



SPEIEO SPIEI 384

May - June 2011

STC Office Bearers

President:

Geoff Wise
Ph: 0408 108 984 (m)
geoff.p.wise@gmail.com

Vice President:

Stephen Bunton
Ph: (03) 6278 2398 (h)
stephenbunton@bigpond.com

Secretary:

Janine McKinnon
Ph: (03) 6243 5415 (h)
jmckinnon@Tassy.net.au

Treasurer:

Chris Chad
Ph: 0437 125 615 (m)
Chris.Chad@hydro.com.au

Equipment Officer:

Gavin Brett
Ph: (03) 6223 1717 (h)
gavinbrett@iinet.com.au

Librarian:

Greg Middleton
Ph: (03) 6223 1400 (h)
ozspeleo@iinet.net.au

Editor:

Alan Jackson
Ph: 0419 245 418 (m)
alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au

Search & Rescue Officer:

Jane Pulford
Ph: 0437 662 599 (m)
jlpulford@yahoo.com

Webmaster:

Alan Jackson
Ph: 0419 245 418 (m)
alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au

Web Site:

<http://www.lmrs.com.au/stc>

Front Cover: Ferrous staining on the roof of Wind Tunnel, Undara.

Photo by Greg Middleton.



Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated

PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006

<http://www.lmrs.com.au/stc>

ABN: 73-381-060-862

ISSN 1832-6307

The views expressed in the *Speleo Spiel* are not necessarily the views of the Editor, or of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated.

Issue No. 384, May - Jun. 2011

CONTENTS

Regular Bits

Editorial	3
Stuff 'n Stuff	3

Trip Reports

Extravaganza	Geoff Wise	4
Wild Caving – 2 Year Old Style, 23 Apr. 11	Amy Robertson	8
Splash Pot, 24 Apr. 11	Janine McKinnon	8
Splash Pot, 1 May 11	Janine McKinnon	9
Splash Pot, 1 May 11	Nicolas Baudier	10
I Hate Ferns ... and Other Stories, 8 May 11	Chris Chad	11
Pseudo Caving in JF-107, 15 May 11	Chris Chad	12
Smorgasbord Tidy Up, 21 May 11	Alan Jackson	13
Vet's Misfortune & Cashion Ck Carry On, 12 Jun. 11	Stephen Bunton	15
The Curse Continues, 15 Jun. 11	Stephen Bunton	16

Other Exciting Stuff

First Record of Dolomite Karst at Pieman Head	Rolan Eberhard	18
Exit Commonsense Management	Stephen Bunton	18
Chillicon Capers – Conference Wrap Up	Stephen Bunton	20
2010 Office Bearers' Reports	Various Artists	19

Surveys

Various Surveys	27
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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

Tardiness is the order of the day. *Spiel* 383 was late, this one is very late, CA185 was late and 186 isn't looking like being any better. I haven't even been finding time to go caving. Pathetic. Hopefully things are about to change.

This *Spiel* contains a selection of material stretching from ages ago to the distant past. Enjoy the trip down memory lane.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

JF MAPPING ADVANCEMENTS

For those of you who are as boring and old fashioned as I am, Tasmap now has issued a new edition of the Dobson Sheet which has GDA 94 as its datum. This covers the caves in the Niggly area, those on Cave Hill and the Junee Ridge area. The area covered is not the same as the old Dobson sheet, which uses AGD 66 and the old Grid References won't work either. The advantage is that the co-ordinates match those in the club's GPS whilst you hold a hard copy of the map in your hand. This allows you to see just that little bit further than what is available on the GPS screen. All the caves are in the bottom left-hand corner and I have a laminated A4 section to take out into the scrub. The new GDA 1:25,000 Tasmaps have poo brown, purpley and bluish covers, not the old, familiar, yellow ones. Only more popular areas have been done in this series and we may have to wait a while for the Maydena, Tiger and Gordonvale sheets to be done.

Stephen Bunton

PROTECTING THE STENLIGHT'S ACHILLES HEEL

When I purchased Janine's second-hand Stenlight recently, Gavin (the engineer!) was quick to point out the weaknesses in the design. Apparently where the lead enters the top of the battery the wires fatigue, the connection becomes faulty and the light goes on the blink. I (the rough-as-guts home handyman) went to the spare materials data base and cobbled together the following solution to the problem (see Photo). I took some 25 mm PVC pipe

end-cap and drilled a hole in the top large enough to thread the Stenlight lead through. I then cut two notches on opposite sides of the end-cap so that the "thingy" sat over the top of the battery. It was like a set of shoulder pads for the battery pack. I then filled the interstitial space with silicone and after it went off, covered the whole thing with heat shrink plastic.



S. Bunton

Stephen Bunton

END OF AN ERA

Rumours have been rife for a few weeks but it can now pretty much be confirmed that Chris Chad and family are off to dustier pastures in Gunnedah, NSW. We will miss his trip reports, surveys and treasury reports laced with sardonic wit. We expect to see a rise in the number of pathetic sandstone cave surveys and trip reports. We wish Chris the worst of luck and hope the job doesn't work out so he can move back to Hobart where his talents can be put to much better use.

You may also note that Chris has forgotten to submit a photo of Toby for this issue. I'm very happy to not remind him prior to publishing.

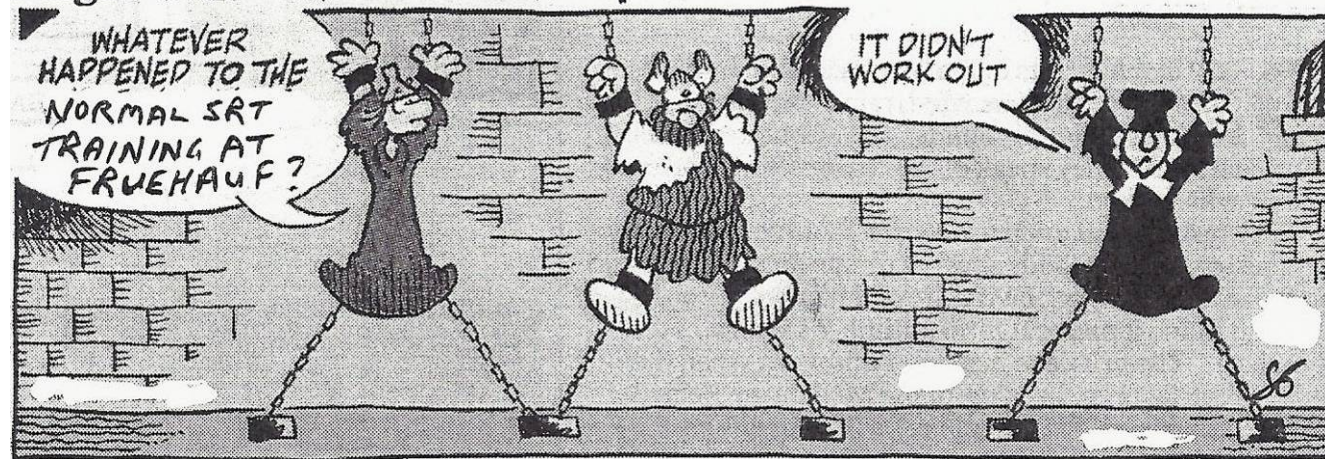
Alan Jackson

GEARSTORE SUPPLIES BOLSTERED

Guy has donated 10 bolt plates (aluminium) and 19 spits to the gear store. We thank him for the plates but hope the spits rot. Long live the battery-powered hammer drill. [We spit in his general direction – Ed.]

Gavin Brett

Hagar the Half Trained Troop



Trip Reports



G. Wise

Extravaganza

Geoff Wise

20-26 February 2011

Party:

20-26th Serena Benjamin, Tony Veness, Geoff Wise

20-25th Sarah Gilbert

20-21st, 24-26th Jane Pulford

21-24th Guy Bannink

26th Amy Robertson

Sunday 20/02

At least our packs weren't as heavy as the week before when we carried most of the gear in. It didn't take much over the hour to get to Camp Gumboot which was in pretty good condition given the rain we'd had. We headed off to retrieve the gear that was stashed in the cave. The bolters were making a nuisance of themselves getting down to business on the steps when we arrived at the entrance. The high water level and presence of bolters meant that getting the gear that was in the Wind Tunnel would be difficult; Tony found his tent floating in a pool inside. We rigged a rope and hauled the gear out and back to camp. Back at camp we set up tents and then geared up.

By the time we got back to the cave the bolters were at the first crossing inside the cave, leaving Amy to guard the new steps and ask all those who attempted to cross the questions three. The water was over waist deep at the first crossing. We made short work through to Hatwalk Tributary where I recovered the map I had left the previous weekend. We then continued on to the Eastern Passage and split into two groups; Sarah and Jane would inventory the emergency stash at Inner Base Camp then sketch the main streamway back to the rockpile while Tony, Serena and I surveyed up the Eastern Passage collecting forward and back sights to check any screw-ups in the orientation of the original survey. We surveyed up and linked into station 14, then headed back to meet up with Jane and Sarah at the start of the rockpile.

When we got there they weren't in sight so we headed into the rockpile and caught up with them at the corner where the formation is. We continued out having a look at the handwork of the bolters on the way.



G. Wise

Sarah reaching that all important water depth at the first crossing.

Monday 21/02

Ric and Janine were expected today but wisely didn't show. When I opened the tent in the morning there was a fair bit of hail on the ground. The river level had risen significantly during the night so no caving today. We spent the day at camp; I transferred some of MadPhil's in-cave sketches of the Mystery Creek Passage to 1:500 sheets. Jane left later that afternoon and Guy turned up (without Greg but with more port) after an apparent epic on the slippery walk in. His enthusiasm however was not diminished.

Tuesday 22/02

The river had dropped sufficiently for us to go caving. Back through the rockpile, Tony and Sarah worked in the main streamway around the Eastern Passage while Guy, Serena and I headed into Mystery Creek Passage with a similar task to Sunday, taking forward and back sights up the passage to confirm the heading and tie into a known station. We surveyed up to the rockfall, tying into station

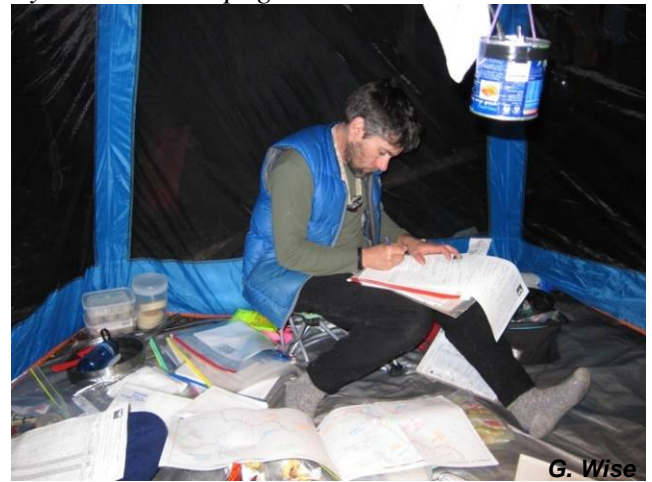
12. Back at the main drag Tony and Sarah had left a note; they had headed off to work between [station] ex94 and the Grand Fissure. We headed off to 'The Dig' to check out what Ric, Janine and Mario had surveyed on Australia Day and continue work there. We found they had surveyed around the room but not up the obvious lead, along the streamway. We also found two station 4s (this would later form the basis of the first crimes against surveying trial). After a bite, we resurveyed and sketched the chamber putting a station in at the stream and surveyed the crawl passage back to the main stream connecting into ex93. We then met up with Tony and Sarah; they were heading back to ex81 to survey a passage they had found that morning. Serena, wisely not wanting to be exposed to possible litigation from the self-appointed survey police, went with them. Guy and I decided to survey up the dig streamway and then head back to ex87 and survey the big borehole I look at every time I walk by. We surveyed up to the threeway junction in the dig. Guy went a little further but it was too wet so I took a shot up each way to get passage direction and then we bolted back to the Mystery Creek junction.

We surveyed a few legs up the borehole passage, like many places in Exit there are carbide marks of old survey stations here. After around 10 legs we hit a perpendicular passage and could see one of Tony's station-marking flashers. We stopped surveying and followed the passage until we came across the others. The passage was large, with sections of cracked mud and much gypsum. Guy and I overtook the surveyors and explored a little further until the passage came to an end. There may be possible high level passage here but access would be difficult. Tony suggested Gumboot Gallery for the name. Note to Greg: named for footprints there (possibly gumboot created) and that it was surveyed by members of Camp Gumboot.

Wandering back out, I taunted the others about the route they were taking through the rockpile, I always walk over a narrow slab with a bit of a drop either side that bypasses a bit of grovelling. Someone labelled it the 'slab of doom', I decided it was so easy that it should be called the DAWDLE OF DOOM (By the end of the week everyone was using the superior DAWDLE OF DOOM route.)



Patent Pending – One of Tony's station-marking flashers.



Tony hard at work back at camp on Tuesday evening. Hanging Monsieur's Bucket from the ceiling reduces the risk of standing in it.

Wednesday 23/02

Guy had developed a large swelling on the back of one of his knees [A better place than where he normally gets one while caving – Ed.] (perhaps a symptom of over enthusiasm or consumption of the 'Spanish Sausage') and decided not to cave today which was disappointing as Ric and Janine were turning up and could do with a ribbing re the lack of Scurions. They arrived, told us about the Christchurch earthquake and events in Libya, geared up and headed for the Western Passage while we were having breakfast.

We headed in to the Grand Fissure and through to the Kellers Squeeze - Camp Pie Circuit junction. We then surveyed Kellers using the DistoX for taking shots but entering the numbers on paper. Later when this was entered into Compass there was a large loop closure error. However because the DistoX saves the shot data to memory we were able to find two transcription errors (another crime against surveying) and fix the issue. We headed out via the Camp Pie Circuit. In Broken Column Chamber we added intermediate stations between the long theodolite legs and took splay shots (a shot from a station to a wall recording distance and compass) at some to get more accurate passage dimensions than the traditional LRUDs. I was starting to get cold after being in Kellers so we pulled the pin and headed out. On the way we tied some old traverse stations into theodolite stations.



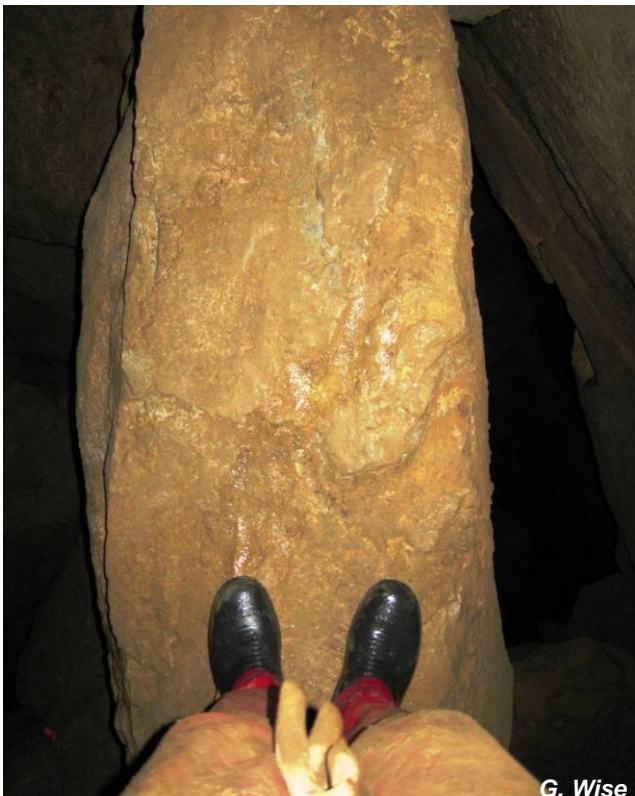
It's got some nice passage (for a cave at Ida Bay ...)

Thursday 24/02

Today Guy and Sarah sketched Gumboot Gallery, the passage we had found on Tuesday. Tony, Serena and I looked for a passage in the stream under the rockpile near Mini Martin that Arthur had told us about. We surveyed along the stream but didn't find the passage. We then surveyed a few shots up the Dribble Passage. We headed to Gumboot Gallery and met up with Sarah and Guy who had just about finished. Back through the rockpile, Serena, Sarah and Tony went to survey a stream passage under Old Ditch Road that Arthur showed us on 12/02/11. Guy and I headed out, Guy was leaving today and wanted to get out before dark and I wanted to grab the bolt testing gear and start testing the bolts installed on Sunday. Back at camp I couldn't find the notes so I headed back to the cave and enjoyed the glowworms while I waited for the others at the first crossing.



Would you go caving with these goons? Probably not a good photo to include on any advertising material for next year's expedition. Guy appears to be embarrassingly wet from the crutch down.



The Dawdle of Doom. Best not put this one in the brochure either – might be a bit scary for the mainlanders.

The others turned up with the testing notes, Sarah and Serena headed out while Tony and I tested and tagged the bolts on the first river crossing. Some were quite difficult to test due to being installed by a sadistic giant. I misinterpreted the notes and thought that the two bolts that hadn't been installed were on the second crossing so we decided not to start testing at the second crossing. It later turned out I was wrong: all four bolts were already installed, the two that weren't installed were on the first crossing.

Jane arrived later in the afternoon ready for a last hoorah and the inevitable hauling of gear out.

Friday 25/02



Friday morning at Camp Gumboot – typically bathed in glorious sunshine ...

As Sarah was leaving today, we loaded her up with as much as we could and headed into the cave. Today we flew through to Broken Column Chamber. Tony and Jane continued to collect passage dimensions of the chamber while Serena and I unleashed the full power of the DistoX/PDA combo on surveying the streamway below Broken Column Chamber. This is when the next crime against surveying happened. Part way along the streamway the PDA turned itself off and I lost about ten shots worth of data for the survey. I had forgotten to properly set up the survey file so it wasn't autosaving (if a chair was involved it would be described as a PICNIC). The stations were still in place so it wouldn't take too long to resurvey on the way out. We headed back up to the main chamber and met up with Tony and Jane. They had finished their job and it was almost time to head out. First we decided to spend 30 minutes looking for the entry to Lost Squeeze Passage. This passage appears to have been lost on numerous occasions and is evidence of yet another crime against surveying. We worked our way along the wall poking around until Jane found a decent sized opening quite close to the western end of the chamber. I headed down and found a passage barrelling along. This must be it. I ran into a string line. If this wasn't it then it was still something worth finding. I headed back; Jane and Serena came down for a look. Tony and I surveyed from the entry of the passage back to a station on the main drag, hopefully it will never be lost again.

That done, we all headed back to the streamway and I surveyed out to the point where you climb up out of the streamway. We then headed to Gumboot Gallery to take some photos by the light of a pineapple tin. A few more photos here and there and a brief stop near Old Ditch Road

to re-shoot a blundered shot from yesterday (another crime!) completed things. We left a barrel of gear including the bolt tester in the Wind Tunnel for next time. The gate was locked for the last time and then back to the camp.



A person and a passage somewhere in Exit.

Saturday 26/02

Amy (bless her heart) turned up to carry a load of gear while breakfast was going. We packed up, divvied up the gear and started the long slog out. We all had very heavy packs and cave packs or barrels in our hands. At one point going up the hill I decided it was easier to drop the mossie shelter and my cave pack, walk up the hill, drop my pack and go back for the previous. It felt better anyway. Tony and Jane came along and gave me a hand. We took it pretty easily; all up it took over two hours to get back to the carpark. All I can say is that we were shagged by then.

Organisation

Dehydrated main meals were cooked for the group, complicated somewhat by the presence of a heathen (also known as a vegetarian). Tony and Jane had dehydrated various fruit and veg to compliment each meal. Everyone organised their own breakfast, lunch and snacks for the week. Two gas stoves were used for cooking; we emptied two medium canisters and part used two more.

A large mesh beach shelter was used as a main cooking, eating and lounging area and to protect us from the ravenous mosquitoes. We put a tarp over the top to keep out the rain and provide an area for hanging gear up to dry. There was plenty of area for tents around the main camp. A few plastic tubs were used to store food, garbage and water.

Surveying was completed as a two part process, the first was to survey the section of cave or record missing passage dimensions for old stations that we were able to relocate. That line plot was drawn onto 1:500 sketch sheets after the day's caving and to-scale passage detail was then added to this sheet on the next trip to that area.

Important Lessons

- Organisation is key – Thanks Tony for doing the bulk of it.
- LED flashers are great for marking survey stations.
- The mesh shelter was a 'your chosen deity'-send for keeping away the mossies at camp but those stupid citronella wrist bands do nothing.
- Get changed quickly after washing in the creek because those stupid citronella wrist bands do nothing.
- Bacon and eggs for brekkie each morning might sound nice but it could end in disaster - ask Tony.
- Convince people it's a really nice walk and they should come and help carry gear.
- Don't let Serena use your portable espresso maker.
- Many parts of Exit now unofficially bear names THE <feature> OF DOOM.
- It was decided that STC needs a panel of judges to sit on crimes against surveying trials. Charges include not labelling stations correctly, losing data, not forwarding data to the archivist, not surveying obvious leads and anything else we can come up with. With these criteria everyone who has ever surveyed in Exit Cave is likely to be charged.

It was a brilliant week with much more done than we could have completed in 7 day trips from Hobart. We'll be doing it again next year so get ready.



Wild Caving – 2 Year Old Style

Amy Robertson

23 April 2011

With Mum Amy having spent the morning sauntering through Ghengis Khan with several VSA cavers and an MCCCer, Dad Dion and daughter Linda were keen to share some of their time (and responsibilities!)

Amy had scheduled Linda's introduction to wild caving to coincide with a Victorian assault on Mole Creek's Honeycomb Cave. So with around a dozen people underground, Linda had an opportunity to regard this underground stuff as 'perfectly normal', and being just one of the crowd.

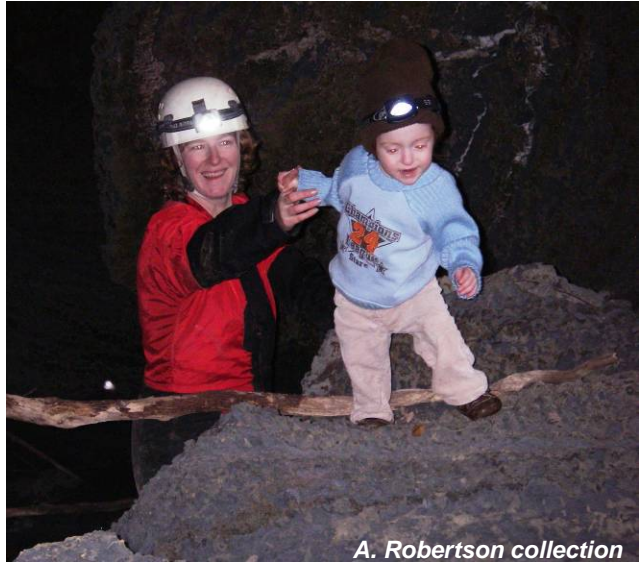
With every expectation that the cold, uneven ground or darkness might influence Linda to do a very short through-trip going out the next entrance 30 m away, we began our wander. Linda walked carefully holding one parental hand, occasionally grabbing a second on a steep or uneven surface or getting a lift over the stream channel. At the first exit she walked/climbed up the slope to see the outside world, then turned around and headed back down, keen to continue. "Yes", thought mum, "she likes it!"

Pausing to pick up an interesting rock, she found a \$2 coin - definitely treasure, into the pocket it goes! "People" was accompanied by pointing as Victorians seemed to play peek-a-boo in and out of side passages. "Cath" was identified quickly as a helper down from high jumps and crawling (or in Linda's case, strolling) through low passages, but Chalky's camera was another good distraction, and the "wheee" slope was good for a dirty bum - again and again.

Linda's safety beanie (head too small for any helmet, so yes we broke the ASF guidelines) would slip down into her eyes with the weight of the headlight on it, so needed to be pulled up every couple of minutes.

Linda stayed underground for more than an hour and explored much of the cave. When we finally brought her out for some food, she wanted to walk away and get back in there. First wild cave passed with flying colours, think I have a caver on my hands!

PS. At less than 9 kg, Linda will consider recruitment offers for exploration trips – but mum has to be invited too and will need a pack-carrier!



A. Robertson collection

Amy and Linda in Honeycomb Cave.



A. Robertson collection

The benefits of being only two feet tall - a VSA caver (Cath?) and Linda in Honeycomb Cave.

JF-10 Splash Pot

Janine McKinnon

24 April 2011

Party: Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon

Alan was getting very keen to de-rig Splash Pot. There seemed to be a total of two people prepared to brave Close To The Bone (CTTB) to get the gear out. One was away, and injured. The other was here, and injured. So the player on the ground at the time won the prize.

To sweeten the deal Alan offered a trip down "Harrow the Marrow" (HTM) pitch as part of the day. It is questionable as to whether taking 120 m of rope to the bottom of the cave, and back out again, dropping the pitch, and then de-rigging the cave, was a bonus. But it had looked like a great pitch from the top, and Alan rated it particularly

highly, so I was convinced. It would be my only chance to do it, so I couldn't pass the opportunity.

We got underground just after 10 am and made a fairly speedy trip to the start of CTTB, taking around 30 minutes, as far as I recall. The cave was fairly wet on the way down the entrance pitches, and thoughts about how wet the big one would be started to flicker through my mind. We had the usual joyful trip through CTTB, and arrived at the top of HTM two hours after entering the cave.

As neither of us had volunteered to carry a single 120 m rope, we tied the knot to join the two ropes we had brought for the job, at the top, before Alan went out along the traverse line. Alan descended first, and I could hear him getting quite excited as he got further down the drop. The waterfall he found himself underneath for most of the way had a lot to do with all this noise, I gathered.



Alan negotiating the pitch head at the bottom end of CTTB.

I started down I got a good look at the pitch. It is a beauty. The waterfall crashing over the edge beside me only added to the effect. 10 m down and I found myself under this waterfall, where its scenic value disappeared - as did any other views I had. As I kept descending I found myself passing in and out of the waterfall. Or really, it passing over, then away from me. The knot pass, where Murphy had the full force of said waterfall on me, was interesting.

Alan gave me a tour of the sights at the bottom, which didn't take long. We spent a few minutes looking up at the sinuous patterns the waterfall was making as it plummeted 112 m from the top. You've gotta love Scurions, where you get to see the top of a pitch so far above. It was very

clear why we had found ourselves in and out of the waterfall, as it was moving laterally by several metres, in a chaotic pattern.

We had decided to tandem prusik up, both to save time overall, and also reduce waiting time as we were both soaking wet and starting to cool rapidly. The prusik was mainly spent under water, with moments of relief from the deluge. Getting frequent, but short, rests whilst Alan did his bit, was a godsend. The company on the climb was also appreciated, by us both, I think. I can't think of a longer, wet prusik that I have done.



Janine negotiating the inappropriately placed straws in Tiptoe Passage (and one of Jeff's advisory signs).

We had the pitch de-rigged, packed up and were ready to go by 2.30 pm. Then the slog out started.

The first moment of relief was after I passed "those" straws. The risk of breaking them, and suffering never-ending opprobrium, was gone forever.

The slow grind up through CTTB went pretty much as we expected. Alan had the same shoulder injury I did, so we pair of (young and) old crocks weren't as fast as we would normally expect.

We left the ropes from the pitches in CTTB, plus my 50 m rope from HTM, in the small chamber at the entrance end of CTTB. Alan carried out the 70 m rope he'd taken in for HTM.

It took us about 40 minutes to get out from there.

We were both out by 6.45 pm, 8.5 hours after we went in.

Now there was only a short trip back to the start of CTTB needed to finish the de-rig. Would I be able to find a few willing souls to help me finish the job the following weekend?

JF-10 Splash Pot

Janine McKinnon

1 May 2011

Party: Nicolas Baudier, Trent Ford, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

With some willing troops marshalled, we headed off to finish the job started last weekend. Trent was keen as mustard, which is always a plus, Nico wanted to try some harder caving to "toughen up", and Ric was just being nice and helping his wife out. Such loyalty should be remarked on. So I am.

We got underground around 10.30 am and had an uneventful trip down the cave to the start of CTTB, our gear retrieval and turnaround point. The last of us arrived 1.5 hours after we started in. It was interesting to see that the amount of water flowing into the cave was significantly less than the previous weekend, despite heavy rainfall the previous afternoon and night (as reported to us by a local).

As a bit of a novelty on STC trips (the ones I do anyway) we had time to all sit and have a proper lunch together. Then the ropes were distributed, with Nico and Trent taking the ropes left the previous weekend. This just

happened to be all the ropes needing to be packed at this time. New, young and keen. There should be more of it.

I went up first, followed by Nico then Trent. They then started making their way out through the horizontal sections, with instructions to wait if they had any concerns or troubles anywhere along the way. Ric and I then followed doing the de-rig of the rest of the cave.

We arrived at the entrance pitch just behind the boys, to find no rope hanging down. Threats of a ransom needing to be paid to regain the rope were shouted from the top. That will teach me to put ideas in their heads, by telling them to check the rope below them was in place as they went up pitches.

Luckily they relented and we were all out and ready to go by 2:45 pm.

JF-10 Splash Pot

Nicolas Baudier

1 May 2011

[Please read with an outrageous French accent – Ed.]

Party: Nicolas Baudier, Trent Ford, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Aims:

- Bring ropes and gear left back from the last weekend trip
- Derig the cave

After all of us gathered at the sacrosanct stop at the bakery (which was for this time "Jackman and McRoss" instead of the holy "Banjo") and make sure that I played my role of cookies-maker well, we all took place in Ric and Janine's 4WD Subaru, direction: New Norfolk and the Junee-Florentine area; any wallabies could stop us !!!!!

Arrival on area (remark: the gate was left open: quick checking of our keys possession for not being locked in, and off we go!) Parking, preparations, muffins and let's go for the approach walk; the sky is still grey and unfriendly ... at least underground, we won't be missing much!

Remark: during the walk, explanation of the different tape sign on the trees log: path leading to different caves (it complete my apprenticeship ahaha)

The entry of Splash Pot is in a little valley; moss and fern covered, in the shade of giant eucalypts; in kind of T shape; 3-4 m long; 1.50-2 m large. The 1st pitch is not deep (5-6 m) and is surmounted by a little hill where a fern tree is growing on top of it, and where a tape was attached as an anchor for the first abseil.

It's very interesting for me to come caving here, and to notice during this trip the nature in such climate: everywhere is light, water and nutrients, life's blooming; giving birth to a complex and sure is delicate ecosystem! (cave crickets and spiders; moss; glow worms etc.) I love that!

Once the abseil done, we took off the gear to get to the heart of the matter: hundred meters of narrow bits, punctuated with little easy down climb sections. God bless my AU\$6 "bought at Vinnie's" yellow plastic rain suit! I think that Trent is kind of regretting of being dressed like a mechanic: it's going to be wet !!!! ahaha. And with a rocky ground (knees pads would definitely be A+). On the way down, I noticed that there is some small fossils onto those rocks (only Brachiopods for the few I saw, which are a phylum of marine animals that have hard "valves" (shells) on the upper and lower surfaces. Most species of Brachiopod went extinct during the Permian-Triassic extinction, over 250 million years ago; but many survive

today. For further details about them, don't hesitate and go on: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brachiopod>).

The narrow bits passed behind, we entered a little chamber which can contain 4-5 squeezed cavers, with a slightly raising ground, leading to the pitches: SRT gear back on place !!!!!

Words are missing for a French men like me, to do a correct description of the pitches; but the limestone with white marble incrustations, and this big open space once you abseiled the very first metres remains for me things that I won't forget!

Remark: Thanks to Janine for all the shooting, my Japanese soul did appreciate!!! ;-)

Ropes recovered, bags and gear assigned and time for a quick lunch! Quick look as well at the entry of the (in)famous section so-called "close to the bone"! It doesn't look that nasty ... but I trust Janine when she said that it's getting worse than it seems. (And it did exhaust THE Alan Jackson himself!!! It might be dreadful then!) By the time that Trent and photo masteress Janine finished prusiking their way up, I finished convincing Ric to go to France, and meet the cavers from my club!!! Good work!!! ahaha

Way up without any problems, Trent and I first, while Ric and Janine where derigging the pitches (to avoid Trent to turn into a giant frostbite styx!!!! Especially with his "automatic turn off" new Scurion!!!! aha) But fortunately, the narrow bits warned us (and finished convincing us to buy a decent plastic trog suit!!!) And criticizing generously Alan Jackson and make him responsible of everything (especially Trent's Scurion disfunctionment lol).

Important points:

Splash Pot successfully derigged.

Ropes, gears and bags from last trip recovered.

Failed attempt of ransoming Ric and Janine with the 4WD as hostage.

A box of French handmade cookies (montecaos), waiting outside the cave is a good idea!!!!

Tricky Trent's Scurion headtorch (after someone put his finishing touches to it) ;-p

Tough'n up !!!!

Conclusion:

Interesting cave (without "Close to the Bone" which would be a plus anyway!) but exhausting for the gear and the body!

Any characters are fictional, everything did happen, and any wallabies, cavers, or any sort of wild life were harmed!

Thanks for your reading!

I Hate Ferns ... and Other Stories

Chris Chad

8 May 2011

Party: Everyone of any intrinsic value to the club

Once again the membership for some reason found my very existence offensive and declined to take part in my Mother's Day caving trip. On the last trip I unwittingly unearthed some long-standing dispute between Alan and Gavin which had the unintended result (aside from an unusually venomous rant from Alan) of rules and proper procedure being brought to the attention of the club. As a result the option of killing myself in a vertical cave was off the table, so I would have to be content with horizontal death instead. I chose the Stan Murray area as my poison as I have unfinished business there.

Sure I was disappointed my monthly caving trip was going to be lame, but I reflected on the drive out there that regardless of my lack of enthusiasm, I had still managed to get away from home much earlier than on a work day, so clearly I still find caving has some appeal.

My progress was stopped slightly short on Kens Road due to tree fall and I didn't have enough spirit in me to pack the chainsaw. Instead I decided on a straight line approach and charged into the scrub that within metres became hideous chest-height ferns reminiscent of my recent Burning Down the House nightmare. It had been raining, so I immediately became wet and cold, and quickly started to think this was a rotten idea. Never-the-less I charged ahead with the intention of following the contact around the south-eastern side of the hill, which is where I theorised I would find JF-104 through to JF-107.

It wasn't long before I found a lovely little cave in the side of a hill. A short ramp led to a decorated room about 5 m x 5 m x 5 m. It was also lovely and dry, a welcome respite from outside. A short down climb in one corner yielded no continuation so I sat down to sketch it. During this time the sun briefly came out and I was treated to a compact beam of light that entered the cave shimmering on the back wall. I realised that there was natural 'lampenflora' growing on this wall like a biological gnomon as the light traced its way around during the year. Delightful.

There was no tag to be found so I assumed it was probably one of the caves Rolan had found in the course of his forestry study back in 1996. On reflection, it almost certainly isn't. I hadn't been to the gear store to get tags prior to the trip, so I couldn't tag my find (thus depriving a village somewhere of its idiot) nor did I have any flagging tape. I did manage to squeeze a waypoint out of my GPS though. For now it is simply known to me as WY Gemini.

I wandered further around the contact, before encountering the snig track and deep soil. The terrain is different from what the map would suggest and is confusing and difficult to negotiate. The scrub is impossibly thick in places (no ferns though), but never-the-less I began a systematic search towards the west. I had a demoralising hour thrashing my way back to JF-517 and was considering giving up and heading up to JF-527 to have a poke around there. Luckily I reasoned there would be no point taking the established route and took a parallel route further up on the limestone ridge, where within a few metres I happened

across JF-107. I must have walked right past it the first time I searched the area, but I'm sure it would have been obvious to the chap who cut down the two very large trees next to the entrance.

JF-107 was quite a surprise and a delight. Rolan's report suggested the cave was nothing particularly special, however earlier *Spiel* reports suggested it was possibly the biggest and best cave in the Western Florentine. I'm happy to report that Rolan's assumption that the tunnel terminates no great distance from the entrance is not correct and that the cave continues on. The cave is very horizontal and obviously very shallow because there are great curtains of fibrous roots everywhere. There are also plenty of interesting moonmilk and pendulite formations including the odd improbable example.

It turns out I'm scared of tree roots, and at one crawl, as I considered whether I really wanted to crawl through the veil of spooky roots, some movement caught my eye. As it turned out I had spotted a pseudoscorpion. Well, I thought Danilo Harms and Michael Rix would be pleased so I sat there and considered what to do. I didn't have a camera and any attempts to sketch it turned into a picture of boobs, but I worried that if I collected it then karst bureaucrats desperately trying to stay relevant in a time of weak state budgets and pressure on the public service would seize an opportunity to take on a soft target. In the end I collected the little blighter in the battery compartment of my backup light, reasoning that any karst bureaucrat foolish enough to stick their head up over such a trivial issue during a time of weak state budgets and pressure on the public service would probably find their head lopped off. I had absolutely no club gear with me anyway, so it wasn't a club trip, Your Honour. I was oddly elated with my find. Perhaps there is something appealing about this bug nerd stuff after all.

The cave continued on for a bit until I faced another spooky crawl. I had come to the conclusion that it was a bit of a big job for me to survey the cave alone, particularly as I would have to come back to tag my other find, so I decided to abort my explorations and continue my surface hunt for JF-104, JF-105 and JF-106. Before I turned around something else caught my eye. Well if it wasn't another pseudoscorpion! Then as I sat there wondering if I should condemn the last remaining specimen, I realised the cave was teeming with life (as far as caves go). I spotted several millipedes about 30 mm long that seemed to have at least a partial cave adaption, plus a few of those little white symphylans. I was also treated to one of those big cave spiders grabbing a cave cricket near the entrance. I concluded that Bunty is full of crap and bugs are easy to find in caves, so I left my pleasantly dry and horizontal cave for another day and headed out to the horrific scrub outside.

To punish me for not surveying JF-107 a comically heavy shower came through and I was soon miserable again wandering randomly through the horrendous scrub. Eventually I gave up and started the slog back to the ute. In doing so I stumbled across a stream running in the opposite direction to what I was expecting that, with further investigation, led to a small sump/spring. I managed to get my GPS working long enough to get a waypoint, and to determine that I had become somewhat lost. I guessed this was the spring near JF-104 that Rolan mentioned, and sure

enough, after a bit of hunting around I soon happened across its entrance.

JF-104 was simply a small window into the stream that runs under the hill. I can only assume the water from JF-527 comes out here as it seems like a very similar streamway. I GPS'd it, sketched it and continued my search for the missing JF-105 and JF-106 (The Eliminator). The editor can insert some pithy Eliminator comment here

because I couldn't find them, and the intermittent GPS track shows me frequently wandering aimlessly in the wrong direction.

When I found myself back at WY Gemini, I called it a day and attempted to find a fern-optimised route back to the ute. I was pleased I had found JF-107 and hope I can get a semi-competent bug nerd to tag along for the survey trip.

Pseudo Caving in JF-107

Chris Chad

15 May 2011

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

Alan was up for a bit of an easy trip, and I was very surprised when he suggested we head out to the Stan Murray area and I was even more surprised to hear he had Bunty and Serena keen to tag along as well. The plan was thus to survey JF-107, search for more pseudoscorpions, and find out if it was simply my incompetence that made JF-105 and JF-106 so elusive. To tell the truth, I spent all day wondering if this was going to be some bizarre hazing ceremony where Bunty and Alan would set me on fire, then wee on me and then indoctrinate me into some weird STC sub-committee.

I led them into the scrub where the party showed a complete lack of faith as I made increasingly small circles around my quarry. We found WY Gemini first and tagged it JF-566 (see survey on page 32). We then wandered up the gully to find JF-107 ... and for a worrying few minutes I thought I had lost it again. We were interested to find a running stream that was sinking just short of JF-517 in the process.

On finding JF-107, we ooohed and ahhed then set to work making the cave smell like ethanol. The cave was a bit of a treasure trove of critters so we set to work collecting various specimens including the plentiful mites, millipedes, spiders and symphalyns. We were also delighted to find another two pseudoscorpion specimens for the DNA sequencing blender. I found bug hunting to be quite an enjoyable pastime. It avoids the unpleasantness of caving, is quite social, and there is a perverse challenge in trying to make some small, blind critter leap to its death into a vial of doom.



JF-107 pretties (and Chris).



JF-107 pretties (and some stals).



Beauty in JF-567.

Eventually Alan and I got around to surveying the cave which now has a surveyed length of over 180 m, somewhat more than I was expecting.

We left the cave with our cache of collected critters and attempted to locate JF-105 and JF-106. Once again we failed, and I led the party a bit astray ending up a bit further away from JF-104 than planned (the JF-104 waypoint I took last time appears spurious). The upside of

this, whilst we were all yelling at each other, was that I happened across a delightful little steam cave disappearing into the hill. This was attacked with much enthusiasm, with Alan wriggling along to find a daylight hole and, when surface investigations were commenced, we found the spirited burbling resurgence not far away. We surveyed about 40 m of passage and tagged it JF-567 (see survey on page 30). In a drier time, I reckon you could just about turn it into a through trip.

We found JF-104 again, then we headed back hoping to happen across JF-105 & JF-106 as we went, but failing again. Bunty thought it was all an interesting little karst area, and Serena showed a lot of promise for the STC Fungi Appreciation Splinter Group. I'm finished with this area, so probably won't be back.

Postscript: The pseudoscorpions were posted to Danilo Harms at the Western Australian Museum. He had me excited with the first specimen as he felt there was a good chance it was a new species and lured me in with the promise of naming it after me (I never mentioned this to the others in case they stole my thunder). I subsequently couldn't resist telling my friends, family and workmates,

and despite it being terribly lame, the whole thing gained unexpected momentum. As such I was later shattered to learn that upon blending, the little blighter turned out to be of the same species as the specimen collected recently at Beginners Luck. Interesting in its own right as there is a river running in between the caves, and the other specimens appear to be confined to individual caves, but I now have a thousand business cards with "Chris Chad, Discoverer of *Pseudotyrannochthonius chrischadi*" that aren't much good to me. Quite genetically diverse between the caves apparently ... and the first specimen was a girl. All fascinating stuff. Danilo was delighted and makes it a pleasure to help out.

Bunty was planning to take the rest of the plundered wildlife to the Tasmanian Museum. I took the family only to be disappointed there was no display dedicated to our troglobitic marvels. In fact none of the displays appeared to have really changed in the past 12 months except they have pulled out a chunk of stuff in anticipation of funding that will probably not be received. As it turned out Bunty hasn't got around to it yet, possibly poring over a tiny pin board at home putting together his own private collection.

Smorgasbord Tidy Up

Alan Jackson

21 May 2011

Party: Serena Benjamin, Stephen Bunton, Sarah Gilbert, Alan Jackson

Some fanatical religious nutter had predicted the beginning of the end of the world to occur on 21 May 2010 so I figured what better way to spend your last day on Earth than groveling around shit holes in the Junee. Bunty, Sarah and Serena obviously agreed.

I had a long list of little jobs to complete in the Tachycardia area and this was attempt three at finishing them off. Both previous attempts resulted in walking in the opposite direction to that intended. Our first job was JF-Z76 (this cave has also been referred to as C1 in SS345:14-15) – the swallet located well below the contact a few hundred metres off the end of Chrisps Road (western branch). As described in SS381:16-19, JF-Z76 has changed somewhat as a result of a large fallen tree. The old water-sinking point has dried out and is an accessible 'cave' of sorts and a new gurgling sump pool has formed immediately upstream of the fallen tree. I had previously argued a lack of suitable rock for failing to tag this feature but with a strengthened resolve we located a handy little limestone face on the northern bank a few metres from the 'cave' immediately adjacent to the fallen log. So JF-Z76 is now JF-568.

The slog up the hill then commenced. Plenty of tree-falls made for slower going than usual. The GPS said we were near 'CV8', a blocked cave entrance I had found in September 2010 (SS380:11-13). I mentioned that I didn't plan tagging it but Bunty got on his high horse and said that if I'd mentioned it in a trip report and given it a label then I'd effectively created an X-cave. That couldn't be tolerated so I agreed to at least take everyone to the hole and then a group decision could be made on whether it deserved a tag.

Finding it proved a challenge, as I'd not strung up a pink tape over the hole last year. While straddling a log I was dishing out instructions to the others on where they should look when Sarah asked me what that thing between my legs was. It was the cave in question (and nothing else, you filthy-minded vagabonds). The others reckoned it was pretty cavey so it was tagged JF-569. The tag is located in the centre of the back wall of the walk (stoop?) in entrance.

Not far up the ridge the GPS guided us to CV7 (also found in September last year). This was tagged JF-570, on a narrow spur of rock protruding from the southern (downhill) side of the hole. No more than 20 metres from JF-570 I found a large shaft entrance in dense horizontal scrub. A ~5 m pitch lead to a sloping floor of mud and surface matter. A slot under a large boulder allowed access down to a small decorated chamber with all leads blocked. Disappointed, I tagged it JF-571, just over the lip on the southern side of the entrance.

While I was down JF-571 Serena had relocated a cave I had found on my first ever excursion to this area (the day Tachycardia was found with Gavin and Ken in November 2004). I'd never been able to find it again since. SS345:13-14 covers the discovery while SS345:14-15 lists it as being labeled C7. It is now JF-572 – tag on the right (east) wall when climbing down.

We then dumped unnecessary gear at JF-269 Toss Pot (a little up the hill from JF-572 – see survey on page 28) and headed out east to 'CV1' (from SS380:11-13) with tagging gear, but not until Sarah ate her seventh sandwich for the day. CV1 was tagged JF-573 on the back/right wall (uphill!) of the slightly lower entrance – have a look at the survey (when it's published) or entrance photo in the archive to make sense of that.

Back to Toss Pot (for sandwich number 8) and then further west towards Tachycardia. First stop was JF-279, which needed some pink tape on the tag and a sketch. This hole was originally called C14 and a separate number (C15) was assigned to a hole 4 m down the hill from C14. C15 is not worth tagging on its own so I will include it on the

survey for JF-279, so JF-279 is the artist formerly known as C14 & C15.

I climbed down into JF-280 (see survey on page 30) and chucked some tape on the tag and then we potted along to the tree responsible for JF-271 Fork Pot (see survey on page 27). This tag was left un-taped as it's in a bit of a hairy spot unless one has a rope and harness on. Some of these caves already had surveys drawn for them (by me about 6 years ago when my drawing skills were less than ideal). They were assigned STC map numbers and filed in the archive but have not been published till now as I was too embarrassed at the time. They now serve as a baseline for determining how much my digital drafting skills have improved. Some of these old surveys are published in this issue on pages 27-31. I then toured past JF-268 Pooshooter and hatched cunning plans for a return sometime soon. I then mentioned that there were a few more random 'C' caves just east of Pooshooter that were never looked at properly and vaguely wandered in that direction. Again I stood on a log and issued instructions that this whole area needs a thorough going over when Sarah spotted something between my legs for the second time. A bit of heaving and kicking expanded the minute hole such that it was big enough to contemplate entering. We rigged our trusty 11 mm rope and poked Sarah down (finders keepers – especially when they look tight). Turned out it was a ~15 m pitch to nothing much. An ascending bit of passage headed in the direction of a small choked doline just ~5 m downhill of the new entrance which turned out to be taped and marked as C25. So, for all intents and purposes, C25 is now JF-574 (see survey on page 32). I wouldn't want Sarah to think that by claiming JF-574 is synonymous with C25 that I'm trying to rob her of the glory associated with this find – it's just that it's an easy way to clear up the whole C25 legacy. The tag was placed on the eastern wall just down over the lip. Good work, Sarah.



Sarah slips into JF-574.

While Sarah had been poking about in JF-574 I had done a quick circuit to relocate JF-275 and a few other holes west of Tachycardia. Once the group was reunited we headed for Tachycardia. Since Sarah was suited up and I was getting my gear on for a sketch mission in JF-273, I suggested a brief foray into Tachy to show Sarah the nice bit of the cave (it does have one, honest) before the first pitch and the horrors of Gypsyland below. At the first little climb 10 m in the entrance I noticed some loose rock and freshly turned clay which I didn't remember from my numerous previous visits. At the narrow point below the climb I noticed more new things – several large boulders that had come out of the climb and jammed the squeeze. We tried shifting rocks but two of them were too large so we headed out again. So if you're planning a Tachycardia trip then pack the capping gear – it'll only take 10 minutes to clear. It might be best for everyone if we just leave it blocked and pretend the whole cave never existed. Maybe we only imagined the whole thing anyway and it was all just a bad dream.

I then popped into JF-273 and sketched – horrible, wet, crumbly cave – while Bunty popped some tag tape on nearby JF-272 Sawn Off Pot. Having survived JF-273, just, we set out with minimal gear for the few caves between Tachy and JF-276 Hairball Hole. We didn't even make it to the first one, JF-406, before stumbling across a 20 m shaft hiding under a tree. We wandered back to retrieve the rope and I bombed it. It was nothing more than a 20 m shaft with a sealed muddy floor and a bit of decoration coming down the back wall. It was tagged JF-575 in a rather awkward spot. The first few metres of the shaft are formed in the overlying mudstone and it's all a bit overhanging and crappy. The tag was placed in the mudstone but a couple of metres down the shaft – you can just see the tag and the big piece of pink tape hanging off it by getting down low on the western side of the entrance and shining some light around.

We shot a couple of legs down JF-406 so I could figure out how close it gets to intersecting Tachycardia (it would add a couple of metres to the depth) and gave the tag the usual tape treatment. Next is JF-404, which is nothing to get excited about, then JF-405, which is an horrendous shit fight of a cave that I crawled into once before many years ago. Mud, mud and more mud with a few sketchy climbs that were very hard to reverse in the mud. We didn't enter this cave far enough to get muddy and have relied on my distant memory of its horrors for the sketch. Then JF-276 got some tape (see survey on page 29), followed by a return loop to JF-575 via JF-275. JF-275 is a small but interesting cave well below the contact zone that we taped and sketched. We then packed up and bugged off home. There's still a bit of tidying up to do further west but I was pretty happy with the day's progress.

End note – due to holidays, work and other more interesting cave-related tasks I have failed to draw up the large number of surveys that should theoretically accompany this trip report. You can expect them within the next 5 years. According to Chris Chad the deadline for all outstanding surveys is 'when Serena gets around to drawing up JF-208'. This gives us all plenty of breathing space.

Veteran's Misfortune and Cashion Creek Carry On

Stephen Bunton

12 June 2011

Party: Serena Benjamin, Gavin Brett and Stephen Bunton.

This was supposed to be lame caving, which I was happy to do during the week whilst on school holidays but the weather conspired against me. In the end it was good to make it a more social affair. I just wanted to tie up a few little loose ends but like any good caving trip we unearthed more worms than we could can.

First of these loose ends was the untagged entrance to Beginners Luck Cave that was discovered on 9/10/2010 (SS380:16). The entrance was tagged JF-576 without fuss but when I went to photograph it I managed to break my camera. The replacement cost \$265! Serena had to return to the car for her camera and then it was photographed and GPS'd but not surveyed. The cave entrance is just a few metres from the JF-81 entrance to Beginners Luck Cave and joins the main cave passage as a parallel passage to the JF-81 entrance.

This was Gavin's first trip to the deep north of the Florentine and he liked "the vibe" of the place. He suggested we run around and see what we could find. I had forgotten that Alan and I had found another cave just nearby but Gavin's suggestion jolted my memory. We relocated this without problem but I had also forgotten that the problem with this was that it was so obvious that it was surely known to those of yesteryear. I wanted to sort this problem out and so I returned to the car to read Rolan's Florentine Forestry Report (Eberhard, 1996). The cave matched none of the descriptions so we returned to the cave entrance determined to map and tag it.

Unfortunately the first side passage on the left led to an extensive passage that doubled the length of the cave and finally to another entrance. This was the entrance with the bird's nest mentioned in Alan's trip report from our previous visit. I had forgotten this detail; in fact I had forgotten the cave entirely. There was now a good chance that the cave did match a description from yesteryear and therefore more research was needed. It would also take the rest of the day to survey it and that was not our main mission for the day, which lay with Cashion Creek Cave(s!).

Eventually at home I did troll through The Archive and find a brief description that matched the cave and its location (Parker, 1978). The cave is JF-196 and now it needs tagging on one entrance.

The problem with caves in this area is that John Parker had run out of metal tags and so he tagged them with plastic tags and a nail. By now most of the nails will have rusted and the plastic tags have probably decomposed. I asked Rolan if in his studies he found any plastic tags in the area during his 1996 study but he had not. Anyone keen for another lame but confusing and not necessarily productive day?

We relocated to Cashion Creek Caves and ate lunch sitting on a real seat in the Land Cruiser; luxury! After this I showed Gavin and Serena the map and the dilemma:

Cashion Creek Cave is actually two caves and three entrances. Since it was JF-6, I wanted to use the imminent JF-600 numbers for the other entrances of these caves in order to make them easier to memorise in future. That was our mission.

The first problem was that when we went to the smaller more northerly cave, there were two entrances, not one as marked on the map. I'd only ever remembered one entrance to the smaller cave. At this stage it was still a reconnaissance and so we relocated at the main Cashion Creek Cave; the longer more interesting and more often visited one. Here we tagged this entrance JF-6. We then entered the cave and proceeded to the back entrance, which is up an 8 m climb.

I ascended first until close to the surface but a dicey looking boulder in a vertical squeeze blocked my way. Gavin, who is less of a fat bumbly than I am, overtook me on the climb and scrambled out the entrance. He then tagged this entrance JF-600 and left his pack there. He GPS'd the entrance and brought the GPS with him back through the cave in order to relocate his pack on the surface again later.

Down below we started the other phase of the Cashion Creek Cave mission: finding a pseudoscorpion. Serena was lucky enough to find one so that will make our WA Museum friends happy. We could not find any *Goedetrechus* beetles, however, and this was our second attempt. Whilst we were initially searching Gavin went to the end of the cave, which he estimated was about 20 m beyond the extent shown on the map. The water level was lower than when I had visited the cave previously. When he returned he got into the action by finding two opiliones, which will provide me with yet more biology homework. We signed the visitors' book, only to note that I was the last person to sign it back in October on that particular bug hunt.

We returned to the surface and then set off in search of Gavin's pack, which we found without fuss. I located the streamsink that feeds the cave. Gavin and Serena combed the ridge above and I eventually found them descending a new cave somewhere over the top of the main cave. This proved to be a tight, vertically descending passage to a depth of 15 m and it was tagged JF-577. Gavin hates surveying these things and we just left it. Gavin promised that he would be back. Unfortunately as we returned to the road he realized he had forgotten to GPS it, although it was photographed.

Back at the starting blocks we tagged the left entrance of the little cave JF-602 and the larger entrance closer to the resurgence, JF-601. This order will make more sense to someone coming to the caves from the right direction. Serena and Gavin entered JF-601 but Gavin could not get through to the JF-602 daylight hole, although Serena did. There is still a small void between rocks to the right, south, of the JF-6 entrance, which needs the JF-603 tag.

Back at the car we consulted the map only to find that we could make no sense of it. The 1995, Phil Jackson, SCS map did not seem to resemble the little cave much at all. So much for clearing up all the confusion in this area! Rather than returning to the cave to ground truth the map

we decided our time would be better spent on our next mission.

Our final mission for the day was to eliminate a couple of JF-X numbers across the road. So we headed across the road and followed the stream down to try to find JF-X143, a 5 m inflow cave and JF-X144, a 5 m outflow cave. We didn't find caves that matched these descriptions but we did find a rather interesting mini karst area on the western side of the Florentine Rd.

After some distance the Cashion Creek Cave stream enters a cave with three obvious entrance pillars. It flows around these pillars and out to follow along under a small cliff. Behind the middle pillar in the entrance to a cave proper, a tributary stream emerges from a side passage. The cave does a dogleg to the right at a place where there are some lowdown stalactites. It then gets low and crawly and continues about another 10 m.

The stream continues about 25 m before it sinks into a small, triangular, almost impenetrable passage at the end of a little blind valley. On the small hill directly above this Gavin entered a hole leading 5 m down a climb, in a phreatic tube, to stream level. The passage at the bottom headed back upstream almost to the sink. There was a possibility to push a low wet crawl downstream as well. At this stage we were convinced that we were onto something new because the caves did not match any of the descriptions of caves in the area. We would have to return to the car and consult the book again. If I wasn't on holidays, I would have got the appropriate photocopies done at work and carried them with me. It also meant that I would have to consult the STC Archive when I got home.

Interestingly enough when I did consult The Archive looking for information about the cave near Beginners Luck, John Parker (*ibid.*) mentions stopping to look at the caves opposite Cashion Creek Cave, on his way home. His description is brief but reasonably accurate.

Gavin and Serena continued on "downstream" but over the hill. Eventually Serena found the outflow stream. We now have a happy little karst area to map. Gavin was very inspired with this lame caving and vowed to return before too long.

As soon as I got home I drew up mud maps of what we found and the localities. These will be in the archive because we can't publish cave locations in the *Spiel*. [A map plotting JF-6, JF-577, JF-600, JF-601, JF-602 & JF-603 entrances is in the archives – map number 7JF.STC270 – Ed.]

The next day I showed my mud map to Rolan and he confirmed that the unenterable inflow cave was JF-X143 and the outflow JF-X144. Rolan, however, did not notice John Parker's cave or Gavin's hole. More lame tagging and surveying required!

References:

Eberhard, R. (1996) *Inventory and Management of Karst in the Florentine Valley - A report to Forestry Tasmania*. Forestry Tasmania.

Jackson, A. (2011) *Biospeleology for Beginners – Part 1*. SS380:16

Parker, J. (1978) Florentine Valley SS141:2-6

The Curse Continues – More Florentine Fun

Stephen Bunton

15 June 2011

Party: Steve and Kathy Bunton

I managed to convince my dear wife that it was such a nice day in Tasmania; cold crisp, lovely valley mist and clear blue skies above, where you can see every peak in Tasmania; that we should spend it groveling around in the damp, cold slash and dogwood regrowth of the Florentine. She thought that was a good idea. I suspect it was more to witness first hand the secret men's business we get up to tagging caves and other related endeavours. I promised her that it would be a lame caving day.

We started 900 m up Settlement Rd at the track to Beginners Luck Cave's JF-80 tag and surveyed three legs across to the cave that I recently identified as JF-196. We dropped the tape down the impenetrable rift entrance (BLRift in the GPS) and I quickly went into the cave to get the depth. Yes, without Alan on the trip we reverted to old technology and without a Disto surveying is much slower. How did we survive in the old days? We then surveyed to the entrance, tagged and photographed the BLRift1 (in the GPS, now edited as JF-196) entrance. A bit more mucking around and we surveyed the whole cave. Initially I thought of putting a new number on the Birdsnest Entrance but I decided against it, mostly because if you find one entrance, you will find them all. John Parker (Parker, 1978) reported three entrances but surveying revealed seven. Tagging 7

entrances, three of them impenetrable, all within 10 m of each other, definitely crosses that dark line into the realms of obsession!

We then headed back to Cashion Creek area to finish our business there. The first job was to tag JF-603, a small hole to the right, south of JF-6 and one that I had mistakenly entered in the past. JF-603 is one of two entrances within 5 m of each other. You can see the same spot on the floor 5 m down from both entrances so I only bothered to tag the one on the right. JF-603 wasn't GPS'd because I had bigger fish to fry and time was getting on. [And when you're a Luddite it takes longer than the 15 seconds it takes the rest of society to save a waypoint ... Ed.]

Kathy went back to the car to stand in the sunshine to warm up. In her meanderings she found the remains of the hut at the corner of Westfield Rd and the Florentine Rd. I can't remember ever seeing the hut before although I knew that people spoke of the hut on Westfield Rd as if it had some significance but this I can't remember either. I was always under the impression that the hut was somewhere out in the boonies, way east, along that great loop of Westfield Rd. Now I know.

On the opposite side of the creek we tagged the impressive flow-through cave, with the three entrance pillars, as JF-578 (see survey on page 27). We then headed downstream to the inflow that was JF-X143. We tagged it as JF-579 and photographed it. We did not GPS this but headed up to the small cave Gavin found last weekend where we would have better GPS reception. Gavin's hole was only 5 m or so away and the GPS was reading 9 m accuracy but

wandering all over the place. We tagged, photographed and GPS'd Gavin's grovel as JF-580. (see survey on page 27)



The remains of the hut.

En route to the outflow JF-X144 that Serena relocated last week we found another quite large entrance with a steep leaf-litter slope leading into it. We glissaded into the cave and walked down to a little saddle. Kathy had the better light and confirmed that 2 m below us, there was in fact a pool. We headed down over some little rocks to our left and this came to water level. I peered left and confirmed that this tannin-coloured pool was in fact a sump. I crawled through under the pillar that makes up one side of the saddle and peered into the downstream sump that I had spied from above. This was a new cave and basically it was just a pool of water. I called it New Pool Cave. It was GPS'd and tagged JF-581 (see survey on page 28) well down inside the cave, on the pillar beside the saddle, since this was the only bedrock that was not covered in moonmilk and I did not want to drill into the enormous green boulder hanging over the entrance. The tag did not show up in the photo of the entrance.

Time was really against us at this stage and we had to complete the day's mission of tagging the outflow that was JF-X144. It is now JF-582 (see survey on page 27). This cave is about 10 m long but at about 5 m in there is a low arch, some phreatic Sword of Damocles, that would force you to get pretty wet as you crawled beneath it. We photographed this last cave before returning to JF-578.

I wanted to do a proper survey of this cave but it was almost dark and our enthusiasm was exhausted. We went into the cave so that I could at least make a memory sketch of it later. Kathy was at first impressed with the number of huge *Hickmania* in the cave as well as the number of cave crickets before almost freaking out with the seething mass of cave biota. At one point Kathy counted a cluster of two-dozen crickets. I called the cave Cricket Cave because of the number of crickets but also from the three stumps at the entrance that make the wicket!

If someone wants to return to this area and do some better surveys, then the things that need doing are:

On the Cashion Creek Cave side of the road;

- JF-601/602 Check against the map.
- JF-603 GPS and better survey.
- JF-577 GPS and survey.
- GPS the streamsink that leads into Cashion Creek Cave.

- Link all these together, plus JF-600 in an overland survey. Bring a disto – you will be faster!

On the western side of the road:

- JF-578 Cricket Cave. Proper survey and push the upstream wet crawl.
- JF-579 Push the wet downstream crawl to JF-580. They are only a few metres apart. GPS and survey.
- JF-580 Push the upstream wet crawl to JF 579. A bit of gravel removal may do the trick. Survey.
- JF-581 New Pool Cave needs a better survey. The upstream and downstream sumps could be dived if anyone was really keen.
- JF-582 Push the low wet upstream crawl. Do a better survey.
- Overland survey to link all these together.
- Retrieve Alan's drill bit. The subject of this week's curse!

And for stuff I don't know anything about:

- JF-45 is still to be found.
- There is still a resurgence on the east side of the road, JF-X14.
- JF-X142 a possible archaeological site "G10-2" has still to be located.

Does this sound like another lame days caving or two? Bring a wetsuit!

References

Parker, J. (1978) Florentine Valley SS141:2-6



A multitude of crickets in JF-578. [Bunty suggests there were two-dozen crickets but I can see three-dozen just in this photo alone. Luckily he teaches science and not maths – Ed.]

Other Exciting Stuff

First Record of Dolomite Karst at Pieman Head

Rolan Eberhard

The karst is associated with a minor occurrence of dolomite 1.5 km north of Pieman Head, on the west coast of Tasmania, and roughly halfway between it and Rupert Point (Photo 1). The grid reference based on a GPS reading is 325938E 5386269N (GDA94). The dolomite comprises a fine-grained, light grey rock with frequent siliceous veins. X-ray diffraction analysis at Mineral Resources Tasmania confirmed that the rock is dolomite, with minor quartz and traces of mica (R. Bottrill, pers. comm.).

Dolomite has not previously been recorded at this location, which occurs within an area mapped geologically as the Precambrian Rupert Beds (Gee *et al.* 1969: Geological Atlas 1:63,360 Series Pieman Heads) – interbedded quartzite, siltstone and conglomerate, correlates of the Rocky Cape Group. Minor dolomite is not unknown within the Rocky Cape Group (e.g., dolomite in association with Irby Siltstone near Rocky Cape); however, it is likely that the ‘Rupert Beds’ are actually a correlate of the basal Togari Group (Forest Conglomerate), implying that the dolomite is equivalent to the Black River Dolomite (C. Calver, pers. comm.). Black River Dolomite crops out extensively between Smithton and the Arthur River and is karstified at many locations.

The scale of karst at Pieman Heads is constrained by the limited extent of the dolomite outcrop, which comprises a few square metres of rock poking through a cobble beach berm at the backshore of a small cove. Karst development is confined to numerous small runnels and pits with sharp intervening crests (Photo 2). The runnels are oriented broadly in the direction of the prevailing onshore winds and are clearly influenced by the exposed coastal setting. The siliceous veins are more resistant to erosion and protrude above the surface of the surrounding weathered dolomite.

The dolomite was found during a traverse on foot of the coast from Pieman Head to the Interview River. The geology is well-exposed on this coastal section but no other occurrences of dolomite were noted. Dolomite crops out on the coast south of Pieman Head at Duck Creek, and again at various locations between Cape Sorell and Point Hibbs. A well developed coastal karst including minor caves is present at Point Hibbs.



Photo 1. General view of dolomite outcrop north of Pieman Head. Only the rocks in the foreground are dolomite.



Photo 2. Karren development on the dolomite.

Exit Commonsense Management

A discussion of strategies for the management on Exit Cave with Rolan Eberhard 18/5/2011

Stephen Bunton

Present: Guy Bannink, Serena Benjamin, Stephen Bunton, Siobhan Carter, Arthur Clarke, Matt Cracknell, Pat Culberg, Tony Culberg, Rolan Eberhard, Sarah Gilbert, Jane Pulford, Adrian Slee, Tony Veness and Geoff Wise.

The evening started well for me when it was announced that Kent Henderson had quit ACKMA and I could make my point that Ken's little folly, which had grown into a fully blown "organization", was no good for caving and that it had eviscerated ASF. All the middle level cave managers who could do so much good for caving are no longer involved in ASF, when they should be and could be making such a valuable contribution. The significance of

this situation was directly relevant since the only time we see Rolan, despite him being a member of the club, is at times like this when he comes to "consult" with us on matters pertaining to his job in park management. I would like to see Rolan more involved with the club.

Rolan stated that he was very impressed with the Exit Cave map as it currently stands and he thanked us sincerely for our efforts. I must declare my own hand here that I have not been involved at all with any of the surveying. Also I am not very familiar with the cave only ever having done a handful of trips into the cave. I tend to think that once I've seen it and got some type of appreciation for the cave, then I really shouldn't go back too often because I am aware of my own impacts upon the cave.

The real proceedings were kicked-off with Rolan expressing his disagreement with Ric's email that effectively said "If it ain't broke don't fix it!" I thought that this was the most concise email Ric had ever written

but Rolan shrugged it off believing that people with thirty-year-old attitudes will eventually die out ... unlike managers / bureaucrats who will be with us forever!

When it comes to attitudes to cave management Ric and Rolan would be at absolute opposite ends of the normal distribution bell curve.

Rolan believes that the cave is fragile and in his 30 years of experience in visiting the cave many parts have been seriously degraded. This degradation can only have come from club cavers since they are really the only ones who have visited the cave. Tony pointed out that the best protection for fragile cave passages is their remoteness: 2 hour's drive, 1 hour's walk, 3 hour's caving from Hobart.

Rolan's belief is that the cave would be best served by implementing various levels of protection to certain zones within the cave.

One way of ensuring that the cave is not further degraded would be to implement a system of leader accreditation as exists for Kubla Khan. Various reasons were given as to why this is a bad model to follow, including the fact that Parks are under-resourced to accredit leaders and the fact that members of clubs are then continually imposed upon to take groups through the cave. In reality there are very few people who know the cave well enough to be leaders.

There was the belief that much of the degradation was from parties not knowing their way through the cave and trampling everywhere in order to find the way on.

A better suggestion was that several standard routes could be available for recreational trips. The main ones are the Valley Entrance through trip and in and out the main entrance, through The Rockpile and up to the Grand Fissure. A way to limit the possible devastation would be for parties to nominate where they are going to visit in the cave. Whilst this is already done on the written permit, there could be a tick-a-box pro-forma on future permit application forms.

There was some feeling at the meeting that most of the devastation pre-dates the current generation of cavers. The cave was rarely visited in the '90s. Before this time and during its exploration the cave was very popular and visited by larger parties who seem to have gone just about everywhere. Since the '90s, attitudes to cave conservation have changed and cavers are more aware of the Minimal Impact Caving Code.

There was a suggestion that a requirement of each trip could be that people provide photos at various points within the cave and this could document the deterioration of the cave. Hopefully there would not be any further damage and current cavers could feel exonerated. As it stands cavers are asked to provide a report of their trip including any damage they notice. Data on the cave's degradation must exist somewhere i.e. where the permits are filed (if people have reported accurately – unlikely).

My questions were intended to ask Rolan what outcomes Parks are managing for and why does the cave need managing at all? Why can't people just visit the cave whenever they like? It is public land just like any other National Park, State Forest or Coastal Reserve and there are fragile areas within these that people are free to visit.

Whilst Ric's viewpoint is considered by many to be quite extreme there is a fundamental philosophical point to it, that of freedom to visit public land - the land we all own.

Locking it away and saying that people can't go there ever only tends to alienate people and lead to views that are more extremist.

Again Rolan's best answer was that he hadn't heard that type of argument for thirty years and he believed that this sort of thinking would die out. Defending people's basic freedom is, I'll admit, a fairly old-fashioned concept but I don't think it will die out. Rolan keeps telling us that we are in fact in a privileged position in that we are some of the few members of the community who can in fact visit these parts of our State.

My argument is that caves seem to attract a mentality of management for management sake and that they are over-managed. Rolan assured us, or spilt the beans a bit, that Exit Cave would be treated no differently from other caves in the World Heritage Area. To me this indicated that there will be other "No Go Zones" and "Restricted Access Caves" in the Southwest and we won't find out about them until we are asked to comment on the forthcoming management plan. The reason we are holding such a discussion at this time is because management strategies must be included in the management plan.

The discussion raised the issue of who can go to the cave. At the moment only cavers who are ASF members are allowed to visit the cave, along with Parks staff on management trips, and scientists who can apply for special permits. We did mention that Parks staff could undertake jollies into the cave under the guise of management trips and this thought irks the caving fraternity. It seemed that Parks staff don't have to be members of ASF, they are entitled to visit the caves just because they work for the "company". I believe that if Parks staff want to do a management trip then someone needs to approve their trip. I know this leads to another level of bureaucracy but as cavers we want more integrity from Parks.

Whilst Rolan was canvassing our opinions and representing management it was impossible to tell what his own beliefs are and I hope I haven't misrepresented him here. I was quite willing to play devil's advocate and at various times I am sure he was too. One interesting point he raised was that in future ASF membership might not be considered robust enough. Whilst this is a recognised qualification at the moment it is no guarantee that ASF members do follow their own Minimal Impact Code.

Besides the proposal for set recreational routes through the cave there was a proposal for "No go zones". This included the type localities for various troglobitic species as proposed by Stefan Eberhard (1999). At various stages people annotated the latest version of the Exit map. I couldn't help but feeling that they were giving up their opportunity to ever go to these place ever again. There was a feeling that no-one ever went there anyway and these areas were well respected for what they are. My attitude is "How do you know that no-one will ever want to go there again?" They might. If they are "No go zones" then it is really easy for a petty bureaucrat to refuse a permit to visit the area merely because that's what it says in the rules. There would be no discretion and given the calibre of petty bureaucrats I have dealt with in the past it is most unlikely that they would have the breadth of view to consider such an application realistically.

The discussion expanded to tackle the broader question "What are we managing the cave for?" We just don't need

management for management sake – it needs to be for a reason and there need to be measurable outcomes. It seems conservation is a good management objective, the desire for recreation needs to be considered and so too is exploration. These days exploration carries with it an obligation to survey and added to this in a cave such as Exit was a further obligation for appropriate track marking. It would also be good, if you wanted to do photography, that you would be specific in nominating where you were likely to go.

It seemed as though newly discovered areas revealed just what the cave would have looked like before it was well trogged. There was a suggestion that today with better lighting we are better able to see where we need to go and also that the devastation of the past is more visible. It would be a pity if future exploration opportunities were denied to us. This is unlikely given the nature and progress of the Exit Cave project and the vast amount of undiscovered or unmapped cave.

It was thought that the cave mapping should continue because a resource is better managed if the extent of it is known. My argument is that there is more to management than restricting access and that there are various obligations the Parks Service needs to commit to as well. Not least of these is the keeping of records of cave visits and some analysis of this data, not just for Exit Cave but for other caves as well. There needs to be training of their staff in order to appreciate the caves better and to better understand the aspirations of cavers. There is also the capability for Parks to check whether or not any person on the permit is in fact an ASF member through the online ASF Membership Database.

I do have real issues with the fact the decision as to whether a person can visit a Restricted Access Cave, is made by one petty bureaucrat often with very little cave experience. This decision could be quite arbitrary and made by someone with very little interest in caving. Rolan has tried to implement programs to increase the awareness and skills of Parks personnel, which is admirable.

Rolan pointed out that for the Rangers at Hastings, administering caving is only about 1% of their responsibility.

This heightened our awareness of how stretched resources are in this area. Despite the fact that they are under-funded Parks would be happy to supply the stringlines for track

marking which could be installed as we survey. Track marking alone would probably be insufficient and signs would be necessary for navigation and to delineate the No Go Zones. Rolan said that he had already made up enamelled stainless steel signs. This was a bit of a give away that decisions had already been made within the framework of the Southwest Management Plan. I know this meeting was not merely lip-service but at this point it certainly looked like it and I'm glad that Rolan does consult with us because in reality he has the power to act unilaterally.

Whilst Parks needs to manage Exit Cave the reality is that we will do all the work; surveying, drawing the map, track marking and putting in signs. When it comes to cave management, the expensive item is labour; string and signs are cheap by comparison. The club was quite willing to embrace the fact that they would be doing all the work and that there was still a lot to do.

The meeting ended with Rolan admitting that the meeting had raised other issues that he needed to consider. He also needed to consider areas within the cave more carefully in terms of their possible future zoning. He said that he would come back to us with some more definite proposals. At the end of the meeting we gave away the copy of the map we annotated. I am not sure that this was the best thing to do. Whilst we did get some remuneration from Parks, through a Wildcare grant, it was probably insufficient to compensate for our intellectual property. This does show a great generosity of spirit from the club or possibly a naivety.

As we gave the map away Parks can now use it to lock up areas and keep us out. In some ways the words of Ric's email were prophetic.

I realise that there were other people present who may not have seen this meeting as I did. This article is not meant to be a set of minutes, although it should reflect the discussion. This is meant to be more of an essay to explore the issues and record the things that need further consideration.

Reference:

S. Eberhard, 1999, Cave Fauna Management and Monitoring at Ida Bay, Tasmania. *Parks & Wildlife Service, Tasmania, Nature Conservation Report 99/1*

Chillicon Capers – The 28th Biennial Conference of ASF

Chillagoe, Queensland 17th – 22nd April 2011.

Stephen Bunton

Present: Serena Benjamin, Grace, Kathy and Stephen Bunton, Sarah Gilbert, Tom Porritt, Adrian Slee (STC) and about 80 others.

Chillagoe was one of the more prominent caving areas in Australia that I had wanted to visit for a very long time. Attending the ASF Conference there gave me a great opportunity to see what is there at a time when there were most likely to be a number of committed locals to guide me through a sample of the caves.

Saturday 16th. After a 6 am flight from Hobart we finally arrived in Cairns and met Sarah at the airport. Chillagoe is 200 km NW of Cairns, about 3 hours drive. Actually we had to wait for the road to be cleared after a nasty traffic accident [*traffic collision – Ed.*] near Kuranda, and so it took quite a bit longer than that.

We arrived to find that Adrian and Serena had been around for a few days and they had already slotted themselves into the caving scene pretty easily. This was centred on the rather impressive Chillagoe Caving Club headquarters in the old school house. We dropped Sarah off here and she joined the others for a number of their trips. Hopefully everyone will write-up their own adventures and I'll just report on all the boring, incidental stuff, like meeting up with old friends and hanging around in the pub.

Sunday 17th. After registration at about noon ably handled by Peter Bannink, Guy's brother and almost his clone, the first event was the evening's Opening BBQ. I'd already met a number of old acquaintances around town but it was great to informally mingle and chat about what we'd been up to since we'd last met at Mt Gambier 4 years ago, CaveMania, 6 years ago or in some cases even longer.

Monday 18th. The first session of the morning was the welcome by the Shire Mayor and the start of the sessions where papers were presented. The keynote speaker, who presented a number of papers, was Dr Emil Silverstru, a noted Romanian academic now living in Chilliwack, BC, Canada. His main interest was in karst terminology, semantics and slaying sacred cows. He was staying at the same accommodation cabins as we were and so I chatted to him a fair bit. Later he admitted to me that he was surprised that more people didn't contest his notions. I tried to reassure him that there were so few people who were interested in such stuff, without saying that the majority couldn't give a stuff ... and neither did I.

The local geologist was a rather boring speaker with an interesting topic and a good Powerpoint with great diagrams. He had helped with the interpretation in the local visitor centre, The Hub, and a few days later we checked it all out. Actually it was much easier to read the geological history aimed at kiddie level. I'll even dumb that down a bit for you in my précis:

A long time ago Silurian – late Devonian limestone was laid down in reefs off the coast of Queensland. The continents drifted back and forth. The land got buckled, not once, not twice but three times and with various overthrust folds, the limestone was carved into vertical dipping lenses. Eventually these would be exposed individually as tower karst. Meanwhile large granite intrusions introduced mineralisation into the area and metamorphosed the limestone into marble. One of the world's richest goldmines, Red Dome, is still operational in the area and there are numerous marble quarries in the surrounding area although these are no longer used (see photos) since the cut-stone mafia bought them all out and now makes money for their relatives back home by importing Italian marble rather than processing the Aussie stuff.

It's always considered poor form for the locals to run trips during the presentation of papers, so many of the trips were conducted after dinner. On Monday night we joined Winfried Weiss on a trip to Queenslander from the Little Italy entrance (CH-55), a ladder pitch entrance into the cave and through trip to the main walk-out entrance (CH-51). Serena was in a party going in the reverse direction.

Queenslander was the cave I really wanted to see because it is one of the most extensive, most interesting and quite typical of the local caves. It is also one of the most biologically diverse. It rated as one of the Top 5 in the world on the list I spied at Postojnska Jama earlier in the year (see *Speleo Spiel* 383:17). This was due to two things. Firstly, the tower karst caves have numerous daylight holes which mean many accidentals find their way into the caves and these eventually supply nutrition to the cave fauna. Secondly the cave was quite well studied in the early '70s by Brother Nicholas Sullivan, a visiting American scientist on an SSS expedition - and the fauna was subsequently well documented.

Queenslander was quite challenging, in fact I was surprised how challenging the caves were at Chillagoe. The main cave passages are phreatic and form mazes of interconnected passages of varying shapes and sizes. This offers a range of squeezes and climbs with very rounded footholds and handholds that feel very insecure. Given that the caves flood, the bottom levels have red clays in them that help to lubricate the climbs. In general the cavers see the caves more as a great gymnasium and like the various challenges each one offers. There was no concept of a real objective like bottoming the cave although there was always the prospect of a connection. A pretty famous dig, The Dig, connected the cave to Cathedral Cave (CH-15) in the same tower. Given the warm temperatures and the lack of need for tackle bags full of vertical clobber, cavers took very little gear and therefore thought nothing of free-climbing some rather outrageous stuff, things I would have put a handline on or bolt in. We Buntons were in a bit of a culture shock in this cave but Winfried adapted the route to suite the capability of the party and we all went home satisfied. In fact the way he managed all the situations impressed me greatly. He would have to be one of the best party leaders I have ever encountered!

Because of the record wet season parts of the caves were still flooded and we enjoyed a good swim in parts. Other interesting stuff encountered in the caves included the number of species of bats, spiders, frogs and the odd cane toad. There was also a Children's python in Queenslander. The formation in the upper drier levels was rather pretty and the breccia infill of various ages has yielded some good fossil and sub-fossil deposits. At one part we had to swim down a beautiful smooth canyon with walls rich in crinoid and bivalve fossils.



Winfried and the Children's python.

Nearby Magh Cave (CH-82) was very popular with visitors because of its swim. Kathy and Grace did this cave

on Friday afternoon whilst I was at one of the boring meetings.

Tuesday 19th. We slept in and we missed the first sessions that morning. This was no great tragedy as it consisted mostly of ASF one-upmanship over SSS, as John Dunkley tried to outdo Eric Halbert by talking about and giving some scientific credence to sandstone caves in the Blue Mountains. We preferred to visit Chillagoe's own iconic landform, Balancing Rock. Later in the week Ken Grimes would talk authoritatively about karst in the sandstones of northern Australia and with good diagrams of speleogenesis at the Bungle Bungles and at Bullita in the underlying shale layer.

At 10.30 we joined the pre-arranged fieldtrip to Royal Arch Cave (CH-9), the largest of the tourist caves in the area. This trip exceeded the minimum recommended party size of 4 by a factor of about 8! The main item of interest in this cave was the phytokarst. This develops as photosynthetic cave microbes eat away at the carbonate substrate and produce something not unlike rillenkarren of various forms, except that it never looks truly like rillenkarren and always erodes directly away from the daylight holes. This means that it is often angled. This was most evident in Picnic Chamber named because it was so hot working in the mines and this cave was the site of much weekend recreation.

The main daylight chamber is actually two holes with a narrow arch between them and this, combined with the fact that a bluff on the edge of the tower looks like Queen Victoria, gave the cave its name. The cave is not lit and tourists have to take their own light, most cavers wore their helmet as well.



S. Bunton

'Cavers' in Royal Arch Cave.

Wednesday 20th. We started the day with a 7 am "at cost" joy flight over the surrounding area including the karst towers and the mine. The pilot had a low-flying license and so we spent most of the time below 300 m, which was very exciting!

I'm not sure what we did up until lunch but for us, lunch was the high point of the day. The catering at Chillicon was excellent and we regretted the fact that because we were staying elsewhere, we didn't sign up for all the meals. Those at the club hut either got fat or went caving more often. Serena went on a total of 17 trips spending 66 hours underground with about 30 hours sleep and I'm not sure how many meals she missed!

At some stage during the week I did catch two short but interesting papers by Tasmanian historian Nic Haygarth of Northern Caverneers. One was on Beattie the photographer and the other on the early explorations at Mole Creek.

In the afternoon there was Speleosports and I volunteered to be a marshall. I am not into this form of torture and public humiliation, besides if I stuff up my knees I want it to be on a real trip, not a pretend trip. Serena with her hard-core group were just beaten by the WA hard-core group of Greg Thomas, Tim Moulds and Ian Collette. Grace and Sarah joined Denis Marsh (OSS) and they managed a respectable performance. Adrian went with a few other randoms. The extra requirement of the Speleosports was that parties had to make a map of the cave. Brian Evans (ISS) took advantage of the open-ai'dness of the cave to carry a GPS and download the trace as his map, however, it didn't work in the culvert under the road!



S. Bunton

Sarah engaging in Speleosports.



S. Bunton

Serena clearly enjoying Speleosports.

The Speleosports was followed by the Prusiking Competition. Of the eleven that entered six were STC members with Serena posting the second fastest time or Tom Porritt posting the second fastest time if you consider his ropewalking method as legitimate; most didn't.



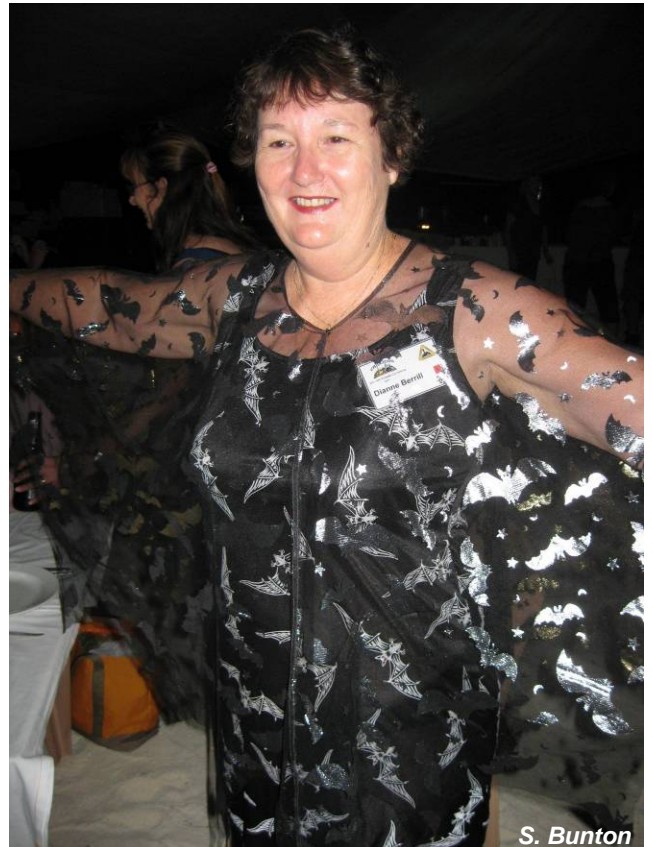
Grace ascertaining the gravity of the situation.



Adrian demonstrating poor technique (harness is not tight enough and just what is that crab doing in between his central maillon and his Croll?)

This fun and games was followed by the first Council Meeting where the new ASF Safety Guidelines were finally adopted. It had been over 4 years since I penned the first draft and now it was Draft 8 that was accepted, with a few more modifications on notice for the “working document”. There was an announcement also that the ASF Environment Fund fully supported the Extravaganza. STC got its money, \$2400, for the Exit Survey and we should all be encouraged by this.

That night was the Caveman's Dinner and quite a number of people dressed for the occasion. The band was excellent i.e. their choice of music agreed with my tastes and quite a few people got up to dance. The main formality of the evening was the presentation of awards. Longterm Chillagoe mover and shaker, Alan Cummins, the organiser of Chillicon itself, was awarded a Certificate of Distinction. Our own Greg Middleton was given (a long overdue in my opinion) Edie Smith Award for his efforts in cave documentation, Australian Speleo Abstracts and his work in Madagascar, Mauritius and other poor unfortunate places where he was instrumental in setting up National Parks. Congratulations Greg!



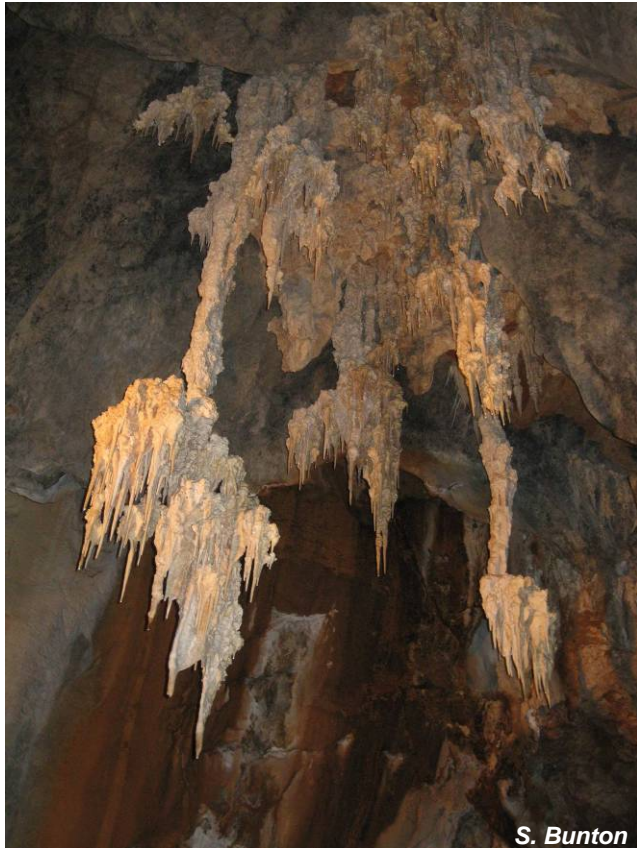
Dianne Berrill 'batted up' for the Caveman's Dinner.

There was a plea at the Council Meeting to put in more nominations to recognise the efforts of cavers. It is up to club members to let ASF know what is being achieved, by whom and to give encouragement to young cavers. There is no point waiting until people are dead before we recognise them!

Thursday 21st. After listening to Ken Grimes' geomorphology presentations I was psyched for some more caving. The main activity was a group visit to Trezkin Cave (CH-14). The name is derived from Trezise and Kinnear who found it. All the caves at Chillagoe, at least those mentioned in *Australian Karst Index 1985*, have

names. There are no JF-1s or anything as unimaginative as Threefortyone although Trezkinn comes close.

Like most caves at Chillagoe, Trezkinn is above ground level; you walk up a whole lot of stairs to descend a long staircase back down into it. The lower levels are inaccessible but the higher levels above the wet season water table are very well decorated. The centrepiece was The Chandelier although I did get some ordinary close ups of a Diadem Bat.



The Chandelier in Trezkinn Cave.

Thursday night saw the judging of the Photo Competition and the Environment Fund Auction which raised \$1300 and rid me of two carbide lights – I should have sold them myself on E-bay! The Photo Competition was the weak point of the Conference. There were no real categories and few prizes. There were far too many surface shots and too few cave shots. Jodie Rutledge won with the only really nice side-lit photo inside a cave. No-one appreciated the humour of my Carpark Cave 1 photo or the seriousness on Ken's face as he squeezed out of Platypus Pot in his SRT gear. [Misunderstood and unappreciated – story of Bunty's life – Ed.] All that the judge could say was that my photos had drama, obeyed the rule of thirds and were slightly over exposed in parts.... Well they are digital photo happy snaps and I suppose that's the problem these days: it is now so easy to take lots of photos that nobody takes the time to set up and take good photos.

There was no Poster or Map Competition but people were in awe of Tony Veness' Exit Survey poster and Matt Cracknell's Wolf Hole poster which both decorated the screen room dividers set up permanently in the Chillagoe Town Hall, that served as the conference venue for the week.

Friday 22nd. My oldest caving buddy, Graeme Smith (HCG), gave the last paper of the conference. It was his second conference and the second time he'd presented a

paper called *Silverfish in Australian Caves*, this time with the addendum *34 years on!* It was great to see where over three decades had taken him as an amateur taxonomist. Graeme had just recently retired, not because he disliked work but because he wanted to do what he wanted to do, i.e. study silverfish. Like many other attendees he had taken over a week to get to Chillagoe and had allowed himself about the same time to drive home. He had arranged permits to collect at a range of national parks on the way and we caught up with him later at Undara.

The big secret revealed in the last session is always the location of the next conference. TroGalong will be held in January 2013 at a very nice venue, an old monastery now a retreat, 30 km west of Yass. This gives good access to areas like Wee Jasper, Wombeyan, Abercrombie, Bungonia, Yarrangobilly and Cliefden. The conference was declared officially closed by Bruce Dane, who thanked us all for coming. It was a pleasure!

At the second instalment of the Council Meeting I managed to avoid being elected to the executive. This meeting also cleared up some issues with respect to insurance: Pensioners are able to be charged at the student rate and we were not in favour of ASF clubs having to follow Victorian Adventure Activity Guidelines, especially since we now have brand new shiny ones of our own. The main topic of contention was the relationship between ACKMA and ASF. ACKMA is not an ASF member club and neither are its members. Therefore there was some issue considering the status of ACKMA members entering Limited Access Caves, especially for jollies. There was a real feeling of hostility also that many of these "cave managers" acted autonomously and beyond the level of their expertise, particularly with respect to denying cavers access to caves and gating them arbitrarily. An interesting quote from this meeting was that "Most of them confuse significance with fragility."



A spider in a cave (inserted to break up the tedium of ASF Council Meetings and sort out a formatting problem on the next page ...)

After the meeting Winfried took a number of us poor delegates out for a quick buzz around Carpentaria Cave (CH-77), another one of the more famous caves in the area. Again this was an interconnected series of passages and daylight chambers with the usual interesting array of obstacles between them. We finished about sunset just in time to see the White Rumped Swiftlets, circling the entrance, before coming in to roost and running the gauntlet of snakes, quolls, cats etc at the entrance. One of

the most impressive papers of the conference was by Mike Tarburton about his life's work on swiftlets.

That night we did Disney Cave (CH-112). This was a real gem. The cave is on two distinct levels with the upper one being well decorated and the lower one a huge phreatic chamber with a distinct tide-mark. Often this lower section is flooded but it had just recently drained. This was a bit surprising since there were still caves with a lot of water in them after a record wet season. One of the fossil walls was quite spectacular.



Which one's the fossil? Deb Hunter in Disney Cave.

Saturday 23rd. Caving was grinding to a halt. Kathy and Grace did Carpentaria. I went to climb the Dome Rock and investigate the other attractions around town, a disused marble quarry and the remains of the old smelter. They'd been pulling precious metals out of the ground here and refining them for over 150 years! Yes, in the tropical heat, humidity and wet season.



The old marble quarry.

Sunday 24th. Kathy and I had another birthday each. We celebrated it by relocating to Undara, climbing the very worthwhile Kalkani Crater and having dinner at the restaurant at Undara Lodge.

The lava tubes at Undara are the best in Australia. They are a result of an eruption of a volcano 190 000 years ago which spewed out more lava than the currently active volcano in Hawaii – although I find this hard to believe. One of the lava flows reached 160 km from the crater - the longest lava flow from a single crater in modern times. The lava was fairly runny so the volcano doesn't stand up like the neat little cone that you see with most volcanoes. Being runny the lava drained from the tubes more easily and left some impressive 15 m diameter lava caves including Australia's longest, Bayliss Cave (U-30), at 1.35 km. Bayliss Cave is also one of the richest fauna caves in the area and Graeme Smith had permission to collect here but unfortunately it was still flooded.

Monday 25th. Our first half-day tour (\$87 per adult - a bit pricey!) was past the entrance to Misplaced Arch (U-45), into Mikoshi (U-44) and on to Wind Tunnel (U-42). This was followed by a look into the flooded Stephensons Cave (U-21), through The Archway (U-22) and a swim in the flooded Ewamin Cave (U-23). Mikoshi means *beautiful view* in Japanese and certainly it is very photogenic, being just the right length to look like a considerable feature and yet short enough to let light in at each end. The main part of Wind Tunnel is much longer at 226 m and this is a very impressive feature with daylight shining in at the far end.



Kathy in Wind Tunnel.



Sirens luring lava tube enthusiasts to their deaths.



Mikoshi.

Undara is very much a closed National Park and the only way for most of us to visit the caves is with an organised and overpriced tour. Again National Parks is worried about its liability but they use excuses like floods, foul air, dickheads getting lost or injured and biological significance to stop you going caving by yourself. Last year Greg Middleton organised a special programme for his International Vulcanospeleology Conference and Graeme Smith had written permission to collect in the caves, so some concessions could be made with prior planning.

When Graeme arrived in the afternoon he had only phoned the rangers but was yet to meet them and to sort out the details of what was possible.

Tuesday 26th. The following afternoon Joe Sydney and Dave Rothery (HCG) turned up with enough gear to scale the Eiger and all the electronic gadgetry of Spyforce, in order to enable them to find the few caves that Graeme wanted to sample for silverfish.

In the very late afternoon we went on the 2 hour sunset drinks and Barker Cave (U-34) bat flight tour (\$45 per adult). I made sure I had several champagnes. Again we

were captives: if you want to see the bat flight you have to pay the money. It was a very impressive sight nonetheless although my photos don't do it justice. The best view was afforded by setting up your camera and not looking at the screen but watching the cave with the myriad bats all lit up by the synchronised flashes. Unfortunately the resident python caught a bat the previous night. He is not a greedy character so we knew he would not be in his usual tree for our visit. Seeing a python catch a bat would have been 'way kool' but it was not to be.



Bats in Barker Cave.

Wednesday 27th. We relocated to Mission Beach, which had 155 mm of rain in the 24 hours up to 3 pm Thursday. We drove over the highest part of Queensland's Great Dividing Range and down to the coast in pouring rain, without a view although the wipers were on "fast" for much of the journey.

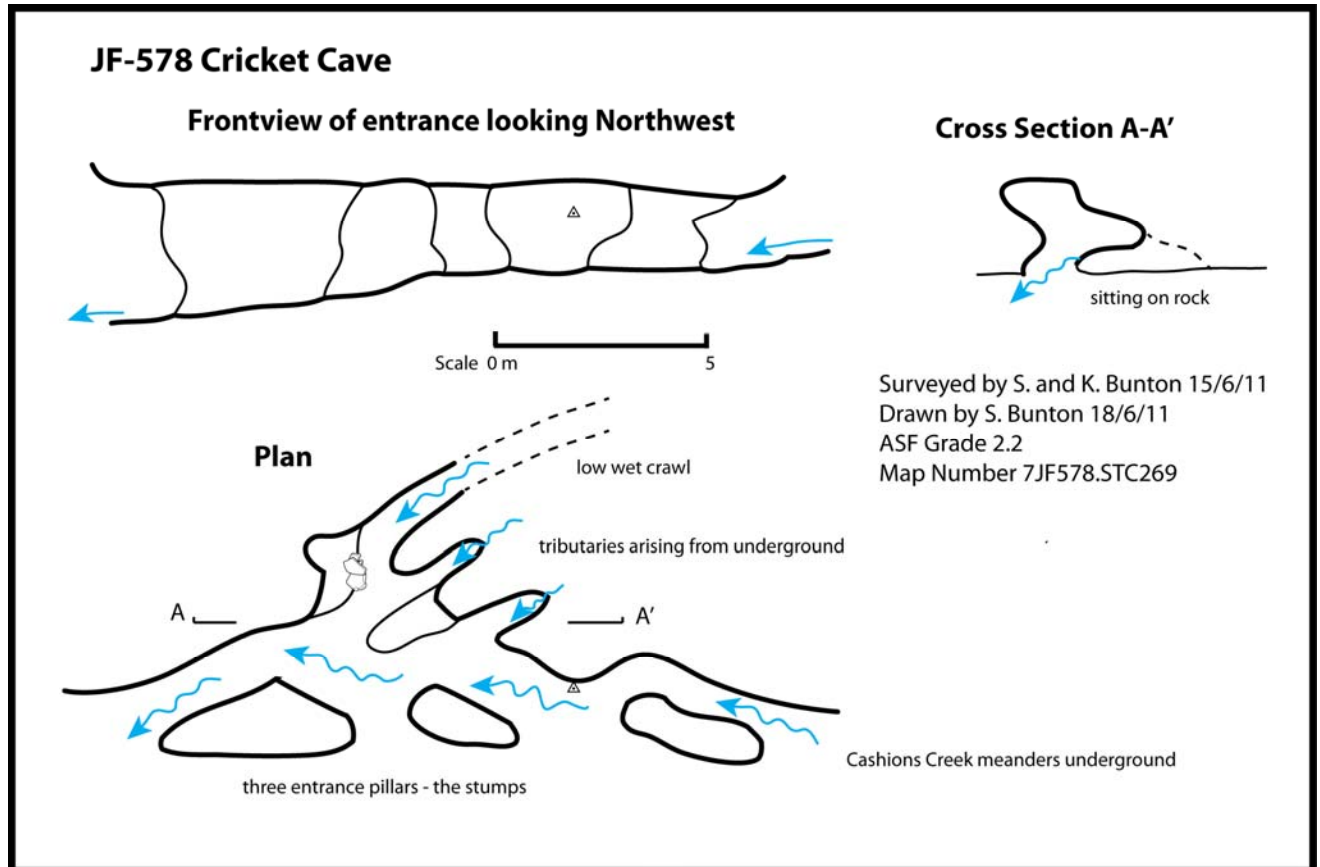
Thursday 28th. We sat and watched the rain. It was too heavy to go outside our room and get in the pool. The wet season was not finished yet! The weather had us wondering what sort of place is this? Six months of torrential rain and you can't go swimming, there is no surf and if the stingers don't get you the crocs will. Eventually everyone goes tropo! We decided that the only reason why Tasmanians are the butt of mainland jokes is that it takes too long to say Far North Queenslander.

Friday 29th. There is one thing that rain is good for and that is river flows. We spent the day on the Tully River rafting with a commercial company. We really enjoyed it although the photos show that most of the time we were scared shitless. Perhaps I need to do more adrenalin sports and fewer tourist-caves?

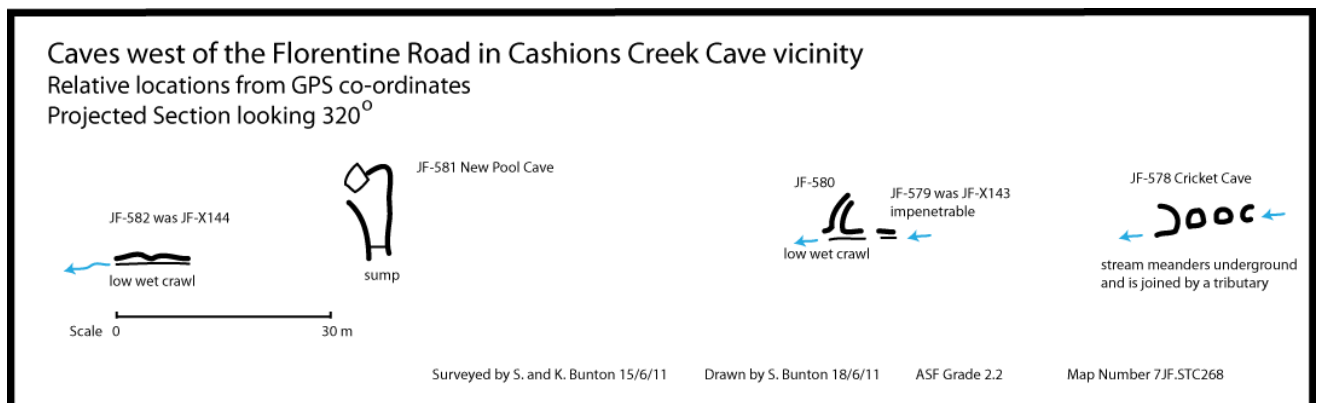
Thanks to the Chillagoe Caving Club for hosting the conference and having an excuse to go and see this wonderful part of the world.

Surveys – Old and New

An assortment of surveys in random order. A few ‘new’ ones to accompany trips reports in this issue and a few ‘old’ ones that kind of relate to the work conducted in the Smorgasbord area on pages 13-14. As alluded to on page 14 of this issue, I went through a period in 2005-2006 of drawing up pathetic surveys in pencil or Microsoft Word that never got published. In order to bulk this issue up to have a total page number divisible by four (for the new photocopying format for hardcopy *Spiels*) I have chucked in some relevant to the Smorgasbord area and then a random extra from back in the Growling Swallet area (JF-283). There are several more which will be published as space fillers over the next few issues. They appear in semi-random order to optimise formatting/layout. I’ll try to include relative references for the discovery of the caves associated with the random old surveys (no doubt not in a format unacceptable to Greg Middleton).

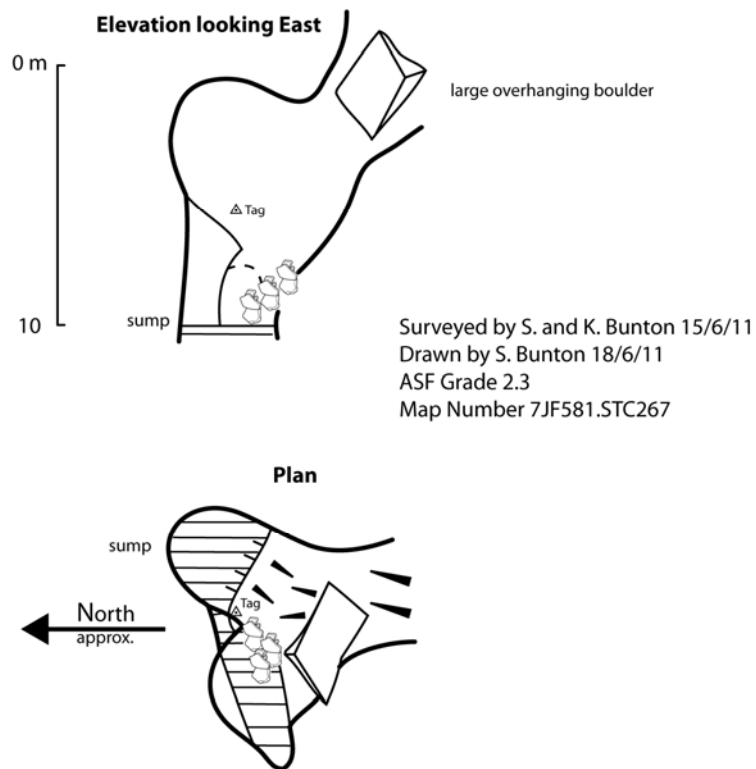


See trip report on pages 16-17

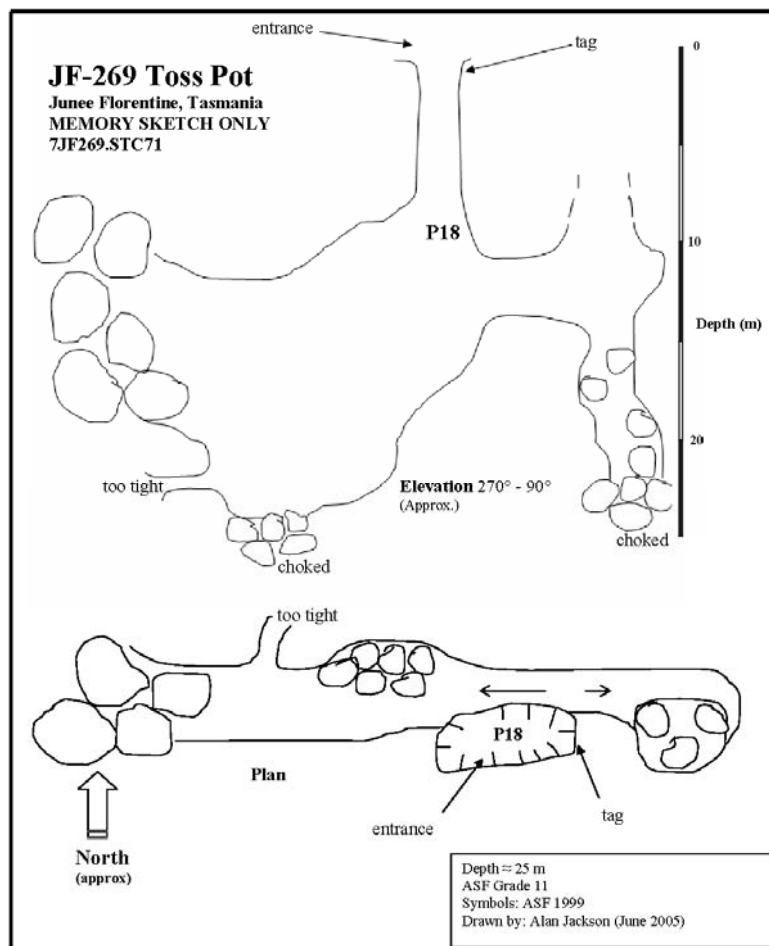


See trip report on pages 16-17

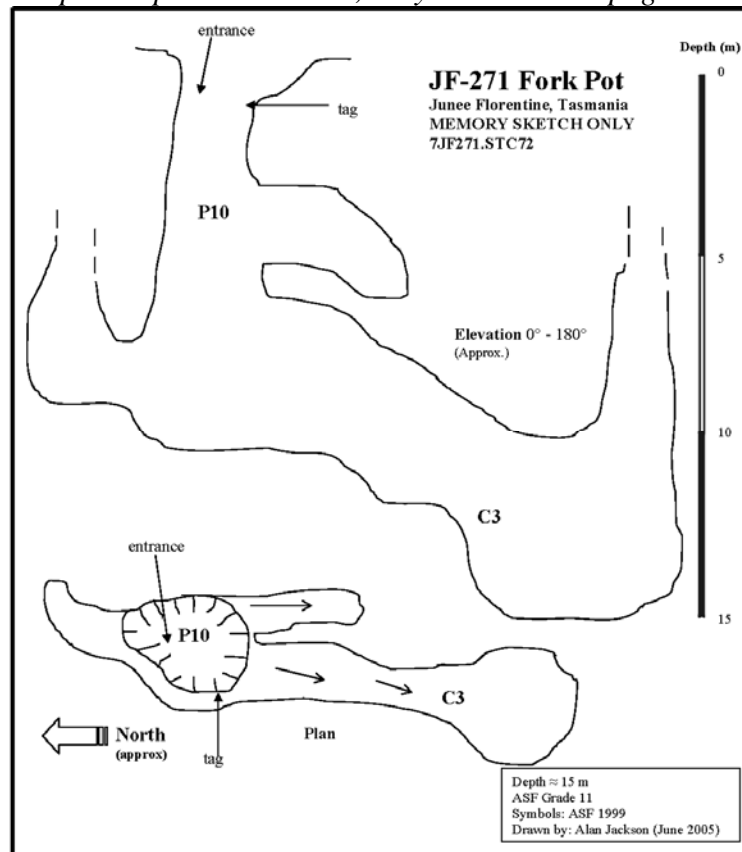
JF-581 New Pool Cave



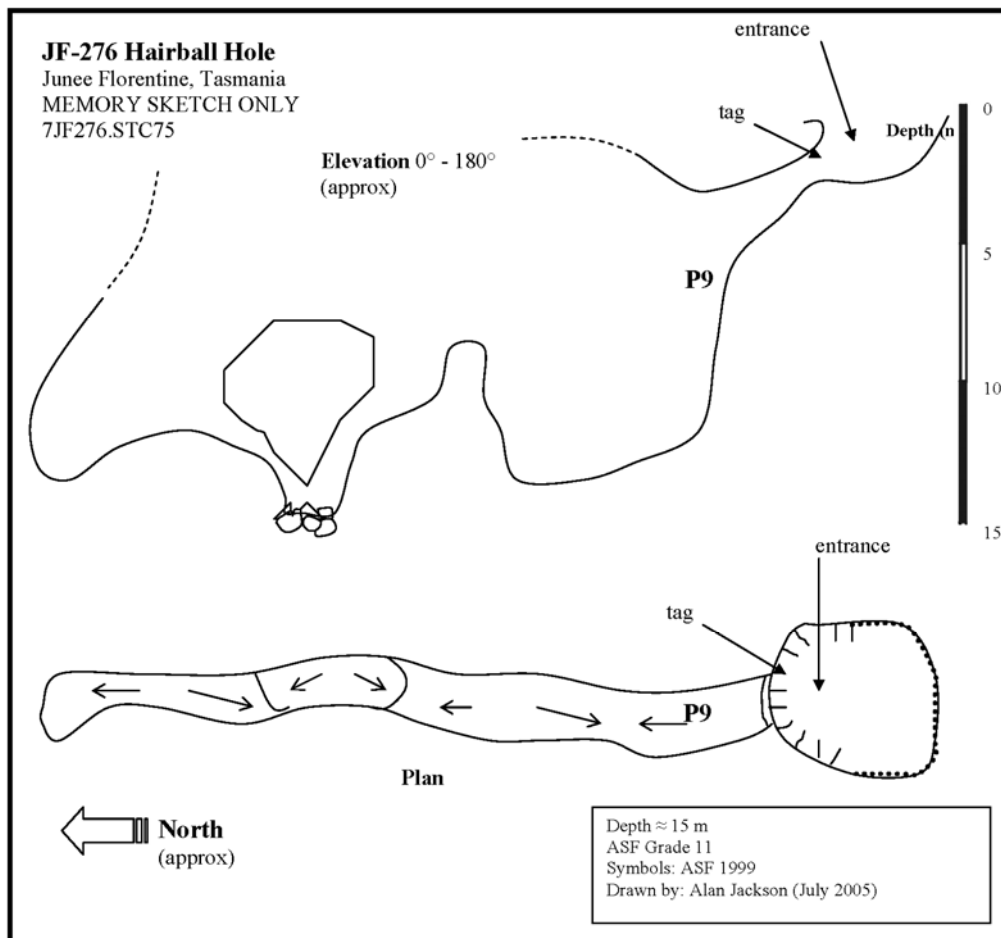
See trip report on pages 16-17



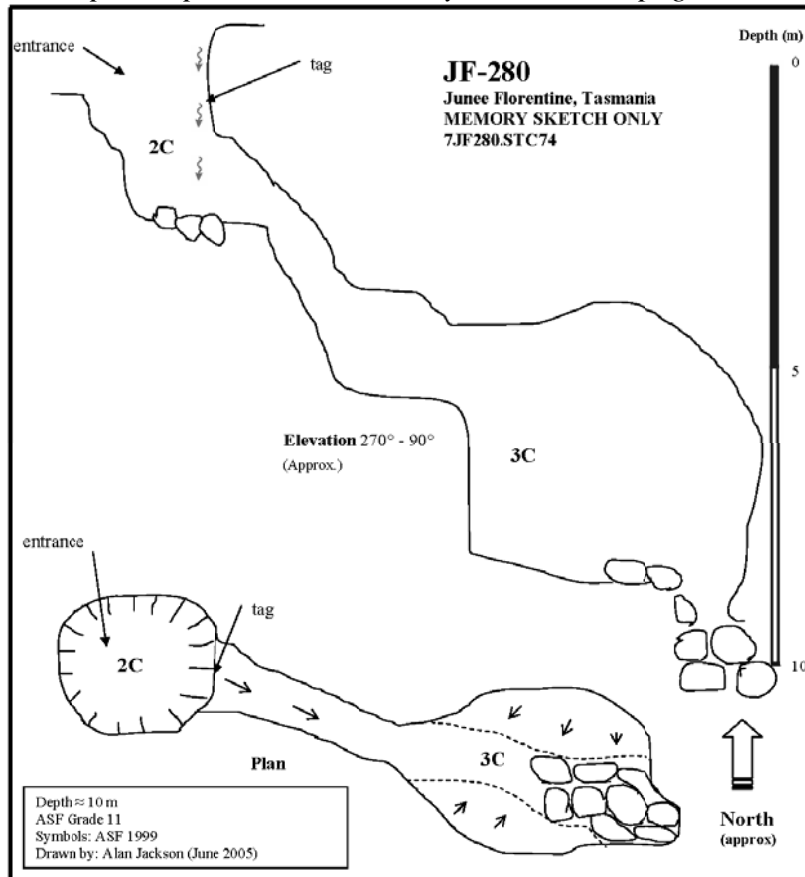
See trip reports in SS345:13-15 & 22



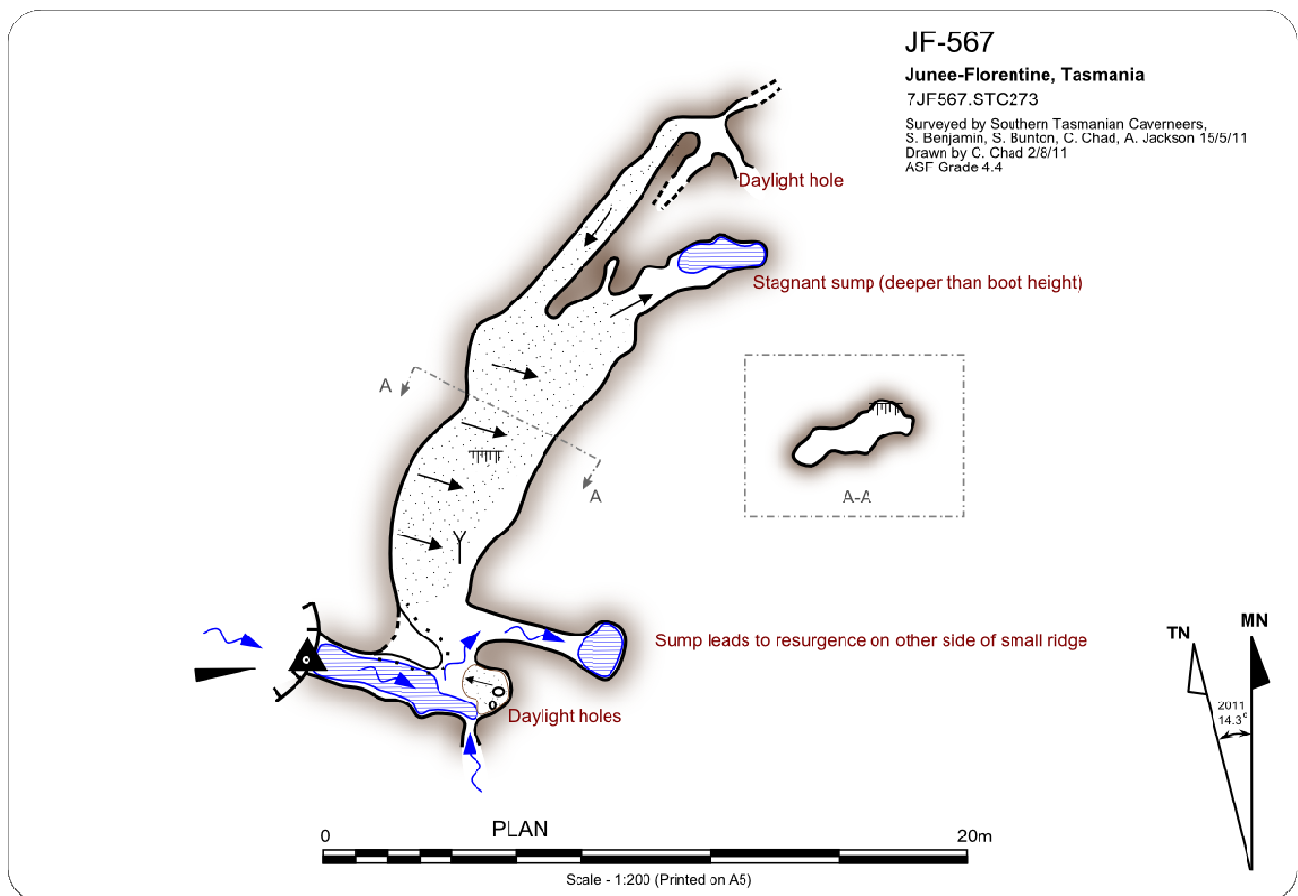
See trip reports in SS345:13-15 & 22



See trip reports in SS345:14-15 & 22 & SS348:5

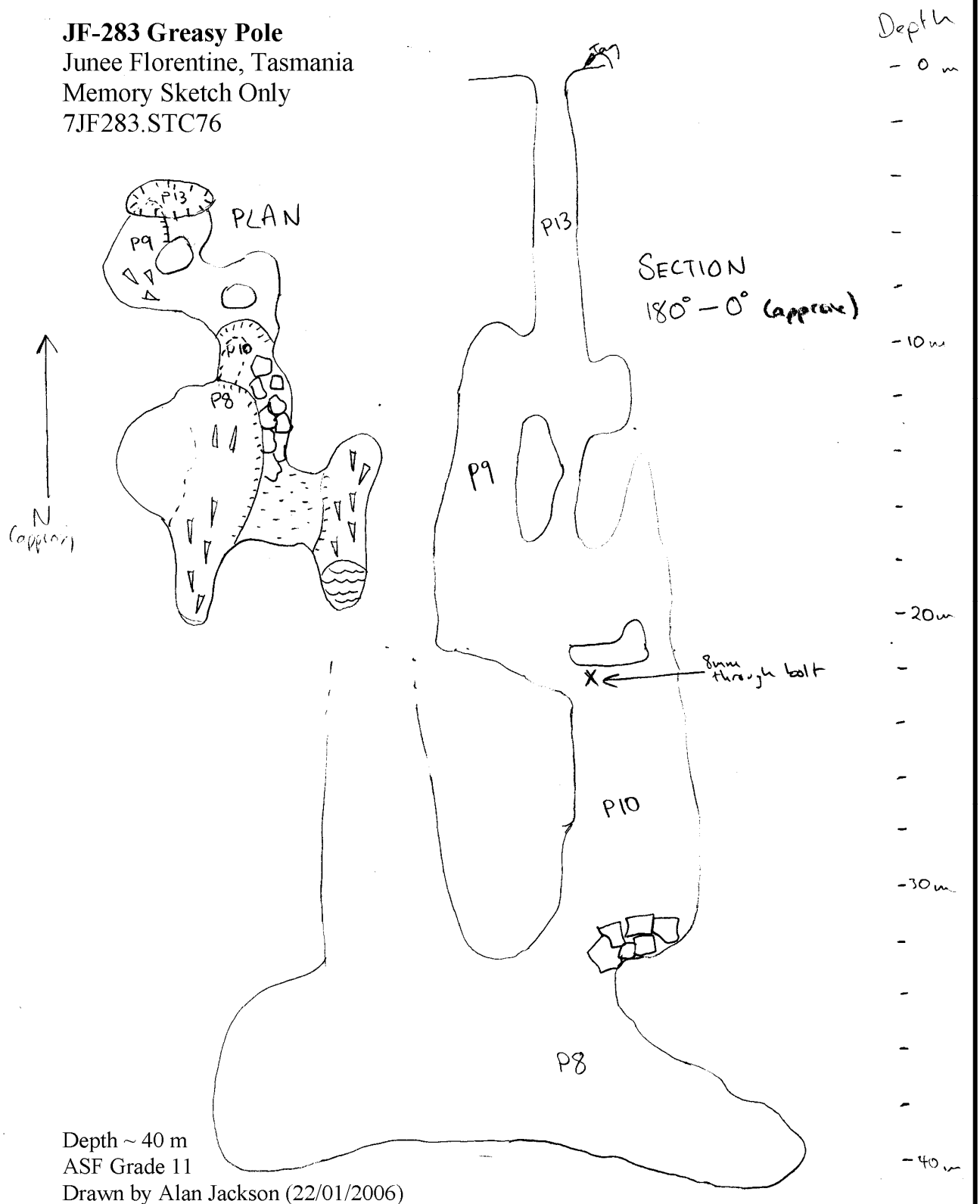


See trip reports in SS345:14-15 & 22



See trip report on pages 12-13

JF-283 Greasy Pole
Junee Florentine, Tasmania
Memory Sketch Only
7JF283.STC76



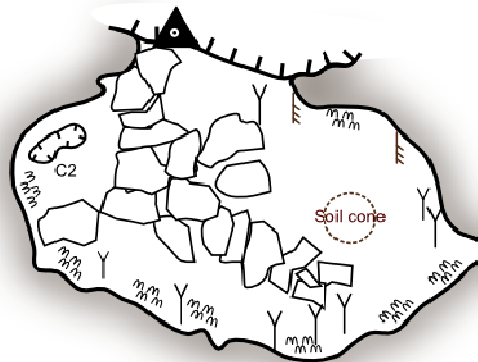
See trip reports in SS351:6 & 8 and SS352:13-14

JF-566 WY Gemini

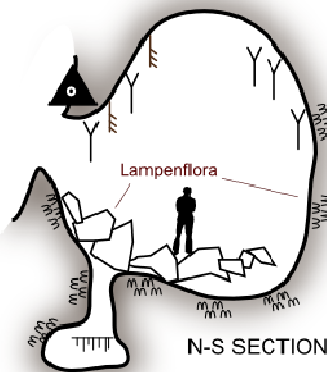
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF566.STC272

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
C. Chad 8/5/11
Drawn by C. Chad 27/7/11
ASF Grade 3.3



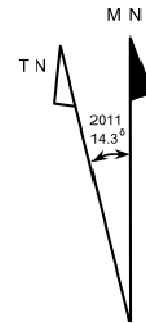
PLAN



N-S SECTION



Scale - 1:200 (Printed on A6)



See trip report on pages 12-13

JF-574 (c25)

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF574.STC266

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
21-5-2011

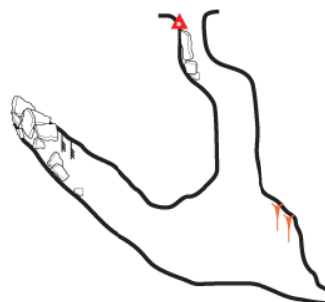
Drawn by S. Gilbert

ASF Grade 22

PLAN



SECTION 330°-150°



See trip report on pages 13-14