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Front Cover: Heil Hitler! Kapitän Hosking and Unteroffizier Bunton return from the campaign on the Somme. Photo by Serena Benjamin

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



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Editorial

I'd convinced myself that I'd already published the May-June issue of the *Spiel* until I double-checked late in the month of June. Whoops!

Things have been fairly quiet on the caving scene, both personally and generally for STC. This has given me time to draw up some surveys. Rescue Pot and Dissidence are published in this issue (pages 22 and 23). Dissidence has moved from a good cave to a great cave since it was extended in 2011-12. Similarly to some previously published large maps the Dissidence map will be barely legible when printed on an A4 page so hard copy subscribers are advised to download an electronic copy if they wish to get any value out of the map.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

ERRATUM? - JF-Z64

It would seem that the 5% of uncertainty I described in my explanation for why JF-Z64 is synonymous with JF-337 in SS388:11 has shone through. After reading my theory, Peter Shaw emailed me with why he thought I was wrong. Peter wrote:

I saw your reference to JF-Z64 in the latest Spiel. On the original trip into the Trapdoor/Slaughterhouse area, we didn't find the actual entrance to Slaughterhouse. The doline with the crevice that's shown on the map is the larger doline in which Slaughterhouse is situated. I can't recall the crevice. After leaving Trapdoor on the trip in SS70, we decided to look at the crevice but couldn't get anywhere. It was then that we discovered the Slaughterhouse entrance a short distance to the SE. We had to dig the Slaughterhouse entrance out a bit to get in.

If Rolan allocated JF-Z64 from my sketch map, then theoretically JF-Z64 is the crevice in the main doline. Whether it's worth a number I can't recall.

So we can scrap my theory and scratch the relevant line from my table on page 12 of SS388. I'll need to have another look.

Alan Jackson

GEAR STORE FINDS A NEW HOME

After almost a year and a half of procrastination the new gear store location has been decided. Geoff has a superb space under his house in West Moonah and a working bee has been scheduled for the weekend of 18-19 August (precise day TBA) to build some shelving and shift the gear. We'll have a BBQ lunch while we're at it. Anyone who doesn't turn up to help will be banned from borrowing gear for 12 months.

MIDWINTER EXTRAVAHOOZYWHATZIT

Many thanks to Arthur and Siobhan for hosting yet another midwinter bash at Francistown. Attendees enjoyed good food, good company and good caving – though some engaged in gardening as an alternative to caving. Amazingly the weather was perfect the whole weekend, which I think is a first in living memory. See you next year.

HARWOODS HOLE SLACKLINING

Slacklining is like tightrope walking except that it involves using a (approx. 11mm) climbing rope. It is often practiced

by climbers, festering at base camp, to improve their balance and core strength as well as overcome the boredom of not having to write up trip reports or draw up maps of their exploits.

Last summer a group of international slackliners descended on NZ and set up crossings of various kiwi land marks including Harwoods Hole. Harwoods Hole is at the end of a dry valley where the bottom just falls out of it, down a 176m entrance pitch, amongst a circle of imposing limestone cliffs. The slackline was rigged 250 m above "the deck"! Only one of the cast of loonies made it across. (Yes, they belay themselves with a trailing cowstail!) *The Climber*, the newsletter of the NZ Alpine Club published a nice photo.

Stephen Bunton

STEVE BLANDEN SUCCUMBS TO CANCER

Steve (Northern Caverneers) has been fighting brain cancer for the last couple of years. It finally got the better of him on Sunday 1st July. Steve was a passionate and productive caver dedicated to finding and documenting new caves in the Mole Creek, Gunns Plains, Savage River and other miscellaneous northern Tasmanian karst areas. Steve was a good bloke and I enjoyed the four trips underground I managed to share with him (we never did finish surveying Mersey Hill Cave ...). I'm sure STC and all cavers who met Steve are directing their thoughts to his friends and family as they are left to mourn a life cut short.

Alan Jackson

EXTREME BREASTFEEDING

Amy has reported on a non-club trip to Mystery Creek Cave with young Ray in tow. Always keen to flash her boobs, Amy has submitted some photos for *Spiel* readers. It looks like Ray is getting a solid grounding in the art of caving.



EXTREME SNORKELLING?

I imagine people would rather look at semi-naked photos of Amy than the same of Bunty, but here goes anyway. Bunty went deck-chair snorkelling in a tropical downpour during a recent trip to Malaysia over the school holidays. He has submitted photographic evidence for your viewing pleasure.



(TOO MUCH) MORE SKIN

The two previous pieces reminded me of the following photo forwarded to me after Exitravaganza 2012. I had pledged to myself that no-one should be forced to see this photo but the stars seem to have aligned this issue. This is Trevor at his best (i.e. being ridiculed in print by a so-called friend).



AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT ...

Arthurs Folly turned out to be not quite as wet and cold as I had anticipated so the wetsuit had to come off 150 m into the cave. Rolan recorded the moment for prosperity and now seems like a good time to print it. My apologies for the over exposure of the lily white flesh. We almost have enough semi-naked photos of club members to put out a fundraising calendar!





Trip Reports

L-4-6 Mostyn Hardy Cave & MC-14 Lynds Cave

Norman Poulter

7-22 February 2012

Party: Vicki Bresnan [SRGWA], David Wools-Cobb [NC] & Norman Poulter

[An edited version – caves only – of Norm's report covering a trip to Tasmania by visiting WA caver, Vicki Bresnan – Ed.]

...

The next two days were caving days, the first, Mostyn Hardy Cave, which is on private property. The owner operates his property, beside a river with limestone cliffs on the opposite bank, as an eco-accommodation multiactivity centre. The cave is only a short walk from the accommodation compound, nestled in a damp, shady doline; leech paradise, although luckily we didn't encounter any. Entry into the near-vertical entrance is gained with the aid of a rope and slippery mud steps. A small lake is at the bottom, along with at least one obligatory decaying log. Our host led us through one of the two passages leading off from the entrance – to be greeted by several of the many Tasmanian cave spiders - with many more to come, along with their principle prey, cave crickets. The cave had passages, chambers, rifts and avens of all shapes and sizes, along with a small, active stream. Calcite decoration abounded in numerous places, especially along fault lines. There was also a large crack visible in several places throughout the cave – the result of a "recent" earthquake. The highlight of our tour was being led through a crawl into a low chamber with an active stream, crammed with so many glow-worms that you could easily move around without the need of a headlamp. A couple of cave spiders were also there, one guarding an egg-sac.

It was near here, low down in a small alcove near the edge of the stream, that I spotted a small white spider in a tightly woven web – it was nothing like the traditional cave spider. The leg span was approximately 20-30 mm. Neither our host nor David had seen a spider like this before, leading us to speculate that this could be a new species. I observed another one under similar circumstances about an

hour later. Unfortunately I only had my "happy snapper" camera with me so couldn't attempt to get a picture of it.

All too soon, we emerged from the second entrance back into what was now a bright, sunny day, so after clambering back up the rope, trying not to damage the steps, bade our host good-bye and headed back to welcome showers and reminisces at David's house.

Whereas we had stayed mostly dry in Mostyn Hardy Cave, the next day we were guaranteed to get at least partially wet BEFORE we even reached Lynds Cave as part of the access track runs through the Mersey River in the Mole Creek region. Once through the rusty gate, you enter Lynds' own little river and have to perform some interesting gymnastics at a couple of small waterfalls in order to stay dry, that is, wet legs and feet only. If you lose your sparse foot or handholds, you get completely wet. Once past those obstacles, you're into the main cave and are shortly confronted by a magnificent bank of what was once overhanging-type flowstone, about 40 m long and 10-20 m high that had cracked and crashed down in the aftermath of a "mild" earthquake several years before - it would have been interesting to be there at the time - and frightening too. Still a fantastic decorative display. Calcite decoration abounded throughout what little Vicki and I saw of the cave.

Our purpose for being in the cave was to undertake a bit of restoration work as part of David's KarstCare projects. We were to do some flowstone scrubbing and stringline track marking about halfway into the cave. Reaching the area on a flowstone ledge above the stream, we located a suitable streamlet which would supply more than enough water flow for the small 12 V pump and lengths of pipe/hose fitted with a modified backpack fire pump of David's design for additional pressure. Working with this, and scrubbing brushes, began to make us feel as if we had indeed "fallen in the water" [Goon Show joke] at the waterfalls. Hours later, the work was finished and we had a late lunch, unpacked the stringline gear and marked out a suitable path through the flowstone-covered rocks and muddy area - a future trip will lay a "floor" to avoid mud contamination of boots.

With that done, we retraced our steps back to the outside world, not falling at the falls and maintaining our balance as we waded up the slippery Mersey riverbed.

Diving Under the Nullarbor – Easter 2012 Janine McKinnon April 2012

Party: Full time: Peter Buzzacott, Janine McKinnon

Murra bit: (CDAA) Liz Rogers, Ken Smith, Mark Pardoe

Is it possible to get cave diving gear for sidemount diving into a 23 kg luggage allowance? I pondered this question when Peter invited me on a trip he was organising to the Nullarbor over Easter. There was only one way to find out, and it is always surprising what you can wear onto a plane.

Peter provided all the camping gear, tanks and lots of the miscellaneous stuff needed for a trip like this. That was the only way I could make the trip.

The first adjustment to being back on the mainland was the 13 hour (1200 km) drive from Bunburry to Cocklebiddy. I will never think anywhere is a long way in Tassie again. We arrived at 9 pm and were so tired that we just set up camp and went to bed. I don't know what excuse I had to be tired, Peter had done all the driving. [The 13 hours of incessant banter between the two of you would have tired me out – Ed.]



Cocklebiddy entrance chamber.

The others weren't due to arrive until sometime Friday (and this was Wednesday night), so we planned on diving Cocklebiddy Cave with just we two, on Thursday. I am not sure if it has been done by only two people before as the logistics of getting the gear to the water is a bit lengthy, with a tripod usually employed to lower the gear from the lip of the entrance. We just carried it down the track, over the fence, set up a ladder for the 5 m drop, and continued ferrying trips down the rockpile to the water. That required three trips each. All this took 4 hours.

We took half an hour to gear up. There were a few problems. One of my tanks only had 150 bar (full is 240 bar), so that was going to shorten the dive a bit. Peter had some problems with balancing his tanks and shifted stuff around a bit. Finally, at 2:30 pm, we were off, swimming leisurely across the 200 m of lake on our backs, chatting

and enjoying the view of the roof. The sculpting on the walls all the way to the roof is very interesting and the cause still in debate. The cave dive then begins with a duck under a ledge.

I was there for a tourist dive and Peter wanted to collect water samples from the roof and floor of the underwater bits. Peter had told me that the water was about 18°C, but it felt like only 13°C, or thereabouts, to me as I swam across the lake. As we swam under the ledge, and reached 5 m depth, we passed through a thermocline AND a halocline; my first ever of both. It was an amazing experience. Pete, on the other side first, looked all shimmery and out of focus. Recent rains had left a cold, fresh water layer on top of the warm, dense, saltwater of the cave.



Cocklebiddy lake.

We swam for about half an hour, turning so we would have plenty of air left to use on another dive later in the trip (air was in short supply as we didn't have a compressor – just 14 tanks). We hadn't got as far as I would have liked as I was using 2 x 12 litre aluminium tanks, with weights in the bottom to stop then floating as they emptied, and I was finding them heavy going. I haven't used tanks this big in decades. Pete also was having trouble with his trim and buoyancy because of the set-up he was using, and didn't manage to get his samples. Still, it was a wonderful dive. Clear water, huge cave passage, massive boulders on the floor; and I was in Cocklebiddy, a dream dive for Australian cave divers. A place I never thought I'd get to.

We left the gear on the beach after the dive and made our way out of the cave for the day, planning to return the following day. We were back at camp at 6 pm with plenty of time to drive (5 minutes) to the Cocklebiddy roadhouse for showers.



Cocklebiddy entrance doline.

Friday saw us back at the water in Cocklebiddy Cave by 8:30 am. Pete was in the water at 9 am and went to do a quick dive to take his water samples and I started ferrying my gear up the rockpile to the ladder. There was a small hold up when he realised he didn't have enough weight as he tried to descend at the far end of the lake and returned for more weights (which I had already taken up to the ladder – bummer).

I had my gear ready for lifting up the ladder by the time Pete was finished diving and we started moving his gear up at 11:30 am. By 1:30 pm we had everything back in the car and headed for camp. It was hot, despite it being April.

Camp was right beside the entrance to Murra-el-Elevyn (10 minutes drive from Cocklebiddy). We started sorting gear to go into this cave on the Saturday. A tripod (that Pete had built), which is set up over a 10 m drop, needs to be used to get the gear in and out of the sinkhole entrance. On the opposite side of the hole the rockpile comes to 5 m below the lip and the plan was to use the ladder here for the divers to get down. Unfortunately it was 1 m short, so I set the drop up SRT.

We had the tripod and rope ready by dark, and shower time at the roadhouse.

This was so civilized: a shower each night. It was also very appreciated as the work was hot and sweaty and the dust everywhere.

The others arrived after dark; Ken and Liz from the east and Mark from Geralton (now THAT'S a drive for a weekend!). That was a final tally of 5 out of the 10 people on the permit, a fairly high drop out rate.

Saturday morning we started lowering gear down into the entrance around 10 am. Late by my standards but the others were more laid back than I am.

Ken went off to try to get his Subaru fixed as he had hit a stump the previous day and buckled the suspension at the front. He could only drive at 20 km/h. It is a long way back to Adelaide at that speed.

It took four hours again to get all the gear down the hole, and then down the rockpile (not as far as Cocklebiddy, thank god), and then the 200 m through the cave to the lake.



Murra-el-Elevyn entrance chamber.

Pete had 2 x 15 litre tanks for me this time, so I first spent some time swimming around in the lake, trying to get the hang of swimming with two tanks almost as big as I am.

People had various personal projects and agenda, so we headed off on dives in different groups. Liz and Ken were focused on photography. Liz is a brilliant underwater photographer — check out her website lizrogersphotography.com). Mark and I went in first to lay some line on the main route for everyone to follow for the days we were there.



Kitting up in Murra-el-Elevyn.

Pete had temperature loggers to put in to various spots in the cave and sieving to do for micro-fauna, but he also had trouble with his borrowed gear and spent the rest of the day sorting it out above water.

We were all out for the shower at the roadhouse by 7 pm.

Sunday, after lowering everyone's replacement stage tanks (except me – my massive 15 litre tanks lasted the whole three days), Pete, Mark and I did a big tour of the main cave for 75 minutes. We looked at two of the three air bells and toured the main passages and massive chamber. The air bells were beautiful and contained gypsum deposits over the walls. Some of the underwater sections were very large and the scalloping of the walls and roof in the tunnels was beautiful. The rock is white and pink, which adds to the beauty of the dive.

I went for a look at the last air bell whilst Mark started taking his gear out, as he had to leave the following morning. This was as well decorated an air bell as the other two. There are also bacterial mats in the passage leading to the air bell.

Liz and Ken were taking photos somewhere.

Pete and I helped Mark get his gear out and then Pete returned to do a late dive and put his loggers in (better late than never).

We looked at Liz's photos of an evening on her laptop. They were stunning.

Monday, Liz and Ken were up for more photography in the morning, I went for a big tour of the bits I hadn't seen, and some I had again, for 75 minutes, and Pete went and got his temperature loggers that he had left overnight, and sieved for micro life in the lake.

Then the gear haul-out began - a four hour job again. We lifted the last load just on dark. Time for a shower at the roadhouse.

Tuesday we headed back to Bunbury in 12 hours (with a tailwind), after a delay of a half hour when we couldn't find the car keys and started unpacking the trailer. Liz and Ken headed back east.

And Ken's car? He managed to fix it himself with some tools that Mark had and the Cocklebiddy roadhouse facilities. Very lucky as the "local" tow truck driver (from Eucla – look at a map) had quoted \$2.50 per kilometre, both ways!

IB-110 Arthurs Folly

Alan Jackson

9 May 2012

Party: Serena Benjamin, Rolan Eberhard, Alan Jackson

This wasn't technically a club trip, although the party consisted of club members. I reckon it should be recorded, so here goes.

Rolan wanted a survey of the cave and all the existing data was fairly poorly collated. Madphil had scanned everything he could find into the archive but sketches were largely non-existant and it was generally all pretty poor. The best option seemed to be to start from scratch.

The hideous mud and shit in the entrance seemed to be acting as an efficient barrier as the log book Rolan had installed several years earlier, on the far side of the squalid entrance manoeuvre, was unsullied by entries. The log book was removed.

It took us a while to negotiate the tight and confusing first 150 m but we eventually squeezed through into the larger bits of the cave. At a fork in the main passage we tried the right branch first but it soon petered out so we surveyed back to the junction and then ambled up the left branch.

Eventually the good walking passage gets lower and one ends up on one's belly in the filth. We pursued this for 60 m or so before deciding to commence the survey out. (Rolan wasn't keen to push what he knew was going to become an increasingly muddy hell hole just for the sake of a complete survey).

We surveyed out as far as the squeeze at the start of the narrower stuff near the entrance (about 100 m from the entrance) as it was getting pretty late. We racked up 634 m of data (with lots of sketching required as the passage is quite large and full of sketchable stuff). As we went we discovered a few cairns and tapes that, while unlabelled, looked like they could be old survey stations. We linked

these into our new survey so we could try matching up the old data.



Serena demonstrating a good turn-around spot at the back end of Arthurs Folly.

Once back in the comforts of a warm office I analysed the new and old data and thoroughly read the few old trip reports for the cave. Once the old data was all plugged in and tied in at the suspected overlapping stations the data fitted pretty well, but unfortunately it didn't render any of the old data useable (the only sections that we hadn't already resurveyed were bits that didn't have any sketches associated with them). The old station 50 (rock cairn on entrance side of rockfall section) turned out to be synonymous with new station 80 and old station 65 (16 in Jeff Butt's notes from 29/3/87, marked with red flagging tape) is synonymous with one of our new stations (marked 'OLD' in the OnStation file and labelled '# red station old' in my original notes). Another relocatable station (an X in the mud at the start of the low muddy back end with a bit of orange flagging tape beside was discovered but we removed that bit of tape as we passed through and I have been unable to locate the data associated with that station in the archive or at Arthur's house, so there's no point replacing the orange tape on a later trip. We left four labelled (station number and date) pink tapes at the start and end as well as the termination of the short right hand branch and the junction/fork of this side passage and the main stream passage.

Now we just need to finish the survey. The ~ 150 m or so from the tag to our last station (100) at the squeeze is

critical to make the survey remotely useful. The back end is not as important in terms of what Rolan needs to fulfil his management requirements but I want to see it completed, even if by all accounts the cave descends into a muddy horror show not far beyond where we got to. Who's keen to help me?

Marble Hill Meandering *Janine McKinnon*

16 May 2012

Party: Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

It had been a while since we last wandered around on Marble Hill and there were a few places we wanted to check out again.

There seems to have been quite a bit of rain down that way recently and 40 Minute Creek was flowing quite well. The track was soggy, as expected, but has no new tree falls, which was a pleasant surprise. The D'Entrecasteaux River was high and the beach in Exit's entrance chamber was under water by about a foot.

Our first objective was the D'Entrecasteaux River Third Sink (IB-232). The entrance has altered since our last visit a few years ago when we placed the tag. The cliff above the sink has collapsed and several big boulders now lie in the stream immediately before, but not filling, the sink pool. Luckily we hadn't put the tag there! The tag is on a 3 m high cliff on the left hand side of the stream and is now some 5 m away from the entrance. There was a large volume of water flowing into the sink with little backfilling occurring.

We next wandered up the valley, reminding ourselves what the sinks and resurgences of the anabranch of the D'Entrecasteaux River, that runs along the side of Marble Hill, look like. Our last visit was in summer, in low flow, so this was a good opportunity to see what happens when there is a large volume of water trying to flow through. An interesting observation was made near D'Entrecasteaux River First Sink (IB-227). The river drops 2 m into a narrow canyon. Above this drop is a small dam, plugged by vegetation. The water drops into the canyon from the base of this natural dam. Upstream the river had formed a large pond which would have been a few metres deep and which had large logs floating on it.

Our objectives for the day complete, and it only being early afternoon, we made the fateful error of deciding to return to the car via Mini-Martin. Now this would have been a reasonable decision if we had gone up towards the taped line from Halfway Hole to Baader-Meinhof Pot, but no, we opted for a look at some new territory (to us) by going straight up the ridge line above the first sink (IB-227).

One hour and 300 m later we were not quite so happy. This route was very scrubby. Very, very scrubby. To make it worse, we found no new caves at all. We crossed a strange taped line which came very straight up one side of the ridge, made a sharp turn on the ridge line, and headed very straight down the other side. It was made from a sort of plasticised paper tape and didn't look like a caver's track.

Travel did get a bit better when we reached the valley that passes below IB-107 Machete Pot. We headed towards IB-107, which you can hardly see even when standing right beside it. Some tape on a tree helps find it.

We re-joined the Baader-Meinhof track very near Mini Martin and then followed the Mini Martin track back to the Exit track. It was in surprisingly good condition too.

JF-201 Rescue Pot

Alan Jackson

20 May 2012

Party: Stephen Bunton, Sarah Gilbert, Darren Holloway, Ken Hosking, Kerrin Huxley, Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

The plan was to finish the surveying of Rescue Pot (or find a whole heap more cave to keep us busy surveying for years to come) and some other odd jobs in the area.

Alan, Bunty, Ken and Janine headed in, rigged the pitch and commenced surveying the rockfall. The other four checked out nearby JF-202 Tyenna Tomo to see if they could find the old tag, then did a quick tourist in Rescue Pot (down the pitch), surface surveyed the 50-odd metres between the two caves (JF-201 tag to an orange tape on a tree on the SE lip of the JF-202 doline, since the tag couldn't be found) and then headed back for coffee at the cars.

Nothing much new was found in 201 and 68 m of survey data later we reached what appeared to be an end to the rockfall. Ken and Bunty took the track back to the cars (Ken was pulling his Toni Kurz trick again every 5 minutes) while Janine and Alan took a thoroughly unpleasant route down the ridge towards Cave Hill, but found nothing of particular interest.

With all the data in, Rescue Pot is officially 540 m long. The two low points (bottom of the rockfall and the sump/active streamway termination) are ~125 m and ~127 m deep respectively. The surface data collected by Ric *et al.* placed JF-202 north of the underlying JF-201 passage. It will be interesting to survey JF-202 and see whether it also heads into the hill in a north-westerly direction, paralleling JF-201 passage, or if it descends in a south-easterly direction and slides under the JF-201 entrance series. It could also hit a perpendicular fault/joint/other geological nerd term and go bloody anywhere. This would seem like a job for summer when the cave isn't a raging waterfall. The survey appears on page 22.

Diving Lawrence Rivulet Rising

Janine McKinnon

16 June 2012

Party: Diver: Janine McKinnon. Support: Ric Tunney

Winter is not traditionally the best time to dive sumps in Tasmania. In fact, usually it's not possible at all as the flow is too strong. We have very few cave dives that are ponds, nearly all are streams, subject to the usual effects on flowing water of rainfall and snow melt.

Consequently I was very surprised to find Lawrence Rivulet flowing strongly, but not at levels typical for Winter, when we decided to have a quick look as we drove past from Wyatinah to Maydena in mid-June. Even more attractively, it was relatively clean water, not the opaque, zero visibility, milky mess it had been each time I had checked it out in low flow conditions over the last two summers.

It was too good a chance to miss, even though the water temperate was going to be a further degree or two lower than summer temperatures, which aren't exactly tropical.

Thus, Ric and I found ourselves parking at Cashions Creek Road at 10:30 am, two days later. The air temperature was 7°C and it started raining lightly as I organised my gear. At least the dive wasn't going to be much colder than standing around on the surface.

As cave dives go in southern Tasmania, access to this site can be equated with Owl Pot or Tassie Pot. That is, it is as easy as it gets and an exception to the general rule. So a couple of trips got the gear to the kit-up site in 15 minutes.

Of course by the time I got it put together, and into the entrance pool, and me in too, and the gear on me, another half hour had passed.

There was no line visible so I made my primary tie-off to a convenient tree with my primary reel and placed it within easy reach to take with me into the entrance.

Finally, at 11:15 am I was ready for off. Well almost. I generally wear my drygloves for dives in these cold temperatures (which don't actually work as drygloves for me but they are warm) and I get everything on and sorted before I put them on. They are so thick I can't feel much with them so it is easier to put them on last. This time I couldn't get the second one on properly (they are difficult to get on) and I got fed up and left it off. One hand was just going to have to put up with getting very cold.

Now I was off ... a few metres under the log jam to try and find the entrance to the cave. This proved to be relatively easy to find by following the highest flow, and proved to be a smallish vertical slot with water barreling out with some force. I pulled myself through, with a little wiggling, jamming myself against the sides as I went, so as not to get spat out by the current. Just inside, where it opened up to a lowish flattener, I found the fixed line starting.

The regulator I was using was gurgling quite a bit now (water coming through as well as air). I must have got some muck, or probably a very small pebble, jammed in it as I came in the entrance. I stayed in place for a few minutes assessing how bad I thought the problem was. It was still quite useable and so I changed to the other

regulator and decided to keep this as my backup and only dive as far as was reasonable on the other tank.



Janine about to dive at Lawrence Rivulet Rising.

I tied off my reel to the fixed line and then started following the fixed line.

The current was significant but not too hard to swim against, particularly as I could pull myself along on the small rocks in the floor too. The line was in good condition, and still fixed at its tie-off points. I swam along the horizontal passage and then turned sharply to the left and down a steep bank. The slope leveled off at -18 m and the fixed line finished, tied off around a small boulder in the floor. There was no line ahead but there was a vertical restriction about 2 m ahead. I had penetrated about 50 m into the cave.

I hung there for several minutes deciding what I would do. I wanted to continue on but there were several factors in favour of turning the dive here. My hand was cold, I had only one reliable regulator (and thus air supply), and the squeeze could take a bit of time to get through. I was carrying a couple of jump reels but they only had 15 m of line each. That wouldn't get me very far. In hindsight, I should have used one of them at the entrance and kept my primary reel, with 120 m of line, for the cave. I had expected the fixed line to continue further. So, all things considered, I decided to retreat and return another day.

The swim back to the entrance didn't actually involve any swimming by me at all. I just let the current move me, pushing away from things that go bump, as I went.

I had a few moments of effort trying not to get pushed out the entrance squeeze whilst I untied my reel from the fixed line. I also had to be a bit careful how I went through the squeeze, and had to jam myself to have control over the exit. I managed this without damage to my drysuit, which was a bonus.

The dive had taken 25 minutes. I used 30 bar of air. I had twin, sidemount 10.5 litre tanks filled to 220 bar each. Water temperature was 6°C. Visibility about 2 m on inward leg. Minimum silting occurred for the return trip so visibility was about 1 m for return. A metre is as good as a mile, as they almost say.

Ric had seen my bubbles from the hill above and was waiting as I surfaced. This was a surprise as we had agreed on an hour, and he had gone off wandering in the interim. I

had expected to have to haul the gear out myself so I was pleased he was there to pass the tanks up to.

The rain had stopped so getting changed was much more pleasant than I was expecting.

We had planned a bit of work along McCallums track on the way home but by the time we had lunch the clouds were gathering again, rain was moving down the valley, it was 3 pm, and so all together, enthusiasm evaporated.

We did check that the new key for the F8 East Road actually worked in the lock as we passed by on the drive home.

Settlement Area

Alan Jackson

23 June 2012

Party: Serena Benjamin, Stephen Bunton, Darren Holloway, Ken Hosking, Kerrin Huxley, Alan Jackson, Peter McIntosh (FPA), John Webb (Norske-Skög)

Norske-Skög (NS) own a bit of private freehold title in the Florentine Valley (the old Dawson Settlement) and grow trees on it for their paper mill. They've been planning and doing quite a bit of pine harvesting there in the last year or so. John Webb is a planner with Norske and has been getting out and about with Peter McIntosh (Forest Practices Authority) and Rolan to manage the karst that underlies the area. Ex STC member and former FPA employee, Adrian Slee, also did some work in the area with John and I believe Chris Sharples did some of the initial karst investigations as a consultant to NS.

Rolan tagged four of the caves in the area last year and published names and descriptions (Eberhard 2011) – GPS coordinates were also supplied and entered into the club GPS. Further work in the area this year revealed another cave that Rolan allegedly declared too narrow to enter (or at least too narrow to exit without gravity assist). With the prospect of a long-held dream of mine coming true – to name a cave something along the lines of 'Rolan is Soft Cave' – I organised to visit the area with John.

Eberhard (2011) mentions that the caves are off What-U-Callit Road but we accessed them by continuing to near the end of Frizons Road (the next road west). Road mapping and optimum cave access routes in logging coupes tend to vary following harvesting activities.

We started with a short amble beside a recently harvested pine coupe to a patch of residual native vegetation around a linear collapse/sink hole. John and Peter motioned towards the small entrance and sat back expectantly. It certainly was tight, but with a ladder in place it looked like I'd be able to get out again so I descended. The cave essentially consisted of two intersecting narrow rifts (one aligned ~100-280°, the other ~60-240°) both of which narrowed off at each end. In the 100° direction the rift descended steeply into a small chamber and then doubled back on itself and continued to descend steeply but via a narrow hole. Rocks rattled for a few seconds down the hole and there was a strong draft pouring in. The floor consisted of fill so it could be dug by someone super keen.

The 60° end of the other rift proved to connect with another small entrance located 8 m ESE of the main entrance – I could see Ken's light and converse with him. This entrance was not really humanly negotiable though.

Strangely, I had found a sheep skull on the surface at the entrance (and a scapula in the cave) and by the time I'd extricated myself from the entrance squeeze Bunty had mounted the skull on a totem by the entrance and

announced his intentions to call it Voodoo Cave. I suggested an amendment to make it Voodewe Cave and all those with a poor sense of humour whole-heartedly agreed what an outstanding name we'd come up with ...

It was tagged JF-592 on the western side of the entrance, GPSed, photo-tagged and sketched.



The entrance to JF-592 was a little tight.

We headed back to the car, where we discovered I had a flat tyre, then strolled to the end of the road and into the pine trash again. We located JF-458 Tonsil Cave, got a photo and confirmed Rolan's assertion (Eberhard 2011) that John and Adrian had surveyed the cave already. We then moved a short distance to a small entrance that John *et al.* had located previously and declared 'un-enterable'. Being decidedly untrusting, I poked my head in and declared it distinctly enterable.



Darren and the sheep skull totem pole at JF-592.



A caver-train in the pine trash.

The cave descended via a clay slope to a small chamber. An ascending slope on the other side of the chamber petered out a few metres along but a 2 m downclimb at the base of the chamber led to an interconnecting series of clay-filled phreatic tubes. A nice articulated skeleton of a small bouncy creature was laid out perfectly in one of the side tubes. The cave was tagged (JF-593), GPSed, sketched and photo-tagged. It was called Un-Enterable.

A short distance away was JF-457 Notit Cave. A quick recce by Darren and Kerrin had determined that it was extensive enough to warrant a quick survey rather than a shitty sketch. We ran six legs to the first chamber described in Eberhard (2011). The second chamber is

much as Rolan describes (fragile) so we didn't subject it to further damage by surveying it. A quick look did show us that a small hole leads to a significant drop (4-6 m) below this chamber but the hole is way too small to fit down and would require some pretty serious cave modification to enlarge it sufficiently.

While Notit was being surveyed, Serena, Bunty and John headed off to look at two nearby untagged features to the south. The first was the fourth in the series of sinkholes on John's map (running east-west). It was not previously entered or tagged although it looked like a promising doline. Most of the cave-like feature was under a log and was totally un-enterable and therefore not tagged, for a second time.

The second feature was a ~3 m deep cave that Adrian Slee had allegedly failed to explore initially due to the presence of too many spiders. This cave was sketched, photographed, tagged JF-594 and called Arachnophobia in honour of Adrian.

Back at the car I was happy to be dressed in a waterproof suit as the job of changing the flat tyre was somewhat messy. We then located the start of the JF-7 Frankcombe Cave track beside the Florentine Road before Darren and Kerrin made tracks for Geeveston. The rest of us then travelled to the Eight Road where Serena, Ken, John and Peter took a leisurely stroll to Growling Swallet while Bunty and I slogged up to Camp Misery to collect the small cache of gear left over from the Easter expedition.



The joys of flat tyres in the mud.

Post Trip Research

Eberhard (2011) mentioned that JF-458 was to be published in Forest Practices News and John and Peter confirmed this during the trip. I found the article, Slee et al. (2011) on the FPA website. The article discusses three caves in the area and contains maps (plan only) of two of them. Rolan's JF-458 Tonsil Cave is referred to as Cave 3 (Tonsil Hole), so we have a minor nomenclature issue there (which came first, the cave or the hole?). The other two caves are also given names. Cave 3 (Radiata Cave) is simple enough but unfortunately Cave 1 gets several names. In the text it is referred to as Cave 1 (Budget Cave), in the map it is Settlement Cave 1 (Budget Cave) and in the figure title it is Settlement Cave (Budget Cave) – i.e. without the '1'. I've seen plenty of caves get multiple names over the years but this is the first time I've seen one get three names in the one article! FPA obviously don't have Greg Middleton doing the sub-editing.

Of course Settlement Cave is already assigned to JF-362/363 (named in Robinson 1971 & tagged in Goede 1984). So I think we'll adopt Budget Cave for this one.

I've obtained GPS coordinates for Radiata and Budget Caves and I'm pursuing the survey data and naming history from John Webb and Adrian Slee, though Peter McIntosh has informed me via email that Budget Cave was discovered on budget day (2011) and that radiata pine roots in the roof of Radiata Cave provided the inspiration for that name. We'll get back to tag them at some point in the future.

All in all the whole thing's a bit of a mess but hopefully we can clean it up and if the constructive relationship we've established with John Webb continues then we should be able to minimise any future messes. John is very amicable and keen to share information with the club so I'm optimistic. He has provided the club with a copy of Chris Sharples' 2009 report – *Karst Features & Hydrology of the*

Settlement Block, Florentine Valley: Explanatory Report and Data Dictionary, which contains a lot of information.

It's a pity Chris Chad isn't still here to make the most of the fact that we've found someone else in the world who cares about the bad end of the Florentine.

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Flat tyres, lunch and rainbows (aka how many cavers does it take to change a tyre?)

JF-341

Matt Cracknell

23 June 2012

Party: Matt Cracknell, Petr Smejkal

It was a long time since I had done any real vertical caving (so long I can't even remember) and Petr was keen for something a little more exciting than a Newdegate survey trip. So JF-341 seemed like a good option as neither Petr nor I had been there. Also, it offered an opportunity to see some of the best decoration in the Florentine and apart from a ~40 m pitch the rest of the cave appeared to be relatively tame.

Armed with a detailed essay from Alan describing the rigging (see below), route finding and access to the entrance, we headed west on a cold and wet winter morning. After getting momentarily lost at the quarry, we managed to find the appropriate right hand turn onto the

KD road. We kitted up and found the Chairman track along with the JF-341 entrance without too much thrashing about in the rainforest.

Once in the cave, we scrambled down though rockpile that closely follows the steeply dipping bedding. After about 50 m, we found ourselves in a sloping chamber that opens onto the first pitch of ~ 5 -6 m. The second pitch, better described as a steep climb, starts at the base of the first and opens out into a descending rift. With ample naturals to rig off things went smoothly. The third pitch of ~ 7 m landed us at the approach to the fourth where Petr spent a bit of time installing spits.

The big pitch, a gaping shaft with a large column and flowstone growing at the bottom, was great. It reminded me of why I used to go vertical caving. It's funny how my most memorable moments of JF caving revolve around heavy bags, bottomless pits and your life flashing before your eyes.

After a few gummy bears we headed off in the obvious direction to explore some of the cave. We both really enjoyed the crystal pool and long straws, eventually finding the TCC extension. This extension was easy to identify, with a handline and a very tight flattener marking its existence. It quickly opened out into a huge chamber with masses of flowstone covering the floors. The bright pink tape made route finding easy. We spent an hour or so rooting around in all the obvious places, taking photos of pretties and generally having a good time. We lifted our blood sugar levels with gummy dinosaurs before heading back to the surface.

It only took us about an hour and a half to climb back to the surface where the sun was still shining. This was probably a good thing because we got a little bushwhacked finding the Chairman track; if it was dark we may still be there. We took a quick look at the entrance of Rift Cave just so we could marvel at its doline and then made our way back to the car as night fell.

It was a good days caving. Petr and I caved well together, there were no mishaps and we both got to see a cave neither of us had been to before. Also we must thank Alan for his rigging notes. Things have changed since the days of *Vertical Caves of Tasmania (VCT)* so Alan's rigging notes are summarised below.

JF-341 Rigging Details

P1: This pitch is located at the base of a sloping chamber below the rockpile. Take a ~12 m rope and a couple of medium-length tapes. Use the abundant large and sturdy naturals on the sloping floor above the pitch.

P2: This pitch is the first 10P mentioned in *VCT* but it is really about 15-20 m. Tie back into the preceding rope as a backup and place a couple of long tapes over the large obvious naturals. About 5 m down there is a slight rub but you can get a natural re-direct in if you know where to look. The best plan is to take fat rope (10.5 mm or 11 mm) so you can just IRT. Take a ~25 m rope for this pitch to be sure.

P3: This is a 7 m pitch. The approach has an 8 mm expansion bolt on the left hand wall (heading into the cave) that requires a bolt plate (take two in case you drop one). Traverse out over the pitch and up at head height are at least two nice little jugs to get some tapes around for a free-hang. Use a 15 m rope to account for backups and enough length to join up to the next pitch.

P4: This free hanging pitch is ~ 39 m but ~60 m rope is required to rig the pitch and the sloping approach. Join into the previous pitch (but leave enough slack to allow someone to go up that pitch) then use a massive flake on the left hand wall, which requires a long tape. Place an additional anchor on the flake at the lip of the ~1 m drop before the pitch proper. About 5-7 m down the ramp on the left hand wall are two bolts at head height, both require old-fashioned spits (hangers with captive 8 mm bolt stubs).

Summary:

P1 – 12 m rope, 2 short/medium tapes

 $P2-25\ m$ rope, 2 medium tapes and 1 short tape for redirect

P3 – 15 m rope, 2 medium tapes and bolt plate

P4-60 m rope, 1 very long tape or trace, 1 medium tape and 2 bolts (8mm spits)









Various images of nice stuff in JF-341.

Other Exciting Stuff

Rediscovering 'Lost' Caves at Ida Bay, (and some unrecorded exploration history)

Arthur Clarke

Introduction

Prior to the recent Exitravaganza at Ida Bay in late February 2012, organiser (Tony Veness) asked me for a "hit-list" of suggested exploration leads in Exit Cave, plus any recommendations for related surface work at Ida Bay. No doubt Tony had ideas of his own together with the suggestions of other Exit Cave explorers. Amongst my lot, there was the suggestion to relocate the seven caves found by the Croatian cavers in March 2003, plus Flat Top Roots (IB-X70) the horizontal cave explored by Arthur Clarke (AC) and Jason Gardiner on 1st March, 2003. AC also suggested that the three gated side entrances into Exit Cave (near the lower end of the Skinner Track) be relocated, checking if their gates still open and whether they are still viable entry/ exit points in case of flood emergencies.

Some history related to IB-86, IB-87 and IB-161

The three side entrances near the Skinner Track are Slip-In (IB-86, aka Tradesmans Entrance), Drop-In (IB-87) and Bobs Hole (IB-161). All three caves are located in or adjacent to the manfern gully that bottoms out at the D'Entrecasteaux River flats. The latter two are vertical entrances, located near each other below a 6-7 m high limestone bluff. IB-86 is located in the valley floor about 30-40 m further up the gully at the base of a small collapse doline. Although it's unclear when these entrances were first discovered, Slip-In and possibly Drop-In were reportedly used by cavers in the mid-1970s, well before cutting of the Skinner Track (in the early 1980s). Tagged in 1985 by Arthur Clarke, both these caves (IB-86 and IB-87) have been used as emergency exits on at least two occasions when extreme floodwater levels prohibited exit via the Wind Tunnel. The IB-86 entrance was surveyed to Station 2 (in Exit Cave) during Easter 1986 by AC together with three visiting cavers from VSA (Victorian Speleological Association): Lou Williams, Barry Russell and Malcolm Fankhauser.

It is unclear when the third and uppermost side entrance was discovered and first used by cavers. Reportedly named to honour its discoverer (Bob Reid), the IB-161 (Bobs Hole) entrance was most certainly being used in the 1980s. Early in 1990, during the course of the Ida Bay Karst Study, Ian Houshold advised me that the then still untagged Bobs Hole was observed by two archaeologists: Rhys Jones and Angie McGowan, who noted the proximity of the entrance to an Aboriginal rock shelter site. In their report, which identified four Ida Bay cave sites for inclusion on the TASI (Tasmanian Aboriginal Site Index) register, McGowan (1990) records that "TASI 4549 is extremely close to the Exit Cave track and is on an unofficial route to an alternative vertical entrance to Exit Cave. Traffic through this site is already causing erosion of the deposit. Cavers should be encouraged to find another route to the vertical entrance to Exit Cave." Although the archaeologists found no evidence of hand stencils or artefacts inside Exit Cave, there was some speculation that the Bobs Hole entrance may have been used as an entry point by Tasmanian Aborigines.

The Bobs Hole entrance remained untagged until Australia Day, 1994. (It was hot that day, 39°C in Hobart, so Jeff Butt and Greg Jordan went south to Ida Bay, spending the day surveying the gypsum walled Angels Lair passages in Exit Cave, where the temperature was recorded at a more pleasant 9° Celsius. During their exit, the Bobs Hole entrance was given its IB-161 tag.) This entrance was used on several occasions in January 1993 and again in January 1994 to pack-haul the theodolite and tripods when the ASF Exit Cave survey project was in full swing. Some backtracking from IB-161 was necessary because the flat track across the plains from South Cape Road was the preferred access route when heavy or long equipment was carried in and out of Exit Cave. Aside from the issue of occasional flash flooding, the IB-161 entrance was favoured as a pack-haul route due to the awkwardness of negotiating the Wind Tunnel entrance and outer steel wall steps.

Although Bobs Hole, Drop-In and Slip-In were no doubt sometimes used as short cut entry points into Exit Cave from the Skinner Track, in the early 1990s the flat track was still being used quite regularly, especially on weekdays, because of the access hassles during the Benders Quarry debacle. (There were also concerns for cavers parking near the start of the Skinner Track at, or just beyond the Marble Hill/ Lune Sugarloaf saddle, especially the risk of having parked cars hit by fly-rock from limestone quarry blasting.)

Installation of the cave gates and other ironmongery

All three side entrances were gated during March-April 1996. At the same time, inside the IB-14 entrance chamber, the steel fence grid was constructed across the D'Entrecasteaux River exit. The gating and insertion of ironmongery was coordinated by Ian Houshold, in his former role as the Tasmanian Government Karst Geomorphologist. Ian was assisted by Stuart Graham from the Dover office of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage, along with Roger Griffiths, a long-standing guide from Hastings Caves. In addition there were four young men from Dover engaged as part of a process for employing and job-skilling long term unemployed youths. The gating process involved visits to all four entry points, which had to be accurately surveyed before the gates and ironmongery could be positioned. On all occasions, the entourage walked in via the so-called "Brooker Highway" across the flats from the South Cape Road.

In a recent phone conversation with Roger Griffiths (3rd July 2012), he informed me that the final assault with the ironmongery for Exit Cave involved eight personnel with Ian, Roger, the four young men and two employees from Drysdale Engineering in Dover. They spent three nights camped in a clearing near the flat-top log across the D'Entrecasteaux River, a remnant of the former forest

logging tramway bridge. All of the gates and other steelwork were assembled on site. Although some equipment including camping gear, food and fuel was carried in, the majority of the steel and heavy duty generators for electric welding were transported by helicopter. Using long-haulage cables, the heavy equipment was lowered from the helicopter into a natural clearing located near the now tagged IB-232 entrance, where the D'Entrecasteaux River goes underground, about 300 m west of the IB-14 Exit Cave entrance. A makeshift welding plant was established at the drop point and the fabricated steel man-handled to the various installation sites. At the conclusion of the project, Ian and Roger took all the participants on a tourist trip to Exit Cave going in as far as The Ballroom.

The Croatian expedition to Ida Bay in March 2003

After some six to eight months of negotiation with local cavers and the Tasmanian Government, a team of eight Croatians were guided to Ida Bay on 1st March 2003. Permission for their expedition had been granted on the basis that experienced cavers would search for limestone and karst features in the region beyond Western Creek on the southern flanks of Moonlight Ridge. There were high hopes their expedition would extend the known boundaries of the Ida Bay karst, perhaps finding a western extension of the Exit Cave system. As a condition of their visit to Ida Bay, STC and DPIWE were to receive a comprehensive report of the expedition, together with any maps of the geology/ geomorphology and surveys of any caves discovered. No report was ever received. There was also talk of a documentary film being produced; a copy was promised for STC as well as Parks and Wildlife.

Recently arrived in Australia, the Croatians spent five days in Sydney as tourists enjoying the sun, surf and souvenirs. The expedition members arrived at Darling Parade, Mt. Stuart, around 4 pm on Wednesday 26th February 2003. Some of the Croatians wore expedition T-shirts or long sleeve zip-front windcheaters bearing their "Terra Australis 2003 Caving in Tasmania" logo. The STC welcoming committee comprised Steve Bunton, Arthur Clarke, Robyn Claire, Ric Tunney and Toxy (the cat). Our STC Quartermaster (Jeff Butt) arrived shortly afterwards with a bin of helmets and cap lamps. In response to our welcome, the Croatian expedition leader Marlon Zivkovic presented our STC President, Steve with a book about caves in Croatia. There was much discussion and poring over maps. After spending Thursday provedoring and meeting Ian Houshold, the Croatians were taken south to Francistown in the late afternoon with Lionel Clark's Far South Bus Tours. Ensconced at Francistown, some got their adrenalin rush on the rope swing while others headed down the road to grab wood-fired pizzas. Their evening was taken up with more trip planning and preparation for a taste of Ida Bay next day.

On Friday morning 28th February, Mick Williams arrived and the eight Croatians boarded his SWEAT (South West Eco-Adventure Tours) aka Glow-worm Cave Tours bus for the journey to Ida Bay. First stop was Bradley-Chesterman Cave to see Anaspides shrimps and harvestmen, followed by a quick trip into Mystery Creek Cave with lyrebirds en route. Returning to Dover (Francistown), they partook of a sumptuous evening meal prepared by Robyn Claire, after which they began organising their first week's supply of

expedition food. It was amazing... to see all their heavy weight provisions: a dozen or more cans of baked beans, vegetables and soup; enormous bags of carrots, potatoes and onions; bags of processed meat sausages; glass jars of tomato paste and gourmet pasta sauce, relish, mayonnaise and sandwich spreads; bags of dried fruit, spaghetti, rice, pasta, soup mix and sugar; tins of coffee and drinking chocolate; a dozen boxes of muesli bars and too many salami sausages; together with too many loaves of fresh bread; stubbies of ginger beer; several two litre plastic bottles of cordial and cooking oil; plus an enormous container of tomato sauce, not to mention the brand new super-sized 4 litre billies, rolls of loo paper, paper towelling and serviettes, cling wrap, foil, greaseproof paper and several bags of long candles; and a jumbo size bottle of dishwashing detergent with their scourers, sponges; and finally there was the pub stop for tinnies of beer! Now add the weight of camping gear and caving equipment including 500 m of brand new 11 mm SRT rope.

Saturday 1st March was departure day and six STC members assisted the Croatian expeditioners getting to Ida Bay. Aside from Mick Williams providing his Glow-Worm Tours bus, there was an escort team of five STC guides and porters: Ric, Janine, Steve Bunton, Jason Gardiner and AC. (Jason also worked as a guide at Hastings Caves.) Saying our goodbyes to Mick around 10am, thirteen of us left the Ida Bay carpark heading to Exit Cave, via Benders Quarry and the Skinner Track. There were many heavily overloaded packs with too much food, plus their extra luggage add-ons: SRT ropes, helmets, billycans, tents, tarpaulins, tent poles, groundsheets, sleeping bags and mats! A detour was made en route to show them the nature of the mudstone/ limestone contact along from IB-47 (National Gallery). After a brief lunch stop outside the efflux entrance of Exit Cave, we continued westward. The Croatians were eventually deposited at a site in a flat area of forest, not far south from the entrenched course of the D'Entrecasteaux River, approx. 600-700 m west of Exit Cave on the southern flank of Marble Hill.

Two of the Croatian expedition team were not cavers. Their freelance expedition cameraman Hrvoje Franjic, from Zagreb had never caved before, and likewise Katarina Jurincic from Crikvenica, the only woman in the group (being the designated camp cook), was the non-caving girlfriend of the expedition leader. Two of the six cavers were from Porec on the west coast of the Istrian peninsula: the much older expedition leader Marlon Zivkovic from the Speleoklub HAD and his young mate Bernard Pistan. The four other cavers: Antonio Ciceran, Andrea Gasparini, Bojan Mladenovic and Igor Popovic (all from Vrsar in Istria) were also in their early 20s. For most of them, this was their first time away from Croatia.

They spent their first day in the Ida Bay bush based at their campsite, exploring their surrounds and recovering from the walk-in. Camped in the isolated wilderness for nearly two weeks, it was not very pleasant; no one told them about our thick scrub and the possums, quolls and bush rats that raid camp supplies. It had also teemed with rain for seven of their thirteen days in the Ida Bay forest. When it rained there was little to do and no caving! Becoming damp underfoot, they moved to a new campsite further east on 6th March. Confined to camp for much of the time, they

soon ran out of food. With six or seven (?) smokers in the group, there were two provedoring trips coming out for provisions, including beer and tobacco. Having no vehicle at the carpark and no mobile phone; it was a very long walk for supplies. The phone box near the Ida Bay Railway station was out of action, so in addition to walking the Skinner Track and then the full length of the South Lune Road, the provedores had to go along the main road to the public phone box at Lune River, ringing myself or Jason Gardiner at Hastings Caves for assistance. The luckless cameraman/ cinematographer, Hrvoje Franjic, was given the supply run job twice!

In their post-expedition debrief to Ric, Steve and Arthur at Mt. Stuart on Sunday 16th March 2003, the Croatians were obviously disappointed and disillusioned by their experience. From the little that is known about their expedition, it appears that aside from a leisurely recce westward along the D'Entrecasteaux River on 3rd March, they spent little time (if any) exploring the intended target area. [They had come here expecting to find deep caves.] From the few details given to us, the caves they explored, located on the southern or southwestern flanks of Marble Hill, were all quite shallow. Their cave survey data was very scant containing Slavic words or terms, very little English and some confusion with cave names, such as IB-191 (see below). So, we in STC were very keen to see their finished report. However, two of the Croatians (Bernard and Katarina) gave Arthur copies of photos from their digital camera photos (so this Spiel article uses their photo record).

Most of their discoveries were vertical caves. All their caves were given "Jama" names, being a Slavic word for "hole" or "pit". Their cave finds were generally named in honour of their Croatian cities of origin. Recorded as being found on 7th March 2003, were IB-191 (named Jama Had in their bookwork, but Jama Porec with their survey sketch), IB-192 (Jama Crikvenica), IB-193 (Jama Vrsar) and IB-194 (Jama Zagreb) plus IB-196 (Janica Jama) recorded for 6th March 2003. It is unclear whether the latter (IB-196) is a horizontal or vertical cave. Although cave number IB-195 is shown on their rough sketch for another cave, the 10 m deep Trojka Jama found on 5th March 2003, it is unclear if this cave was actually tagged. Initially recorded by ASF and STC as IB-X71, Trojka Jama may in fact be IB-195. The Croatians also report the discovery of Ivica Jama, found 6th March 2003. Now recorded as IB-X72, Ivica Jama is a horizontal cave, and from Bernard Pistan's photographs it appears likely to be the D'Entrecasteaux Fossil Cave.

Although the Croatians advised us they had a bolting kit and the correct drill for attaching cave number tags, some of the pre-stamped metal "IB" cave number tags were not properly fastened at cave entrances. In their debriefing, they reported that the IB-191 tag was simply attached to the rock wall above the entrance by a piece of wire and similarly the IB-192 tag was wired to the rock about 0.5 m below the entrance on the first pitch on the left hand side. The exact status, site of attachment or permanency of tags on the three or four other numbered entrances supposedly tagged by the Croatians is unknown.



A younger-looking Bunty receives a book from Marlon.



Filming in Bradly Chesterman Cave.



The first week's supply of expedition food.



Team Croatia ready to go in the Southern Ranges carpark.



Hrvoje the cameraman looking professional



Croatian camp.



Bernard descends into IB-192.

A memory report relating the discovery of Flat Top Roots (IB-X70)

After the Croatians were left at their campsite in the afternoon of March 1st 2003, Ric, Janine and Steve returned to the Ida Bay carpark via the Skinner Track. With the STC Garmin GPS unit in hand, Arthur (AC) and Jason Gardiner opted to return via the southwestern flanks of Marble Hill, hoping to reach Valley Entrance (IB-120, aka VE) well before sunset. AC mistakenly thought it might be an easier and shorter route back to the carpark from the Croats campsite! As Jason and I headed west, following the D'Entrecasteaux River, we marvelled at its course through sculptured limestone. Further west, the river became a wide flat-lying braided cobble-floored streambed at the edge of a floodplain; we had run out of limestone! Heading north again, the river had to be crossed three times before we reached ascending ground, and after emerging from the river flats we ran into a dense thicket of Gahnia cutting grass.

Hitting the limestone again, Jason and I attempted to follow its western edge, setting a course to Valley Entrance. Although I had used a Garmin before, in the dense forest it was increasingly difficult to get a reliable GPS fix on the location of VE and our relative position or distance to IB-120. With fading light in the myrtle dominant rainforest, we followed a low lying ridge, near which was a broad dry flat-floored gully with small bluffs of limestone. Seeing a number of potential horizontal entrances, we entered one of these. After a crawl through a section of minor breakdown, we were half crouching, then standing in a spacious flat roofed chamber with lots of tree roots, massive but ancient stals, lots of moonmilk and some fragmented bone pieces. There appeared to be at least two ways going further in: a wider route through more break-down more or less heading east and a narrower

passage heading NNE through tree roots and moonmilk. Considering the time of day and our need to get home, we simply opted to explore a small 1.8-2.0 m high side rift with cave fauna, located just a short distance inside the cave.

When we emerged, it was nearly dark and according to the GPS, we were no where near VE. However, thanks to our perseverance with the Garmin, we were eventually able to reach IB-120, but quite late, to memory around 10:30 pm. With fading headlight batteries and difficulty relocating different coloured track marking tapes in the dark, we did not get out to Ida Bay carpark until about 1.30am, waking Ric Tunney and Janine McKinnon in their campervan. The GPS was returned to Ric and the co-ordinates for our new cave (recorded in the Garmin as "Cave-1") were also passed on to Ian Houshold, the Government karst geomorphologist.

Although I subsequently advised Ric to edit the GPS readings to record Cave-1 as IB-X70, referring to it as "Arthur's New Cave", Ric subsequently re-named the new cave site as "Arthur" and sent me a print out showing its location relative to other known Marble Hill cave entrances. He also reported that it was heading in the direction of some known passage within Exit Cave.

Declaring "of course, it's Arthur's prerogative to explore, tag and map", Ric seemed happy enough about our suggested name for the new cave, as "Flat Top Roots".

Our new cave (Flat Top Roots) is obviously the same site revisited by Rolan Eberhard late last year, number tagged as IB-251 and surveyed in mid-December 2011 by Rolan, Geoff Wise and Serena Benjamin. This conclusion is based on a photo swap with Geoff and the perusal of my inside entrance photos by Rolan and Serena. When I queried Rolan about how he found the entrance to IB-251, he advised that the cave's location was recorded in a 1990 report by Angie McGowan describing archaeological sites found during the Ida Bay Karst Study. Although her report listing the site as TASI 4548, a "... cave with stratified deposit, artefacts and animal bones" (McGowan, 1990) does not actually include any grid coordinates, it is obvious that Rolan has sourced the location details from the TASI (Tasmanian Aboriginal Site Index) register.



Jason at the IB-X70 entrance in 2003.



The (same?) entrance in December 2011, now IB-251.



Inside the IB-X70 entrance (2003).



IB-X70 roots (2003).

Back to the present ... rediscovering "lost" caves at Ida Bay

On Wednesday afternoon 22nd February 2012, while Arthur C, Siobhan Carter and Trevor Wailes were walking into the campsite, three Exitravaganza members went searching for the Exit Cave side entrances: IB-86, 87 and 161. With Greg Middleton on the surface, Rolan and Matt Cracknell relocated the entrances from the inside at the far end of the first RHS passage just beyond the Wind Tunnel. Although Matt and Rolan were able to find and photograph all three gates and check the workability of their padlocks, a voice connection with Greg was only possible via IB-87 and IB-161. Greg was unable to relocate IB-86 on the surface. Inside Exit Cave, the horizontally aligned entrance

gate to IB-86 was completely clogged with organic debris and the now rusted gate could not be opened.

From a subsequent conversation with Rolan Eberhard on 2nd March 2012, he reports:

- The IB-87 vertical entrance with its horizontally aligned gate now has the only workable/ operable locking mechanism, opening from the inside and still having potential for use in the case of an emergency (flood entrapment etc);
- The IB-86 entrance has a horizontally aligned gate that was completely buried, the gate very rusted and padlock seized. Rolan sent me a photograph of this;
- The IB-161 entrance had a vertically aligned gate half buried in forest litter; the two locks on the gate were both seized. It is unclear why there were two padlocks.

On Thursday morning 23rd February, Greg and I initially headed to IB-232, where the present day course of the D'Entrecasteaux River enters Marble Hill (to become part of Exit Cave). Given that Hammer Passage and possibly The Ballroom and The Colonnades may be remnants of ancient subterranean river passages, I had the notion that there might be an equivalent entrance higher up Marble Hill, leading to a fossil section of a former upper course of the D'Entrecasteaux River. Although we did not go far up the hill or explore the area further west of IB-232, there was no sign of any horizontal entrances. Heading further east, with Greg upslope and AC downhill, we both almost across a vertically simultaneously came depression; it had a steep slope leading down to what looked like a cave entrance. As Arthur ventured down, Greg spotted a number tag; it was IB-191, the first of the 5-6 "tagged" caves found by the Croatians.

With its entrance surrounded by logs and fallen trees, a steep and loose mulch slope lead down to a relatively spacious and quite well decorated entrance chamber. The cave walls and ceiling abounded with cave crickets (*Micropathus tasmaniensis*). Most of the speleothems were old and inactive, now encrusted with moonmilk. At the back of the chamber there was a raised flat floored dry sandy bank, approximately 7-8 m long and 1.5-2.0 m wide, potentially capable of sleeping a number of happy campers! Behind this bank, there was a wall of more encrusted formations including the pendulites commonly seen inside Exit Cave.

Back in the floor of the entrance chamber, looking to the RHS, a relatively high approximately 1.0-1.5 m wide rift heads north into Marble Hill. Both sides of the mud-walled rift had perched remnants of flood debris, some intertwined with tree roots. The route on involved squeezing past a fallen slab, and then descending a slick (moist) sandy bank to a shallow streamway, approx. 2 m wide, which appears to be initially flowing east before heading north. The light tannin coloured waters look very similar to the water that Greg and I had just seen at the IB-232 entrance, about 130-150 m further west. Further north (downstream) the passage narrows and the 0.75-1.0 m wide stream deepens. Could this cave (IB-191) be a karst window, opening into a subterranean section of the D'Entrecasteaux River, before it enters Exit Cave? Perhaps it is a subterranean anabranch of the same river? It certainly warrants being dye traced sometime in the future.

Heading further east again and slightly north, we skirted around the top of the IB-14 (Exit Cave) collapse entrance, hearing ladies' voices from below but not seeing anyone. Perhaps it was Siobhan Carter or Pat Seiser or Barbara Zakrzewska or someone else from the Exitravaganza camp? Onwards and slightly uphill, we found a prominent buttress of massive limestone. At the base of this 5-6 m high bluff, we found several small vaguely vertical entrances. Despite having recent neck surgery, Greg was keen to explore these, so he donned my Scurion and disappeared. Both caves provided little passage and certainly offered no future prospects. Despite this, both caves were flagged with yellow tape with inscriptions relating our initials and date of discovery. Heading northeast again around our ridge, the slope angle became significantly steeper and the ridgeline took on the appearance as being a series of stacked bluffs; it reminded me of the lower regions of the Kokoda Trail, one of the original early walking routes to Exit Cave.

Looking down from one of these bluffs, Greg recognised some familiar landmarks, spotting the area where he had been in the previous day. Descending to the valley floor, Greg pointed out the locations of IB-87 and IB-161. We then started searching for IB-86. Greg located a potential entry point where a stream trickle drained to an extremely narrow.15-18 cm wide slot. Not being part of my memory of the "Slip-In" (Tradesmans) entrance, I headed further up the manfern shrouded dry gully. Recognising the small collapse doline almost immediately, there was no longer any recognisable cave entrance. The base of this doline was filled with a jumble of small logs, decayed ferns and a black humus rich mud (no doubt a legacy of too many lyrebird scratchings). After about five minutes of digging away with gloved hands, I located the IB-86 number tag on the RHS wall looking down into the entrance, where there appeared to be some recently moved rocks. Once again a yellow tape was positioned near the entrance; it reads: "IB-86 Rediscovered by AKC & GJM 23-Feb-2012". Yellow tapes were also added to two nearby trees on the Skinner Track.

The following day (on Friday morning 24th), Trevor Wailes lead some of the Exitravaganza folk on a search for another lost cave he had a memory of from his earlier days at Ida Bay. Trevor's recollection was of a wide and expansive overhang a short distance west of Exit Cave, situated under a bluff of limestone near the break of slope. Although we could not find any likely cave or karst feature, from the collection of photographs left with me by the Croatian cavers, it appears they may have found an overhang similar to Trevor's remembered site.

After our fruitless search for the overhang, together with Trevor and Stephen Jacobs (from Northern Caverneers), Greg and I took everyone up to the entrance of IB-191. Following the departure of Greg, Stephen and Trevor, heading off to look for entrances near Old Ditch Road, Geoff Wise and David Wools-Cobb (Northern Caverneers) commenced the survey of IB-191. Getting into the streamway with its tannin stained waters beyond the entrance chamber there is a squeeze between a rock and a hard place. I had entered the cave with a GPS in my breast pocket and thinking it would be more secure, placed it in a pants pocket; its face was consequently scratched when my pocket was torn open in the squeeze! Oblivious to this (until later), I spent about half an hour photographing

fauna with Rob Susac and Barbara Zakrzewska (both from WASG). Together we marvelled at the wonders of nature at work in the dark, watching glow-worms catch their prey and witnessing a cave spider emerging from its previous exoskeleton!

I wondered whether in fact Trevor's elusive cave might possibly be the site reported by Albert Goede as Salvation Cave (IB-X6) found in the early days of TCC exploration at Ida Bay. In Goede (1973), Salvation Cave is described as: "a small cave at base of hill west of Exit Cave; contains pool of water". Although its year of discovery is reported as "1960" in Mathews (1985), Albert believes Salvation Cave is the formerly un-named site near Exit Cave seen by cavers in March 1947, the very first occasion when TCC was guided by former Lune River resident Algie Smith (Anon., 1947; Iredale, 1947).



The IB-191 tag attached with wire.

Conclusion (aka Footnote)

Reading the original TCC trip report handwritten in 1947 by Peter Allnutt (probably written with a fountain pen), his description of the "Un-named Cave" relating its location, entrance features and brief detail of the streamway inside clearly matches IB-191, being the cave named Jama Porec by the Croatians. In his report, Allnutt (1947) describes "...a small cavern with an entrance from the hillside near the Exit Cave. Interesting small formations and a profusion of wetas & cave spiders. A side cavern had a stream running through it but was soon blocked with talus. This cave would probably be representative of the many openings in this area." [It was another seven years – late January 1954 – before cavers returned to Exit Cave again; fortuitously it was Albert Goede's first caving trip.]

In the Minutes of the TCC (Tasmanian Caverneering Club) committee meeting for 2nd July 1947, amongst the new cave names proposed for submission to the Nomenclature Board are the caves at Ida Bay seen in early March that year. One of these new names is Spider Cave, almost definitely to be the "Un-named Cave" reported by Peter Allnutt. As often happens in the case of untagged caves, the same site is often rediscovered again. So it is highly probable that Spider Cave was found again later as a "new" site and then named Salvation Cave. Given that it has now been given a third name, I would suggest that we should record that IB-191 (Jama Porec) was formerly IB-

X6, perhaps also listing "Salvation Cave" and "Spider Cave" as its alternate names, or perhaps its first names! In the first TCC Annual Report, published in September (?) 1947, included in the list of new names formerly adopted by the club are: Caves Hill [later becoming Marble Hill], Mystery Creek Cave; Spider Cave, Exit Cave and Bradley-Chesterman Cave.

It appears that IB-191 was also visited by the archaeologists in 1990 when it was recorded as TASI 4549, "...a rock shelter with sealed stratified occupation deposit" (McGowan, 1990). Together with a fourth recorded find, McGowan (1990) states that the TASI sites on Marble Hill are most probably Late Pleistocene in age and quite significant, since they "...represent the most southerly known extent of people who occupied south-west Tasmania during the Ice Age".



Trevor at the height of his powers in 2012.

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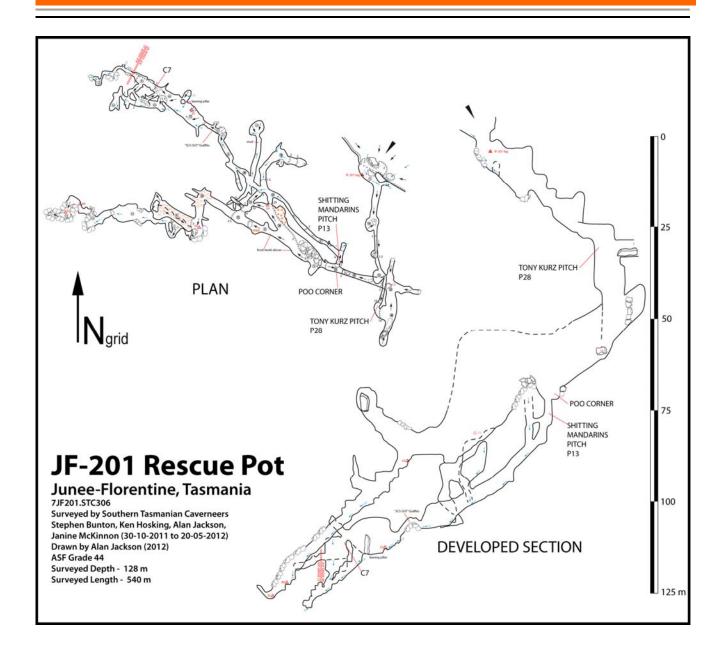
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
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