Speleo Spiel 402

May—June 2014

Newsletter of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc., PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006, AUSTRALIA ISSN 1832-6307

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Front Cover:
Reflections in Lake Pluto, H8 Wolf Hole. Photo by Petr Smejkal.

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

Contents

Editorial

Issue #402 of the *Speleo Spiel* is chock-a-block full of interesting stuff. There are numerous trip reports detailing new discoveries in the Junee-Florentine and a few reports documenting trips with new club members. Some of these trips have a moral to their story: don't go caving with Dickon in the rain; make sure that you can fit through the squeeze before you pull the ropes down; and always take ropes that are a couple of metres longer than recommended by Jeff Butt. Despite this, there were no fatalities and everyone managed to get home without calling in the "Crack Team" to help.

This issue contains a bumper crop of articles categorised as "Other Exciting Stuff". Dickon provides us with a small but surprisingly transparent window to his psyche. Ric reconfirms to us all that he cuddles up to small electronic devices at night. Rolan has been gating caves ... again (albeit for very good reason), Greg republishes some TCC history and we farewell a early member of the club, Jesse Luckman, who recently passed away.

Matt Cracknell

Stuff 'n' Stuff

Epic German Cave Rescue

The long saga of the German cave rescue is over. He's out and alive. Amazing effort see http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27914426.

Janine McKinnon

Quiz Night

I've just been trawling through my STC folder and came across a third quiz I'd put together ... in 2011. I thought perhaps it was time it saw the light of day. It's not 100% cave-oriented like its predecessors; more like 20% cave and 80% normal quiz. Perhaps we could invite some normal people to attend too, just not any of the semi-professional quiz circuit wankers that trawl the Hobart quiz scene and suck the joy out of the part-timers' evenings. Or we could invite them too, refuse to allow any cavers on their teams, up the ratio of cave to non-cave questions and screw them over!

If there's sufficient interest likely dates are 12 or 16 August. More information will be forthcoming

Alan Jackson

SAREX 2014

This year's SAREX will be run from the Wayatinah Camp Ground with a briefing being conducted at 9.30 am on Saturday 2 August 2014. There will be a caving scenario, 4WD navigation exercise, day walk up Wylds Craig and a search scenario involving a search dog. Police will provide a BBQ at the conclusion of the exercises which we hope to have finished by 1600 hrs on Saturday. Sunday will be a clean up day and travel back to Hobart. You will need to bring a tent to stay in, food for lunch and breakfast and anything else that will make you comfortable for the night. We can use the facilities at the camp ground which include toilets and coin operated hot showers. For more information contact Andreas Klocker.

Andreas Klocker

Cave Rescue Training

As mentioned in one of our terribly exciting meetings I'm organising a cave rescue training session to be held on the Royal Hobart Show weekend, 22-25 October 2014. Al Warild will be leading the training, which will be based on a cave rescue course that has been run for mainland clubs in the past. As the first part of that course was mainly for people who saw a rebelay for the first time in their life (apparently they do exist!) ... so hopefully that won't be needed here (I really hope so!). Hence Al thinks three days should do it. Further information will be posted on the STC email list/website/*Speleo Spiel* in the near future.

Andreas Klocker

Sixteen Legs: Enter The Cave

The Opening of the Exhibit "Sixteen Legs: Enter The Cave" will take place at 5-6 PM on Friday 15 August at the Rosny Barn (next to the Eastlands shopping mall). The exhibit will be open until 24 August. The Bookend Trust has specially invited STC to attend the event. For a bit more info on this event and related projects visit http://www.sixteenlegs.com/background.html.

Yoav Bar-Ness

Bunton after Browne

Trip Reports

JF8 Junee Resurgence

Old line removal and tie-off refurbishment dives

1 & 10 February 2014

Janine McKinnon

Divers: Janine McKinnon & Michael Packer (Pax).

Support: Ric Tunney.

[*These reports somehow got lost somewhere between Janine writing them and my receiving them. A subsequent trip (Dive 3) has already been published in* Speleo Spiel *#401 (McKinnon 2014c – Ed.*]

Dive 1

The new line was in (McKinnon 2014a) and now we were starting the job of removing the old line and doing whatever was needed to the tie-offs to make them secure, and hopefully durable. The flow in the river was back to summer levels. We were happy to see this as the job would be much easier if we weren't fighting a strong current. The usual palaver of getting diving gear to the beach at the start of the sump was started at 9 am. Having my usual, reliable Sherpa, I was ready to put tanks on as poor Pax arrived with his last load around 10:30 am. This was OK as we had a plan. This plan involved me diving first and starting on the removal of the old line. Pax would follow behind, checking and re-doing the tie-offs. The best laid schemes O' Mice an' Men gang aft agley (credit Robbie Burns).

Pax arrived to report that he had torn a hole in the leg of his drysuit. Not to fear, he and Ric would return to the car and see if they could do a field repair. I would wait at the beach, and plan a plan review for if Pax was out of the game. To be honest, I doubted he would find anything that would seal the hole, and so I laid back and thought through my back-up plan. This basically involved me removing as much old line as I could fit in the two cave packs I was taking for the task, and then making my way out. Tie-off upgrading would wait for another trip. I apologise to the boys for doubting their determination and resourcefulness. Pax arrived, some indeterminate amount of time later having effected a repair with superglue … Game on.

I headed in with two cave packs and a stage bottle (to potentially grant extra time), cut the old line just inside the entrance restriction and started stuffing the line in to the cave pack as I swam forward. I cut the line at tie-offs and when the sections were getting too awkward to handle I stuffed them into the pack.

Stuffing thick line into a pack underwater isn't that straightforward. It is sufficiently not straightforward enough that Pax caught up with me after about 15 minutes. I dropped the stage after a third of the gas was gone, dropped the pack when it was full then started stuffing and cutting line into pack #2. Pax periodically caught up with me. He was pretty fast with those tie-off fixes. When I had filled the second pack I signalled Pax (who had caught up yet again) to turn for home. I estimated we were around the half way point. Pax agreed.

The trip out was uneventful although moving two full rope packs of line was a bit awkward (it is mostly 9 mm rope, with about 30 m of it being 11 mm). I basically picked up each pack and put it down on the floor ahead of me as I moved. This stirred up silt so poor Pax had a pretty low visibility exit dive. Mind you, all our efforts on the way in had stirred up silt already. Every touch of rock and old line sent swirls of silt into the water. I can't say my visibility was much either.

I reached the surface 55 minutes after starting the dive with Pax right behind me. We were quite cold (8 °C water temperature) but the task of getting our gear back to the car soon warmed us up. Lunch, coffee and a beer in the warm sun (30 °C) finished off the day. Also, we managed to talk to passing tourists. I am always surprised how many come by in summer.

I measured the rope when I got home and was disappointed to find only 70 m. I did a calculation of how much new line we had placed in the cave (using how much was left on the roll), and found around 230 m, which is the surveyed length of the sump, so that fits well. We obviously didn't get as far as we had thought … Bummer.

Dive 2

The Dive 1 team was back to continue the job. Our start was delayed an hour, as we spent that time chain-sawing the tree that was blocking the road just inside the Norske Skog gate. We were equipped and prepared for this as this particular tree had given us some excitement on the drive out from the Dwarrowdelf trip the previous night (McKinnon 2014b). Pax did all the hard work with the chainsaw while we stood around, admired his skills and moved the odd cut limb.

We made it to the car park at 10.30 am. We packed the gear and took our loads to the viewing platform. We had coffee and a snack and discussed the plan, which didn't take long as it was the same as the last trip – Diving independently, I go in and start packing old line and Pax follows (with a 20 minute gap) and checks and secures tie-offs.

The usual shuttle to the beach went as normal. Ric left as soon as he had delivered the last load and Pax left for another load while I started kitting up. I was fully kitted and ready to go before Pax arrived back at the beach … Déjà vu, Pax had had another leak in the (other) foot of his drysuit and had been out repairing it. I had just thought he was sitting in the sun for the 20 minutes that I was going in ahead of him.

I headed in, swam quickly to the end of the old line (10 minutes), as the flow was quite low compared to what it can be. Line cutting and stuffing went pretty much as expected. I spent half an hour or so at it and filled three bags. I was approaching thirds on my air (main twin tanks, as I had already dropped the stage) but more to the point, I was fed up with it for the day. Pax arrived behind me just as I finished filling the third bag. I had optimistically carried six in with me which was a pretty clear example of failing to know my limits. I signalled that I was heading out and Pax decided to continue on. I was a bit surprised then to see his lights appear out the entrance only five minutes behind me. It had transpired that his suit had started leaking quite badly only a minute or two after we parted and so he had terminated his dive too.

I picked up my stage and one of the filled bags as I came out and left one bag for Pax to retrieve. My dive time was 1 hour. I headed straight out to the car to alert Ric to our imminent return. I then started hauling out of the cave. Ric completed two trips with my gear from the beach to the entrance while I changed and stayed at the cars. There were lots of tourists around and we didn't want to leave the gear unattended at the car. I was amazed how many people were coming by to view the resurgence [*It is an advertised tourist attraction – Ed.*]. There were five or six groups in the hour we took to retrieve gear from the viewing platform, have a late lunch (at 2.30 pm) and pack up. As we were doing our final pack a couple walked by and stopped for a chat (as they all do). It turned out to be Keir Vaughan-Taylor and partner. He is a cave diver from Sydney. We knew him thirty years ago. Small world indeed.

I measured the length of line again the following day and found we had retrieved 80 m. One more trip should do it. I hope [*See McKinnon 2014c – Ed.*].

References

McKinnon, J. 2014a. JF8 Junee Resurgence – Permanent line replacement. *Speleo Spiel, 400*: 10-11.

McKinnon, J. 2014b. JF14 Dwarrowdelf – Training trip. *Speleo Spiel, 400*: 22.

McKinnon, J. 2014c. JF8 Junee Resurgence – Finishing the re-line of Sump 1. *Speleo Spiel, 401*: 5.

JF398 Boulder Jenga

Cracking Boulder Jenga

26 February-2 March 2014

Dickon Morris

Cavers: Andreas Klocker & Dickon Morris.

This report covers five trips that were run over about a week. It follows on from the report in *Speleo Spiel* #400 (Morris 2014) which describes the first trip to push the boulder choke of JF398. For obvious [*Not obvious to anyone over 40 - Sub. Ed.*] reasons this cave has been christened Boulder Jenga.

26 February 2014

The entrance dig had not collapsed since the previous trip, in fact nothing had moved at all. This meant that we had no excuse not to venture underground and continue rearranging the choke to a more favourable orientation. It took a little while to work out the correct way on at the limit reached on the previous trip.

We wasted effort trying to engineer a route through a 'rift' between two enormous boulders. When this proved to be rather a tall order we began to work our way down through the floor. About 1 m below the original level of the boulder floor a narrow squeeze was uncovered which, when pushed, led to more open space. There was still no solid wall but miraculously it was possible to push on down through cavities among the jumbled boulders. Finally, a chamber was reached that appeared to have one solid wall. The draft was now rather faint but appeared to emerge from the floor beside the wall that was presumed to be solid.

The survey would later show that this point was 30 m below the entrance. Quite a sobering depth to attain in a loose boulder choke.

27 February 2014

Our optimism had faded considerably the next day. There was a way through the choke for sure but digs like this have been known to take years to complete successfully. I did ask myself why we had chosen to target a hopelessly choked sinkhole rather than one of the many open leads in the JF. There were two answers: (1) the draft on that first trip had been ridiculously strong; and (2) British cavers are naturally drawn to heavily choked sinkholes. Many major UK systems start this way.

Once we had dragged our carcasses down to the bottom of the cave the method of boulder removal familiar to many modern cavers began in earnest once again. As with the previous two digs we were fortunate to have a dearth of stacking space and as before, we were extremely lucky. After less than two hours work we had opened up a hole in the floor that revealed considerable space below. I dropped through this and was treated to a view of a low dry stream bed with a solid roof.

"We're in! We're f***ing in!!" I shouted and crawled eagerly onwards. After a few metres the passage opened up into the largest chamber yet encountered. It is about 10 m long and 2 m wide. The left wall and roof are solid rock while the right hand wall is composed of a mass of boulders that is the bottom of the choke that goes 30 m to the surface. On the far side of the chamber it looked as if the cave may choke again but a body sized hole between boulders provided access into a pleasant, wide meander. The first truly solid passage in the entire cave.

It has been a long held dream of mine to find a cave after a dig in a choked sinkhole. It is the sort of discovery that you really have to work for. I hope this will go some way to explaining and excusing the maniacal, triumphant whooping and cackling that the exploration of this passage was accompanied by. My joyous headlong rush was soon halted by something not entirely unexpected in the JF ... a pitch.

28 February 2014

The next day's trip got off to a great start when we discovered that my SRT kit had been left in Hobart. As the cave had now 'gone' we were obliged to survey it. To the top of the pitch at least. Around 40 of the shortest and most awkward legs put the cave at 60 m long and 35 m deep. At the top of the pitch discovered the previous day, Andreas was able to effect an exploration rig off a very large chockstone and rock spike in the streamway. A bolted rebelay around 20 m below the lip produced a good hang. However the 50 m rope that we had brought was insufficient and he was left hanging a good distance from the floor. Returning to the top of the pitch he passed the baton (and the single SRT kit) to me.

The pitch was straight apart from the last undescended 20 m where it was broken by a ledge. With the current rig the rope would pass right over the edge of the ledge. This was not ideal but it wasn't a particularly sharp edge so I attached the short rope that I had brought to the end of the 50 m and performed my first knot pass outside of training to get to the floor.

The pitch was floored with boulders (as if we hadn't encountered enough of them already) that sloped steeply down to the far corner. Here I was able to find my way through to the top of a short pitch in a rift.

1 March 2014

We added a deviation in the last 20 m of the pitch descended the previous day and swapped the two short ropes for a 75 m rope to create a good clean rig. After dutifully surveying the pitch we proceeded to the drop that had stopped us yesterday. It proved to be two short drops in a classic fault plane passage down a dry stream canyon – strongly reminiscent of Eastwater Cavern on the Mendip Hills, although not polished to a sheen by the passage of countless Boy Scouts.

At the bottom of the pitch, the passage trends along the strike of the fault to emerge in a reasonable sized chamber with a large fossil inlet. A very short pitch led to yet another bloody boulder choke! I managed to follow a route between jammed boulders and a solid wall into a small boulder chamber that appeared to have no way on. Could this bastard really do this to us after so much hard work and good fortune to simply turn us away less than 20 m from the probable base level? After a few anxious minutes I managed to find a gap between the boulders that was half blocked with gravel. Once this was removed a tight squeeze gave access to another boulder chamber with an easy slide between boulders leading to the head of a short pitch in a rift.

2 March 2014

Today was to be the final trip. We were not sorry, the daily drive from Hobart, hike up the hill and descent of what, for its depth, is a rather arduous cave was getting tedious. While Andreas resurveyed the pitch to make sense of the strange data we had entered the previous evening I went to grab the rope that we had left at the

last choke and derig the bottom. I was unable to resist using the rope and slung it around a large thread at the top of the undescended pitch.

Finally the cave delivered what I had hoped for when starting the dig, a pleasant section of walking stream passage with a number of sharp right angle bends. After about 30 m a short climb was reached at which point I turned around, leaving it for the next trip.

The cave has almost certainly now reached base level and shown that even totally choked sinkholes are worth a crack. You never know how lucky you might be.

Reference

Morris, D. 2014. JF398 Klockerfest Day 15 – JF's next big system? *Speleo Spiel, 400*: 21-22.

H8 Wolf Hole

4 May 2014

Matt Cracknell

Cavers: Matt Cracknell, Milos Dvorak & Petr Smejkal.

Petr was turning 31 so I thought a jolly in Wolf Hole might be a nice birthday present. Also, it had been several years since my last trip to this cave and it offered a chance to get back and check out a lead that I had noticed while mapping the cave in 2008-2009. I hadn't pushed the lead as I was on my own and didn't feel like falling to my death without anyone knowing about it. Furthermore, Rolan needed an extra lock added to the gate that restricts access to the "new" stuff.

Milos, Petr and I dropped the entrance pitch without any dramas and headed straight to the gate. We experimented for 15 minutes or so with different lock and chain configurations before settling on a system that provides additional security.

We headed back to the main tourist route and bumbled around poking our heads into most of the easily accessible passage before making our way to the breakdown that dams Lake Pluto. We turned right (east) and climbed into the labyrinth of unstable boulders and clay that contains the lead I was looking for. It took a while for me to remember where to go. This area of Wolf Hole has numerous dead ends and slippery climbs that are treacherous to navigate even with a good map. I finally got my bearings and located the ~ 4 m climb that I spotted five years ago.

Petr literally skipped up the rift and onto the ledge that had potential to go somewhere. Unfortunately it was full of bootprints. This indicated that were weren't the first to think this spot was worth a look. Milos and I followed Petr up onto the ledge only to find him heading back our way. He had found a ~ 3 m drop and needed a hand-line to get down. The walls did not provide any bombproof anchors so I made a "Figure 10" knot (Figure 9 with an extra loop) that was big enough to jam into a small gap between the wall and clay floor. Petr gingerly slid down feet first and disappeared.

A couple of minutes later he reappeared and informed us that there was no way on. It seems that the rift we were in was full of sediment that had in places washed out. However, it hadn't washed out enough for us to get through. Unperturbed by this setback we headed back to Lake Pluto for some lunch and a couple of photos.

To kill an hour or so I suggested that we head for the far end of the lake and check out the rockfall past the "Mud-brick Factory". The low water levels meant that we only got wet up to our waists. We slithered onto the broken slabs past the "Mud-brick Factory" and looked for the right-hand turn (east) down to "Estremita". I had forgotten how difficult it was to move through this part of the cave. It is a wide flattner formed from the ceiling collapsing (probably when the fault that forms the western wall slipped) as one giant slab an indeterminate number of years ago. One has to slither over razor sharp rocks with barely enough room to pass. We turned right and headed down the slope only to realise that we had managed to find uncharted territory. Petr pushed it to the point where he almost couldn't pull himself out. Battered and bruised we decided to turn around and go home.

H8 Wolf Hole, some pretties.

H8 Wolf Hole, geo nerd.

JF36 Growling Swallet–New Feeling

25 May 2014

Janine McKinnon

Cavers: Han-Wei Lee, Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer (Pax) & Ric Tunney.

On the lookout for new connections to be made, I had decided that the sump at the end of New Feeling was worth a visit. I had found the descriptions of that area in old trip reports in the archive a little confusing, however, it is only about 250 m from Serendipity according to survey data. That would be a great connection to make.

It had been quite a few years (McKinnon 2003) since I had last been into New Feeling, and then I had only been as far as the New Feeling Chamber. I at least wanted to see the Mini Khan. It seemed like a good choice for a Sunday amble. Pax was keen for his third caving trip and Han-Wei hadn't been into Growling Swallet yet, so both were keen as mustard as we started into the entrance at 10.30 am.

The water levels were moderately high in Growling Swallet and we chose to go straight down the main route at the entrance, as there was actually less water flowing there than down the Dry Bypass! It is interesting how the route the water takes changes over the years, presumably as boulders and logs shift in flood conditions.

We had brought hand lines and belay ropes for the climbs, as we weren't sure how Pax and Han-Wei would feel about the free climbs in the entrance series, or those in New Feeling as well. We also had four ropes for pitches in New Feeling, our SRT kits, plus the drill because the spits on the pitch heads were guaranteed to be rusty and unsafe. Han-Wei also had a pelican box with his SLR camera and paraphernalia. Thus, our packs weren't as light as one would normally carry for a trip into Growling Swallet.

No one needed any belays on the entrance climbs but we did use a tape as a hand hold on the last climb before the dry bypass re-joins the main stream. The water was thundering through the chute there and our feet were threatening to be pushed off the wall. We used a 14 m belay rope on the climb before that as the waterfall at the bottom was pounding.

Our trip downstream was uneventful but slow, particularly climbing down the Cascades in the high flow. At Stal Corner we made the sharp left hand turn [*Pretty sure it is a right hand turn - Sub. Ed.*] into the passage leading to New Feeling. I am glad I had been there before otherwise I may not have believed the way in. The squeeze was tighter than I remembered as the sand and rocks had partly filled it in. This is not big boy country. Luckily none of us are, so no dramas ensued getting through.

The 6 m climb down looked a bit intimidating but I knew I had done it before, so I jumped in. This was not a good plan as my heavy pack was dangling below me pulling me down and I couldn't find footholds. I couldn't look down as the top is tight. I handed my pack back up to Han-Wei and climbed down unburdened. We passed packs down and everyone else free climbed down, with spotting from below helping find unseen footholds.

The climb up into New Feeling Chamber was straightforward and the in situ 11 mm belay rope looked good enough to use despite being some 20 years old. The thinner haul line was still good too, and we used it to pack haul up the climbs. Once in New Feeling Chamber we had lunch and Han-Wei got his camera gear out for some serious photography (I think it's serious when I see a tripod).

Ric went ahead to start re-bolting the 12 m pitch to get down to Mini-Khan Chamber. The rest of us didn't find the way on quite as quickly and had a minor detour to the other side passages that run off the chamber before we found our way into the long crawl. This was now new territory to me (and Ric who was up ahead). There are several sections of decorations along the crawl that can all be passed without causing damage. Ric had the first bolt in when we joined him and was waiting for a belay rope for protection while putting in the rebelay below the lip of the pitch head. The two old, very rusty bolts (with hangers) put in in the mid 80s (Hume 1985) were visible on the wall and certainly did not encourage use. The rebelay was placed and we all headed down. It was about now Han-Wei realised he had left his hand ascender at home. Oh well … we could pass one down to him on the way out.

Some more decorated passage with lots of straws led to Mini Khan Chamber. The Mini Khan is certainly worth a look. It seems to be remarkably out of place for the JF, as are the decorations in New Feeling Chamber. The only comparable degree of decoration I have seen in the JF is in For Your Eyes Only, past sump 1 in Junee Resurgence.

The way on from here is marked on the map as being on the left hand side before the Mini Khan. We spent half an hour at least climbing up and about looking for this passage. Finally, we looked on the other side of the chamber and saw the hole in the floor leading to a 12 m pitch, which is the way on.

Han-Wei decided to stay put and practice his photography skills. The rest of us headed down and onwards. The passage at the lower level had some lovely crystals in the floor and care was taken to avoid treading in any of these. Eventually, we reached the climb up into the terminal series. Ric decided to head back then. That left Pax and me. I really wanted to see the end of this cave, Pax was still keen as mustard so we carried on.

After crawling around in small passage for a while I decided I didn't need my SRT rig and left the descender and top ascender in the phreatic passage before The Passover. I have no idea why, as there is a short pitch

JF36 New Feeling, calcite crystal pool.

JF36 New Feeling, some pretties.

and climb before the sump. I must have been having an Old Folks moment or something. So when we got to the 6 m climb I had to borrow Pax's descender. No big drama as it was a short, straight drop. An old furry 11 mm Bluewater rope is still intact and in situ (Hume 1989), and we used that. A little further along and we reached the 3 m drop complete with a rope in situ (conveniently placed on the same trip in 1989). After Pax descended he handed his Stop up to me. We found this quite funny. It might rate as the shortest abseil I have ever done?

We followed the passage to the upstream end of the cave, a length of about 90 m, and then turned to find the downstream passage. This dipped at about 10-15° and was low and small, as described in previous trip reports. We were approaching what was described as a sump, first visited on a survey trip a few weeks after the discovery of the New Feeling extension (Eberhard 1985). This was what I had come to inspect but I was a little confused as a trip several years later talks about Dean pushing a duck (Hume 1989). A survey trip about a decade later talks about surveying from the 12 m pitch (that Ric had just rebolted) to the sump but then mentions Lee attempting to push a muddy squeeze and failing (Canning 1997). Was this past the sump or before it? Did Lee go around the sump somehow, or was it dry and they didn't mention that? Is the duck Dean did the sump with airspace that trip? I wanted to clear all this up and see if there is a sump to dive.

Pax and I continued crawling along muddy but dry passage. We passed through a small dip in the passage that was 1 m deep and 2 m long and coated in smooth mud. This looked suspiciously like it might be a sump at other times. We continued crawling and the passage opened up a bit to be wider and lower with a trickle of water running through a small, muddy gap. This was looking suspiciously like Lee's muddy squeeze. Pax went through first with me on his tail. It was very tight and very muddy but passable. We were in walking passage on the other side which contained a small stream. We followed this for perhaps 50 m and then roof met floor and the water disappeared under the wall in the gravels. We could see no way on that we could fit into.

JF36 New Feeling, Han-Wei self portrait.

JF36 New Feeling, the Mini-Khan.

So the sump, which was dry for us, was a duck when Lee and Liz did their survey. The muddy squeeze that stopped Lee was passed by Pax and I. We got another 50 m of cave before it finally terminated … Questions answered it would appear. We retraced our steps, picked up Ric and Han-Wei in the Mini Khan chamber and made it out of the Growling Swallet entrance at 6.30 pm.

Rigging notes

Heading into New Feeling:

1. The 6 m down-climb at the end of the crawl in the entrance to New Feeling is easily free climbable.
2. The rope to aid the 14 m up-climb into New Feeling Chamber is still in situ and useable. There is a haul line nearby to get packs up.
3. From half-way up the climbs there is a way that bypasses New Feeling Chamber, the crawl and pitch. This bypass goes directly to Mini-Khan Chamber.
4. The 12 m pitch after the long crawl leading to Mini-

Khan Chamber has been re-bolted with an 8 mm SS through bolt at the pitch head. A similar bolt has been placed just over the lip for a rebelay. The hangers have been left in situ.

5. The 12 m pitch out of Mini Khan Chamber can be rigged with tape around a boulder. Use a thick rope as it is a sloping pitch with many rubs. There is a bypass though. No personal information from us on that.
6. The 6 m pitch at The Passover has a rope in situ. This was in good enough condition for us to use.
7. The 3 m drop just past the Passover had a rope in situ that was in good repair.

Note it is up to future parties to decide for themselves if they are prepared to use the ropes and bolts left in the cave.

References

Canning, L. 1997. New Feeling re-visited. *Speleo Spiel, 302*: 5.

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McKinnon, J. 2003. New Feeling (Growling Swallet). *Speleo Spiel, 399*: 3-4.

JF398 Boulder Jenga

(Re-) Rigging Boulder Jenga

11 May 2014

Andreas Klocker

Cavers: Andreas Klocker & Dickon Morris.

Dickon and I had been planning to continue to explore Boulder Jenga as soon as possible after my return from caving expeditions in Mexico [*Any trip reports? - Ed.*]. Since the next few weekends we had mainlanders joining us, leading to a substantial group size, we thought it would be wise to re-rig the cave with just the two of us. So 36 hours after landing in Tassie, with many fresh memories of large and warm caves in Mexico, we hiked back up the hill towards Boulder Jenga again. The main difference from previous trips being that summer was definitely a thing of the past, and instead of seeing the cave before hearing it, we could hear the stream well before arriving at the cave entrance.

As expected, the rockpile didn't get any prettier and the ropes and rigging gear didn't help to make it any more pleasant. Once we arrived at the pitch head it was clear that the dry season was over. I started to rig a proper pitch head (on previous trips we used tapes around dodgy boulders to descend, putting us directly into the waterfall which now poured down the pitch) to avoid (some of the) water. Nevertheless, the existing rebelay 20 m down the pitch still looked more like a miserable cold shower. The only solution was to bolt a huge traverse around the shaft and stay partially dry, or just deal with the water and hope for some lower water levels on future trips. We decided to just suck it up and descend through the water – a mistake which even caused the almighty Alan Jackson [*And everyone else – Ed.*] to shit himself on an upcoming trip (see Alan's report which follows in this *Spiel*).

Once at the bottom of the big pitch we tried a different continuation of the cave which looked drier, rather than the short two pitches down the canyon which would have involved more contact with water. After a few down climbs, and some crawling in between boulders (who would have guessed?) we emerged in a relatively spacious chamber, the “Hall of the Hilti Cap”. After a bit of searching a continuation was found in a gap. This led us to “The Rockgarden”, which is where the new dry route and the old wet route meet. So even though being a bit longer, I would definitely call the dry route the preferred option – at least it gives you a brief break from the wet misery of the other parts of this cave.

We continued following the water once again and rigged the two little pitches we found on the last trip. Quickly we arrived at the point up to which Dickon mischievously bagged virgin passage on the last trip while I rechecked some survey data. Luckily he was stopped by what he thought was a pitch that turned out to be an easy climb. We then bagged more streamway passage, which was quite an amazing passage apart from the unpleasant crawl in the water which saturated my trogsuit. Not far after this crawl we hit a sump ... not one of those pretty ones where you get excited as a cave diver. However, being a cave diver I also knew we couldn't call this the end of the cave just because it goes underwater – but it would make progress harder.

Having achieved what we planned for the day we headed back, ascending a wet and miserable pitch, to arrive in Hobart at a very reasonable time. We should have learned here – JF398 Boulder Jenga is a project for summer. We learned the hard way a fortnight later.

JF398 Boulder Jenga

People die on pitches like that

17 May 2014

Alan Jackson

Cavers: Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Dickon Morris & David Taberner.

Dickon and Andreas had been trying to coerce me into joining one of their Boulder Jenga trips for months. Convinced that the worst was past (digging, lugging bags full of drills, rope and dive gear, surveying etc.), I foolishly made myself available for what I hoped would be a pleasant tourist of this interestingly-positioned cave.

The previous weekend’s trip had been a bit wet, apparently, and the main pitch (~50-60 m long) had proven rather distasteful to negotiate with its dry conditions rig. Statements like ‘well, it’s wetter than last week’ didn’t bode well as we geared up at the entrance. The entrance boulder choke was pretty vile with loose rocks, squeezes and water everywhere. The pitch head was reached without too much drama but I started to get a bad feeling as I watched Dickon disappear into the lashing spray below me. This could get ugly, I thought to myself.

The descent was pretty unpleasant; worst from the rebelay about 20 m down to the redirect a further 20 m down. The last 20 m was fine. We added some extra layers – my PVC suit was shagged and I was soaked through. Dickon and Dave headed into a dry ‘upstream’ passage from the base of the pitch to gather survey data while Andreas and I headed downstream, surveying the ‘dry bypass’ that winds over the top of the active stream way below. That completed, the two of us surveyed into a narrow fossil vadose passage which the guys had cursorily inspected previously. We surveyed to a blank wall with a possible climb to a higher window/

continuation then went for a tourist to the bottom of the cave.

Water was the keyword, preceded by 'lots of'. An inlet at the first almost 180 degree bend before the 'roof sniff' was thundering with water, probably doubling the amount of water in the streamway. We passed up the chance to experience the wet bit (not really a roof sniff at all, but not an obstacle one could keep dry in). It was obvious that the opportunity for pushing the sump was not going to happen till next summer so we stripped the two short pitches in this section on our way out.

We met the other two back where the fossil side passage headed off and Dickon informed us that he'd climbed up at the end of it and it was going. We headed back in, Dickon climbed it again and placed a rope on the worst bit then headed in with Andreas to push it while Dave and I surveyed along behind. Dickon had pushed a second climb to some small horizontal passage with a good draught, the sound of water and a dig required (of fill/sediments). We called the survey at the bottom of the second climb (pink tape labelled AA24) and decided to head for home.

The mood became a little more somber at this point. We all knew we were in for a shit fight on the big pitch. All were aware that people died on cold waterfall pitches rigged in the water and 60 m is not a short pitch. It wasn't so bad that I considered writing a final note to my family before I commenced the ascent but I certainly thought long and hard about my options before I attached my ascenders. The first bit to the redirect was splashy but fine. I then managed to keep myself on a relatively dry face to the left of the main flow for a few metres before I had to commit to swinging in to the full force of it, put my head down and go for it. It was wildly unpleasant; soaked through, a disorienting wall of water screaming past my face and my muscles cooling and labouring heavily. A brief respite below and at the rebelay gave me time to gather my thoughts and way up the option of continuing on or backing out (abseiling quickly back to the bottom). The top section had not been as bad as the middle section on the way in, so I figured I'd push on. It soon became apparent that conditions had changed.

A few metres above the rebelay the water flow was more concentrated and the force of it smashing into your face and chest was intimidating. Breathing was becoming more difficult and the combination of sound and water movement in front my face was inducing a feeling equivalent to motion sickness. I stopped thinking about it and prusiked faster. After about 10 m of utter hell I got my body above the water line and breathed a big sigh of relief. Concentrated at the top of the pitch, it was evident that the water flow was two to three times what it was when we entered the cave.

While I jogged on the spot at the top of the pitch to warm myself up, my mind was drawn to a KD trip report from a 'wet way' push trip from November 1988 (Hume 1989). Nick Hume recounts Stef's return after abandoning his descent of one of the waterfall pitches; Stefan was quoted as saying "things were animal down there". I don't think I can express it any more succinctly.

Continuing to do squats, lunges, star jumps and other basic cave yoga to keep warm, I waited with trepidation for the others to appear. I made the conscious decision that if someone didn't come up then I wasn't going down to try to save them. Dave appeared next and his facial expression suggested he'd visited the same place I had and enjoyed his stay just as little. Andreas looked positively drowned when he emerged from the maelstrom and then it was just the wait for Dickon. He was going to attempt to derig it but with a zero tolerance approach to rope snag rectification.

After a noticeably longer period of time Dickon emerged. He had experienced some difficulties. The rope had snagged at the redirect but he managed to flick it free and had coiled the rope on a ledge beside the redirect for the next stage. Then, somewhere below the rebelay and in the thick of it the trailing rope became jammed and he was unable to proceed on the resulting tight rope. He had to down-prusik, flick the snag free and continue up. The plan to derig was abandoned at this point and he proceeded straight to the pitch head.

Bullet one dodged – death in a waterfall on a rope – we focused our attention on bullet number two – death in a flooded boulder choke. It was pretty horrific. You mostly had to go by feel and memory as the amount of water pouring through everything reduced visibility to about 100 mm. Thankfully Dickon had negotiated the choke numerous times and had it firmly imprinted in his mind. We made our way out by employing the 'if you lose sight of the ankles of the caver in front of you just scream "stop" until you can see them again'. To add to the water hazard, rocks up to 200 mm in diameter were being mobilised by preceding cavers' movements and then being swept down the stream to the next caver's hands and face. Back on the surface we goggled at the swollen watercourse, packed up our troubles and hightailed it to the relative warmth and security of the car.

There is a lesson in this trip report, and if you're too thick to have already figured it out [*See Dickon's thoughts in Other Exciting Stuff - Ed.*] then you deserve to learn it the hard way.

Reference

Hume, N. 1989. A Vertical Swim in Khazad-Dûm. *Speleo Spiel, 245*: 7-8.

IB11 Midnight Hole

Big men and small holes don't mix

24 May 2014

Petr Smejkal

Cavers: William Persey, Milos Dvorak & Petr Smejkal.

William is one of the first people I made friends with here in Tasmania. He is a keen bushwalker, a member of the UTAS rafting and climbing clubs, and a diver. A couple of weeks ago I met him randomly in the Chemistry building at UTAS and we had a bit of a chat. He mentioned an intention to do a speleo-diving course sometime in the near future. Well, I thought if he is keen for speleo diving he might be keen for a bit of classical caving. So I asked and he said yes. The following week I organised SRT training and a trip to Midnight Hole for Saturday 24 May.

On Saturday, we reached the entrance of Midnight Hole at 10:50 am and in two hours we were at the bottom of the last pitch. The trip was smooth so far, with no problems. After a bit of a snack I slipped through the Matchbox Squeeze and waited for Will. Unfortunately, Will is a big shouldered guy and he did not fit. He did not fit even when he took some clothing layers off. Will was disappointed because he could fit through ten years ago – but not today.

We had planned the trip as a through trip so we had just two ropes (65 m and 45 m). We probably could have left Will in there and gone back home but we would have had to live with the consequences so we decided to help him out. We, being Milos and I, exited the cave through Mystery Creek and we ran uphill to reach the entrance of Midnight Hole again. We abseiled the first three pitches and we pulled the ropes with us. We rigged the three last pitches (8 m, 34 m and 49 m). Milos abseiled down to the bottom of the last pitch and I waited at the bottom of the 34 m pitch. Will climbed

up to the top of the 8 m pitch and then he threw me the rope. Then I abseiled the last pitch and then Milos and I ran to the Midnight Hole entrance again. Fortunately, after the second run we had enough rope to get Will out of the cave.

We left the cave at 6 pm and quickly ran back to the car park. I already had twenty missed calls from Lucy as she thought I was dead. In a rush we packed our stuff and went back home. When we got to Sandy Bay Milos realised that in the rush he left his harness at the cave car park. It was too late go back. We did a quick trip there on Monday and fortunately the harness was lying exactly where Milos left it. In the end nobody died and nothing was lost ... what a success!

Now when I think about it, I have seen only two people get stuck in a squeeze. Both of them were divers! Therefore, if you consider going diving you should keep in mind that you don´t want your lungs to grow too big.

JF36-JF337 Growling Swallet–Slaughterhouse Pot

Through trip

8 June 2014

Petr Smejkal

Cavers: David Bardi, Milos Dvorak, Brendan Heery, Robert Krachler, Petr Smejkal, Sandrine Varin & Shirley Zheng.

A month and a half ago I received an email from Andreas asking if I could do SRT training and caving with David and Sandy, from Melbourne. We organised a weekend, with the SRT training at Fruehuaf on Saturday 7 June and a caving trip for Sunday 8 June. We were a party of seven for the weekend.

At the Saturday training all the participants proved they have good skills on a vertical trip. We agreed to make a trip the following day to Growling Swallet exiting through Slaughterhouse Pot. The only issue we had was that we were two SRT kits short.

Growling Swallet was growling loudly on Sunday. The water level did not seem to be too high and we decided to stick with the plan - start at Growling and get out through Slaughterhouse Pot. We entered the cave system at 11 am and we used a 28 m rope to safely pass the entrance pitches. The walk through Growling was smooth, with just water foam, fresh leaves and wooden sticks on the walls around us suggesting a very recent flood. The great success from my point of view was that I managed to get through Growling with dry feet. I don´t think that anybody else was as lucky as I was that day but I forgot to ask.

Windy Rift and both rope ladders were not issues for anybody and we started climbing the bottom pitch of Slaughterhouse Pot before 3 pm. As we were short on SRT kits I was swapping my SRT kit with Brendan, and Milos shared his with Shirley. We passed the SRT kits using the 28 m long rope that we had with us.

I was hoping to have a bit of excitement on the way through the rock pile but we found our way through on the first attempt. The biggest excitement was when Shirley´s cave backpack fell through a hole in the rock pile. She was concerned that she would have to get a new one for the gear store but fortunately for her Rob saved the situation and retrieved the bag. The next two pitches took quite a bit of time and we all got a bit cold. We warmed up through the final squeeze but when we exited the cave at 7 pm, it was 3°C.

It was truly an enjoyable beginners trip. From my side, I was embarrassed that I could not remember Shirley´s name and I called Sandy, Jill, during the trip.

JF207 Voltera

Down the great erotic vagina

15 June 2014

Alan Jackson

Cavers: Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Dickon Morris & David Taberner.

Voltera was first explored in 1970. Its principle assailant was Aleks Terauds who dubbed the swallet a Lithuanian word for "Goddess of the great erotic vagina" – Harris (1975).

After weeks of anticipation and banter about just how big this new pitch in Voltera was going to be the lads had returned from Saturday's trip having only made it half way down the pitch. This either meant the pitch really was as big as Dickon thought it was or they were crap at rigging. I was keen to discover which of these had turned them around so I confirmed my intention to join them on the Sunday trip. Bunty was keen to try out his new streamlined figure underground so we dragged him along too.

I was flabbergasted that none of the earlier explorers who had ventured into the wet entrance had noticed the short slope up to the window over the pitch – SCS, Ken and Serena should be ashamed of themselves. The pitch proved to be as spectacular as everyone else had stated, with the exception of Dickon – no, it wasn't wider or more impressive than the Black Supergiant. It certainly was a spectacular shaft though, in some of the cleanest limestone the JF has to offer – good solid, clean, grey stuff in the Benjamin beds.

Andreas and I surveyed down the pitch, rebelay to rebelay, while Bunty and Dave hung about and Dickon continued the rigging. The rebelays proved to be well placed but I became a little unnerved when I started reaching single bolt rebelays. This cave was the first use of the new bolting method using 6 mm concrete screws. These screws are slightly more fiddly to install than the 8 mm expansion bolts we've been using for the last ten or so years but they're totally removable (and re-usable if push comes to shove) and are therefore much lower impact on the cave and simplify any future replacement with p-hangers or the like. You also get more bang for your buck from the drill battery (6 mm holes instead of 8 mm). After deciding I would risk my life on these bolts (for the descent at least) I continued down and launched into a typical Alan tirade about poor bolting practices. A 2 mm diameter difference doesn't sound like much but an 8 mm bolt has a cross-sectional area of just over 50 mm^2 while a 6 mm bolt has just over 28 mm2 – TWO BOLTS PLEASE! It was determined that one of the light and childless members of the party would ascend the pitch first and double up the bolts on the last three rebelays.

The sight that greeted us at the bottom of the pitch (which had proved to be ~ 80 m) wasn't encouraging – a spray-lashed boulder choke. But the irrepressible Dickon had already scrambled up the mobile talus slope beside the pitch, poked himself through a nasty tight rift and then dropped out the bottom of the same tight rift into a small chamber. Calls of 'I think I'll need a handline to get back out of here' were quickly replaced with 'there's a 40-50 m dry pitch down here, come on through with gear'.

The rift was a clear Bunton filter so it seemed his day was over, which he was quite content with – an 80 m pitch more than enough to road test the new physique. Andreas and I joined Dickon with one SRT kit, the drill and some rope. Dickon proved the rift climb was doable without a handline but we installed one anyway for the prevention of unnecessary hernias on the way out. We looked at Dickon's 40-50 m pitch and determined that 25 m of rope should buy us an

approach line, redirect and DOUBLE BOLT rebelay for the ~ 12 m pitch. Dickon glimpsed at his cue cards and remembered 'team' and 'share' and decided to savour the delights of the rift twice more – once to get my bag and other SRT kits and again to help Dave survey it.

Andreas and I slid down the pitch into a larger chamber full of mobile breakdown and some water emerging and sinking into boulder choke at its lowest point. I slipped into the wet choke, avoiding the teetering widow-making boulder, and found nice two metre wide, six metre high passage descending at about 40° taking the water. It continued for ~ 40 m in a dead straight line before dropping over a ~ 7 m pitch (maybe climbable but wet and unpleasant – a job for Dickon). At the base of the pitch it looked like the stream flowed under a blank wall. I re-joined Andreas in the breakdown chamber (after hiding from the rocks he was trying to kill me with while making a safer entry point that avoided the big nasty boulder). We then checked the side and upper leads off the chamber. These all proved blocked with rockfall.

Dickon appeared at this point so I sent him down to the ~ 7 m pitch to see if it was climbable (expendable companions are handy sometimes). Andreas and I went back up the pitch to pick up the survey from the bottom of the rift climb. Dave, despite probably being the smallest in the group, hadn't enjoyed the squeeze or the climb. I declared the area probably dead so we decided to send Dave and Bunty out to fix up the entrance pitch rigging and get out while we tidied up the survey. After a few attempts I managed to coerce Dave back through the squeeze and passed the drill and stuff through to him then went back to help Andreas survey.

Dickon reappeared with 'good news and bad news'. The climb had indeed proven fruitless but the tenacious little bugger had shifted some rocks over the top of the entry point to that lower passage and discovered an independent meander directly over the top of it. The two passages not connecting didn't seem to make any sense but Dickon insisted he'd just scooped a couple of hundred metres of passage with no end in sight (he'd dropped his cue cards) so we popped in surveying as we went.

The passage was generally ~ 1 m wide and ~ 8 m high meander with a small stream (which had entered via an inlet about 20 m in) descending at the dip of the limestone (about 30°). It just went and went and went. After ~ 65 m Andreas experienced technical difficulties with his pencil [*Always carry spares – Ed.*]. We abandoned the survey with glee and tore off down the passage (as fast as one can tear in less-than-ideal width meander). I'd guess about 200 m further on the character changed to a 10 m section of 4 m wide, flat-bottomed passage with orange clay on the walls. The stream promptly tumbled over a ~ 10-15 m pitch (a good 30 m according to Dickon) before appearing to drop back into continuing narrow meander. Off to the side of the pitch a larger space opened up with potential for other ways on. Time for home.

The tight rift was rather annoying (with bags) on the way out and will become a regular moaning point if the cave keeps going for multiple exploration trips. I was delighted to see Dave's extra bolts on the big pitch rebelays. Then it was just the slog back to the car through that horrible dogwood stick forest. We found the others back at the car and Bunty was happy to report that losing 10 kg had been the answer to all his prusiking problems – he could actually get his arms above his head now and gravity wasn't taking anywhere near as much notice of him.

Andreas crunched the survey numbers and the deepest surveyed point came in at -145 m. This was the bottom of the 7 m pitch/climb. The end of the survey in the meander sits at -132 m but a bit of extrapolation would suggest that the base of the undescended pitch will sit somewhere around the -170 m. These numbers hang off the JF-207 tag as the zero datum, which is well down inside the doline. I'd add around 5 m to these figures if applying the 'lower edge' rule but Rolan would no doubt get more excited and choose an 'upper edge' on the high side of the doline, possibly even the summit of Tyenna or Florentine Peaks. The entrance sits at around the 700 m elevation which gives the system about 300 m of depth potential. The cave sits RIGHT over the top of the extrapolated continuation of the Niggly master stream passage. Like other significant stream caves on Cave Hill (Sesame and Rescue Pot) the water is descending in a NW direction, along the strike but away from Junee Cave. I'm no geologist so can't offer a theory as to why. There's a reasonable draught. I'm excited.

Reference

Harris, S. 1975. Some Notes on the Surveys of Voltera, Bone Pit, JF.206 and Sesame. *Southern Caver, 7 (1)*: 12.

JF4 Khazad-Dûm

To the streamway and back

22 June 2014

Janine McKinnon

Cavers: Anna Ekdahl, Han-Wei Lee, Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer (Pax) & Ric Tunney.

This was purely a fun/SRT practice/experience building /gear checking trip for Anna, Han-Wei and Pax. Anna and Han-Wei had been having a lot of trouble with the comfort (lack there of) of their new sit harnesses. We had spent a couple of hours on the previous Friday afternoon fiddling with them at our place. This was a test run of the changes we had made. Pax had just got his newly purchased SRT kit delivered, and he had spent the same Friday evening putting it all together at our place. So this was the test run for him too. Thus, prudence would suggest we not go a ridiculous amount of pitches down anywhere before we started up and saw how everybody's set-ups behaved.

As it was winter, we expected the streamway pitches to be very wet too, and throwing them into that didn't seem very prudent at this stage of their vertical caving careers either. So, down to the streamway, via the classic route, was the plan.

We left Jackman & McRoss (Newtown) at 8 am, and were at the cave entrance at 10:15 am. Ric discovered, on attempting to put on his caving suit, that he had bought mine, somehow (by not checking the label). He valiantly soldiered on by declaring that he would do the trip sans a coverall. This he proceeded to do. Everyone else got kitted up without any dramas, and away we went.

I was at the front, Ric at the back (as per usual). We had a rope to use for the traverse after the first short pitch, for any that may wish to use it. I don't need it (yet, give me a few more years and I may change my mind), so I went across and waited to help the others. We passed packs across, but the next three were happy to free climb across. I thought this was a good sign of their future caving potential. Ric decided that he would like a belay, so that was no problem to quickly arrange.

Everyone made it easily to the top of the "90 footer", stepping over the holes in the floor without protest, so that was another good sign. As I rigged the "Bunny Ears" for the pitch, Ric gave the others a lesson in how to do them … and discovered he had forgotten how! It has been a while since he rigged. This provided great mirth for all. Poor bugger wasn't having a good start to the day really.

At the next drop, a small 9 m pitch, we had a bit of a surprise. We were using rigging notes from the club archive. These were published by Butt (2003). He gives a rope length for the pitch of 12 m. This is precisely what we had. Actually, we had a 12.5 m rope. Ric was rigging this one and he found there was no way that worked. He had a couple of goes at it by making shorter Bunnies, and thus too great an angle on the hang, and still it wasn't long enough. Finally, we stopped trying to tie in to the eyebolt backup, and just used the 12.5 m rope for the drop itself. It JUST reached the bottom. A 15 m rope would be enough I think. Maybe another metre just to be sure. Jeff Butt rigging. It is a marvel. Alan would probably say we should have known better ... Probably.

At the next pitch, the "70 footer", I was rigging again. We had a rope slightly longer than the 27 m required (by a couple of metres I think). Again, no way was it reaching the bottom with the tie back to the old eye bolt a few metres back from the edge (as stipulated in those rigging notes). I tried several times to save rope on my Bunnies, but to no avail. So we used the belay rope we were still carrying for emergencies (look ... an emergency!). With the rope for the pitch JUST being used for the drop, I found it just kissing the ground at the bottom when I arrived down there. So I recommend a 32 m rope for this pitch.

Pax was a tad disappointed as he had decided we really should do the first streamway pitch with that rope, so now that was off the plan. This sudden enthusiasm was brought about by our discovery that the water levels were surprisingly low for winter. Only moderate summer levels really.

The others started playing with cameras in the waterfall chamber and Ric and I wandered down the stream to the first streamway pitch. I managed to keep my feet dry, the water levels were that low. The others passed us as we came back, and after a pleasant lunch we started out. Ric first, me last, with Pax helping with the de-rig. All went smoothly. We caught them at the "90 footer". Anna and Han-Wei were marvelling at how much more comfortable their harnesses were now. Pax was finding his setup efficient, with maybe just a few tweeks needed. We took the streamway route out at the top of the first pitch. That was much quicker and a bit different. We were all out by 3.30pm with some daylight to spare. What a pleasure in June.

Reference

Butt, J. 2003. Khazad Dum (JF4)-An Updated Rigging Guide-July 2003. *Speleo Spiel, 337*: 29.

JF4 Khazad-Dûm, Ric all trogged up.

JF4 Khazad-Dûm, Han-Wei having fun.

Other Exciting Stuff

JF398 Boulder Jenga

Thoughts and interpretations

Dickon Morris

WARNING: DO NOT DESCEND BOULDER JENGA IF THE SINK IS CLEARLY AUDIBLE BEFORE THE FINAL LOG HOP OR IF THERE IS SIGNIFICANT RAIN FORECAST

Boulder Jenga is a very interesting cave, potential to go big style notwithstanding. It is fairly unusual in the JF in that it is a major seasonal stream sink located almost 1 km from the dolerite/limestone contact where one would have expected the water to sink. The other major example of this is of course Growling Swallet which takes water that has been prevented from sinking by glacial deposits that are mantling the limestone. It is likely that the same has occurred with Boulder Jenga although the fact that the sink has a large catchment and yet is still seasonal suggests that there is some leakage upstream of the sink.

The cave entrance has been completely plugged with boulder debris at some point, the cliffs above the sink being a likely source for this. The boulder choke extends to a depth of 30 m, its lateral extent is impossible to determine. The way through the choke is tortuous and not obvious unless the draft is blowing. At the bottom of the choke a short section of horizontal streamway leads to the top of Hydrophobia, a 60 m pitch. This is a straightforward vadose shaft which is extremely dangerous in wet conditions. There are two possible leads on this pitch. The first is located level with the rebelay 20 m below the top. A pitch window with a decent black space behind it. At first this was thought to be extremely interesting but a sizeable fossil inlet passage has now been pushed which contains large avens that probably connect with this window. If that is the case it may provide a drier, safer rig to the bottom. The other is a fossil passage below the rebelay that has not been investigated but cannot be missed (you abseil right past it).

At the bottom of Hydrophobia there are two ways on which are essentially different levels of the same passage (St Davids Rift). The first down through boulders at the far end of the pitch leads to two short cascade pitches in the rift. The rift opens into a decent sized chamber containing a survey station at the head of the climbs and pitch into the start of The Rock

Garden, another sizeable boulder choke. By going directly ahead at the bottom of Hydrophobia a fossil stream passage can be gained, formed in the same rift. At the bottom of two short climbs one crawls through a low passage and crosses some jammed boulders perched above the active route. Going up and over here and turning left leads to a sizeable collapse chamber (Hall of the Hilti Cap) which is the source of the boulders of The Rock Garden. In the far right hand corner of the chamber a way around through boulders can be found which links with the other route at a tall rock spike topped with the survey station mentioned earlier.

St Davids Rift is a classic fault plane passage dipping at 70-80° which the stream has gradually cut down into leaving several generations of vadose canyon behind. This fault is also likely to have had a hand in the large boulder collapse just below this point.

At the end of the rift a wide bridging climb down that carries the stream leads to a junction. A good sized fossil vadose canyon enters at this point and this is the most interesting dry lead remaining in the cave. After about 40 m this reaches what appears to be a solid mud wall. This proves to be only a thin veneer and suggests that the passage was at one stage filled with sediment before being washed out again. It is possible to climb to the top of this where the passage continues, reaching another climb very shortly. At the top of this a very narrow vadose canyon doglegs left reaching a small aven. However before the dogleg a fault passage partly filled with loosely consolidated gravel and mud (an easy dig) leads off. On the only visit to this point (in very high water) there was a good draft coming out of this hole and a large waterfall could be heard at the other end of the passage. This cannot be the water on Hydrophobia as the survey shows that the passage has already passed under that pitch and is below the streambed leading to the entrance. During summer, water sinks a fair way upstream of the entrance, I think it very likely that this water is what I heard at the end of the fossil inlet. The canyon we explored clearly does not take that water currently so it must have cut a new route.

Back at the junction a very short pitch leads to the top of the boulder choke. At the end of the boulder choke another short pitch finally drops into pleasant stream passage. This goes for around 40 m with many rapid changes of direction likely caused by the faults visible in the roof. A 4 m free climb leads to a low wet crawl followed by 20 m of larger stream passage terminating in a grotty sump pool. Andreas has dived the pool on a (very) minimalist rig and found it to be a roomy classic water table sump. Given its distance from the resurgence the sump is likely to be short and the prospects of it leading to more roomy stream passage and possibly even a master cave are extremely good.

The chances of there being a way over the top of the sump are also quite good. The draft was felt at the top of the 4 m climb before the wet crawl on a trip in March although it has now disappeared. As it has taken so much boulder rearrangement to get this cave to base level it would be a shame if it was allowed to crap out so rapidly.

Charging caving lights with the Tenergy TB6B charger

Ric Tunney

Current caving lights (like Scurion and Rude Norah) have nifty lithium batteries and come with a clever mains-voltage chargers. Charging these lights when away from mains is somewhat problematic. Just before he went to Mexico recently, Andreas sent a cry for help to Michael Packer (Pax), who advised a Tenergy TB6B™ charger. This was too late for Andreas to take advantage of the answer before he left, or for Janine and me before we left for the Nullarbor.

On the Nullarbor, I had four chargers (one each for our caving lights and two for Janine's diving lights). These required mains input. (And of course we also had chargers for the phone, tablet, GPS batteries etc but we won't go into that; modern travel involves a bag full of electronics.) There were generators with mains sockets in camp, and many in the group are now using solar panels, batteries and inverters. These are needed to power their microwaves and coffee machines; this is really heavy-weight car camping. Plus I had a small inverter to run off our truck battery with the constant risk of flattening it. It's not easy to push start a diesel. All in all it was very fiddly and annoying.

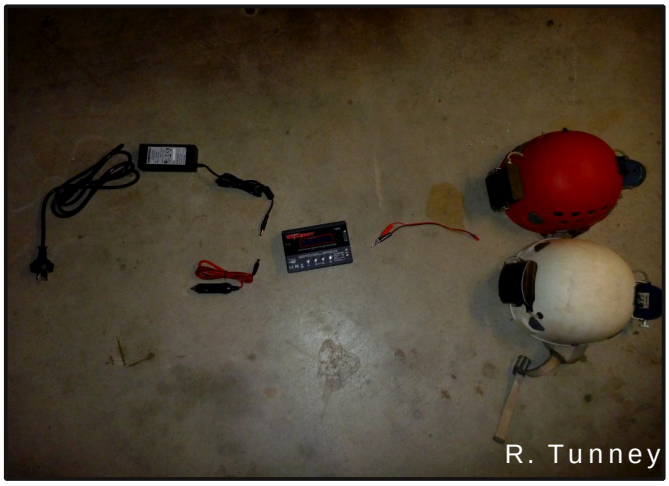
So, I have now bought a TB6B and, with some help from Pax, it is up and running.

1. The unit – The TB6B runs from a 12V source. It handles multi-cell NiMH, NiCd, Li-Ion, Li-Po, Li-Fe or SLA batteries. So it should work with any caving light rechargeable battery. I bought a unit through eBay for $93. It is surprisingly small.
2. Power supply – Power input is to a 2.5 mm ID, 5.5 mm OD DC socket. The unit comes with a power cord with alligator clips one end (for 12 V source) and DC plug other end. I have bought a 12 V 60 W AC adaptor (Jaycar MP3242 $47.90) for mains use, and a cigarette lighter adaptor (Jaycar PP1997 $3.90) for 12 V use. Both of these came with suitable plugs for the TB6B. The mains adaptor uses an IEC mains lead, so it's simply a matter of plugging in a different lead when overseas.
3. Caving battery connections – Charging output is from two 4 mm banana sockets. There is a charging cable with lots of plugs, but none of these plugs were of use to me! Both Scurion and Rude Norah have female JST connections on their batteries. The charging cable that comes with the TB6B has a JST connector, but it's also female. So it's necessary to make a cable. Banana plugs (Jaycar PP0400 & PP0402) one end, JST male (Jaycar PT4452 $3.90) the other.
4. Diving light connections – Janine's Finn Light has a 2.5 mm DC socket. It was easy to re-purpose the power cord that came with the TB6B and replace the alligator clips with banana plugs. Janine's Light Monkey uses 30 A Anderson connectors. It was easy to make up a cable with these at one end and banana plugs the other.
5. Charging – The unit has lots of options for altering the charging parameters, so many that I called on Pax's engineering expertise. Using his finely-honed skills, he selected "Auto", let the unit sort out the charging parameters, keyed in an engineeringly-derived charge rate (think of a number, double it, and subtract a 10% safety margin) and took a swig of cider.

(Pax writes: For the uninitiated the charge rate (Amperes) is how fast you are able to charge the batteries. Too fast and they tend to get hot and shorten their life, too slow and you get bored waiting! It is based on the capacity "C" of the batteries, i.e. a 6 A battery takes 1 hour to charge when charged with 6 Amps, this is known as a 1 C charge rate. Between 0.5 C and 1.2 C are good values for Li-Ion batteries.)

I have chosen a charge rate of around 0.8 C in an attempt to compromise between battery life and boredom. Choosing a charge rate below 0.5 C is hindered by the TB6B™ having a default time-out of 120 min; this can be altered. My Rude Norah uses a 3.7 V battery pack containing three 18650 Li-Ion cells in parallel, each are allegedly 2200 mAh. (18650s are

The Tenergy TB6B charger.



The Tenergy TB6B charger setup.

available in much higher capacities.) As my cells are several years old, I've guessed 2000 mAh each, giving me a 6 Ah pack. Newer batteries for the Rude Norah 2 use a two cell pack rated at 5.2 Ah. At 0.8 C, the charging current is 4.8 A. This would give a charging time of around 90 min with 80% efficiency. Janine's Scurion uses a 7.4 V battery pack containing four 18650 Li-Ion cells in series/parallel. As the cells are old, the pack would be rated at about 4 A. At the 0.8 C rate, the charging current is 3.2 A, again giving a charging time of around 90 min.

Dromaius Cave: a hitherto unreported cave containing bone material at Mole Creek

Rolan Eberhard

Karst Officer – Geoconservation Section, DPIPWE

The purpose of this note is to inform the caving community of a significant cave find at Mole Creek. Dromaius Cave is named for the extinct Tasmanian emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae diemenensis*), the remains of which were found amongst other bones preserved at the site.

Due to the constricted nature of the cave, any person entering it puts the bones at risk, compounding the possibility, albeit small, of loss due to theft or souveniring. Accordingly, the cave has been gated by the Parks and Wildlife Service and access is presently restricted to scientific investigations.

Dromaius Cave is known to have been entered on two occasions since the site was reported to PWS – firstly to assess the find and secondly during installation of the gate. Future management arrangements including protocol for scientific research at the site will be considered in the context of the 2014 Cave Access Policy, which has now been finalised following input from caving clubs and other interested groups.

Dromaius Cave first came to attention in 2008 following a private trip by a former cave guide, who investigated several caves on the eastern side of The Grunter hill. The land was privately held at the time and the owners were aware generally of the presence of caves on their property, as this had constrained a proposal to harvest timber there during the 1990s. The Crown subsequently purchased the land with funding under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement. It is now part of the Mole Creek Karst National Park.

Dromaius Cave is small and of simple form, totalling about 10-15 m of passage. The main part of the cave is a rift-like chamber about a metre wide and several metres long. The base of the chamber is clayey sediment while the ceiling is a sheet of flowstone about 2 m above floor level. Clearly, at one time the chamber was mostly filled with sediment beneath a capping of flowstone. Later, the sediment was eroded away, leaving the flowstone suspended at ceiling level. Evidence of such infilling and erosion is common in caves around Mole Creek.

In this case a quantity of bone material has been preserved in the base of the suspended flowstone. The bones are in an excellent state of preservation and densely packed together in a seemingly random way. The volume of bone exceeds that of the flowstone

Bone deposits protruding from the base of suspended flowstone in Dromaius Cave, Mole Creek.

*Tasmanian emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae diemenensis*) bone deposits in Dromaius Cave, Mole Creek.*

Marsupial bone deposits in Dromaius Cave, Mole Creek.

matrix over much of the visible portion of the deposit.

A novel aspect of the site is that the lower parts of the bone bed protrude several centimetres below the level of the flowstone (see accompanying photographs). A lesser amount of bone material, most likely a mix of older material and more recent pitfall deaths, has accumulated on the base of the passage.

Skulls, mandibles and teeth can be seen throughout the deposit. The majority are from larger marsupial species which still survive in Tasmania. The only exception identified to date is the emu bone noted earlier. The bone is from of the bird's leg (tibiotarsus) and was removed from the cave shortly after discovery. The find was identified by Craig Reid (Queen Victoria Museum). Jillian Garvey (La Trobe University) provided additional advice based on images of the deposit.

Tasmanian emus were considered a pest in the colonial times and had been hunted to extinction by around the 1850s. Dromaius Cave appears to be the first record of emu bone from a Tasmanian cave, although emu shell has previously been recovered from cultural horizons in occupied cave shelters.

The mix of species and the general character of the bones at Dromaius Cave suggest that the deposit represents a re-worked pitfall accumulation. The bone bed appears fairly shallow and cannot be compared with some highly regarded cave palaeontology sites, which have yielded comprehensive records of species present in the landscape over very long periods of time. Even so, this is one of relatively few caves in Tasmania with a well preserved fossil bone bed.

The age of the bones has not yet been determined. Scientific aspects of the site are currently being discussed with researchers.

Cavers are reminded that the removal of bones from caves without a proper scientific record of the original context may detract from the value of the find, even if the sample is handed in for research. In some circumstances it is an offence to interfere with bones of species listed under the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 and all bones and other materials in caves on reserved land are protected under legislation.

Potentially significant bone discoveries should be photographed, left in situ and reported to the land manager. If the location of the bones makes them vulnerable to inadvertent damage, the appropriate response is to highlight the sensitive feature by marking a barrier around it with string or tape. The PWS or Resource Management and Conservation Division of DPIPWE can be contacted for advice on these matters.

Historic caving report Junee–Florentine

Greg Middleton

Our Librarian/Archivist has recently come across an item of interest which appeared in *The Mercury* on 22 December 1945 (p. 11). This report was one of a series of Nature Notes by 'Peregrine' (Michael Sharland). The date is significant as it was published a few months before the establishment of our club (as Tasmanian Caverneering Club) on 13 September 1946. It was, in effect, publicity for the group being proposed by Dr S.W. Carey, then Government Geologist, our first President.

Minor errors may have crept into the story because the details were evidently given to Sharland by Dr Carey. The first thing to note is the reference to the cave being "tenanted by bats …" when this has not been the case (at least in historic times). Further, Alan Jackson has observed: "Some of the descriptions are hard to place and other bits don't make sense but the active stream has moved around in there since I've been caving, so goodness knows what has happened since the '50s. Only really strange bit is the assertion that the cave flows west. It actually trends southeast! I suspect they didn't have a compass but just guessed, incorrectly." (A. Jackson, pers. comm. 13 June 2014).

The cave had not been named at the time (odd, since it had been well known since at least 1908) but it is undoubtedly Growling Swallet, a name which was not given until about 1949:

"The first visit by the Tasmanian Caverneering Club is mentioned in an undated (c. 1949) trip report by Des Lyons [sadly no longer in our archives]. He explored the cave for a short distance until he reached a 9 metre waterfall and suggested the name Growling Swallet, which was later accepted by the club" (Goede 1992).

That acceptance was recorded in the TCC Annual Report 1952-53:

"Junee area was visited only twice by official parties; once to the Bone-Pit, and once to a new cave [known since 1908!] in the Florentine. Both caves require more work by larger parties for longer periods. The Florentine cave, tentatively named "Growlingswallett" [hopefully a typing error], has been explored to 200 ft. and is still going" (Sargison 1953).

References

Goede, A. 1992. The early history of Growling Swallet. Tasmanian Cave Exploration in the 1980s. *TCC Explorations Journal*, vol. 1, p. 1.

Sargison, S. 1953. Tasmanian Caverneering Club General [Annual] Report 1952-1953, p. 1

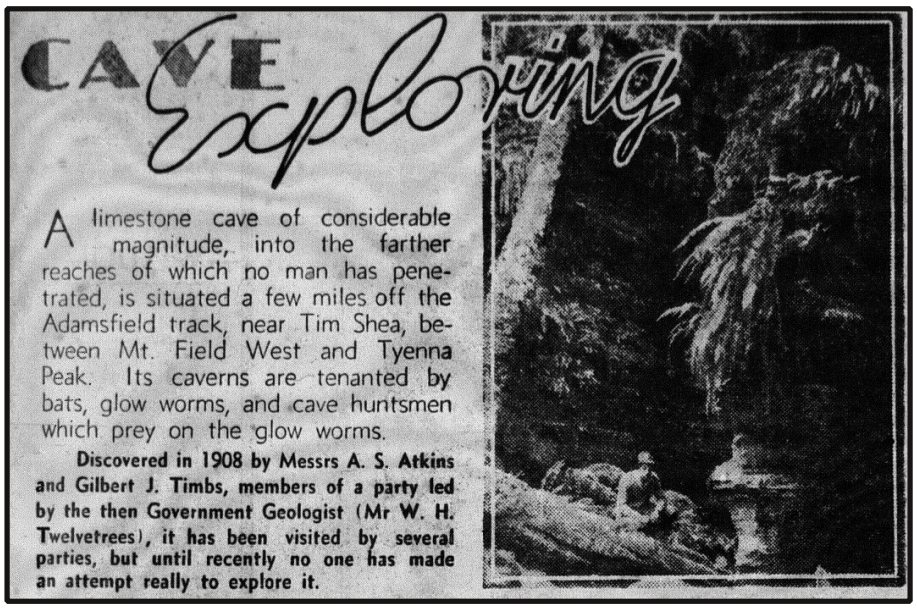


Photo caption: Ferns line the entrance to the limestone cave near Adamsfield.

Cave Exploring

[Michael Sharland]

Published in The Mercury 22 December 1945

An account of the examination by the recent party was given me by the present Government Geologist (Dr Carey), who is contemplating the formation in Tasmania of a caverneering club, with the object of investigating caves not yet opened to the public.

Equipped with ropes and lights, Dr Carey and his enthusiastic caverneers penetrated to a greater distance than anyone before. They found waterfalls within the cave and some good examples of limestone "ornaments," though the last named were some distance from the entrance. Ceilings of caverns were brilliant with glow worm lights.

Although the cave has been known for years, it does not appear to have been given a name. Its entrance probably leads to a network of caverns in the limestone belt.

It has a double entrance, Dr Carey tells me, the right hand one being occupied by a stream, which there gains the speed of a torrent and plunges over a waterfall into the blackness. His party took the left hand entrance. After descending this for some distance, climbing over huge tumbled blocks of limestone, they reached a short vestibule at the foot of the waterfall.

Continuing down the left hand channel, lights were needed but ropes were not used. From this channel were several lateral galleries and recesses. The party had to scramble over more immense fallen blocks, with the floor descending continuously at an average of about one in five. Fossils were seen, etched out of the rock of the walls and standing in relief.

Soon the descent was stopped by a steep cliff and a yawning void beyond. A chasm ran back as a narrowing niche on the right, so no advance was possible without ropes.

There were no projections to which rope could be attached; but by retracing their steps the explorers found a small passage to the left, which descended the cliff, and ended with a drop of about 15 ft. to the floor of another cavern. To reach this, ropes were found convenient and comforting.

From the bottom of this descent the low galleries wound like a spiral staircase, with a leaking roof, and came out beneath the cliff they had recently left. From there on progress was fairly easy for some distance.

Several alternative routes linked up with the main gallery, and care had to be taken not to get lost. The floor continued to descend rapidly.

A little way along a small stream they encountered a second waterfall, the descent of which called for the use of ropes. Then they met the main stream again, which flowed as a torrent with a lot of noise, that rumbled through the dark limestone dungeon.

Some distance down this stream they came to a place where the roof closed in and found a fine group of dripstone canopies and shawls, the first good formations the whole way.

From here, because of a basin of water under a low roof, it was deemed inadvisable to proceed farther. An experienced caverneer would recognise it as a danger zone.

Dr Carey explained that after every rain underground streams rise more suddenly and to higher levels than do surface streams because the water tends to bank up at every successive obstruction, so that the onset of the flood soon becomes a wall of water of increasing height which sweeps round a corner with little or no warning.

In the roof above they could see sticks which had been driven hard into the earth by the last flood. An inch or two of rain on the surface would have been enough to fill this chamber they were in to the roof and turn it into a pipe full of swirling water.

A disturbing thought was that at any moment, without warning, water might flood the chamber (because when they left the surface some two or three hours before, rain was falling). "So we decided this was an appropriate time for a cup of tea," Dr. Carey said to explain their return to the daylight.

"I rather ridiculed the story I had heard, that glow worms don't like noise," Dr Carey said, "But we decided to try an experiment.

“When we put out our torches, the pin points of glow worm lamps were in hundreds on walls and roof. Then we gave an imitation of a concerted sneeze–'hish, hash, hosh.' The reaction was surprising. Nearly all the glow worms put out their lights! The noise, reverberating through the caverns, certainly alarmed them."

As the cave is unnamed, so also is the river which runs into it, the source of which is in doubt. So far as this new river was traced underground, it maintained a westerly [sic] course, and descended steadily with the observed dip of the limestone towards the Florentine.

Somewhere in the Florentine Valley, therefore, there must exist an important resurgence, or outlet, which has not yet been observed.

In the limestone belt which runs almost continuously from near Maydena railway station, along the north-eastern flank of the Tyenna Valley, to the Florentine, with a general north-westerly dip, there are a number of caverns and several places where streamlets vanish through limestone cracks.

These waters are thought to converge underground to form the new river, and also probably the Junee River, which emerges from a fern-lined cavern not far from Tyenna. In this region there is still a lot of exploring to be done by the keen caverneer.

Jesse Luckman – some personal recollections

Arthur Clarke

We recently received sad news of the passing of Jesse Luckman, one of our early "caverneers", who died at the age of 104. I first met Jesse Luckman (and her husband Leo) in the very early 1970s, along with other members of the Hobart Walking Club. I had just been on a bushwalk to Federation Peak, going in via the old Yo-Yo Track and across the Picton, then up "Luckmans Lead", so I felt very privileged to meet the namesakes who had pioneered this walking route. We met at the Mt. Nelson home of Pat Wessing (nee Higgins), also an early member of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club (TCC). Although I did not know it at that time, Pat Wessing and Jesse Luckman were two of our very first Tasmanian cavers, both joining TCC in 1946. However, neither of them were actually TCC Foundation Members. Jesse was obviously no longer a caver then, because I had never seen her at any TCC meetings.

It was almost a decade later before I caught up with Leo Luckman and Jesse again, and incidentally, Leo was in fact a TCC Foundation Member. I had been caving in the Florentine Valley and met Leo who was splitting shingles to put on the roof of some roadside picnic/barbecue shelters he was building near Maydena. I enquired about purchasing some of these shingles. Leo agreed to split 1200 shingles for me, provided I could come and collect them from the driveway beside their house in Clare Street, Newtown. There was also a promise to show me some B&W "snaps" (photos) of their early days as "caverneers" with TCC.

Around about 2002, to mark the 65th anniversary of the opening of Newdegate Cave, Jesse Luckman had been asked if she could write a short monograph together with photographs describing the early history of caving in Tasmania. This would have particular focus on the early discoveries in the tourist cave and elsewhere at Hastings. The following article is Jesse's monograph, which was originally accompanied by 28 black and white photos, many of which unfortunately are not very good quality.

To my knowledge Jesse's monograph has not previously been published in *Speleo Spiel* or anywhere else. It is reproduced here exactly as Jesse typed it, with her hyphenation, punctuation and paragraphs. There may appear to be some ambiguity in Jesse's article together with are a few minor errors of fact, so I have included a few words of explanation, plus a postscript or addendum of sorts, with added detail relating the early days of TCC in Tasmania. Although Jesse has attributed all the photos to Leo Luckman, it is possible/likely that some of them were taken by other TCC cavers.

Aside from her article and the photos, plus a few brief anecdotes gleaned from an interview conducted by Nic Haygarth and myself on the 5 February 2009, I knew little about Jesse Luckman's involvement as an early caver. So, I sought further information from Albert Goede, suggesting that we pool our knowledge and compile this present article together. Catching up with Albert, just a few days before he left for his annual trip away to warmer climes, he advised me that he did not know anything about Jesse Luckman's early "caverneering" days. In fact, according to Albert, Jesse Luckman's last caving trip with TCC was in January 1954. This coincided with his first adventures into the Tasmanian underworld on the three day overland walk to Exit Cave led by Leo Luckman.

THE TASMANIAN CAVERNEERING CLUB

Jesse Luckman

The Tasmanian Caverneering Club was the first club to be formed in Australia with the specific aim of cave exploration.

At the end of World War II, Prof. S. Warren Carey was appointed head of the Geology Department at the University of Tasmania. He was interested in studying Tasmania's limestone cave system and suggested to the Hobart Walking Club the idea of organised underground exploration. A number of members responded enthusiastically and, together with his geology students, met in September 1946 to form the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. A Constitution was agreed upon and rules of conduct, safety precautions and training of party leaders were drawn up. Instruction and practice courses in climbing, abseiling, belaying and the like were held on the cliffs at Taroona, near Kingston, and special items of equipment such as light-weight flexible ladders, "tin hats" with head-lamps, etc. were constructed at the members' homes.

The Club's first trip was to the Ross-Walker system near Maydena. However, the first extensive exploration was in the Hastings Caves system where, where with the assistance of the Government Tourist Bureau, the illuminated section of Newdegate Cave was thoroughly surveyed and mapped. Exploration and mapping was done on the rest of the area, including the underground river, and many new and interesting chambers were discovered, such as the Binney Caves.

Probably the effort most remembered by early caverneers was the digging out, literally handful by handful, of the yellow clay choking the forty-metre tunnel leading to Binney Caves. This arduous job spread over three years until, at last, in September 1970, the Governor, Sir Hugh Binney, and his A.D.C., flanked fore and aft by female caverneers, were pushed and cajoled through the narrow pipe-line to officially name the new caves – and were then pulled and pushed out again. At least one member had the privilege of pulling the Governor's leg! We were really proud of His Excellency.

At the request of the Government, exploration was done in the Caves Hill and Mole Creek areas, at Gunns Plains and Flowery Gully systems, Mystery Creek and Exit Cave were explored at Ida Bay, and new caves were discovered at Junee, near Maydena. Croesus, Lynds' and Kubla Khan caves, near Liena, containing some of the finest lime formations in the State, were explored and named by members around 1950.

Since then, exploration and mapping of cave systems, as well as biological studies, have been carried out... throughout the State.

Max, Pat, Jesse & Neil surveying the Underground River in H1 Newdegate Cave.

Leo Luckman surveying in H1 Newdegate Cave.

Ken Iredale digging Binneys Tunnel in H1 Newdegate Cave.

Sir Hugh Binney outside H1 Newdegate Cave (Angus Love on LHS).

A few words of explanation

Arthur Clarke

In earlier times of our speleo history, the various different chambers or passage sections of our karstic cavities were also referred to as "Caves". Hence, Jesse Luckman's mention of the "Binney Caves" (now known as Binney Chamber) located beyond the main tourist section in Newdegate Cave. It was also common practice to refer to an individual cave in its plural form, perhaps to give the impression to visitors that there were more caves to be seen, or perhaps simply because the site contained several cave chambers. So, Newdegate Cave became known as "Hastings Caves" and similarly the cave at Ida Bay that we know today as Mystery Creek Cave, was originally known as the "Ida Bay Caves". The "pipe-line" referred to by Jesse is in fact the excavated siphon tube in Newdegate Cave, originally named as the "Thirty Day Tunnel", known today as the "Binney Tunnel". This tunnel provides crawling and/ or stooping access from the Wee Three Crack (beyond The Cathedral) going down-slope then up into Binney Chamber.

Although not mentioned in Jesse's monograph, the motivation for taking Governor Binney into the newly found upper level speleothem-rich chamber was simply because he was the first TCC Patron, a position Binney had held since December 1947. During the February 2009 interview with Jesse, she said it was Ken Iredale (the TCC Secretary) who had the pleasure of pulling the Governor's leg, quite literally, by hauling him out of the far end of the tunnel and into the Binney Caves (chamber). Robin Mills was Governor Binney's accompanying ADC on their trip to Newdegate Cave.

Jesse also makes reference to the "underground river" in Newdegate Cave. Later named as "Mystery Creek" (not to be confused with nearby IB10 Mystery Creek Cave). This is a small creek below the tourist section leading to the upstream sump. No doubt it swells up to become quite deep in the winter months. In the early days of TCC, the subterranean streams of several caves were referred to as the "underground river", e.g., in Croesus Cave and Kubla Khan.

The Mystery Creek stream passage in Newdegate Cave reportedly derived its name from the so-called Mystery Chamber, located on the left-hand side immediately upstream from the sump. This chamber contains a vast array of magnificent and quite long helictites. In the early days of speleology these enigmatic speleothems were commonly referred to as "mysteries", hence the name Mystery Chamber.

Jesse also mentions the exploration at "Caves Hill" referring (then) to the broader Hastings karst area, further beyond Newdegate Cave. It was here in Caves Hill that Erebus was found by TCC in 1946; later re-named by SCS as Waterloo Swallet. In subsequent years, the "Caves Hill" name was used synonymously for Marble Hill in the Ida Bay karst and similarly in reference to the Junee Ridge part of the JF karst area [*No, Junee Ridge and Cave (no 's') Hill in the JF are quite separate things - Sub. Ed.*].