

# SPELEO SPIEL 377

March - April 2010



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**Front Cover:** Ken ascending in JF-489 Perfect Pitch Pot. *Photo by Gavin Brett*



# Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the

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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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## Editorial

I have to admit that after receiving Chris Chad's somewhat unique notification of the birth of his second child I was lost for words for a while (see Stuff 'n Stuff). Congratulations are in order on two fronts – the birth itself and also the submission of what must be the funniest (and crassest) *Spiel* contribution ever. I hope this is what Amy was referring to when she requested I maintain the high standards of this publication.

On a more sombre note, Max Jeffries died on March 17th. Max was an integral part of caving in the Junee-Florentine for many years. Laurie Moody and Bunty have both written a piece about Max for this *Spiel*. Laurie's article will also appear in *Caves Australia* 181 (which should be published in June). I only met him once, when we dropped in during Tachycardia exploration to borrow a tape measure. Unfortunately he was unable to attend the 60th anniversary in 2006, falling ill only a couple of days beforehand. I think everyone who knew (or knew of) Max will join me in expressing STC's condolences to his daughter, Helen, and the rest of the family.

After a long hiatus it would appear that cave diving is becoming popular again, at least on the mainland. It was all the rage in Tasmania in the 1970s and 80s with a surprisingly large proportion of TCC's membership being active divers. The occasional trip by the (once) irrepressible Eberhard brothers still happens and even Janine is currently taking a trip down memory lane in the Junee Resurgence. Recent (and future) issues of *Caves Australia* contain numerous cave diving articles – three in the next two issues! Some of that activity has been occurring in Tasmania, with the nasty second sump in the Junee receiving attention as well as extensions in the Lawrence Rivulet system.

With a 20 year gap on the Tasmanian scene comes 20 years of technological improvements which may yield results. A fresh pair of eyes can often do the trick too. We need to encourage these divers from beyond our northern shores to head south. Continuing the Eberhard's recent work in KD Sump II could see a new depth record (hopefully then Rolan could stop suffering from his Niggly/Tachycardia disorder); Growling's Mainline, Dreamtime and Coelacanth Sumps are crying out for a better look; and what's beyond the upstream sump in Porcupine Pot? I suggest we 'normal' cavers start practising our Sherpa skills.

Alan Jackson

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

I was pleased to see the cover of the latest edition of *Speleo Spiel* was a photo of some dorky-looking caver and someone other than Stephen Bunton. Not that Steve is ever on the cover, but he does get a fair bit of stick in most editions.

By the way ... lay off about the bat cave!

It was my idea!

Kathy Bunton

## Stuff 'n Stuff

### PITCH BAGGERS

As the creator of the "Pitch Bagger's List" list (SS363:19), I claim creator's privilege to modify it on occasion, as required.

After my recent sojourn to the Niggly "Black Supergiant", some modification to its points is required, I feel. I had not visited the cave when the list was compiled and therefore had not realised quite how hard it was to get oneself, and all the gear needed, to the pitch. So I am adding 2 points for difficulty of access (from the 0 before).

It is also THE MOST MAGNIFICENT pitch I have seen, in my opinion. As my opinion is the only one that counts in the allocation of pitch points for aesthetic beauty, I am adding a point to its beauty allocation. Thus making it the only pitch worth 2 points for beauty.

This raises The Black Supergiant's total points to 14. The total for the list is now 280.

Now get out there and do some obsessive, competitive, points gathering.

Janine McKinnon

### NEW DISCOVERIES



Chris and Louise are pleased to announce that Sophie Florence Chad pushed the final squeeze of the affectionately named Louises Clacker Cave, at 7:35pm on Friday 19th March 2010. Mum and Dad are very proud, and Sophie's dad hopes to get the opportunity to return for a survey soon, as this particular location has been off limits due to landowner imposed constraints for some time. To save anyone the embarrassment of asking, the land manager will decline permission for any prospective club visits (and/or photo tagging).

Chris Chad

### THE AGM WASH-UP

The AGM has come and gone for another year. There have been a few changes. Geoff has taken over from Matt as president (Matt's three year tenure was up); Sarah stays on as treasurer; Janine, as secretary, might talk less at meetings now that she has the job of recording everything in the minutes; and Jane has taken on the tremendous task of vice president. Some of the 'minor' positions changed also. Matt is now both the public officer and the search and rescue officer. Unfortunately for you all, I have retained the role of editor (I thought me being absent from the AGM presented a perfect opportunity for someone to oust me discretely, but alas). The 2009 Annual Reports are found later in this issue.



## TAHUNE SEARCH

Several STC members assisted with a ground search for a missing elderly man in the forests around the Tahune Airwalk in March. Unfortunately the search was unsuccessful. Many thanks to those that delayed their Exit Cave trips to help out with the search, especially Geoff who also sacrificed a lot of skin on his (sexy) legs during the search.



*Geoff's scrub-hardened lower limbs following the search.*

## GREEK LEGENDS, FAMILY HOLIDAYS AND LAME INJURIES

Some recently unearthed paintings depicting one of Gavin Brett's early childhood holidays to Tasmania have been uncovered. This one (below) portrays a scene from wash day on a family camping trip to the Styx River. It may explain one of his latest 'old man' ailments. His birth year of 1969 explains the rest.



## MORE JUNEES HOMESTEAD SHENANIGANS

Bill Nicholson has uncovered a few interesting photographs while digitally scanning his old slide collection. They were taken after the cave rescue exercise held on 27th May 1978 – “Operation Womguano”. [see SS. 136:3-5]. I think his submissions give us a glimpse of what a potentially dangerous place Bill's mind was (and still is?)



*Fornicating rescue dummies, Junee Homestead.*



*Mark Forward finds himself in a compromising position after a day of caving, a night of drinking and a chance discovery of a suitcase full of women's clothing in the roof space of the Junee Homestead.*

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*It looks like Bunty's anti-Forestry Tasmania slander in SS374:18-19 had more effect than he thought it would. I might have to be more careful about what I publish in the future. Maybe Steve is some sort of influential god!? – Ed.*

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## Trip Reports

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### Cave Hill

Jacko

28 December 2009

**Party:** Jacko, Will and Stewart

Will had a few compasses to test so we went to Cave Hill to do some surface surveying. We put in a semi-permanent mark at the start of the route to JF 216. We then surveyed up to the cave and back again. We popped into Dementia Den while we were there. The survey would appear to be a dud so it will have to be done again. After that we got the GPS from Alan and entered the mark by the roadside as CH01. It was a lovely day in the bush enjoyed by all.

Now a prayer of thanks to the great Gods of Forestry, Husqvarna, Stihl, Allis Chalmers and Cat D9, who have made it all so easy for us. Heads bowed and hands together:

*Oh Lords we thank thee for making roads in the Florentine that save us from two to four day bushwalks to the caves,*

*Thank thee for chainsaws so that poms and 21st century cavers can get to the caves,*

*Thank thee for Arrakis not being a ten day epic, And we thank thee for giving the likes of Wilson, Robertson, Eberhard and others jobs so that they may better pursue their dirty pastimes.*

*Amen*

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### A Perfect Day in the Florentine

Ken Hosking

6 February 2010

**Party:** Gavin Brett and Ken Hosking, later joined by Chris Chad, Trent Ford, Sarah Gilbert, Alan Jackson and Stuart Reedman (after derigging Niggly).

After finding a gaping 30 metre shaft on the hill above Niggly, Gavin, also known as the Co-holder of the Australian Cave Depth Record, could hardly contain his excitement and a return trip was planned just as soon as his Achilles tendon and other crumbling parts of his once highly-tuned physique had recovered. Gavin and I joined a group who were heading to Niggly to complete the derigging of the cave following recent trips in which the big pitch was descended.

Gavin's shaft is situated a short distance away from Niggly, possibly at a slightly higher level than the entrance to that one time Australian record holder [*and is almost certainly synonymous with Rolan's JF-Z34 – Ed.*]. Gavin rigged from a suitable tree, installed a rebelay under a conveniently overhanging tree and set off down with only a brief pause to put in a bolt and set up a redirect. Our rope, thought to be 40 metres, just failed to make the bottom, but the landing at the base of the pitch was on an incline, and by making a small pendulum, it was possible to get off the rope.

What a pitch! A perfectly formed oval with smooth reflective sides, this pitch was among the best either of us had seen, even if we later found that we had a 30 metre rope, not a 40, and that the pitch was actually only 29.5 metres according to Alan's Disto.

By the time I had joined him, Gavin was pushing himself into a series of little rifts and holes leading off the pitch, but none of these were goers, despite some rather desperate enlarging of some of the tighter bits. Gavin even tried a pendulum to what appeared to be a high level passage about 4 metres above the bottom of the pitch, but to no avail. We eventually gave up, but greatly enjoyed the climb up the pitch given the scenic attraction of this airy hole. With a liberal coating of shiny material on the walls, the pitch was much brighter than other similar entrance pitches and even at the bottom a light was hardly needed.

Over lunch we discussed the options for a name, eventually deciding on Perfect Pitch Pot, in recognition of the superb entrance shaft. In order that future generations have no confusion about the origin of the name of this cave, it must be emphasised it was most definitely not named in recognition of Alan's less-than-perfect singing pitch that we endured later in the afternoon. (Alan, by the way, is the other Co-holder of the Australian Cave Depth record). The cave was tagged JF-489.

The others could now be heard as they left Niggly and headed in our direction. Gavin had found several other caves in the area, and we set out to tag, explore and sketch these. The first, 20 m away and downhill of JF-489, was about 10 m deep with no hope of continuation. It was tagged JF-490. The next one of these had a rather tight spiralling pitch of about 10 metres, with several precariously placed chock stones, terminating in a small horizontal section of tight rift passage with no obvious way on. It also had a novel shock-absorbing belay that Gavin dreamed up by tying off to a twig-like tree and then draping the rope over a fairly mobile tree trunk lying on the ground. I later verified the structural integrity of this belay by stepping on it as we left, with the result that it disintegrated. It was tagged JF-491. The other caves in the area were of less extensive proportions, with one exception. There was a horrible looking hole that started in earth before developing in limestone. Gavin had found this one previously but discarded it as being too repulsive to enter on the basis of there being liberal quantities of hanging death and a very tight, spiral pitch. We gathered round, stared down the hole, cleared away the vegetation and found excuses not to go down, even though a draft was evident. Eventually, Alan set off, this time with rigging characterised by a novel re-direct in the shape of Gavin's boot.

Alan tagged it JF-492 and then disappeared for some time and achieved a reasonable depth before returning to describe a tight continuation, but with a strong draft in evidence. Further progress apparently requires some modification to the cave structure. That leaves two going leads in the area, the other being the drafting cave near Bunyips Lair that was found on an earlier trip. Both are tight and daunting, but both have good drafts.

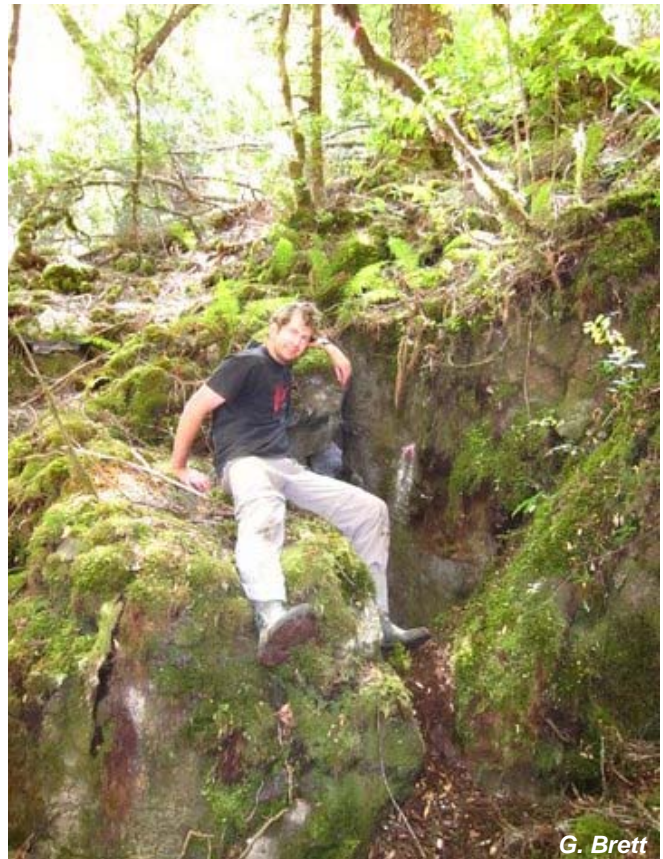




G. Brett

*Ken handles logistics while Alan tags JF-492.*

A short, essentially horizontal cave 10 m down hill from JF-492 was explored and tagged JF-493.



G. Brett

*Chris strikes a pose at the entrance of JF-493.*

The trip out was unremarkable, apart from a minor difference of opinion as to whether tiger snakes or humans have right-of-way on bush tracks.

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## **MC-18 Soda Creek Cave**

**Alan Jackson**

**20 February 2010**

**Party:** Stephen Blanden, David Butler, Alan Jackson

I was stuck up north for work so I tapped into the Northern Caverneers grapevine to see what was going on. Steve and David were heading to Soda Creek Cave (down near Liena, past King Solomon tourist cave) to continue a survey they'd commenced in this cave about five years earlier!

The flat 100 m walk to the entrance was a welcome change from recent Niggly trips. Soda Creek is an overflow cave (essentially no running water in there except during winter rains when it becomes a raging outflow – during which it sumps in several locations). The entrance could be mistaken for a man-made adit. A couple of hundred metres in we located the final station from the previous survey effort and commenced our surveying. There were various sections of deep standing water (almost nipple height in the first one!) Despite these pools of water the going is pretty spacious and easy which made for relatively pleasant surveying. What made it really pleasant was that I wasn't taking book and wasn't ultimately responsible for drawing

up the survey at some stage in the future – what a relief it was to simply read the instruments with all care but no responsibility.

Several more hundred metres later we reached the final section which sumps out in winter – again we were up to our belly buttons in water. Shortly after, the nature of the cave changes somewhat; the lower levels are full of gunk and muck from floods and one has to climb up into upper levels. We stopped the survey here and tried to find the way through. David had been on the initial push trips in this section 10-15+?? years previously. A series of tightish ups and downs over large gour pools ensued, always with the draft rushing past. We struggled to find the way on and thought all was lost until David pushed a narrow climb and found himself in what he was looking for. Steve and I didn't join him – we'd retreated to more spacious, comfortable climes before David got through. David returned a while later confirming he'd found his way to the 'end'. Apparently there is a ~30+ m aven there which they tried aid climbing during initial exploration. We'd covered a fair distance already and most were cold thanks to the full body immersions and howling draft. The nasty job of surveying the tight stuff was postponed till the next trip in another five years!

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## IB-14 Exit Cave

**Matt Cracknell**

**27-28 February 2010**

**Party:** Matt Cracknell (TL), Geoff Wise (TL), Sarah Gilbert, Adrian Slee, Greg Middleton, Trent Ford

### Saturday shenanigans

The rendezvous at the carpark went according to plan. We kitted up and set out along Skinners Track and took about 70 min to complete the walk. Once in the cave we headed directly for a place we have been calling “The Beach”. The Beach is a large sand bank (funnily enough) a short way downstream from The Rock Pile at the turnoff to The Ballroom. It offered a nice place to sort out instruments and roles for the surveying/sketching job ahead.

Geoff and Greg sidled off into a dark corner in an attempt to unlock the DistoX’s magical properties. The rest of us took a good look at the well decorated chambers in The Ballroom area. After a few legs we had a reasonable system going, Trent at the pointy end with the disto (just Alan’s ordinary non-magical one), Sarah with the instruments, Adrian for nerd support and the book in my hand. By lunch time we had re-grouped at the base of the last pitch from Old Ditch Row. Greg and Geoff returned but the mysterious ways of the DistoX remained hidden.

Trent and Greg left early due to wife commitments while the rest of us mapped The Ballroom - main river loop. We continued with a slight change in personnel, Sarah now had the book in her hand. During this exercise we took note of the major tributary junction that enters the main river immediately downstream of the Rock Pile. This area is yet to be properly surveyed and mapped (not unlike a large majority of the cave!).



*Cavers in the Wind Tunnel.*

Arthur had kindly offered his place at Francistown to stay for the evening. The four of us who were left, eagerly took the chance to discuss caves and other random stuff vaguely related to caves. Dinner was, for most of us, pizza from the “under new management” Dover pizza shop (now called the Post Office restaurant). Pizza was good and reasonably priced but the wine at Arthur’s was better ...

### Sunday slothness

Early in the morning Sarah and Geoff roused Matt and Adrian from their delicate slumbers. Arthur was up by the time we had left for the carpark. The aim for the day was to continue having a good look downstream of The Beach, sketching as we went. The current map of the area doesn’t fit with the surveyed line plot very well and we wanted to get an idea of what it is doing. And while we were at it, sort out how we will approach the problem of mapping a very large cave with a minimum of effort but with a reasonable amount of mapping detail.

In the cave we separated into two groups. Each group was self-contained for surveying and sketching, one person running instruments and disto while the other played bookkeeper. Geoff and Sarah took The Colonnades (did I spell that right?) and Matt and Adrian started on the main river passage.

By the end of the day The Colonnades had been mapped (again?!) and the river downstream to the D’Entrecasteaux River junction. This traverse includes an area called the Roman Wall (G. Wise pers. comm., pers.comm, 2010 – i.e. he heard from someone else, who probably heard from someone else, who probably heard from ... you get the picture). The Roman Wall is a sheer sided flowstone wall ~ 10-20 m high on the western side of the river. The track traverses the base of this feature with Camp 1 (and the D’Entrecasteaux River junction) at its downstream end. We did get sidetracked in a large rockfall at the base of several high level passages opposite the D’Entrecasteaux River junction. These high level passages are not only hard to get to but the approaches are also covered in a soft coating of moonmilk and mud.

We re-grouped and headed out. The walk back to the car took 65 min. Interestingly the majority of walking times are less (by about 5 min) on the way back to the carpark from the IB14 resurgence than they are on the way to the resurgence in the morning. Maybe the thought of dry socks and muesli bars eggs us on a little?



*Upper level flowstone.*

## **IB-46 Bottleneck and Friends**

**Ken Hosking**

**28 February 2010**

**Party:** Amy Robertson, Ken Hosking with cameo appearances by Arthur Clarke, Siobhan Carter and Tom Porritt.

Back in 1985, while visiting Tasmania with a VSA group, I was with a party that went to IB-46, Bottleneck, in that great southern mud bath called Ida Bay, on the recommendation of our very own Ida Bay specialist, Arthur Clarke. Arthur postulated that this cave would be worth investigating for a potential connection into Exit Cave. The passage of time has erased most of my memory of Bottleneck, except for an awkward little pitch from which the cave derives its name. It was there that Peter Stewart (VSA) suffered a short circuit in his battery pack as he negotiated the tight pitch head, setting off a shower of sparks and a cloud of smoke in the process. Needless to say, no great extension was found and the possibility of flooding of the stream way in the lower section of the cave, given that it was raining on the surface, resulted in a cursory examination at best.

In more recent times, extensions in the Hooks Hole/Leech Pot complex resulted in Arthur again suggesting that it was worth looking at Bottleneck on the basis that the newly extended system and Bottleneck must be separated by only a small distance.

So it was with that Amy and I set off to investigate. We were surprised to find that Arthur was not waiting for us at the car park when we arrived at Ida Bay, but we had anticipated that contingency and headed for IB-42 Mudraker and nearby IB-163. Both caves were supposedly connected to IB-41 Leech Pot. We began at Mudraker, climbing down a steep slope to a near u-turn in the cave passage where a vertical tube led downwards. It looked pretty tight to me, but Amy, a fearless pusher of squeezes, decided to have a go. The tube seemed to go down about five metres, as judged by rock throwing, but the tightness of the tube and its spiral nature prevented a visual confirmation as to where it was headed. After a while, Amy decided it was too tight and while she may well have been able to slide down, it was far from clear how she would get back.

We tied some flagging tape around a rock and threw it down the tube in the hope that it might arrive in Leech Pot or IB 163 to confirm the connection at a later date.

The area around the tube appeared to have been constricted by rockfall, and it may be that the way on was more user-friendly in the past. If anyone reading this has been there and got further down the cave we would be interested in hearing from you.

We moved on to nearby IB-163. The entrance can be free climbed, but a rather slippery rock face posed enough of an obstacle that we used a handline to ensure that we could

get back out. From the entrance, the cave heads downwards to a constriction that requires a little grovelling to pass under, drops down to a muddy soak with a short climb up that opens out into a spacious chamber. At one side of the chamber, there is an aven that can be climbed to reach an ascending passage. We felt certain that this would be the connection to Mudraker, but there was no sign of the rock with the flagging tape and no apparent way on. The distance between the caves is not great, and it seems likely that there would be a connection, but we did not find it. We did a rough survey and headed out, now liberally coated with the thick clay-like mud for which Ida Bay is noted. Mud aside, this is quite a scenic cave with several areas of decoration, including shawls, flowstone cascades and stals.

As we emerged from the cave, we heard Arthur, Siobhan and Tom calling from nearby. We stopped for a bite of lunch while we decided what to do next. After a fruitless search for a number tag on Mudraker, we decided to move on, with a vague doubt in our minds as to whether we actually had been in Mudraker. Once again, if anyone reading this report can remember Mudraker and where its tag might be, we would be pleased to hear from you.

We debated going into Leech Pot to see if we could confirm a connection with Mudraker by voice, but decided instead to investigate Bottleneck. By now it was raining solidly and everything underfoot was turning to mud. The entrance to Bottleneck was close to being free-climbable but we rigged it for SRT and Amy and I set off down, following a downward sloping passage from the bottom of the entrance pitch to the bottleneck itself. At this point a short (about 3 metre) vertical drop is found, with a very constricted take off. We found that the best way to tackle the drop was to back out over it until, when perched on a narrow ledge on the far side of the pitch, we could clip into the rope and descend. It seemed hardly worth rigging such a short drop, but the walls were overhanging, we had our SRT gear on anyway and I couldn't remember if the drop continued beyond the next corner. This time there were no fireworks displays, and from the bottom of the drop we descended yet another sloping passage, intersecting a small stream leading towards a flattener. There were some quite pretty gour pools in this area. Amy slithered a little way into the flattener, but found that it closed down rapidly and was somewhat damp.

We beat a retreat, surveying out, to a very soggy doline where the rain was continuing. We slipped and slid through the increasingly wet bush and eventually caught up with the others on the track out. Arthur thought that we had missed a side passage in the cave that might have been the way on. We will have to go back, but not when it's raining. The reader might well ask why we chose one of only a few wet days in this 2009/10 summer to go to Ida Bay and especially why we would go to a wet and muddy cave like Bottleneck. It is a little like asking why we go caving at all. There is no logical answer.

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**JF-8 Junee Cave Sump 1 (Dive 1)** or *How I finally gave up on someone else who dives joining the club and just got on with it.*

**Janine McKinnon**

**20 March 2010**

**Party:** Ric Tunney (for the VERY dry bits), Janine McKinnon.

I first dived Sump 1 of The Junee Resurgence back in the time mists of the mid '80s. Nick Hume was my dive buddy on that trip.

I have wanted to go back to "For Your Eyes Only" (FYEO) chamber for many years (like, from when I last came out of it), but haven't. This was mainly because there weren't any other club members who dived to go there with. Finally, I've given up waiting for one to appear. I dive in the ocean alone, so why not in sumps? There are other cave divers who go it alone, so I decided to just get on with it, whilst I still can.

I had left it a bit late in the season to start, we have been doing lots of other weather-dependent things this summer that have distracted me, and I also had to wait for some extra waterproof lighting to arrive from O/S (you gotta love buying stuff off the internet). I was finally organised by late March and so off we went on a typical Maydena day; cool with light showers forecast.

The water levels were very low, and the stream looked crystal clear, as we walked to the resurgence with all my gear. I was hopeful of good visibility and little current in the stream. Where does such optimism come from? I should know better!

Getting the gear the first 50 m into the cave was no problem. Then disaster struck. My support team mutinied. We had reached the first pool and it was neck deep. That is neck deep for the support team, not me (Alan inserts pithy, short person comment here).

We should have done a reconnaissance trip of the dry bits. Ric had a trog suit on, not wetsuit, and for some strange reason he was not keen on getting soaked, and then sitting around for ages waiting for me to reappear.

I could have ferried my gear to the end of the streamway but I decided to kit up where we were. This meant that I used some of my air swimming across the pools (I had removed my snorkel for obvious reasons) before I reached the sump.

On entering the sump I found the current to be moderate, so some effort was needed swimming against it. I looked carefully at the *in situ* guide line as I started along the passage. The sump is 200-230 m long, and not very capacious. It starts off with a flattener that is about 5 m long and is just high enough to squeeze through with my kit on. How convenient is that? It gets slightly bigger after that, but you can always touch the walls and roof and I had to be careful not to snag my dry suit on projections of rock. Progress was not fast as I checked the state of the line, and where it was laid. This was because sometimes guide lines can float into nooks too small for a diver to follow. This is a bit of a nuisance when visibility drops to zero.

Visibility was only zero to 1 meter as I went IN. Where did all that clear water go? At least I could see the line most of the time. The outward current cleared much of the silt I was stirring up as I moved forward (no way to keep off the floor as the passage was so small).

Along the way I saw a white anaspides and also a white fish, with a few coloured dots and dark eyes (I'm not much good at biological identifications). Interestingly, the fish didn't move as I went by very close, and it was in the same place on my return trip. What a plucky little fellow! (I've since seen a photo taken in the same place some time ago – same fish!)

After undulating along at around 14 m for some time, I was finally on a steeply rising slope when I reached 1/3 use of my air supply. I was pretty sure I was almost there, but the 1/3 rule for cave diving is one that I won't break. It was time for me to reverse direction.

The trip back was much easier, and significantly quicker, as I was going with the current. Visibility was a little worse but the current cleared the silt I was stirring up enough to give me a few inches visibility. That was enough to see the line so I could pass the knots with my krab easily.

I reached the start of the sump with the feeling that I had flown out. In reality, I had taken 15 minutes inward and 10 minutes outward. Not as big a time difference as I had felt at the time.

I shall return, and I'll get all the way in next time.

Just as a point of interest. On the way out of the cave we passed two groups of tourists walking to the viewing platform, and then passed a third group driving in as we drove away. The Junee Resurgence is much more of a tourist attraction than I had thought.

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## IB-14 Exit Cave

**Matt Cracknell**

**27-28 March 2010**

**Party:** Matt Cracknell (TL), Geoff Wise, Sarah Gilbert, Ric Tunney (TL), Trent Ford, Janine McKinnon, Ivan Riley

**Saturday – Nerd alert**

The McTinne mobile had docked the night before and loomed at the top of the road as our car approached in the morning. I got out looking a little bit green after having a little too much red cordial the night before. While

recovering, the rest of the crew got into something a little more respectable.

We were at the cave 65 min later. Not bad for a couple of geriatrics and an unruly band of prospective nerds. We split up at the entrance. Ric, Janine and Trent made their way upstream to Western Passage. They were on a mission to tick off the last of their survey question marks so they can start drawing. Geoff and I hung back and mapped the main stream around the D'Entrecasteaux River junction.

We started off getting a little bit wet – rooting around in the tannin-stained waters entering via the D'Entrécasteaux. It may be possible to continue on this way but a wetsuit will be needed. After that we had a look at some of the



high level passages both sides of the river. The first (to the east) led to a well decorated flowstone floor with stals blocking the way. We shot a leg as far as we could see and turned around.

This part of the cave offers a unique perspective on the geometry of the ceiling (and genesis) of the cave in these parts. The ceiling is formed along a horizontal bedding plane of the limestone ~ 30 m above the current river level. Most of the upper level passages vaguely conform to the height of this ceiling level. On closer inspection the ceiling is found to be undulating. It appears to contain the remnants of anastomosing water flow channels. The pink colour and corroded texture of the rock looks very similar to some of the wall rock in Edies Treasure (in Exit Cave) and the Strawberry Cascade area of Wolf Hole.

We headed back to the main river passage and sketched efficiently to the big slabs of rock ~ 200 m upstream from the gate. From here multiple passages, both high level and low level, career off in all directions. The lower, more accessible routes were surveyed. One of the passages contained surprisingly unsullied flowstone floors. This was quickly and delicately ticked off and tied into the theodolite survey (ah thank the Cave Gods for their theodolite survey, without which we would be in a lot of trouble). We laid some flagging tape and a message discouraging any other traffic in this area. On our travels we spotted a decayed jumper on flowstone not far from Th6 (theodolite survey) station. Dye from the jumper was leaching on the floor and walls. Geoff and I vowed to return the next day armed with some equipment to clean it up.

While we were waiting for the others to come back from Western Passage, Geoff and I started marking a defined route through the main river passage to The Ballroom turn-off. Using stringline donated by WildCare and a few stainless steel skewers, some sense of one path through the mud covered blocks and flowstone emerged. The others turned up before we could finish the job but tomorrow is another day.

## **Sunday = Funday**

Sarah, Ivan and Amy arrived on time only to find us with various items of cooking and clothing strewn across the road. Eventually we got all our poo into one sock and were ready to leave. Amy had tagged along just for the walk. At the cave entrance she bid us farewell as we made our way into the gaping jaws of the cave. Ric, Janine, Ivan and Trent headed off to The Rock Pile in search of one of Arthur's mysterious side passages while Sarah, Geoff and I set to work where we finished up yesterday.

Sarah with book in hand and I with instruments and disto, surveyed and sketched the entrance area, including sorting out the survey stations in the Wind Tunnel. Geoff potted around looking for the emergency exit (the one you use if the key is lost or the gate lock cannot be opened) but was turned back by Arthur's "Fauna habitat" signs.

A few hours later we had finished the job finding lost survey stations and mapping entrance passages. We also noticed another high level passage not far from the entrance adorned with white flowstone and moonmilk. It is truly amazing the amount of passage in this cave. We are surveying 100s of metres of passage just a stone's throw from the route that we have always used, in places I never knew were there.

During this time Geoff and I attempted to remove the jumper we found the day before. Unfortunately the jumper was in a heightened state of decay. We managed to remove most of the fabric but the dye and some smaller fragments were left behind. These will require further attention in the future.

While waiting for the others to return, we completed the track marking in the river passage back to the first river crossing in the cave. Hopefully that will restrict our movements along the main route to one path. The next job will be to bring some buckets and spray bottles and brushes to give the soiled flowstone some cave club loving.

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## **Hairygoating**

**Alan Jackson**

**27 March 2010**

**Party:** Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson

It was time to refocus on the cleanup work we had been doing in the Splash Pot/Hairygoat Hole area. The road to the KD carpark needs some work to stop it being quite so hard on the paintwork. The KD track also needs a tidy up, with a few large tree-falls creating disaster zones.

We took the Splash Pot turnoff and then dropped into the gully to locate JF-9. We dropped in too early and had to bash through the ground-ferns up the gully to find it. Bunty found a little 'cave' in the gully about 40 m down from JF-9 that I couldn't bring myself to tag – maybe we could assign it an X number! At JF-9 (which has never been surveyed, so far as we know) we got the instruments of torture out and sealed the deal in three legs! The JF-9 waypoint in the GPS was about 100 m out, so I relocated it.

We continued up to JF-10 Splash Pot and had a quick poke around for JF-X21, described in the Australian Karst Index

1985 as "700mASL; unexplored but definitely a cave; ... probably connects with 10." We assume the "10" refers to Splash Pot. The KID tends to be a little reference poor and is more of a hindrance than help a lot of the time. The only thing we could find nearby that could be listed as likely to join to JF-10 was the intermittent swallet located immediately south (around the contour). This doline is the feature listed as A3 in SS315:7 by Jol and Dave. It was on our list of things to eradicate (it is also JF-X75) so it was tagged JF-494 (tag placed down in the base of the doline on a rib of limestone just above the point where the water disappears into the impenetrable bit of cave).

Still following the notes from SS315:7 and the surface surveying notes from SS317:11-12 (which I thankfully found in Ric's filing cabinet!) we also relocated and tagged A4 (JF-X76), A5 (JF-X77) Fossils Hole (Fossils Hole according to Jeff's survey notes – fossils abound), Hole 25 (JF-X94) and A6 (JF-X78). These were tagged JF-495, JF-496, JF-497 and JF-498 respectively and are in numerical order when travelling north to south along the contact zone. After a spot of French shenanigans and the usual crap that accompanies a day in the bush with Alan, JF-498 ended up being known as Complex – it is a low, ~10 m



long contact cliff with a pit at one end and a minor depression at the other (enough to make it a 'complex'). JF-497 became Butt Hole because it was under the butt of a large fallen tree in Jeff Butt's survey notes. The tag for JF-495 is on the NE face beside the tight 1.5m climb down into it. The JF-496 Fossils Hole tag is on the cliff above the deepest point and to the right of the little rock containing the fossils. JF-497 Butt Hole tag is 1 m down inside. JF-498 Complex tag is in the lefthand/southern most (deepest) hole. Bunty then put on a spectacular choking display when he tried to swallow too large a piece of grapefruit, which lodged in his throat. He could neither breathe, swallow nor talk and I was only alerted to the problem by a series of strange gurgling noises. I watched in amazement as he flailed about, eyes bulging. I enquired if he was all right, to which he furiously shook his head. Finally the penny dropped that Bunty was dying before my eyes but thankfully I was saved from having to perform any icky first aid on him when a pink chunk of grapefruit came flying out of his mouth onto the forest floor. Bunty then lay on the ground recovering while I fell over backwards with laughter. Eventually Bunty saw the funny side of almost choking to death too and we moved on.

Our next aim was to relocate a cave I'd found while wandering the surface after our first Splash Pot rigging trip in March 2009 (SS371:9). I didn't cover it in that report as we hadn't GPSed, tagged or even properly flagged the entrance (we had planned to be underground all day, not dicking around on the surface and I was wary of mentioning an untagged cave that, if left unchecked, could generate another X-cave in the future!). We had 'marked' the entrance with a strip of Bunty's disintegrating red raincoat. We emerged as planned from the scrubby vegetation into the open ground-fern 'glades' but couldn't find the bloody thing. Eventually our search led us further south until Bunty found a cave. It turned out to be JF-262 Musk Hollow 1 (one of the four caves – of around 50 'found' – Dave, Jol and Jeff actually tagged during their forays in this part of the world – which only happened, it would appear, because Albert Goede tagged along on a trip). It was a funny little cave right on the contact and about 40 metres away we also found JF-264 Musk Hollow 2 – a similarly funny little cave on the contact. From here we followed the survey data to try to locate the rock cairn on a log (the cairn is of unknown origins and I had seen it on that day in March 2009). We missed it, did a big circle and found ourselves in the vicinity of JF-19 and JF-20. I then started from 'Hole 23' (now JF-476) and followed the survey data to nearby Hole 24 (JF-X93) Crowbar Pot. Its tiny entrance is very obscure and we would never have found it without the survey data to get us within 5 m or so. We tagged it JF-499 just down inside the entrance and the tag significantly constricts the entrance – i.e. you'll rip your trog suit on the tag if you try to enter this miniscule feature! A survey of this cave accompanied the trip report in SS320:17-18. Later we worked out that this was JF-Z9 from its description and its position relative to JF-479, which was JF-Z10.

Having located Jeff Butt's survey notes for the caves in the Hairygoat Hole area we were amused by a little note beside Hole 23 which we earlier decided was JF-X92, JF-Z10 and now JF-479. A survey appears in SS376:22. This hole was not tagged in the olden days because of the crappy rock in the entrance which is above the contact. It

must have looked equally uninspiring to Jeff and Dave because the note says "Dave didn't go all the way". Given the cave has a bit of history it deserves a name and Bunty decided *Coitus Interruptus* might be an appropriate name.

We picked up on the old survey data again, intent on finding the cairn on the log. We soon discovered why we hadn't found it before. An enormous eucalypt had snapped off and fallen absolutely dead smack across the cairn on the already fallen log. It was only by peering down inside the splintered remains of the newly fallen log that I found a few pieces of the rock cairn still sitting on the old log. Amazing!



*Hickmania troglodytes and egg sac in Musk Hollow 1.*

Further down the survey line we found Hole 12. In SS315:14, Dave and Jol theorise that this could be JF-21. They were right. We dropped the ladder down and spotted the JF-21 tag on the eastern side of the doline, just over the lip of the entrance (interestingly, the original tagging report in SS56:2 says that the tag is located on the southern edge – compasses must have been uncommon in those days). The yellow tape that had been surveyed in by JB and Co. had been obliterated by an enormous log that had fallen over the hole (a bit of a running theme in this area I'm afraid) – as a result we didn't join the tag into the survey, but this shouldn't cause any major problems). With our mission completed here we continued further north back towards Splash Pot.

The next aim was to find A7 and a number of nearby holes. We soon found ourselves in the right area but the hole (a 10 m blind shaft) didn't quite match the description of any of the caves we were expecting to find. It had a pink tape hung over it and another very faded pink tape tied a few metres downhill. We tagged it JF-500 (on the western face about 0.5 metres over the lip) and decided we'd work out what it was later once we'd found all the other nearby holes (we later confirmed it was A7).

It was getting late so we headed off with the intention of 'processing' any new or old holes we found, but not to actively track any down. Bunty soon found a small entrance that dropped 2-3 metres and then ran horizontally for a bit. There was no evidence of previous discovery or tapes and it didn't fit the description of previously recorded nearby holes. We decided it was new, tagged it JF-501 just down inside the entrance and left exploration for a future trip. In the process of GPSing it I flicked the clip off the GPS into the hole, where it will stay until we return with sufficient enthusiasm to enter the cave (Bunty had named the cave Clipjoint within a day or two of this event). From here we sidled down till we hit the KD track (up a bit from the Dwarrowdelf turn-off) and then headed out. It was a productive day with a nice dent made in the long list of 'holes' and X-caves that infest the area.



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## **IB-14 Exit Cave**

**Janine McKinnon**

**27 March 2010**

**Party:** Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon, Trent Ford

This was the next trip in our series to make sense of the survey notes for Western Passage done by Jeff Butt in the early 1990s.

We had walked to the cave with the others who were planning on doing stuff in the front section of the cave. We left them at their venue and quickly made our way through the Rock Pile.

First order of business was to make a very enjoyable cup of coffee! This is the first time we've bought a stove (rather than a thermos) on a caving trip. Old age is slowly, but surely, taking hold and changing our habits.

When we finally got to work the first task was to find the theodolite survey points in the main passage that we were linking the Western Passage survey into. This was quickly done and then we started into the first section of Western

Passage. We expected the first part of the passage to take several trips to make sense of, as it is a very confusing labyrinth of passages.

Trent and I looked up all the side passages whilst Ric stayed on the main route with the map, making sense of our explorations as we called them back to him. Most of the survey lines were unscrambled against reality surprisingly quickly.

One passage we couldn't seem to find, and after a half hour of looking Trent finally found it. Trent and I followed all side passages to their termini, which will aid us interpreting Jeff's drawings.

After several hours we called it quits and headed out, picking up the other party in the front area along the way.

We had done much better than we had expected in making sense of the confusing chamber. One more trip, with a rope to look at a few question marks on drops, should finish our familiarisation with the passage. Then we can draw up the map.

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## **IB-14 Exit Cave**

**Janine McKinnon**

**28 March 2010**

**Party:** Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon, Trent Ford, Ivan Riley.

After being joined the next morning by a few more members we all walked to the cave together. Trent and Ivan decided to come and help us with some surveying we planned. The first job was to survey a passage at the immediate upstream end of the Rock Pile, on the true right, that we have noticed for years but never gone into. It turned out to be quite short and the survey was done quite quickly.

We had lunch and then headed upstream to do a quick tourist of the passage on the true right just past the "Hat Walk".

Then it was back to do our second task, a survey in the first passage in the rockpile, on the true left, where the route makes a sharp turn to the right on the way in. Trent and Ivan scouted again whilst I did instruments and Ric book. This passage turned out to be surprisingly long, with a branch. We finished the main route but stopped on the side route when it got small, wet and grovelly. This was mainly because it was getting late (how convenient is that!), and it will go on the list to finish sometime in the future. After all, this seems to be tradition in Exit; not finishing tasks.

We found the others already out of the cave and waiting for us, so that's another good reason not to have kept surveying the crappy bits.

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## **JF-207 Voltera *et al.***

**Ken Hosking**

**3 April 2010**

**Party:** Serena Benjamin and Ken Hosking.

Securing a caving party is a war of attrition and the usual Cave Hill masochists were suffering from various illnesses, injuries, family duties or were just being idle. A depleted party of two, Serena and me, set out to take another look at the stream that sinks in the doline that is also home to JF-207 Voltera, a cave with a large and impressive entrance and little but disappointment within.

As we walked in along the track that Steve Bunton and I had marked to Voltera, I found that the use that we had made of fallen logs to avoid the perils of the stick farm vegetation were great in dry conditions but in the aftermath of rain the logs were as slippery as ice. We made the obligatory stops to peer into JF-203 (Bone Pit) and JF-487 (Platypus Pot).

In Voltera, the water level was marginally higher than it was last time, and the passage that I thought might have digging potential was not looking good. However, Serena was able to squeeze into a rift that bypassed the stream, and was able to follow the passage down and along for a short distance before a tight bend impeded progress. She was able to contort herself enough to see around the corner to confirm that the passage continued growing wider but lower. Short of capping the bend there was not much more that we could do in this cave. However, with a drafting hole in the Tarn Creek Swallet doline and with this streamway showing promise, a visit from the capping experts to this area might be in order.

We then climbed up the base of the very impressive line of cliffs in which the Voltera entrance represents the lowest point, emerging on a ridge overlooking the valley. We then set out down the valley in the general direction of Sesame Caves. Only 50 metres south of Voltera we came upon JF-208, the entrance being a body sized hole at the base of a substantial cliff. The uninspiring entrance provided access to an unexpectedly large chamber, from which a large

passage led downwards to a terminal chamber with various passages leading off. At the lowest point in the cave a short drop of about 3 metres led to a muddy floor. The rock was coated with extremely slippery moonmilk and all of our gear was on the surface. With no draft and no obvious way on, as well as there being great potential for defacing the cave, we decided not to pursue the climb. This cave is worth surveying if it has not already been surveyed. (There is no reference to a survey in the Archive).

After spending a while looking into the various side passages in the cave we set off down the valley. Before long Serena had found another cave in the bottom of a small but deep doline in very dense bush. Some sort of sixth sense alerted her to the fact that another step would result in her falling into the doline and probably falling straight into the cave entrance. After struggling to find a sensible means of climbing into the doline, we found that the cave did not amount to much, being merely a narrow, steeply descending rift that became too tight to follow after

about 15 metres. The entrance was reminiscent of Gollums Grovel, being part filled with rotting wood and deep mud.

We bashed on down the valley, finding nothing more. The bush is so dense that it would be difficult to find anything unless it was directly in the line of travel.

Eventually we reached Chrisps Road after intersecting the snig track that leads to Sesame and we set off for the car, realising after a short while that the car, being parked at about the 675 metre level, was nearly 200 metres vertically above where we emerged near the Sesame track. It is very character building at the end of a day in the bush to tackle on foot what looks and feels just like a New Zealand ski field approach road. Now I know why the Subaru prefers first gear on this top section of Chrisps Road.

Whilst this was not the most successful of days, we have JF-208 accurately located, there remains a lead in the Voltera streamway and there is much more to be investigated in the area.

## More Hairygoating

**Alan Jackson**

**10 April 2010**

**Party:** Serena Benjamin, Stephen Bunton, Chris Chad, Alan Jackson

Yet another day in the bush near Splash Pot aiming to boldly go where numerous have gone before (yes, Greg, I know that's a split infinitive, but it's based on the most famous split infinitive of all time, so I'm going to use it). We had two extra helpers today, which proved very useful – while Bunty and I 'processed' each find the others could be off finding more!

We 'tracked cleared' to the Dwarrowdelf junction then headed west up to the caves. I found a promising looking depression which was actually lame – this later turned out to be Hole 13. While I examined the paperwork to try to establish if this was a 'Hole' cave or not, Chris and Serena went wandering. Chris came back with reports of two holes near one another to the south and another not far from Hole 13 to the north. I had a look at the one to the north and realised it was the not-so-long lost 'Raincoat Cave' – see page 11 for the raincoat reference. Bunty then arrived with news he'd also found a cave not far away. We tagged Raincoat Cave JF-502 (on the southern overhanging face a metre in the entrance above the climb), then followed the enormous fallen log to its root ball and tagged Bunty's hole JF-503 (on the south-eastern face – on a bit of a projection 300 mm down inside the cave). We later confirmed that this was Hole 16.

In the meantime Serena had refound JF-500 and JF-501 and also another hole just downhill from JF-501. This turned out to be Hole 14 and it was at this stage that we confirmed that the lame little hole I'd found first in the day was indeed Hole 13. Hole 14 was tagged JF-504 (on the eastern side of the entrance) and then Chris dropped it (it's about 20 m deep) while we tagged Hole 13 JF-505 (on the western side just above the two initially promising-looking holes). We called JF-504 Bark Canoe Cave based on Jol and Dave's description in SS315:14. Chris was obviously having fun so we left him to it and poached the other two close together holes he had found earlier. These were

confirmed as Holes 21 and 21A – tagged JF-506 (eastern face just in entrance) and JF-507 (western face a metre down into the cave) respectively.



*If it looks like a cave and smells like a cave then it probably is a cave – Alan and Chris tagging JF-508.*

Soon Chris was finished in Bark Canoe Cave and Serena was back from an excursion round the hill as far as JF-21. Based on the surface survey data the only hole left to find nearby was Hole 15 'Stuck Hole'. We recreated the survey legs but failed to find it. We guessed there was a mistake in the data and tried to flesh out likely corrections but found nothing. We abandoned 15 and went looking for holes 19 and 20 instead. These were easily and quickly found and left in Chris's capable hands to descend and sketch. They



were tagged JF-508 (eastern face) and JF-509 (western face, under the sassafras trunk) respectively.

Six X-caves and one of my own unfinished businesses was a good haul for the day and the rain was threatening. We decided to head to KD in a more or less straight line and see what we could find. Just before JF-40 we found three or so hole-like things, two of which must have been A1 and A2(Hole 8). I was sick of reading paperwork by this stage so we left them for a later date. We had a look for the JF-40 tag so we could photo-tag it, but failed. Serena then guided Chris to KD for a quick look while Bunty and I scoured around for other things. We failed to find JF-12 Log-feed but I'm pretty sure the narrow slot with a pink

tape I spotted was hole Bethin (located at the top of the cliffs behind the first big doline in the gully down from JF-4) – another one to come back for. We then found JF-5 but had trouble finding the tag – eventually I spotted it high on the overhanging cliff above the easy climb-in spot of the cave. This was photo-tagged. Next we looked for JF-69 but I now know I was searching in the wrong place.

Chris emerged from KD and we headed for home. We've now located 30 of the 50-odd holes in this general vicinity and the majority of these I'm expecting to be relatively simple to find. Hole 15 could prove to be difficult – as Serena pointed out at the time, is it just coincidence that JF-15 and Hole 15 are both proving hard to get?

## **JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot – JF-36 Growling Swallet through trip**

**Alan Jackson**

**17 April 2010**

**Party:** Chris Chad, Ken Hosking, Alan Jackson, Adrian Slee

Just a beginner quickie to the Sluthouse – I'd been promising Chris I'd take him somewhere half decent for a while now. The underground portion was easy and out of the way by early afternoon. We then stumbled across a ~40 year old couple from Glenorchy, Kelly and Glenn Gray, on the track about 20 m from the GS/McCullums track junction. Kelly had broken her right ankle.

We did the mental arithmetic and figured it'd be at least 4 hours by the time the cops got there and did their thing if we just walked out and raised the alarm, so we whipped up a stretcher out of two sassafras saplings, Chris's trog suit and ~25 m of rigging tape and 9 mm rope (plus some general clothing for comfort). We lashed her down with various odds and ends (cowstails, pack haul lines etc). The five able-bodied blokes then hoofed it out to the carpark. It

took us about 2 hours with many rest stops – with no extra people to rotate lifting duties with, it was pretty hard work.

Kelly was in surprisingly good spirits the whole way, with only the occasional scream of pain when we accidentally hooked her leg on passing trees ...

Glen only had about 8% vision and didn't have his license, so Ken drove their car back to my place in Moonah where Kelly's parents were waiting and they transferred her to hospital. She had surgery on her fibula (which she had clean snapped off at the base) the following Monday.

All's well that ends well but it could have been a very tricky situation had we not just happened to wander through. With Kelly crawling at about 1 metre per 30 seconds, in extreme pain, she would have struggled to make it out to the car at all. Glen, with his 8% vision would most likely have become lost while walking out alone to raise the alarm (and then still had to manage the drive to Maydena). They were lucky, we were only too happy to help out and they were very appreciative – I've received several calls from Glen, and Kelly's mother, expressing their thanks. They hope to make it to the May meeting to say thanks yet again, with maybe a little beer under their arms ...



## Other Exciting Stuff

### Annual Office Bearer's Reports 2009

#### Various Artists

##### President

##### Matt Cracknell

After three years of being at STC's helm I can now rightfully say that I have paid my dues to the executive gods. Once again, this year has shown that STC is at the forefront of caving exploration and research in Australia. The Exit Cave Survey project has been initiated with the assistance of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. Although this project is a long term endeavour, the professionalism and patience with which club members are approaching the task is admirable. Several club members have had jaunts overseas, no doubt singing the praises of our club as they go. In addition, the editorial prowess of a couple of club members has dragged *Caves Australia* kicking and screaming from the murky depths of oblivion. As for real caving, exploration continues in the Junee-Florentine, the re-bolting of Niggly was a success and important discoveries were made in Wolf Hole.

As I have been President for the past three years it is time for me to relinquish my role and step down for another suitably equipped member (you don't need much, in fact less is better). Thanks for the support and commitment of all STC members. We continue to make this caving club the most active and adventurous in Australia.

##### Vice President (expanded version)

##### Geoff Wise

NTR would almost seem appropriate (11 out of 11 business meeting VP reports show NTR - I'm consistent if nothing else) but not quite. I managed to chair three meetings when Matt was unable to attend this year. I'm happy to take on a role next season.

##### Treasurer

##### Sarah Gilbert

##### Summary

For those that only read the first sentence, I'll start with the big news that STC has made a surplus of \$28.21 for 2009 (to put that in perspective, at this rate the club will be able to purchase a Scurion for the gear store in the year 2035). In more detail we have made a deficit from the General Account & petty cash (-\$156.20) but a surplus from the Science Account (\$184.41). In 2006 and 2007 STC made a large surplus, but in 2008 a deficit. As long as we break even again, or make a surplus in 2010, then overall the finances are doing OK.

For the General Account the 2009 income was slightly less than in 2008, mostly from lower membership fees and no donations or fundraising. However gear sales were up from the sale of the Oldham lights. Expenditure was also less, due to lower production costs for the *Spiel* (well done Alan) and less equipment purchased.

The Science Account has kept a much lower profile in 2009 than in recent years. The income received has been

entirely from interest to the Cash Management Account, and no payments were made. The interest earned was significantly less than in the preceding years. We are subject to financial ebbs and flows, and interest rates are now slowly on the rise ... which is encouraging for the future STC finances, but not to my impending mortgage.

I have been Treasurer for a year and I now feel I have my head around what's required in this role. I'm happy to continue as Treasurer in 2010.

##### Membership

STC had a steady influx of Prospective members in 2009 (total 14), but with only a 21% survival rate to Full Membership (Congrats Adrian, Kate and Chris). STC has also had an addition of four new Full Members join this year.

Membership Category	YE 31/12/08	YE 31/12/09
Household/full/student	39	47
Introductory	19	12
Life	9	9
<b>Total membership</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>
Friends	10	9
Armchair cavers	2	n/a
<b>Total association</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>77</b>

##### Income

The following table shows the actual income from 2008 & 2009 and the expected income from 2010. Gear sales are expected to be lower in 2010, but income from grant applications is expected to increase.

Category	2010 Estimated	2009 Actual	2008 Actual
Memberships (incl. ASF component)	\$3,350.00	\$3,346.80	\$3,442.00
<i>Speleo Spiel</i> subscriptions	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00
Trip fees	\$350.00	\$314.00	\$507.50
Gear hire	\$150.00	\$167.00	\$142.00
Gear sales	\$100.00	\$388.50	\$108.00
Donations, Grants, Other	\$1000.00	\$5.00	\$179.65
Cash Mgt Trust distributions	\$300.00	\$286.86	\$467.41
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$5,325.00</b>	<b>\$4,583.16</b>	<b>\$4,933.06</b>

##### Membership Fees

The Membership Fees are designed so the STC finances break even, which we have done ... just. The General Account has made a deficit, but income from interest has balanced our overall expenditure. Provided the ASF rates remain the same, **I propose that the current Membership Fees remain unchanged for 2010. However, if the deficit trend continues for the General Account, there will be the need to increase the Membership Fees for 2011.**



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	\$20.00	\$30.00
Life (conferred)	Nil	\$23.00 – inactive* \$68.00 – active*	\$23.00 – inactive* \$68.00 – active*
<i>Spiel</i> subscription (printed <i>Spiele</i> delivered)	\$25.00 (for non-members) \$15.00 (for STC members)		

*\*in previous years this cost has been reduced by \$23 as sponsored by STC.*

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.

The ASF now requires prompt payment of annual membership fees for members to be covered by insurance. To encourage early payment **I propose that the Early Bird rate be changed to a \$10 increase in Membership Fees after 1-Apr.**

#### ***Trip Fees***

Over the last two years STC has averaged the collection of about 85% of the trip fees that should have been paid (I couldn't be bothered going any further back through the *Spiele*). For those that do keep up to date, well done, but to the other 15% pull your finger out in 2010! In the past 4 years we have spent \$1,176 on new rope, and have collected \$1,139 from Trip Fees – not quite enough. Considering the steady increase in the price of rope, which will no doubt continue to rise, we may need to increase Trip Fees in 2011. **I propose that the current Trip Fees remain unchanged**, since we would be breaking even at present if everyone paid and strongly encourage everyone to make prompt payments of Trip Fees.

#### ***Gear Hire Rates***

In 2008, STC purchased new helmets and lights to be available for hire from the Gear Store. Due to these new purchases and the steady deterioration of the donated trog suit collection, **I propose the following changes to the Gear Hire rates: Helmet Hire to \$3 and Trog suits to \$1.** These changes are to more accurately reflect item usage and cost of replacement, rather than to increase the overall income from gear hire.

Item	New	Previous
Trip fee (vertical caves where a rope was used)	\$2	\$2
Light hire	\$4	\$4
<b>Helmet hire</b>	<b>\$3</b>	\$1
Full SRT kit	\$6	\$6
Pack	\$1	\$1
<b>Trogsuit</b>	<b>\$1</b>	\$3
<b>SRT kit, light, helmet, pack</b>	<b>\$14</b>	\$12
Descender only (depends on number of abseils)	\$3-\$5	\$3-\$5
Descender only (Midnight Hole)	\$5	\$5
Harness & cowstail	\$2	\$2
Miscellaneous (eg. jammer, cowstail etc)	\$1-\$2	\$1-\$2

#### **Expenditure**

The following table details the expenditure from the General account in 2008 & 2009, and the expected expenditure in 2010. The expenditure of gear purchases is expected to increase due to the Wild Care grant application for the Exit Cave survey work.

Category	2010 Estimated	2009 actual	2008 actual
<i>Speleo Spiel</i> production & supply	\$500	\$484.96	\$539.27
ASF fees for inactive life members	\$207.00	\$207.00	\$207.00
All other ASF membership fees	\$2,600.00	\$2,586.50	\$2,716.83
Gear purchases	\$1000.00	\$683.14	\$983.50
Equipment Officer Honorarium	\$170.00	\$227.25	\$121.65
Audit fee	\$78.00	\$71.50	\$71.50
Annual return fee	\$53.20	\$51.20	\$50.00
PO Box rental	\$135	\$130.00	\$123.00
ACKMA membership	\$55.00	\$55.00	\$110.00
Publications	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other	\$300.00	\$58.40	\$0.00
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,148.20</b>	<b>\$4,554.95</b>	<b>\$5,141.62</b>

#### ***Speleo Spiel***

Production costs for the *Speleo Spiel* were down yet again in 2009, to \$484.96 – good work Alan (aka Stamp Steamer Extraordinaire).

**I propose that the subscription rates for printed *Speleo Spiel* remain the same: at \$25 per year for non-members, and \$15 per year for members.**

#### **Summary of Motions**

- I propose that the current Membership Fees remain unchanged
- **I propose that the Early Bird rate be changed to a \$10 increase in Membership Fees after 1-Apr.**
- I propose that the current Trip Fees remain unchanged
- **I propose the following changes to the Gear Hire rates: Helmet Hire to \$3 and Trog suits to \$1.**

- I propose that the subscription rates for printed *Speleo Spiel* remain the same: at \$25 per year for non-members, and \$15 per year for members.

## **Secretary**

### **Serena Benjamin**

An interesting year has passed with me in the position of secretary. Plenty of interesting mail to collect, which has definitely been a perk. The occasional letter to write and permit to apply for and also the occasional unmarked stamp to rescue for stingy old grandmas. Relatively straightforward administrative stuff. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions I've made is to steer away from writing the minutes in Times New Roman, using Calibri instead. Should anyone wish to be so innovative, the role is open as I won't be continuing with it this year.

## **Editor**

### **Alan Jackson**

Another year, another six *Spiels* added to the archive. Only two of those six issues featured me on the front cover, which is a little disappointing for all my fans. In fact, I've produced 37 *Spiels* now and only 9 of those have featured me on the cover – that's less than 25% and I'd argue that I've been involved in or responsible for more than 25% of the caving during that period, so I'd say you're being hard done by. I'll try harder this year, if you'll have me again.

Please remember to check your mail and tear off any unmarked stamps you might receive (and give them to me) -- being a stingy old grandma has saved the club close to \$100 over the last 12 months!

## **Public Officer**

### **Damian Bidgood**

*[Nothing worth reporting apparently – he was just a figurehead – Ed.]*

## **Gear Store Officer**

### **Gavin Brett**

*[Again, nothing submitted – I sometimes wonder whether Gavin even realises that the gear store is still under his house – Ed.]*

## **STC Librarian/Archivist**

### **Greg Middleton**

The Library received 89 new journals in 2009-10, continuing a declining trend (95 in previous year, 113 in 07-08, 101 06-07, 168 in 05-06, 191 in 04-05) and bringing our holding to 4,523. The decline is largely due to the trend for journals to be published on-line. Perhaps we will soon need to change the name of the library to 'museum'.

The library received 9 new books, bringing our holding to 300. Our CD/DVD collection remains at 34.

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.

Since 2005 I have been producing *Southern Caver* in digital format, publishing otherwise unpublished or very rare material. No new issue was produced in 2009 but #65 is almost ready for distribution.

I'm happy to continue in the position.

## **STC Science Officers Report (2009-2010)**

### **Arthur Clarke**

Another year has passed without the club having any specific STC initiated cave science project! Nonetheless there have been several significant science related achievements resulting from the present and past speleo endeavours of current (and former) members. Broadly speaking, these achievements relate to some of the geological and biological aspects of karst studies.

1: Permian age palaeokarst in the Hastings dolomite. Believed to be the first recorded evidence for palaeokarst in the Precambrian dolomite of Tasmania, the discovery emanates from the continued exploration and mapping projects in Wolf Hole, principally initiated by STC President (Matt Cracknell). It is well known that the entrance of Wolf Hole is formed as a collapse in the basal Permian Conglomerate caprock. Some limited collection of rock samples was undertaken from fissure rifts beyond The Catacombs and from the base of a fault zone before the Strawberry Cascade where unusual laminated platelets were found. The samples were examined in detail by Dr Max Banks, a retired lecturer/ palaeontologist from UTAS Geology Dept., who is a specialist in the Permian age geology of Tasmania. Also a former early member of TCC, Dr Banks found evidence of macro-invertebrates and leaves in these Wolf Hole palaeokarst samples. Now for the first time there is confirmation that some of the exhumed cave passages in Wolf Hole are formed in palaeokarst; the passages following fissure rifts containing sub-rounded cobbles set in a fine grained siltstone. The fine sediments possibly derived from the base of a glacier (or ice sheet) or from glacial meltwater flowing across the dolomite c. 250-260 million years ago.

2: New area of limestone in southern Tasmania. Although STC has not been directly briefed on this area, it is known to be located west of the Picton, south of the Hustling Creek/ Riveaux karst. Similarly, little is known about the karst potential of the area, though is believed to abut close to the World Heritage Area boundary. The area is currently under investigation by Forestry Tasmania and officers from DPI/PWE and initial reports indicate that some of the caves contain significant glacial deposits.

3: Glow-worm monitoring programme at Ida Bay. Arthur Clarke has been continuing a collaborative project with Dr. David Merritt from the University of Queensland, studying glow-worm bioluminescence, principally in Mystery Creek Cave at Ida Bay. There have been two significant outcomes from this study of the cave dwelling glow-worms: firstly their rhythmic behaviour, i.e., determining a very precise 24-hour cycle circadian rhythm (Merritt and Clarke 2009), and secondly, discovering the variability in the peaks of bioluminescence in the dark zone of the cave. In previous years it was noted that in the dark zone of caves at both Ida Bay and Mole Creek, there was generally a daytime (early afternoon) peak of glow-worm bioluminescence almost all year round, while specimens near the cave entrances peaked just after dusk and shortly before dawn. However, following more extensive photo monitoring research this year, it was noted that different population clusters in different parts of Mystery Creek Cave had extremely variable peaks in their bioluminescence. Some of the populations in the dark



zone, e.g., near the cave ceiling, were on the same glowing cycle as specimens located near the cave entrance.

4: Description (and naming) of nine new troglobitic micro spiders from Tasmanian caves. A recently published (February 2010) 321 page monograph (Rix and Harvey, 2010) provides detail of nine (9) troglobitic spiders from caves in several Tasmanian karst areas. Based on the recently completed PhD by Michael Rix, the monograph provides a revision of the Gondwanan spider family Micropholcommatidae. (More than 80% of the micropholcommatid genera are confined to a narrow region in the southern latitudes between 35°S and 45°S.)

Not much bigger than the size of a pin-head, the troglobitic micropholcommatid cave spiders are typically found suspended underneath horizontal sheet-webs in small alcoves or crevices of cave walls. Principally located in the twilight and dark zone of Tasmanian caves, there is generally just one micropholcommatid species per karst area. However, there is a classic exception, where two troglobitic micropholcommatid species are found in the Junee-Florentine karst, including two different genera of spiders from one cave: Splash Pot. Some species are only known from one or two collected specimens, sometimes from only one cave. Although some of these micro spiders have eyes, they are generally much reduced or simply vestige spots; all the species show other troglomorphic characters including spines or barbs, setae (hairs), modified chelicerae (prey grasping organs) and highly adapted pedipalps (sperm containing mating organ) in the males. Following is a brief synopsis of the nine new recently described species belonging to known or new genera of the Family Micropholcommatidae Hickman, 1944 and its sub-families or tribes:

Sub-family Micropholcommatinae:

Tribe Micropholcommatini

(a) *Micropholcomma junee* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; eyes reduced to four vestigial eye spots. The two holotype and paratype males were collected from Splash Pot in Junee-Florentine by Stefan Eberhard in 1987; the allotype female was collected by Stefan from Cauldron Pot in 1990.

Sub-family Micropholcommatinae: Tribe Tetricellini

(b) *Epigastria loongana* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; six reduced eyes present. Only known from a single specimen, the holotype female was collected from Mostyn Hardy Cave in the Loongana karst by Albert and Therese Goede in 1969.

(c) *Epigastria typhlops* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; eyes absent. The holotype male and allotype female were collected from Kubla Khan at Mole Creek, by Stefan Eberhard in 1990.

(d) *Eperiella hastings* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; presence of only six vestigial eye spots. The holotype male and three paratype females were collected by Stefan from Bug Hole (a now 'lost' cave) in the Hastings karst, in 1988.

Subfamily Taphiassinae Rix & Harvey, subfam. nov.

(e) *Olgania excavata* Hickman; six small eyes, but includes cave dwelling ecotypes that appear to have troglomorphic adaptations. Although the holotype male and paratype females of this species were collected from moss in the lower Gordon River valley in 1976 and 1977, this micro spider has been more recently recorded from

several caves in western Tasmania: 1935 Cave and Thylacine Lair at Bubs Hill; Cardia Cave on the Acheron River and Kutikina Cave on the Franklin River.

(f) *Olgania cracroft* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; eyes absent, except for a single, barely-visible vestigial eye spot on each side of head. The holotype male and six paratype females were collected in Wargata Mina in the Cracroft karst by Jean Jackson in 1989.

(g) *Olgania eberhardi* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; eyes absent. Only known from a single specimen, the holotype male collected from Splash Pot in the Junee-Florentine by Stefan Eberhard in 1987.

(h) *Olgania troglodytes* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; eyes absent (but with a single, barely-visible vestigial eye spot on each side of the head) and very long-legged. Rix and Harvey (2010) describe this spider as the most troglomorphic of any Micropholcommatidae. The holotype male and five paratypes (another male and four females) were collected from Revelation Cave in the Ida Bay karst by Arthur Clarke in 1989. This species (*Olgania troglodytes*) is also recorded from Arthurs Folly, Bradley-Chesterman Cave, Dismal Hill Pot, Little Grunt, Loons Cave, March Fly Pot, Pseudocheirus Cave, Straw Cave and Thun Junction.

(i) *Olgania weld* Rix & Harvey, sp. nov.; six vestigial eye spots on front of head. Two specimens: the holotype male and allotype female were collected from the Weld River Arch and arch caves by Stefan Eberhard in 1986.

References:

Merritt, D.J and Clarke, A.K. (2009), Rhythmic regulation of bioluminescence in glow-worms, *Arachnocampa*, pp. 291-303 in Meyer-Rochow, V.B. (Ed.) *Bioluminescence in Focus - A Collection of Illuminating Essays*, Research

Signpost, Kerala, India; ISBN 978-81-308-0357-9.

Rix, M.G. and Harvey, M.S. (2010) The spider family Micropholcommatidae (Arachnida, Araneae, Araneoidea): a relimitation and revision at the generic level. *ZooKeys* 36: 1-321.

## Search & Rescue Officers

### Jane Pulford & Tony Veness

No caves rescues needed in 2009, so again things were fairly quiet.

Police SAR Liaison meetings:

\* Wed 1 April: Jane Pulford attended, CavEx debrief

\* Wed 2 September: Jane Pulford attended, not many other groups represented.

CavEx:

28-29 March 2009: Saturday's indoor rope rescue skills workshop went well, but Sunday's underground activities were replaced by a real surface search and successful rescue for two bushwalkers in the Growling Swallet area. 22 attendees over the weekend, including 12 STC members.

2010: May not take place before winter, as the Police are short of training days. Smaller-scale search and rescue training exercises for STC members are in the planning stages.

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.

We are happy to continue in this role for another year, however we plan to be overseas July - October 2010 (inclusive) and would need to appoint a deputy for that period.

#### **Training Officer**

##### **Janine McKinnon**

Four members received basic SRT training during the year. Sessions were held at the regular venue of the Fruehauf Quarry. All have subsequently been on SRT caving trips and employed these skills with varying levels of expertise. One member received some basic abseiling training.

I am willing to continue in this role in the coming year.

#### **Social Secretary**

##### **Guy Bannink**

The year was somewhat busy from a social perspective.

Several evenings were hosted at GB's, one at JM-RT's and one at AJ's. These were all well attended largely because they were associated with large quantities of food, photo reviews or movies.

Complaints about the screen in Fern Tree have been made and I will endeavour to get the hospice shroud ironed prior to the meetings to facilitate wrinkle free viewing. The balcony will remain out of bounds during 2010.

A few social gatherings took place at Sublime Pizza which provided a change for those tired of struggling up the hill.

The traditional Winter Solstice was hosted by King Arthur of Francistown, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all, although the traditional Quiche Discus throwing was not held this year. There have been some requests that an outdoor heated bath be available for the unwashed in the Kingdom- this will have to be discussed with King Arthur.

The highlight was the car 'rally' organised by AJ - who had been planning this for two years. Unfortunately this caused some bitterness when it was accurately reported in the *Spiel*, but I think all is forgiven now.

The Christmas bash was held in a festive mood anticipating summer caving.

A quick and dirty early social meeting was held in January 2010 just to break with tradition.

Thanx to all those who helped with food or dreaming up culinary themes through the year.

Special thanx to SB who was more the social secretary than I was.

Happy to stand again in this awkward but satisfying position if required.

#### **Electronic Archivist, Surveying Archivist and Map Archivist**

##### **Ric Tunney**

The Electronic Archive is now mature, containing a large proportion of STC's information. Occasionally, members are finding dribs and drabs behind "Beware of the Tiger" signs and passing it on. Now that Bill Nicholson and Jacko have reappeared I'm expecting oodles.

We have lost too much survey data over the years. Surveyors are getting into the habit of sending both scans and the original bookwork. Thank you.

Over the year, Matt and Alan repeatedly descended upon the Map Archive and took away large bundles for scanning. The scanning work is now complete. The club owes thanks to them for this time-consuming work. An horrendous job facing someone is to match the scans with the Map Number Index, name and annotate the files, and incorporate them into the Archive.

Last year I expressed worry about the danger of losing our data. I have improved the backup regime. The master copy of the Archive is kept on a dedicated hard drive on my PC. The data is mirrored daily to a pair of mirrored drives in a safe in our garage. The data is also mirrored within a few hours to Carbonite, an on-line backup service. I am using it for family data backup and the Archive is included at no cost to STC.

Paperwork is still at risk from a very large fire. Paper maps are in map drawers in our garage, but these have now all been digitised. Paper drafts of maps have not been digitised, but they represent historical curiosity only and probably will never be looked at anyway. (It's hard to throw stuff away.) A4-sized paper and original survey bookwork is in a filing cabinet. Most of this has been scanned and all of the data itself has been digitised, so its loss would be merely annoying. The long-term solution to fire risk is to digitise everything and distribute backups.

If anyone wants a project, the stuff in the filing cabinet could be checked against the Archive. This could be a good excuse not to go caving.

Tagging continues at Ida Bay and Junee Florentine. I'd like taggers to actually tell me they have tagged a cave so I don't have to extract the information from the *Spiel*.

I am happy to continue in these positions.

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## **Exit Cave Mapping Project Scoping Study review 2010**

### **Matt Cracknell**

Over the past year, several members of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers (STC) have been working with the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (TPWS) to establish the Exit Cave Mapping Project. STC coordinators for the project are M. Cracknell and T. Veness. The project's general aims are to: produce a suitably detailed map of the Exit Cave system; record and document important cave features; and establish in-cave tracks for navigation and

protection of sensitive areas. These outcomes will provide land managers with up-to-date information for the long term management and conservation of Exit Cave.

The project was divided into two phases, an initial Scoping Study and Main Project. The first phase of the project, the Scoping Study, was completed in August 2009 with the delivery of a report to TPWS. This report tabled findings and recommendations regarding the overall feasibility of the Main Project phase. During a meeting held in mid-December 2009 attended by Peter Stafford (Parks and Reserves Manager Southern District TPWS), Lynne Sparrow (Southern Region Planner TPWS), Rolan



Eberhard (Dept. Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment (DPIPWE)) and Matt Cracknell (STC) a summary of the Scoping Study aims and objectives were presented, with its findings and recommendations discussed.

The general aims and objectives of the Scoping Study were to:

- Establish feasibility of long term survey/mapping of Exit Cave system
- Define data collection and storage protocols
- Ground truth data currently held within the STC Archive
- Relocation of and document permanent survey stations (especially the theodolite traverse)
- Familiarise active STC members with the Exit Cave system
- Document the current condition of in-cave tracks and track marking

The finding and recommendations of the Scoping Study are:

- ~ 5-10 year time frame for re-surveying, surveying and map production
- A limited number of active STC members to undertake the Main Project
- To organise an expedition style approach with assistance from mainland cavers in 2012
- Production of documentation for standardised survey and mapping methods
- Request financial assistance (e.g. survey equipment, mapping materials)

Additional comments raised include:

- Recognition of the beneficial collaborative working relationship between TPWS and STC
- Difficulties encountered when assessing STC's current data quality/coverage without in-cave observations
- 50% of time used for travel (i.e. Hobart – carpark and carpark – cave)

- Map production will require a substantial amount of volunteer time and commitment
- Annual reporting and feedback is advantageous

In summary, the general outcomes of the meeting were to:

- Break the cave into mapping units or sections. For each unit or section, identify the suite of tasks that have or need to be completed. These tasks could be grouped (e.g. survey and mapping; track marking; infrastructure; estimation of time/resources needed for map production and data handling)
- Prioritise tasks/mapping units. Develop a set of prioritisation criteria/scoring system. (e.g. use no survey; poor survey; robust section; sensitive section; low visitation; more likely to be visited)
- Develop data collection standards and methodology (use ASF as basis), this could serve as guidelines for other mapping exercises
- Define data storage protocols (i.e. Identify options and decide which is best for long term access)
- Maintain the 2009 Access Protocol as this is working well
- Apply for grants from Wildcare, ASF and /or volunteer grants program

So far this year a grant has been obtained from Wildcare for the purchase of surveying gear, stationery and track marking equipment totalling ~ \$1600. Also, a document outlining standards and methodologies for mapping and surveying, and a list of priority areas and tasks is currently being drafted. Further investigations are required into the establishment of an in-cave feature documentation/observation database. The objectives of this database will be to ensure that outstanding cave features are recorded, catalogued and tied into the survey.

Overall, the project appears to be proceeding well. STC is obtaining funding for equipment and resources, TPWS is keen to give the project some momentum and cavers are showing some interest in participating. The rest of this year will involve establishing a foundation for the Main Project by prioritising our objectives and through the definition of mapping standards. With these aspects of the project in place STC will be in a better position to host caving groups from other clubs on Exit Cave survey sorties over the coming years.

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## **Vale Max Jeffries**

### **Laurie Moody**

I first had the privilege of meeting Max Jeffries in 1973 on my first official trip to the Junee area as a member of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Max, a long-time resident of Maydena, was a self-employed contractor for ANM for many years before joining the Forestry Commission prior to his eventual retirement.

His interest in caving began with the pre-Khazad-dum conquest in the early 1970s and he was one of those people responsible for cutting the track to the cave. Max was notably extremely adept in using a chain-saw and repairing them. He was also responsible for many cave discoveries in both the Junee-Florentine and Western Florentine areas.

Perhaps one of his notable discoveries was that of Beginners Luck Cave. Max was also one of the main figures responsible for the formation of the Maydena Branch of TCC in 1975.

Cavers from clubs throughout Australia frequently dropped into his former residence in South Street, Maydena to seek information regarding cave locations, advice and sustenance and occasionally gear. Max was also instrumental in acquiring the necessary permits from ANM and on more than one occasion assisted with looking for overdue cavers and helping with cave rescues.

Max often accompanied me on many of my trips into the Junee-Florentine and nearly all of these excursions ended up with a coffee at his place before heading home. We got to know each other fairly well over the years and after my retirement from caving in 1980 we continued to keep in

touch. Ill-health eventually found Max in the Corumbene Nursing Home at New Norfolk where I continued to visit him. On my last visit in 2009 I noted a marked deterioration in his condition and was deeply saddened to hear of his passing. I'm sure all of the caving fraternity who came in contact with Max over the years will feel the same. Our condolences to his daughter Helen and sons Tony and Tim and their families.



Max and Louise Moody in JF-107 (West Florentine).



Max at his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in November 1997.

### Stephen Bunton

I first met Max at Maydena when I was about to do Khazad-dum for the first time in 1977. He was with John Palmer, Anne and Steve Annan; the Maydena Branch of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club which he helped form in 1975. Our arrangement was that Max was to show us the

cave entrance, hidden on the slopes of Tyenna Peak, the impressive mountain that towers above the small forestry town of Maydena.

Max had been a foreman for the Australian Newsprint Mills logging operations in the Juneeflorentine. In his position he was able to negotiate an arrangement with the loggers such that they reported any cave discoveries directly to him. Max was then able to ensure their subsequent exploration by cavers. As such Max oversaw the discovery and exploration of some of the area's earliest classic caves.

Max eventually worked for the Tasmanian Forestry Commission, when its function was to oversee practices in the timber industry, before it became Forestry Tasmania – now a Government commercial enterprise.

One particular trip took us out through the logging area and into the rainforest where the entrance to Khazad-dum is located. Anyone who has walked this track will notice the change in vegetation from regrowth to pristine rainforest. It is somewhat to Max's credit, as the man on the ground, that the National Park boundaries were adhered to.

Upon return from our trip we stayed overnight at the Juneeflorentine Homestead. The maintenance of this wonderful federation style weatherboard "hut" was one of Max's pet projects. Gradually the homestead started to fall into disrepair and somehow Max often "knew" (via the grapevine) the identity of the young locals who occasionally vandalised the hut. Max was adamant about not providing the recalcitrants with a reference, to support their job applications. Max was held in such high esteem that his endorsement was most valued.

Max was a father figure in the town. When he "retired" he ran a chainsaw sharpening business from his house. Over the decades Max was one of the main workers whose chainsaw kept the tracks to the caves open.

Cavers often visited him at his Maydena home on their way to or from a caving trip. Many mainland cavers also relied on Max as the fixer who arranged their permits and to show them the location of their chosen cave.

From *The Mercury*  
classifieds – 19<sup>th</sup> and  
21<sup>st</sup> March 2010

**JEFFRIES, Maxwell**  
James. —  
24.12.1927 — 17.3.2010

Loving Son of John William and Edith Marie Jeffries (both dec). Brother of Fay Stirling (dec), and Rosemary McDougal. Loving Husband of Phyllis (dec).

Loving father and father-in-law of Tony and Yvonne and Gaylene (dec). Poppy Max of Nicola and Ann Maree and friend of Paul.

Loving father and father-in-law of Helen and Kim. Loving Pop of Prudence and Nicholas. Special Maximus and Poppy Max to Jodie and Poppy Max to Holly.

Between a Dad and a Daughter, there is a loving special tie that binds them to each other as the days and years go by, no words can ever quite convey the special love that they share.

Miss you Dad,  
Love Helen.

Loving father and father-in-law of Timothy and Jenny. Poppy Max of Kristy and grandfather of Kyleigh and Emily.

### *A great man at rest with His Lord.*

Special thanks to the staff at Corumbene for their love and care.

**JEFFRIES, Max.** —  
Loved brother of Faye Stirling, brother-in-law of Ron. (both dec), treasured uncle of Margaret (dec), Chris, Anne and Peter and their families.

### *Rest peacefully Uncle Max*

**JEFFRIES, Maxwell.** —  
Passed away March 17, 2010. Dearly loved lifetime friend and workmate of John and Betty Barratt and families.

### *Always remembered*

**JEFFRIES, Max.** —  
Friend to cavers in the Juneeflorentine for over half a century. Thank you. — Southern Tasmanian Caverneers.



Occasionally Max's expertise was likewise called upon in the rescue of overdue cavers.

Max was an expert on the locations of caves in the Juneeflorentine area, and their history. As such his knowledge was of great importance in their documentation. Unfortunately many of these stories are now lost to the current STC cavers. The stories have gone with him to the

grave, particularly, those regarding the horizontal caves of the West Florentine, which have become less fashionable.

Spending time with the older generation is something that seems to have gone out of fashion also, and I feel quite guilty that I didn't spend more time with Max. For those times that I did spend with him I am very grateful. Max Jefferies will be missed and his contribution to caving will always be valued.

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## **Deepest Cave List (>=150 m) - Tasmania**

*Compiled by Ric Tunney*

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Cave</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
1	Tachycardia	375.2	JF	Elevation, <i>Speleo Spiel</i> 354
2	Anne-A-Kananda	373	MA	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(2)
3	Niggly Cave	372.4	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 376(3)
4	Growling Swallet System	360	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
5	Splash Pot	306	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
6	Cauldron Pot	305	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
7	Khazad-Dum System	292	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 352(7)
8	Dissidence	284	JF	Map 7JF382.STC138
9	Serendipity	278	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
10	Threefortyone - Rift Cave System	249	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
11	Shooting Star	247	MC	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 333
12	Tassy Pot	238	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
13	Arrakis	235	MW	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
14	Niagara Pot	230	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
15	Owl Pot	225	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
16	Exit Cave (Mini Martin)	220	IB	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 208
17	Mystery Creek Cave (Midnight Hole)	212	IB	<i>Caves Australia</i> 177
18	Milk Run	208	IB	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
19	Sesame Cave	207	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
20	Flick Mints Hole	204	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
21	Porcupine Pot	202	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
22	Baader-Meinhof Pot	198	IB	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 353(29)
23	The Chairman	197	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
24	Cyclops Pot	192	IB	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
25	Rocket Rods Pot	191	IB	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 353(30)
26	Big Tree Pot	190	IB	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
27	Peanut Brittle Pot	186	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
28	Deep Thought	183	MA	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 322
29	Udensala	181	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
30	Lost Pot	175	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
31	Dribblespit Swallet	168	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 314(21)
32	Little Grunt	165	IB	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 277(3-4)
33	Pooshooter	159	JF	Survey
34	Three Falls Cave	158	JF	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)
35	Kellars Cellar	155	MA	<i>Speleo Spiel</i> 213(3)

Note – #16 Exit Cave – Depth of Mini Martin to stream. Cave will be a little deeper to resurgence.