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Front Cover: Petr Smejkal emerging from H-208 Aquamire. *Photo by Arthur Clarke*

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.



Speleo Spiel

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Editorial

It must be winter. Not many trips happening.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

NEW GEARSTORE LOCATION

Alan's bit: The great gearstore move has occurred. Thanks to all those who assisted and thanks to Geoff for providing space to house the club's junk. The door has a fancy lock on it that takes a code, not a key, so in dire circumstances those considered trustworthy will be able to get in even if Geoff is not around to supervise your visit, however, supervised visits is the preferred method wherever possible. I have been entrusted with the code so can act as back-up for when Geoff is unavailable.

Geoff's bit (extracted from his email around the list server): If you need to borrow or return gear please call me and arrange a time to visit, you can get me either on 0408 108 984 or my work mobile 0400 503 629. In exceptional circumstances where I can't be there, I may give you the code to get in on that occasion. Alan will always have the current code if you can't get hold of me.

Gavin's bit: It has been great to host the gear store, I will miss seeing people come by and hearing where they are going and how they went. I would like to publicly thank Claire for doing a lot of the work in recent times as I have been so busy with my business. I would also like to thank Alan for helping dig out under my hose to make room for the gear store, and finally thanks to Geoff for taking it over.

PETR'S NEW BABY

Congratulations to Petr and Lucy on the birth of Patrick Smejkal on Saturday 4th August. Hopefully Patrick won't drive them both insane and that the family caving trips begin soon.

MT RONALD CROSS

Bob Cockerill (SCS barnacle, STC foundation president and Friend of STC) turned up to the August meeting, handed over \$50 in the name of editorial excellence and mooted a return to the dolomite of Mt Ronald Cross. The story goes that the large dolines down the bottom of the mountain were ignored in the early days in favour of the ones with greater depth potential further up the hill. They're not far from the Lyell Hwy, just over the Surprise River (they're marked on the 1:25k maps). Feel like escaping the drudgery of Gordon limestone this summer? Contact Bob and he'll even drive you there.

FUTURE TRIPS

It's not often we plan things far enough in advance that it's possible to advertise them in the *Spiel* but this issue we have two!

Andreas and a mainland rabble will be heading to the JF between 29 September and 7 October. All STC members (and presumably other clubs too) are welcome to join them – in fact I'm sure they'd appreciate some expert guiding. They're planning on doing a range of classic trips and

some general bush-bashing as well. I think they plan to set up camp somewhere up there for the whole period.

And then in January next year I'm organising a Mole Creek fest. I want to complete the survey of Mersey Hill Cave that I started with Stephen Blanden and Dave Wools-Cobb a couple of years ago. There'll be an array of canyoning and caving options on the go. I have been liaising with Northern Caverneers and it looks like we'll have a mob of them to joining us. It'll all happen over the Australia Day long weekend and I'll probably be taking the preceding Friday or following Tuesday off as well.

STILL CAVING

Most would accuse Jacko of not doing much caving these days but here is photographic evidence that he is *still* caving. I hope he has confined space training and it's a good thing the ethanol content is so high in these things that most of Jacko's infectious diseases should die before it goes to barrels.



Jacko feeling at home in a whisky still.

SOUTHERN CAVER, No. 66

Another issue of Southern Caver, STC's occasional journal, has just been produced. No. 66 comes in two parts, due to file size (there are lots of photos and maps). The versions posted on the website are slightly lower quality than might be considered ideal but we needed to make the file sizes moderately sensible. If you're not happy with the quality then contact me and I can supply you with the fullsize versions. This issue features a 'Major Study' (thesis) prepared in 1973 by the late Andrew Skinner as part of tertiary studies he was undertaking at the then Tasmanian College of Advanced Education, Mt Nelson, Hobart. The report contains Andrew's ideas on the conservation of the Ida Bay Caves, particularly the Exit Cave system, and, should their conservation require that they be developed for tourist access, his proposals for how such development could be undertaken in accordance with the highest standards. Naturally, as it's nearly 40 years old, it's now somewhat dated, but it's an interesting historical item and was fairly radical for its day. (Fortunately the cave system has been protected without resorting to the contemplated development – so far ...)

Download at the usual place - www.lmrs.com.au/stc

Greg Middleton

Trip Reports



Preparing to descend Oh Yeah..

IB-166 Oh Yeah Janine McKinnon 30 June 2012

Party: Darren Holloway, Kerrin Huxley, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Another Winter solstice weekend at Francistown had rolled around and a venue was sought for a pleasant, but not too lengthy, or taxing, day's caving for the Saturday.

Various options were considered and rejected before we settled on Oh Yeh.

We stayed the Friday night at the carpark in the slug (our camper) and Darren and Kerrin were scheduled to arrive at 9 am. We were having breakfast at 8:15 am when they arrived. We won't have any problems getting this pair to fit into the STC culture of promptness.

They did have gear to sort out, so we got to finish breakfast.

We left the cars at 9 am and took a leisurely walk up to the cave. Ric disappeared about half way there when he decided his socks weren't working and went back to change them. He caught us back up before we arrived at the cave. Zippy Riccy.

We rigged the entrance and, after some discussion, it was decided I would go first with the drill kit in case any of the bolts needed replacing. The cave was rigged by Madphil in 2001, and we hadn't been able to find any reference in the trip reports as to whether the bolts were spits or thrubolts. We did not particularly want to rig off spits now, and thought that for future use, thrubolts were the way to go anyway. So if they weren't there we should put them in this trip.

Darren wanted to be involved with the rigging, so he came next, with Ric bringing up the rear as "tail end Charlie".

At the bottom of the first pitch I stayed on rope to inspect the bolts at the top of pitch two. It was a single bolt and also a spit. I waited at the bottom of the first pitch for Ric, discussing options with Darren as we waited. After we had all had a good look at the situation we decided that an approach to the top of the second pitch was needed and it was better if one could get off the first pitch abseil to do it. A very similar situation to that at the bottom of the first pitch in Midnight Hole.

So I put in a bolt at the top of the approach.

I then descended to the top of the second pitch and put a hanger in the spit so I had better access to the pitch head to put in a replacement bolt. Darren came down to nearby to watch and assist. I put a bolt in above, and a little to the side, of the spit. It took a while to select the site as the spit was in the perfect spot – not surprising since Madphil put it in.

The rebelay a few metres lower needed a bolt too, of course, and finding a good spot there was a little more problematic. Again, the spit was beautifully placed, and between projections further down, and crud rock, I spent 5 minutes deciding on the location for the bolt. Finally it was in and I looked down ... to see our 48 m rope waving in the breeze. It had seemed like plenty of rope for a two pitch (14 m & 24 m) cave, with the pitches right on top of each other. Redirections and rebelays certainly use up rope.

It looked like it was near the bottom though, so I decided to continue on and employ the skills I learnt from Jeff Butt in minimum rope caving. I rigged the rebelay with a very small loop and took the knot out of the bottom when I got to the end of the rope. The rope was a bit less than 1.5 m off the ground, so I was able to stand and let it slip through my descender. I must have been channeling that day because it was perfect Jeff Butt rigging.

Once we were all down everyone had a look around, which doesn't take long. We decided to put some tape across the route NOT to use to follow the small passage. It is easy to miss the route that has been used previously, and the tape should cause future parties to stop and think about where to go. The way on is over a boulder and down a short passage on the left hand wall, NOT the obvious way in front of the pitch.

Kerrin started up first, followed by Darren, Ric, and then me de-rigging. We had decided to leave the keepers in the spit holes as a back-up in case they may be needed in the future, for a rescue or something. A long shot, I know, but they are there now so no point in cutting off options unnecessarily.

However, try as I might (for 5 minutes anyway, until my patience ran out) I could not get the plastic nut back into the thread of the rebelay spit. I also managed to drop the washer on that bolt as I took the hanger off the thrubolt, so it needs replacing on the next trip.

I fared better at the pitch-head bolt, and managed to refit the spit plugger, and get the nut, washer and hanger off the thrubolt without dropping anything.

As I approached the top of the pitch I was informed that the others had had some difficulty getting off the Y hang at the top. They had decided that a rebelay at the first bit of solid rock would make for an easier, and safer, exit. As we think this is an excellent beginners SRT cave, and thus future parties will very likely have very inexperienced cavers on board, I agreed to put the bolt in.

The gear was lowered to me, and in it went quickly, before I climbed out. I haven't done any bolting for a while, maybe more than a year (?), but I was back into the swing of it by this one.

As we had lunch, after packing up, we discussed whether we would do our second objective for the day-Pseudocheirus Cave. It was 1:30 pm by now, and whilst the day was still young, there were celebrations to be had that night. We guessed the cave would take about 3 hours to do, including the walk. That would be fine on a normal weekend but we didn't want to arrive at Arthur's too late. That was our excuse anyway, so we headed back to the cars for a leisurely coffee and drive back to Francistown.

We sprang a leak in our water tanks on the drive there and arrived to find water pouring out of the camper door. But that's a non-caving story.

IB-166 Oh Yeh Rigging Guide

P1 (14 m)	Belay from stringybark tree uphill from entrance. Rebelay on bolt at -3 m.
P2 (24 m)	Bolt for approach line RHS at bottom of P1. Bolt and spit LHS at pitch head. Bolt and spit for rebelay at -8 m.

Notes: All directions looking down. "Bolts" are 8 mm x 80 mm stainless steel "thrubolts" installed 30/6/2012. Hangers removed; plastic tags. "Spits" are 8 mm Petzl installed December 2002. Hangers removed; plastic bolts and tags (June 2012). Plastic bolt and tag missing from spit at rebelay P2 (June 2012). Washer missing from bolt at rebelay P2 (June 2012). Single 48 m rope was 2 m short.

IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave & IB-259

Alan Jackson

30 June 2012

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Anna Jackson, Jessica Orchard

I have a child who gets excited at the concept of going caving and abseiling. I figure I'd best make the most of it before she hits puberty and decides that fathers are embarrassing and that telephones, short skirts and girlfriends are the only leisure activities worth pursuing.

I planned to take Anna through Midnight Hole soon so I though I'd better check that she was happy with Matchbox Squeeze on a trip where it was optional. She wandered through in a slightly crouched position and made the rest of us look like idiots. Jessica, a prospective member, seemed to have enjoyed herself too.

On our way back to the car I wanted to tag and sketch the cave I'd found on the 2010 Midwinter Extravaganza weekend – a small horizontal cave nestled up beside the cliff that hangs over the IB-10 entrance (up the steep gully from IB-135 Beetlemania). See *SS*379:10.

It was tagged IB-259 on the left wall just under the drip line and two quick survey legs were done to get the gist of things. The survey appears on page 23.

On our first visit it was assumed that this cave was 'dead' due to the dry and crusty-looking decoration but all the decoration and gour pools were dripping and full this time.



Clean and dry before Matchbox Squeeze.



Squeeze? What squeeze?



Hanging with some pendants.



IB-259 entrance.

JF-221 Owl Pot Petr Smejkal

22 July 2012

Party: Trent Ford, Petr Smejkal

At the last caverneers' meeting (06/07/2012) Trent and I were both interested in doing a caving trip. Three weeks later we finally got time and we decided to do JF-221. Neither Trent nor I had filled the role of trip leader yet. Therefore, this trip was challenging for both of us, even when we decided to go into a well-known cave.

Alan warned us that some fallen trees could be on the road and lent us his chainsaw. We left Trent's house at 7 am. One and a half hours later we vainly tried to drive our two-wheel-drive car up to the JF-221 car park. The road was too wet, so after a few attempts we parked and walked the twenty minutes uphill instead.

With the help of the club GPS and faded memories from last year, we found the entrance without any significant wandering around. As Alan warned us, the tree usually used as the first rigging spot was missing so we tied a rope around a big rock two metres in front of the entrance. All other rigging in-cave was easy and obvious as we followed the P-hangers. The only rigging we were not really proud

of was the rigging of the second pitch where we could not find the hole for redirecting the rope. Alan warned me that to find this natural hole for redirecting the rope would not be easy and I can say that he was right. As a result of our rigging of the second pitch the rope was touching a rock wall 10 meters above the bottom of the pitch.

All the rest of our trip towards the bottom was without any problem. Before the last pitch when we hit the stream we wandered upstream for a little while and then we finished abseiling down to the bottom. While Trent tested the waterproof qualities of his overalls under the waterfall, my overalls allowed me a nice shower. At the bottom of the cave, we used Trent's light and waterproof camera to take a few pictures of the waterfall. This was a bit tricky because of the moisture in the air. Thanks to Trent's Scurion 1500 some of the pictures we took looked quite good.

Our way back on to the surface was without any problem. We de-rigged and left the cave at approximately 3 pm. After 15 minutes walk downhill we found our car parked at the same spot and we could happily head toward home. Sunday had been a really pleasant day. The weather had been good and our trip was a success.



Trent at the base of the 35 m waterfall pitch in Owl Pot.

A Bit of Cave Diving at Mt Gambier Janine McKinnon July-August 2012

On our recent skiing trip to NSW, Ric and I diverted to Mt Gambier for the first and last weekends, so I could do a bit of cave diving. The following report is of three of the 10 dives I did over the two weekends. I thought these might be of some interest to club members.

Also, Alan put out a plea for copy and I am a soft touch for the desperate.

Dive 1: Engelbrechts East. Friday 13 July.

Divers: Adam Hair, Janine McKinnon.

Support: Lachlan Ellis.

Ric? – He bunked off into town to go shopping.

Engelbrechts Cave has an east and a west arm which are separated by a collapse feature. They are also two halves of a tourist cave, with separate entrances, both gated, and a walkway connecting them with ground level, and the entrance to the site. This entrance is conveniently through the ticket office, and more importantly, the coffee shop. Thus one can have a coffee, walk down the nice, tourist quality steps, turn on the nice tourist lights as one goes, dive, and reverse the order post-dive. Very civilised.

Oh, I forgot to mention that the attraction of the site for the tourists is the lake in each section, which leads to flooded tunnels (otherwise it's not really a cave dive, is it?). There are a couple of flood lights mounted in the lake underwater

which illuminate the crystal clear water but don't show where the tunnel is.

The really interesting thing about the operation for me was that the operators were extremely happy when we turned up to dive, and wanted us to wait for their next tour to start before we did our dive. Yes, rather than skulking in the shadows unseen, or timing visits so tourists wouldn't meet us (my usual experience with access to tourist caves as a "free" caver), they wanted us to be the main attraction.

Whether this had anything to do with the fact that they had only just taken over the lease the day before, and had never had any divers in, I don't know. Mind you, there isn't much to see other than the lakes, and they do have:

- a) A big mural of cave divers in the café and,
- b) a dummy of a fully kitted cave diver hanging from the roof in the entrance to the west arm.

So some divers actually being there adds a bit of verisimilitude to all that, I suppose – and entertainment value.

Anyway, we wandered down to the edge of the water slowly and timed it so that we were doing our final gearing up as the tourists came in. Locky was on hand to give some information whilst we did our thing getting sorted, getting in and doing final checks before heading off under the wall and off down the tunnel.

Adam laid the line and I swam behind, with us both trying not to stir up the silt from the floor.

The sump is very short, only about 30 m or so, and surfaces in a small chamber. There is a narrow side passage branching off to the right about half way through the sump, and this takes a couple of narrow twists before surfacing around the side of the same chamber, but it is too narrow to get through.

Thus the whole dive only takes about 25-30 minutes even going slowly.

We resurfaced in the main chamber after the 30 minutes and started getting out, chatting about the dive and just generally relaxing. We couldn't see anything behind us (away from the lake) as the flood lights had blinded us as we swam back across the lake. When our eyes readjusted we got a big surprise to see the tourists still standing there! They had waited for us to return.

The operator/guide was still smiling and friendly as we had a coffee together afterwards, so I guess we didn't say anything too offensive/embarrassing when we didn't know we had an audience.

Dive 2: The Shaft. Sunday 5 August.

Divers: Andreas Klocker, Adam Hooper, Janine McKinnon, Tim Payne (Guide).

Visualise a typical dairy farm paddock, but flat. Lush, long, green grass. Cows. Large irrigation system. 1 m diameter circular hole in the ground covered with a gate.

OK, so maybe the last bit isn't typical. But this is Mt Gambier, with a subterranean aquifer very, very, close to the surface. Breaking through sometimes; or the ground subsiding above it, more like.

There is an interesting story about the appearance of the entrance hole to the Shaft, involving horses and the 1960s (I think it was), but that is not for here.

The reason I have included our dive report here is somewhat tenuous. There is an 8 m drop through the circular entrance hole to the water. This is negotiated by divers via an electron ladder, hence the (already mentioned tenuous) caving connection. Of course, the dive is all underground, so maybe not a ridiculous stretch for an article in a caving mag.

To dive this site you need a guide, as well as the relevant qualifications and signed indemnity forms, forms outlining prior relevant (deep) diving experience, harness, blah blah ... Mt Gambier sure makes Mole Creek look open slather.

So, everything official in place, we turned up at 8:30 am at the rendezvous point to convoy into the hole in the paddock.

It was cold, (heavy) rain showers and WINDY. Don't let anyone tell you Tassie is Windy. It's nothing on Mt Gambier.

We put all our gear into Tim's Landcruiser as they have had a lot of rain and we didn't think Adam's 2WD would get the 200 m across the flat paddock to the entrance. (Spoiler alert! We were right, as Tim got his Landcruiser seriously bogged when he tried to leave at the end of the day.)

We started getting the A frame erected over the hole in a gale, with downpour showers, and got our gear on, all in similar weather.

It took 1.5 hours to have everything ready. Tim uses his car as a primary anchor for the belay rope, and also anchors the A frame to it. There is no secondary anchor point as there is nothing suitable around. I would have thought that the CDAA would have placed bolts into the ground around the hole (in the solid, half metre thick, rock that makes the hole) as mounting points for the three legged A frame, but they haven't. It all seems to work this way though so maybe it isn't necessary (but I'd do it). [Surely any passing cows would suffice – Ed.]

Tim actually lowered us all into the hole, rather than abseil, with a pulley and brake. This saved wearing more junk (like descenders) that would be a nuisance on the dive. We used a tape as a harness and recycled it for each of us.

Adam had been there before, so he went down first, as he knew the layout of the entry chamber. There are lines strung around the walls to attach lowered dive gear to. Thus, tanks were lowered down and slung on these lines. The divers were lowered wearing the suits, masks, fins, and BC (buoyancy compensator) (in the case of we sidemounters).

All went smoothly with the entry and putting gear on. The dive itself (first of two) was spectacular. Gin-clear water where you could see forever (if you had the light). Deep. Big passage. Big rock pile (where the farmer tried to fill in the hole when it first appeared. A very determined but hopeless effort.)

We swam down to 40 m depth and looked below at the bottom more than 20 m away. Tunnels running off to right and left, and big ... Tim had a couple of very powerful lights so we had amazing visibility.

After we surfaced from that dive the plan was to go back up for lunch and then return for another dive. Adam and I had twin, 7 litre tanks and we had enough air to go again without a refill. Adam also had an extra 12 L tank, which helped with that! The others had much bigger tanks (twin 12 L) so we didn't have to go get refills.

Tim went up first, followed by me. And this is where it gets REALLY embarrassing for a vertical caver, folks. I took off my tanks and left them behind on the line. I thought I would climb up the paltry (free hang) 8 m ladder with my (very heavy – the excuses start ...) buoyancy compensator still on, and my fins attached by a crab.

I huffed, and I puffed, and I pfaffed about ... and I couldn't climb up! I just didn't have the strength and was having real trouble getting vertical with my feet underneath me. Embarrassing indeed. Tim ended up by hauling me up on the pulley system he had set up for the belay.

I rarely climb ladders but ...

In hindsight, my wet BC probably weighed about 8 kg (it's a big, heavy-duty technical BC for carrying many tanks), and the fins another couple, and it was all on my back (yeah, I know, excuses, excuses).

It was still blowing a gale across the open paddocks, with horizontal hail at times, so we huddled in the lee of his car for lunch, which was surprisingly enjoyable and convivial.

After a 1.5 hour beak (for surface decompression of dissolved gases) we started in for the second dive.

We had another brilliant dive, only slightly marred by the fact that three out of four of us had leaking dry suits. We

got a little cold (water temperature 15°C) but nothing drastic.

When it came time to climb out I was a bit less cavalier than in the morning. I left my BC and fins behind and climbed just in my drysuit. It was a snak! Reputation, if not redeemed, then not altogether lost, I hope.

It took about one hour to get all the gear up, changed into dry clothes, and the A-frame de-rigged. In the gale.

The three of us then wandered across the paddock to Adam's car, as Tim finished packing the Landcruiser and started to drive out. Or, not drive out. After about 10 minutes we noticed that his car wasn't getting any closer to us at the gate. I started walking back, with the others following. To cut a long(ish) story short, an hour later, and the farmer's tractor enlisted, Tim was out of the paddock.

Dive 3: Engelbrechts East. Tuesday 7 August.

Divers: Andreas Klocker, Janine McKinnon

Support: Ric this time.

So, I was back for a second go at this one, with Andreas as my buddy this time. So it was really an STC trip, right?

The manager remembered me from three weeks previously and we all had a lovely chat before getting organised to dive. The length of the chat was partly determined by his desire for us to align our dive with his 10 am tour. No worries for us, anything for good relationships with the locals. Although I must say, I don't really feel comfortable with a lot of people watching me get geared up and start a dive (or a caving trip for that matter, but that doesn't happen).

So, off we went again, with our audience watching and Ric giving them some background on it all this time. Andreas laid the line out and then gave me the reel and I (did the easy bit and) reeled us home, half an hour later. We did spend more time looking in nooks and crannies than last dive, but it is still a pretty short dive.

This time we were prepared for the tourists to still be there. Not that we necessarily behaved any differently, it's just that we knew we had an audience, which made a difference. Claro? I could never go on Big Brother.

Ric helped carry my gear back up and also spent a few minutes answering questions and explaining stuff to the tourists. [Ric in his element ... poor bloody tourists – Ed.] This was good. Andreas and I could just go and get changed and sort our gear.

We had another coffee with the manager/guide/leasee (all the same person) and his wife, before heading for home.

All very civilised. Did I say that already?



Andreas emerging from Engelbrechts East.

IB-11 Midnight Hole

Alan Jackson

12 August 2012

Party: Anna Ekdahl, Trent Ford, Alan Jackson, Anna Jackson, Han-Wei Lee, Janine McKinnon, Kim Knight, Jesicca Orchard, Ric Tunney

My plan to take Anna through Midnight Hole before she turned six was hijacked by beginners and it was a very large number of cavers that assembled at the entrance. Foreseeing the tyranny of numbers we took heaps of rope and had three pitches on the go at any one time for the majority of the descent.



Kitting up at the entrance.

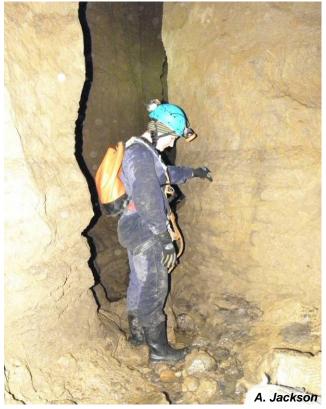
All beginners, old hands and children performed admirably. Anna rode shotgun on my harness for pitches 1, 2, 3 and 5 but was lowered off, solo, for pitches 4 and 6.

All in all it was a pleasant trip and hopefully we'll see some of these faces on future trips.

"What's next for Anna?", I hear you ask. Ice Tube perhaps; Niggly; FYEO (just pop her in a dry bag and get Janine to tow her through). Being a mere 17 kg she's very easy to throw around underground (not much worse than a pig full of wet rope) so almost any trip is easy enough. Maybe I'll teach her to survey so she can be of some use or rent her out as a squeeze-pusher.



Anna close to touch down on the sixth pitch.



Jesie contemplates the wall before embarking on the sixth pitch – a budding geologist perhaps.



Other Exciting Stuff

H-1 – Newdegate Cave: 21st Century Surveying

Matt Cracknell

About 60 years ago the Tasmanian Caverneering Club (TCC) published its first map, a map of Newdegate Cave. Despite being a good map, it is in feet and inches and does not really provide an accurate depiction of the true extent of the most visited cave in the Hastings area. As a result, ten years ago Jeff Butt and Arthur Clarke re-surveyed the Show Cave and Lower Streamway (called Mystery Creek on the TCC map) sections of Newdegate Cave. This data led to a map being drawn and published for the benefit of the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Arthur's thesis. The untimely death of Jeff meant that the remaining "back end" of the cave was never properly surveyed and mapped. Hence, we begin the tale of a "new" survey of this very intriguing and substantial dolomite karst feature.

9 December 2010 - Small beginnings

G. Bannink, M. Cracknell, S. Gilbert and K. Whiteside

After the surprise discoveries within Wolf Hole had subsided, a few non Junee-Florentine cavers had tossed around the idea of making a concerted effort to survey the back end of Newdegate Cave. It was thought that this project would make a nice distraction from the behemoth task of re-surveying and mapping Exit Cave and hopefully provide the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers (STC) with an up-to-date survey and map of the cave. The Show Cave section had already been surveyed about 10 years before and all we wanted to do was build upon this survey. Maybe we would even find "new" cave in the process?

The aim of the day was to get an idea of what was in Hells Half Acre and the Stream With No Name, so called because I couldn't think of anything better, and to make a start on the survey. The Stream With No Name carries a permanent flow of water and seemed to be a good place to start. The usual fun was had navigating up through Binney Tunnel. We installed a semi-permanent rope at The Pitch located beyond Binney Caves. We then reached the confluence of the intermittent Lower Streamway that flows under the Show Cave and through the Middle Sump (or Siphon as it is called on the TCC 1947 map) with the Stream With No Name. At this confluence a waterfall trickles out of the ceiling so Waterfall Junction seemed like a fitting name. After heading upstream a couple of hundred metres through a mud-filled canyon we met a seemingly impassable wet squeeze. The obvious way on was high up into a rift heading north. We followed this and encountered a junction with a dry rifting passage that heads east. We found a plastic bag that once contained "Pea Soup with Ham", which seemed to be a good name for this spot. From here we surveyed downstream back to Waterfall Junction. This took us at least three hours. The surveying wasn't particularly difficult although on the odd occasion Guy had to crouch in a muddy puddle in order to take instrument readings. This, as it turned out, was going to be the normal state of affairs for the instrument mule.

On the way back I poked myself up into the lofty rift to about 50 m or so upstream from the Waterfall Junction. There were some nice stals, an expanse of space above and some slippery looking holes below but no potential leads.

12 March 2011 - Close your eyes . . . and survey

G. Bannink, S. Benjamin, A. Clarke and M. Cracknell

I was preoccupied being a first time dad and Guy was as keen as a bean to get back into Newdegate Cave. The other two on this trip were Arthur and Serena. It had been many years since Arthur had ventured off the concrete paths of the tourist section and he wanted to see if anything had changed. Serena had her motives but these will forever remain a mystery to the rest of us. Their objective for the day was to link Waterfall Junction with the 2001 Show Cave survey.

From all accounts it seems that the day's surveying had taken its toll on Guy. He was laboured with the instruments and book (numbers only) while simultaneously having to contend with Arthur's old-school style survey precision with the Disto. I am not sure what Serena was up to, probably wishing she was somewhere else. They managed to survey from Waterfall Junction, upstream to Middle Sump, up The Pitch, through 'Binney Caves' and to the top of Binney Tunnel.

This was all well and good except for the confusion generated when I plotted the data. It appeared that upstream from Waterfall Junction was actually downstream and the distance between this survey and the 2001 survey either side of the Middle Sump was 50 m! After I realised I was reading the survey units in feet not metres this difference reduced to a more respectable 17 m. Still the results of the day were not really up to scratch. It was obvious that what had just been surveyed would have to be re-surveyed.

9 April 2011 - Tight bits and some geo-appreciation

G. Bannink, M. Cracknell and P. Kleinhenz

Downstream of Waterfall Junction was a bit of a mystery to all of us so we decided that this was a good place to continue with the survey. This downstream section consisted of a tight meandering passage with a few nasty bits where lying in the stream was the only way on. After about 80 m the stream disappeared under rockfall at Lower Sump. There looks to be a way on up a muddy ramp to the left that possibly bypasses the rockfall but as we really wanted to survey Binney Tunnel and link the 2001 survey to the backend we left this potential lead for another day.

On the way out we decided to have a look up into the rift east from The Pitch. Access is via a steep muddy ramp that links to a large chamber ~15-20 m wide, ~50 m long and ~10 m high. This area looks as if it carried water in the far distant past, flowing in the opposite direction (i.e. east to west) to the Lower Streamway located directly below. In addition, two different phases of development could be seen. High in the ceiling are gently curved walls, evidence of phreatic development. Exposed under corroded crystalline flowstone blanketing the chamber floor are collections of rounded cobbles and gravels of Permian

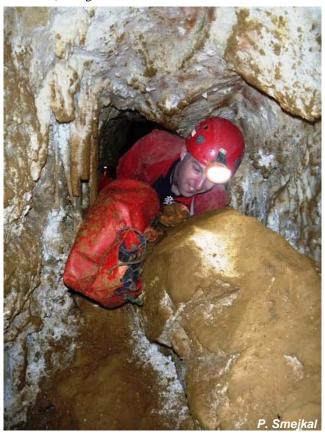
mudstone, evidence of high energy vadose development. Even more exciting – well, only to rock nerds – were the pink altered rocks and puggy clays filling a thin fissure that controls the angle of the chamber ceiling. This stuff looks a lot like the fill exposed in fissures generated by thrust faulting observed in some of the larger chambers in Wolf Hole

I eventually cleaned myself up and we headed up The Pitch. We decided early in the day that surveying down Binney Tunnel toward The Cathedral would be a far more enjoyable experience than trying to survey it on the way up. As it turned out it took a little over an hour to cover the ~80 m of tight and nasty passage out to the Show Cave.

3 September 2011 - Re-surveying the re-survey

S. Benjamin, M. Cracknell, P. Smejkal and G. Wise

Guy was very apologetic with regard to the previous surveying effort linking Waterfall Junction with Binney Tunnel but as we were to find out he should only have been half as apologetic. We started off at the top of Binney Tunnel and worked our way east. We used the same stations as the previous survey attempt (where we could find them) and got to Waterfall Junction at lunch time.



Geoff in the squeeze above The Pitch.

After lunch we all headed upstream toward Pea Soup with Ham and commenced surveying in the high rifting passage heading east. This passage contains evidence of a palaeowater flow in the form of rounded cobbles of Permian mudstone. This dry passage ends up swinging toward the northwest where we found some decaying magazines. From what Arthur had said, this area was called The Reading Room. Geoff remarked that the cave should probably be named Garbage Cave, on account of all the crap that has been left behind in it. Just beyond The Reading Room we met up again with the Stream With No Name as it disappeared down a perfectly round 8 m shaft.

Beyond this pit it was easy surveying up meandering stream passage.



Reading material in The Reading Room.

Once the re-compiled re-survey data was plotted and compared with data collected previously, upstream from the Waterfall Junction was definitely upstream in elevation. The stations either side of Middle Sump were now about 10 m apart and at a similar elevation, whereas previously they were ~ 17 m apart and offset by ~5 m in elevation. However, not much had changed from the top of Binney Tunnel to the bottom of The Pitch, although the matched survey stations were not coincident. It looked as if the errors in the first survey had fortuitously cancelled each other out.

30 October 2011 - Stuk is just a four letter word

G. Bannink, M. Cracknell and P. Smejkal

I wanted to survey the well-decorated high-level passage east of The Pitch. After discussion with Arthur, this feature was given the name Crystal Chamber. We started off having a quick look at the far reaches of Crystal Chamber, poking our noses into the rockfall at its eastern extremity. This, as it turned out, became more of a mini-epic rather than a quick look. Petr, as is his style, found a tight slot leading into virgin passage within the rockfall. It was an awkward keyhole squeeze, requiring a head first approach angled down at approximately 45 degrees. I inserted myself into the slot and got stuck, not just annoyingly stuck but terrifyingly stuck. I had slid into the lowest and tightest part of the squeeze with my belt buckle acting as a effective brake to any forward progress. Unfortunately, with my head down at 45 degrees and legs flailing around behind there was no way that I could back out. After several tense minutes of grunting and feeling the rock tighten around my waist, Petr managed to get over the top of me and pull me upwards by my belt. By lifting me higher it was hoped that I would be in a wider part of the slot. I gave a last ditch push with the one leg that had purchase on the wall behind me. I felt myself move a millimetre or so and that was enough to give me hope. With one last cry of desperation while pushing with all my strength I managed to pop myself out of the slot.

After a few moments, Petr and I composed ourselves enough to explore the virgin passage that lay beyond the slot that was now called Stuk is Just a Four Letter Word. For obvious reasons Guy had opted not to follow us through. This region of the cave contained thick mud – no surprises there – and was heading back towards the Lower

Streamway. After a few slippery climbs we slid down a very slick slab and into the large chamber just off the Lower Streamway called the Telephone Room (on account of the many metres of corroding telephone cable contained within). This cable was used by the original TCC explorers, when they were nervous about water filling Middle Sump and trapping them on its downstream side.



Corroded cable in Telephone Room.

Petr and I climbed back up into Crystal Chamber to meet up with Guy who was a little surprised to see us coming from the opposite direction from where we had left him. Unfortunately Stuk is Just a Four Letter Word required surveying. On the way back through the offending slot I took off my belt to give myself a bit more room, even so it was still a struggle to get through. It took a little over half an hour to collect the survey data. The only possible way on that we saw was a high rifting passage heading east that required assailing a very slick overhanging 4 m climb. We tied the survey back into the Lower Streamway and met up with Guy who was waiting patiently at the base of The Pitch.



Helectites at Mystery Corner.

There was plenty of time left in the day so we all headed up the Stream With No Name to survey upstream of the pit we had encountered last time. After about half a dozen legs we had reached the limit of accessible passage in tight and very wet rockfall from which the stream descends. We returned to explore a tight cobble-and-boulder-filled side passage heading east from the stream. Following this for about 50 m led us to a hideously muddy squeeze with a very awkward approach. Petr made his way through and after a couple of minutes came back looking like he had been inserted into the back end of a constipated elephant.

Despite his assurances that it was a definite lead, time was not on our side – or maybe it was the anticipation of negotiating a nasty bit of cave that put us off. We surveyed on our way back to the Stream With No Name. It looks as if the passage we had just surveyed had, in the past, carried water, evident from sub-rounded boulders, cobbles and gravels of Permian mudstone found cemented under flowstone in places. It is likely that this passage carried the Stream With No Name in the now far distant past.

On our way out, Petr, Guy and I poked our heads up into the steeply ascending passage immediately downstream of where we had linked this survey into the stream passage. After a short climb we found ourselves in a highly decorated steeply sloping passage. We had enough time to take a few photos before we headed back to the surface.

26 November 2011 - Did we mention the mud?

M. Cracknell, S. Gilbert and P. Smejkal

Sarah had decided to dust off her caving gear and join Petr and me for another fun day's surveying in the back end of Newdegate. By now we had got the trip from the Show Cave to the top of The Pitch down to a fine art, taking only about 15 minutes. We made our way downstream to Waterfall Junction and upstream to the labyrinth of passages beyond Hells Half Acre without incident. It then took a few minutes to sort out our roles; Sarah didn't know it at the time but she had drawn the short straw by being selected to carry the instruments.



Descending The Pitch.

We poked our heads tentatively into the steeply ascending passage Petr and I had briefly looked at last time. The ceiling of this passage did not fill us with confidence. It is largely composed of decaying angular boulders of dolomite and a pinkish looking matrix similar in colour to the walls in areas of Wolf Hole such as The Vermillion Room. What was more troubling were the freshly broken angular boulders of dolomite littering the floor. This is definitely not a good place in which to hang around. Once we negotiated the short climb into the upper level without dropping rocks on each other we had time to marvel at some of the best decoration upstream of Hells Half Acre. We decided to call this area The Cool Room on account of the noticeable drop in the air temperature. Petr pushed the sloping rock-filled crevices as best he could but to no avail. Getting back down to the stream level from The Cool Room requires great care, dislodging any of the precariously balanced boulders would have resulted in obliterating most of its pristine decoration. Interestingly,

The Cool Room is the highest point in Newdegate Cave, situated ~20 m higher than the Entrance.





Guy in The Cool Room (both images).

Once back at stream level we turned east and relocated the tight passage, which probably carried the Stream With No Name at some stage, and slithered along to where the previous survey had terminated at a nasty-looking squeeze. This squeeze was worse than it looked. The approach requires one to slide head first down at about 30 degrees and drop into a muddy pool reminiscent of a ship's bilge. Unfortunately, once your head is immersed in the muddy pool you need to turn right with only half of your body in the squeeze and the other half stuck back up the approach. Bad enough as it is but even worse when you need to read instruments. We called this particularly evil bit of cave the Bilge Hole, keeping in the tradition of the other named "holes" in Newdegate Cave.



Negotiating Bilge Hole.

Having negotiated the Bilge Hole, the passage beyond was relatively tame, becoming rather exciting when we happened across a stream flowing in from the north. We followed this downstream into a widening passage that gradually became filled with more and more mud. Surveying was a breeze except when trying to climb the 2 m high mud banks. We followed the stream until it disappeared down an unimaginably small hole. The hole is small enough that when the water flow is high enough, and it needn't be much higher than what we saw, the whole back end of this section of cave would sump, hence the mud and its name, Mud Sump Creek. This didn't bode well for discovering passages immeasurable to man. Our worst fears were confirmed after we climbed up into rockfall and down the other side to another hideously muddy terminal passage.

We back-tracked and surveyed upstream in Mud Sump Creek from the junction we had passed previously. After a few twists and turns we came across a high rifting passage with the word "FUCK" marked in the mud on the right hand wall. Obviously the previous visitor(s) to this part of the cave were not happy with its potential. I pushed the obvious way on upstream that required me to lie flat in the water and slither about 10 m over gravel banks. There was a way on but it required digging flowstone-cemented gravels while lying face down in the stream. I gave up and literally snorkelled back to find that Petr, the crazy Czech, had climbed an impossible-looking rift. Sarah and I stood well out of the way to avoid the avalanche of rock pouring out of the ceiling. After a few tense moments Petr literally fell from the sky to inform us that there was a chamber up there, with no way on, and that to get there was "not so good". Enough said.



Mystery Corner.

On the way back to Hells Half Acre above The Reading Room, Petr spotted a slot in the ceiling. This time I followed him up across a tricky bridge manoeuvre and traverse that took us along an exposed bedding plane. Another short climb gave way to the edge of a very unstable-looking pile of rocks that looked out into a large chamber. We needed rigging gear if it was going to be pushed safely so we retraced our steps and met up with a cold and tired-looking Sarah. However, the fun was not over yet. Next I put my head down the small and tight hole on the northern wall of The Reading Room where water can be heard trickling. Surprisingly I found that the water was flowing from the east, presumably coming from the direction of Mud Sump Creek, however, it was way too

tight to go any further. We then got ourselves into a narrow rift on the east wall immediately south of the pit. This led down to a confluence of the water I had just seen in the slots near The Reading Room and the water of the Stream With No Name that descends the pit. Junction Pit seemed like a good name for this confluence. We followed the water down a very narrow and muddy streamway for about 70 m then through a very tight almost duck-under back to the climb up to Pea Soup with Ham. We decided against surveying this streamway (Shortcut Streamway) until we had the DistoX as the low passage, ubiquitous water and copious amounts of mud would make reading instruments very unpleasant.



Geoff upstream of Junction Pit.

Back at Hells Half Acre the lofty chamber to the west of the main route that bypasses the stream was next on our list of things to do. I assured the rest of the party that it wouldn't take too long to finish. The initial surveying was easy, the latter was not. Once again Sarah had the honour of lying face down in a fetid pool of muddy water in order to take readings. We pushed the narrow doglegging passage up a series of dry black flowstone cascades to a terminal chamber containing angular Permian mudstone gravels. That was enough mud for one day. We packed up and headed back to the surface and some nice dry clothes.

14 January 2012 - Shattered dreams and a spot of reading

Y. Bar-Ness, M. Cracknell and P. Smejkal

Some promising leads beckoned in the back end of Newdegate Cave. This time Petr and I had Yoav in tow. First on the list was to use a ladder to drop the climb into the large chamber that Petr and I had found last time. If there was any time left there were two jobs – close the Shortcut Streamway loop and survey/push the climb above the Lower Sump.

It was a slower than usual trip out to The Reading Room. Then Yoav declined to follow Petr and me into the ceiling and toward potential virgin passage. Naturally we left him behind. The ladder climb turned out to be only about 3 m but there was a hole in the floor below the base of the climb that, if you fell, turned it into a fall of about 5-6 m. Couple this with hideously shattered rock, and this obstacle definitely required rigging. The most promising way on was up a 2 m overhanging climb at the far end of the chamber that led to a series of meandering passages. At the far end of these was a squeeze that led into virgin passage. The floors in this tight rift were covered in patches of

calcite crystals, remnants of small pools that had long since dried up. This opened up into a room that on closer inspection linked back into the passage immediately upstream of Junction Pit. Funnily enough this lead was missed on previous trips. Petr quickly let Yoav know what was going on while I set up to start surveying what we had just found. I was expecting Yoav to join us but the traverse across Junction Pit had put him off.



Yoav above the Lower Sump.

After surveying for an hour and a half, derigging the climb and lamenting the lack of high level passage required to bypass Mud Sump Creek, we accepted defeat. We decided to call it Shattered Dreams, on account of the shattered rock and our quashed aspirations. By the time we got back to Yoav it had been well over two hours since we first abandoned him. Interestingly he had been reading photos of a family journal that were on his camera in The Reading Room.



Crystals in dry pools, Shattered Dreams.

We had some lunch and then set about surveying Shortcut Streamway. This was as bad as I thought it was going to be. I gave up sketching in the end because it was just too wet and muddy and the passage was small enough and uninspiring enough to warrant a distinct lack of attention to detail. With that out of the way we slithered into the fetid chamber that marks the Lower Sump. The walls in this area are covered in the worst mud in the whole cave. It is so thick and super sticky that climbing up the steep slope into the rooms above is quite a challenge. Above this you are greeted by a large stalagmite and a breakdown chamber with "fresh" and very unstable rockfall that is above the high tide mark from the sumping stream below.

I pushed the rockfall and found myself in a chamber filled with large slabs of dolomite. On the northern side of the chamber a slight trickle of water appears from the ceiling accompanied with dark brown organic-looking material and sub-rounded boulders of Permian mudstone. The southern side of the chamber is a sheer wall of huge and unstable sub-angular dolomite boulders in a clay matrix. We decide to call this chamber Zasypauá which translates from Czech as "hole filled with rocks". There was no way on. After plotting the survey data we found that Zasypauá sits directly underneath the Erebus/Waterloo Swallet dry valley. It is likely that Zasypauá had carried the Erebus stream in the past but has since been filled up with crap rolling off the contact and down the hill.

We derigged The Pitch on the way out as we had completed all the surveying that I knew was required in the back end. I was feeling elated on the way through the Show Cave. However, after looking at the copy of the 1947 TCC map at the Entrance I realised that the Pop Hole and the passage beyond had not yet been covered by the new survey. The Curse was rearing its ugly head.



Post trip book work conditions.

15 April 2012 – The Curse

A. Clarke, M. Cracknell, D. Holloway, K. Huxley and P. Smejkal

We managed to pick up Arthur from Francistown at a reasonable hour and met up with Darren and Kerrin at the Hastings Visitors Centre. From there we picked up the key, as we always do, and headed for the Entrance. I was feeling good. At the last STC meeting I had announced with confidence that the new survey would be finished by the end of this trip. Little did I know that The Curse would do all that it could to stop that from happening.

We found our way past the Upper Sump, which looks as if water flows up from its depths to feed the Lower Streamway, to the Pop Hole without any problems despite the fact that no one except Arthur had been this way before. After negotiating the short but slippery climb into the Pop Hole we slithered through the tight passages before it opened out into Christmas Chamber. Arthur told us that its name was derived from one of the very first exploration trips the TCC ever conducted, coincidently on Christmas Day 1946, hence the name. Christmas Chamber is a big room with lots of straws and flowstone. The eastern wall of the chamber opens out into a lofty passage with a hemp rope dangling from a small hole in the ceiling. It appears that just about every 10 m there is a named section of the

cave in here. I guess that the TCC crew who found this were very excited about their discoveries.



Christmas Chamber.

We pushed the narrow slot (Layback) heading east toward Rabbit Ear Hole and the limit of accessible cave. We surveyed heading back using Geoff's DistoX. All was going well until the batteries in the DistoX ran out. I had spare batteries but the issue was with the calibration of the compass and clino. I was really pissed now as I hadn't brought along a spare set of instruments. Arthur had even asked if I wanted him to pack his set but I stupidly said that they weren't needed. We decided to push on with a new set of batteries taking both back and fore sights to check that the data was OK. After about a dozen shots we had one that that was 10 degrees out. Even after three duplicate shots the discrepancy was still unacceptable. I called an end to the survey and decided that I wouldn't consider any of the data collected after the batteries went flat. The Curse was in full swing.

Despite the early end to the survey there was one bright side to coming back. Heading south from the passage that led to Rabbit Ear Hole we had found a small down climb that required a ladder. This was a small consolation for an otherwise crappy day.

30 June 2012 - The Curse is broken

M. Cracknell and P. Smeikal

It had been just over two months since our last fateful survey trip into Newdegate Cave. Optimism was high although I was refraining from using the word "finish" on account of the potential to be proved wrong ... again.

When Petr and I arrived at the Hastings Visitors Centre to pick up the key we got a nasty shock. The key was not there. The permit had been arranged but I had failed to double check that Beth Russell was expecting us. It was looking as if The Curse was determined to prevent us doing anything remotely like finishing the survey.

To kill time while we waited for the Visitors Centre to open up so we could organise a key we headed up the Fossil Creek Swallet gully. I was keen to get better GPS locations of Fossil Creek Swallet and Polyp Grotto, a cave I had found several years ago with Amy and Dion. While thrashing through forest we somehow missed the swallet and got to the contact, marked by a pleasant little waterfall. We followed the mostly obscured contact as best we could around to the southeast and traversed the ridge of dolomite that contains Polyp Grotto. We found this small cave without too much trouble and then made our way back

down into the gully that contains the swallet. After initially missing it again we found Fossil Creek Swallet and got a reasonable GPS fix about 15 m south of its entrance. This new set of coordinates are a marked improvement over the location in the STC database (based on data in S. Joyce's honours thesis) that was about 150 m southeast of the swallet entrance.

Back at the Visitors Centre I managed to negotiate a key. Beth was very apologetic for having forgotten to leave one in the usual place. Despite this initial set back we were in the cave and through the Pop Hole by about 11 am. It didn't take us long to drop the ~ 3 m pitch we found last time. In the chamber below we discovered that someone had scrawled on the wall "1958". I am not entirely sure who put it there as I haven't had time to do any research. We surveyed on the way out having added about 20 m of passage to the survey. What was really interesting though, were the angular gravels of Permian mudstone piled up in the chamber below the pitch. These gravels are identical to those found in large deposits within the Wolf Hole entrance chamber, Lake Pluto and nearby in Beatties Cave.

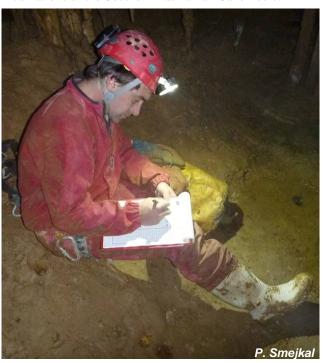
Having spent a lot of time caving and surveying together, Petr and I made short work of the remaining passage beyond the Pop Hole. All up there is a couple of hundred metres of cave in this area. Well worth the survey. We packed up and had a quick look in the Lower Streamway, also known as Mystery Creek, downstream of the Show Cave. The Middle Sump was full of water. After getting wet up to our waists and taking photos of the local attractions, we turned around and made our way to the surface. Warm clothes, a hearty mid-winter meal and delicious fruit wines were waiting for us at Francistown, a superb way to finish off an epic survey project.

Post Script

The new survey of Newdegate Cave took over a year and a half to complete. In that time, nine trips were required to collect more than 2 km of survey data, some of which was thrown in the bin! The surveyed length of the cave totals approximately 3.2 km, with 1 km of this collected by J. Butt and A. Clarke in November 2001. The two maps accompanying this report show the locations of the named features/passages in Newdegate Cave in both plan and section views. Passage wall outlines were generated based on LRUD in-cave measurements, plotted in Compass and edited in Inkscape. The topographic surfaces associated with the two sections were constructed based on data from the 25 m resolution Digital Elevation Model that covers Tasmania. The contact location, drawn at 240 m asl is based on limited observations and should be considered approximate.

I am indebted to all the cavers that have followed me into some of the muddiest cave passage that I have ever had the pleasure to visit, all in the name of data. Special thanks must go to Petr, who has clocked up more trips than anyone. He has had to put up with a disproportionate amount of incessant nerdy ramblings about the similarities and dissimilarities of Newdegate Cave to the other caves at Hastings – none of which he has visited. Lastly I must thank Hastings PWS staff, especially Rob Wass (the

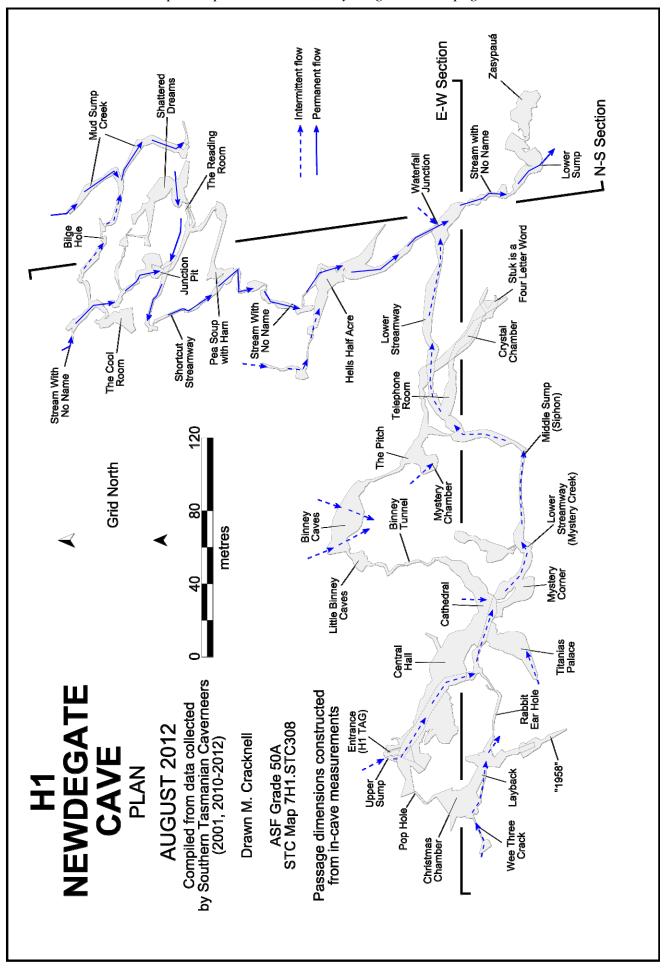
previous Senior Ranger) and Beth Russell, the current Site Supervisor. They have organised permits and keys, providing us with hassle-free access to a cave that has had a long and rich history with the previous and current incarnations of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers.

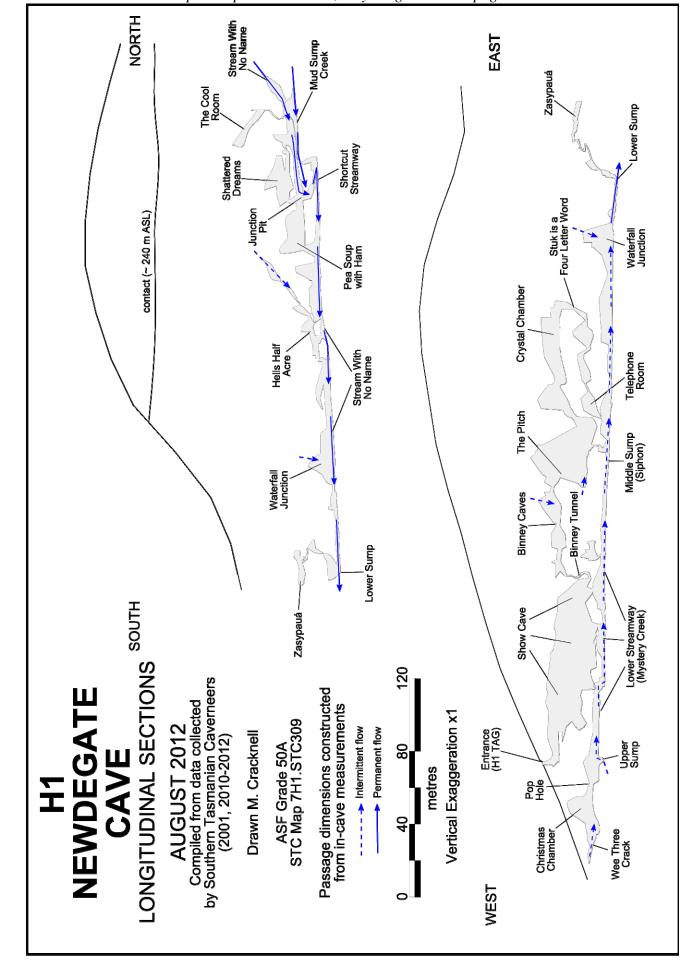


Matt keeping book.



Interesting formations in the Lower Streamway.





Some Random Photos from Arthur (page fillers)



Darren emerging from the far end of Pop Hole (H-1 Newdegate Cave).



Norm and his collection of mobile trip hazards at the Wind Tunnel gate in IB-14 Exit Cave



The pinnacle of intelligent subterranean life-forms – Matt and Petr outside H-208 Aquamire.



Tiny-eyed, de-pigmented Anaspides in the IB-14 Exit Cave streamway.



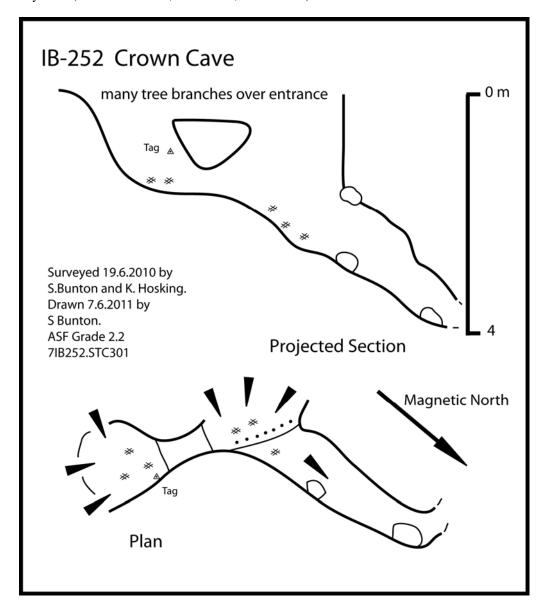
Geoff in his favourite photographic pose (see page 12) in IB-135 Beetlemania.

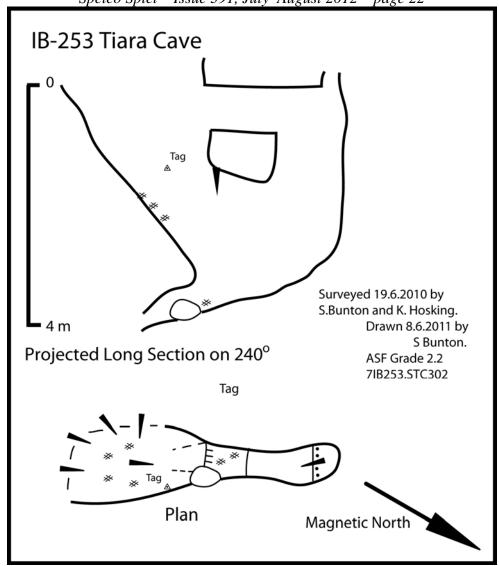


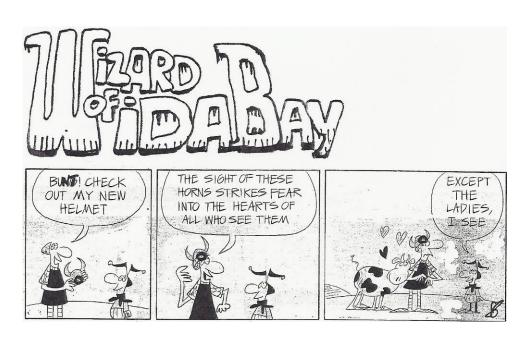
Hanseniella magna (giant symphylan) beyond Pop Hole (H-1 Newdegate Cave)

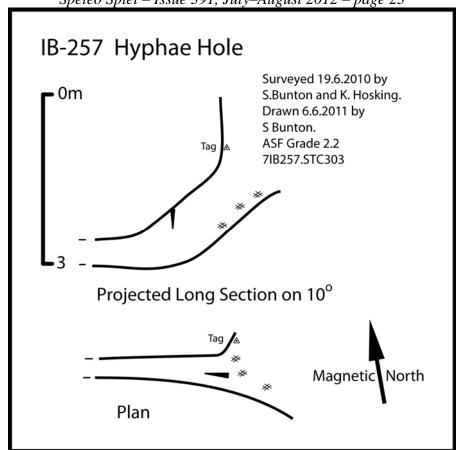
Miscellaneous Surveys

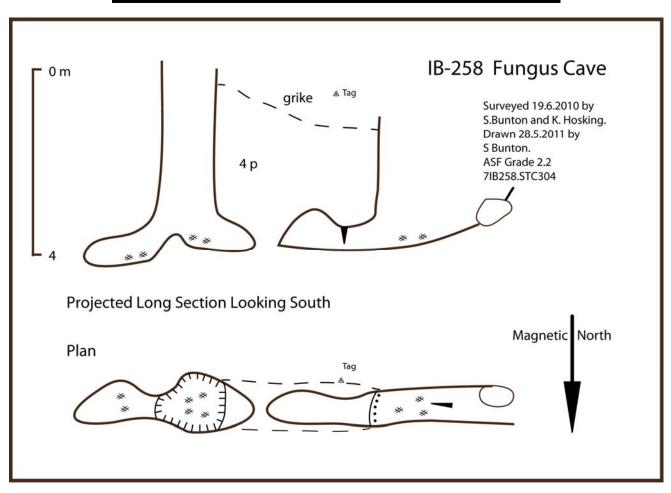
Back in June 2010 Bunty and Ken found a few crap-holes at Ida Bay (see SS379: 7-8). It took almost two years but Ken and Chris Chad returned to the area after Easter 2012 (14th or 15th April) and tagged the four holes. No trip report was forthcoming and I've given up waiting (a common occurrence when Ken is involved). The maps for IB-252, IB-253, IB-257 and IB-258 are finally published here. To fill a gap and break the monotony I've also inserted a Buntoon for comic relief from the oppressive nature of Ida Bay caves. Then we have the IB-259 survey (from trip report on page five), followed by three surveys from our trip to the Settlement Area of the Junee-Florentine (from trip report in SS390: 11-13). To Chris Chad's delight I've slotted in Serena's map of JF-208 next – many believed this survey would never materialise but miracles do happen. The last survey is an updated JF-10 Splash Pot map. This includes the extensions discovered and surveyed in early 2011 (see SS382: 11-12; SS383: 4-5; SS383: 9-10).

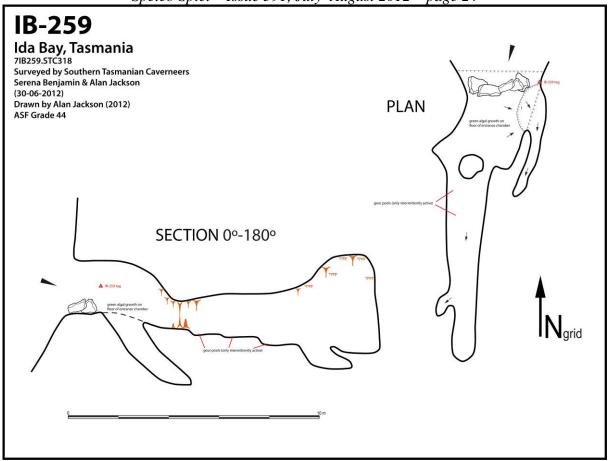


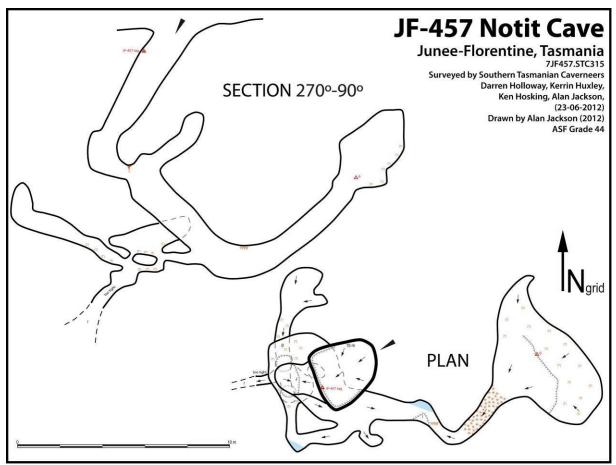


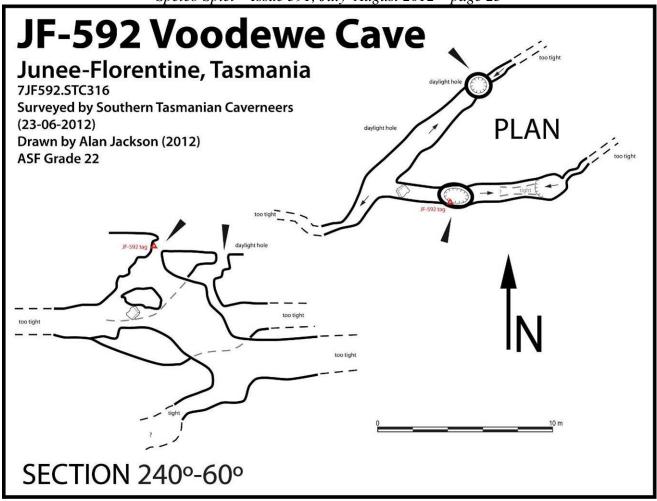


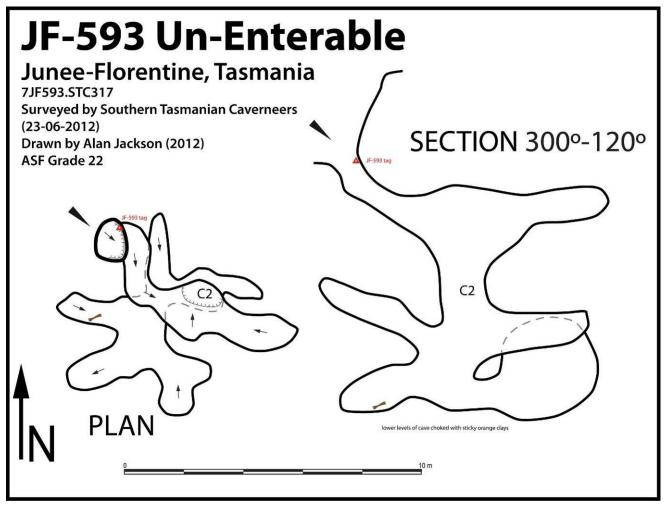


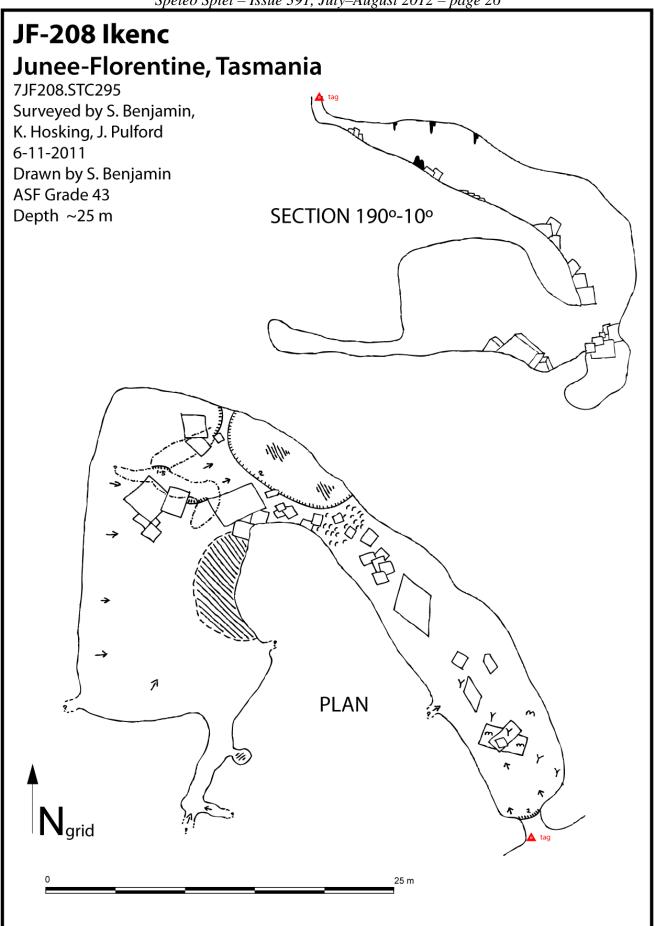















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