

SPELEO SPIEL 392

September - October 2012

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Front Cover: JF-36 Growling

Swallet entrance. *Photo by
Damian Bidgood*



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

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Editorial

The end of the year cometh, which means the beginning of the pleasant caving season cometh also. What a pity I can't also say that a band of competent and keen cavers cometh so we get some good stuff done. There's no point listing the things I'd like to get done this summer as it'll only cause me distress when I read it back in years to come and note that none of it came to fruition. Enough melancholy; try your best to enjoy the *Spiel*.

I apologise for the lack of subjective personal pronouns in Mark's trip report on page 9 but it was just too much work to add them all – it invokes bad memories of Madphil.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

CHRISTMAS FRIVOLITIES

Bunty has kindly offered his house as a venue for the STC Christmas get together. It will be held on the third Wednesday of the festive month (19 December). I don't think an official start time has been announced yet but no doubt it'll be something along the lines of "5:30 pm till late or until the neighbours complain".

MOLE CREEK FUN AND GAMES

Don't forget the planned Mole Creek caving over the Australia Day weekend next year. It'll all be soft caving (that's all they have up north) so no one can play the lame card on the grounds of it being nasty JF crap as their excuse for not coming.

BIG WATERFALLS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gavin continued his family's tradition of letters to the editor and highlighted an error in some recent reporting in *The Mercury*. Below is a scan of the letter from Tuesday 16 October's issue. We can no doubt expect a correction from Rolan in the near future.

Waterfall numbers

GOOD on Max Moller for raising money for devils (*Sunday Tasmanian*, October 14), but Peverata Falls are not Tasmania's highest, they are Bermuda Triangle Falls in the cave called Tachycardia deep inside Mt Field. The falls are 170m high and Tachycardia is Australia's deepest cave at 376m deep.

Gavin Brett
South Hobart

Trip Reports

Trowutta Arch

Chris Chad

10 April 2012

Party: Chris Chad & Family

I had been aware of the Trowutta Arch for a little while, and having in-laws hailing from the Smithton area, I had been intending to slip it into a visit to this part of the state on a few occasions, but this time the wife being sick of me hinting at it, to my horror, turned what could have been a simple 10 minute diversion into a full day packed with drama. Needless to say I didn't have all that much fun.

Anyway, Reids Road then Reynolds Road is the key; then look for the ridiculously discrete sign as you get through the plantation and enter the Myrtle Forest. I find it extraordinary how few of the locals even know of this impressive natural feature on their doorstep. I can't help but get the impression that the bureaucrats would rather it stay that way, though the track becomes almost comically over-marked as though some public servant has suddenly become quite panicked over the liability issues of the man-trap contained in this small but beautiful reserve. The walk in is very easy and pleasant and the arch was more impressive than I was expecting. The constant "be careful"s were a bit of a downer and the slight rain (well it is a rainforest) cut my explorations short but I had a good time clambering round and exploring with the kids. There is a fairly comprehensive description of the cave in *Southern Caver*, 5(3): 6-7, and *Southern Caver*, 4(3): 20 rather unhelpfully suggests eight caves were found by SCS, although that may not necessarily be confined just to the Trowutta State Cave Reserve. Never-the-less the area is cavernous, that much was obvious. The bottomless lake is fascinating and we should poke a cave diver into it as it is

an easy walk from the car. [*I believe the Eberhards found the bottom sometime in the early '90s – Ed.*].



Chris and family brave the extreme dangers of the Trowutta Arch



A pleasant display of *Dicksonia* through the arch

Sheep Go To Heaven, Goats Go To Hell

Alan Jackson

1 September 2012

Party: Stephen Bunton, Trent Ford, Alan Jackson, Greg Middleton, Jessica Orchard, Petr Smejkal

It was about time we put another day into finishing the tidy up of the Hairy Goat Hole area – the last work of any substance we'd done in this area was April 2011. Jeff Butt *et al.* had located and documented close to 50 holes in the general area (Dwarrowdelf to KD to Splash Pot and beyond to Pitfall Pot) and prior to this trip we'd re-located all but four of them – then there are the Z and miscellaneous X caves. While I regularly get stuck into Jeff *et al.* for not tagging these features I have to admit that Jeff's diligence at surveying the majority of them into the surface grid (and then not losing that data) has been invaluable in re-locating and positively identifying most of them.

As well as locating three of the remaining four legacy holes, I had several blanks in the 'GPS waypoint', 'surface survey', 'cave survey' and 'entrance photo' columns of my 'ButtRasch caves' spreadsheet. We started by walking to KD. Petr, Trent and Jessica (and possibly Greg?) hadn't seen it before so job one was 'satisfy the tourist element'. Trent, Petr and Jessica then headed back to JF-563 to see if the dig I identified in SS383: 10-11 was worth pursuing. While they did that Greg, Bunty and I did a quick photographic tour to obtain entrance/tag photos for JF-69, JF-4, JF-5, JF-40, JF-562 and JF-563.

Upon arrival at JF-563 we could hear Petr and Trent slopping and swearing in the mud and cursing my name so Jessica joined the rest of us as we set off to try to relocate the two holes Bunty found in SS381: 16. We found his second hole (the one under the fallen sassafras that he, I believe incorrectly, theorised was JF-Z6) thanks to the line of orange tapes he had left in place. This proved to be a few metres deep with no prospects. It was tagged JF-595, sketched, GPSed, photographed etc. [Survey on page 18] In order to stir Greg, who maintains the cave name origin database, I urged Bunty to give it a stupid name – one of his greatest strengths. Bunty came up with Bald Pig (as it clearly wasn't a Hairy Goat). Bunty and Greg then continued on in their search for Bunty's other hole while Jessica and I returned to JF-563.

The two lads emerged covered in filth and surprisingly not overly angry at what I'd sent them in to do. They'd excavated the lead and Trent had poked himself in head first. Two metres later it all looked rather hopeless and Petr had to assist Trent in reversing the head first move. JF-563 is as good as dead. We then moved to JF-494 (just west of Splash Pot) to commence our search for 'Hole 26' (JF-X95). I'd located survey data linking 'Hole A3' (now JF-494) to 'Hole 26'. It was quickly located (about 30 m downhill) and tagged JF-596. Another X-cave bites the dust. [Survey on page 19]

Bunty and Greg rejoined us; their attempt to find Bunty's other hole proving futile. After a bite to eat in the sunshine we followed the contact south to JF-500, where we would start yet another search for 'Hole 15' Stuck Hole (JF-X84). This hole was also surveyed into the surface network but

there was obviously an error. The OnStation file had the single leg to 'Hole 15' branching off station 'w50' (one leg west of JF-500). We had recreated this leg in the past and failed to locate it. After reading Dave and Jol's report in SS315: 14, I decided that it seemed more likely that the leg should start somewhere nearer to JF-21 ('Hole 12' in that trip report). It also seemed safe to assume that it could also have branched from any one of stations 'w47' to 'w49' (the stations between JF-21 and 'w50'). We spread out in a line and contoured toward JF-21. We didn't find anything matching the description of Stuck Hole. We decided that 15 is clearly an 'unfindable' number in this area and moved on.

Next stop was JF-19, JF-20 and JF-475. It was assumed that JF-475 was the second entrance to JF-20 and none of these caves had been sketched/surveyed. A quick look in JF-475 suggested it wasn't going to connect to anything. Petr and Trent then descended JF-20 while I rigged JF-19 so Jessica could do her first proper SRT (down AND up) in a cave. Petr and Trent confirmed that JF-20 was about 30 feet deep (as per SS56: 2) and that the second entrance reported for this cave is right next to the other (~2 m apart) – JF-475 is a separate entity. Jessica also confirmed that JF-19 was as per SS56: 2 suggests. About two metres down from the top of the pitch is a window into a parallel development. Jessica stuck her head into it but couldn't be sure if it went or not so Trent had a go too and confirmed that it only went a few metres. Three sketches later and these three caves were done. [Surveys on page 16]



G. Middleton

Jessica commences descent of JF-19

We then caught up with Bunty, who had trundled over to nearby JF-18 to affix a replacement tag; the original tag had been placed on a tree root and was now missing. Due to an absence of rock at the entrance he had to abseil into the cave where he found that the first few metres of ‘rock’ was crappy mudstone and eventually, at about -4 m, he struck limestone and placed the tag on a prominent nose of rock halfway down the pitch. The tag is very easy to spot from the entrance (pink tape on it too) but the number won’t be discernible without some way of getting down the pitch. A photo was taken of the tag placement and we bugged off down the hill to JF-482 Knee Deep. [*Survey of JF-18 on page 15*]

Knee Deep had been just that when discovered by Butt *et al.*. I had improved the situation somewhat when we found it again and extended it to ~5 m deep with a possible ~10 m pitch beyond a tight bit. This time I had hoped that Trent and Petr could overcome the tight bit and drop the pitch. The lads burrowed and squeezed but couldn’t get through. The pitch and the draught were still there and Trent came out oozing with enthusiasm (and mud) for a return with some rock-persuading tools.

The next job on the list was miles away and the day was getting on so we headed for home. We chose a bearing and headed off with the hope of intersecting the KD track at some point. After a little while I noticed a hole under some ferns to my left. It was a nasty-looking little round shaft which became very tight after a few metres. This alerted my ‘Hole 15’ Stuck Hole detection system so I pulled out the GPS and discovered that we were about 30 m away from JF-21! So perhaps Dave and Jol had the 32 m part of their leg correct but their bearing of 79° would have been more useful if it had been more like 110°. Bunty later found a piece of red tape on the ground nearby (not a colour I’ve seen before in the area – most of Jeff’s was yellow, but Jeff was not there the day Dave and Jol found Stuck Hole).

Trent squeezed down while we prepared to tag it. The hammer was missing, most likely sitting back at JF-18. Bunty headed off (optimistically sans GPS) to retrieve the hammer while Trent somehow squeezed past the constriction at -3 m that had presumably stopped Andras all those years ago. We tagged it (using the crowbar to bang in/bend over the fasteners). [*Please note the final paragraph of this report as it looks like the tag will be coming off (I have intentionally not listed the number here to avoid someone getting confused in the future)*]. Bunty came back 10 minutes later, without the hammer, then headed off again straight away (this time **with** the GPS). Trent was now out of sight and calling for some rope. We tied off a 30 m length to a nearby tree and fed the end down to him. After a bit he reported that he’d free-climbed a ~5 m pitch and was at the top of a ~30 m pitch, with no natural rigging. He couldn’t get back up the ~5 m pitch, even with the hand line in place, so we pulled up the rope

and lowered his SRT kit. Quite some time later (making Close to the Bone in Splash Pot look like a caver expressway) he regained the surface. This is a tight cave. Bunty returned, with the hammer but sans dignity. We headed for home.



Trent extricates himself from Stuck Hole

I was very happy with the day’s efforts, finding all the holes I had hoped to. The only other ‘Holes’ in this area that we haven’t found now are ‘Hole 2’ – which we haven’t looked for yet and is located near JF-1 (see SS312: 10) – and ‘Hole 22’. When I started writing this paragraph I was of the opinion that ‘Hole 22’ would be almost impossible to identify as it is only briefly mentioned in Jeff’s report in SS317: 11-12 without so much as a hint as to where it is located or what it is like. In this report he mentions the report from their day out on 15/12/99 which is alleged to have been printed in SS317 but does not appear. In the process of explaining where I thought it might possibly be located, based on my horoscope and something I read on the back my Cornflakes packet that morning I found a reference to it in the scans of Jeff’s bookwork from the 15/12/99. I don’t know how I missed it before; I’ve been over this stuff dozens of times! It was never surveyed into the surface network but there is a note that says ‘Hole 22 – at base of small cliff ~80 m south of Hole 12’ (JF-21) and a tiny sketch of the cave. Yippee! I’ll go looking for this one while Trent pushes Stuck Hole (good excuse not to go in there with him).

Other things we haven’t found in the area are JF-15, JF-16 and JF-22, or so I thought. Having written that sentence I decided to have a re-read of the reports in SS56: 2-4. There is a numbering summary and trip report for JF-16 through JF-22. It has now become very clear to me that JF-22 is what we found at the end of our trip (what we assume is ‘Hole 15’ Stuck Hole and tagged). There is a reference to red tape being used to mark holes in that area and the description of JF-22 matches Trent’s perfectly. Some vegetation clearing will be required (and possibly a tag removal).

JF-237 Niggly Cave

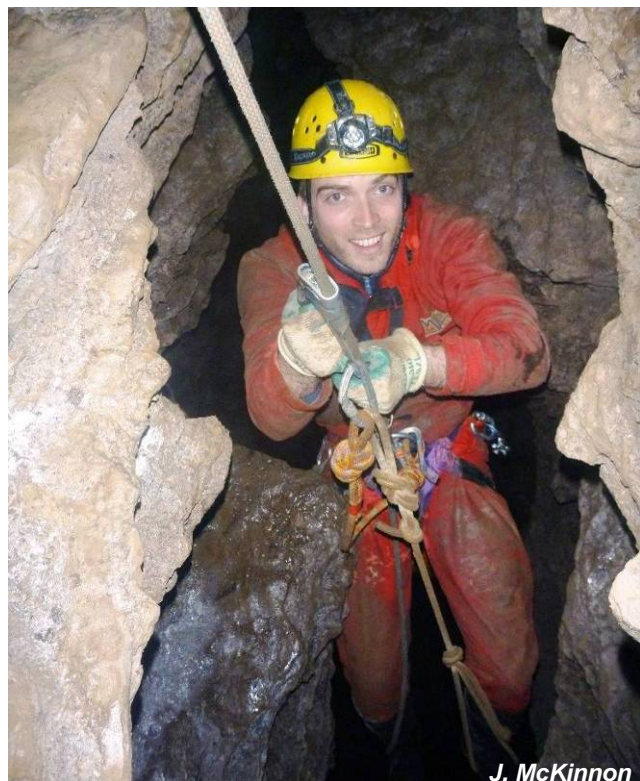
Anna Ekdahl

8 September 2012

Party: Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney, Kim Knight, Anna Ekdahl

Janine and Ric were kind enough to take us two beginners to Niggly cave on 8 September. The day was wet, windy and miserable but we made the 90 minute trek through the rainforest and snow to the entrance of Niggly. I could barely feel my hands by the time we got to the cave but we soon warmed up once we got inside out of the rain. We abseiled down two small pitches before following the cave down for an hour or so until it we reached the 85 metre

pitch, which we gawped at but stayed safely at the top of. Kim and I had our first chance to prusik in a cave, which was a bit harder than I remembered it to be in the quarry but once I adjusted my chest harness it was easy enough. It was a very enjoyable caving experience for a beginner and I am keen to get back out, hopefully with some of my own equipment and try something a little more challenging.



Kim ascends the second pitch in Niggly



Snowy logs on the walk up the hill



Anna poses with some tinkly bits in Niggly

JF-99 The Chairman and JF-598

Alan Jackson

28 September 2012

Party: Nat Brennan, Mark Euston, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker

I accompanied the visiting mainland contingent to assist with establishing their camp and to guide them to The Chairman for a tourist trip. The weather forecast wasn't great but we made it to the end of the KD road before the rain started in earnest. The road was very slippery and I had to tow their vehicle on a few spots beyond the 341 track start. I was surprised to find four active bee hives up at the apiary site but the cold conditions rendered them pretty slow and sluggish. Tents and a shelter were erected (it's the first time I've ever pre-drilled tent peg holes with my hammer drill) and then it started to rain.

The walk to The Chairman was pretty bleak in the rain but the precipitation reduced upon reaching the entrance and we geared up in relatively fine conditions. While Andreas rigged the first pitch Nat and I wandered 50 m or so east of The Chairman to have a look at the entrance we'd found back in April last year (see Chris Chad's report in SS383: 12-14). This is a medium-sized doline on the contact zone, about 10 metres across (and now filled with a massive pile of fallen trees). At the western end of the doline is a ~1.5 m deep, 1 m wide pot with no prospects but 5 metres away

to the east is a descending rift (descending back to the west, following the dip of the limestone). This is enterable for about 4-5 m before becoming a bit tight (and very snaggy) but a few metres beyond a ~3 m drop into a small chamber is visible. I had hoped to hammer my way past the narrow bit but it was more serious than that; a more persuasive argument will be required. There was no noticeable draft. As described in SS383: 12-14, there is an orange tape on a tree in the doline with something to the effect of "DW 6/10" written on it. I tagged the cave JF-598 (on the right hand wall just down inside the descending rift entrance). I'll be back one day with proper digging gear. I had a quick look about 20 m further east of this feature in a large doline taking quite a bit of water but with the exception of a 2 m-long small bit of cave on the eastern wall there was little of interest there.

By now the entrance pitch of JF-99 was rigged so everyone descended. Nat and I made it as far as the top of the third pitch while Mark and Andreas made it as far as the top of the last pitch, where they promptly ran out of rope. On the derig Mark managed to drop the nut from the second (lower) rebelay bolt on the entrance pitch, so next visitor needs to take a replacement 8 mm 316 stainless steel nut.

The walk out was even sunny at times but back at camp the clouds were gathering in preparation for the snow dump predicted for the next day. I got in my warm car and headed home for a warm shower and a warm dry bed.

JF-37 Pendant Pot

Janine McKinnon

29 September 2012

Party: Natalie Brennan (SUSS), Mark Euston, Andreas Klocker, Janine McKinnon

Andreas, Mark and Nat were camped up at the end of the KD road, so I made my way up there alone on Saturday morning. The weather had been poor the previous 24 hours but was not precipitating when I parked the truck and walked up to their camp at the apiary site at 8:15 am. This was a short-lived reprieve and it soon started snowing quite heavily as we got ropes and their gear sorted out. Strong wind was also forecast for the day, so they secured camp before we all left an hour later for the drive to the cave. The drive itself was an exciting event for the lads sitting on the back of the tray in the falling snow, but Nat and I were very comfortable in the cab. Why weren't they in their own car, you ask? Because it was 2WD and they couldn't get it up the hill in the wet conditions, so they couldn't afford to drive it down.

The walk in was cold, with intermittent snow showers, and we passed by Growling for a look at the entrance as we went by. It always looks impressive with high flow.

We discovered that there has been a partial collapse of the walls of the gully that leads into Pendant Pot and some large boulders are strewn down the slope of the floor. They looked quite fresh.

The final descent to the base of the 7 m up climb is as muddy and slippery as ever. We planned to do some replacement rigging on this trip: replacing spits with 8 mm stainless steel thru-bolts, and also replacing the entrance rope that has been there since the '80s. I was leaving the entrance re-rig until we came out though, so we headed straight in.

I went first, as the only prior visitor, followed by Andreas, who was going to be involved with the rigging. I got to the first pitch fairly quickly and started looking around for the naturals I used last time. It took me a few minutes to find the spot up high used for the Y hang as I hadn't remembered it well. We got it all rigged and I headed down, followed by Andreas. He went off looking for the start of Pandemonium Rift whilst I waited for the other two.

I was planning to dive the sump later in the week so I rigged a rope to use for hauling gear from near the start of the down climb, through the boulder pile, to the rift proper. I rigged a back-up and primary anchors at the start of the rift itself as we all abseiled down and used the rope as a belayed climb on our return. Again, I put the rope in as I knew I would need it for hauling gear later and not because it's really needed on the climb. I actually find it a nuisance on the climb as it gets in the way in the narrow rift.

I rigged Pel Mel and headed down with bolting gear ready as I was planning to put a replacement bolt where there is a spit on the rebelay. I started drilling ... and drilling ... and drilling ... It was heavy going. The drill was hammering but not progressing very quickly at all. Every few minutes it would stop making forward progress and the rock would grab the drill bit and try and turn the drill! I would back it out, clear some powder out of the hole, and then go again.

The powder was wet, rather than the dry stuff I have always had in the past. This was a real pain. Words were directed to the rock and drill. They chose not to answer. They were probably offended by my choice of words.

Finally I had a deep enough hole and the rest of the job was achieved quickly.

On the Ultimate Man pitch I decided to put a rebelay in about 7 m down. I had only been drilling for a couple of minutes when my battery died! One hole and a bit! Up I go until I can pass the drill up, get Mark and Andreas to change over the battery, and back down again. I was getting fed up with this drilling. I needed to put a lot of force behind the drill to get any forward progress at all. On this hanging rebelay it was difficult to get any weight behind the drill and I was forced to pull myself in against the wall with one hand and drill with the other. The same issues with slow progress, drill catching and wet powder as before were encountered. Finally it was done and on we went.

Now it gets embarrassing (nothing new for me, I hear some of you say). At the bottom of the pitch I had forgotten the way on. I hadn't been here for something like eight years. I looked down the obvious drop in front of me and assumed it was the way on. If I'd bought a copy of the map with me then all would have been clear. Alas, I had been too cocky with my assumption of navigation required (i.e. straight down and up again).

In my defense, I did comment that this drop looked more like a climb than a pitch, and I didn't remember it at all, and where was the pool I remembered? Must be a bit further to go then ...

So we rigged this drop as it was quite wet and we didn't want to free climb down (and we'd need a rope to haul gear anyway) and down we went. After some poking about we found it didn't go anywhere. Now I was really confused. The cave can't have filled in, it was too big. Or maybe there'd been a small, crawly bit I'd forgotten before the pool and this had filled in since the last visit? It didn't make sense but we certainly were at the end of the going down bits. Andreas and Nat had climbed up a narrow rift on the right side and declared that it kept going and disappeared off to investigate. Mark and I headed back up the climb, doing it as a self-belayed climb.

We were waiting for the other two when Mark went for a wander and found the correct way on around the corner from the bottom of the pitch. DUH. Did I feel a twat? Yes indeedy.

We rigged the pitch head and I traversed out over the pool and down to the spit at the top of the last drop. I started to put a replacement bolt in and had almost finished when my drill suddenly stopped. The Lithium battery had reached the level of discharge where it self protects by shutting down. There was still a few mm of drilling to go but it was well within safety levels for the 90 mm deep bolts I was using. I put the bolt in and put a hanger on it for rigging on the next trip.

So I had done three bolts for two batteries.

The other two arrived back with reports of ongoing cave. Another exploratory trip was on then.

The trip out was fairly quick, at least compared to the trip in, and we walked back to the truck in the dark, with snow flurries. Without any batteries working I couldn't put in the new rigging at the entrance pitch. A job for another day.

The drive back to the KD camp was pretty cold for the pair in the back. Not far from camp (fortunately) we found a tree across the road and so they had to walk from there as I hadn't brought the chainsaw with me. A bit of an oversight that. That's about the fourth, isn't it? A lesson in not going caving a day after returning from an eight day bushwalk. I hadn't had time to think the extras through properly.

Turning the truck around (with its extra long wheel base) on the narrow road in the dark was a bit interesting.

After discussing with the group their planning for the rest of the week I realised that I didn't have time to do a dive, and then a de-rig trip, before they left. With no idea if I could get anyone else (answer: probably not) to help de-rig the cave I decided to abort that idea for now. The crew would de-rig on their exploratory trip on Monday.

Pendant Pot Rigging notes:

Pitch 1: (+7 m) climb. Rope *in situ*.

Pitch 2: Penthouse (18 m) – 23 m rope.

One short and one long tape. Y-hang from a natural bollard at floor level as a main, on the right side after squeezing to the pitch head, and a backup, which is a flake on the right, behind you when you're at the RHS of pitch head – the tape goes around that flake and then through a small gap above the pitch head (where the two rock walls pinch together).

Pitch 3: Pandemonium Rift (15 m) – 23 m rope.

Free-climbable but self-belay rope can be useful for some. Small tape wrapped around projection at top of rift, immediately below constriction. Tie back to multiple chock stones above restriction. When climbing down traverse to the left as you descend and aim for a landing on the extreme left.

Pitch 4: Pel Mel (39 m) – 60 m rope.

Y-hang from two bolts at pitch head, 3 m along ledge. Rebelay y-hang from two bolts at -5 m, off-set 2 m from direct line. Rebelay from bolt at -15m (approx) on RH wall, about 2 m below obvious ledge and off-set by 4 m (and 50 cm directly below old spit).

Pitch 5: Ultimate Man (19 m) – 25 m rope.

Use obvious natural thread at the pitch head. Rebelay at -7m.

Pitch 6: Boltezar (22 m) – 28 m rope.

Tape around natural thread on RHS as approach line over pool. Belay on bolt near old spit on LHS at pitch head, with back up to thread 3 m above. Rebelay on natural spike at -7m.

Notes: Bolts are all 8 mm x 90 mm SS Thru-bolts.

Those at pitch head, and y-hang rebelay, of P4 (Pel Mel) were installed in July 2006 (SS355).

All other bolts installed September 2012.

Spits installed March 1984 (SS198)

All bolts have markers on them.

Hangers removed Sept 2012.

Rope lengths are approximate.

All directions facing downwards.

JF-22, JF-482 and JF-597 – Frozen Goats

Alan Jackson

30 September 2012

Party: Serena Benjamin, Nat Brennan, Mark Euston, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Petr Smejkal

We arrived to a snow-covered camp and dragged three soggy, frozen campers out of their beds. We left them to cook breakfast and organised a rendezvous at JF-482. The three of us who'd had a good night's sleep headed in the KD track as far as the Dwarrowdelf turn-off and then turned left. Our first target was the cave (Stuck Hole) from our last trip out here that I thought might be JF-22. Serena and I hacked at the fern roots that had encroached upon the limestone slab above the entrance and were pleased to discover the JF-22 tag hiding there. We celebrated by ripping off the tag we'd placed on this cave on our last trip and added the number back into circulation. I can now happily declare with 99% certainty that Hole 15/JF-X84 is synonymous with JF-22. Now it just needs Trent to come back and drop the pitch and survey it for me!

Next we stomped through the snow to JF-482 Knee Deep. Petr and I headed in to dig while Serena wandered up to look for JF-16, which I theorise to be somewhere between the JF-447 Pitfall Pot gully and JF-17 on the contact. The dig-site in Knee Deep was an absolute shit fight with masses of snow melt dripping in and a mobile blob of saturated soil and organic debris underfoot. It was reminiscent of the conditions Chris Chad and I enjoyed

when digging JF-436, only worse. Despite the oppressive conditions we managed to breakthrough in an hour or so and slide down the liquid shit chute to the pitch head, round a right angle bend. I placed two bolts on either side of the passage at the corner while Petr got his SRT gear on. Due to the confines of this passage both bolts were placed about 15 cm from my face (drill dust was landing in my mouth!). I rigged the rope and squirmed back up out of the way while Petr headed down. After some 15 minutes or so he returned reporting that the pitch had been about 8 m and was followed by a ~3-4 m pitch (natural rigging) which was in turn followed by a ~2 m climb to a shaft blocked with dodgy rockfall. The draft, very noticeable in the tight section above the 8 m pitch, was not observed lower down the cave. [Survey with extensions on page 17]

Our muddy condition provided great entertainment for Serena who was waiting for us on the surface. She hadn't found JF-16 but had GPSed two holes of potential interest in the area (called 'new' and 'newa' in the GPS). The other three had arrived at Knee Deep a couple of hours earlier and had been sent off to the west to surface bash a bit more of the ridge above the end of Sunshine Road. They returned, empty-handed, a few minutes after we'd finished scraping some of the excess crap off our gear and persons.

Next we tried to locate Hole 22. The only useful record of this cave is a sketch in Jeff Butt's notes from 15/2/99 and a note saying "Hole 22 – at base small cliff ~80 m south of Hole 12". Hole 12 is JF-21 so we reverse engineered a waypoint and headed for it. As per usual we had the

searching power of six people being wasted by everyone walking in single file. I had a whinge, convincing everyone to spread out and lo and behold Nat found an entrance within 30 seconds, as we commenced our descent into the dry gully below JF-19. It was a lovely circular shaft about 2 m in diameter and 5 m deep to a soft mud floor. At the lowest point of this shaft was a low tight hole which could be bypassed by worming through a fissure and climbing up into an adjacent chamber full of cruddy old moonmilk and stals. A downclimb from here put you on the other side of the low tight hole that connects to the entrance pit where a collection of miscellaneous dead marsupials was piling up. I tagged it JF-597 (using the recycled tag recovered earlier in the day from JF-22) on the northern side of the shaft half a metre or so down from the lip. [Survey on page 19] I offered naming rights to Nat but she declined. I find it easier to remember caves if they have stupid names rather than just a sterile number so I've decided to call it something. Had the name 'Munted Tag Cave' (JF-470) not already been used then I would have chosen that (the recycled tag was a bit warped and I didn't quite get the drill hole spacing correct, leading to a somewhat bodgy

tagging job). Instead I have called it Fan Out to highlight the importance of covering as many square metres as you can when traipsing through the semi-impenetrable scrub of the JF.

Once we reached the suspected vicinity of Hole 22 the party was starting to look a little lacklustre. Petr and I stayed to trog the general area while the others continued down the gully back to camp. We were unsuccessful in our mission and Hole 22 remains missing. Petr and I returned to camp via JF-261 Itchy. We decided, since we had all the gear with us, to have a dig in there to see what was beyond the drafting constriction but to our dismay we discovered our drill battery was flat and Serena had all the spares. Below here we followed the left side of the gully, up in the horrendous dogwood stick forest in the hope of finding another Scratch Pot. I did find one initially promising-looking hole but it didn't go.

All up it was a moderately successful day, at least in regard to events at JF-22 and JF-482. The job list in this area is pretty short now.

Mainland Invasion

Mark Euston

28 September – 7 October 2012

Party: Nat Brennan (SUSS), Mark Euston, Andreas Klocker and random other hangers-on at various times.

Friday: Met up with Alan, drove to JF. Towed little 2WD up to campsite on KD road. Found lots of bee hives. Set up tarp, table and tents. Alan drilled holes for the tent pegs. Went to The Chairman. Nat got the 'Jackson Inquisition' into her SRT skills with Alan eventually deciding that he probably wouldn't have to rescue her. Andreas rigged as part of his rigging examination. Couldn't find the last bolt so he left it and Alan came down second and rigged the last rebelay. Andreas set a higher backup line than Alan had on his rigging notes so we had to join the rope for the final pitch to get the last 5 m of the penultimate pitch. Alan therefore didn't bother going down and started heading out with Nat. Mark went down for the fun of it and then Andreas headed out first with Mark de-rigging. The middle pitch was all spits so fairly easy to de-rig. Mark forgot that they changed to expansion bolts and was happily unscrewing the nut (safe in the knowledge that his cowstail was in the hanger) when it fell away. A 50 mm long rub point was noticed on the top rebelay (off the trees) that had worn out about 30% of the sheath. Slingshot just the larger tree rather than both trees should avoid this rub point.

Saturday: Woke up to snow. Janine arrived and Mark and Andreas had to sit in the tray in heavy snow for the drive from camp to the Growling car park. Everyone got fairly wet on the walk to Pendant Pot, except Mark and Janine who had PVC suits. Andreas and Nat made murmurings about maybe getting PVC suits next time. Spent a bit of time rigging as we unnecessarily rigged ~20 m of climb before Pandemonium Rift and then rebolted rebelays on the big pitch and the one after it. The drill bit was blunt and the wet rock kept clogging the hole up with powdered limestone paste. Mark put on beanie and gloves whilst Nat used interpretive dance to stay warm.



KD road camp complete with snow and honey supply

Went down the wrong last pitch, couldn't find a sump, thought that maybe it had filled in. Nat and Andreas went looking for Alan's lead and pushed it a bit further. Mark and Janine found the real last pitch and Janine set about drilling the new rebelay bolt for it. Made our way out and enjoyed the 'sporty' pitch heads. Nat tried abseiling down the fixed 11 mm rope on just one bar - it was described by Andreas as "only slightly slower than freefall". Got out in the dark at about 8:00 pm. Slow getting back to the cars as we kept losing the track. Started snowing again. Mark and Janine stayed fairly dry - Andreas and Nat swore blood oaths to get PVC suits for next time. Nat offered the car seat to Andreas in exchange for brownie points (which she never cashed in), although the car didn't warm up so Andreas didn't get warm (he did stay out of the snow though). New tree fall on KD road meant we had to walk the last 500 m to camp. Got dry and started cooking dinner at around 9:30 pm. It was -3° so the stove couldn't bring the water to the boil. After ~30 minutes we just put the foil packets in and warmed them up for another 20 minutes and quickly scoffed our dinner before it cooled down too much. Got to bed around 11:30 pm - sent a text to Alan to bring a chainsaw and to expect us to be sleeping in on Sunday morning.

In short, it was the coldest and most miserable day of the trip, with all of us being cold and wet from about 8:30 am until 9:30 pm. We learnt from it, so our next trip into Pendant was actually quite enjoyable and it set a very low benchmark for the remainder of the weather to exceed, which thankfully it did.



Tasmania – snowing one day ...

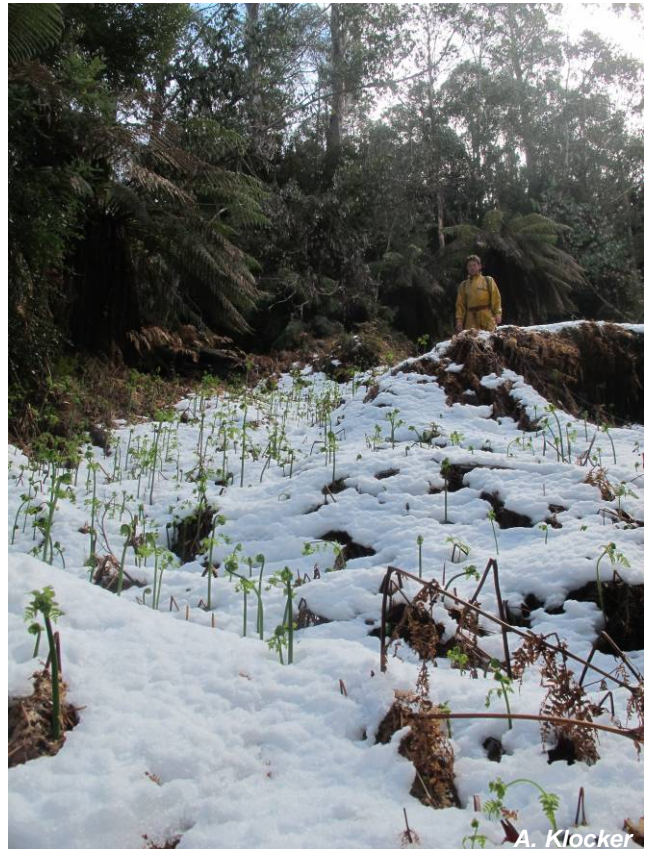


... sunny the next

Sunday: Alan, Petr and Serena turned up for a surface day. It was sprinkling but they all looked very clean and dry compared to us. The sun came out and the bees became very active. The three mainlanders enjoyed their first taste of sun and a hot breakfast whilst the three Taswegians headed off for their surface bash. They also bought the bad news that Janine had hurt her back so wouldn't be caving with us on Monday, which meant we had to go and de-rig Pendant and shift our camp to Growling as we could drive down the KD road but not back up it.

When we caught up with them, Alan and Petr were down a hole. Mark looked down, saw Alan head-to-toe in mud and decided not to bother. Mainlanders and Serena went off looking for more caves but didn't find anything. Met back with Alan and Petr around 3 pm. Their lead hadn't gone anywhere so we all went looking for Jeff Butt holes that are only vaguely located relative to other caves. Alan lectured us on the need to spread out to find new caves for several minutes before he finally realised that we were more interested in getting back to camp and warming up than finding horrible muddy holes. Nat found a cave entrance by almost falling into it, which turned out to have a pitch of a few metres. Alan set up the ladder and went in, finding one further chamber (full of dead animals) before

the cave ended. The Mainlanders and Serena headed back to camp whilst Alan and Petr stayed out searching. We almost drifted too far right on our way down the gully but the GPS saved us. Fairly slow going due to very thick vegetation. We enjoyed getting back to camp with plenty of daylight and even cut up some vegies and salami to add to our pasta sauce.



Mark looking for caves in treeless snow fields



Andreas looking for caves in (mostly) snowless tree fields



Petr and Alan post Knee Deep digging/mud fighting

Monday: Packed up most of the camp but left the tarp, some ropes and other gear there for when we came back. Drove down to Growling and didn't encounter any fallen trees (which was a good thing as we'd forgotten to take the chainsaw with us). Stopped before the big bog (<1 km from the end of the Growling road) and set up tents in case it was raining when we got out.



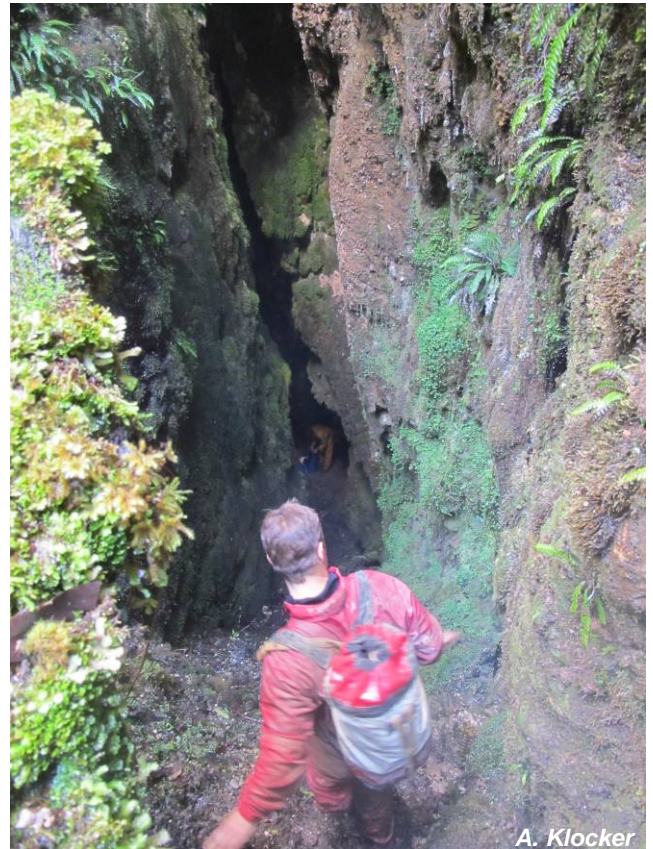
Nat sells the F8 East Rd camp



Andreas and Mark at the creek crossing above Growling

Got down the cave fairly smoothly (<2 hours), de-rigged the last pitch and then went to push the lead. Went through a bit of rockpile, climbed up some flowstone, saw some oolites off to the side, and popped out into a well decorated chamber with a rockpile floor. Nat burrowed around in the floor for a bit and Mark went to the opposite corner to see

if there was anything in the direction we'd been going. Saw a hole going a few metres down to dry streamway and squeezed down. Nat found an easier way down and she and Andreas followed. A short crawl along the dry streambed opened up into a short passage with some dry gourds and ways on up in the roof. Following the streamway led to more rockpile with a way continuing up with some flowstone. There was a vertical squeeze and as you got your head through the squeeze you could see a flattener continuing for a few metres. We left this at first and went up to a small decorated upper level with no obvious ways on, except back in the direction we had come from. Mark went through the flattener to see if it went anywhere and found that it kept going. Nat followed but Andreas couldn't get through the squeeze. The flattener was a horizontal rift with a +45 degree jink on your left side and a -45 degree jink on your right. Sometimes you would have to go into the +45 or -45 part to continue. There was a conglomerate bank that made a tight squeeze where Mark stopped and pondered giving up, but then he heard the low groan of flowing water and decided to push on. Past this it went for another 5 m or so before reaching a more difficult squeeze where the sound of water was loud enough to hear whilst moving. Nat was at the conglomerate squeeze and Mark got her to stay still so she could hear the water. She also heard Andreas calling so we decided to head back.



Andreas descends to join Mark in the Pendant Pot entrance

It was getting late so we decided to head out. Back at the bottom of the penultimate pitch we heard a lot of water thundering into the final chamber (which we didn't hear before pushing the new lead). We couldn't see it as we'd already de-rigged, so we decided to get up the next pitch quickly in case we were about to get flooded. Apparently the sump in the final chamber is actually two sumps with water flowing out of one and into the other, then going back into Growling. The sound was therefore just this short river, brought to life by the afternoon snow-melt.

Headed out with Mark de-rigging. All went pretty smoothly except Mark dropped another nut, this time it was the very last hanger that needed to be removed. We changed out the super-stiff entrance pitch rope with a newer bit of 11 mm and were out in daylight and even got back to camp before it went completely dark.

Tuesday: Surface bash - return to the Wherretts Swallet area that Andreas, Mark and Bunty had looked at on the Easter Dissidence trip. Wherretts Swallet 1 & 2 are two large dolines with small, probably perennial, creeks flowing into them. They're mostly filled up with soil, however, and there is no obvious way in. On the Easter Dissidence trip, Bunty found a small hole about 100 m downhill from Wherretts Swallet with a breeze and it was tagged as JF-590. Andreas had wanted to get back here ever since so this time we came with rope and SRT gear – well Mark did as he was the only one with a dry cave suit. Mark went in the entrance squeeze and found a 4 m pitch. Rigged it, went down, it crapped out. There's a possible way on through a high window that's half full of mud, but there are probably easier ways into the Wherretts system. [Survey with extensions on page 17]



Marks tries JF-590 headfirst

We started heading back and came across the stream that we followed downhill with Bunty during the Easter trip. There was more water this time so we found the creek continuing past where it had sunk last time. The creek forked around a mound which on closer inspection had some limestone and small holes. The one on the right was bigger so we dug it out a bit and diverted the stream into it. It soon filled up, so it wasn't going anywhere. We then diverted the other branch of the stream into the left hole and found that we could fairly easily wash mud down it. Andreas was pretty excited by this lead, but Mark was convinced that it would just be a tight boulder choke that would take a lot of effort to get into. In any case, we were out of time and started heading back to clean gear and drop Nat off at the airport (she decided to head back early for a genetics exam - way too responsible!).

Wednesday: Lazy Hobart day. Andreas went and bought a new sleeping bag. Can't remember anything else of interest. We went to an STC meeting where they argued about stuff; I wasn't really paying attention. Andreas was made vertical trip leader, so next time he can muddy STC rope instead of his own.

Thursday: Tassie Pot with Janine. Andreas and Mark rented a car and met Janine in Maydena. This was the windiest day of the week with wind damage in Hobart. We

encountered a fallen tree not far off the main road and we were expecting a lot more, but we got to Tassie Pot without issue. We packed the ropes in order of rigging (or so we thought) and Janine sent Andreas down for another rigging exam. Turns out we'd switched the 60 m with the 40 m so we needed to join ropes half way down the entrance pitch, with Janine and Mark standing on the muddy bank whilst Andreas tried every permutation to get the ropes to reach. Janine had to clip a cowstail in so that Andreas wouldn't pull the rope out of our reach. Janine said that she'd grab onto Mark if she felt she was about to get pulled off the ledge – Mark discretely moved out of Janine's reach. We eventually got down this pitch, but at the cost of an extra rope, which meant we wouldn't have enough for the bottom pitch. Mark went and rigged the bottom pitch just for fun and got to the last rebelay p-hanger, which is about 10-15 m from the bottom. We got out smoothly, although Andreas walked in the opposite direction to the car when he got out. Janine lent Andreas her Pantin for the ascents and he was an instant convert, even managing to talk Janine into letting him borrow it for the next day's Khazad-Dum trip.

We got back to Hobart in daylight (we got softer as the trip progressed) and even had time to wash ropes.

Friday: Got picked up by Alan and went to our campsite at the end of the KD road. Amazingly the tarp was still up. We packed up the campsite, sorted out ropes and headed for the cave, hoping that the water wouldn't be too high. When we saw the river at the entrance, Alan said that it would be exciting, but not dangerous. Mark liked the cave right from the start, with lots of streamway to stomp down. Alan complained about the rigging of the first pitch, with the backup bolt being well below the main. Alan complained about the pitch after the "Dry 90" as it was a triangle of bolts. Alan complained about the pitch where you had to bridge over a 20 m drop to clip into the traverse line. Alan complained about the streamway pitch where you had to crawl awkwardly along a ledge to get to a natural anchor that can't be rigged tight as the sling will just pop off. Mark found the easy way down by just falling into the waterfall. Andreas got his pack in the waterfall and ended up with about 40 kg hanging off him.

We reached the bottom of the last pitch after about three hours and decided to look at the sumps. The first sump was fairly putrid and we continued past it through Mainland-style passage to the second sump. Andreas managed to lose Janine's Pantin in the streamway on our way out. Got out of the cave after about seven hours.

Saturday: Car mix-up so we had a lazy Hobart day. Andreas's friend was supposed to leave her car for us but forgot. We walked across Hobart to see if she'd left it at another place but she hadn't and she was on her way to raft the Franklin River so was out of mobile contact. On our way back we bumped into Tony and Jane and managed to twist Tony's arm into coming to JF with us the next day for a surface bash (his other option was finishing his tax return, so his arm was not too hard to twist). Spent the rest of the day cleaning gear for our flight home and washed all the STC gear at Alan's place (we managed to make the disheveled Pendant Pot rope look fairly respectable).

Sunday: Went for a surface bash in the Wherretts area with Tony. Tony entertained us with talk of UAVs and even gave a demonstration of 'yaw' in his Subaru through

the pre-Growling bog. Mark set him the challenge of getting 45 degree yaw on the way back, but he only managed 35 degrees.

We went straight for the Wherretts Swallet valley and found and GPSed a few tagged caves. Our main mission was to look at the stream sink under Wherretts Swallet. We found that it was mostly mud and with not much effort, we expanded the hole and were able to drop rocks down. They bounced for quite a while so we think there's a steep slope that goes down for ~20 m – future explorers may want to be roped in to continue this dig. There were a few large boulders still blocking the way, which we attempted to move with a sling but with little success. We got some of the smaller ones out but two large ones remain. Andreas took Mark's cave suit and valiantly dug and tried shifting large boulders for over an hour, but he eventually gave up and we went up to Wherretts Swallet.



Andreas digging while being viewed by the peanut gallery



Andreas gets enthusiastic about the dig

After that we started traversing around to look at the next valley over and came across an entrance with water sinking directly above it. Mark went in and found a breeze and could hear the water trickling in, but there were no human-sized ways through. There were also glow worms only a few metres in. Mark came out and sketched a map on an old receipt that Tony found on him. Tony complained of Andreas's organisational skills for not bringing flagging tape, paper or Mars Bars.

We continued traversing around to the next valley and headed down. We found several limestone outcrops but no entrances. The vegetation was fairly thick and there were lots of large fallen trees, so it was slow going. We used the GPS altitude to try to guess where the McCallum's track was. We found a fairly indistinct track which briefly became good and actually looked like a 4WD track, but we eventually lost it and had to use the GPS to head for where we'd left McCallum's track at the bottom of the Wherretts Swallet valley.



Man versus ferns on Wherretts Lookout

In summary:

- * October is still too cold to camp in the JF.
- * PVC suits are great, even if just used for walking to the cave.
- * The McCallum's track is relatively easy to follow up to the Wherretts Swallet valley and could be cleared in a day.
- * There's probably a good cave in the Wherretts Swallet valley and the stream sink is most likely the easiest way in.
- * The last rebelay of the entrance pitch of The Chairman and the first Y-hang of the big pitch in Pendant Pot are missing nuts.
- * Mark shouldn't be allowed to de-rig.
- * There's definitely a dry connection between Pendant Pot and Growling, although it would make a somewhat tight through-trip.
- * The KD streamway swallowed a Pantin to go with the Croll that was lost several years earlier - it did, however, regurgitate a Black Diamond karabiner. A few more years and one might be able to scavenge a full SRT kit.
- * Caving trips are not very good exam preparation, so one might as well skip the exam and do more caving.
- * Alan should re-bolt KD so next time he has fewer reasons to complain.
- * Thanks to everyone who joined us on some of our adventures or lent us gear, gave us advice, etc.!

Other Exciting Stuff

JF-223 Tassy Pot Rigging Guide

Janine McKinnon

P1 (42 m).

50 m rope.

Primary tie-off around the Sassafras tree. Approx five meters down the vertical part (15 m from primary tie-off) a flake out to your left. A P-hanger at approximately the same height on your right. Use a short tape and the P-hanger to affect a Y-belay.

Pitch 2 (24 m).

30 m rope.

Stay on the rope from the first pitch to the ledge above P2. A P-hanger and a permanent 10 mm SS bolt and bolt plate, are on the RH wall. Rig a Y-hang. Remember to tie the end of the previous rope into this rope if not using a continuous rope. Also, leave enough slack in the first pitch rope so that people standing at the bottom of the first pitch can reach the rope without sliding down the muddy floor.

These two pitches can be rigged with a single rope, if desired. An alternative is an 11 mm rope to the Y-hang on P1, and then a new rope from there to either the top, or bottom, of P2.

There is a lot of rub on the pitch to this Y-hang.

Pitch 3 (18m)

24 m rope.

Climb down the mud slope a short way, and through a short crawl, then down a 1.5 m climb. A large boulder is in front, wedged in the roof. Place a long tape around this as a back-up. It can be used as an approach safety to free climbing, or abseil down. About 4 m lower you will find a small ledge and two P-hangers. Rig a Y-Hang from these.

Pitch 4 (71 m)

98 m rope.

This pitch is at a small, obvious window, in the Good-bye chamber on the LHS. Tie back to the large boulder well back from the window. A VERY long tape (7-8 m), or two tied together, are required to encircle this boulder. A Y-hang from the two P-hangers on the RHS, just around the corner of the window. 10 m down a rebelay out to your right. 30 m further down to a rock ledge to another rebelay about 25 m off the bottom.

Notes:

All directions are facing down cave.

All bolts are P hangers except for the (*in-situ*) bolt and hanger on P2.

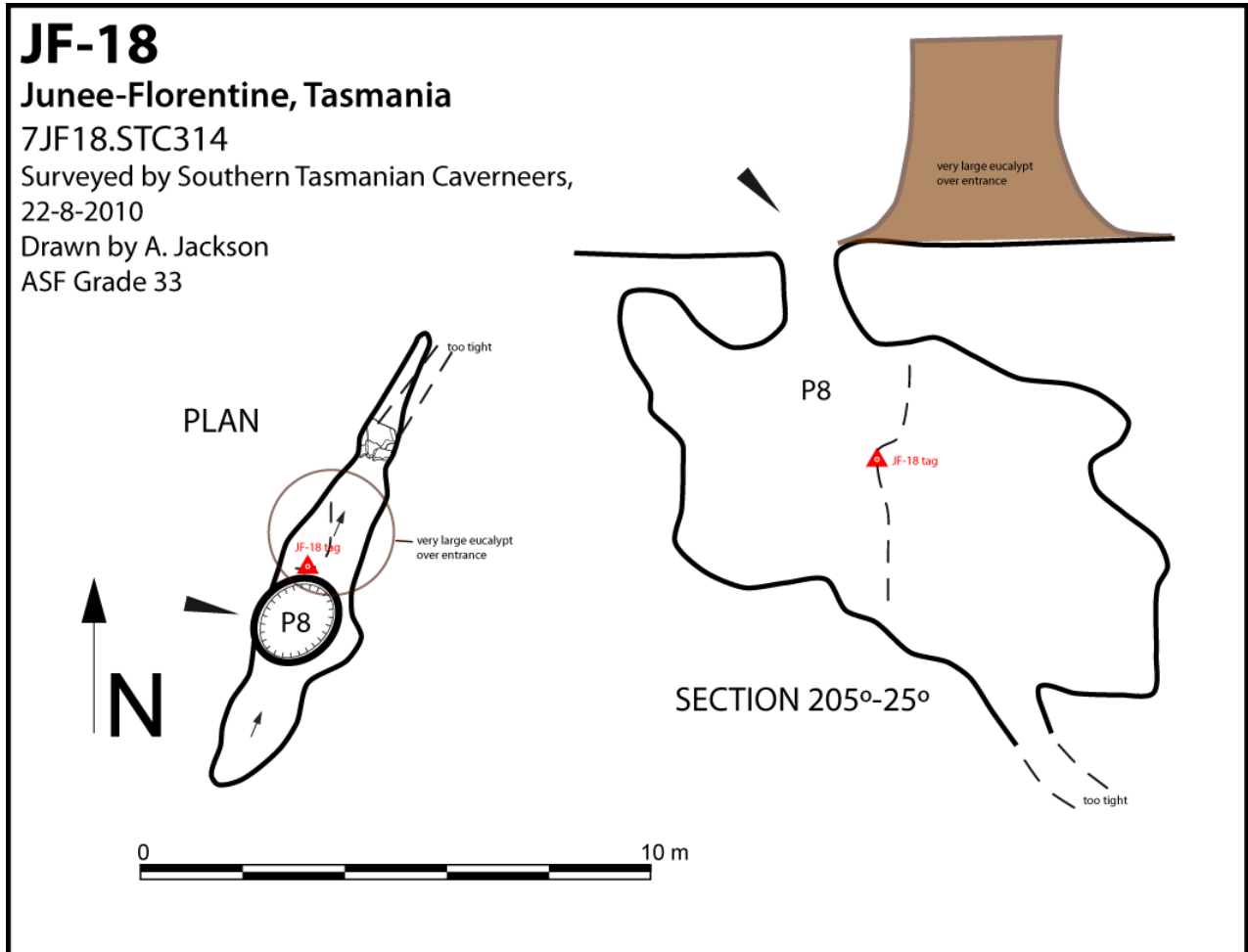
Rope lengths are approximate.

If using a separate rope for first pitch to rebelay, then rope lengths to bottom of second pitch need to be calculated.



Miscellaneous Surveys

As per usual here is a pile of surveys of shitty little crap holes dotted around the JF (with a space-filling comedic interjection from Bunty). Most of them are from the Splash Pot/Hairygoat Hole Area (from trip reports in this issue), the exception being JF-594 Arachnophobia on page 18 – this survey should have been published in the last issue with the other three from the Settlement Area.



WIZARD OF IDA BAY



JF-19

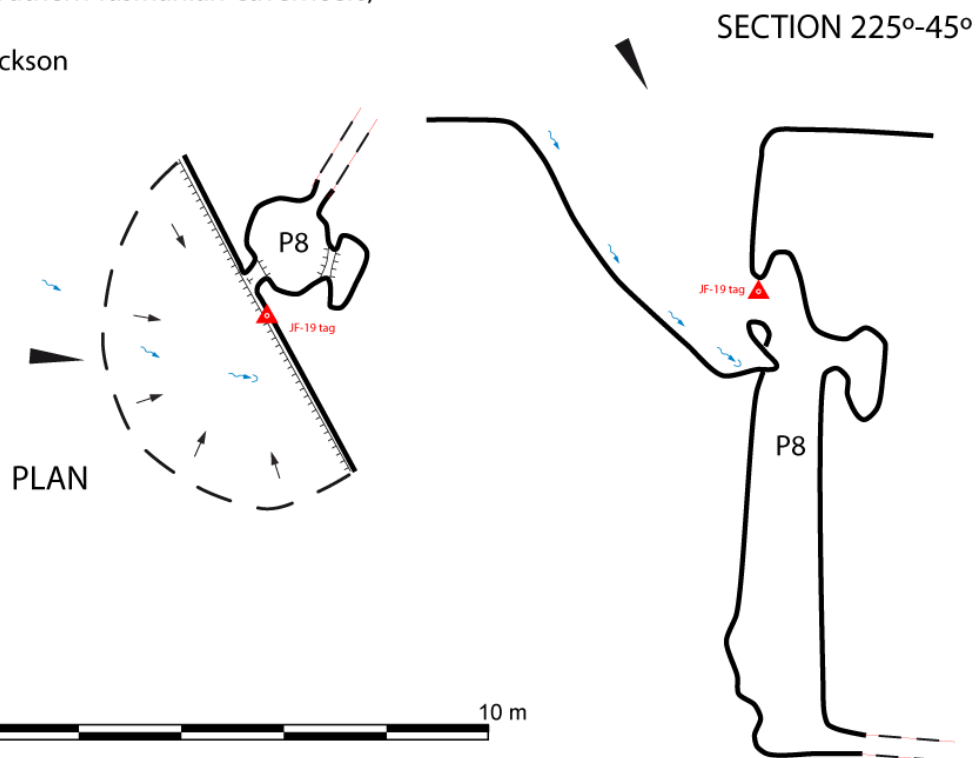
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF19.STC320

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
1-9-2012

Drawn by A. Jackson

ASF Grade 33



JF-20 & JF-475

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

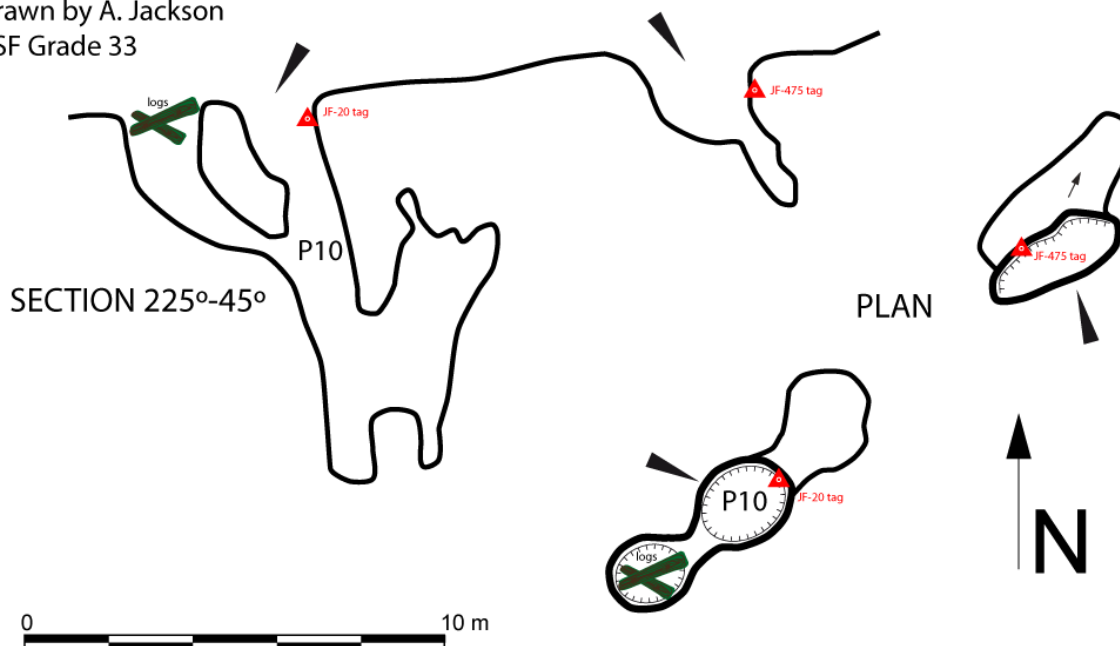
7JF20.STC324

7JF475.STC325

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
1-9-2012

Drawn by A. Jackson

ASF Grade 33



JF-482 Knee Deep (was JF-X102, Hole 33)

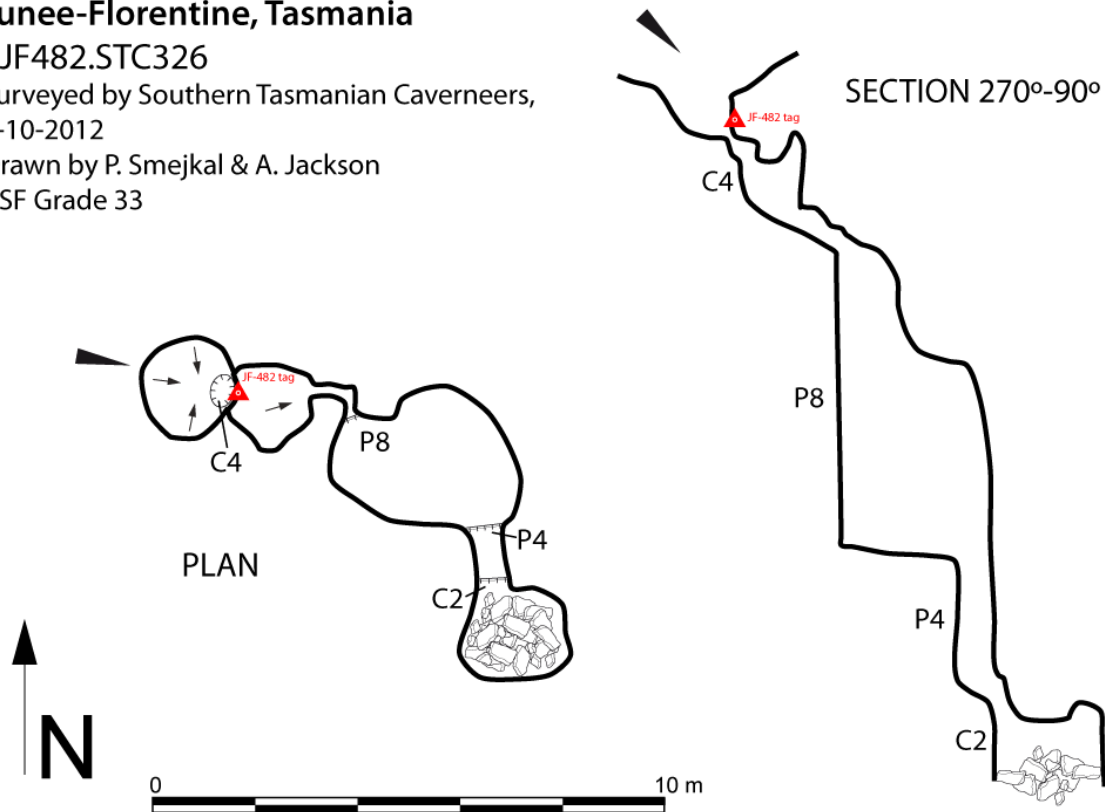
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF482.STC326

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
1-10-2012

Drawn by P. Smejkal & A. Jackson

ASF Grade 33



JF-590 (was JF-Z66)

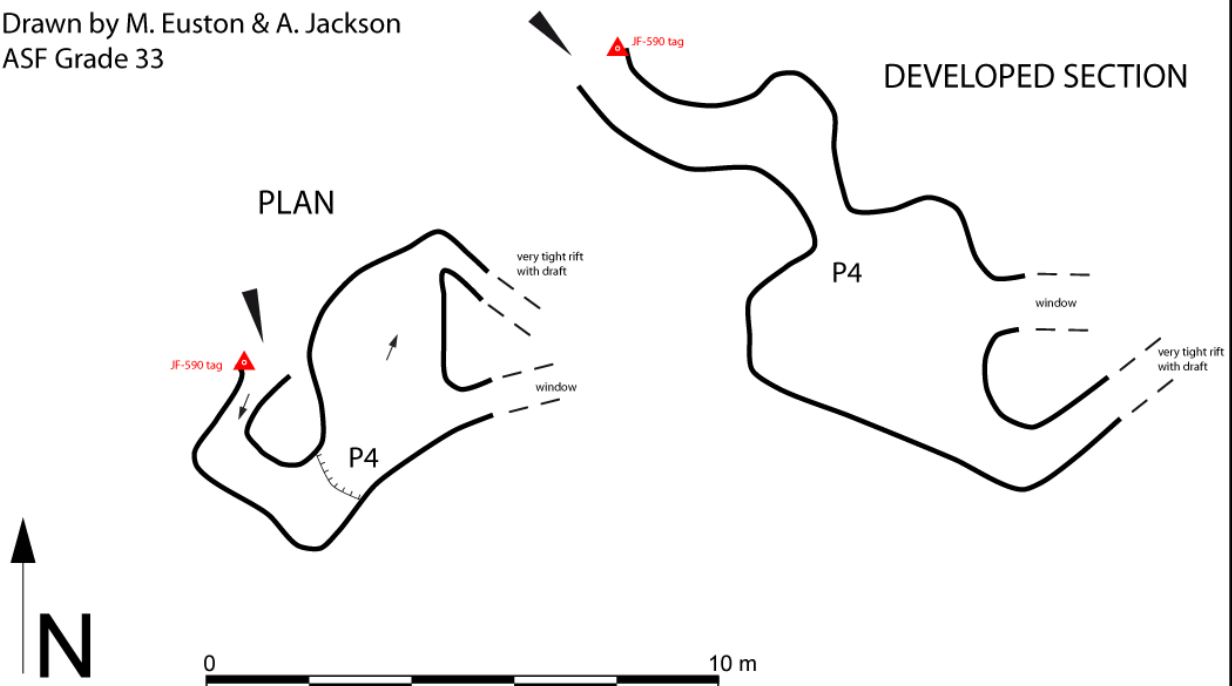
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF590.STC327

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
2-10-2012

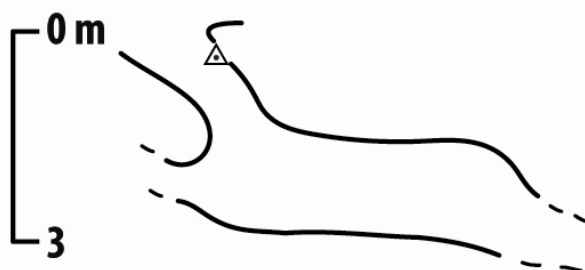
Drawn by M. Euston & A. Jackson

ASF Grade 33



JF-594 Arachnophobia

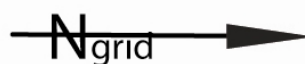
Depth 3 m Length 5 m



Surveyed by S.Bunton 23/6/12
Drawn by S.Bunton 12/7/12
ASF Grade 2.2
7JF594.STC319

Developed Long Section

Plan



JF-595 Bald Pig

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

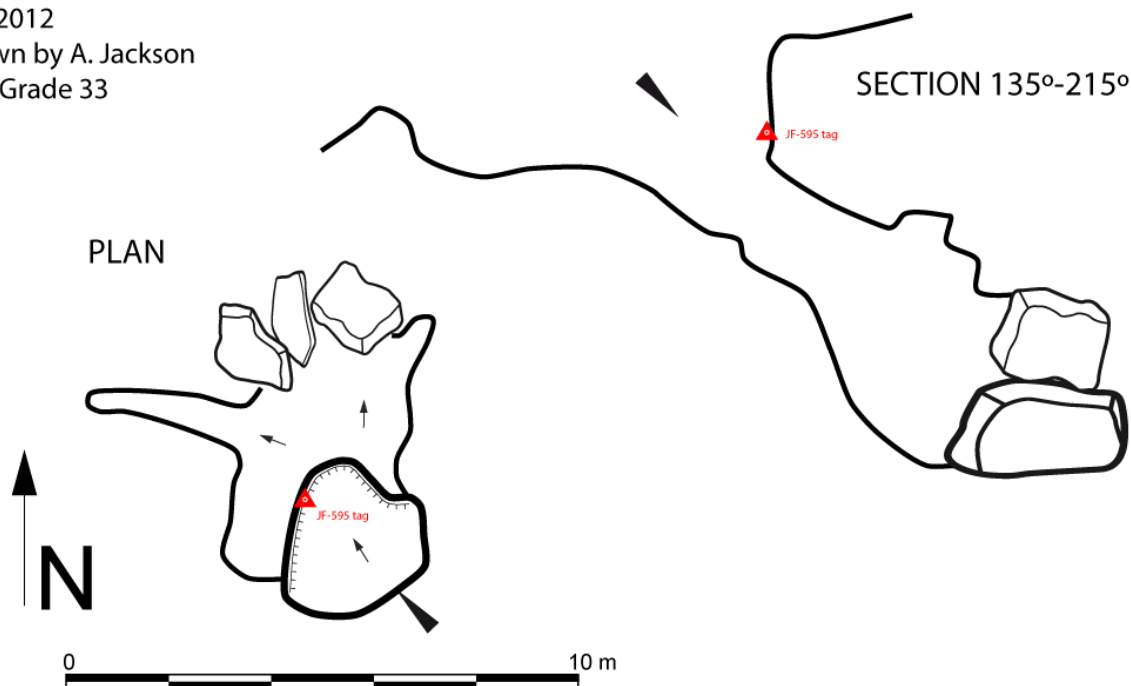
7JF595.STC321

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
1-9-2012

Drawn by A. Jackson

ASF Grade 33

PLAN



JF-596 (Hole 26, JF-X95)

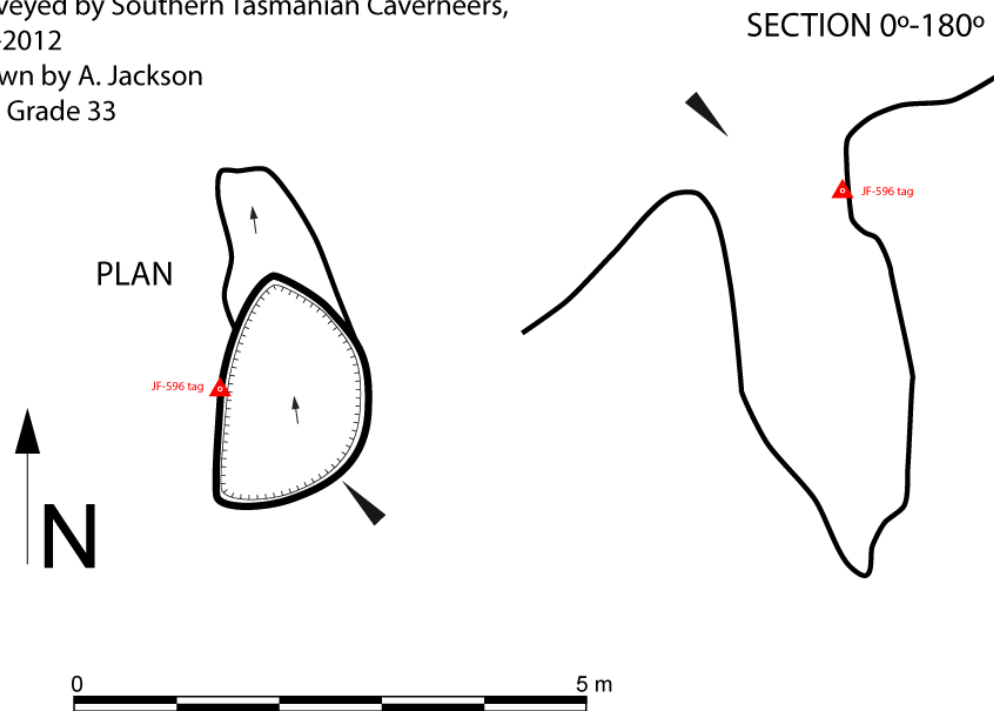
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF596.STC322

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
1-9-2012

Drawn by A. Jackson

ASF Grade 33



JF-597 Fan Out

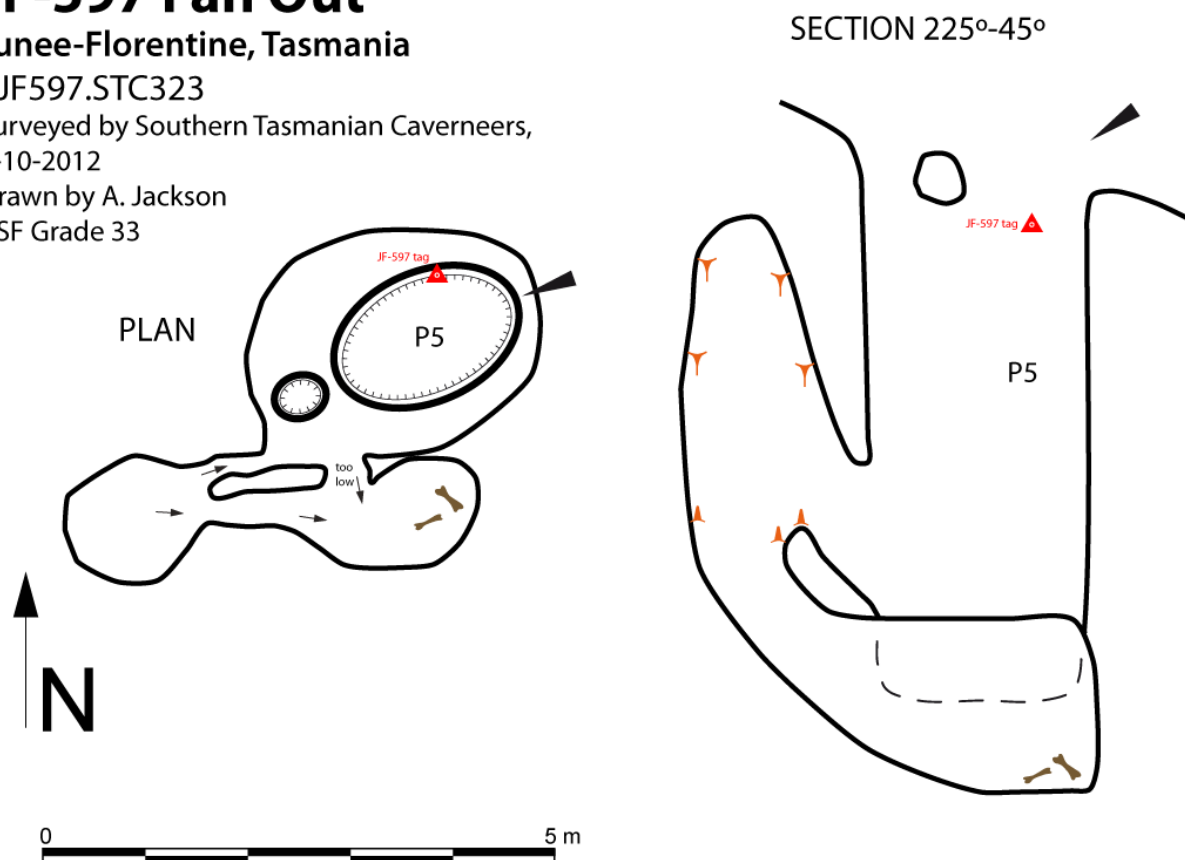
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF597.STC323

Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
1-10-2012

Drawn by A. Jackson

ASF Grade 33



Speleo Spiel – Issue 392, September–October 2012 – page 20

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Kathryn	Bunton	PO Box 198, North Hobart 7002	6278 2398			
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