

SPEIEO SPIEI 371

March - April 2009

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Front Cover: Decoration in the recently discovered H-8 Wolf Hole extensions. *Photo by Arthur Clarke*



Speleo Spiel

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STC was formed in December 1996 by the amalgamation of three former southern Tasmanian clubs: the *Tasmanian Caverneering Club*, the *Southern Caving Society* and the *Tasmanian Cave and Karst Research Group*. **STC** is the modern variant of the oldest caving club in Australia.

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Bullshitorial

It has recently been brought to my attention (not for the first time) that my sarcastic, nasty, rude and vicious editorial style stinks. I guess that's what you get when you vote a sarcastic, nasty, rude and vicious individual into the role of editor! You reap what you sow.

I actually found it surprising that there was anyone left who hadn't already come to this realisation and hadn't put their own system of 'ignore what Alan says, he's full of bullshit' in place. So I have decided to firmly place it on the record that as long as you keep voting me in as editor of *Speleo Spiel* then you can expect to continue reading large steaming piles of crap. It is my *modus operandi*. At least it is a regular steaming pile of crap – a high fibre *Spiel*, some might say (just not moral fibre).

If you read one of my editorials then assume it is bullshit. If you read one of my trip reports then assume it is bullshit. If you read italicised text with “-Ed” appearing after it in something someone else has written then assume it is bullshit.

That's about as close as any of you poor darling victims will ever get to an apology from me, so savour it and harden up.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

CAVEX IS NEARLY UPON US! 28-29 March 2009 - should be an interesting weekend of rope skills and teamwork, alongside members of the Tas Police, SES and Tas Ambulance Service. We will be working in small parties, with the emphasis on hands-on learning and practising of rope rescue skills. Cavers must have competent SRT skills and be physically able to participate, in order to attend.

Plans for the weekend:

Sat 28 March, 8am - 5pm-ish

- Rope rescue techniques workshop (indoors)
- Tas Police Marine & Rescue Office, Federal Street, North Hobart
- BYO normal caving gear, including SRT kit & caving pack
- BBQ lunch will be provided.

Sun 29 March, 7am - 5pm-ish

- In-cave rope rescue scenarios, various caves
- BYO normal caving gear, including SRT kit & caving pack
- BYO lunch & snacks
- Bus transport will be provided, departing Tas Police Marine & Rescue Office @ 7am.

If you are keen to join in and have not yet contacted me, please do so by Wednesday 25 March.

Jane Pulford – Search and Rescue Officer.

SRT TRAINING – SRT training will be offered on an “as needs” basis. Any new members wishing to learn the skills needed to go up and down ropes (called Single Rope Technique, hence SRT) should contact me to arrange a mutually suitable time to learn.

A lot of the caving currently done in the club involves SRT. Members limit their caving options significantly if they do not have these skills.

Training is also available for members wishing to improve on their current level of expertise or remind themselves of what it's all about if they haven't done any vertical caving for a while.

My contact details are on the club members address list.

Janine McKinnon – Training Officer.

NEW OFFICE BEARERS – The AGM was held in March. We have a few familiar faces sitting in different places now. The positions and elected individuals are listed below:

Position	Name
President	Matt Cracknell
Vice President	Geoff Wise
Secretary	Serena Benjamin
Treasurer	Sarah Gilbert
Gear store officer	Gavin Brett
Public officer	Damian Bidgood
ASF Representative	Matt Cracknell
Librarian	Greg Middleton
Map Archivist	Ric Tunney
Training officer	Janine McKinnon
Karst Index officer	Ric Tunney
Editor	Alan Jackson
Search and Rescue officer	T. Veness & J. Pulford
Science officer	Arthur Clarke
Web Master	Alan Jackson
Social Secretary	Guy Bannink

For those that aren't on the email list-server, the 2008 annual reports are included in this issue (page 12).

UNDERGROUND DUTY FREE – Bunty was fortunate enough to find an underground tax haven on a recent trip. Shop till you drop!



A. Jackson

Trip Reports

Upper Coles Creek

Phil (Jacko) Jackson

5 trips from 21 Dec. 08 to 15 Feb. 09

Party: Philip Jackson, Stewart Jackson, Jeff Watson, Simon Billings, Greg Jordan, Mick Pursell, Ken Hosking, Ping, Gus.

The ultimate purpose of these trips was to examine a possible karst feature high on a hill that splits the upper Coles Creek catchment into its northern and southern tributaries. As yet no significant karst has been found, however at least one significant drainage anomaly exists.



Jacko and son, Stewart, at the end of Tocs Road.

The two branches of Coles Creek are shown on the 1:25000 Tasmap “Wylds” as joining close to Lower Coles Road whereas they actually join approximately 250 metres west of the end of Tocs Road. The northern branch has a catchment of approximately 10 square kilometres while the southern branch drains about 25 square kilometres. The highly scientific hairy eyeball method would suggest that the flow rate of each branch reflects that. The anomaly exists in the northern branch which splits into two branches within a couple hundred metres of the previous junction.

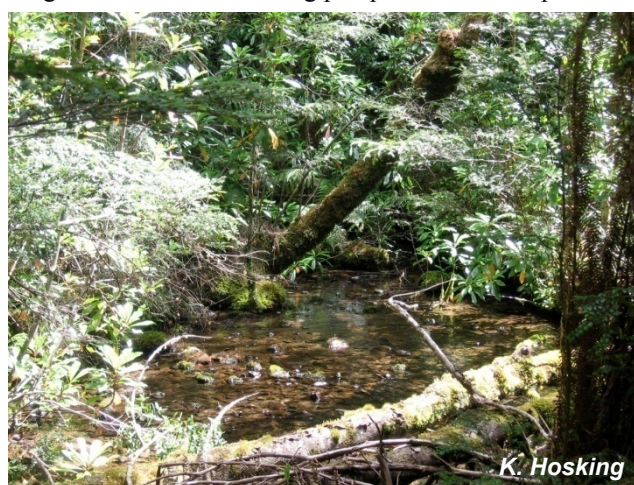


One of the streams.

Hairy eyeball technology showed these branches to have similar flow rates. The purpose of the most recent trip was to evaluate the branch that has a catchment of less than half a square kilometre. Within a couple hundred metres this creek developed out a belt of bog following the base of the hill. With the upper hillside tinder dry the source of the bog water is un-clear.

On other trips both major tributaries have been traversed for approximately one kilometre with no obvious karst.

There seems to be only one avenue left- a serious slog up a very steep hill with an apprentice complaining about all the weight of that vertical caving paraphernalia in his pack.



Another one of the streams.



Jacko and Stewart near one of the muddy risings.

After a struggle with Forestry’s two metre buffer zone the area is relatively easy going through open forests of spectacular eucalypts and myrtles with a few minor patches of horizontal and other stuff.

On the 12th Feb. the water levels of the lower Florentine River, Coles Creek and Growling Swallet were very low.

I have mistakenly referred to the ridge running south from Coles Creek as the Tiger Range. It is actually known as Currawong Ridge. We have box seat tickets and naming rights for any appropriate premium level sponsorship.

JF-8 Junee Cave – Diving Sump 2

Richard Harris (CEGSA)

January 2009

Party: James Arundale (VSA), Dean Chamberlain (CDAA), John Dalla-Zuanna (CDAA), Richard (Harry) Harris (CEGSA), Grant Pearce (CDAA), Liz Rogers (CDAA).

Background

After a wonderful family tour around the Apple Isle, including a great couple of days visiting the main show caves at Mole Creek (King Solomon and Marakooa); I (Harry) headed out to Maydena with John Dalla-Zuanna (JDZ). There we met up with the rest of the group who were already settling in at the idyllic cabins at the “Giants Table”.



The participants: L-R Richard Harris, Grant Pearce, Jim Arundale, Liz Rogers, Dean Chamberlain, John Dalla-Zuanna.

Our main objective was Junee Cave (JF-8), which lies in State forest just outside the Mt Field National Park; only a very short drive from our accommodation. The cave is famous for its stunning dry chamber (“For Your Eyes Only”), which lies between the two sumps. In cave diving circles, it is famous for a few other things also: firstly its temperamental conditions (being prone to high flow, flooding, razor-sharp suit-eating limestone and frigid water), and secondly, its potential for many kilometres of new passage. When dye tracing in 1973 connected Growling Swallet to Junee Cave, the concept of the Junee Master Cave ... a 9+km connection was born.

But to temper our enthusiasm was the knowledge that South Australian divers Tim Payne and David Doolette had on two occasions (2002 and 2004) visited the terminus of sump 2 and failed to find a way through a breakdown area there (*Speleo Spiel* Issue 349 July-August 2005).

Anyway we decided to try and see for ourselves and regardless of the outcome, we wanted to experience the glory of For Your Eyes Only (FYEO).

January 4th 2009: Dive Day 1

First impressions for those in the group that had been to the cave before was that the water level was quite high. From the carpark to the public platform overlooking the cave entrance is about a 10 minute walk through the picturesque rainforest. The first job is to carry all the dive gear up the 100 m streamway inside the cave to the beginning of the first sump. The 7 degree water necessitates the use of

drysuits for any such activity but one soon warms up whilst battling against the flow.

On arriving at the setup area by sump 1, we were somewhat surprised to see a diver's gear neatly laid out on the “beach”. The lack of a car in the carpark saved us undue worry but for a fleeting moment we wondered what might have happened to the owner! We quickly surmised it belonged to Dave Apperley, a Sydney based cave diver who said he may be in the area. It seems he had started diving but retreated for a few days once the water levels started to rise. During the course of our stay Dave came and went and in fact saved us a great deal of effort by repairing a lot of line in the majority of the second sump before we dived there.

Although several of the group planned to use rebreathers in the cave, all except Dean performed the initial first sump dive on open circuit. The thick line laid in the first sump is still in a good state of repair except for a few belays, which had broken or come loose (these were repaired). In order to protect the line from the intermittent high flow, it has been laid to guard against rubbing on the sharp projections. This means it doesn't always pass through the best route for a diver to follow. Several line traps exist as the line passes flatteners especially in the first 50 m of the sump. Visibility varied between zero and 4 m for all our dives (obviously worse on exiting the cave, or following someone else in). In low viz conditions these line traps can cause some delays during exit especially. Dives through sump 1 consistently took from 15 to 25 mins depending on whether video was being taken. Flow was moderate initially but improved as the water levels fell during the trip. Temp 6.8°C.

JDZ and Harry dived through the first sump together and then walked to the end of FYEO simply to admire the passage and get a feel for the work involved to bring more gear through. Based on the size of the passage they decided using backmount CCRs would present a challenge in some of the flatteners but they should be passable (as Dean had proven). The rest of the group also came through without incident and everyone enjoyed a relaxing chat in the beautiful chamber.



Dean Chamberlain and Jim Arundale talk tactics in For Your Eyes Only. Above Dean and to the left, one can see an emergency depot amongst the flowstone.

January 5th 2009: Dive Day 2

Water levels fallen further today and weather perfect. Everyone dives through sump 1 and the 3 divers using backmounted CCR find the sump squeezezy but manageable. The group transported the 5 stage cylinders required by JDZ and the author to dive sump 2, up to the end of FYEO. Photos and video of FYEO were recorded and we all exited again via sump 1. A small drop in water levels was noted to make a large difference in flow in the streamway of FYEO. Dave Apperley dived sump 2 and spent considerable time repairing the line down through the deep section at 63 m. After working on the line he was short of time and unfortunately didn't get to the end. However this effort certainly paved the way for JDZ and I to dive the second sump the next day.

Dave reported the flow through the deeper restrictions was very high and quite difficult to pass.



Jim stands admiring the beauty of For Your Eyes Only.



Straws a plenty in FYEO. Truly a spectacular passage.

January 6th 2009: Dive Day 3

Weather holding up, river continues to drop. More video and stills in all areas today. JDZ and Harry hauled their rebreathers to the end of FYEO and the group kindly brought the rest of their kit. Sump 1 was becoming pretty familiar and comfortable. Regular sightings of depigmented brown trout were made, as well as white syncarids and shrimps.

JDZ and Harry set off for their second sump dive using the rebreathers. They used a trimix diluent to limit narcosis

and decrease the work of breathing at depth. Each carried 2 large bailout cylinders and a further cylinder of decompression gas was staged at 20 m.

The dive started with a 5-minute swim over silt dunes at only 5-10 m. The line disappeared into the silt intermittently. Multiple line patches were seen and really the entire line needs replacing at some point with thicker rope. The cave then descended steeply and the restriction known as the "Teeth" was clearly visible at 40 m. This presented only a minor obstacle and was easily passed. The entire tunnel was a single conduit with no side passages seen in the 4-5 m visibility. At 50 m the tunnel was flat centrally and on the right. On the left side it was scooped out and this was the obvious place to swim. However Harry found the flow to be very strong here whilst JDZ had a much easier time of it sticking to the middle. Through 62 m the maximum depth was passed and the cave then ascended to 56 m. Dave's line ended here and Harry tied on some 6 mm rope, which he ran to the breakdown area, which only lay another 20-30 m further on. They had arrived at their destination. It took 28 minutes battling the flow to get to this point, much longer than they had hoped but certainly sooner than if they had to repair all that line themselves. This gave only a few minutes to have a good look at the breakdown area, which was blocking further progress into the cave.

Harry: "My firm impression is that the cave continues beyond the breakdown. There was no sign of another route around the collapse. The breakdown is made of very large boulders with good size chinks between ... clear water is tantalisingly glimpsed beyond the rockpile. Some apertures perhaps 30 cm across are the largest gaps ... certainly too small for a diver in any configuration to pass. Whilst it might be possible to move some rocks and force a route, this would be very time consuming and not without risk so far from the air chamber, and nearly 1 km from the entrance. So for the time being, the Junee master cave will keep its secret! Total dive time in sump 2 was 104 very chilly minutes!"

January 7th 2009: Rest Day

Took a day to recover from the bumps and scrapes of carrying gear up those streamways! A quick tour of the district to have a look at some of the magnificent local scenery. Visited Growling Swallet (JF-36); one of the major feeder siphons for Junee. Next, over to Lawrence Rivulet (again following in the footsteps of Dave Apperley who had just dived here and was doing his line repair work for us again!) Lawrence looked very inviting (apart from the leeches and mosses which were abundant).

January 8th 2009: Dive Day 4

Snow on Mt Field and hail on us! The Junee River was rising and it was time to get our gear out while we could. Approx. 5 hrs total in the cave to bring all the cylinders and other gear out and back to the cars. Red wine and a good feed the order of the day for cold cave divers!

Thus ended our exploration of the Junee Resurgence. Tassie cave diving has made a big impression on all of us and there are already plans being made to return!

JF-345 Ice Tube – JF-36 Growling Swallet thru trip

Valentine's Day (unfortunately no roses – just a bunch of pansies)

Alan Jackson

14 February 2009

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Marco Zocca

Italians had invaded again and were asking for a good JF trip. Like the last time, I figured a jaunt through Ice Tube would be suitable. Marco's girlfriend, Martina, couldn't join us as she'd injured her foot bushwalking.

The trip was uneventful enough, with the exception of a few head scratching moments from me, as I tried to fathom if some of my companions had actually been caving

before. Oh yeah, and the rope got stuck on Killing Joke pitch and we had to leave about 8 m of it behind. We'll collect it next time.

The way out through Growling included a quick tourist loop through Bloody Smokers, Dreamtime and the sumps (during which some more head scratching was done). Andreas was a bit tuckered out by the time we reached Mainline. He was absolutely wasted by the entrance. He needs to harden up.

Marco was a superbly competent caver (reminded me of the good old days when I used to cave with Gavin) and hinted at running an expedition to Tas with a million eager Italians in the next 2-3 years. He also offered to reciprocate the hospitality STC has shown should any of us find ourselves with some spare time in Italy in the near future.

IB-14 Exit Cave

Geoff Wise

21 February 2009

Party: Serena Benjamin, Matt Cracknell, Geoff Wise, Tony Veness

After the efforts of two weeks ago some returned, with a few tasks to complete. The first was to place a plastic barrel of emergency gear in the cave at inner base camp. Then we aimed to tie in some of the 'old' survey stations (with aluminium tags) to the theodolite stations. If time allowed we would continue mapping from station 1037 where we left off on the last trip. We also had some radios Tony had purloined to test their effectiveness for communication in the cave. This required call signs such as Captain Methane and The Tea Lady to be used.

The walk to the entrance took a little under an hour and the water level was very low. We proceeded through the rock-pile with only minor disorientation before arriving at inner base camp for lunch. With the barrel stashed Tony, Serena and Matt headed off to start the surveying. I had brought my Palm pilot with the latest version of Auriga and the DistoX calibration program installed and had another attempt to calibrate Greg Middleton's DistoX which we were unable to get into calibration mode last time. I succeeded in running a rough calibration but the error was

outside the acceptable range. You need to be quite pedantic to get an acceptable calibration but at least we now know we can calibrate the thing.

We surveyed in stations from the 70s to the 90s until a rock-pile caught Tony and Matt's eyes. We headed over to a chamber with a small stream entering. In the stream bed there was some bark and sticks which got our exploring hats on. With the water levels so low we had to take a look. We grovelled up the crawl-way to a three way junction where we found a short handled adze and two blue buckets. The way on meant crawling in water and while there was a good breeze both Serena and I piked before having to get right down in the water. The breeze and forest litter that has been washed into the cave here suggest some potential for a surface connection. Enough potential for someone in the past to go a diggin' (If anyone has any information let me know).

Time was getting away so we headed out tying a few loose ends as we went. We also tested the range of the radios which until then had been mainly used for attempts at comedy. They worked quite well in passages but not so well through the rock pile.

It was a good day but there was a lot of travelling (4 hours in the car, 2 and a half walking plus moving through the cave to get to the work site) for a limited productive time. We managed to arrive at Franklin just in time to get pizza.

JF-248 Four Road Swallet via Hell

Alan Jackson

7 March 2009

Party: Kathy Bunton, Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson

Bunty and I had been talking about pushing the McCallums Track beyond the Serendipity Valley turnoff through to Florentine Gap for yonks now. Of all the ideas of places to go that we had on Friday night the McCallums exercise was the only one that didn't involve surveying and since the Exit freaks had cleaned me out of Disto and instruments it was the only viable option.

We started at the end of the F8 Road and did the usual to the Growling turnoff. Halfway to Serendipity turnoff we

shot up the hill briefly to number and photo-tag the cave I had found a few weeks previous (SS370:17-18 – the last cave we found for the day). We tagged it JF-438. We then proceeded to the Serendipity Valley and prepared ourselves for whatever the forest could throw at us.

The first little bit wasn't too bad (the extremely low light conditions in the rainforest means that it takes 100 years for a seedling to get big enough to impede a human unless a canopy tree falls over and lets in some light). A couple of fallen eucs and the odd patch of horizontal slowed us a little. In the vicinity of and for a few hundred metres beyond where the track crosses the broad Warhol valley there is an abundance of exposed limestone and associated karren. We were briefly distracted looking at dolines immediately adjacent to the track but our goal was to flesh

out the track so we mainly stayed on the straight and narrow. About 350 m after where the Warhol valley 'creek' is marked on the 1:25k topo map the aspect changed and so did the soil depth and vegetation. The rainforest turned to a spindly musk (*Olearia argophylla*) dominated forest as a result of the very thin soil cover. This meant that the previously obvious benching of the old track became difficult to pick. The natural tendency of the limestone outcrops to form narrow terraces added an extra difficulty – there were benched 'tracks' contouring the hill everywhere! GPS coverage also abandoned us at this point (again, the good GPS had been commandeered by the Exit freaks).



Steve models (rather enthusiastically) for the JF-438 photo.

After a further 300 m we stumbled back across the track (even though the track was hard to follow, the fact that it essentially contoured meant it was difficult to ever get a long way off course – though I'm sure Ric could have managed it). The next 800 m were a mix of easy open track following and horrendous overgrown slogs. One of the main dry gullies, choked with blinding ferns and enormous fallen logs, seemed to take forever to negotiate. Oh, did I mention it was raining?

Why were we really there, I hear you asking. Well, in this whole section on the south-western slopes of Wherretts Lookout there are very few recorded karst features. JF-248 Four Road Swallet is the major feature; a significant streamsink located well below the contact off the end of the F4 Road. The only other officially numbered/tagged caves are JF-385 and JF-386 which are located higher on the slopes at the contact. During his wanderings in the area preparing his Junee catchment karst report for Forestry in the early 90s, Rolan plotted and recorded five other caves/features, which were named Z65 thru Z69. Z68 is listed as 'just below the McCallums Track' so we figured we'd follow the track to this point and then have a look for it. Unfortunately Rolan undertook his study before the advent of easily accessible and reliable GPS so most of his Z caves are plotted on the map with an educated guess (i.e. plus or minus 200 m). When we got to the spot on McCallums Track closest to Z68 the GPS told us that the cave was uphill from us, not downhill like Rolan said it should be. We had a quick look around and a bite to eat and then admitted defeat (we'd actually been defeated about an hour before – it was only now that we were prepared to admit it). A forward plan was discussed.

The vegetation we'd just traversed had been so vile in spots that we figured that nothing could be worse than

retracing our steps. We settled on the option of continuing around the hill till we hit the creek that sinks at JF-248, follow it downstream to the swallet and then straight-line it to the end of the F4 Rd. The creek was soon intersected and followed to JF-248 with only minor vegetative obstacles. Rolan was proved to be way out with his educated guessing on the location of JF-248. He has it placed at the junction of two gullies/creeks on his map but we found it to be some 150 m further upstream from this point. It is of course possible the swallet has moved up the gully but the sink looked pretty 'old' and I reckon a mapping error is more likely. The swallet, by the way, has no prospects of yielding navigable cave without the use of a large excavator.



Steve and Kathy give JF-248 the hands-on-hips treatment.



Digging in JF-248 is not a particularly hot prospect – it couldn't really look less like a cave if it tried.

After JF-248 the going became really bad. The tree and shrub cover was almost non-existent (usually a good thing) but making the most of this abundant light was a forest of bats-wing fern (*Histiopteris incisa*) – often mistakenly

referred to as bracken fern by those less well educated amongst us. Delightfully interspersed with the 2 m high wall of ferns was stinging nettle. Things were pretty grim. We briefly retreated to the adjacent timbered forest, armed ourselves with some sturdy bludgeoning weapons and leapt back into the ferns with weapons swinging wildly. I felt like the VSA logo. It proved very effective (and quite a work out, but lactic acid doesn't last as long as stinging nettle pain). A 1.5 m swathe of destruction was cut through the ferns (we were out of the national park now and back into Forestry territory, so wholesale destruction of the landscape was acceptable) and we climbed out of the gully and back in to the forest to quickly link up with a snig-track, and eventually, the badly overgrown F4 Rd. At the major creek crossing on the F4 Rd we discovered, to our

delight, that Forestry are in the process of upgrading the road so easy going was finally found. We marched back along the Florentine Rd and up the F8 Road to the car.

So what does the future hold for this area? I think the McCallums Track needs opening back up all the way from Serendipity to Florentine Gap (partly just because this is a fabulous bit of history and shouldn't be left to just blend back in with the forest). This would provide a direct and fast route into this area from both ends that makes exploring amongst the horror vegetation a much more acceptable task. The result could ultimately be discovery of a cave that heads back underneath Wherretts Lookout towards June Cave. Essentially that whole piece of the JF puzzle is missing at the moment and needs filling in.

JF-10 Splash Pot – and so it begins

Alan Jackson

14 March 2009

Party: Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker

There's a saying amongst the whitewater kayaking fraternity "the amount of time you spend looking at the hole before you paddle it is directly proportional to the time you'll spend getting munched by it." I wonder whether it works for caving 'holes' as well? If so, this Splash Pot project might be a bit nasty. I've been talking about it for almost two years. It was finally time to get there.

I had enough rope and rigging gear to, in theory, get us to the top of Harrow the Marrow, but really I was just hoping to make it to the top of the second group of pitches the bad side of Close to the Bone. The weather was beautiful on the walk in but state-wide rain was forecast. We located JF-9 and figured we were close. We then went too far, found the stream and then followed it downstream 30 m to Splash Pot (we had been staying out of the gully to avoid the bad vegetation).

As we trogged up the sky darkened and light rain began to fall. Bunty found some less than level ground to attempt getting changed on. His various gymnastics kept us entertained. We chucked a rope down the entrance pitch and headed off down the obvious looking way – a steeply descending passage with a loose dolerite boulder floor. It was almost bone dry – about the equivalent of one old man with a urinary tract infection trying to squeeze out a piddle. After a short climb-down the passage width decreased somewhat and the next 60 m or so was annoyingly snaggy. At one point the loose floor gave way beneath me to reveal a tight continuation – I thought little of it at the time.

After a few tiny avens with the odd drip or seven coming in were passed we found the pitches. The rigging I used seems to pretty closely mirror that described by Dave Rasch and Jeff Butt in SS314:10. I didn't have a trace so the small projection used for the last of the three pitches (which was razor sharp) was backed up to a slightly less sharp projection a little higher on the same wall. It needs a trace. I found the toy krab that Hugh left behind on the last trip to this cave (SS349:8-9).

I got off the rope in the roomy chamber and strolled to the far end, calling 'rope free'. I glanced quickly at the way on – it didn't look nice. I also peered up the aven that joins

from the side at this point. The same old bugger who was peeing at the entrance was having a go in this aven too. Once Bunty reached the third pitch I asked him to place something under the tape on the sharp projection as I was concerned it would cut through under the bouncing of ascending. As he did so I heard a funny distant noise. It sounded like water and I convinced myself that it must have been the drips hitting Bunty or his pack now that he was in a new position putting something under the tape for me. Suddenly the noise increased and a surge of water came cascading down the aven beside me. In a matter of three seconds the water flow was more akin to the entire French Foreign Legion taking a leak simultaneously. We figured we had had a little rain out there!

Completely unsure of how the hydrology operated in this cave and being similarly unsure of just how much it was raining, we figured that we should retreat. If the already drippy pitch became as wet as the side aven then it was going to make for three very unhappy cavers. If it was a really really big rainstorm then we could end up more than just unhappy. We all headed up. As we regrouped at the top of the pitches the small dribble in the main passage increased to a steady trickle. We left the rest of the rope at the pitch head and headed out.

When we reached the point where the loose floor had partially collapsed on me on the way in we found a large amount of water disappearing down it. It turns out that the main drain, which is captured at the entrance, follows the main passage to this point and then follows a relatively new path to the pitch series. It was apparent, from various bits of vegetation, that this new drain wasn't always big enough and that sometimes the water overflowed this point and took the old route down the pitches. It hadn't reached this point yet. The trip out from here was very sporty and wet, in stark contrast to the silence of the trip in. Back on the surface it was only raining lightly, so it must have just been a very short but heavy deluge. We'd managed a whole 2.5 hrs underground!

We decided that we were happy with doing the cave in 'decades' – achieving on the first trip what they achieved in the 1970s (~100 m). Next trip we'll aim to get the 80s out of the way (get through Close to the Bone and descend the two following pitches). Then we'll work on the late 90s for trip three. Who knows what the 'noughties' will produce?

We padded out the rest of the day with a bit of a surface wander along the contact to the south.

Other Exciting Stuff

“*Furari litoris arenas*” - To undertake a never-ending task (Exit cave surveying update).

Tony Veness

Introduction

Members of STC have undertaken a series of preliminary trips into the Exit Cave system at Ida Bay as part of a scoping study, with a view to eventually pulling together all of the existing survey data into a ground-truthed and generally spatially-correct map of the cave system. These initial works are supported by Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (TPWS) and STC has been granted an entry permit enabling multiple entries into the system as required up until 27 March 2009.

Due to the length of the known passage and the time required to get to the extents of the known cave system, the current focus of the scoping study, and the supporting survey trips, has been purposely constrained. The current emphases are:

1. Familiarisation with the main route through the system, from a safety and practicality point of view. As it is an eight hour round-trip from Hobart to any part of the known system north of the main rockpile, it is important not to lose further time route-finding or investigating unexplored leads.
2. The relocation, documentation and re-tagging of existing permanent survey stations. These survey stations have enormous value for mapping the cave, along both the early 1990s theodolite traverse (from IB-14 Exit Efflux to the horizontal passage below the IB-120 Valley Entrance drop-in) and the 1960s hand instrument traverse (from IB-14 to Conference Concourse). It is unlikely STC could ever organise this mapping work to be undertaken again, should the survey stations along the traverse routes be lost (in space).
3. Surveying links between the hand instrument traverse survey stations (marked by galvanized nails and stamped aluminum tags) and the theodolite survey stations (marked by red 20 mm diameter reflective stamped disks). Given the length and orientation of the system, and the limited opportunities for connections to known surface locations, the value of the non-magnetic bearings and laser-derived distances measured between the theodolite survey stations is priceless. Much of the available historical survey data, and hence sketches, ‘hang-off’ the old hand instrument traverse survey stations - so the improved accuracy achievable by linking the two traverses together is warranted.

Current work

Over the last two months, STC members (and hangers-on) have undertaken ten trips, over five days, over three weekends into the Exit Cave system. 37 caver-days of work have been completed in the system and 18 Mars Bars

consumed. Refer to table one for details of dates and activities.

Table 1. Trip dates and details

Date	Group	Cavers	Areas and Activities
8 Feb	A	8	IB-120 to IB-14 through trip. Familiarisation, relocating and retagging survey stations.
9 Feb	A	4	IB-14 to Ballroom. Survey station relocating and retagging. Recce with Skinner’s TCC ‘tourist trail’ map of entrance series.
9 Feb	B	4	North of Eastern Passage turnoff. Sketching, relocating, and linking old stations to new.
21 Feb	A	4	North of theodolite survey station ThEx1023. Relocating and linking old stations to new.
7 Mar	A	3	North of Hatwalk area to Inner Base Camp turnoff. Relocating and linking old stations to new.
7 Mar	B	3	North of theodolite survey station ThEx1035. Relocating and linking old stations to new.
7 Mar	C	1	North of theodolite station ThEx1024. Sketching main passage.
8 Mar	A	4	South of theodolite survey station ThEx11. Relocating and linking old stations to new.
8 Mar	B	3	Eastern Passage recce – relocation of old stations and familiarisation.
8 Mar	C	3	Mystery Creek Passage recce – relocation of old stations and familiarisation.

The STC electronic archive has proved to contain a mine of survey data collected in and around the Exit Cave system. Some datasets are very good quality, with electronic survey data and ‘to-scale’ post-trip draft maps. Other datasets are scanned log books and in-cave sketches of variable quality and legibility. The groundwork currently being undertaken will allow the existing datasets and newly collected datasets to be sensibly collated into a spatially correct map of the known system (hopefully!)

A major advantage the current participants in the project enjoy, compared to contributors to past Exit Cave surveys, is the current availability of affordable electronic distance measuring (EDM) equipment (e.g. Leica Distos, etc), excellent cave surveying software packages, and affordable large format colour printing.

The existing On-Station (<http://shatterthefog.googlepages.com/onstation>) survey datasets for the Exit Cave system in the STC electronic archive have been imported into Compass (<http://www.fountainware.com/compass/>) for evaluation, allowing the comparison of the abilities of the two software packages. So far, so good - the loop closure, statistical reporting and data export abilities of Compass have been found to be very good. All new survey data collected is being entered directly into Compass at this time.

Exports from the Compass package are subsequently pulled into a desktop Geographical Information System (GIS) permitting high quality, large, to-scale printing. Figure one shows a small section of a draft map of the main streamway in Exit, at the intersection with the Mystery Creek Passage.

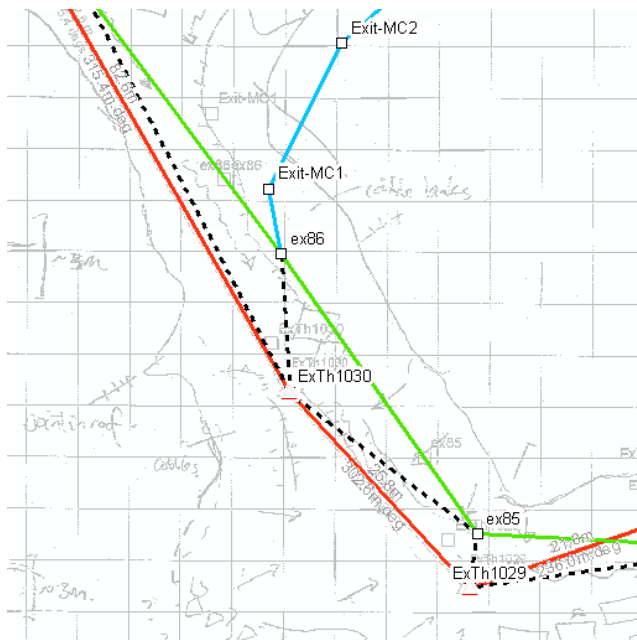


Figure 1. Existing shot and station data, with new shot data and 1:500 in-cave sketching. Dashed lines show new shots between existing 'old' and 'new' permanent survey stations.

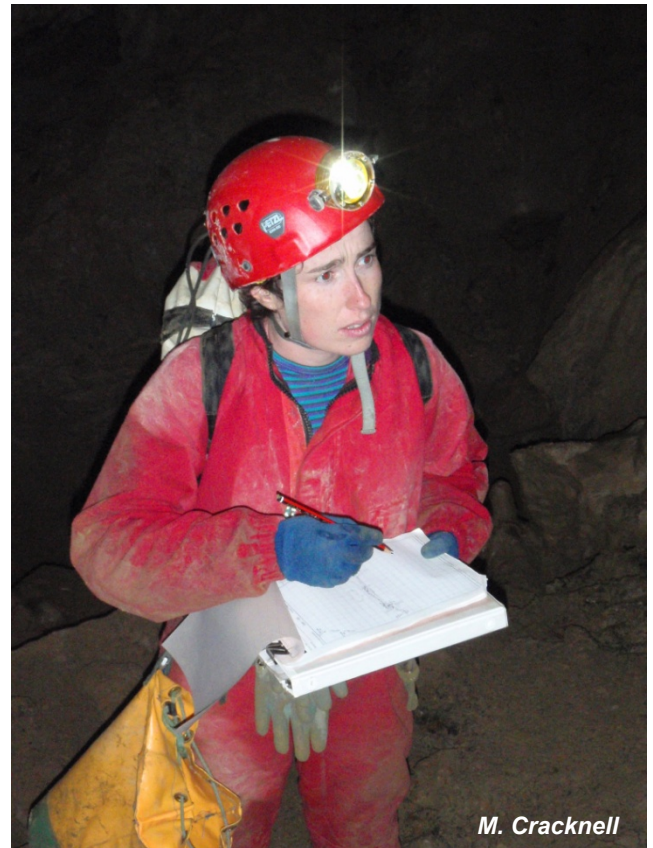
Where to now?

The longer term goal of sketching passage detail on-screen, with a software package which enables the linking of hand (mouse) drawn passage detail to survey shot data, is being investigated. Therion (<http://therion.speleo.sk/>) and Walls (http://www.utexas.edu/tmm/sponsored_sites/tss/Walls/tsswalls.htm) are two such packages.

The power of such software is that subsequent loop closures and re-generation of corrected shot datasets, which 'move' survey stations and shots, also 'move' passage detail accordingly (within reason). The first step in the on-screen sketching of the system, however, is to generate a series of neat, contiguous, hand-drawn, to-scale sketches which can then be 'traced' and annotated on-screen with the software package of choice.

Priorities from now include: completing the linking of old survey stations to new; more sketching where no (or poor) passage sketches exist; investigating cave system extensions; digs; track marking; buying more Mars Bars ...

"Arduum sane munus" - A truly arduous task ...



Sarah puts on her serious Exit Cave surveying face.

STC Film Night – Spluga della Preta

18 February 2009

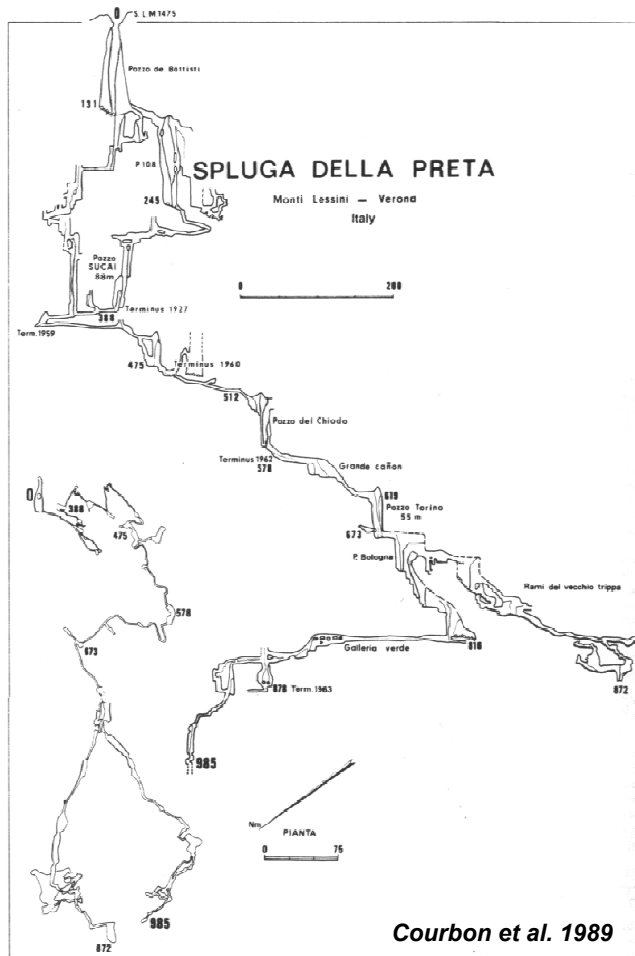
Stephen Bunton

A few of us gathered at Guy Bannink's Fern Tree home to view the DVD that Marco, the visiting Italian caver, had given the club. The DVD was a feature film on the exploration of the Spluga della Preta. The 'Sluga' was the world's deepest cave when it was first explored in 1927. The cave's first pitch is 131 m, which was initially descended on a winch, with the caver subsequently pulled out on a horse-drawn rope. The second is 118 m and these

were then routinely descended on ladders with hemp belay ropes. At various stages of exploration the depth of the cave was overstated. Eventually the Spluga at -376 m (but quoted at -637 m) was surpassed by the Gouffre Berger (France) in 1954 when it reached -903 m.

The film interviewed former explorers who talked about how tough it was in the good old days. (They sounded like Italian equivalents of our own Trev.) The cave eventually reached -985 m but it is still the focus of current exploration and the film neatly wove its plot around current and former exploration. The film illustrated the exploration with good animated graphics of the cave map. It also showed some exciting footage of abseiling down

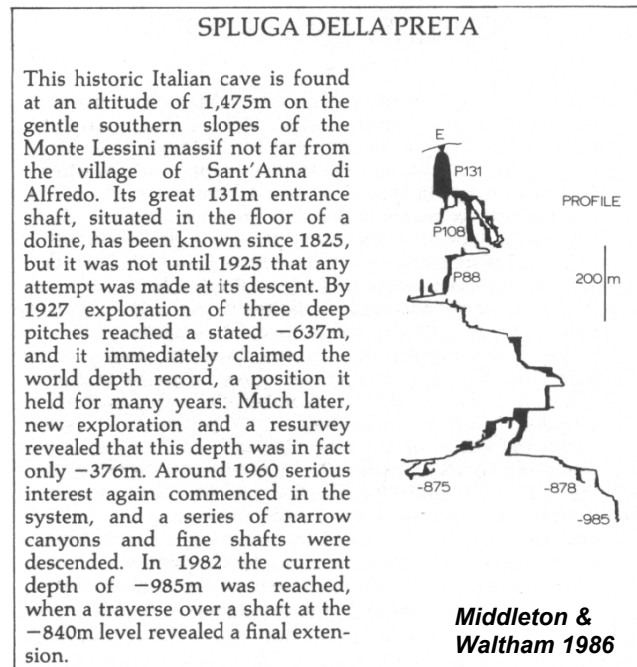
scary cliffs on the steep limestone slopes outside the mountain, looking for an alternative entrance. It was the bat skeletons which provided the intrigue, and the forensic analysis of them gave little hope to the quest for a second entrance.



Certainly the Spluga della Preta is one of the world's classic caves, one that could well have been on my hit list. Thankfully having seen it on film, I now don't need to go and do it, never mind the fact that it is a pretty difficult cave. The cave involves narrow passages between the long pitches and carrying sufficient gear would not be easy, let alone with bivvy gear if you were involved in a multi-day push at the bottom of the cave.

The rugged nature of the cave was well portrayed with simple video cameras and simple lighting systems. It was very well done. Watching this film was a privilege and we should thank Marco for giving us this DVD.

The rest of the evening involved seeing Arthur's photos of the new extension of Wolf Hole. The mudbanks, cave formations, and different types of rocks in this section were quite unusual and very interesting. Again it was a privilege to see these. [All 827 of them? – Ed.]



Maps and text from:

Courbon, P., Chabert, C., Bosted, P. & Lindsley, K. (1989) *Atlas of the Great Caves of the World*. Cave Books, St. Louis, MO.

Middleton, J. & Waltham, T. (1986) *The Underground Atlas – A Gazetteer of the World's Cave Regions*. St Edmundsbury Press Ltd, Suffolk.

2008 Annual Reports

Various Artists

PRESIDENT

Matt Cracknell

It has been another year of fun and games and the STC ship seems to be sailing smoothly. Once again, the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers has proven to be one of the most active and adventurous caving clubs in Australia. Regular *Speleo Spiels* jam-packed with trips, maps and the occasional rant highlight a wealth of talent that our club contains.

The Junee-Florentine karst continues to push some of the more hardened cavers in our midst to their limits. The area has yielded significant rewards. Congratulations to Alan Jackson, gaining just recognition for his frenetic endeavours in the hardest caves that Tasmania has to offer.

The Exit Cave Mapping Project seems to have initiated an Ida Bay renaissance. Emerging from this project is a solid and hopefully long lasting relationship between Tasmania's conservation land managers and STC. Special thanks to Tony Veness for the enormous amount of effort he has put into the preliminary stages of this long term project and making it a tangible reality.

I also want to acknowledge the army of diligent STC volunteers who keep our administration ticking over. Your support helps to maintain a healthy and exciting club. I look forward to 2009, a year that heralds a (mostly) brand new Executive Committee and a year where STC will be at the pointy end of Australian caving.

VICE PRESIDENT

Sarah Gilbert

It has been a pretty smooth year for me as Vice President - an easy introduction into the inner workings of STC. With

Matt at the helm, my official duties have only been to fill in and chair meetings twice. No dramas there.

Mid-year I was involved in putting together the varied opinions of club members into some sort of coherent document and submitting it to Parks as our proposal to their Southern Karst Management Plan.

As for the coming year, if anyone is interested in taking the position of VP they are welcome to it - it's the easiest exec. role in the club ...

SECRETARY

Alan Jackson

Despite attempts to the contrary, I was cornered into the role of Secretary for another year at the 2008 AGM. The biggest perk is checking the mailbox and reading all the journals at one's leisure. The biggest lurk is ... well, there isn't one really. It is quite a simple job.

This is only my second year as Secretary, so constitutionally I could carry on for one more. However, current work arrangements in the Jackson household are making it very difficult to attend meetings on a regular basis so I will have to decline any nominations for executive positions for the coming year.

Oh yeah, I opened some letters and sent a few too (that's what the Secretary does).

TREASURER

Amy Robertson

Summary

Apparently the President never reads these boring reports. I've tried to spark this one up a bit to encourage your attention span. I report here that STC has made a deficit of \$321.06 – the GFC has struck. This is lower than the surpluses achieved in previous years, but without any major fundraising efforts this year and with the aim of breaking even, I believe this is an acceptable result.

The main sources of income for the club last year were membership fees and trip fees. Other sources of income did not vary much from the previous year or the budget.

Expenditure too has been fairly similar to that budgeted, though it is worth noting that *Spiel* production costs decreased to less than any of the past 3 years – well done again to Editor Alan. Gear purchase exceeded budget but was provided for by existing funds from the previous year's Sport & Recreation grant and the Cavemania surplus.

Of course, just as I've really got my head around this role, it is time to move on as my three terms in the job are up. I think things are in reasonable order for the new treasurer, and I wish them well, while I go about teaching my daughter to squeeze!

Membership

The membership numbers increased in 2008 (Table 1), mainly through a swarm of prospective members (if that's what you call post-conference biospeleologists!) A number of beginner trips held also attracted new faces from local sources, some of whom have continued their involvement with the club. Recruitment of prospective members was better than last year, with 4 of these people continuing on to annual memberships.

Table 1. Membership

Category	YE 31/12/2008	YE 31/12/2007
Household/full/student	39	33
Prospective	19	6
Life	9	9
Total membership	67	48
Friends	10	10
Armchair cavers	2	3
Total association	79	61

Gear Hire Rates

The club received \$142.00 from gear hire plus \$507.50 from trip fees. Revenue from gear hire has reduced, but trip fee income (i.e. rope use fees) has increased. **I propose that gear hire costs remain unchanged.** These rates (for STC members only) are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Gear hire rates

Item	Amount
Trip fee (vertical caves where a rope was used)	\$2
Light hire	\$4
Helmet hire	\$1
SRT gear, light, helmet, small pack	\$12
SRT gear, helmet, small pack	\$8
Pack	\$1
Descender only	\$3-\$5
Descender only (Midnight Hole)	\$5
Harness & cowstail	\$2
Trogsuit	\$3
Miscellaneous (e.g. jammer, cowstail etc)	\$1-\$2

Speleo Spiel

The costs of publication production reduced this year to \$539.27, for production of the usual 6 *Spiels* and 1 edition of the irregular *Southern Caver*. The print run averages about 40 copies, yielding a production cost of about \$14 per year for each receiver.

I propose to retain the printed *Speleo Spiel* subscription rate for non-members at \$25 per year, and \$15 for members.

Income

Table 3 shows the expected income for the General Account for 2009.

Table 3. 2009 expected income

Category	2009 est.	2008 actual
Subscriptions (incl. ASF comp.)	\$3,400.00	\$3,442.00
<i>Speleo Spiel</i> subscriptions	\$75.00	\$75.00
Trip fees	\$350.00	\$507.50
Gear hire	\$150.00	\$142.00
Gear sales	\$100.00	\$108.00
Donations	\$100.00	\$179.65
Cash Mgt Trust distributions	\$450.00	\$467.41
Interest (bank)	\$10.00	\$11.50
Total income	\$4,635.00	\$4,933.06

Expenditure

Table 4 details the budgeted spending from the General Account for 2009.

Table 4. 2009 budgeted spending

Category	2009 Est.	2008 actual
<i>Speleo Spiel</i> production & supply	\$600.00	\$539.27
ASF fees for inactive life members	\$207.00	\$207.00
All other ASF membership fees	\$2,700.00	\$2,716.83
Gear purchases	\$200.00	\$983.50
Equipment Officer Honorarium	\$194.85	\$121.65
Audit fee	\$75.00	\$71.50
Annual return fee	\$51.20	\$50.00
PO Box rental	\$135.00	\$123.00
ACKMA membership	\$55.00	\$110.00
Publications	\$150.00	\$0.00
Transfer to Science Account ¹	\$300.48	\$218.87
Other (ex Treasurer Honorarium?)	\$300	\$0.00
Total	\$4,968.53	\$5,141.62

¹ Share of interest from Cash Management Trust.

Membership Fees

The membership fees are set to allow the General Account to break even. The difference in the budgeted expenditure

and income for 2009 is -\$333.53, or 10% of the account balance. This difference includes only a small budget of \$200 for gear purchase, since our stock has improved via recent purchases. It is also expected that some gear expenditure from the Science Account will be incurred as part of the new Exit Cave Project. I think it is likely that some additional income will arise from the increased activity of this project, but it may be useful to do some fundraising through the year. There may need to be an increase to membership fees in 2010 (bloody GFC!). Also, subject to my proposal for changing the Constitution succeeding, the membership categories for 2009 will be slightly different (mostly just re-named).

I note that ASF membership fees will also remain unchanged. **The proposed annual membership fees for 2009 are outlined in Table 5.** Most are unchanged, but I propose increasing the Concession STC rate so that it doesn't cost less than an Introductory membership.

Table 5. Proposed annual membership fees for 2009

Category	STC membership	ASF membership	Total STC & ASF
Single (annual)	\$17.00	\$68.00	\$85.00
Concession (annual single student/pensioner/junior)	\$10.00	\$61.00	\$71.00
Household (annual)	\$28.50	\$121.50	\$150.00
Introductory (3 month, non-voting)	\$10.00 (includes printed <i>Spiel</i>)	\$20.00	\$30.00
Life (conferred)	Nil	\$23.00 – inactive* \$68.00 – active*	\$23.00 – inactive* \$68.00 – active*
Friend (conferred non-member)	Nil (includes printed <i>Spiels</i>)		
<i>Spiel</i> subscription (printed <i>Spiels</i> delivered)	\$25.00 (for non-members) \$15.00 (for STC members)		

Notes:

- Late fee of \$10.00 applies to all STC Single, Concession and Household memberships not renewed by 1 May each year.
- New members who join during the year will pay pro-rata for their annual category.

Summary of Motions

- That the gear hire fees for 2008 remain unchanged for 2009;
- That the *Speleo Spiel* subscription rates remain unchanged at \$25 per year for non-members and \$15 per year for members; and
- That STC membership fees apply as per the above table for 2009.

EDITOR

Alan Jackson

Another six of the finest issues produced in 2008/09. I'm still really enjoying putting together what I consider to be the most important element of the club – a regular, entertaining and interesting newsletter/journal. A club is rooted without one (just look at ASF in recent years and the *Caves Australia* situation – which is on the up-and-up now, of course!)

I'm happy to continue with the job but am also as equally happy to hand it on.

Thanks, as usual, to Greg Middleton for crossing my "t"s and dotting my "i"s and to everyone that has contributed articles and trip reports.

PUBLIC OFFICER

Damian Bidgood

It has been a quiet year for me. I am getting some trip reports via the electronic system, not many though – it would be barely one a fortnight.

I had the media approach us about the NSW caving incident which after discussion with Alan and Matt we preferred not to reply and enter into their little witch hunt.

LIBRARIAN/ARCHIVIST

Greg Middleton

In 2008-09 the Library received 95 new journals (142 in 03-04, 191 04-05, 168 05-06, 101 06-07, 113 07-08), bringing our holding to 4,434. We received 14 new books, bringing our holding to 291. Our CD/ DVD collection has grown from 18 to 33.

I have continued to collect relevant reprints, photocopies and newspaper articles. These are housed in binders and 625 are catalogued in a database. I have many to add.

The archives of the three constituent clubs (TCC, SCS & TCKRG) and some from STC are still in boxes. I have

started a database, but most have not been catalogued or shelved.

Lists of our holdings are available and members are welcome to borrow any time I'm home. I can be called on 6223 1400 to arrange a time.

Despite popular mythology, items have been known to be borrowed!

Since 2005 I have been producing *Southern Caver* in digital format, publishing otherwise unpublished or very rare material. Issue #64 was produced in December 2008.

I'm happy to continue in the position.

SCIENCE OFFICER

Arthur Clarke

Cave Science activity during 2008-2009

Provision of a 16 page submission for the Southern Karst Management Plan in August 2008, detailing various cave science related aspects, particularly related to archaeological and Aboriginal use of caves, protection of geomorphological attributes in caves and the biology of caves with emphasis on the Hastings, Ida Bay and North Lune karst areas. Other karst cave areas briefly listed for mention included Cracroft, mid-Huon (Riveaux), Maydena area (Junee-Florentine, Mount Mueller, Risbys Basin and Styx valley), Precipitous Bluff, Vanishing Falls and Weld River areas.

Week long cave biology tour of Tasmania during early October 2008 with visiting biologists from Canary Islands, Chile, Denmark, Italy, Spain and USA, following the Symposium for the International Society of Subterranean Biology held at Fremantle in late September. Caves inspected included Marakoopa 1 and 2, plus Snail Space at Mole Creek, Mystery Creek Cave at IB and Newdegate Cave at Hastings.

Reporting on the discovery of a symphylan found by Gavin Brett and Alan Jackson in the recently explored upper reaches of *Mystery Creek Cave*; see *Speleo Spiel* #369 (Nov-Dec 2008): p 13.

Approval/ support for payment of STC Science Account funds (as minuted at respective meetings)

- Approved \$220 for new set of aerial photographs covering Marble Hill and Ida Bay karst (April, May, June, July 2008); purchase cancelled (October 2008).

- Approved \$639 for new Garmin GPS purchase; half cost (\$319.50) paid from Science Account and half from Sport & Rec. grant monies (May, August, September, October, December 2008);

- Moved motion for payment of future electronic scanning of large format maps in STC map archive (February 2009).

On-going cave science projects (2008-2009)

1: Ida Bay palaeokarst

On-going study of Ida Bay palaeokarst deposits, with specimens from Blaneys Quarry being examined by Simon Stephens (in the Geology Dept. at University of Tasmania) and Max Banks (retired lecturer/ palaeontologist Geology Dept. at University of Tasmania). Preliminary results indicate that these cave infills were deposited in the Permian Period (c. 260mya), indicating that caves were present at Ida Bay during or before this time. There is some evidence to suggest that the presently known and

accessible cave systems at Ida Bay possibly date back to this period, having exhumed the deposits emplaced during earlier geological periods with subsequent solution and exhumation following the course of previous passage infills.

2: *Arachnocampa tasmaniensis* (glow-worm) bioluminescence.

An on-going project has been the wildlife monitoring programme in collaboration with Dr. David Merritt from the University of Queensland, studying glow-worm bioluminescence, principally in *Mystery Creek Cave* at Ida Bay but also in *Marakoopa Cave* and *Sassafras Cave* at Mole Creek. Time lapse photography has produced some interesting results, indicating that most glow-worms in the twilight and dark zones of caves show a precise 24 hour circadian rhythm with their bioluminescence peaking during the middle of the day or early afternoon (see August 2008 minutes). During January 2009, Dr. Merritt expanded the project to include studies of forest dwelling glow-worms and specimens living in the entrance zone of sandstone caves at Francistown and *Mystery Creek Cave*, where their bioluminescence appears to peak in the early evening. A number of on-going experiments are being conducted to ascertain the factors that might explain the timing of the peaks in glow-worm bioluminescence in the entrance and dark zone of caves.

3: New cave dwelling trechine carabid beetles from Tasmania

Stefan Eberhard is involved in an on-going taxonomic project with Pier Mauro Giachino from Italy to describe several new species of known genera of trechine carabid beetles (*Goedetrechus*, *Idacarabus* and *Tasmanorites*) from various Tasmanian caves. Stefan has requested/ asked STC cavers to be on the lookout for to locate and collect trechine carabid beetles from a number of caves, e.g., from Elephant Farm Cave (at Gray on the east coast), Cauldron Pot, Growling Swallet and Niggly Cave (in Junee-Florentine), Philrod Cave (at Mount Cripps) and Damper Cave (at Precipitous Bluff), plus *Tasmanotrechus moorei* n. sp., from Kubla Khan (at Mole Creek). See *Speleo Spiel* #369 (Nov-Dec 2008): Stuff 'n Stuff (p. 3) and the article by Stefan Eberhard and Pier Mauro Giachino (pp. 17-23).

SEARCH & RESCUE OFFICERS

Jane Pulford & Tony Veness

No caves rescues needed in 2008, so things were fairly quiet.

Cave Radio

Some excitement about building our own Nicola cave radio system after the 2007 CavEx. This fizzled due to lack of correspondence from Nicola PCB supplier and Tony V's change of job. No radios were created.

Police SAR Liaison meetings

- * Wed 7 May: Alan Jackson attended

- * Wed 29 October: Alan Jackson, Jane Pulford & Tony Veness attended, also -

- * Wed 29 October: Rope rescue practise at Police Marine & Rescue Services in North Hobart – small party self-rescue skills and rope-breaking session with a few Police and SES personnel. Seven STC attendees.

Rope skills training

At Freuhauf Quarry in South Hobart, run by Matt Cracknell, Tony Veness, myself and Sarah Gilbert. More SRT training than rope rescue practice, as we've had quite a few new people try caving in 2008!

* Dates run: Fri 22 Feb, Sat 4 Oct, Thurs 9 Oct.

* Indoor venue for winter sessions? Unsuccessful search – climbing wall at UTAS seems suitable for SRT training, but it is booked out every weekday evening.

CavEx 2009

28-29 March, preparations well underway. An all-action weekend of rope-rescue fun, with Saturday to be an indoor rope rescue skills workshop, followed by Sunday underground - putting it all to the test.

Cave rescue manuals

Tony V and Jane P still have a few copies of the comprehensive NSS cave rescue manual 'On Call' available for sale at AUD\$40 each.

SOCIAL SECRETARY

Jane Pulford

This would have been one of the most enjoyable roles to fill in STC. Organising social events each month was pretty easy this year, as club members readily provided suggestions of activities and venues for the third Wednesday of each month.

2008 social meetings

- 19 March: South America trip slide show by Sarah Gilbert
- 16 April: Caving in NT slideshow, Bullita, Katherine & Fergusson River, by Guy Bannink
- 21 May: Socialising at the Waratah Hotel
- 18 June: Karst Management discussions at the New Sydney Hotel
- 21-22 June: Midwinter Feast weekend, including Mystery Creek caving & rope rescue practice, hosted by Arthur Clarke at Francistown
- 16 July: Pommy caving DVDs at Alan Jackson's former abode
- 20 August: Top End trip slide show by Tony V & Jane P, Dodos of Mauritius presentation by Greg Middleton
- 15 October: China Caves slide show by Arthur Clarke
- 19 November: Caves episode of David Attenborough's 'Planet Earth' series, hosted by Guy Bannink & family
- 17 December: Christmas BBQ at Taroona Beach
- February 2009: Italian cavers' DVDs at Guy Bannink's.

I would like to pass on the job of Social Secretary in 2009, to allow me to put more energy into other STC stuff.

TRAINING OFFICER

Tony Veness

SRT Training sessions - Fri 22 Feb & Sat 4 Oct at Freuhauf Quarry, South Hobart (also rope rescue practice)

Beginners' trips -

(Re-)Introduction to SRT Weekend: 23 Feb in Owl Pot

Vertical skills trip: Sun 5 Oct in Rift Cave

In summary, the club attracted four or five 'beginners' in 2008 and SRT training was available for all interested. The club has maintained contact with two or so of the four or five.

The combination of SRT training, followed shortly afterwards by a vertical caving trip worked well and should be considered a worthwhile plan for future trips and newbies.

I'm happy to pass on the heady responsibilities of the 2009 STC training officer if there's someone young and keen out there happy to tie ropes onto trees three times a year.

ELECTRONIC ARCHIVIST

Ric Tunney

Collecting existing data (including scanning of publications) is basically complete.

Greg discovered we did not have some 5 years' worth of *Southern Cavers*, but they had been scanned and just overlooked for processing, and they are now in the Archive. Also, Greg arranged with SSS for us to include scans of some *JSSS* in the Archive. These scans covered trips to the South West during the Franklin Dam furore.

New data, dribs and drabs of old data and unscanned publications, are being sent to me by Greg, Alan, Steve, Arthur and Matt. I expect Tony to send some lovely ones and zeros when the Exit project is complete. I should encourage anyone finding stuff they think should be incorporated into the Archive either to scan it or lend it to me for scanning.

I am a little worried about the danger of losing our data. Currently, the master copy of the Archive is kept on a dedicated hard drive on my PC. The data is backed up daily to another hard drive. Once a week, a backup is made to a pair of mirrored drives in a safe in our garage. Once in a while I produce a backup DVD which is stored in a fire-resistant safe.

The data is still at risk from a very large fire. I have a personal need for off-site data backup and I am investigating how to do this - either by storage of DVDs off-site, or by on-line backup. The Archive is almost 8 Gb, but I have over 50 Gb, which means DVD backup is cumbersome. I am leaning towards on-line backup as there is much less work involved once the system is set up.

A project for anyone interested is photo-tagging of cave entrances.

I think the (very) long-term goal of the Archive should be to incorporate ALL information about Tasmanian caves.

Map Archive

The biggest job during the year was done by Ivan who scanned most of our A3-sized maps. This means that almost all maps up to A3 size have been scanned.

Our maps larger than A3 have not been scanned as we have not had access to a free scanner. Some of the maps are quite old and are deteriorating. Janine spent much of an afternoon going through the maps to scope the problem. After a General Meeting indicated STC would be willing to pay for commercial scanning, Alan and Mat spent a long evening sorting out which maps should be scanned. They

are currently arranging the cheapest scanning and STC has allocated funding (some \$500).

Karst Index

I haven't been keeping a detailed track, but cave tagging seems to have trailed off this year. (Probably less than a dozen tags installed).

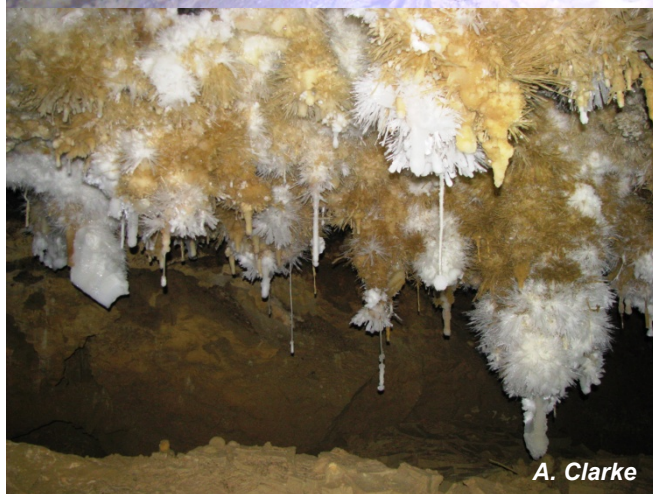
I think surface exploration parties should take a tagging kit, as I know caves are being found but left untagged and poorly recorded (mea culpa).

I am happy to continue in these positions.

A selection of photos from the recent extensions in Wolf Hole



M. Cracknell



A. Clarke



A. Clarke

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