

SPELEO SPIEL 401

March—April 2014



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Front Cover:

Andreas posing in Sump 1 of JF8 Junee Resurgence. Photo by Liz Rogers.



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The views expressed in the Speleo Spiel are not necessarily the views of the Editor, or of the Southern Tasmania Caverneers Inc.

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

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Editorial

I will keep this short and sweet. There has been lots going on in the world of STC. Read about it in this issue of the *Speleo Spiel*. Just be thankful I pulled my finger out.

Some of the more astute readers will notice that the format has changed. I just couldn't bring myself to continue using MS Word. Hence, the editorial process for this issue was fully open source. Some won't like it, others will hate it but you can all sleep soundly at night knowing that neither Bill Gates nor Steve Jobs ('cos he is dead) are making any money from this.

Matt Cracknell

Stuff 'n' Stuff

NZ cave rescue

Recently, two NZ cavers were rescued from Pillar Cave, in the Mount Arthur region, New Zealand. A news report on the incident can be found at <http://www.3news.co.nz/Freed-cavers-escape-with-minor-injuries/tabid/423/articleID/335173/Default.aspx>.

Alan Jackson

NASA image of the day

Here's a beautiful satellite image taken by Landsat 8 of the mountainous karst landscape in south-eastern China, <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=83608&src=eoai-iotd>.

Jane Pulford



NASA Landsat 8 image of the mountainous karst landscape in south-eastern China.

Borrowing gear from the Gear Store

If you borrow gear from the gear store you need to return it ASAP so that it is available for other club members to use. You should be able to clean it and get it back to the gear store during the week following your trip so that someone else can use it the next weekend. This is especially true for helmets, SRT kit, keys, GPS etc. where we only have a small number of each item.

Some equipment has a hire fee associated with it which means we have money to replace gear when it gets old or unsafe. If you borrow SRT kits, helmets, bags or trog suits there is a (small) fee per trip for their use. If you are collecting gear for someone else and there is a fee attached please let them know about it. If you have used this gear this year but not paid the fee please arrange to do so by contacting the gear store officer (me) or the treasurer (me again) for how much and how to pay. From the previous sentence you can probably deduce that I know who the gear hire fee dodgers are...

Current gear hire rates are available on the website as part of the STC membership form and fees 2014, <http://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com/forms/>.

Geoff Wise

Nerds in caves

To get your fix of photos of nerds in caves see a recent issue of Tasmanian Geographic <http://www.tasmaniangeographic.com/in-utter-darkness/>.

Yoav Bar-Ness

Anti-Social News

Notice is hereby given that there will be a Vietnam Expedition slide fest at the Bunton residence on Friday 13 June from about 7:00 pm.

Stephen Bunton

Vale Jessie Luckman

STC (ne TCC) has, I believe, lost one of its most famed members, Jessie Luckman at the ripe old age of 104. An article in *The Mercury* can be found at <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/jessie-luckman-scion-of-tasmanian-bushwalking-and-tso-pianist-dies-aged-104/story-fnj4f7k1-1226918939105>.

A dedicated obituary will appear in a future issue of the *Spiel*.

Matt Cracknell



Bunton
after
Browne

Trip Reports

IB14 Exit Cave

Exitravanza 2014: Part 1

Sarah Gilbert

6-10 February 2014

Party: Tony Veness, Sarah Gilbert, David Butler, Chris Sharples, Petr Smejkal, Milos Dvorak & Geoff Wise.

Sherpas: Tom Poritt & friend.

This year's Exitravanza was a slightly different format from previous years, held over two extra-long long weekends in February and March, allowing more flexibility and time for people to recover between rounds. We assembled at the Ida Bay car park at about 10 am on Day 1 and with the help of a couple of welcome volunteers we managed to carry all our own, plus the communal gear into Camp Gumboot located just over the river crossing near the entrance to IB14. We strung up tarps, constructed tables, set up the essential mozzie shelter and dug the pit loo. With our now well-practiced team, camp was set up quickly with enough time for some cave sightseeing or survey equipment organisation before dinner.

On Day 2 we split into two survey teams heading up Mystery Creek and Eastern Passages to attempt to relocate old survey stations and ground truth Mad Phil's (MP's) 2005 sketching. Team A (Chris, David and Sarah) went into Eastern Passage where we had line data for the whole extension but for most of it there weren't enough relocatable survey stations to be able to sketch to scale from the existing data. Resurveying Eastern Passage was added to the to do list. However, in the far north-western rockpile we were able to sketch to scale from MP's previous sketches and survey notes. The Wooly Jumper Room was also relocated with about a foot square of dark-coloured wool slowly decaying on a large rock slab. Team B (Tony, Petr and Milos) headed into Mystery Creek Passage with MP's previous sketches. The team was able to locate some old stations and annotate the old notes. The top of Mystery Creek Passage was declared the "worst passage in Exit". [*Not from what I heard. Petr wants to go back!* - Ed.]. After five years of exploring and surveying it must have been a doozy! The general conclusion was to sort MP's data out on the computer in a warm cosy lounge room and only return to some areas of MC Passage to ground truth if there is no other option ...

As the sun was setting that evening, Geoff arrived after a long day in the office running over Marble Hill in record time.



P. Smejkal

Exitravanza 2014, late night entertainment.

On Day 3 we all went up to Conference Concourse to try to survey some loop closures and attempt to link side passages into the eastern end of Hard Mans Way (HMW). Team A (Chris, Sarah, Petr and Milos) linked the two surveys from 2012 and 2013 in the large breakdown chamber to the east of the main passageway. They were only one year and 20 m apart! This forms a large loop closure with the far south-west extension of CC, where the streamway disappears under breakdown heading into the Bermuda Triangle. Now for the keen, CC can be traversed in a loop but a handline is recommended on the sketchy climb in the newly surveyed loop closure. For Team B (Tony, Geoff and David) the connection to HMW proved to be more elusive with progress stopped by a too tight and too loose rockpile. The mysteries of where the water goes through the Bermuda Triangle still remain (from CC to northern stream entrance in the Grand Fissure), with rockfall blocking every approach. On the way out we all rested at Inner Base Camp then sketched the large chamber behind the Western Arthurs where Western Passage and Dribble Loop lead off. Petr and Milos headed for home that afternoon.

On Day 4 we all returned to Eastern Passage to begin the resurveying and sketching. Team A (Sarah and Chris) finished re-sketching MP's survey in the north-western extension and resurveyed the rest of the branch down to the main drag of Eastern Passage. Sketching this area and resurveying the side passages will have to wait till next month. Team B (Tony, Geoff and David) surveyed and sketched the low, grovelly, muddy passage in the northeast extension where the water enters from Little Grunt. Our teams then combined to begin resurveying the main Eastern Passage and relocating several side branches. Again these will await our return. [*That's hopeful, I doubt the passages will give a stuff!* - Sub Ed.]

The next day we dismantled camp and packed most of it away under a couple of tarps for our return in a month's time. With lighter packs we returned to the cars and headed for home, with the traditional post-Exit fish and chip stop on the Huon River.



P. Smejkal

Exitravanza 2014, an ex-bat.



*Exitravanza 2014, Camp Gumboot.
Note the mozzie-proof "room".*



*Exitravanza 2014, the Devils Stove
Pipes, Western Passage.*

JF8 Junee Resurgence Finishing the re-line of Sump 1

Janine McKinnon

28 February 2014

Party: Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer (Pax) & Ric Tunney.

The same team was back for the final trip to finish this job. We hoped. There had been significant rainfall since the last trip in mid-January (McKinnon, 2014), but the flow levels were back to a reasonable level again. I wanted to get the job finished before the autumn/winter rains arrived, which, as all we Taswegians know, can be any time from after February.

The same exercise of getting to the water as the last visit ensued, with two exceptions:

1. Pax actually stayed dry this time. New feet for his drysuit had fixed the problem of leaking.
2. I had strained my back watching rope testing the previous Sunday and wasn't game to carry tanks in to the beach, so Ric did both loads and I just carried the light stuff. He had to put my fins on too, which was a laugh.

Pax went in first this trip as I thought it better for him to have the clear water to finish the tie-offs, and he was faster with that than me stuffing and cutting that recalcitrant old line. I gave him 15 minutes head start and then followed. I had a close look at all the tie-offs on the way in to the end of the permanent line. I thought they all looked good and secure. Winter floods will determine whether I am correct.

The line removal went pretty much as last two trips. Stuffing, cutting, swearing as it tried to get out of the bag. As per last trips, I had my shears attached to a line (and me), the bags attached to me, and anything else I could think would float away, or disappear in the silt my work was stirring up, if dropped. After about half an hour Pax arrived from the For Your Eyes Only (FYEO) direction and signalled that he was heading out. I continued with my task, also having a good look at the new tie-offs as I passed each one.

I arrived at the silt bank rising to FYEO some ten minutes later, and pulled as much buried old line out of the silt as I could before cutting it. I also found large amounts of line floating half-way up the bank. I discovered what it was when I surfaced in FYEO. I had expected to swim as far up the stream as I could and then cut the line, leaving the last couple of metres for the next party in there to remove from the

rock in the chamber it was tied off to (so I didn't have to get out of my dive gear; yes, just lazy). This was gone, and was part of the floating line in the sump entrance. Pax had done the job of cutting it off the anchor rock. Good show.

I stuffed what I could into a bag as I knelt in the water, and then got organised to deal with all that floating line just inside the sump. Down again, more cutting and stuffing. I had filled the second bag as I finished stuffing the last of the line. Job done. Large amounts of silt had been stirred up, yet again, doing this, so I had a low visibility swim for the first part of the swim home. It cleared after 20 m or so, and was a pleasant swim out. I removed the final bit of old line, the 11 mm rope starting into the sump, as I came out. Alright, job finished NOW.

Pax was waiting for me at the beach. He helped by moving the invalided old woman's tanks from the water and getting the poor old dear's fins off (I couldn't reach them).

My dive time had been 65 minutes, and this didn't include the time in FYEO, or time to get kit on and off. So my total time in the water was more like 100 minutes. I was starting to get a bit cold by the end [*you should invest in a heat vest like everyone else – Ed.*], but nothing too drastic. This was probably because I had so much clothing on under my drysuit I felt, and moved, like the Michelin Man. Pax had found some time to check a few leads in the sump as he swam out, but found nothing exciting. I walked back to the car in my kit, minus tanks, plus rope bags, as per last trips. I started to get changed. Ric then went for my tanks, after putting on his wetsuit again, and found Pax had already carried one to the entrance! That is seriously beyond the call of duty. He had his own gear to retrieve unassisted. Lunch in the sunshine followed at the usual 2 pm.

Medical report: My back was significantly better at the end of the whole exercise than the beginning. Hydrotherapy anyone? I again measured the line when I got home, it was 65 m. So total line removed from the sump was measured at 215 m. I did not measure, or remove, tie-off loops and knots, or measure the lengths with precision. So I would allow for 10% more line to have been removed. This makes the total closer to 235 m. The survey length of the sump is approximately 230 m.

REFERENCE

McKINNON, J. 2014. JF-8 Junee Resurgence - Permanent line replacment, 11 Jan. 14, *Speleo Spiel* 400:10-11.

IB14 Exit Cave**Exitravanza 2014: Part 2****Sarah Gilbert****6-10 March 2014**

Party: Matt Cracknell, Sarah Gilbert, Yoav Bar-Ness, Petr Smejkal, Milos Dvorak & Geoff Wise.

Sherpas: Jane Pulford, Chris Sharples & Amy Robertson.

Fast forward one month and we went back for a little bit more ... one last time!

By now we knew the drill – down the road, over the hill, across the river, dig a loo, set up camp. The keen four (Matt, Yoav, Petr and Milos) headed into the cave to sketch from the Mini Martin aven to the streamway. I potted around camp and sharpened pencils ready for the next few days.

On Day 2 we all headed into Eastern Passage once again. Team A (Matt and Yoav) sketched and surveyed the upper level side passages but were stopped by a 10 m pitch. The line data from the old survey continues for a fair way on the other side, but this will have to wait for another trip with a bit of rope. Matt would like to note that no Distos were harmed in this part of the survey [*I think I gave it to Yoav and told him to keep it away from me - Ed.*]. Team B (Sarah, Petr and Milos) went back up to the north-western extension to finish resurveying and sketching. There were a few unstable climbs in the rockpile down to the streamway, with a wet crawl at the end but then into lovely stream passage. All worth it for another loop closure.

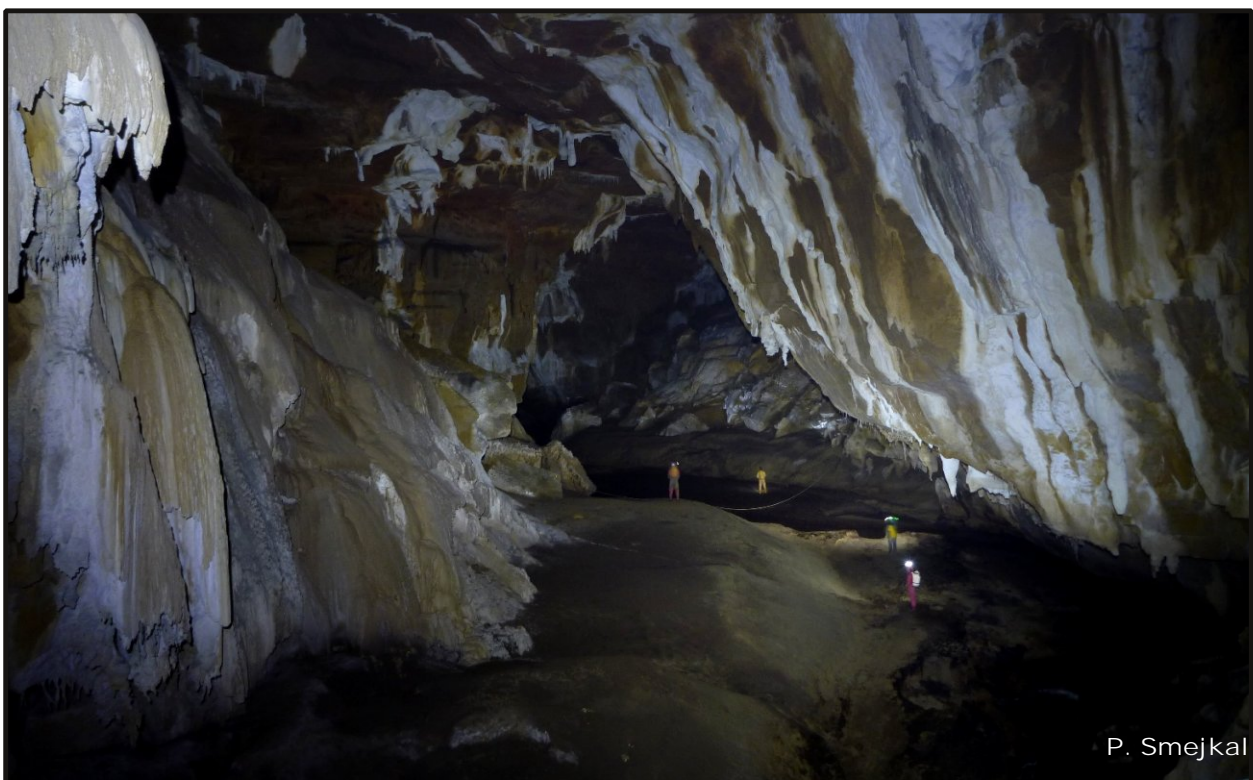
Geoff joined us once again on the Friday evening, beating his previous record run over the hill by about a minute. This was in preparation for Saturday Race Day. Team A (Geoff, Matt and Sarah) headed into IB14 through the cave and out the back to Thun Junction Chamber in 1 hour 40 minutes, just beating the crack Team Czech who had walked overland to drop into Valley Entrance. With Petr and Milos I sketched up to the top of the Valley Entrance streamway and waved them goodbye as they headed

back up the ladder. In the meantime Yoav loaded up and carted all the gear left at Camp Misery in 2012 back to Camp Gumboot. Petr, Milos and Yoav headed back to the car that afternoon. Meanwhile, I met up with Matt and Geoff who were sketching Skeleton Creek, Side Door and 8 Degree Creek. On the way out Geoff sketched the end of Kellers Squeeze which finished off all (famous last words) of the loose ends in the far reaches of Exit.

And then there were three. We had a reasonably relaxed last day, going back once again to Eastern Passage to finish sketching the main drag. Job finally done! On the way out Matt and I lingered for some serious geo-nerding in Dribble Loop, looking at the massive geothermal breccia and associated fault structures [*It was f**king awesome! - Ed.*]. This was all too much for Geoff's nerd alert and he made a hasty retreat back to camp.

Monday morning we packed up and decommissioned Camp Gumboot, our Ida Bay Hide Away for the past four years. After breakfast we were met by a much appreciated troop of volunteer Sherpas (Jane, Chris and Amy). With their help we managed to carry all the gear back to the cars in one trip. Some of it had been sitting in the bush for years! No harm done. The Gear Store now has a full collection of assorted pencils, flashers, tarps, mozzie shelters, toilet seats and Care Bear chairs. All available for hire to those who wish to recreate the genuine Exitravanza Experience.

In summary, Exitravanza 2014 has been 266 caving person-hours by nine people, consuming 12 L of quality cask beverages, sketching some large lengths of cave passage and producing 560 g of paper work [*You weighed it? - Ed.*]. This amounts to a survey production rate of 5.4 pages per litre. Now we have unquantifiable person-hours in front of a computer to digitise, sketch and produce the fabled map of Exit Cave ... stay tuned. Lastly a big thank you to all those who have contributed their time and effort, large (you know who you are!) or small over the past four years of Exitravanzaing and the preceding 40 years of exploration and surveying.



P. Smejkal

Exitravanza 2014, the Second River Crossing.

JF8 Junee Resurgence For Your Eyes Only

Liz Rogers

8-9 March 2014

Party: Andreas Klocker & Liz Rogers.

It's been five years since I last dived Junee, and my main recollections are cold, dark, dirty and cold. Obviously the inner air chamber is gorgeous and on an even earlier trip I took my compact digital camera through Sump 1 in a dry tube. With a tiny tripod and dive torches I achieved a number of passable pictures, and caught the camera mid-tumble into the stream at least twice. The camera survived the experience and so did I, though it took a week for my feet to thaw.

This time around I was keen to explore the photographic possibilities of all those delicate decorations with a proper camera set up. On arrival we discovered beautifully clear water and I was able to get some nice shots as we transited Sump 1. The new line put in by Janine, Ken and Pax is very nice,

and the extra cable ties that were distributed along the route have now been removed. We dumped the tanks and headed up the streamway to the straws. Successful shots took a while as my strobes were lighting not only the straws (pretty) but also the roof (not pretty). A bit of fiddling around and some backlighting got them to stand out in the photos.

From there I tried half and half water/air shots, getting up high to shoot across the straws, getting down low to shoot through the water, silhouettes, balanced lighting, and every variation in between. Andreas's facial expressions gently morphed from happy smile to forced smile to gritted teeth, and it was time to head out. We returned Sunday and improved the Saturday shots, including a couple I was particularly pleased with.

Getting back into For Your Eyes Only with my underwater camera rig has been on my list for some time, and it was great to spend the weekend in there. It would be even nicer if some of the other sumps on the list to investigate felt like surfacing in similar chambers ... I look forward to finding out.



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JF8 FYEO, Andreas (not smiling).

Tigers Eye and JF259 Gear testing and a surface recce in the Junee area

Andreas Klocker

10 March 2014

Party: Andreas Klocker & Liz Rogers.

After two days of photography in sump one of Junee and in For Your Eyes Only we had one day left of the long weekend. Our first goal was to test the gear set-up I was planning to use for a dive in Dreamtime in a cave which is easier to access than Dreamtime itself, so we headed for Tigers Eye. As usual, Liz was going to take some photos. Once we got there we saw that

the flow was very low (which was nice) but the viz was absolutely crap (it looked like someone poured some milky-white silt into the cave). Liz immediately pulled a mainlander "this-looks-too-cold-and-miserable" face and I knew I was going to do the dive on my own... But luckily I could use her heating vest which turned Tigers Eye into a warm bathtub! To sum it up: I turned the dive very quickly (due to the shocking viz), but the gear set-up which I want to use in Dreamtime worked great! Instead of a fragile drysuit I'm now going to use a wetsuit with a heating vest (thanks to superstar Damo Grigg my own heating vest is on the way!) and even though I'm getting lots of strange looks when people see my gear set-up, gumboots are the way forward as diving footwear and they definitely are the latest and

greatest fashion in the cave diving world!

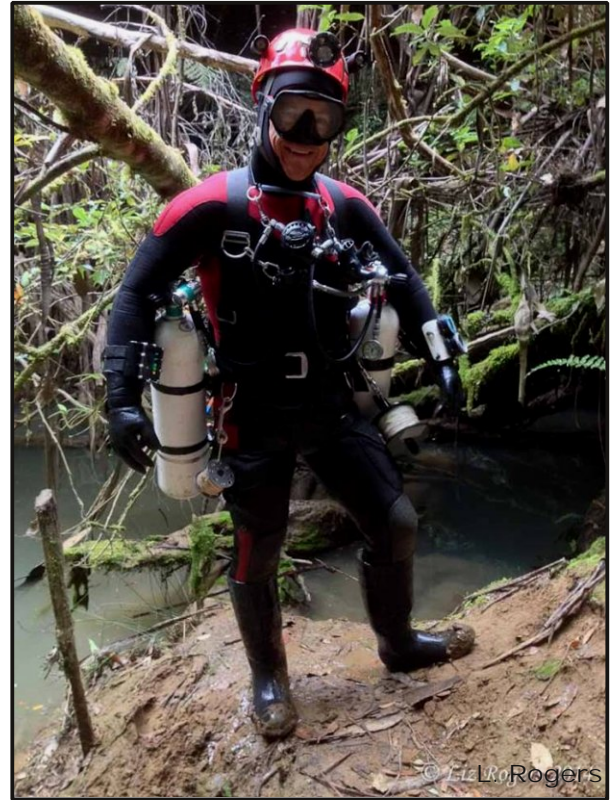
Having finished the gear testing, we headed up the Junee Quarry Road to have a look at the huge surface dolines upstream of the 'terminal' rockpile in the second sump of Junee. After seeing the size of those dolines I think the chance of getting through the rockpile are about as high as meeting the pope in a strip club, not impossible but... Looking for possible entrances upstream of the dolines we re-found JF259 (see photo) and a cave entrance which is likely JFZ74. Both entrances would need some Pommy-

style digging to get in but with the potential to find the streamway so close to the resurgence it might be worth some effort!

To finish the day off we headed back to the bridge heading over the creek coming out of Junee in case Liz would be more lucky to shoot a platypus with her camera. But as the afternoon before, there were no platypuses. Instead I heard from a friend that they saw a platypus the same day in a creek in Hobart ... wrong place and wrong time!



JF259, Andreas diligently recording this gap in the soil for posterity.



I am the Frog Man, I am the Walrus, Coo Coo Coo Choo.

Mole Creek Search and Rescue Training

Matt Cracknell

29-30 March 2014

Party: Matt Cracknell, Milos Dvorak & Petr Smejkal. Several NC and MCCC members including David Wools-Cobb & Deb Hunter. Lots of SES volunteers.

Tasmania's northern cavers had organised a joint caver search and rescue (SAR) retreat weekend with the mostly local (northern) State Emergency Service (SES) at Mole Creek. Saturday was booked out with general background information for the specifics of cave-based SAR procedures. Sunday involved participating in a mock but relatively realistic cave SAR scenario.

The STC contingent for the weekend decided to take their families up to sunny Mole Creek for a holiday. So at about 10 am on Saturday morning the Cracknell/Smejkal convoy headed off out of the pouring rain to warmer climes. We had a pleasant and safe drive up. On the way we enjoyed our now obligatory and highly recommended pitstop at Ross.

(Ross is a beautiful town with tree-lined streets, heritage buildings, clean toilets, two great bakeries full of banbury slice, scallop pies and good coffee, and it's only a minute's drive off the highway. Why would you want to stop at Campbell Town? ... Err maybe only to sit on the steam punk sundial in the field near the playground that Andy Sprent forged out

of old tractor parts but you should only do that on a sunny day.)

By the time we made it to Mole Creek a couple of hours later the rain had cleared. We booked into our rooms at the Mole Creek Hotel and settled in. After a pleasant meal at the "bistro" we then watched *Antiques Roadshow* and bundled into bed ready for the coming day's shenanigans.

The morning came and we left the girls and Paddy (Sarah & Jasmine Cracknell, Lucy & Patrick Smejkal) to go op-shopping and eat raspberry pancakes at about 9 am. Milos, Petr and I turned up at the Wet Cave Reserve and were greeted by the "comms" bus, several large marquees (the biggest of which contained a field kitchen and seating), porta-loos and several dozen SES volunteers lead by Northern Region Regional Training Officer, Gerald Van Rongen. We were warmly received and quickly briefed on the day's activities. The plan was for a small party to go in and place a live patient (a caver) into the labyrinth that is Honeycomb Cave. Two parties of 4-5, a mix of cavers and SES, would then conduct a search for, locate and extract the patient.

We kitted up, took our allocated teams and planned our search while the patient was getting ready to need finding. After about 20 minutes of searching our team located the patient down the "back-end" of the cave. A couple of us stayed to stabilise the patient while the others marked a route to mission control. A Michie phone and extraction gear (the MCCC cave

stretcher) were brought in and the process of strapping up the largest guy in the group and dragging him out of the cave was in full swing. Luckily while being tied into the stretcher the big guy (sorry I forgot his name) realised that it was a bit too claustrophobic for him. His smaller and daintier wife took his place and we all breathed a sigh of relief. Once we had found our rhythm it didn't take long to get the patient and all sherpas safely back to mission control.

There was a little confusion about the in-cave stretcher bearers giving warning that they were 20 minutes away from the entrance when in fact they were only 2 minutes away. This was perceived to be necessary for a "haul-line" to be set up at the entrance. However, the haul-line was not set up in a way that provided any safety to the patient, in fact it was probably more of a hindrance than anything else.

It had taken a little over three hours to execute the rescue. By this time the kitchen was in full swing so we all had a hot meal while the main protagonists compiled their notes. By about 2 pm a debrief meeting was called to discuss the day's activities. Deb and David were in full swing as usual but there was plenty of time for most others to have their say.

Overall the general consensus was that the day proved to be fruitful. It was a pity that more cavers

weren't present. The three STC members pretty much doubled the contingent of experienced (and non-armchair) cavers and as such our attendance was gratefully acknowledged by the SES and northern clubs. Personally, I thought it was one of the better organised and serviced SAR meets I have been to. It covered all the basics without being an epic trip that put off young, impressionable SES volunteers at the pointy-end of the day's activities. Also I thought it was neat that the Michie phone operators had to stick their thumb in a puddle to get a good reception.

Milos, Petr and I met up with the girls at the train park in Deloraine at about 4 pm. Everyone arrived safely ... just ... in Hobart a few hours later. We did have one little scare when the SUV behind us thought that the road ahead was clear to overtake. Pity they missed the dark car (with headlights on) approaching at a relative speed of 200 km/h. Don't you love it when they know that you know that they are idiots and they have the gall to give you the finger and then tailgate you for the next 10 km? My favourite thing to do is to ever so lightly ease off the accelerator and watch the faces they pull in the rear view mirror.

N37 Mullamullang Cave (WA)

Janine McKinnon

12 April 2014

Party: Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

We were out on the Nullarbor for two weeks for me to cave dive. As we would be passing by the property this cave was on as we drove back east, we decided we could afford the time to stop and visit the famous, and remote, Mullamullang Cave. I had never been there before, however Ric visited the cave on a trip across to Perth for an ASF conference sometime in the late '70s (that's as close a date as he can pin down) [WACCON was held in Perth in January 1979 - *Sub Ed.*]. Ric had found the name of the property,

and a contact phone number, through a caver in WA. He called and received permission to visit the cave. Some time surveying tracks on Google Earth, and the 1:250,000 topographic map, elicited a route to the cave that we could drive with "The White Slug". We hoped so, anyway.

We started in off the Eyre Highway at 11.30 am. We had a few navigational issues in the labyrinth of tracks in the first kilometre, a common situation with rough tracks near a proper road. Once that was sorted we had a pretty straightforward run to the cave along farm tracks. As there were no signs of any sort, I wouldn't have liked to try and find it without a clear set of directions, or map search beforehand. We arrived after one and a half hours driving from Madura.



N37 Mullamullang Cave entrance with a hydrated Ric in the foreground.

The entrance is quite an impressive sight, in that it is a big hole (collapse) in the ground, surrounded by many, many square kilometres of flat land. All the dive sites out there are the same though, so it wasn't a surprise. We had lunch and started into the cave at 3pm. It was very easy to find our way into the doline, and a few minutes searching found the way through the boulder-choked bottom. It was a small hole on the right hand end wall (facing into the cave). A few minutes in the rockpile and we emerged into the cave.

We found ourselves at the top of a steeply sloping rockpile, maybe 30 m to the floor. A path was marked by reflective tags. This proved to be the case for the whole cave. Navigation was not difficult! At the bottom the cave continued in a straight passage, with intermittent stream channel. It was about 10 m high and a similar width. I had always heard that Mullamullang was huge, so I was a little disappointed with these dimensions. Exit Cave it was not.

We started walking and soon reached The Dune (yes, an 8 m high sand dune in the passage). Ric decided that this was as far as they had reached on his previous trip. We had only been in the cave for 15 minutes! He recalled that in January (when he had been there) it had been very, very hot, and the cave had been stifling. Lucky for us that in April it was more tolerable, although still a very warm t-shirt and shorts job.

We walked pleasantly along easy passage, reached large boulder fields after about half an hour, but continued easy walking up and down hills along the well marked track. I stopped for a few photos along the way. There weren't a lot of distinctive features to aid us in working out where precisely we were on the map of the cave we had. We came to an area with (heavily trogged) moonmilk (I think it had been), some white crystalline wall formations, and a little water in small pools. This we thought was White Lake. We continued on. I had neglected to bring any water with us and was beginning to get very thirsty in the warm conditions. After an hour we decided to give it a few minutes more, and if we didn't reach the marked junction at the lakes near the far end of the cave, we would turn around.

At the one mile mark (I think) there is a book with

historical trip reports, mainly of the exploration trips. A half hour later (just up the next rise, just up the next rise...) Ric came to the top of another rockpile and saw a lake at the bottom of a steep drop. This must definitely be "The Drop Off", just above the junction with the last few hundred metres of passage. We headed down for a swim in the beautiful looking lake. Unfortunately it was brackish so we couldn't drink it, and we were very thirsty by then. However we had a lovely swim and turned to head out. We had been at the lake a half hour.

The cooling effect of the swim lasted for the next half hour as we climbed up and down the large rockpiles. We didn't stop on the way out and arrived at the entrance an hour later, at 6 pm. Five minutes back to the camper and time for a beer (after a big drink of water) and dinner with the sunset.

Impressions: The cave is definitely worth a visit if you are in the neighbourhood. It is very easy caving, being all walking. The part we did was anyway, which is about 90% of the cave. We did not do the one or two short side passages marked on the map, or the bit past the lake at the Drop Off, as I said. I doubt it would have been any harder to the end as the whole cave was of a very consistent nature. Possibly 15 minutes each way, but we were too thirsty, and had had enough of the sameness of the cave to bother with the last part. Maybe we missed something amazing, but that will be our loss. The passage, once we reached the rockpiles, was large. Maybe 20 m wide and 20 m up and down each rockpile. The roof was only 5 m above our heads at the tops of the rockpiles. The last rockpile, The Drop Off was around 30 m high.

The roof had nice roof channels [*that's a technical term is it Janine?* - Ed.] in the front parts of the cave and the colour of the rock and sand was an interesting reddish hue. I had expected to be amazed at the size of the passage as I had always been told how huge this cave was. Maybe that raised my expectations to unreasonable levels, or maybe my experiences with Exit Cave, and overseas, have left me hard to please, but I didn't find the dimensions awe inspiring. Quite impressive, but not overwhelming as I was anticipating. Still, it's a good cave and the remote location adds to the experience.



N37 Mullamullang Cave, rockpile with a dehydrated Ric in the background.

IB14 Exit Cave

Sarah Gilbert

19 April 2014

Party: Sarah Gilbert & Stephen Bunton. Jim & Thomas Blythe, Greg & Tamsin Tunnock, Mark & Holly Wilson (Blue Mountains Speleological Club).

A group of Bunty's mates from the Blue Mountains Speleological Club (BMSC) and their teenage kids had been visiting various caves around Tassie over the Easter holidays. I volunteered to take the trip to Exit Cave, and Bunty also came along for the ride and a walk through the forest to the entrance. We trogged up outside the entrance and headed in. Rain the night before brought the water levels in the D'Entrecasteaux River up to a dangerous just-over-gumboot level at the first crossing. The low summer

levels enjoyed during Extravaganza were no more and wet socks were had by all.

We stopped off for a side trip into The Ball Room before heading through The Rockpile. With an experienced group we made good time. We poked around at the base of Mini Martin (which the others had looked down into the day before) and stopped for lunch by the main streamway. There was still plenty of time and energy so we headed up to the Grand Fissure Beach and admired the formations in the Eastern Grand Fissure.

We headed back out with a short side trip up the D'Entrecasteaux Passage to have a look at the glowworms. Unfortunately the water levels here were well and truly over gumboot depth so we could only see the spectacular display at a distance. Then out, up the hill and back to the car before dark.

IB10 Mystery Creek

Matt Cracknell

19 April 2014

Party: Yoav Bar-Ness, Jasmine & Matt Cracknell. Andrew Hughes (Bookend Trust).

Yoav, through his extensive networking capabilities, had managed to set up a trip into Mystery Creek with Andrew Hughes. Andrew is the main protagonist for the Bookend Trust "Expedition Class" initiative. Expedition Class gives Tasmanian students a "real-time" online learning experience of remote and wild places through Andrew's adventures. This program has run successfully for several years and has earned Andrew national recognition as a finalist for Australian of the Year in 2013, see <http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/honour-roll/?view=fullView&recipientID=1032>.

This year's Expedition Class theme is Cave Search (<http://www.expeditionclass.com/>). Andrew will be camping out later this year in the Florentine ... in winter. He will be posting his caving discoveries online and getting kids interested in caves. Hence, it seemed like a good idea to go caving with him for the day. I had brought Jasmine, my 3-year old daughter. She seems to get pretty excited about caves so I must be doing the right thing.

We rendezvoused in Huonville at about 8:30 am. On the way down we got to know each other and tried to get a sense of what Andrew wanted to get out of the day. We then met up with Sarah and company at the Southern Ranges carpark as they were heading off to Exit Cave. The walk along the track took longer because one member of the party had short legs.

Inside the cave we took our time exploring most nooks and crannies and poking around in the river and developing our sense of wonder. The highlight of the day was looking for *Macularites* spp. and *Crinoidea* fossils in the walls. Jasmine wanted to keep going deeper into the cave but we got to a point where her short legs and my back were not going to make it any further, so we stopped in the dark and waited for Yoav and Andrew. On the way out we had a quick look at the Cephalopod Creek waterfall for photos and snacks. When we got outside Jasmine was a bit tired and cranky so I carried her back to the car.



Y. Bar-Ness

IB10, Jasmine getting into places big people can't.



Y. Bar-Ness

IB10, Jasmine and Andrew developing their sense of wonder.

JF337-JF36 Slaughterhouse Pot-Growling Swallet

Through trip

Petr Smejkal

21 April 2014

Party: Milos Dvorak, Mark & Laura Wilson, Greg & Tamsin Tunnock & Petr Smejkal.

At the last STC meeting I was asked by Stephen Bunton to take four mainlanders to Slaughterhouse Pot. It was four months since I was there last and I could not wait to go there again. Another person interested in this trip was Milos. I exchanged a few emails with Bunty before the trip but I did not hear anything from the mainlanders. Bunty promised that all the mainlanders would be ready to go caving, and to leave from Maydena general store at 9 am. Milos and I arrived at Maydena where we finally met the mainlanders, Mark, his daughter Laura, and Greg with his daughter, Tamsin.

Before we headed to Slaughterhouse Pot we checked the water level in Growling Swallet. Everything seemed OK and we started to follow the track to Slaughterhouse Pot. When we found the entrance, Greg took the GPS coordinates. We started caving at 10 am. The trip through was smooth and without any troubles. The most exciting part was taking photos. We got out of the cave at 2 pm. I thought four hours was not too bad for a group of six. I was pleased when Milos and I got back to Hobart and managed to clean up all the caving gear before sunset. That doesn't happen very often.



P. Smejkal

JF36, Laura (left), Tamsin and a waterfall.



P. Smejkal

JF337, Milos descending Rescue Aven.

JF4 Khazad-Dûm

Stephen Bunton

22 April 2014

Party: Stephen Bunton. Greg & Tamsin Tunnock, Mark & Holly Wilson (Blue Mountains Speleological Club).

It was 37 years since I first visited Tasmania for an Easter caving extravaganza. The aim was to "do" Exit Cave and bottom KD, a trip I almost replicated this Easter.

Mark and Greg were travelling around the premier caving areas in the state doing a "whirlwind – best of" two week caving trip with their teenage daughters aged 15 and 16 respectively! This was to be the gutsiest of their trips and I thought if I was going to give them instructions on how to get to the entrance, then I may as well tag along for the whole day.

We started promptly and the caving went off without a hitch using the glue-in p-hangers. I still recommend a rope on Pitch 2, the free-climbable grovel. We used a rope from below to rig this on the way out. There is still plenty of room for improvement on the rigging of this cave because we all got wet, very wet, wetter than I have ever got before!

The two girls did a great job negotiating the not so straight-forward as we'd like technical rigging and transporting their share of the rope down the cave. I had a bludgy job as guide while Greg and Mark rigged. I didn't go down the last pitch so as to save time on the whole trip overall. I prusik very slowly, these days. When it comes to power to weight ratios, I have a lot of denominator!

On the way out Mark took the bottom two ropes and then escorted the girls out. Greg and I did the rest of the derig. Overall it was a good trip of 9.5 hours. The two girls probably set a record for the youngest cavers to bottom KD, although Neil Hickson and Peter Ruxton of the Sydney Speleological Society (SSS) bottomed the cave, rigging and derigging, as a pair of sixteen year olds, in about 1975, although there was a pretty strong back-up team of other SSS heavies, in the area at the time.

All in all it was a fine day in my favourite cave and the climax of a good trip for the visitors who are threatening to come back. I will have to stay fit, when or if I ever get fit again!

JF223 Tassy Pot

Beginners trip

Petr Smejkal

25 April 2014

Party: Anna Ekdahl, Han-Wei Lee, Robert Krachler, Milos Dvorak & Petr Smejkal.

I had been trying to organise a beginner's SRT trip for quite a while. Finally, I found enough beginners, a group of four plus myself, interested in doing Tassy Pot. We all agreed to do the trip on Anzac Day.

We met at my house, and managed to fit all our gear in Han-Wei and Anna's 4WD Subaru. Travelling in the 4WD turned out to be a wise choice as the road to Tassy Pot was muddy and overgrown with tree ferns. We parked the car next to the Tassy Pot entrance at 11 am. I started rigging the cave at about 11:30 am.

The first rope we had was 54 m long and I thought I would have enough to anchor the rope to a big tree next to the track, which would make it easier to reach a fern tree usually used as the first anchor point. The first P-hanger under the fern tree was marked with pink tape and was easy to find. I made a Y-belay and headed down. When I reached the bottom of the first pitch I observed that I had just enough rope to reach the P-hangers at the second pitch. I felt quite lucky, and I was glad that I didn't have to climb up to redo all the rebelay.

I waited at the top of the second pitch for Milos. When he reached the rebelay I let him lead the way to abseil the second pitch. When Anna reached me I asked her to wait there for Rob, and I followed Milos. While Anna was waiting for Rob, I was able to rig the third pitch. I was waiting for Milos at the P-hangers at the top of the third pitch but nobody came for quite some time. After a while, I got scared and thought that something had gone wrong so I went back to the bottom of the second pitch. Rob was just

reaching the bottom. I asked what happened; Rob experienced an attack of claustrophobic panic, and considered heading back. I took two extra karabiners from him that I needed for the last pitch and told him to relax and that if he did not feel OK to go back and wait for us in the car. When Anna reached the bottom of the second pitch I went down to the Good-Bye Chamber to prepare the rope for the last abseil.

The rope was hanging in the top two P-hangers and I was waiting for somebody. This waiting started to be boring after 15 minutes and I decided to go back. When I reached the bottom of the third pitch nobody was there. When I asked what was happening the response was not clear so I went to the top of the third pitch where I met Han-Wei and Milos who told me that Anna had used her paramedic superpowers to convince Rob to continue. Milos and Han-Wei went into the Good-Bye Chamber to take some photos and I waited for Rob and Anna. 15 minutes later we all met in the Good-Bye Chamber and without any more waiting I reached the bottom of the last pitch.

Approximately 40 minutes after my arrival at the bottom, we were all sitting and enjoying a bit of lunch. It took us 3.5 hours to get there and we spent another half an hour sitting, talking and eating.

Anna started climbing up first at around half past three. The way up was without any more surprises but it was very slow. Oh wait a sec, there was another surprise: Han-Wei's new harness did not fit very well and Han-Wei had to stop frequently to make sure that the circulation to his legs did not stop for too long. Long story short, to get out took us another 5 hours. It was 8:30 pm when I finished derigging. It was a long beginner's trip and I am glad that I took an extra layer of thermal clothing. Everyone was enthusiastic and interested, and I enjoyed leading the trip.



H.-W. Lee

JF223, Anna in the Good-Bye Chamber

Other Exciting Stuff

Geoporn

Chris Sharples

Below is a pic of Vanishing Falls taken by me on a recent helicopter jolly with Rolan. Also for your titillation are a couple of other pics taken on an even more recent helicopter jolly with Dave Bowman – non-karstic features but including the Badger Creek Depression which could be mistaken for karst but isn't, nor is it "pseudokarst" 'cos that's crap terminology as outlined in Eberhard & Sharples (2013).

Nuff sed.

REFERENCE

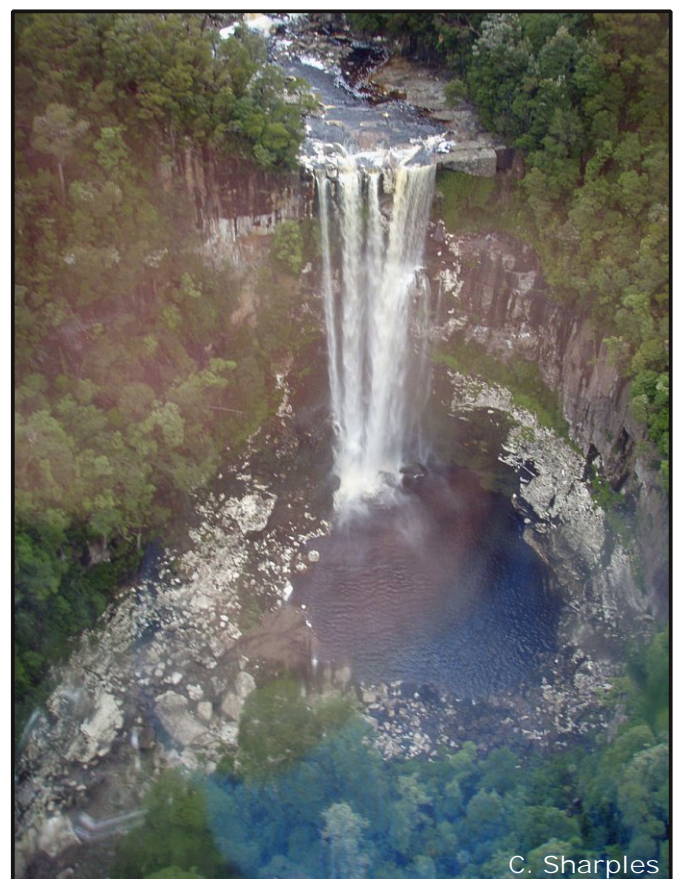
EBERHARD, R. S. & SHARPLES C. 2013. Appropriate

terminology for karst-like phenomena: The problem with 'pseudokarst'. *International Journal of Speleology*, 42: 109-113. Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/ijs/vol42/iss2/2>.



C. Sharples

Badger Creek Depression.



C. Sharples

Vanishing Falls.

WIZARD OF IDA BAY

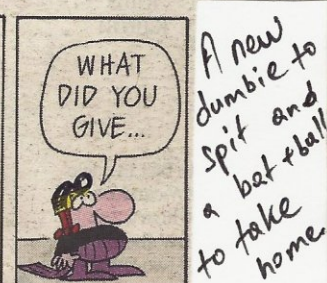
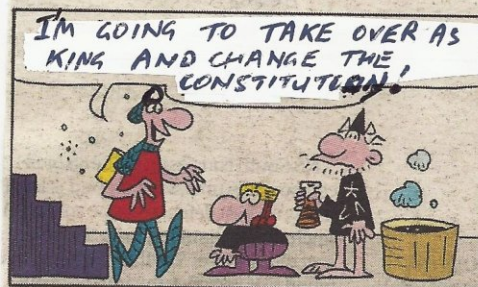
2013



It was all just pie in the sky!



A strange + beautiful idea... well an idea!



WHAT'S WRONG?

I GAVE HIM THE WRONG POTION!

WHAT DID YOU GIVE...

A new dumbie to spit and a bat + ball to take home

History ⑥

To be continued..



P. Smejkal

Extravaganza 2014, the Third River Crossing.