

A photograph of a person in a red jacket and blue helmet standing in a cave. The cave has large rock formations and stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The person is holding a flashlight, which is illuminating the cave floor. The title 'SPEIEO SPIEL 400' is overlaid on the bottom of the image in a large, yellow, outlined font.

SPEIEO SPIEL 400

January - February 2014

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Front Cover: Under the Broken Column, IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave. Photo by François Fourie.

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

Finally another *Speleo Spiel* hits the press. If you like numbers then you will have noticed that this issue is number 400. Hedonistic ideas were mooted regarding the content of this issue. Some have come to fruition while others have been shelved for a rainy day.

This issue's Trip Reports suggest that hard cavers don't have any friends or family to spend Christmas with, they just manage to hang out with each other, in the dark, rolling in the mud. We are then given several examples of how to end your caving trip before it starts. Klockerfest leaves no stone unturned, no wall free of bolts and no fragile habitat intact in a frantic bid to be the most obnoxious caver in the universe.

In Other Exciting Stuff we get a taste of caving through the ages. We start with Albert recounting some of the earliest significant discoveries by STC. This is followed by a bit of news regarding JF-15 Hairy Goat Hole. *Speleo Spiel* #400 just wouldn't be complete without some reference to this elusive cave now would it? A couple of VSA cavers then remind us how different caving in Tasmania really is compared to the mainland. Finally, Yoav summarises the comings and goings around the new STC website.

The fact that this issue contains more than 20,000 words indicates that STC is alive and well and still at the pointy-end of caving in Australia, despite almost 70 years in existence.

Matt Cracknell

explore and document caves. There's a very nice cave map and a photo of two handsome cavers in the article.

This article and more in *Forest Practices News*, vol 12, no. 1, January 2014 is on the Forest Practice Authority's website at http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/95458/FPN_vol_12_no_1_Jan_2014.pdf

Alan Jackson

Cave Diving Qualifications

Janine has been accepted by the Australian Speleological Federation's Cave Diving Group (ASF CDG) as an Advanced Cave Diver – it's their top level qualification. She now joins Andreas as STC members that hold this qualification.

Ric Tunney

JF-382 Dissidence – JF-392 Warhol

The-conjoined JF-382 Dissidence – JF-392 Warhol system (see p. 19) is 3970 m long. This moves it up one on the Longest Cave List from 10th to 9th place, pushing past Mystery Creek Cave.

Ric Tunney

Air Time

An ABC radio interview with our new STC member, Pax and (Michael Packer) some photos can be found at <http://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2014/02/12/3943343.htm?site=hobart>

Ric Tunney

Rolan (unit of distance)

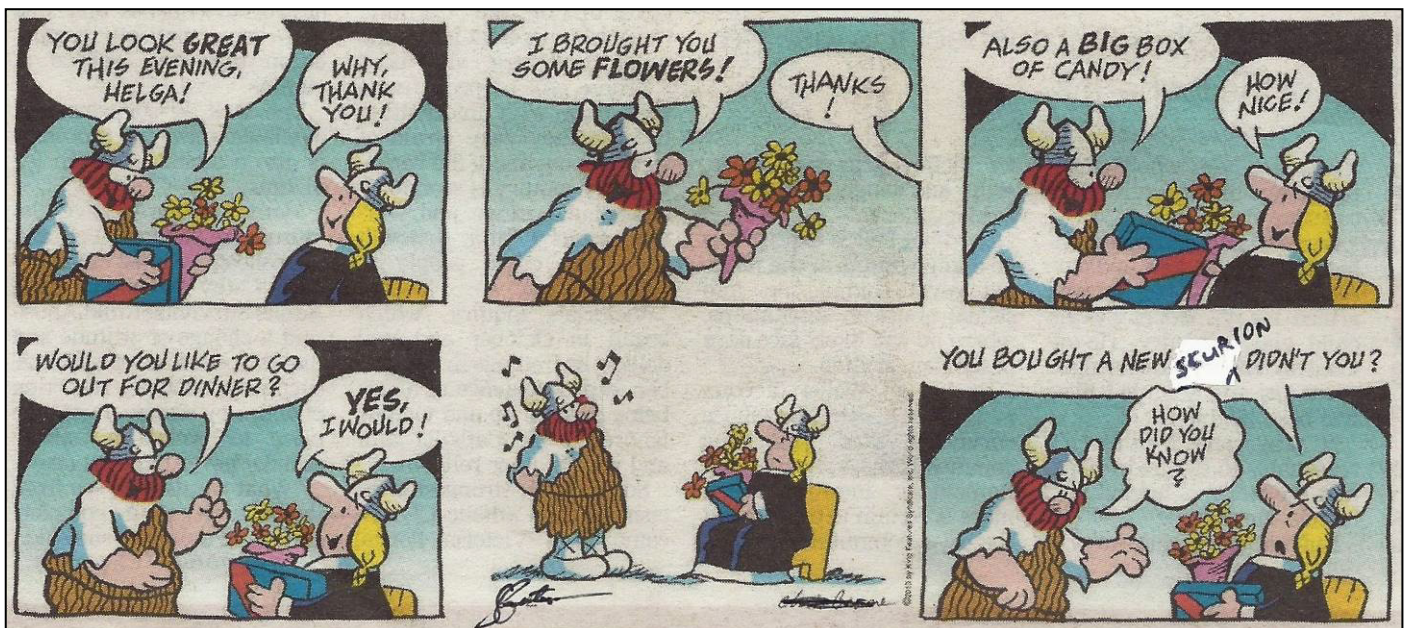
def. The minimum distance two survey teams may be separated by whilst in Exit Cave as defined in an Authority to Enter Limited Access Cave (regulation 17). It is equal to the maximum distance from which a PWS officer can be heard yelling "Oi, you're too close".

Geoff Wise

Stuff 'n Stuff

SETTLEMENT AREA ARTICLE

John Webb (Norske Skog, and now also a member of STC) has published an article on karst management activities in the Settlement pine plantations where STC has been helping to



Trip Reports

JF237 Niggly Cave

Dickon Morris

25 & 27 December 2014

Party Andreas Klocker & Dickon Morris.

When I arrived in Tasmania my first priority was to start exploring the magnificent cave systems that Phil 'Divisive POM' Rowsell had waxed lyrical about. Alan 'Whipped by the Missus' Jackson was eager to snap up what he described as 'another useful POM' (I'm Welsh in case any convicts still recall the difference). On my first trip down to Hobart for caving I was shown the overall survey of the Junee-Florentine area by Alan, a dataset that he maintains religiously. It's an exciting area but what particularly excited me was the obvious 2 km section of base level master cave that abruptly terminates several kilometres from the resurgence at Junee Cave. I was informed that this was the end of Niggly Cave and which was the closest bit of master cave to the rising, which ends in a rockfall that had been visited only briefly on several occasions. Alan then proceeded to rattle on about several caves that were close to connecting to a cave called Khazad-Dûm, producing a system with unimpressive stats that went nowhere other than a sump that had received minimal pushes. I didn't care, my target was acquired.

Niggly is (roughly) 375 m deep. It has a (totally unnecessary) 180 m free hang and is extremely muddy and tiring in its bottom section. It is possible to push the bottom on day trips but given that (from Hobart) it is at least a 10 hour return trip to the end, this does not seem to be a terribly efficient way to get things done. I proposed that an underground camp would be a good idea. Andreas Klocker (a surprisingly sane and normal Austrian academic) conferred and the wheels were set in motion. Laure and Mark, not understanding the misery of underground camping, put their hands up for a place on the trip and we had a team.

On the 25th of December people around the world suddenly care a great deal about the families that they have neglected for the past 12 months. They rush home to be with them for a few often very strained days consisting mostly of excessive consumption of food and that great lubricator of arguments, alcohol. The reason? A tale about a mythical virgin birth that supposedly happened 2,000 years ago and collapses at the merest hint of scientific scrutiny.

Myself and Andreas, the only two active members of the pathetic Tasmanian caving community lucky enough to be without family commitments for this day of consumption (my family live in the motherland of the Australian nation and I'll be fucked if I'm trekking all that way to drag up old arguments) decided to escape the orgy of gluttony and head underground.

Prior to the camping trip, it was decided, a reconnaissance trip would be necessary to suss out a camping spot and look for potential leads. I was also keen to see the nature of Australia's deepest cave, in particular the infamous bridging traverse over an 85 m drop prior to the 200 m pitch.

So it was that on the 25th myself and Andreas left Hobart early bound for the JF. We found the cave without too much difficulty and began our descent. Rolan Eberhard had ropes in

the cave and had kindly allowed us to use them. We rather foolishly assumed that that meant that they were rigged – of course they were not. Instead they were coiled at the pitch heads and all the metalwork and webbing had been taken out [*That went well didn't it!* – Ed.]. Feeling somewhat foolish we exited and took a quick trip down Growling Swallet instead.

On the 27th we were back with a large assortment of karabiners (unfortunately mostly pristine specimens poached from my climbing rack) and some tapes. The first pitch just inside the entrance is straightforward with only a slightly awkward take off. After a section of pleasant fault plane passage the second pitch was reached and proved to be even simpler.

Below this pitch is Tigertooth passage; 200 m of beautifully sculpted meandering passageway which unfortunately has a propensity to grab cowstails, footloops, shockcords and anything else that may be dangling from your harness. A mild annoyance but nothing more. In any case the addition of an inlet halfway along doubles the amount of water in the passage and hence its dimensions. Eventually this passage plummets over an 85 m pitch, the obvious way on which was the originally explored route to the bottom. Now the more popular route is to continue on over the top of the pitch into a fossil meander that was clearly left high and dry by the formation of the 85 m pitch. This involves a wide traverse with one leg on each wall and nothing but blackness visible between. It's not hard but the penalty for failure is certain death, rather like walking a pavement (do convicts say 'sidewalk' as rebel colonists do?) where all the easily avoidable manhole covers are missing, replaced by 85 m drops.

Some more fun traversing in the rift leads to three consecutive pitches equating to a total drop of around 50 m leading to a sizeable and fairly innocuous chamber which becomes somewhat less innocuous when you are informed that the loose boulder slope that you must now traverse ends in a 200 m drop. We rigged a line across this and found ourselves standing on jammed boulders at the top of the pitch with an enormous pile of rope at our feet. This was duly rigged to the very reassuring p-hangers which I believe Alan placed and then re-belayed to



The Angry Hobbit aka Dickon Morris.

the bolts of the main hang which goes off a totally terrifying chockstone held in place it seems by a lot of gravel that would be at least 30 degrees past its angle of repose were pressure to be removed.

After gaining 200 m depth with greater ease than I hear is possible anywhere in the Southern Hemisphere we dumped our SRT kits and negotiated our way down to the main streamway. This was far easier than expected and we didn't get lost once. It was so easy in fact that we completely forgot about Alan's advice that we should flag the route. Fortunately our noses performed as well on the way out.

When the main passage is encountered it really is very impressive – true master cave without a doubt. The stream is sluggish and free of cascades and must surely be at the water table. Mud coats every surface, even the roof 10 m above your head suggesting that it must flood to the roof on occasion. Given our intention to camp here this was clearly a concern to some extent. My fears however were quickly allayed by the following facts. The mud is very dry and although I have not tested the drying properties of cave mud empirically, common sense would dictate that in complete darkness and 100% humidity it takes a while to reach this state. Survey tapes left by Petr and Rolan last winter were still in place suggesting that despite our extremely wet spring there had been no significant flooding since then. Finally it is well known that Mount Field is no longer able to build up a significant snow pack in the

winter. It is my theory [*hypothesis – Ed.*] that the elimination of extreme snow melt events has also eliminated the possibility of extreme flooding in Niggly. That is not to say that I would put that theory to the test by camping in the cave during the winter.

The ideal camping spot rapidly presented itself – a remarkably flat and large area a good distance above the stream and certainly safe from any summer flooding. With the main goal of the trip accomplished we set off towards Junee Cave. The passage is very straight and devoid of side passages, a cave with great purpose in reaching its destination and providing ample justification for the fast flow-through recorded from Growling to Junee.

Apart from a couple of annoying, slippery limbs over mud banks, the passage is joyous stomp for over a kilometre until the first rockfall is reached. Apparently the way through here to the second and final rockfall is obvious but in our tired state (when will I learn that JF caves are deeper than those on Mendip and that one chocolate bar is not sufficient fuel?) it eluded us. We did, however climb to the top of the rockfall where an exciting, low hanging fruit of a bolt climbing lead was spotted.

Thoroughly satisfied with the day's work we exited and made it out just before dark. To cap it all off I (accidentally) cleaned up two wallabies outside Maydena, one of which was slung in the boot and proved to be delicious.

MC-130 Devils Pot

Cañon de los Vejestorios

Janine McKinnon

26–27 December 2013

Party: Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

We started a project two summers ago to rig down this canyon and the waterfall route in Devils Pot. The route joins the lower level passage several metres past the final pitch landing point for the traditional route. This allows for a round trip to be done if both routes are rigged. We had finally returned to finish the job.

Rigging down to the second rebelay on the waterfall pitch, where our efforts had stopped last time, took less than an hour. Ric then added a third rebelay to get to the bottom of this pitch. We added a bolt at the top of one limb that has a difficult overhang, for use of a handline. The other limbs are not difficult. The bottom pitch is now rigged out of the water for normal flow rates, but does not have a rebelay. This might be an advisable addition if parties plan to do the trip in high flow.

In discussion later that evening we decided that a fourth rebelay on the waterfall pitch would be a good idea to get a bit further away from the water in higher flow. We also thought another rebelay near the bottom to stop a rub on tender 9 mm rope was advisable. The top pitch had only one rebelay bolt just over the lip of the canyon, and as the pitch is about 20 m, and the primary rigging points a couple of smallish trees on the ridge above, we decided to add another bolt.

We returned the following day to complete these tasks. We left the cave rigged so Alan could join us on 28th December to complete the survey of this section of Devils Pot. A visiting

group of SUSS cavers also joined us that day to rig the traditional route and complete the first round trip.

The story behind the naming of this canyon (this one is for Greg). We had just returned a week earlier from Mexico. We found ourselves drinking Mexican beer on the night of the 27th somehow. So the name had to be in Spanish and Alan would be disappointed if we didn't include "old farts" in there somewhere.

Rigging Notes

Ric Tunney

December 2013

As it approaches Devils Pot, the taped route follows the unconformity between the limestone and the overlying impermeable mudstones. It then drops down to cross Short Creek at a pond just below a waterfall over the mudstones. Just below the pond, Short Creek drops into a limestone canyon and the cave tag is on the RHS.

Traditional route

Start is at lowest point (on LHS) of doline. Cross Short Creek and make way down and around doline to left. Route is down steep gully then vertical drop into doline.

P1 – 20 m: Belay around tree at top of gully. Rebelay with short tape around tree LHS 4 m down. Rebelay on bolt RHS 6m further down. Rebelay on bolt RHS 3 m further down. Some parties may wish another rebelay with tape around rock about 4 m before bottom. 17 m drop to base of pitch. 44 m rope.

Route then goes down to rib between further drop into doline and big descending tunnel. P2 is down the tunnel.

P2 – 20 m: Wire trace around sharp rock 2 m above floor on RHS 15 m back from lip of pitch. Rebelay on bolt RHS 5 m before lip. Rebelay on bolt 3 m below lip. 17.5 m drop to floor. About 40 m rope.

Cañon de los Vejestorios route

Start is from LHS of Short Creek, about 20 m downstream from the waterfall which is just below the pond where the taped route crosses Short Creek. Cross the creek, descend into the doline & curve back towards the streamway along a rocky rib. Route drops down RHS of rocky rib into narrow canyon. You can see the abovementioned waterfall, falling into the canyon, from the pitch head.

Canyon Pitch – 30 m: Belay from two small trees, slightly on LHS of rocky rib, 5 m from lip of canyon – 5 m & 1.8 m tapes. Drop into canyon and rebelay on two bolts 8 m down. 38 m rope, but a 55 m will reach to start of next pitch and helps with downclimbs in streamway.

Across the Misty Void Pitch – 28 m: Belay from two bolts on RHS at log jam. Rebelay on 10 mm bolt LHS 5m down. Move out onto wall LHS of waterfall. There are now three rebelays on bolts, each about 3 m apart and 1.5 m offset to move away from waterfall. About 6m above the bottom there is a choice of routes, either straight down in spray, or rebelay on bolt LHS to drop down dry to stream behind rock wall. 50 m rope.

Handline (tape) – 3 m: Bolt LHS. Sometimes the plunge pool below is very wet.

Bolt Outta Hell Pitch – 23m: Tape through thread in floor 7 m before lip. Bolt LHS. Y-hang from two bolts LHS to give clear drop. If water is coming down passageway, this pitch will be wet.

Notes: All directions looking downstream. Bolts are 10 mm x 50 mm stainless steel T hroughbolts; hangers left in situ December 2013.

MC-1 Kubla Khan and MC-130 Devils Pot

Alan Jackson

27 December 2013

Party: Alan Jackson & five SUSSers (Deb, Phil, Rod, Dennis & Thomas).

Deb Johnston asked if I'd guide a mob of visiting SUSS cavers through Kubla between Christmas and New Year. I was up north anyway and saw it as a great way of escaping family. Nothing spectacular to report; Kubla's still there.

28 December 2013

Party: Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney & the five aforementioned SUSSers

Ric and Janine had been beavering a way at their canyon project in Devils Pot the previous day or two and since I was in the area and had some SUSS cavers to entertain we descended upon the cave. Ric sunned himself on the surface while the rest of us caved. Some went the traditional way into the doline while some others descended the new route down the canyon. It's an awesome canyon and a pity it is so short. Janine and I headed right down to the bottom level passage, via the flood overflow passage (which was not flowing like it was back in April when I surveyed it). The last pitch, Bolt Outta Hell, was rigged so I took the opportunity to complete the survey loop

from the top of this pitch to the base of the adjacent pitch on the normal doline route. Two legs and it was done.

Janine and I headed back out the way we came while the SUSSers did their exchange and derigged. We surveyed the canyon route as we went so I could position it better on my map.

The next task was to check the 'diveability' of the sump in Devils Anastomosis and descend the flowstone ramp that had stopped us back in April. Janine liked the look of the sump. We descended the ramp and found a sump pool at its base (the survey later indicating that the two pools are less than one metre apart, so no point returning to dive it, although someone should do it as a free-dive/duck just to prove they're a hero). The passage continued with a lofty 15 m high ceiling and a flat sandy floor for about 40 m before terminating in a low, calcified choke with a nice draught. Without the draught it would not be considered a good prospect and even with the draught it elicits no enthusiasm from me.

As we exited the cave we bumped into the SUSS mob who had followed us down the hill for a quick look at the upper levels of Devils Anastomosis. We marched up the hill to Devils Pot and made our way back to the carpark.

I've now updated the map to include the data collected on this trip. The maps (plan and vertical sections) are now ready for publishing, appearing on pages 30 and 31 of this issue.

JF-390 Lawrence Creek Rising Replacing the permanent line

Janine McKinnon

Diver: Janine McKinnon.

Support: Ric Tunney [*oxymoron – Ed.*].

Prologue: On a trip to the cave last summer with Ken Murrey we found that the permanent line in the cave had broken. I decided that a replacement was warranted, as the cave has had a permanent line for divers to follow to the second restriction for many years. In the low visibility, and frequently high flow, it is much quicker and easier to follow an existing line than run one yourself. I planned to leave the cave beyond the second restriction free of line. Thus divers could run their own jump

past this point as they have had to do in the past. The status quo would be restored.

30 December 2013

This was the first dive here since last summer. I planned to remove any old, broken line and start placing the permanent replacement line. The water level was not very high and the flow rate reasonable.

As I checked my gear at the start of the dive though, I found my inflator hose for my buoyancy compensator was leaking a small stream of bubbles. It hadn't been doing that on a dive three days earlier. This was a concern as the small leak could become a major failure point without warning. Or it could just stay a small stream of bubbles. I decided to dive anyway but

keep the dive time short and not venture a long way into the cave.

As it turned out, the old line was a tangled mess just inside the entrance restriction and there was no line beyond that. I started laying the new line and progressed 5–10 m before reaching the steep slope dropping off to the left. Visibility was about 1 m, and I decided that a better plan would be to lay a temporary primary line, and follow with the permanent line afterwards. Of course I hadn't bought a primary line with me, just a jump reel (which has too little line on it). I left the bag and line safely (I hoped) tucked into a small hole and exited the cave.

Dive time: 30 min.

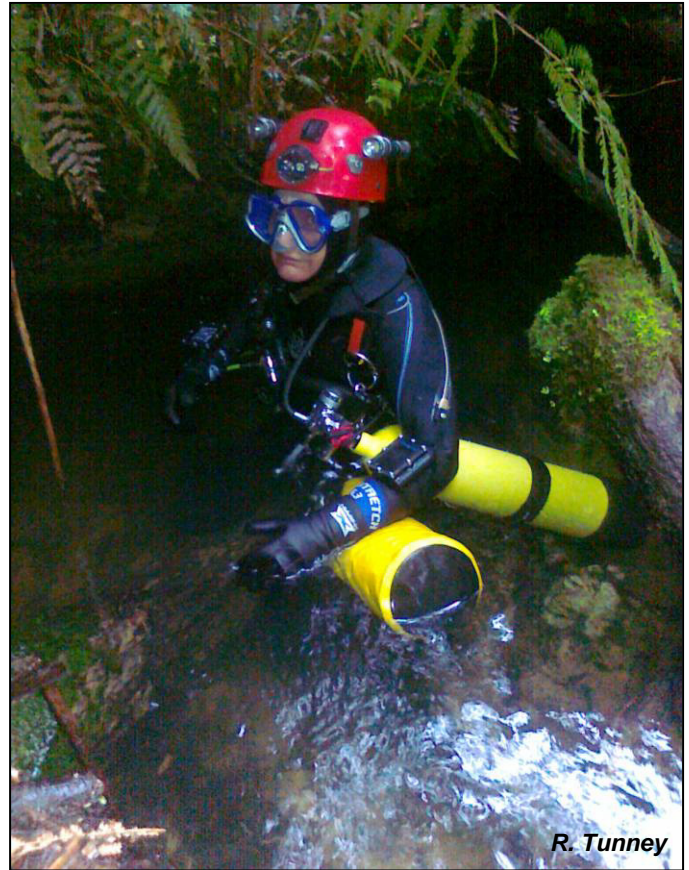
7 January 2014

Leaking hose replaced, primary (temporary) line to hand, and I was back for attempt two. I thought I may get the primary line laid AND then permanent one installed as well today. Famous last thoughts. It had rained over the weekend but I, amazingly foolishly for a long-term Tassie resident, hadn't actually checked how much rain had fallen in Maydena (20 mm on the previous Saturday). It had only drizzled a bit in Hobart ... Yes, I know.

We got quite a surprise to see the stream flowing briskly and the water level at the resurgence almost a metre higher than last week. Still, I had been in moderately high flow in there before, so it was worth a shot, seeing we were there.

I realised I had a bit of a problem as I approached the entrance restriction. It was a battle. I finally dragged myself through the entrance but it took many minutes. Once inside, where I should have made easier progress as the passage is a little wider, this didn't seem to be happening. I clawed my way a few metres but it was getting harder by the minute. The flow rate was still increasing. There was little to grab to pull on, as the rock is very friable and broke off as I pulled on the few hand holds I could find.

The flow kept pushing water into my mask and trying to push my helmet off. My second stage regulator (the one I wasn't breathing from) kept free flowing when the water pushed in the mouth piece and I had to keep turning it inwards. Eventually I turned the tank off. I had progressed about 5 metres past the entrance and could not move forward any further against the force of the water. I was using my feet against the roof to stop



R. Tunney

[Having fun yet Janine? – Ed.]

being pushed backwards and they weren't strong enough to push me forward. This was stupid and pointless. Time to leave.

The next bit of excitement was turning around. I didn't want to go out backwards through the squeeze. Being small has its advantages sometimes. I was able to turn around in the confined passage, by lots of wedging bits of myself as I turned. I was then spat out the entrance as soon as I stopped bracing, with a fair bit of banging about as I was pushed through. Lucky all that cold water insulation provides a lot of padding. Good argument for wearing a helmet too.

Dive time: 35 min. Achievement: zero.

JF-2 Cauldron Pot

Poles

Janine McKinnon

2 January 2014

Party: Andrzej Ciszewski, Ewa Ciszewski, Michal Ciszewski, Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

A family of visiting Polish cavers had contacted us in pursuit of a caving trip. They would be around for the first week of January. Rolan (Eberhard) had already arranged with me to return to Cauldron Pot on the weekend of 11–12 January, to follow up the lead we found in the cave last summer (McKinnon 2013). I perceived a wonderful convergence of interests. I would use the Poles to rig the cave, and give them a great Tassie caving experience at the same time. All winners.

The Poles stayed with us the night before the trip and we got a 7.30 am start from home. We dropped in on the SUSS group (from Devils Pot trip the previous week) at the house they were renting in Maydena, and arranged for the Poles to stay there for a couple of nights and join them on their caving trips. This took half an hour and we left them at 9 am.

The day was fine and we had a pleasant walk to the cave. They were all amazed at the forest and declared it worth the trip in its own right. They were impressed with the entrance to Cauldron, as everyone is, of course. They have caved all over the world (just back from China two months ago) and said it was unique, in their experience. And that was before they went down!

I started down the first pitch in front, and we all gathered at the start of Bills Bypass, after photo time, naturally. I wanted Andrzej to see it before anyone started down. He is a stout, somewhat rotund man in his sixties, with back problems, and I was a little concerned what Bill would do to him. He seemed

happy to proceed, so I headed in first with the next couple of ropes.

Michal had the rope for the third pitch, so he rigged that and headed down. Unfortunately he missed the rebelay but that was no problem. I just put it in as I came down. Michal rigged the next couple of pitches and Ric rigged the bottom pitch, as some arm and leg length are useful getting the traverse rebelay rigged. We were all at the bottom after a couple of hours. Everything was going smoothly and they were all enjoying the trip immensely, as far as I could tell.

After lunch, and a poke around the chamber, we started out. Andrzej went up first, with me following. He waited at the top of each pitch until he saw me at the bottom, and then headed onwards. I never caught up with him. Even in the loving embrace of Bill. I obviously needn't have been concerned about his fitness or caving ability! Forty years of uninterrupted international caving trips and expeditions was showing.

The others all arrived at the top only 10 min or so, apart. It was thoroughly enjoyable, and inspiring, to cave with a couple in their fifties and sixties and their twenty-five year old son, who were all so efficient, capable, delightful, and worked so well together.

We left them at Maydena with the SUSS group, who had returned earlier than expected from their Growling Swallet trip.

REFERENCE

McKinnon, J. 2013. Cauldron Pot, 9 Feb. 13. *Speleo Spiel*, 395: 4.

Rigging Guide

Ric Tunney

January 2014

P1 Entrance Pitch – 41 m [~ 55 m rope]: Walk around lip of doline to broad ledge at cliff line beside waterfall. Belay with tape around tree on LHS of waterfall, with backup to upside down bolt underneath small ledge about 1.5 m above ground level. Rebelay off two bolts immediately above lip 8 m down, LHS of rock slab about 3 m off the fall line. (Use a maillon rapide on the lower of the two bolts as a standard size carabiner is a little too long in the spine and creates a bit of bad leverage on the bolt due to its proximity to the edge.) Rock here was clear when bolts were installed in 2005, but bolts were hidden under moss 2013; bolts are on smooth rock just before corner.) Rebelay off bolt at tributary point on projecting rock about 6 m further down. Rebelay off bolt LHS in corner about 10 m further down above final free-hang to bottom.

P2a First Cascade – 14 m [36 m rope for P2a & P2b if tape is used around natural]: Belay to the eyebolt on LHS, with backup to excellent natural above bolt.

P2b Second and Third Cascades – 2 m & 4 m: Two bolts on LHS.

P3 Chute Pitch – 15 m [22 m rope]: Belay on the eyebolt on LHS at top of pitch. Tie in to previous pitch rope if back-up desired. Rebelay on bolt RHS around corner 5 m down.

P4 Eleven Metre Pitch – 11 m [15 m rope]: Bolt on LHS 2 m back from lip. Rebelay on bolt on RHS 1 m past lip.

P5 Diagonal Pitch – 14 m [30 m rope will reach to P7]: Belay on eyebolt 2 m back from edge on LHS. Rebelay on bolt on LHS at lip. Second rebelay bolt in roof approx. 8 m further down to left gives freehang to bottom.

P6 Four Metre Cascade – 4 m: This can be easily free-climbed or a short rope can be belayed around the “extremely dangerous looking boulder” at the top of the climb. Or the rope from P5 can go down to P7.

P7 Bolt Traverse Pitch – 35 m [43 m rope]: Belay off eyebolt in floor on RHS. Descend and traverse around right hand wall; 5 m round and 3 m down (away from waterfall!) to two bolts. The top one is an old carrot and hanger with some tape - do not use. Rebelay from the bottom bolt, a n 8m m stainless Throughbolt with stainless hanger and a hero loop. [Leave hanger on bolt during de-rig.] Rebelay on bolt about 10 m further down at lip of free hang. Drop to bottom is not totally dry!

Pitch 8 Au Cheval Pitch – 5 m up, 15 m down [18 m rope]: Fixed 5 m rope *in situ* on up climb. Rig descent rope off same natural as fixed rope.

P9 Firehose Pitch – 15 m: Downstream. No t dry! Use naturals.

Notes: All directions are facing downstream; eyebolts are originals from early exploration; all other bolts are 8 x 90 mm Powers SS Throughbolts; rope lengths will just reach bottom, depending on size of loops and knots.

The cave was last de-rigged by a mainland group in January 2014. We had intended the hangers to be left in-situ. The tags for the locations were removed on the rigging trip with that intention.

However the de-rig party removed the hangers, contrary to instructions. Now the bolts have no markers or hangers. They may be a little difficult to locate in some instances.

IB-11 Midnight Hole

Petr Smejkal

7 January 2013

Party: Ross Anderson (WASG/CLinc), Milos Dvorak & Petr Smejkal.

I think it was a couple of months ago when Tony Venns advertised an invasion of some mainlanders, who were interested in caving at Ida Bay. I agreed to take them to Midnight Hole. Midnight Hole was my first caving trip in Tasmania with Ric and Janine and I had not been there since

then. I thought it would be good to visit again and try to find the entrance, this time just with the help of Alan's notes.

Milos Dvorak, an newcomer to Tasmania and the U TAS Chemistry Department, was also a member of the trip. So far Milos has been bus hawking at Mt. Anne, Collins Cap and around Mt. Wellington. He surprised me with his interest in caving and I thought that the trip to Midnight Hole would be a good introduction. A month before the Midnight Hole trip we did SRT practice so Milos would be up to the trip, except for the usual beginners hesitancy, Milos seemed ready to do some SRT in cave.

On 7 January 2014 Milos and I left Hobart and arrived in Francistown (where all the mainlanders were resting) at 8 am. I expected a group of three but the day before had resulted in some physical ailments that affected the health of two of the group. Ross, Milos and I were ready and keen to go to Midnight Hole, the remaining two of the party decided to go to Mystery Creek with Arthur.

We arrived at the car park at 9 am to find the entrance was not as hard as I expected. In summary, we lost our way just once or twice. We entered Midnight Hole and our way through was nice and smooth. After we got through the Matchbox Squeeze I tried to convince Milos and Ross to have a look in Expletive Hall but the water level at the start of Railway Tunnel discouraged us. We went to Mystery Creek instead to meet with Arthur and the others. We met approximately at 1 pm at the end of Skyline. After lunch, Ross went to do some 3D photos. Milos and I went back to Matchbox Squeeze where we turned into Railway Tunnel. I had never been in this part of Mystery Creek before and I found especially the rockfall at the Bohemian Chamber a bit confusing. I have to admit that it was even more confusing on the way back but that is another story. We had a short 5 minute look in Expletive Hall and then we left the cave. We met with Ross and the other cavers in front of the Mystery Creek entrance. Apparently, Milos and I got out of



Milos (right) and Ross, who did not look as though he had been caving.

the cave slightly more dirty than Ross (comparison shown in the figure). We returned to the car park from where Milos and I went back in Hobart. Arthur took the others for an afternoon trip in Hastings.

JF-2 Cauldron Pot

Revisiting a downstream climb

Janine McKinnon

12 January 2014

Party: Rolan Eberhard, Stefan Eberhard & Janine McKinnon.

Rolan and I were returning to attempt the climb that we had seen on our way out from the far downstream end of the Cauldron streamway last summer (McKinnon 2013). Stefan was visiting from Western Australia for a few weeks and decided to join us.

The cave had been rigged the previous week, and I had arranged for a visiting group of mainland cavers to have a jolly down there the following weekend... and to, by the way, de-rig as they came out (please). Another win-win; they get to do a great cave, and only de-rig, and we get to do an easy wander down and up a rigged cave. Lovely. I seem to be developing a knack for this sort of organising.

Ric had exited last on the previous trip and pulled the bottom section of the entrance rope back up, and tied it into the last belay. This is a good idea as the bundled rope tends to get jammed between the logs if left hanging. He also pulled all the rebelay loops for the streamway pitches that were in the water, up tight, so they didn't flap about and get abraded.

I started down the entrance pitch first, at round 10.30am. The plan was to meet again in the bottom chamber, and I just kept going, releasing the tied ropes as I went. The rope we had used on the small climb above the bottom pitch was actually the Au Cheval rope, so I replaced this with a short rope and tape as I passed. The water levels were significantly higher than the previous week and the bottom half of the cave was quite splashy. I was pleased I had worn my plastic suit. I reached the bottom after roughly an hour and waited for the others at the climb up to the Au Cheval pitch. They arrived about 10 minutes later.

We didn't stop for a break here but just rigged Au Cheval and headed down and into the low crawl at the bottom. It was smaller than I remembered; the consequence of a memory that seems to soften unpleasantities [*That's how she manages to live with Ric, obviously – Sub Ed.*]. Stefan was on the lookout for a small, reddish beetle that he had found a single specimen of in the cave in the past. Rolan and I were looking as we crawled through the mud, and hawk-eye Rolan found two, five metres past the end of the crawl. They were tiny. Really tiny. No more than a millimetre long. I would never have spotted them.

Stefan was happy. That was one objective for the day achieved. We continued on and soon arrived at the climb under the boulder. This was just as I remembered it, however it wasn't as scary this time. Familiarity lessens fear I suppose. Stefan recognised it as one he had attempted on a trip with Judy Clarke (sometime in the '90s?). He had only managed to climb the first steep slope (up about five metres) before the rain of boulders, rocks and dirt suggested that this wasn't the smartest idea, so they had abandoned it. We (Rolan), however, had come prepared this time with a belay rope, and rigging and bolting gear.

Lunch was hastily eaten as we prepared for Rolan to climb. I had originally been planning to belay him, but now that Stefan was here I thought that a better idea. He has much more counterbalancing weight than me. So Stefan belayed, Rolan climbed, and I ate more lunch.

Rolan put in a long trace around a boulder on the left about five metres up and then started traversing across the steep and unstable slope. At the other side he placed a tape around a large boulder as a rebelay and climbed up and around the boulders there. He was now about ten metres above us. The whole area was very unstable and despite his taking great care, and moving very slowly and deliberately, we experienced a fairly continuous rain of dirt and small rocks. I was worried one of the large boulders would come rushing down at us as they looked very precariously perched on loose dirt and stones.

He disappeared out of sight and was gone 5 minutes or more, and then reappeared to announce the disappointing news that he couldn't climb any further as he couldn't get a round the large, overhanging boulders. He detected no draught. All this effort to get here again and our hopes were dashed so quickly. Despite the lack of a positive outcome, at least another cave lead has been crossed off the list. Time to retreat.

Rolan retraced his steps, we packed up, and started out. It was still early (around 1 pm) and so we were in no rush, and wandered back up the streamway looking up high for other possible leads as we went. We didn't quite know what to do with all this spare time we had now. Tries never finish this early!

Rolan climbed up at one likely spot, and explored ten metres up the rift before being unable to climb higher. The rift continued upwards. Another promising upwards lead was spotted by the ever observant Rolan in the small chamber just before the crawl. Whilst he climbed up I went to look at a draughting hole that Stefan had found on the opposite side of the chamber that was too small for him to fit through. I squeezed through and found myself on a shelf above the passage we had just returned from. I was unable to climb down though. I returned to the chamber as Rolan re-appeared. He had climbed some tens of metres upwards and found himself looking up an aven. He thought it might parallel the final pitch

in the main cave. This is worth a look, even though it appears it will just join two known parts of the cave.

With no other objectives to complete we decided we may as well head for home. After confirming with Stefan and Rolan that they would exit together, and pull the ropes tight again, I started up Au Cheval pitch, and out of the cave alone. I really enjoyed that. I don't feel the psychological pressure to keep up with anyone else. I didn't see them again until they joined me at the surface about 40 minutes after I got out at 4.30 pm. It was a warm, sunny afternoon. We had a leisurely beer and chat back at the car before heading home after a thoroughly enjoyable day's caving.

REFERENCE

McKinnon, J. 2013. Cauldron Pot, 9 Feb. 13. *Speleo Spiel*, 395: 4.

Postscript: Despite telling one of the visiting mainlanders several times that the hangers were to be left in-situ, AND sending a n e m a i l to all the members of the d e-rig party outlining what was to be done, including leaving the hangers in place, they removed the hangers on the d e-rig. We had removed the tags on our trip as they were no longer needed (with the hangers staying in the cave). Now the bolts have no hangers, or place markers. They may be a bit difficult to find for the next party.

JF-8 Junee Resurgence Permanent line replacement

Janine McKinnon

14 January 2014

Divers: Janine McKinnon, Ken Murray & Michael Packer (Pax).

Support: Peter Freeman & Ric Tunney.

The permanent line that runs through the first sump of JF-8 was laid by TCC in 1981 and 1982, over many dives. It has certainly stood the test of time. The resurgence takes extremely high flow and fierce currents for much of the year and it is a testament to how well they did the job that the line has remained intact and taut for three decades.

However all things decay with time, and this line reached the end of its useful life when, last summer, a section broke whilst we were in the cave (McKinnon 2013). This meant the whole line was now no longer trustworthy and needed replacing. Summer came to an end before I got the job planned.

So, with summer here, line purchased, and plan for how to re-line determined, it was all go. I had expected to have to do this job alone but fortunately Ken was visiting and offered to help, and Pax bounced with enthusiasm (literally) when I mentioned it and asked if he was interested in being involved. It was looking like a lot less solitary task than I had thought.

I cut 100 m from the 400 m roll of line, and put that aside. I then found an old travel bag large enough to fit the spool of line still coiled as I had bought it. I had decided to go with the "Telstra" 7 mm polypropylene line (called that because Telstra use it to pull cables). Several cave divers who have lined sumps recommended it as the line they use. It is quite cheap (at

\$65 for 400 m spool), compared to \$143 per 100 m roll of 8 mm rope that was the alternative I had found.

This is significantly thinner than the current line (which looks like 11 mm rope) so I just hope it has reasonable longevity and that I have made the right decision using it. Mind you, the old rope is far thicker than any permanent line I have seen in a cave.

Ric and I met up with Pax at Jackman & McCross and he jumped into our car. We managed to fit his diving gear in too, which I thought was a bit stunning as I usually fill the car with my stuff alone. We met Ken and Peter at the Maydena shop at 9 am and convoyed to the car park.

It took about an hour to get us divers, and all the gear, to the beach near the sump. The flow was higher than usual summer conditions and I decided to start the dive from the end of the



J. McKinnon

A small pile of gear.



M. Packer

JF-8 For Your Eyes Only.

beach, not the usual mid-beach launching off spot. This made the swim to the start of the sump much shorter. High water is needed to get across the rocks from there though.

Ric and Peter headed out to the warmth and sunshine as soon as their sherpaing job was finished. They would return to help bring gear out when we reappeared at the cars. We had discussed our plan over lunch at our place on Saturday. We would follow the old line and lay the new one along the same course, using the same tie-offs where possible. Why tamper with a successful job?

Pax had been very keen to head in first with the bag of line. As a very good diver and generally all-round practical person (he is an engineer, enough said) I thought he would probably do a better job laying the line than I. So he was the lead diver. Ken was to follow and tidy up any loose bits, and put cable ties where needed. I was following last to check how it all looked, and fix any bits that looked wrong.

I gave them a 10 minute head start and started in, checking the new line, and expecting to run into Ken before half way. I just kept swimming and swimming. The line was lying nicely and tied off to the old line with cable ties at intervals. This is temporary until the old line is removed on a later trip. I caught Ken just before the end of the sump. Pax was already out into For Your Eyes Only (FYEO) chamber. The job had been achieved so much faster than I had expected.

Pax had carried in camera gear (I had his tripod) and Ken and I had Go Pros, so a pleasant hour or so was spent in photography

in the chamber. For the return, I started out first and inspected the line again as I went, mainly looking at placement and tautness. All looked good. I will check again on the old line removal trip. The tie-offs need closer inspection.

I arrived back at the car three and a half hours after starting the exercise. It took another half hour to get all the gear back to the cars – longer for Pax as he didn't have a personal Sherpa like Ken and I.

It was a hot afternoon, with lots of flies and the odd passing tourist. After a leisurely lunch we all moved up to the KD car park and walked in to Cauldron Pot, so Ken and Peter knew how to get there for the de-rig trip they were joining a few days later.

Note: I was using 2 x 7 l tanks (Ken had my 10.5 l tanks). The flow was strong enough to require reasonable effort on the swim in (I have done it in higher flow, but with the bigger tanks). I used 70 bar from each tank and just reached the end of the sump with less than 10 bar to spare on thirds on each tank. I used 10 bar total from each tank on the trip out. Any future divers should not underestimate how high air consumption can be in this sump when the flow is up.

REFERENCE

McKinnon, J. 2013. Junee Cave, 16-17 Feb. 13. *Speleo Spiel*, 395: 6.

JF-99 The Chairman

Janine McKinnon

16 January 2014

Party: Peter Freeman, Janine McKinnon, Ken Murrey & Ric Tunney.

Ken and Peter were down here for a couple of weeks caving holiday. We suggested that a trip down the entrance pitch of The Chairman would be a pleasant, easy day. They were keen to go to the bottom but, having been there several times in years gone by, I was happy to pass on that bit of the trip.

They had a pile of ropes they had obtained from the gear store for various trips they planned during their stay at Maydena, where they were based for the fortnight. We all duly arrived at the Maydena rendezvous and convoyed to the trail head, donned packs, and started the walk in along the Threefortyone track. I did think their packs looked small to fit all the rope, but it was only a passing thought and I said nothing (the sharp observers amongst you may get a hint of where this tale is going).

The track is in surprisingly good condition for the little use it has had in recent years, and only a little light clearing and re-taping was needed to start it up. This did take a bit of time though and we finally arrived at the cave 1 hr 10 minutes after starting.

It was a warm, sunny day and the pit looked inviting. We trogged up and I go to our rigging gear out and set up the

approach line. I then turned to Ken and asked for the 97 m rope that they had, so I could start rigging the pitch. The look on his face got the message across instantly, but there was a five second pause before he uttered those dreaded words “but I thought you were bringing the rope for the entrance pitch – we have the others”.

“No, you have all the remaining long ropes in the gear store (Cauldron was already rigged). We told you to bring the ropes”. Oops ... communications error. A rethink, and we decided to try and get down the entrance on the ropes they had bought for the lower pitches. It might just work.

Spoiler alert: Missed it by T H A T much (let's see who remembers their sitcoms of the '60s).

Ric started down first and managed to rig to the third rebelay without a knot in mid-drop. This was well done, I thought. I came next and hung at the second re-belay whilst he rigged past the third, and looked down, and saw rope swinging in the breeze (so to speak). Guesstimate: 10 m too short.

So that was a short caving trip for us. Even shorter for Peter, who decided not to go down at all, even to see the view. Ken went down and was the de-rig guy. Meanwhile, we headed for home, and the other two took their time checking out Rift Cave entrance and other sights along the way. I can't remember when I last had such a short caving day. Next time I think someone's pack looks too small for the gear I expect them to have I might say something.

JF-237 Niggly Cave

Klockerfest day 2 – To seek the deep

Andreas Klocker

19 January 2014

Party: Rolan Eberhard Andreas Klocker & Petr Smejkal.

Quite a few months ago I promised Rolan to help finish off the re-survey of Niggly, arguably one of the most impressive caves in the June-Florentine, and according to some, the deepest. According to some others Tachycardia holds this title. If one would take a slightly more scientific approach than a single number, add an error bar and think about cave tag heights, one could probably not distinguish the depth of those two caves, but how would we be entertained if we wouldn't be able to fill so many pages of the *Spiel* with those great arguments between Alan and Rolan? – we would be bored to death!

So off we went. Rolan, Petr and I met at Maydena this lovely sunny Sunday morning (while the other members of STC's Northern Branch enjoyed a trip into Cauldron Pot) to finish off the survey of the Mother of God Passage (luckily Rolan and Petr have surveyed through the rockpile leading to Mother of God the previous trip, which would have been less than pleasant); this is definitely one of the most impressive passages I've seen, and no matter what the final survey shows for depth, Niggly has style, whereas Tachycardia (from what I have heard – hopefully I'll never hear it in there) is probably one of the deepest choss piles, second only to Udensala (second once again ...).

Getting down the cave to where Rolan and Petr left their last survey marker went quickly and smoothly, helped by the fact that we all knew the cave from previous visits. And as usual, the big pitch didn't get shorter, only my Stop got skinnier again (luckily I didn't notice how skinny while in the cave). After crawling through the more unpleasant rockpile we got the survey gear out, and to my surprise Rolan didn't have a DistoX ... but if I had brought Alan's DistoX, which I was looking after at the time, and we would have surveyed Australia's deepest cave using it to push Tachycardia off its throne. I would hear Alan's ranting until the end of my life. And who wants that?

Surveying to the end of the cave (current end that is, until Dickon and I toughen up a bit and push harder) went quickly with long survey legs through big tunnel, and a final survey shot to the absolute deepest point! After a quick food break we headed back. Rolan started out with a head start since, now being 50 years of age, he is officially too old to tandem prusik. Petr and I then followed (after some confusion in the rockpile) and tandem prusiked up the big pitch. It was the first time for Petr to tandem prusik, and being the top person on the rope, with all that rope tension between his legs, I think his mind for most of the trip up was on his future family planning.

Same as every time I'm in that cave, the way up never seems to end, and once I exited the cave I felt as though I had been run over by a log truck. Maybe at some point in my life I'll get fitter, get rid of my beer muscle, and finish a Niggly trip in greater style. I got back to Camp Grolwing with a dinner waiting for me, cooked by the others who were all already asleep. Rolan and Petr drove back to Hobart.

June–Florentine

Klockerfest day 3 – A surface day

Nat Brennan (modified by Andreas Klocker)

20 January 2014

Party: Nat Brennan, Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz & Andreas Klocker.

The previous day had been enough caving for everyone (especially Andreas) to warrant a surface day. So Andreas, Mark, Laure and Nat set about to check some hole Alan found near Constitution Hole and tape the way up to Warhol ready for the next day's push. The hole had (in order) Laure, Nat and Mark try to squeeze down into it. It was very committing with minimal movement of the arms on the way back up, which set back Laure and Nat. Mark however, who geared up in a combination of Nat's and Laure's gear, cleared some dirt and rock to make the hole slightly bigger, and committed. It went down 5 m (?) then petered out. This was lucky since just as Mark was finishing the sketch he knocked a 2 m long log down which fell, end straight down, into the entrance, plugging it up completely. The new addition was then added to the sketch map of course. (Not sure if there is a time requirement for something to be in place for it to qualify for being in a survey map as the log will eventually rot). The cave was then tagged as JF-616.

Once that was tied up and it was established there were no other entrances in the area, we started the slog up the hill to Warhol, Nat flagging as we went. There may be a better, more



Nat at Camp Growling

direct route, but this one worked well. It turns off at the Constitution Hole track and then winds up the hill. Wherrets Swallet was the next item on the to-do list with Andreas being sure there is an entrance that of course goes straight into the master cave. Laure managed to find an SRT-free way down and Andreas and Nat helped her poke around the bottom in a desperate search for a way on. Laure went down a horrible grotty tight rock pile and after she surfaced sweaty, and puffing we gave up hope and headed up. Waking Mark from his nap, we trekked back to camp after a good productive day.

JF-392 Warhol

Klockerfest day 4 – Warhol rigging

Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz

21 January 2014

Party: Nat Brennan, Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz, Andreas Klocker & Ken Murrey.

After a pleasant summer day in the forest, Northern Branch expedition Day 4 (i.e. Tuesday) was spent rigging the previously known part of Warhol.

Ken walks in bright and early at 8 am to Camp Growling, only to find the three mainlanders and adopted Tasmanian more worried about the temperature of the milk for muesli than the caving preparation for the day. A couple of hours later, we find ourselves geared up and at the entrance of Warhol. As I made the request of rigging some of the cave, I head in first, abseiling off a very redundant tree plus natural anchor that would progressively get tripped off its backups during the course of the expedition as more slings/biners/ropes were needed in the lower parts of the cave. I proceed to rig the shorter second pitch with the end of the entrance rope. Mark and I, feeling like getting covered in mud, explore a few side passages at that level: inflows where no leads are found. Two convenient natural anchors are used by Ken and Nat to rig the third pitch, dropping in a narrow elongated chamber that can be followed for a few tens of meters. In a few places, small inflows appear that might be climbed, without much prospect of them leading anywhere. While some of us wander around, Mark proceeds in rigging the fourth pitch off a

upside-down natural (the sling would pop out as soon as the tension was off the rope, held only by a chockstone of small size and crumbling appearance). According to marks in the mud, that is obviously how it was done before so we accept our fate and watch the anchor carefully as everyone gets down the pitch. This pitch leads in a rift-like chamber that we climb down on fragile knobs to the top of the fifth pitch.

A very strong breeze is felt at the squeeze that marks the pitch head. Getting confused about pitch orders and previously reported leads, Mark goes down looking around for an alternative way on. In the process of placing a redirect, he climbs on a rubble-covered ledge on the left hand side, 3 m below the top of the pitch. Feeling confident, he disconnects



Nat in JF-392.

from the rope and follows a horizontal meander traversing over some 30 m drops. During that time, I run a quick there-and-back to the surface to bring down missing equipment. A quite happy Mark comes back to a slightly less happy and more hypothermic support group that thinks only about warm spaghetti and pesto at that point.

The fifth pitch is dropped to the bottom and several possibilities are looked at to approach the final pitch. Mark and I climb down, bridging across some drops; Andreas and Ken rig the original sixth pitch through a rift. A blue and white

beanie is spotted on the floor. Arriving at the top of the last pitch, we realise that the appropriate drill bits (who wants to tag a cave in a cave?) have been left at the Squezy Pitch head. Surprisingly, no one feels like rigging the single spit left in place by the first explorers. Out of energy and gummibears, we head up the pitches swiftly as we are leaving most packs behind. The remaining energy is spent watching the fourth pitch upside-down anchor. We bushwalk back to Camp Growling to cook some pasta and get the gear reasonably clean ready to bottom the cave next day.

JF-392 Warhol

Klockerfest day 5

Mark Euston

22 January 2014

Party: Nat Brennan, Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz, Andreas Klocker & Ken Murrey.

After the previous day's hilarity of bouncing the cave repeatedly to get the gear we needed, we decided to have a more boring day and come prepared. So with about five 8 mm drill bits strategically scattered across different rigging pouches and gear bags, we went in to continue our epic mission to bottom a 130 m deep cave. We entered the cave a bit before 11 am, having had a nice sleep in until about 9:30 am.

I went down first with the drill to put in a rebelay on Squezy Pitch. The expansion bolt didn't bite for a few turns so it pulled out about 1/3 of its length, but it seems pretty solid. It's in a position where you could continue the pitch straight down and bypass the climbs (which are a bit sketchy), but you would probably want another rebelay just past the hole in the floor that you would abseil through.

Laure wanted to get more experience bolting and rigging, so I waited for her at the top of the 19 m pitch, which is the final pitch on the old survey. Being the control freak that I am (and wanting to get more experience myself) a pottered about with the hammer looking for good spots to place the bolts. Laure was soon there and we decided on an approach/backup line in the meander (about 4 m from the pitch head) and a Y-hang at the pitch head. Laure managed to drop the protective foam from my drill, but she was able to retrieve it when she abseiled down.

Andreas and Nat followed Laure down and set about looking for leads. I came down to the news that there was absolutely no way on in the floor. Water was coming in but it was going between cal cited boulders with barely a cat-sized space between them.

The old map had indicated leads roughly at the height of the pitch head so we started scrambling up. Ken was abseiling down and we got him to look across but he couldn't see anything. Nat and I pushed Andreas up a slimy mud climb where he reported seeing footprints but no good leads. There was a tall meander but it was getting smaller and would need to be bolted, but it didn't look promising enough to be worth it.

We started back out and de-rigged the 19 m pitch. I was up first and decided that I wanted to have another look at the roof meander near the top of Squezy Pitch. I got the others to take cover whilst I did the traverse, which I now decided was actually pretty bloody scary, in an awkwardly hunched over if-this-foothold-breaks-you're-dead kind of way. When I was across I yelled out to the others that they were safe, thinking that they'd start ascending, but I didn't communicate that very well. I continued along the meander trying to count how many metres I'd travelled before I gave up and decided that I was clear of the known cave by at least 20 m. I also paid more attention at the pitch head and noticed a breeze, so I was pretty confident that I'd found a way on.

I returned to find the others still at the bottom getting quite cold. I apologised and we all headed out. We were out of the cave at 5 pm and had enough time to clean our gear in Garths Creek.

JF-392 Warhol:

Klockerfest day 8 – A way on

Mark Euston

25 January 2014

Party: Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz & Dickon Morris.

Mark, Laure and Dickon went to push the going lead in Warhol. Andreas and Liz stuck to their plan of photographing in Growling. Dave and Nat were pussies so they went to Growling, too. It was the first day of the middle section of Klockerfest 2014 - the Australia Day long-weekend. Laure and I got acquainted with Dickon "I don't speed on the Midland Highway because it's not worth getting a speeding fine, but I'll happily do 170 km/h on a narrow road with lots of wildlife and big trees in a total shitbox of a car with two passengers that I've

only just met" Morris on the drive there - it was not a good first impression [*Good first impressions are not Dickon's strong suit – Sub-Ed.*].

It was a late-ish start due to the drive in and we left camp a bit before midday. I went down first to de-rig the rebelay from Squezy Pitch and pull that rope back up to be used as a traverse line to get across to the ledge and for the sketchy traverse just after it. Laure and Dickon followed and surveyed to the top of Squezy Pitch. The undescended pitch has a narrow meander for about 3 m leading up to it. I went in with bolting hammer and spent about 10 minutes flattening out spots to bolt. I knew it would be a tight fit with the drill, so I flattened about five spots just to be sure before coming back out for the drill. The drill wouldn't fit for my preferred option, so I went for the backup plan, which also didn't fit. Dickon and Laure turned up a tt his point and made themselves comfortable, with Dickon eventually falling asleep.

After an hour of struggling in and out of the meander looking for somewhere to bolt, I managed to get two bolts at about head height on the right hand wall. A redirect on the floor on the left hand side prevented any rub and we were ready to drop the pitch. Descending through the squeeze was pretty straight forward and then there were enough footholds to put the redirect in once your head had cleared the squeeze. I descended 3 m onto a two person ledge and placed a rebelay. I could now see that the pitch was opening up into a fairly big chamber. I descended down another 15 m to a 3 x 5 m ledge with a few large boulders on it. I looked over the edge to see another 20-30 m to the bottom so I called out for another rope and Dickon headed back to the top of the Squeazy Pitch where Ken's rope from the 19 m pitch had been left.

I disconnected so that Laure could come down and she bolted the second rebelay. When the rope arrived she rigged it and was the first one down. Dickon followed and they reported that the large chamber takes a small amount of water, which flows down a 1 m wide meander for about 10 m before hitting a 10 m pitch. The only rope we had nearby was at the entrance which is one of two backups for the entrance pitch. Dickon went back to scavenge that rope while Laure and I went back to the Squeazy Pitch to continue the survey. We used the bolts on the big pitch as stations (using forward and back legs to avoid

disturbing the compass, of course) and it added up to a 40 m pitch. I call it The 30-Year Pitch as it had to wait 30 years since the original exploration to be found. No one else likes this name, but I found it so you can all get stuffed [*spoken like a true protégé* – Ed.].

Dickon gets the rope from the surface and is back and down the pitch by the time we reach it with the survey. He does about the worst rig imaginable with one bolt pulling out 1/3 of the way and the other over halfway and one side of the Y-hang is rubbing. He blames the rock - I call it Sketchy POM Pitch and point out the perfectly placed chockstone 2 m up, but our sling is too short to fit around it so we don't bother re-rigging.

The pitch goes back into a meander which descends a bit and then has an impassable (but short) squeeze before what looks like a bigger and clean washed section of meander that has good airflow and a constant trickle of water. We can't go any further but we're pretty sure that it's going, so we decide to come back the next day and try to widen the squeeze.

We start heading out at 7:30 pm and get out of the cave after dark. We return to camp to find the others had only got out about 30 minutes before us and Laure quickly takes charge of the cooking, which had been going at a Nat pace until then.

JF-392 Warhol:

Klockerfest day 9 – 'Straya day discoveries, fuckin' oath

Dickon Morris

26 January 2014

Party: Nat Brennan, Mark Euston & Dickon Morris.

On my first trip into Warhol up on my arrival in the Juneeflorentine we had dropped a 40 m shaft at the end of the fossil meander that had been discovered a few days previously. Or more precisely Laure and I had listened to Mark whinging for over an hour about how tight and awkward the pitch head was to bolt. We found continuing passage at the bottom leading to an 8 m drop that was christened 'Sketchy POM Pitch' by one of the ever supportive felons (Mark Euston in this case) that I for some reason choose to cave with. A very tight rift led on and we decided to leave that for the next day.

On 26 January it is very un-Australian to do anything other than consume enough ethanol to get a car across the Nullarbor and in intimidate/beat-up/sink the boat of a nobody that stirs the xenophobia that lies within every true Aussie. Fortunately I am not Australian, have no cultural commitments on that day and can do what I like. Mark Euston and Nat Brennan, who joined me on that day's trip, do not have that 'get out of jail free' card and should probably have their passports revoked. In fact I think I'll write a letter to the esteemed Tony Abbott notifying him of their infraction.

We progressed quickly to the final rift. I enthusiastically got stuck in and with surprising ease managed to find a way through. It was tight but certainly not as tight as I had anticipated. A short section of easy crawling and an awkward squeeze led to a junction with a inlet where the passage appeared to widen. Having pushed plenty of virgin passage in my time I offered the lead to Nat who, being a mainland caver, I assume still feels immense excitement when finding chambers the size of a phone booth.

The passage progressed quite pleasantly for a little over 10 m before a black space was visible ahead. At this point I became a little over-excited and then very disappointed when the passage dropped a couple of metres into an avenc chamber which closed down significantly on the far side to a tight muddy passage. A passage typical of many gritty, no-hope holes from my home caving area of the Mendip Hills. Its only redeeming feature was the draught that continued to blast through.

Clearly unhappy to be a Caucasian now coated with brown mud on Australia Day, Nat raced through the miserable section with me hard on her heels. A very awkward and protracted squeeze followed which Nat slipped gracefully (if such a term is ever appropriate in the sport of caving) through and I grunted my way through, lubricated by frequent expletives relating to the female anatomy. I immediately the passage opened up on a ledge above a short pitch.

I don't recall the train of typically mindless yet slightly educated conversation that led to the selection of names but it was agreed that those that we settled on were quite brilliant. The nasty meander was christened 'Tony Abbott' allowing us to curse a name as we hauled tackle through the passage that contains slightly less shit than its brainless, racist, uneducated namesake [*Let's not forget that Mr Abbott is a Rhodes Scholar and owes much of his education to the Mother Country* – Sub-Ed.]. The pitch that ends the torment was named 'Vote of No Confidence'.

It was possible to free climb 'Vote of No Confidence' which led to 50 m of pleasant, draughting and expanding stream passage leading to another pitch. This was only partially descended off a very dodgy chockstone and, feeling somewhat cold and miserable after our experiences with Tony, we decided to exit, leaving the survey for next time. Phil Rowsell Jr's (Alan Jackson for those unaware of the similarity of those two personalities) bark is worse than his bite when it comes to slacking surveyors. In any case I wanted to drink at least one beer on 'Straya day'.

JF-463 Constitution Hole

Invasion Day

Alan Jackson

26 January 2014

Party: Peter Freeman, Alan Jackson & Ken Murrey.

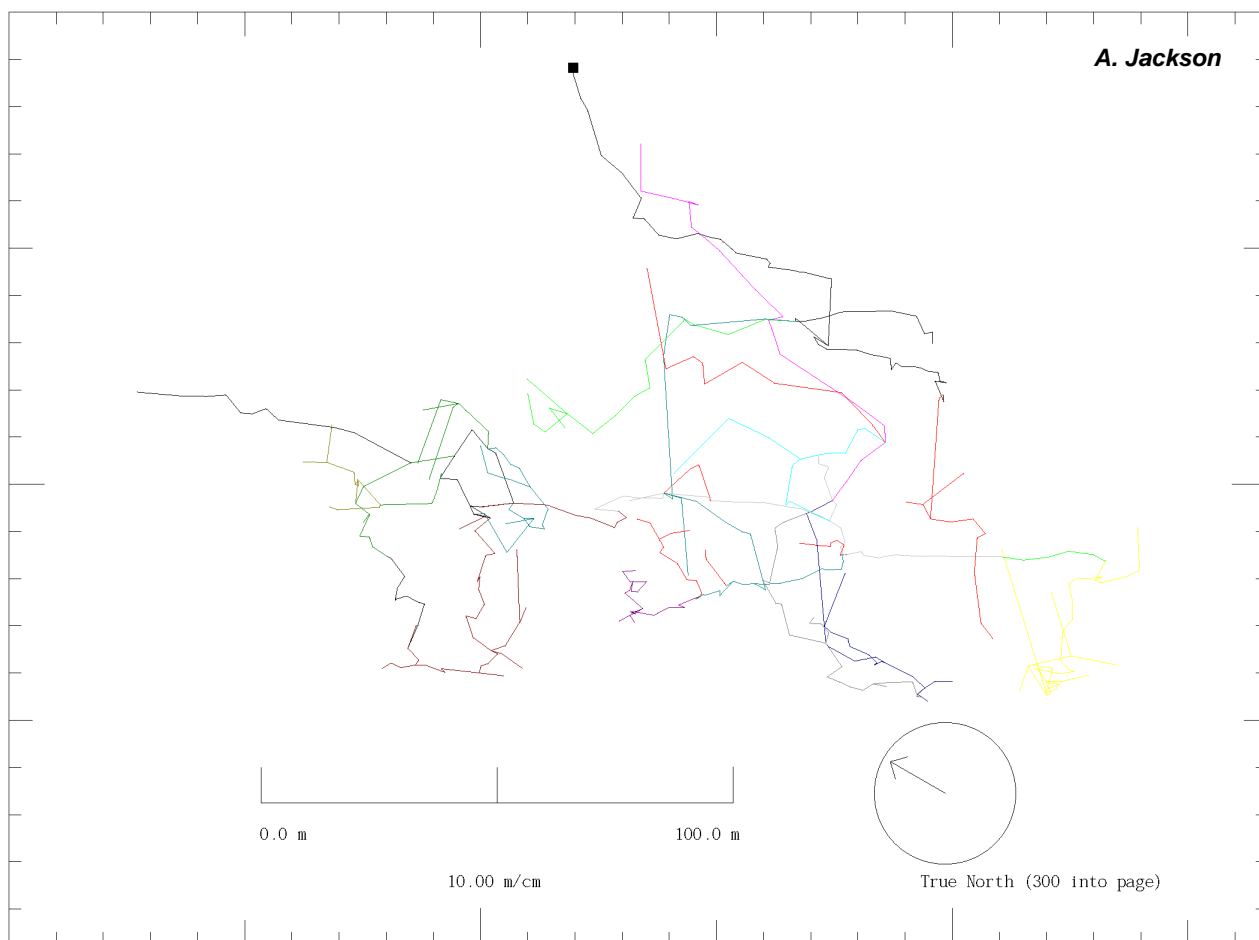
Constitution Hole is proving to be a rather tedious exercise in cave exploration, so far yielding a complex web of interconnecting passage crammed into a relatively small space. Various bits and pieces still require a better look and a survey so yet another trip has been completed in the vain hope of ticking off all the jobs. I was hoping to get all the bits below Hang Glider Pitch done today so the rope could be pulled up once and for all.

There are several small loops, climbs, drops etc. around Hang Glider Chamber that could be done if sufficient enthusiasm could be mustered but the only one I really had on my mind was the likely connection between station XX101 and XX75 at the north-west end of the cave. Another team, earlier in 2013, claimed to have checked this and confirmed the connection but had not surveyed it. So we dumped packs and SRT gear at the bottom of Hang Glider and headed up North by North-West to the climb up in rockfall at station XX44, scrambled up and over to the big junction at XX95 and turned left. We wound down through the rockfall to XX101 and then slid into the

muddy depths below. Footprints beyond where I'd originally turned around suggested that others had indeed checked this area but they ran out before I did a final climb down into a small chamber overlooking a further downclimb with a pink tape poking out of the mud – XX75. 32 m of mostly vertical surveying connected XX75 with XX101 and we placed a tick in that box. There are myriad ways on in this area and they've hardly been pushed hard, but they're mostly covered in inches of sticky mud and should be left for the next generation.

This had been the only job I'd originally planned for this end of the cave but on the way in I'd noticed a sketchy climb into higher passage heading north back in the lofty chamber above the muddy rockfall dungeons we'd just surveyed. It was worth a look so I climbed about 8 m (the first 4 m was very dodgy but the top 4 m was easy) and pursued 50 m of passage to no conclusion. Returning to the others I convinced Ken to join me for some surveying, rigging the 5 m 'just in case' tape I'd stuffed down my trowsuit on the bottom section of the climb for Ken.

The passage was 1–3 m wide and generally 2–3 m high with solid bedrock walls but large blocky floor. Everything was encrusted with popcorn and other crusty bits. The passage ascended gently and then split into an upper and lower level – the lower level was looked at but not surveyed, crapping out after 10 m). The upper level continued, then narrowed off at a junction. The northward passage continued on up, which Ken



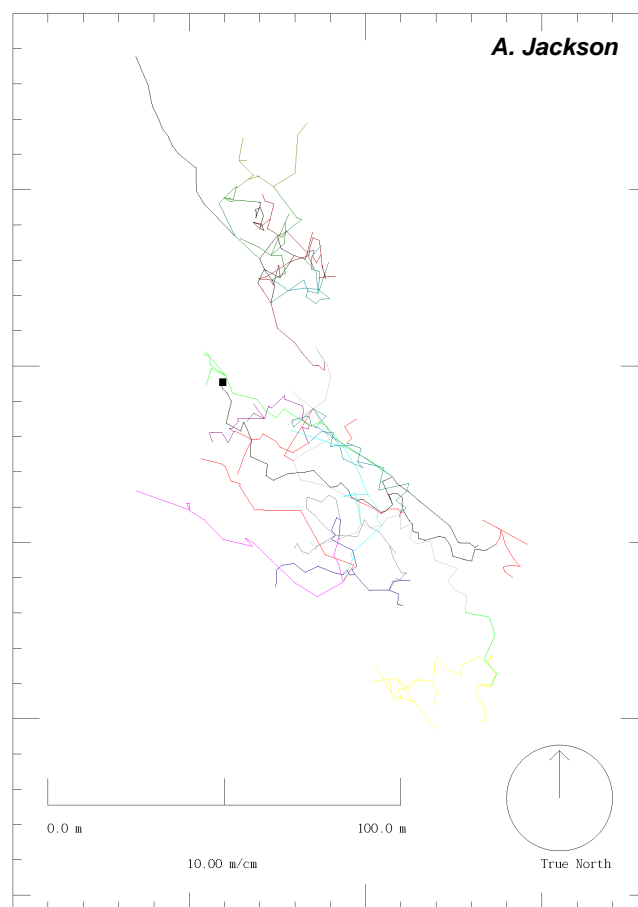
Profile view of JF-463 Constitution Hole survey network.

investigated while I checked the passage on the right, which curved back to the south-east for a few metres before the floor dropped away into a narrow climb/pitch of some description. Ken returned to report continuing passage beyond a couple of small breakdown chambers. With Peter sitting back further getting cold I decided to call the survey and leave it for another day. I was toying with calling this passage Invasion Day but settled on Dumb Drunk and Racist instead.

Getting back down the climb without the handline would have been very difficult. We left the black tape in place for the next trip but the whole ~ 8–10 m drop should really have a properly rigged rope for subsequent trips. We collected Peter and made for Hang Glider. Sending Peter and Ken on their way, I had a rummage around the chamber, investigating a few routes and passages I hadn't seen before but considered none of them worth the effort of surveying – the line plot is confusing enough already in this area without more bloody overlapping stuff.

Sections of the cave had been rigged for over twelve months and some ropes had seen a lot of traffic so I figured it was time to get the gear out. Also, it seemed unlikely that a return trip would be achieved anytime soon, at least not with people generally getting sick of this cave, the only cavers showing any interest in the Junee-Florentine being intermittent mainlanders (who were now well and truly focused on shinier prospects in Warhol) and me tied up with the Kubla survey and Vietnam until May. So the cave is now derigged. The only gear left in the cave are the bolt hangers on pitches 1, 2 and 3 (Hang Glider), the black tape on the climb into Dumb Drunk and Racist and the dropped rigging tape in Just Out of Reach (which Nat and co still need to go and retrieve for me!).

We collected a paltry 97.5 m of data, bringing the cave total to ~ 2,450 m. I've provided some line plots (plan and section) of the cave so far, just to prove what a nightmare drawing the survey is going to be; it's a mess and will only get worse.



Plan view of JF-463 Constitution Hole survey network.

JF-36 Growling Swallet

Klockerfest days 8 and 10

Liz Rogers

25 and 27 January 2014

Party: Nat Brennan, Andreas Klocker, David Taberner & Liz Rogers.

I arrived from Melbourne to discover the motley crew of interstate visitors had had a productive week in the Junee-Florentine caves. More importantly, they had completed the food shop and established camp above the entrance to Growling Swallet. A comfortable start on Saturday morning saw us back at Growling Swallet with no need to stop along the way or set up tents – no excuses for hanging around up top.

With the other half of the group heading off to Warhol, the aim for our team was partly finding to support Andreas's later intention to drag dive gear to Dreamtime. We supported this by diligently investigating most of the leads along the way, something I would not want to do with 30 kg of dive gear on board.



Growling streamway.



Andreas in Herpes III.

The secondary mission (for everyone else) and primary mission (for me) was photography. I was especially interested in getting some shots of the waterfalls, even in the low water conditions we found. This was hampered towards the end of the cave as we progressively decided this was the end, we weren't going to find the end, ooo, what about over here...? and chased Andreas across the boulders and down climbs. Still, we managed a few shots on the way, including some fun on the way back through Herpes III as Andreas obligingly lay down in the mud and pulled various expressions on request.

After a sunny Sunday spent on the Zcaves, Andreas, David and I returned to Grouling on Monday with the express intention of going not very far, and taking many more pictures. This was my first weekend of caving photography with a new toy giving me the ability to get a lot of my flashes off the

camera. I also took advantage of my underwater video lights to light the waterfalls. Andreas and David were very patient with various tripod-rearrangements and shouted-over-the-waterfall instructions and we got some good shots.

Most importantly all of the photo gear survived the trip. My little orange pelican case picked up many more scratches, but the camera inside was clean and dry. The advantage of taking underwater gear caving is you can put it underwater in the cave, and not have to stress about your friends/models/victims dropping something expensive in something wet. Many thanks to David, Andreas and Nat for all photographic assistance rendered, and Laure, Mark and Dickon for tent-pitching, shopping cooking and strobe-washing ... I'm looking forward to the next trip.

Southwest Tasmania

Klockerfest day 11 – Tourist surface excursion

Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz

28 January 2014

Party: Nat Brennan, Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz & Dickon Morris.

Dickon, Mark, Nat and Laure decided to spend the day enjoying the sun with a trip to see Lake Pedder and the SW wilderness. The only flaw to that plan was a longer-than-you-would-want-it commute in the Dickon-mobile. As scary as it sounds, we made it alive to Strathgordon at around 2 pm and met a local guide who gave us info about nice day walks we could do in the area. As Nat had climbed Mt Anne the week before, we set off for Mt Sprent. A little more than 2 hours later, we enjoyed 360° views from the summit: the Western Arthurs, the shimmering ocean, Frenchmans Cap up north, Mt Field and Mt Anne in the distance. Salami and gummibears were had. Nat was so kind as to carry the pack while I

ecstatically ran down the scrub-free part of the trail. Some swimming and sunbathing was enjoyed at Bilys Beach amongst obnoxious French bikers. The Dickon-mobile and its occupants made it back to Hobart only to find that no one there sells beer on a public holiday.



Klockerfester, quartzite and a view of Tasmania's Southwest from Mt Sprent.

JF-392 Warhol

Klockerfest day 12 – Connecting with JF-382 Dissidence

Mark Euston

29 January 2014

Party: Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz, Andreas Klocker & Dickon Morris.

It was the first day of part 3 of Klockerfest 2014. Nat, Liz and Dave had flown out, leaving Laure, Andreas, Dickon and I to have a n e a s y d a y i n H o b a r t a n d m e n t a l l y p r e p a r e f o r T o n y A b b o t t. Laure and Andreas had not met Tony Abbott and we weren't sure if Andreas would fit.

Laure and I went first to start surveying, whilst Dickon and Andreas attempted to further enlarge Tony Abbotts Narrow Mind. Surveying Tony Abbotts Narrow Mind was about as miserable as you'd expect due to the narrowness and slimy mud. I went first with the book and no gloves as I was just going to get my hands muddier if I kept putting gloves on and off. There were usually enough big parts for me to turn around or get my body out of the way so that Laure could shoot to the station. We got to the aven fairly easily and set up a marked cairn to begin the survey of Tony Abbotts Colon (a tighter and slimier part), which we were able to get in just two legs. I went through the final dogleg squeeze and was directing the laser to a point from where you could see on when the DistoX batteries ran out. Bugger! We only needed two more shots to at least get through the horrible part and set up a permanent station.

I came back and we retreated to the aven to decide on our next move. Andreas and Dickon were through by this point to hear the bad news and unfortunately none of us knew how to calibrate a DistoX. Laure and I re-shot some legs and the compass matched up quite accurately. We also put the book down to give us some right angles and took north, east, south and west shots. From memory they were all within a degree except west which was out by a few degrees. We decided to carry on anyway, reasoning that a suspect survey was better than no survey.

Dickon found a way over the final squeeze that Andreas could also get through, whilst Laure and I continued the survey. Dickon then rigged the downclimb as a pitch (Vote of No Confidence) to make coming back up easier. We all kitted-up here and our harnesses got liberally coated in slime from the 10 cm pit of mud that fills Tony Abbotts Anus. The others set up a permanent station and I shot down to it, then Andreas and Dickon took over the survey. They surveyed upstream in what is now called Stop The Boats Streamway, whilst Laure and I headed down to re-rig the 10 m pitch.

On the previous visit with Dickon, Nat and I, we'd just slung a boulder, but the boulder was a bit dodgy and it was an awkwardly low pitch head. Dickon had seen an oxbow passage on the left that would make for a good Y-hang, so we headed there. There was a good natural column (of rock) right at the start of the oxbow which we used as a backup. The walls were a bit muddyy which made it hard to see the rock, and the limestone wasn't that great – 20 mm layers of good rock separated by 5 mm layers of flaky shit. After a bit I was able to find a spot on each wall that I was happy with, and the backup was pretty bombproof anyway.

The next pitch was quite a bit trickier and I probably spent 20 minutes faffing with different options before getting in to it. The pitch has a large chockstone at the edge with a slope so it would need a rebelay. My first attempt was to try climbing under it to see if I could rig straight from the rebelay point, but all of the smaller chockstones underneath the big one that you need to climb on looked a bit sketchy, so I decided it wasn't worth the risk. I wanted to put a pair of bolts on the left-hand wall at the top of the chockstone, but the limestone here was even muddier and flakier than that on Oxbow Pitch. It's the best place to rig from so maybe with a good natural backup it would work. In the end we slung a large (2 x 4 m) boulder on the right and just Indestructible Rope Technique (IRT)ed the first edge then put in a rebelay about 2 m below on the left hand wall.

I went down first and reported that the water was all flowing into rockpile on the floor. There was a bit of cursing from the others up top. I had a quick run up the slope on the left and that shut down pretty quickly and then went down the slope that doubles back underneath the pitch. There I could see a way through the rockpile and decided to dart in while the others were coming down.

I initially had to move a few boulders and then slipped down into a small cavity and then slid down a rock that had detached from above to form a flattener. It had a lot of dirt on it which was easily kicked down a head of me. After this I hit small streamway and got excited and starting following it down. It was mostly hunched over but it was easy enough to move through. After 10 m or so I started noticing footprints and after travelling a bit farther and seeing plenty of footprints I was sure that I was in Angry Wank Streamway in Dissidence. I continued on for another 20 m or so trying to find a marked station that we could tie into, but I reached a bit where the water went down and the only human-sized passage went up, turned me around and dropped back into where I'd been. Apparently Alan and Andy had had the same problem when



*Andreas proving that there is a connection
between JF-382 and JF-392.*

they were retreating after having surveyed in there.

I decided to head back and tell the others that we were in Dissidence, but they'd already figured that out as they'd found the elusive final station of the Angry Wank survey - "RP 1083". We were disappointed that our extension of Warhol was over but also pretty relieved that, after five days, we could finally de-rig Warhol and say good riddance to Tony Abbott.

Andreas, Laure and I finished the survey while Dickon took the drill and a few other bits of gear and headed for the surface. I headed up last to de-rig. Laure was given the rope from the final pitch which gave her a full pack so she went ahead to start making her way through Tony Abbott's solo. Andreas and I filled two packs with the remaining bolting and survey gear, the ropes from Oxbow and Vote Of No Confidence pitches and our harnesses (Dickon foolishly tried to get through Tony Abbott with his harness on and apparently let out a s many expletives as if he'd met the real Tony Abbott). The two packs were pretty heavy as everything was coated in Tony Abbott's slime, but Andreas and I were able to pack pass through the hardest bits.

We met Laure and passed packs to her through Tony Abbott's Narrow Mind. We put harnesses on at the bottom of Sketchy POM Pitch at 8:30 pm. Some cursing of Tony Abbott and rejoicing that we never have to see him again helped to raise spirits. Andreas headed up first, then Laure. I packed up the food that I had been feeding to Laure and Andreas and went to put my harness on when I realised that it was still in Andreas's pack. Fortunately Laure was able to relay the message before

Andreas got to The 30-Year Pitch and he brought my harness back which Laure lowered down to me.

I head up and de-rigged Sketchy POM Pitch and just as I took the last sling off I got the message that Dickon (who had returned from the surface to collect another pack) left some gear just past Tony Abbott's Narrow Mind. I sighed, muttered some expletives about Dickon, and started re-rigging the pitch. I couldn't be bothered putting the hangers back on so I just IRT rigged it off the chockstone that I originally wanted to rig off. It turns out that you fend off the wall just enough to avoid any rub points so a redirect isn't needed, but future trips should use one as the bolt is there anyway. I saw the gear on an obvious ledge – obvious when you're heading in, but completely hidden when you're heading out. I had to take my harness off to get through Tony Abbott's Narrow Mind so I cursed Dickon some more.

Gear collected, the de-rig could start again. I found Laure waiting for me on the big ledge of The 30-Year Pitch. She took my pack and I told her to leave the empty pack at the top of the pitch as I'd need it for this rope and the next one. Dickon was waiting for me at the top of Squeazy Pitch, having come back in for his third load of gear. I was pretty tired at this point, and sick of taking hangers off, so I took my pack and headed straight out whilst Dickon took over the de-rig.

I reached the surface at 11:20 pm to find Laure and Andreas recovering. They headed off to start dinner while I waited for Dickon who was out at 11:45 pm. On the walk back we found an enormous tree had fallen nearly lengthwise a long McCallums Track, breaking a limestone boulder in half.

JF-237 Niggly Cave

Klockerfest day 14 – STC's toughest man de-rigs Black Supergiant

Dickon Morris

31 January 2014

Party: Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz, Andreas Klocker & Dickon Morris.

Not really much to say about this trip but I suppose the 400th edition of the *Spiel* should be filled with as much (very) mildly amusing intra club banter as possible, reflecting previous editions. I would hope to maintain some form of British decency but expect that I shall fail and stoop to immature personal attacks on at least a couple of occasions.

So despite our grand plans the underground camping did not happen. The first problem was that all the other team members were soft as kangaroo poo. The second was that Andreas had returned from a trip to the final choke with Rolan and declared, with typical Germanic optimism, that it was a shithouse lead. That left only the bolt climb that we had spotted on the recce, hardly worth subjecting yourself to four days of misery. Thirdly Warhol was still going strong.

However we still had to pull out the ropes that Rolan had left for us. When Warhol connected with Dissidence and was derigged we had no excuses left to stall the inevitable Niggly trip. As we would only need to bounce to the top of Black Supergiant it would be an easy trip, with the notable exception of the need to remove a 200 m rope.

Amazingly, we made the same mistake that we had on the December trip and forgot to bring any metalwork, but on this occasion were able to scavenge enough karabiners from the various tackle bags that we had with us.

We made rapid progress to the top of Black Supergiant and before long I was down at the rebelay with 200 m of empty space beneath me. Again I had the chance to contemplate the terrifying chockstone off which the pitch is rigged and was glad I did not have to descend. The rope was rapidly pulled to the top, a very long brown snake of nylon looking none the worse for its two year stretch (no pun intended) underground. With the rope out of harm's way it was time to do the first thing that occurs to anybody who finds themselves at the top of a 200 m pitch; throw rocks over the edge marvelling at the nine second drop and the sound of a rushing past the tumbling boulder.

With that primal urge satisfied it was time to face the reality of carting a muddy 200 m rope out of the cave. Unfortunately all three of my companions are massive soft cocks and, sputtering nonsense such as 'I'm old enough not to need to prove myself in this manner', suggested that I do it. 10 kg is not really a lot of extra weight to carry out of a cave (ask Andreas who does it every trip), it was the bulk of the package that made the task particularly unpleasant. Holding 10 kg at a tremendous length while negotiating a narrow rift is not tremendously easy without some specific training so I elected to crawl at floor level in Tigertooth passage with the mass of rope on my back, managing to get myself wedged at floor level a couple of times.

Niggly is now derigged. The leads at the bottom described in the previous article still remain unpushed. To bounce to the

bottom of the cave and check these leads would be easily achievable in a day trip, however if these leads go in a big way then it will be unrealistic to expect to be able to push and survey them in a big way without resorting to the misery of underground camping. From what I am told by Andreas the passage becomes very small and immature beyond the first rockfall and considering the amount of space around this point it is likely that the stream has cut down to a lower level

relatively recently. Generally speaking when this happens the old large level is left high and dry but is often rather prone to choking up. Nevertheless there is still a large distance to be covered to reach Junee and the water must get there somehow. Given the fast flow through times that I hear have been recorded much of this cave must be air-filled. A very exciting prospect!

JF-620:

Klockerfest Day 15 – Z-cave with a breeze

Mark Euston

1 February 2014

Party: Mark Euston & Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz.

The last day of caving for Klockerfest 2014. Dickon and Andreas were keen for JF-398 while I wanted to return to JF-620, on the off the string of Z-caves on the eastern slopes of Wherretts Lookout that we'd tagged on day 6 [*Some of you may notice that the Klockerfest day 6 Z caves report is missing. I have been assured that it will be published in a future issue – Ed.*]. On that day I'd gone in and found a squeeze with a good breeze followed by a 4–5 m drop. I dropped a ladder down and found a slope leading to a < 10 m pitch that I was unable to climb down. I was pretty keen on this cave as it had done a few twists and turns so I thought it was past the zone where debris would block it up.

To save weight, Laure and I brought a 30 m rope to do both pitches and left the ladder behind. The first pitch through the squeeze proved to be quite awkward so I'd recommend a ladder for future trips. On the slope I could see lots of moisture droplets with my light going past me fairly fast. The air was blowing into the cave. We slung a boulder at the bottom of the first pitch and then just IRT'd it over the second. The chamber is a nice cookie-cutter pitch but the floor is a little muddy and boulders which have blocked up the rest of it. There was some smaller stuff of foot height that went down a bit and I squeezed through into a small chamber where I saw a footprint and some strange caving contraption made of 40 cm of 25 mm webbing, two metal rings for adjustment and a small metal

hook. It was pretty badly corroded and had probably been there for over 20 years.

Just back from this squeeze, in what is probably the lowest part of the cave, is a small hole, probably 15 cm in diameter. You can very faintly hear the whistling of air in this hole but you can't really feel any air around it. The air is definitely stronger at the much larger squeeze before the first pitch so that air is going somewhere and making a noise that can be heard through that hole. I think it's a pretty good prospect but it's probably at least a few days' work. There were also quite a few bones in the cave – most looked large enough to be a wallaby or even something bigger. They looked piled up so I'm not sure if the first visitor had done this. Laure and I surveyed out with Laure doing her first book and sketch job.

We had arranged to meet Dickon and Andreas at JF-396, which is farther up the hill from JF-398, and if they weren't there then they were probably still pushing JF-398. We tried to straight line it to JF-396 but we got deflected by some large limestone cliffs. We found an untagged entrance that was mostly just a small overhand with no breeze and marked it in the GPS. A little bit farther down we found a large rift that opened up right in front of us. We weren't able to find a tag but we didn't look very hard and it's a fairly large feature, so we also marked that in the GPS and continued on. We weren't going to make it to JF-396 in time, so we decided to just return to the track which we followed down to the Niggly track junction. Here we dropped our packs and headed up the Niggly track where we found Andreas's pack and a bar of chocolate waiting to be eaten. We made voice contact with them and 20 minutes later they came back out. Dickon was ecstatic and already making plans to come back for a serious push, whilst Andreas was feeling lucky to be alive.

JF-398

Klockerfest Day 15 – JF's next big system?

Dickon Morris

1 February 2014

Party: Andreas Klocker & Dickon Morris.

JF-398 is a large and rather obvious swallet that is passed on the walk to Niggly Cave. It seems to have been of little interest to previous explorers in the JF despite the fact that it is noticeably cold in the depression. On the way up to the Niggly Cave I made a quick investigation of the swallet and found a very large draught to be blowing from the hole, the tape marking the entrance flutters in the chilly breeze. The majority of the draught emerges from a gap in the boulder choke that would admit a rabbit but certainly no human over the age of seven.

The following day we returned with the aim of finding a way in. After a couple of hours playing a very sobering game of

boulder jenga it was possible to get through into a small, unstable turning chamber. My nerves were fried by this point so I backed out and exited the cave to sit on the forest floor refuelling while discussing the prospects with Andreas. I felt happy to be in one piece and wasn't tremendously keen to re-enter the choke. Still, huge discoveries are rarely easy, risks must be taken and the draught was still there.

Over the next 15 min I made easy progress through the choke involving narrow squeezes between boulders with some short digs required to enter larger cavities. The choke is large and open, made of very clean washed boulders that are evidently pummelled with water while the sink is flowing, which is probably most of the time apart from late summer. The way on is very obvious solely due to the strength of the draught which is impressive. Before long I had progressed to a depth of around 10 m. At this point it appears that the choke is becoming a little more like a solid cave (or at least the boulders are getting much bigger and more uniform in their orientation). The last blockage will require some careful work to figure out a way through but is very passable and with the draught still

blasting through the cave is a very enticing prospect. A return is planned for the end of the month. The swallet is in a very interesting location. Most of the major caves in the Junee-Florentine trend south east towards the Junee Resurgence. The nearest major conduit to JF-398 is Niggly Cave almost 1 km to

the north. It is therefore likely that the system associated with JF-398 will fill the completely blank space to the south of Niggly and not join with that system until beyond the final blockage.

JF-14 Dwarrowdelf

Training trip

Janine McKinnon

9 February 2014

Party: Andreas Klocker, Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer (Pax), Liz Rogers (VSA) & Ric Tunney.

This had been planned to be an SRT training weekend for three VSA members. They all have basic training in SRT but wanted to have the efficiency of their kit assessed, have some training in more advanced SRT techniques (off-set rebelay and tricky rigging), and get to practice those techniques in a multi-pitch cave. Thus they decided a weekend with STC was the best plan to achieve all that.

The plan was a day (or part thereof) on the wall at Fruehauf, followed by a day's caving in the JF somewhere. A diving friend of mine, Pax, decided that he'd like to try caving, so he jumped on to the list. The plan partly worked. The training happened, a caving trip went ahead, but unfortunately two of the three VSA members missed their flight from Melbourne, so numbers were somewhat reduced.

I had only planned to go part-way down Dwarrowdelf as all trainees were unknown quantities for prusiking speed and skill, and caving fitness. The top of the 67 m pitch was the absolute turn-around point, with the option to turn sooner for any that wished.

I started down the first pitch around 10 am. Rigging, and descending to the bottom of the 55 m pitch went smoothly. It was decided that this was a good turn around spot. Liz had camera gear and the 14 m pitch was rigged with two ropes for her to take photos there. That filled another half hour, with lunch.

Ric and Pax started out and Andreas and I helped Liz with photos on the 55 m pitch. I then came up last, de-rigging. We had used the 97 m, 10.5 mm rope for the second and third

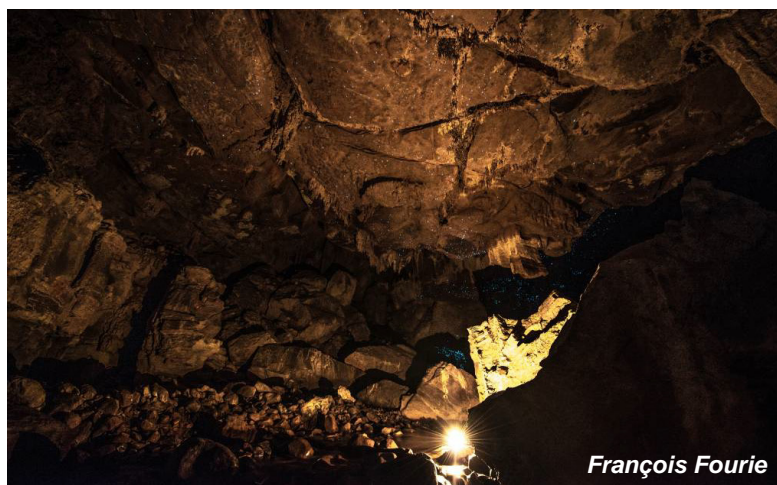
pitches, and I had found it a bit of a pain. Thick and stiff to use, and bulky to pull up on the de-rig. I don't think I'll use it there again. Otherwise, all went smoothly for the exit. Pax was fast for a first time caver and managed all the tricky bits well. Liz had no problems. Having fewer cavers than anticipated also made for a quicker trip.

I was out, and all ready to walk, at 3.30 pm. This had been a fast and smooth trip for a training trip. Both Liz and Pax agreed that they wouldn't have liked to go down any further though, as they were sufficiently tired and sore from what they had already done. So they had had a fun and instructive day without it turning into an exhaustive epic.

The most exciting part of the day was the trip home. The early return to Hobart was stymied by the large tree that was across the road just short of the gate. It was too big to move and we didn't have the chainsaw. Luckily Ric has explored the area well while waiting for me when I have been diving in the Junee Resurgence nearby. He knew of a route across logged ground that he thought the Subaru could drive, that would bypass the tree.

To save you all the suspense, he was correct. It was about 500 m cross-country, and we had a few nail biting moments, but the Suby did it easily. Not so easy was the deep gutter beside the gravel road we were aiming for. Ric took it at an oblique angle, at speed, and got across before the car realised it shouldn't have had the ground clearance to make it. I was a little concerned at one point when one of the back wheels was a foot [*That's 30 cm now Janine! – Sub Ed.*] off the ground, but all was ultimately good. No damage done.

We were very chuffed with ourselves, and happy that we had only lost an hour or so. We got out to the highway, drove down it 2 km, and hit a traffic jam of about thirty cars. A tree had fallen over the road on the outskirts of Maydena, and hit the power line. The bloke at the front of the queue said he had been there over two and a half hours (this was that really windy day that hadn't been forecast). I think we spent about an hour waiting.



François Fourie

Other Exciting Stuff

Reminiscences of a Tasmanian Caver

Albert Goede

The year 2014 is an appropriate time to reflect on my past caving activities as it is sixty years ago that I went on my first caving trip as a seventeen year old. It also marks the publication of *Speleo Spiel* #400 – an invaluable record of caving activities in Tasmania since I first started editing *Speleo Spiel* (New Series) in 1966. Congratulations to all those dedicated editors who have kept it going ever since.

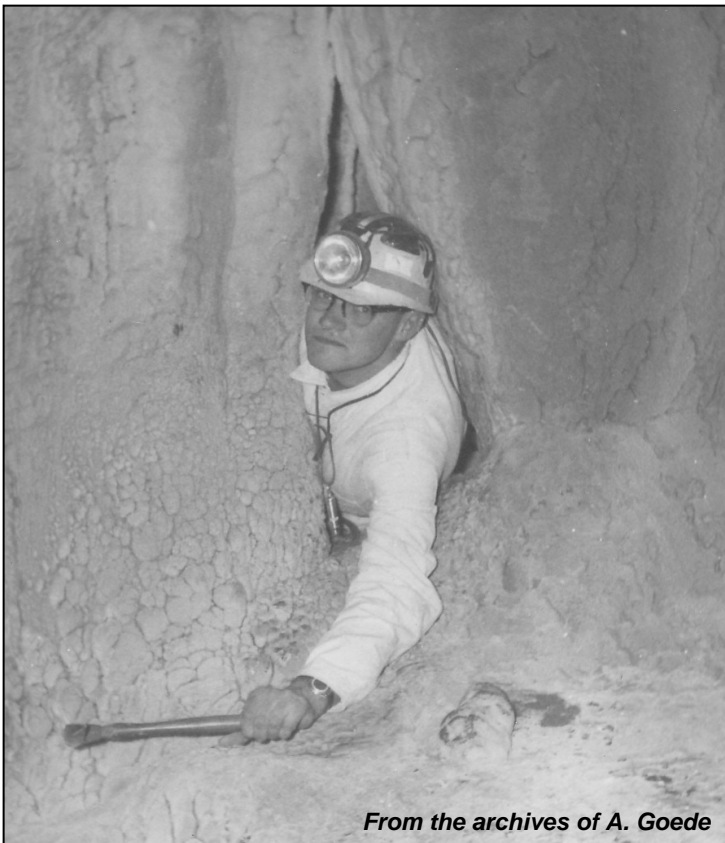
I arrived from Holland with my family in 1951 and later that year became an apprentice compositor at Mercury Press. A couple of years later the Tasmanian Caverneering Club had some publicity in the local press after taking the Governor of Tasmania (Sir Hugh Binnery) through the Binnery Caves at Hastings. I decided that exploring caves was what I wanted to do especially since I had just been reading some of Norbert Casteret's books on cave exploration in France. After making contact with the club secretary I went on my first caving trip on the January long weekend of 1954.

The trip to Exit Cave was led by Leo Luckman who had been shown the entrance to the cave several years earlier by a local bushman but the party had no time to go beyond the entrance chamber. On this occasion we camped near the entrance. To help to explore this cave for the very first time was an unforgettable experience. The glowworm display was spectacular and four of us ended up exploring the cave to the first major rockfall. A few weeks later my second trip was to the Wolf Hole at Hastings. It was led by Eddie Smith, a

geologist, and four of us were belayed down by her on ladders (my first experience of vertical caving) and went to explore new ground and discover a lake that was later at my suggestion named Lake Pluto. I was well and truly hooked on caving but it was to be several years before I was involved in other major discoveries.

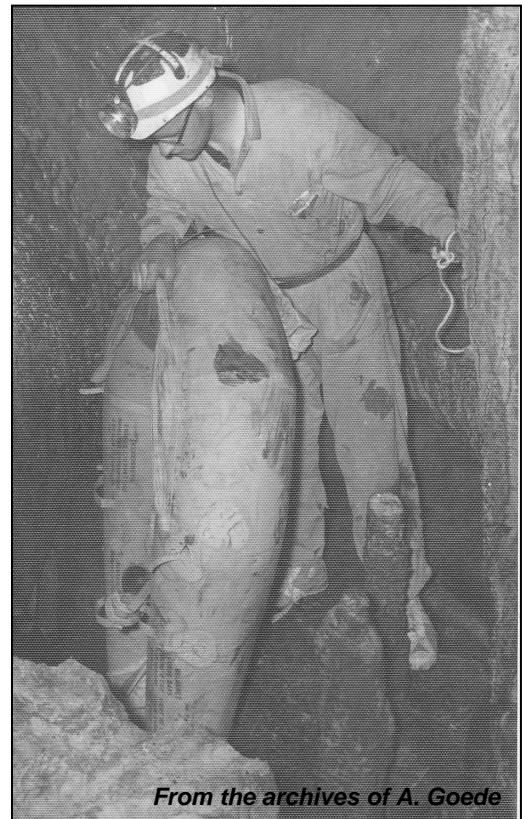
Caving equipment was basic in those days. A pair of overalls, a mining helmet made of high density cardboard or bakelite, a pair of army surplus boots with leather soles that had to be prepared for caving by hammering in a assortment of triple hobs and star muggers to provide some grip. They did a lot of damage to flowstone and tended to accumulate clay in muddy places. A dry battery-powered bicycle-lamp worn around the neck on a lanyard and a carbide lamp completed our personal equipment. Plastic and fiberglass helmets did not become available until late in the 1950s. Also around this time commando soled walking boots started to replace army surplus leather-soled boots – a great improvement

With regards to club equipment, the club had just replaced rope ladders with home-made wire ladders by cutting duralium rods into sections and drilling them near each end to take galvanized steel cable. Each rung was held in place by winding copper wire around the cable both above and below and soldering the wire to the cable. Solid rungs were later replaced by thicker hollow ones and soldered wire by crimping sleeves on to the cable. Manila rope was in the process of being replaced by nylon climbing rope – also a great improvement although they had so much stretch that when you untied yourself at the bottom of a ladder pitch and let go of the rope it could easily



From the archives of A. Goede

Author exploring in Kubla Khan. Easter 1957.



From the archives of A. Goede

Author negotiating The Narrows of the River Alph with inflatable dinghy. December 1957.

disappear out of reach.

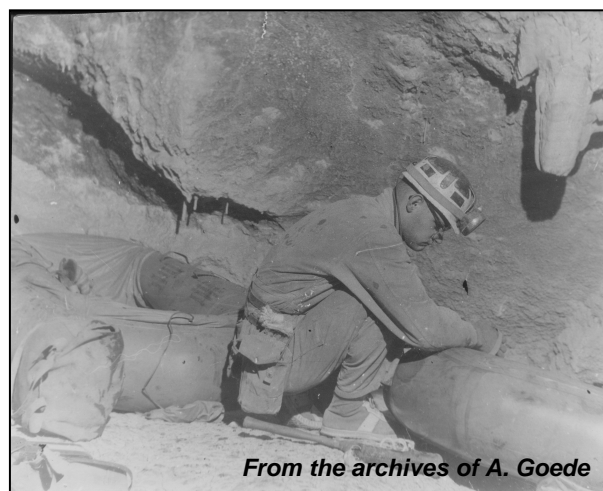
In 1954 most of the foundation members of the club were about to retire from the sport and a small group of enthusiasts had to keep it going. Edie Smith was a very capable leader and inspired my interest in geology to such an extent that I decided to try to go to University after completing my five-year apprenticeship at Mercury Press. It involved going to night school for another three years after completing my apprenticeship training in order to get my university entrance requirements. One of the subjects was geology and this further fuelled my interest in the field. In about 1956 Edith moved to Canberra to a new job with the Bureau of Mineral Resources. Before she left she was made the club's first Honorary Life Member and I inherited her job as club treasurer since someone in the club had discovered that I could add up numbers even if it involved pounds, shillings and pence. Most of the remaining active members were primarily interested in cave photography using 35 mm colour cameras that had become all the rage. To light the cave scene flash bulbs and electronic flashguns were used. I had no transport so cave destinations were determined by those who did have cars. They were often more interested in taking photos than in exploration.

At Christmas 1956 the Australian Speleological Federation was formed in South Australia as caving clubs had been proliferating around the country during the previous few years. Frank Brown and I were the two Tasmanian delegates. Afterwards a new expedition was held to the Nullarbor Plains under the leadership of Elery Hamilton-Smith. About sixty-five cavers took part. Transport consisted of three two-ton steel tray trucks and a VW headquarters bus. Each truck carried twenty cavers with all their personal gear, as well as enough petrol, water and food for a sixteen day journey. In those days the Nullarbor was a truly remote place. Roads were unsealed from Port Augusta and there were no roadhouses. It was a memorable experience although we mainly visited caves that were already known. To me it was a new introduction to the Australian outback and a totally different kind of karst landscape. It was also where I first met Joe Jennings, a geomorphologist who had recently arrived from England to take up a position at ANU. He had also initiated the Canberra Speleological Society, together with Edie Smith and others.

We were also introduced to the “diprotodon”, a South Australian invention that was used to light up the large chambers found in some of the Nullarbor caves. It looked like a musket with a balloon at the rear end that had to be inflated before use. The charge consisted of a pound of magnesium powder with rounded grains. At the mouth was a candle that had to be lit before use. When the trigger was pulled, the powder was blown outwards and with a little luck was ignited by the burning candle that produced a flame about a metre long and half a metre wide. The trick was to hold and point the flame at right angles to the area to be photographed. Up to a dozen cameras were set up on tripods and were opened just before the trigger was pulled. The drawbacks were that photographs were frequently overexposed and a few beads were also soot inged. In following years there were some refinements by people such as Alan Hill of SA and Norm Poulter of WA but the development of faster films and more powerful electronic light sources saw its demise in the 1960s.

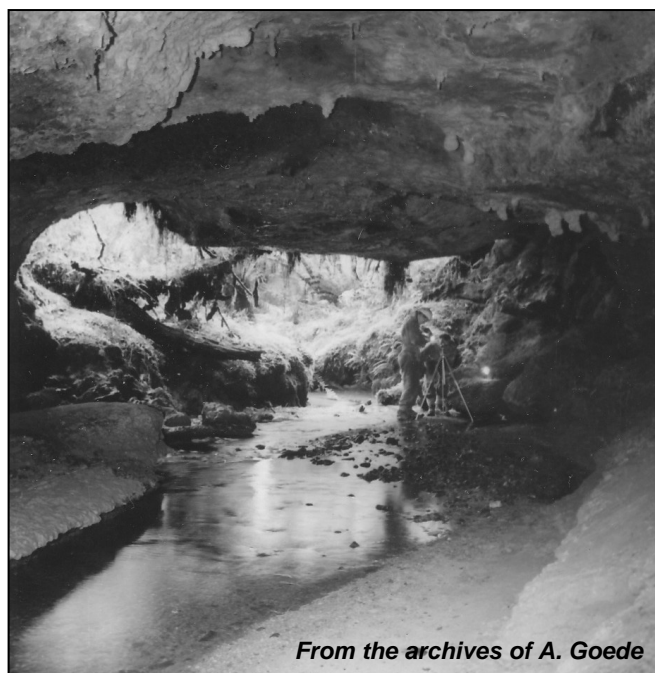
At Christmas 1957 I got my opportunity to make a contribution to the exploration of Tasmanian caves. A weeklong trip was organized to Mole Creek. The trip reports in our archives included one on the early exploration of a cave in about 1948

that had been named Kubla Khan. After a ladder descent into a large chamber the party reached an underground stream that could be explored downstream but the members found the climbing route too difficult and the water too cold to push the exploration. This stream is now known as the River Alph. It says much for the early abundance of unexplored caves that it took the club nearly ten years to return to the site. I had bought two rubber dinghies at an army surplus store and we would use those to explore the stream. I was able to persuade a young caver (Jim Poynter) to come with me and we set off downstream. At one place (The Narrows) we had to manoeuvre the dinghies sideways after climbing onto a narrow ledge but we eventually made it to a large chamber (Cairn Hall) and discovered the spectacular flowstone formation now known as the Pleasure Dome. At the downstream end of the Cairn Hall the water came up to the roof, preventing further exploration. Then the other members wanted to go and photograph the new discoveries. It was even written up in the daily paper (*The Mercury*). We soon discovered that to reach Cairn Hall lilos had an advantage over dinghies as long as you did not mind getting more than a little wet and cold. Waterproof bags were made out of old car inner tubes clamped at each end to carry in



From the archives of A. Goede

Author inflating the dinghy. December 1957.



From the archives of A. Goede

Sib McIntyre (now Sib Corbett) surveying near the entrance to Damper Cave. December 1960

the photographic gear while keeping it dry.

In 1958 I decided to keep a promise to my mother to return to Holland. My father had been killed in an accident in 1954 and the following year my mother returned to Holland with my four younger brothers and sisters. I wanted to stay in Tasmania to finish my apprenticeship and to complete my University entrance requirements. The plan was that I would study geology at the University of Amsterdam. I was very reluctant to leave all my caving friends and my beloved Tasmanian caves. Members of TCC did not expect to see me again and made me the second Honorary Life Member of the society. As it turned out Holland and the University of Amsterdam were not to my liking and I returned a year later homesick for Tasmania and my caving friends as well as being 'stony broke'.

I arrived in time to find a night job waiting for me as a compositor at The Mercury which paid extremely well. One of my caving friends lent me money and within days I was enrolled as a part-time science student at UTAS in the subjects of geology and geography. The second year I did chemistry and physics while reducing my job to half-time. Needless to say I did not get much opportunity to go caving. However, after two years part-time study with good results I got naturalized and was able to qualify for a Commonwealth Scholarship. That enabled me to complete the last two years of my degree in a somewhat more relaxed atmosphere.

During that time I was able to take part in a couple of major trips during the Christmas period. One memorable occasion was a trip up the Gordon River using two wooden punts with new outboard engines that had somehow been arranged by our TCC president, Doug Turner. We found only a few small caves but it was a memorable trip and we managed to get to the junction with the Franklin River. With the benefit of hindsight it was a pity we did not make it further up the Franklin where in later years spectacular evidence of early Aboriginal occupation would be discovered by another caver, Kevin Kiernan, in what is now known as Kutikina Cave.

During another Christmas period I was able to arrange for a party of five to be flown into the New River Lagoon area at a reasonable price to explore the limestone at Precipitous Bluff where geologists had reported the presence of caves. I managed to persuade a local character, Vern Reid, to fly us there in his Tiger Moth seaplane from Cockle Creek – one

passenger and luggage at the time. Vern wanted to be paid up front but I insisted that we would pay the other half of the fare only when he came back to bring us out and he agreed. We camped on the edge of the lagoon with conditions varying from a tropical paradise to an Antarctic blow with heavy rain. We found two major outflow caves and explored and mapped one of them – Damper Cave. The second cave, later named Quetzalcoatl Conduit, was not explored because at the entrance it had deep water almost up to the roof. It was eventually explored, mapped and named during a NASA expedition in 1973.

I completed my BSc in 1962 majoring in Geology and Geography. My ambition to become a field geologist had been dampened at the end of second year as a result of working as a field assistant for the Mines Department during one summer in western Tasmania. Instead I decided to do Honours in fluvial geomorphology in eastern Tasmania with the Geography Department. I did not do it in karst because I wanted to keep caving as a recreational interest. After obtaining first-class honours I got married and moved to Canberra on an ANU scholarship. My supervisor was well-known caver and geomorphologist Joe Jennings but again I opted for a topic in fluvial geomorphology. I managed to get in some caving with the Canberra Speleological Society, especially at Bungonia where I in early 1964 succumbed to high carbon dioxide concentrations while exploring Argyle Hole (B-31), a 274 metre deep vertical system. On the way down someone observed that a candle would not burn. This should have been a warning but as we all felt fine at that stage we decided to bottom the system – and paid for our sins. To this day I do not know how we all managed to get out of there!

Canberra saw the birth of our first daughter in 1964 and the suspension of my scholarship at ANU in early 1965. I was offered a tutorship at ANU which I did for one term. Then came an opportunity to join the staff of the Geography Department at UTAS so in May, 1965 we arrived back in Hobart. We arrived in the middle of a breakup of TCC with most of its active members forming a new breakaway group (Southern Caving Society). My attempts to heal the rift were not successful. Since I owed so much to TCC, the oldest caving club in Australia I felt I had to do my share to ensure its survival. The next ten years was to become the most active period of my caving career but that is another story!

To be continued ...

JF-15 Hairygoat Hole

Not a hairy goat but close

From: Peter Shaw

27/10/2012 4:55 PM

Hi Alan,

I see from the latest *Spiel* that you are still looking for the Hairygoat Hole. I have recently been scanning my slides into digital format and I came across the attached photos. They aren't of Hairygoat Hole, but if you can recognize the hole in the photos (it didn't go any deeper than what you can see), then Hairygoat Hole is very close on the up slope side of this one. I would estimate within 100 m.

Good luck.

Peter Shaw



A hole near JF-15 Hairygoat Hole

A VSA micro-expedition to JF

Peter Freeman

Tasmania, January 2014

Party: Ken Murrey & Peter Freeman (both VSA/STC).

Accompanied and aided at various times by: Ric Tunney, Janine McKinnon, Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz, Natalie Brennan & Alan Jackson.

Ken Murrey and I had mooted a New Year trip to Tasmania for a while, but we firmed it up with limited lead time so it was all a bit late for recruiting others, and it turned out to also be too late to book the ferry. Fly-in was therefore required. The implications of this for taking our own ropes were mitigated by our joining the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers (STC).

Our target area was Junee-Florentine, the location of most of Tasmania's interesting and challenging vertical caves. Both Ken and I had previously done some caving there, so we had a few items on our wish-list and we were equipped with reasonable information and documentation. Our real asset though was the assurance of assistance from STC members, and the fact that STC was already planning activities in that area at the same time as ours.

JF-221 Owl Pot

11–13 January 2014

Travel through Hobart airport, car hire, food purchases, etc, all went routinely on the Saturday. We called in on Ric and Janine, who handed over some of STC's ropes for us to use and provided useful information updates (not to mention lunch). After driving to Maydena and settling into our accommodation, Sunday dawned for our first outing. Our cave was to be Owl Pot, an interesting and rewarding cave, but at the same time a straight-forward task.

Our descent went well until we found that the 97 m rope that had been recommended for pitches 1 & 2 combined didn't actually reach. We therefore had to exit and re-rig pitch 1 (which is actually a gentle but horridly muddy slope) with a shorter rope. The end result was that on this day we found ourselves one rope short for the bottom. Monday saw us return to Owl Pot with an extra rope, and we completed the descent.

We both enjoyed this cave. The final pitch, abseiled beside a waterfall into a splashy chamber, was a joy (though I soaked myself on the way back up by inadvertently swinging into the water). The horizontal extension from that final chamber was not entered as we hoped to make a start on our next cave that same afternoon. However, time ran out so we adjourned to the Giants Table accommodation to microwave more frozen meals.

JF-8 Junee Cave

14 January 2014

For this day, Ken had arranged to assist Michael Packer and Janine in re-lining Sump One of Junee Cave. Junee is the resurgence for most of the vertical caves that lie a few kilometres NW in the Florentine Valley. Sump Two is yet to be passed. Ric and I helped transport tanks etc as far as the first sump. Although only a couple of hundred metres in length, the horizontal wade up the streamway is fun, despite the ever-present 6–7 °C temperature in these Tasmanian caves.

The re-lining went smoothly, and some photographs were taken in the between-sumps section known as 'For Your Eyes Only'.

JF-99 The Chairman

16 January 2014

Wednesday was an enforced non-caving day, since the hire car sustained a tyre puncture and had to be driven to Hobart for rectification.

On Thursday a misunderstanding diminished the day's achievement. The plan was for Ric and Janine to help Ken and me on P1 of The Chairman, and for Ken and I to then bottom the cave. However, Ken and I thought the others were bringing a rope for the first pitch, while they thought that we were ... ! The result was that Ric and Ken visited the dangling end of a too-short rope hanging down the impressive large daylight hole, while Janine and I accepted part-way down that rope as the sensible option. Still, it was nice to see the place – there certainly are some "girt big oils" up in those woods.

JF-223 Tassie Pot

17 January 2014

On this day Ken and I did manage to descend Tassie Pot (having run out of time to start it on the Monday). This is a great cave, though again considered an easy option by Tasmanian standards. We spent some time puzzling over the location of Pitch 1's first rebelay, even though Ken had successfully found it and used it one year ago. Eventually we made our own rebelay, and down the 42 m pitch we went.

The highlight of this cave is the 71 m Pitch 4. A fine drop, landing you around 240 m underground.

Our rented, very-low-clearance, boy-racer Falcon X R6 wouldn't face the Nine Road extension, so by this time Ken and I had become very familiar with the long walk from the "To Westfield Road" signpost.

JF-2 Cauldron Pot

(Klockerfest day 2)

19 January 2014

Saturday was declared a rest day, but on Sunday we tackled



Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz

Peter and the Wolf



Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz

Nat and Laure ready to eat their lunch.

Cauldron Pot. This had been planned as a de-rigging trip before our expedition began, and we were joined by Mark, Natalie and Laure.

Cauldron is an even more impressive sight on the surface than The Chairman, with a waterfall plunging into the tree-trunk ridden hole. After descending this drop, clear of the water thanks to three well-placed rebelay, the way on is down Bills Bypass. This feature is notorious, but actually not as arduous as I had expected. In any case, the next section compensates: a series of small pitches down the Cascades – wet but fun. The final cascade leads directly onto a pitch that drops into a large waterfall chamber. As with Owl Pot and Tassie Pot, there is some more horizontal cave to explore here, for the keen, but we omitted that.

Our trip in had been easy as the cave was pre-rigged, but on the way out we (mainly Ken) de-rigged and brought out the ropes, as requested. The return was, for me, unfortunately marred by injuring my left leg muscle near the bottom of Bills Bypass. The ascent of the rest of it was slow and painful, even with Laure carrying my pack for me (she'd ascended first and dumped hers before coming down again – thanks Laure!). The prusic up the daylight pitch was not badly affected.

My verdict on Cauldron Pot: a fabulous cave. I loved the Cascades. It is also my personal deepest. My problem with this place is that it left me requiring six days rest for my leg to heal. And six days in Maydena, semi-immobilised and usually carless, is a severe sentence. You can only spend so long looking for platypuses.

JF-392 Warhol (Klockerfest days 4 and 5)

21 and 22 January 2014:

During my convalescence Ken accompanied Andreas, Mark, Natalie and Laure for two days in the ongoing exploration of Warhol, a long-known but neglected JF cave. Extra length was discovered and surveyed on these days, and subsequently the cave was connected to the known deep cave Dissidence. I'm a cave-connection fanatic, and I enthused to Alan Jackson about this connection likelihood as we walked up to Constitution Cave (see later). However, Alan lamented that it wouldn't make Dissidence deeper, and it would leave them with one fewer June-Florentine caves in total!

JF-463 Constitution Hole

26 January 2014

After my convalescence, and some non-caving tourism, finally the weekend came for Ken and I to accompany Alan into Constitution Hole. This is a recent discovery, with a few odd spots that still required surveying and/or pushing. It's a relatively easy cave, with short-ish pitches, but my leg, only 80% healed, made the frequent little climatic kish. Alan did accomplish most of his objectives, and also found a new lead trending NW. Whether Constitution Hole will yield much more remains to be seen.

The next day was spent by Ken and me in cleaning and packing, and on Tuesday we made an uneventful (except for a 4-hour flight delay) return to Melbourne.

Summary

A good trip! The large hole in the middle for me, due to minor injury, was disappointing, but none of the caves that we descended was a disappointment. Tassie Pot and Cauldron Pot have become new favourites for me.

Any lessons? For myself, I noticed for the first time that passing a rebelay, upwards, where there is a large sideways angle (i.e. a pendulum on the way down), needs thought. The cowstail that you're hanging on doesn't let go as you ascend, so picking the exactly correct time to reach out and yank it off is important. Constitution and Cauldron each had one of the high angles. Live and learn!

Our accommodation at The Giant's Table establishment is recommended – if you can afford it. At the airport, DON'T accept an upgrade to a Ford Falcon XR6.

Thanks to STC for the use of their ropes (via Geoff Wise), and special thanks to Ric and Janine and Alan for their hands-on assistance and guidance.

STC on the world wide web

Yoav Bar-Ness

February 2014

Congratulations to all on reaching *Spiel* #400, and may your socks stay dry for the adventures to come.

In the last calendar year, STC switched over its web presence to an up-to-date Wordpress installation. Special thanks go to Alan and LMRS for hosting it up to this point. Here is a bit of a time-capsule, idea brainstorm, and review of what's happened

with the site since the transfer. It will hopefully serve as a handy reference and conversation starter into the future.

STC has a Wordpress site :

<http://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com>. It's almost entirely a direct port of the previous version of the site, but cosmetically and functionally more complex. At the moment Sarah Gilbert and Matt Cracknell also have the passwords, and if you have a reason/desire to access it, please let me know!

About Wordpress

Wordpress.com is a free hosting service that is linked to, but slightly different from, the free open-source Wordpress.org software. Pretty much, it runs a limited but stable form of the open-source software and offers additional commercial services. It's used by millions and is reliable and secure.

If we'd really like, we can pay them \$18 per year to register a domain address-- if for example, we'd prefer to remove the "wordpress" section in the middle of the address. Conversely, if we find we have more elaborate projects required, we can arrange our own hosting and run the .org version which will give us much finer control.

Things we can do (but certainly don't need to):

- Include time-stamped “blog posts” alongside the current timeless “pages”. There are a few example trip reports-- (thanks especially to Janine!)
- We can also pull down the rather random trip reports (Sorry Janine).
- Multi-user accounts – we can set up different logins and passwords for anyone who would like to contribute or adopt a section
- Post our back-library of *Spiele*, annual reports, or whatever else we choose to.
- Post more photos! Post some videos!
- Get on a social network
- Run surveys
- Archive and share content behind a password
- Setup separate landing pages for *Southern Caver*, *Troglodyte*, and other newsletters (the effort required to host and post these files for our sister clubs is negligible and it's a great way to help out).

Things we can do if we really want to, but will take more work

- Automagically post ST C-Caving listserv posts that have a certain text string in their subjects (i.e. “web updates”)

- Set up a payment gateway (Paypal) that can be used for paying gear hire fees and membership fees
- Install a 3-d viewer for people to see a cave structure
- Install an immersive photosphere viewer to introduce people to caves
- Sell STC kit! It would be a very easy thing to upload our logo to a printing service like Vistaprint, CafePress, or Redbubble, and they would handle payments, printing, and delivery of products we could sell. This could be a basic income stream mechanism that would take me only a few hours to set up, and then we could all sport STC T-shirts and drink out of STC coffee mugs.

Stats and Insights

We moved the site over in April 2015, and these stats were processed on 7 Feb 2014. We are using 72.6 mb (2 %) of our allocated 3072 mb.

1) Number of visits each month

I'll make a hypothesis that our monthly visitation rates will be highest in summer and lowest in winter (Table 1).

2) Average per day

The number of visitors to the site each day has generally gone up (Table 2). In February 2014 we had notably high traffic.

3) Search Terms Leading Visitors to STC Site Apr 13- Feb 14

It appears that Janine McKinnon, Stephen Buntun, and Ric Tunney are leading the popularity contest. I don't know about that "airquotes Stephen Buntun". I have no idea about "janine is serene", "jennifer and janine mckinnon atlanta ga westminster schools", or "john hawkins salt", but I have met "rescue practice dummy" (Table 3).

4) Locations of Visitors to STC Site Apr 13- Feb 14

Things I have learned while looking at the country stats (Figure 1):

- Tasmania appears to be of some interest to the large island to our north known as “Australia.”
- The Czech people are keen armchair cavers, or alternatively have a secret agent in Tasmania

Table 1. Number of visits per month.

[illegible]

Table 2. Average visits per day for a given month.

[illegible]

Table 3. Search term number of views.

Search Term	Views
southern tasmanian caveeneers	15
janine mckinnon	5
janine mckinnon tasmania	4
southern tasmanian caveeneers troglodyte	4
stephen bunton	4
ric tunney	3
hobart caving club	3
hickmania troglodytes	3
tasmanian caveeneers club	2
growling swallet	2
hobart caving	2
southern tasmania caveeneers	2
mystry creek cave	2
janet blanden tasmania	2
squeeze cave	2
arthur clarke tasmania	2
http://southerntasmaniancaveeneers.wordpress.com/spiel/	2
"steve bunton" tasmania	2
janine is serena	2
All other search terms	1

Table 4. Search term number of views.

Page	Views
Spiel	774
Welcome	720
Contacts	250
Caving	237
Photos	201
Home page / Archives	151
Library	121
Forms	107
History	101
Meetings	92
News	86
Links	76
Research	74
Store	68
Softly	56
Mailing	50
All others pages less than	10

- The United States and the United Kingdom both seem to have an active caving scene, and our profile is growing over there.
- The Poles, Swedes, Spaniards, Swiss, French, and Austrians are on their way.
- The Kiwis really should pay more attention to us because we ALSO have amazing glowworms!
- I didn't know there were any cavers in the Maldives!
- We have a footprint in Malta, a limestone island in the Mediterranean, and a mazingly, in Grenada, which is one of the most remote Caribbean Islands!

5) Pages viewed on STC Site Apr 13- Feb 14

Our most popular pages are the *Spiel*, the Landing Page, and the Contacts Page. Caving comes a distant fourth. We can consider consolidating or dividing pages based on the info here.

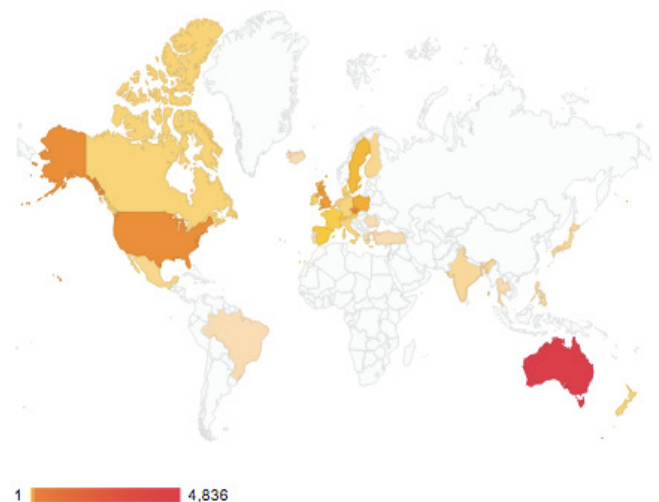
Wrap-up

It's your site! If you have any ideas or requests, just bring them up at the next meeting. You can also reach me at ydbarness@gmail.com. And, as a reminder, the site is at <http://southerntasmaniancaveeneers.wordpress.com>

Enjoy!



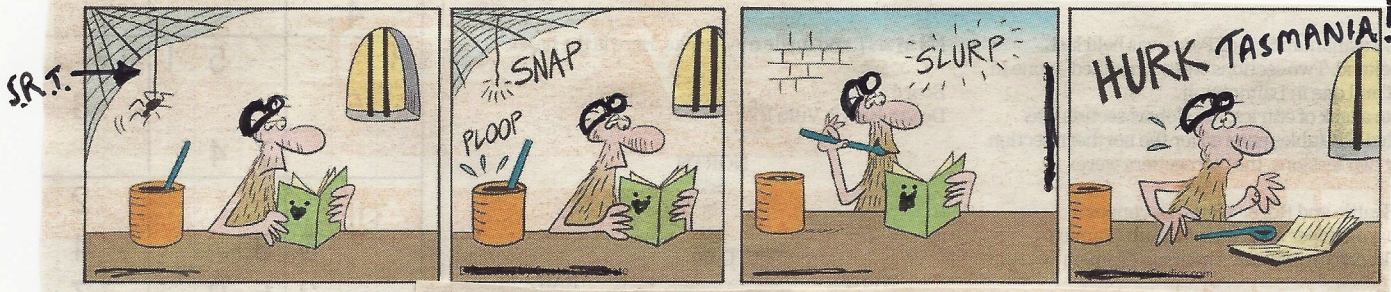
Figure 1. Number of searches by country



WIZARD OF IDA BAY

2000's

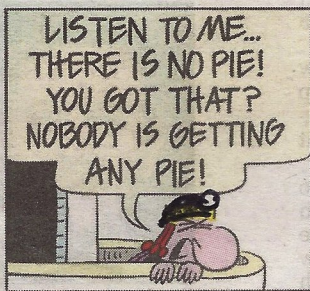
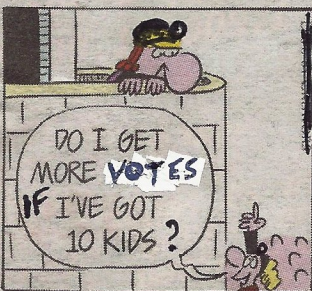
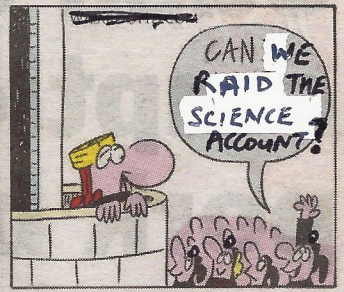
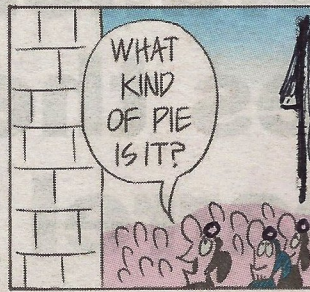
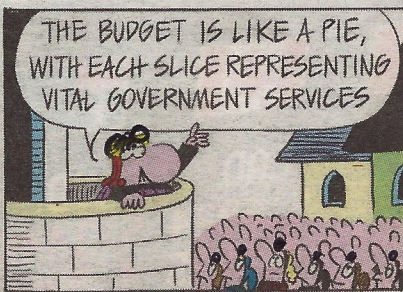
Meantime the Kingdom of Idab Bay had come to the attention of another generation of pommy cave pillagers.



The race to kiss more frogs was on!



But proving that the Earth was hollow became an ever more costly business.



History ⑤ To be continued....

John

Mole Creek karst area

Tasmania

Map prepared by Alan Jackson (Southern Tasmanian Caverneers) for the Resources Management & Conservation Division, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment, Tasmania. Not to be copied or distributed without permission from DPIPWE.

Drawn by Alan Jackson (2013)

Surveyed Length - 1030 m

Surveyed Depth - 125 m (zero datum MC130 tag)

