Speleo Spiel 404

September—October 2014

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

STC Office Bearers

President:
Sarah Gilbert
Ph: 0449 184 233 (m)
sgilbert@utas.edu.au

Vice President:
Alan Jackson
Ph: 0419 245 418 (m)
alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au

Secretary:
Phil Jackson
Ph: (03) 6243 7038 (h)
pmjackson@dodo.com.au

Treasurer:
Geoff Wise
Ph: 0408 108 984 (m)
geoff.p.wise@gmail.com

Equipment Officer:
Geoff Wise
Ph: 0408 108 984 (m)
geoff.p.wise@gmail.com

Librarian:
Greg Middleton
Ph: (03) 6223 1400 (h)
ozspeleo@iinet.net.au

Editor:
Matt Cracknell
Ph: 0409 438 924 (m)
drmjcracker@gmail.com

Search & Rescue Officer:
Andreas Klocker
Ph: 0437 870 182 (m)
andreas.klocker@utas.edu.au

Webmaster:
Yoav Bar-Ness
Ph: 0468 360 320 (m)
ydbarness@gmail.com

Web Site:
http://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com/

Front Cover:
MC1 Kubla Khan, lots of pretties. Photo by Liz Rogers.

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

Speleo Spiel

Issue No. 404
September—October 2014
ISSN: 1832-6307

Newsletter of the
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc.
PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006
ABN: 73-381-060-862
http://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com/

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

Contents

Editorial

Three words – referencing, referencing and referencing. To make my job easier, and for you to get your *Spiels* vaguely on time, if you are going to submit an article to the *Spiel* I would recommend looking over recent issues and taking note of the preferred referencing style. In-text references should have the format Author Date (in parentheses). The reference list at the end of the article (trip report or whatever) should contain – (author) Surname, Initial. Date. Title. Publication, Issue: Pages. There are some contributors that either can't do this or don't care, even after receiving nasty emails (read The Ric and Janine Show). If contributors make an attempt to provide this information then I can, with little effort, include their article.

Having got that off my chest, *Spiel* #404 contains a few reports from past months that either weren't sent to me until recently or I missed them due to my incompetence. JF207 Voltera has proved to be extensive but the Master System still eludes the Hard Men. On the positive side, Dickon provides us with a good dose of creative adjectives to describe geological features. I have never heard of an impure shale band and I can only wonder what miserable bedding is. Several trips in the Florentine Valley with Andrew Hughes from the Bookend Trust are documented and the Settlement Area has been getting a work over with crowbars and assorted digging implements. Rest assured KD is now anally/Alanlly safe and teeming with (more) bolts. Last but not least, this issue ends with a bunch of surveys for a collection of caves great and small.

Oh and there was meant to be an article in Other Exciting Stuff but Ric refused to provide remotely acceptable referencing. So I refuse to publish it.

Matt Cracknell

Stuff 'n' Stuff

Commercial development of Vietnam Caves

There have been some recent articles about the commercial development of spectacular karst and caves in Vietnam, near Dong Hoi (in the Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park): namely, Son Doong, Hang En and Paradise Cave and more. These are sites that British caver Howard Limbert has been exploring for more than 20 years. See the recent *New York Times* article 31 October 2014 about hiking to Hang En, with an interview with Howard Limbert via http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/02/travel/deep-in-vietnam-exploring-a-colossal-cave.html?ref=travel. There are plans to build a 10.6 km long cable car starting at the present Phong Nha Tourist Cave going to and within Son Doong, i.e. going into the world's largest cave passage http://www.gizmag.com/cable-car-planned-for-worlds-largest-cave/34476/. This is being pushed by a very wealthy and influential developer with family roots based in Dong Hoi. This developer has built the 5-star luxury hotel on the beach (Sun Spa Resort and Villa) at Dong Hoi and is the developer of Paradise Cave within the World Heritage Site. He has the money to spend, a lot of political clout and really believes that this is a very good thing for the locals in this impoverished part of Vietnam.

Arthur Clarke

Save the Cliefden Caves, NSW, from flooding by a proposed dam

Cliefden Caves in NSW contains many features of natural, cultural and scientific value. A proposal to construct a dam at Needles Gap on the Belubula River, NSW, will flood the Cliefden Caves forever.

To join the campaign and find out more about this threatened karst area see http://www.bookproduction.org/savecliefdencaves/.

Follow the links to the petition and have your voice heard.

Matt Cracknell

MC1 Kubla Khan, The Forbidden City.

Trip Reports

MC1 Kubla Khan

19 July 2014

Liz Rogers

Cavers: David Bardi, Matt Cracknell, Andreas Klocker, Liz Rogers, Sandy Varin & Neil Wilson.

As Alan Jackson says of Kubla, it's still there. But I hadn't been. I'm a caver and I own a camera so this seemed like a problem. In mid-winter this year Sandy sorted the VSA permit so we could go for a little look-see. Matt Cracknell kindly agreed to guide us through and Andreas, Dave, Sandy, Neil and I were along for the ride. We woke up to -4°C in Mole Creek and glittering frost across the fields. The frost was still there at 3 pm on Sunday afternoon having not melted all weekend – winter gets cold in Tassie.

The pictures tell most of the story here. A pre-rigged cave for the resurvey project made for an easy entry but didn't quite make up for the traumatic exit. Between the two events we stood on only the authorised rocks and saw some stunning calcite in various shapes, sizes and colours. The Pleasure Dome was particularly spectacular in high water with sussurating [*Making a soft rustling sound - Ed.*] streams overflowing down to the black river below. The echoing hum of the moving water was hypnotic. My photos from here show silhouettes of strange stick figures in skinny thermals and huge helmets after we deposited trog suits, bags and boots at the top of the climb. Photographic enthusiasm was beginning to dull and it was time to "wade" out of the river.

My gumboots filled up almost immediately and the burning sensation of the water flowing into the cave from the frozen landscape outside moved from feet to calves to knees and above. The fallacy of the wade

MC1 Kubla Khan, The Silk Shop.

MC1 Kubla Khan, climbing up and out of the (freezing) River Alph.

MC1 Kubla Khan, Dave grinning at his skills at not falling over.

MC1 Kubla Khan, The Pleasure Dome in flood.

became apparent after Matt went from waist deep to neck deep in front of me, and then started swimming [*I really should get shown the Stalactite Shuffle – Ed.*]. The high water that had made The Pleasure Dome beautiful was not so great for the upstream exit. In gumboots, trog suit, thermals, with a pelicased camera and caving pack hanging off me, and with the skin on my legs burning from the cold water I considered my options briefly before jumping in after him.

Swimming upstream in all that clobber is hard enough when you're prepared to put your hands in the water. Luckily for me I could touch the bottom for much of the journey. Getting up the waterfall would have been entertainingly difficult in a drysuit with proper underwear. In trog suits it was a little less fun, but Matt saved the day by pulling us up with a tape, one at a time. After another dip up to the neck we were out and up the rocks with only a long pitch and a short walk between us and the car. Regrettably I was too cold to focus the camera properly so the only shots of the frozen-water swim are out of focus. Take my word for it … it was cold. Nice cave though.

MC130 Devils Pot

20 July 2014

Andreas Klocker

Cavers: David Bardi, Andreas Klocker, Liz Rogers, Sandy Varin & Neil Wilson.

After an amazing trip into Kubla on Saturday we planned to do a short trip into Devils Pot on Sunday since everyone apart from me had to catch a flight from various airports. Just like Saturday the weather was amazing, apart from the freezing temperatures … luckily we stayed at luxurious accommodation with wood heating, washing machine and dryer – so instead of putting on our saturated/frozen undergarments from our swim in Kubla we could start off in dry clothes.

Our preferred plan was then to head down the canyon route into Devils Pot which Ric and Janine had rigged previously (McKinnon 2014), but the combination of Alan advising us that this route might be potentially dangerous if the water levels are up, the local ranger telling us that the water levels are super high, a freezing swim through Kubla the previous day and other recent experiences in water-filled caves, we decided to go with plan B and head down the traditional way.

Thanks to colourful flagging tape we found the top of the first pitch easily. The rigging ended up slightly different from that described in the rigging notes (McKinnon 2014), with a large tree as top anchor and a Y-hang between the first bolt and a tape around a tree

MC130 Devils Pot.

MC130 Devils Pot.

next to it, which worked fine. Once in the doline we quickly found the second pitch, and after me whining about the old-school rigging of this pitch (luckily we were using thick rope), we quickly continued down. Luckily that day Liz was quite low on energy, which meant less model work for her photographic art and more time to run around the cave and explore!

Sadly this cave didn't continue as large and impressive as one would expect by the amazing entrance doline, but we still poked our heads into every hole and had a great time. One the way out everyone was much quicker up the ropes than I expected (if this progress in learning SRT techniques by lamelanders continues at this rate then it'll soon be the locals who won't be able to keep up on trips anymore – be ashamed!) and we had heaps of spare time to head back to Hobart, enjoy a couple beers at Preachers, and head to the airport. And now it's Monday again ... time to procrastinate.

Reference

McKinnon, J. 2014. MC-130 Devils Pot – Cañon de los Vejestorios (Rigging Notes). *Speleo Spiel*, 400: 5-6.

JF207 Voltera

So Close...

27 July 2014

Dickon Morris

Cavers: David Bardi (VSA), Nat Brennan, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz, Dennis (?), Dickon Morris & Sandy Varin (VSA).

I have stated before that my ultimate goal in the Junee-Florentine is to find some more of the master cave that makes up the bottom of Niggly Cave. We had hoped that JF398 Boulder Jenga would provide a back door into the missing master cave beyond the end of Niggly. A big bonus with Boulder Jenga is that because it is located so far down the hill the depth to base level is less than 200 m. However, this proved to be a rather hollow advantage when the nature of the cave became apparent; a 150 m deep cave more challenging than many twice as deep. In any case, as avid readers of the *Spiel* will be aware, that cave sumped after a short section of base level streamway.

The day after shelving the Boulder Jenga project until summer following an excessively sporting trip (Jackson 2014a) we were on the prowl for new pastures and re-examined JF207 Voltera. As previously detailed in the *Spiel* (Jackson 2014b) a previously overlooked passage led onto great things.

Sunday 27 July was to be my last JF trip as I will fortunately soon be able to depart the flattest continent on earth after two years of attempting, and failing, to come to like the wretched convicts that have been dumped here [*From what I have heard the feeling is mutual – Ed.*]. It had promise of being a good trip, the cave had been pushed to the bottom of a beautiful 30 m pitch (Date of Release) the previous day and an unpushed horizontal passage led off from the bottom (Jackson 2014c). Dave was insisting that he wanted a short day so we dispatched him to push a shitty lead at the top of the third pitch (Sent Down) with rock of a quality that may have granted his wish with a one-way trip. Nat accompanied him with secret instructions to cut the rope should the rock fail to do its job.

Meanwhile, Dennis, Laure and I set off to push the bottom. Laure decided that she couldn't really face a

few hours of my company and attempted to throw herself down the rift between Sent Down and Date of Release. She was unhurt but, after a melodramatic exhibition, had a great excuse to join the other party.

I rerigged Date of Release on the way down, swapping the two short ropes used on the first descent the previous day for a 40 m thereby eliminating an extremely irritating free-hanging knot crossing. The first rebelay was changed to a deviation which made the whole business a lot easier.

The passage at the bottom of the pitch (Parole Passage) consists of a reasonably high fault-controlled passage with the water flowing through a miserable bedding plane that undercuts the right-hand wall. The floor of this bedding plane is impermeable shale. We naturally elected to follow the upright, dry part of the passage. Being fault-controlled it is very straight, which allowed us to get some fantastic 10+ m survey legs, an unusual pleasure in most JF caves.

After a reasonable distance we reached a fairly large and interesting chamber. The high fault section of the passage terminates in a blank wall while the bedding plane portion continues down in the right-hand corner. This continuation is low and extremely muddy but as argued later is probably the best lead in the cave. The water does not follow this path as it has now cut a pit through the shale in the floor and falls 4 m to flow at a lower level.

We elected to follow the water down the pit. Halfway down the pit a fossil passage leads off in both directions. The upstream passage is dry while the downstream carries the water that drops through the pit, however, this stream has clearly invaded the fossil passage long after its formation, creating a trench in the floor that is not present in the upstream section of the passage. The logical conclusion is that the lower passage is related to a previous phase of development, possibly the same as the dry pit alongside Sent Down. This dry passage always existed less than 1 m beneath the floor of Parole Passage as it formed. Then at some point the water in Parole Passage broke through the impure shale into this older passage (Hardened Criminal) cutting a vadose canyon in the floor of the downstream section and leaving the bedding plane lead, that I described previously, high and dry. The upstream portion of Hardened Criminal was of course unaffected. A truly fascinating sequence of speleogenesis.

This was getting very exciting as we had three leads to choose from. We elected to follow the downstream end of Hardened Criminal as it was the largest passage and was carrying the water. This continued in a very pleasant manner, crawling in the bedding plane at first before dropping down into the canyon. The bedding seems to peter out after around 20 m with the passage becoming a pure canyon. A canyon beyond which I could see black space. A lot of black space. Even better, I could also hear the sound of a base level river! A stream with no cascades that just babbles merrily over rounded dolerite cobbles. Was it actually going to happen? The thing that we had all fantasised about? The interception of the main drain? At that moment I really believed I was about to break out into river cave. As those that have been with me on breakthroughs may recall I can become rather excited. My reaction on this occasion made all previous reactions look like disinterest.

I reached the end of the rift and climbed down into a passage that is about 8 m wide and 6 m high with a rectangular cross section. Large mudbanks left by ancient floods lie against the walls like snowdrifts yet there was no more water visible, just that which we had been following from the entrance. I had to climb a pile of boulders in the middle of the passage and peer down the other side to find the water. Ram Raid Streamway comes out of a 3 m wide stream passage in the left wall and does a 90° bend to follow the continuation of Hardened Criminal. Interestingly Hardened Criminal becomes very large a little before Ram Raid Streamway joins it. The area around this enlargement may be very worthy of investigation.

The termination of the rift to the top of the small boulder pile yielded a staggeringly long leg of 18 m. Does racking up passage get any easier? The inlet of Ram Raid was duly marked on the survey and we set off downstream. Alas after 30 m this came to an end at Re-Conviction Choke. The flat shale roof comes down to meet the cobble floor; it obviously all backs up a great deal in flood conditions. This shale band completely dominates the form of the cave from the bottom of Date of Release to Re-Conviction Choke. It makes up the floor of Parole Passage creating a flat floor that slopes at around 20°. The passage essentially goes along the strike of this bedding plane. Then at the pit the water breaks through the shale band and into Hardened Criminal with Parole Passage, heading down dip, now dry but still floored by the shale band.

Hardened Criminal is the mirror image of Parole Passage in that the shale band that makes up the floor in the latter is the roof in the former. This is still the case when the passage becomes very large and Ram Raid streamway enters. In its dying moments Hardened Criminal does what Parole Passage does at the pit and turns to go down dip. This is its downfall; my hypothesis is as follows.

Re-Conviction choke is or was at one time at the water table. Ordinarily in this type of setting the passage would continue on at the water table but the shale band has prevented this, the water is forced to follow the shale down. This has created a sump, but not just any old sump, this sump will be a low horizontal bedding plane with a flat roof heading down at 20°. This is a total disaster zone and it is not remotely surprising that it is hopelessly choked, just a fact of stratigraphy. Yet there is a ray of light. The grotty continuation of Parole Passage is above the shale band and it was this passage that took the water before the creation of the pit and invasion by the water of the fossilised Hardened Criminal. Therefore, provided it is not choked, Parole Passage should lead to the continuation of the streamway beyond Re-Conviction Choke and beyond the troublesome shale band.

Well there you go chaps, I've managed to convince myself it will go through the beauty of logic and hopefully enthused those that will push the lead. The fossil upstream of Hardened Criminal is interesting but not the big prize even though it will be far more pleasant to push.

With this sudden and unexpected end reached, Dennis and I turned our attention to upstream Ram Raid. This was some of the most pleasant surveying I have ever done, standing in large passage shooting 10 m legs. The passage was simple to sketch too. Our agreed turn around time was 3:30 pm and when we reached this time we almost called it but I decided I was having too much fun and elected to do a few more legs. This was fortuitous as the passage ended two legs later in an impressive 25 m aven with the entirety of the water falling from the roof in two large streams.

With all the easy passage bagged and surveyed, yes you did read that correctly; bagged AND surveyed, it was time to head out. Thankfully the cave was still going and we therefore felt no obligation to derig. Dave's team had already headed out and we did not encounter them until the Fistula where we could hear them on the pitch beyond.

On the surface we exchanged notes on the day's exploration. Dave's lead was still going and seemed to be dropping down into something. Apparently he had heard me whistling—this would make perfect sense, meaning that this fossil pitch connects with upstream

Hardened Criminal making up the old route. Another piece of evidence to support this is the presence of a small hole at the base of Date of Release which has decent black space beneath. If this is also part of Hardened Criminal this would be the only example I have come across of a cave where the dry fossil passage is BELOW the modern active route. This is an absolutely fascinating piece of cave and I really hope it goes further. Indeed Voltera as a whole is the first cave I have pushed in the JF that I would happily and without irony, recommend as a sporting trip.

I was then asked how our trip had gone, to which I replied. "Oh, bit disappointing really. 30% of our survey legs were less than ten metres!"

So there you have it. On my very last trip in the JF I finally got what I had always hoped for, a good bit of base level streamway, granted it wasn't the main drain but that would have been too perfect. As Alan's report in *Spiel* #402 (Jackson 2104b) shows we were very lucky to even get this far with the cave appearing to be dead twice in the upper section but I suppose that's caving. Hopefully the luck will continue and Parole Passage will turn out not to be choked. What wonderful caves Tasmania has! I really can't see myself staying away for the rest of my life.

References

JACKSON, A. 2014a. JF398 Boulder Jenga – People die on pitches like that. *Speleo Spiel*, 402: 9-10.

JACKSON, A. 2014b. JF207 Voltera – Down the great erotic vagina. *Speleo Spiel*, 402: 11-12.

JACKSON, A. 2014c. JF207 Voltera. *Speleo Spiel*, 403: 11.

JF207 Voltera

But Wait, There's More!

Alan Jackson

23 August 2014

Cavers: David Bardi (VSA), Nat Brennan, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker & Sandy Varin (VSA).

The end was nigh and this was meant to be the final trip in Voltera to tick off the last of the crap leads and derig. We staged empty packs strategically through the cave for accepting rope on the way out. At the bottom of the last pitch we poked Sandy into the tight draughting fissure to see if she fitted. After some digging and improvised hammer work she almost did. We decided Nat was smaller and popped her in next and she got through, just. She reported a short pitch to a streamway so I headed in too (after some more hammering to fit my child-bearing hips through). What was initially an exciting prospect was quickly dismissed as I could see our boot prints from the previous weekend – it was connecting in just above the nasty climb up in the upstream part of the streamway (Turn the Other Cheek) we had pushed (at station VS314). This meant we didn't need to devise a way of making some rope appear for the new pitch, which we didn't have with us.

We proceeded to 'The Pit' and David started enlarging the awful low, wide, mud-filled thing. After his shift, Sandy and I headed in and got through, slid down several metres before having to dig briefly again. It then opened up quite nicely (very high ceiling) and we slipped and slid our down quite nice passage to the edge of a ~6 m drop. At the bottom of the drop we could see the known part of the cave. The only thing of potential interest at this point is that we were level with the small inlet that showers in which appears to have quite navigable passage continuing upstream. It would be a relatively simple ~8 m bolt traverse with no climbing involved to get there. But the mud would make conditions pretty hideous. We ploughed back up through the mud to join the others then had a general tourist of the bottom sections, lamenting that the downstream stuff craps out what must be but only a few metres from the main drain.

We headed out, derigging as we went. To mark the bolt holes (we were using the 6 mm concrete screws, so the whole bolt comes out leaving nothing but a 6 mm diameter hole) I poked a piece of plastic drinking straw into the hole with some pink flagging tape tied to it. This worked well on the bottom pitch and the little two metre pitch but at the top of the next pitch I couldn't locate my bag of tape and straws and figured I'd dropped it somewhere. So that pitch is unmarked – it had a single bolt on the left wall a few metres back from the drop for an approach line and then three bolts directly over the main drop for the primary anchor/hang. The layer of mud on the walls in this section should allow the astute to notice where we sullied it and find the imprint of the hangers.

Andreas had one last lead in mind for the way out – an ascending side passage located between stations AL3 and AL4 at the highest active inlet in Stairway to Niggly. After 20 m of crawling to a point where we could hear (but not see or reach) the water splashing around in the adjacent chamber at the bottom of the second pitch (near station A30) was a bloody pitch. It was horribly loose and full of perched dolerite cobbles and fill but we got the rope from the last pitch rigged and Andreas headed down while we others surveyed up to it. Andreas reported a subsequent short pitch/sketchy climb which he descended to the top of yet another pitch with a reasonable stream flowing at the bottom but he'd need the drill to get down. We didn't have a drill, thankfully. We left the rope rigged and dumped the ~29 m rope from the other derigged pitch too and started heading out, abandoning the plan to derig the whole cave. We suspect the water is the remainder of the entrance water (last seen at the bottom of the 80 m pitch) and not seen again until Turn the Other Cheek passage at the bottom. Who knows what fossil systems might be intersected along the way though?–that's the joy, and pain, of exploration caving.

Cave Hill Escapades

24 August 2014

Alan Jackson

Cavers: David Bardi (VSA), Nat Brennan, Stephen Bunton, Amelia Fowles, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Rob Krachler, Michael Packer, Sandy Varin (VSA) & Andrew Hughes (Bookend Trust).

This trip had all the hallmarks of a circus and at times we achieved it. Andrew Hughes was already up the Florentine doing his primary school education adventure 'Cave Search' thingy so I'd invited him along in the hope it'd provide something inspirational for his audience of 9-11-year-olds (which, coincidentally, was the average mental age of our party).

We parked at the Sesame junction and geared up, then I dropped six up at the top of Chrisps Road. Our plan was to meet in the middle. Pax, Rob, Bunty and I thrashed up to JF210 and put pink tape on the tag. Next we found what we thought had to be the JF211 entrance but without rope we couldn't find the tag to confirm it. We then proceeded further up the hill to the swallet you can hear from Sesame, in the hope of locating JF209. The swallet is generally described as blocked and un-enterable in most old trip reports but it looked doable to me if you didn't mind the two litre per

second flow of snow melt going down the back of your neck in the process. We then found what had to be JF209 just upstream of the swallet, on the eastern bank. We couldn't find the tag at first, but did find it later lurking under some moss. Pax and Rob investigated and returned shortly after declaring that it doesn't go then headed off into the scrub to look for other entrances. Being untrustworthy of others' opinions I headed in myself and found the way on via a ~3 m climb. After a good look around amongst the rockfall and roots I surfaced and called for the others. Muffled yelps could be heard off in the scrub and eventually the others returned. At the same time the uphill party arrived. They had apparently followed the track almost to Voltera, then made a bee-line for the sound of the large stream you can hear in the area, effectively following the dry gully below JF206-207 until it intersected the other gully (with the stream). On the way they came across Serena, Ken and Bunty's hole from yesteryear (Hosking 2010) confirmed it didn't go and tagged it JF638. (This cave was originally entered into the GPS as 'JFSK1' and has now been renamed 'JF638' but retains the original metadata. If you don't know what metadata is then ask George Brandis.) Following the stream led them to JF209.

I jokingly suggested one of them push the nearby swallet while we surveyed JF209. JF209 went up a bit, along a bit, down a bit, along a bit more and terminated in a narrow passage with daylight. We collected 85 m of data (over a 10 m vertical range) and quite a bit of mud. I was impressed to discover that David had braved the swallet and explored ~100 m of passage that was still going. He didn't seem to think it matched the sketch of JFX44 Ring Hole (Hume 1982) but in my mind it really can't be anything else. It was tagged JF633 and we'll return to survey it properly when all the snow's finished melting.

We bashed back down to the road but Bunty got left behind doing Sesame track upgrades (we found him later in the day in the car). We kitted up for an attack on JF202 and strolled down the road to that track. JF202 was looking a bit wet. I left Andreas sussing out the rigging to re-visit nearby JF213. I had a new tag with me, since we couldn't find the old one previously (Jackson 2011). Nat, Andrew, Sandy and David accompanied me. Before affixing the new tag we had one last look around and Nat's youthful 20:20 vision found the tag. There is a narrow fissure that heads into the main wall and it was located on the right hand side (east) of this about 30 cm from the corner, at face height. We hung some pink stuff off it, photographed it and wandered back to JF202 via a circuitous route.

Andreas was still faffing down his hole so I took Sandy, David, Nat and Amelia into Rescue Pot as far as the first pitch for a jolly. Once back at 202 there was no one in sight so I geared up and headed down with the survey gear. At the bottom of the first pitch Rob suddenly materialised out of a wall of water said something about not enough rope and started ascending. I leapt through the waterfall and saw Andreas and Pax drowning below me, but definitely coming my way, so I turned around too. Basically, too much water and the single 65 m length of rope we had wasn't going to make it from the tree at the top all the way to the bottom of the second pitch. No survey today, though from what I saw of it the passage it was trending away from Rescue Pot and that was what I was really hoping to find out. If the old map (*SC*51: 34) had had any kind of information on it in regard to the orientation of the cave then revisiting the cave wouldn't have been necessary – useless twats.

We wandered down to the cars and went our separate ways. A productive day, with JF209 and JF213 ticked off and hopefully JFX44 finally located and tagged, and a few other things.

References

HOSKING, K. 2010. JF-207 Voltera et al. *Speleo Spiel*, 377: 12-13.

HUME, N. 1982. "Rescue Pot" --- er, rather "Ring Hole". *Speleo Spiel*, 176: 6 & 9.

JACKSON, A. 2011. JF-583, JF-201 and JF-213? *Speleo Spiel*, 386: 4-5.

Settlement Area

Norske Skogging

1 September 2014

Alan Jackson

Cavers: Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Chris Sharples, Ric Tunney & John Webb, with Andrew Hughes & Andrew Poynter (Bookend Trust).

John Webb (Norske Skog planner and STC member) had another pine plantation ready for harvest in the Settlement area so there was a long list of entrances that he wanted explored and surveyed to determine all necessary boundaries for harvesting and machinery etc.

Chris did a lot of the survey work five or six years ago as a consultant to Norske so he tagged along to see his efforts right through, Ric and Janine were keen to assist generally but also had a special interest in having a look at nearby JF459 Nameless Spring to see if it was a possible diving site, I was there as official control freak to make sure everything was recorded 'properly' and the two Andrews tagged along in the hope of finding something that might inspire the primary school kids taking part in the Expedition Class thing.

We started with 'feature 94' (numbers as per John's ground searches and resulting map and list). This proved to have two entrances, very close together (~8 m) and a favourite haunt for local mammals. About 24 m of passage over a 4 m vertical range was hastily surveyed and sketched. It was a short horizontal cave with clay/sediment floors, lots of poo, a distinct share-house odour and a small cow skeleton (probably a calf deposited there during the days when the Settlement was actually a settlement). We only tagged the larger southern entrance (JF634), on the western rock face 40 cm down from the top. In the spirit of JF33 Dead Horse Cave I've called this one Dead Cow Cave.

Next was nearby 'feature 84'. This entrance had a nice 2.5 m high south-facing limestone wall with a small entrance heading in to the left. This was followed for ~15 m, over a delightful little flowstone pool to a sediment blockage. We surveyed out and were about to leave when I noticed a low hole with a continuing clay slope heading off to the right of the doline wall. I squeezed under and it opened out into a pleasant, clay-floored chamber with dimensions of 10x10 m and ~3-4 m high. Three ways on and down were explored – all terminating in clay blockages. 85 m of data was collected (lots of splays) over a ~12 m vertical range. The cave was tagged JF635 at about head height (~60 cm down from the top of the cliff – in case the floor level changes over time!) on the large limestone face, right of the centre. The first five survey legs were all three-point-something-metres so before finding the second way on I'd already scribbled Three Pointer as a name for this cave. It has stuck.

Forty metres away was 'feature 88'. This was a low

small entrance which opened out into a small chamber (7x4 m). Nothing spectacular but definitely a cave. The tag (JF636) was placed immediately over the entrance on the small limestone face. Chris found two *Hickmania troglodytes* (one male, one female) in this cave supposedly about to do the deed. Caught in the Act will suffice as a name for this one.

Sixty metres later, back at the cars, the clean people got in and the dirty people rode on the tailgate to a spot a few hundred metres further down the road. Just off the road at the head of a little gully was JF399 Briggs Squeeze. This cave has a published survey (*SS*162:10) but it's only ASF Grade 22 so we thought we'd better just collect some shot data to confirm the heading and extent of the cave. We went as far as the squeeze (about 35 m in) and surveyed out in four shots, which should give John a reasonable idea of where the cave goes for harvesting purposes. The tag, which is on the left wall just inside the entrance passage about a metre off the floor, had some pink tape attached to it for easier finding in the future.

A little further round the hill was 'feature 142'. This was a 20 m long tunnel that paralleled the limestone escarpment to a second entrance. We did the through trip, surveyed it and tagged both entrances. The eastern entrance is JF637 (tag on the left wall at entrance) and the western entrance is JF639 (tag on left wall at entrance). [No, 638 wasn't missed – it was assigned to a Cave Hill cave the previous weekend by Andreas and co (as was 633)]. John had frequently referred to this cave as a 'walk through', so that's the name – Walk Through.

A hundred metres away on the top of a strike ridge we re-located JF632 Corkscrew Cave (Feature 113). This needed a survey. The lower muddy levels proved to all choke out not far beyond where Bunty had got to on the previous trip. 80 m of passage over a vertical range of 15 m was collected.

After some lunch and vigorous discussions we moved further down the road. One hundred metres off the road was 'feature 48' – a small hole which had been punched open by a recently fallen pine branch. A large flat slab of rock was jammed a metre into the entrance (the old ceiling which had been punched in) which prevented access. The adjacent wall proved soft and friable though and within a couple of minutes one could just fit past the wedged slab. The passage continued down a dirt slope to another much larger fallen roof slab. I managed to excavate under this and fall through into a more spacious chamber below. Various side passages headed off and up to near-surface. The whole place was chockers with curtains of pine tree roots which had to be pushed aside to make progress. They made surveying difficult, interfering with the laser. After Janine and I had finished and negotiated the awful entrance squeeze I declared exploring the cave was like 'sex with a French woman' due to the extremely hairy nature of the passage and the constant battle with pine pubes. In the interests of taste I've decided to reduce my original cave name to Femme Française. It was tagged JF640 on the south-eastern side of the entrance on the narrow face of a protruding bedding plane slab (much like the one jammed lower down). The cave was 33 m long and 5 m deep. One side passage must be within a metre of intersecting the surface.

Back down the hill, close to the road, was 'feature 54'. The cave consisted of a small triangular entrance with a right angle corner just inside leading into a medium-sized chamber with a few recent but empty animal nests (ferns/leaves etc.) and a two metre deep muddy pit at the far end. The cave was tagged JF641 on the right wall and is 18 m long and 5 m deep. I've called it Empty Nest.

Another short drive and we were in the JF631 area. First stop was 'feature 136'. This was a two metre deep entrance (scramble) into a 20 m long stooping/crawling passage to a low clay blockage (3 m vertical range). It was tagged (JF642) on the back (eastern) wall of the entrance. Nothing interesting happened in this cave, so a name hasn't come to me.

JF631 was next ('feature 188). We had some rope and a ladder this time to negotiate the pitch that stopped Milos, Petr and Chris last time. It was a bit of a dodgy rig but it worked. Janine went down first, then returned to report that the last rung of the ladder had finished 30 cm above the surface of a pool of clear blue water at least two metres deep and she was already planning a return visit for a dive. Chris and I also had a look and managed to scramble off the ladder onto an adjacent mud bank for a better look at the pool. It indeed looked a good dive prospect with 3-4 m of open passage visible below the surface. Great pine tree roots hung down the shaft and into the pool. A short low side passage up the mud bank was quickly looked at but would need some excavation to get through (something to do while the diver does her bit on the next trip). Much debate over a name for this cave was had but nothing was settled (at least not in my mind – don't believe anything Chris tells you). Let's see what it does first.

Forty metres north was 'feature 194'. Janine was already down it by the time I had derigged JF631 but she called out 'bring the Disto' so I dived in after her. The first obstacle was a narrow squeeze which was tight enough to make me worry about reversing it in an uphill direction but I decided I'd deal with that later. Tree roots, as was the theme for the day, was the second obstacle – they'd grown thick and sturdy down the centre of the narrow passage and weren't easily pushed aside. The cave then turned left and I was gobsmacked at the wall of sediment in front of me which was teeming with bones. I'd never seen so many in a cave. Skirting this 1.5 m high, 4 m long bank of presumably extinct fauna species, I found Janine down a tight mud slope in more spacious cave. Mud eventually filled all the leads (although the far end might go if you're keen) so we surveyed out, grabbed some photos of the incredible bone deposits and kicked and swore and grunted in the entrance squeeze. The cave was tagged JF643 on the left (southern) wall just before the squeeze and has 45 m of passage over a 10 m vertical range. In honour of the bones I've called the cave Femur Fest.

The daylight was fading by this stage and we still had several caves to investigate. We cut our losses and made for the car. Ric and Janine were keen to inspect JF459 Nameless Spring so we said goodbye to the Andrews then drove round to the nearest point of approach to JF459. It wasn't far off the road, down towards the river. I was surprised at the volume of water flowing out of it, confirming Chris's suspicions that it is one of, if not 'the' major resurgence for the area. I concentrated on getting a tag photo while Chris and Janine checked for passage. Not wanting to get wet, they didn't go far, but it seemed as though there was at least several tens of metres of navigable passage and a return visit to survey and thoroughly inspect if it would need a dive at any point was confirmed. A line of sinkholes, some with running water at the bottom of them, sit over the theorised alignment of the cave. It was almost dark now, so we made a break for it.

All the caves explored had an entrance photo taken, showing the location of the tag and these have been filed in the electronic archive. Surveys/maps of JF632, JF634-637/639 and JF640-643 appear in this issue. JF631 will come later once Janine's finished swimming around.

Upper Florentine Valley

JF333 Nanwoon, JF334, JF335 Midges, JF336 Handline Slot & JF644 Protestor Cave

7 September 2014

Stephen Bunton

Cavers: Stephen Bunton & Andrew Hughes (Bookend Trust).

In the past I hadn't really concentrated too much on the caves of the Florentine Valley floor but whenever I looked over the lists of JF caves, the name Nanwoon always jumped out at me.

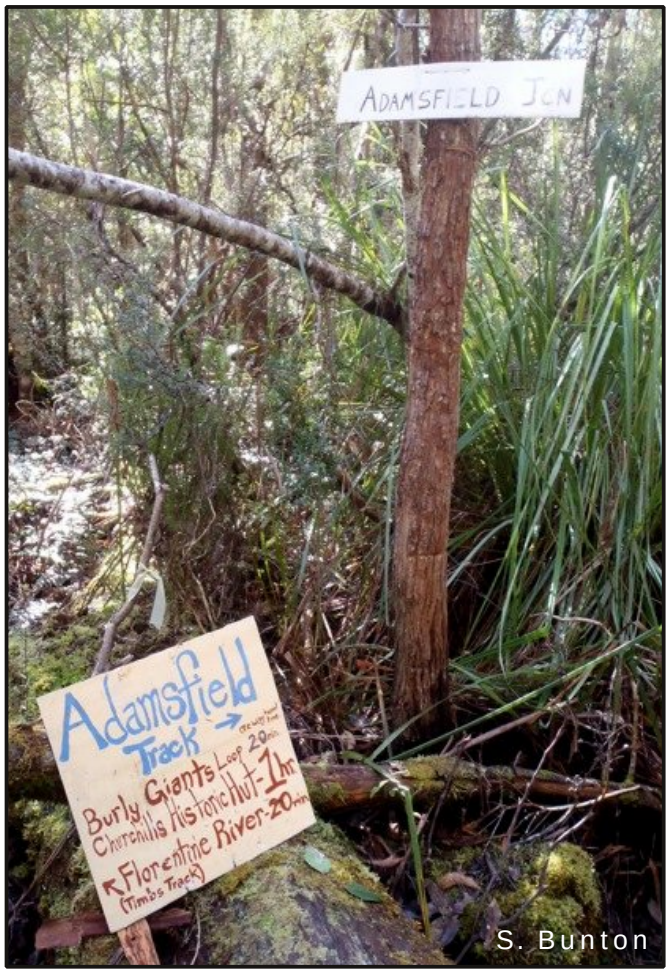
In Andrew Hughes' Expedition Class activity of searching for caves, it was suggested that this section of the Florentine would be a likely spot to find non-life-threatening cave features. During his explorations Andrew re-located JF333 Nanwoon and several other tagged caves. I decided that whilst Andrew was still in the area, I would join him and get the lie of the land in the upper Florentine, thereby maintaining the STC corporate memory.

There is an incredible amount of low relief limestone in the upper Florentine and according to the LiDAR image in Andrew's possession; much of it showed quite obvious karst features. This area was ground zero for the last ditch battles of the Tasmanian forest wars as Forestry Tasmania carried out its land grab to access areas of old growth forest to permanently include in the future plantation cycle. Forestry operations were extended into this area from The Gap, via F5 Rd West and then Cooks Rd. These roads would have followed the start of the old Adamsfield Track. The road extension is marked on the Wedge 1:100,000 map and it is also printed on Andrew's LiDAR image but not on the Tiger 1:25,000 sheet.

The forest protesters accessed this area from the Strathgordon Rd travelling North along Tims (aka Timbs) Track until it intersected the Adamsfield Track, where they turned east. The protesters cleared and maintained this track and it is now in good condition so accessing the caves was rather easy.

From Andrew's camp at the end of the road it was a short stroll along a skidder-type track, through an old logging coupe, to Churchills Hut on Adamsfield Track, overlooking the Florentine River. Both Churchills Hut (unnamed) and Nanwoon (in slightly the wrong position) are marked on the Wedge sheet. We headed west but we did not follow the track branching to the right, as marked on the Tiger map sheet, because Andrew had been unable to locate it. We followed the Adamsfield Track to the Little Florentine River and then ambled downstream following a flat-floored valley. This feature shows up nicely on the LiDAR as a small, meandering stream. On the left a limestone outcrop eventually came into view and it is in this knoll that Nanwoon is located.

Nanwoon was discovered in 1983, by Hydro workers, who were looking for other caves in the southwest that contained evidence of Aboriginal occupancy. The plot was to thereby devalue the significance of Kutikina Cave on the lower Franklin River and thus its inundation could be justified. The cave was tagged by Albert Goede (Goede 1983) but interestingly it only reads "F 333". Nanwoon is a significant archaeological site because it contains bone deposits. None of the bone deposits are of megafauna, only extant species the most recent of these has been dated to 7,200 years BP and this makes these some of the most recent in Tasmania. The most significant discovery however, was of the occipital bone of a human dated to about 12,000 years BP (Jones *et al.* 1988). This makes Nanwoon significant as the only cave in Tasmania to contain



Upper Florentine Valley protester signage.

Old bridge on the Little Florentine River.

human remains. According to the logic of the HEC, Nanwoon could have been devalued if someone committed a few murders and hid the bodies in a cave somewhere else!

Andrew and I located the tag, photographed it, sketched the entrance and got a GPS position. The cave is only low but it faces north, it would have provided sunny shelter but not much else. There is a squeeze-climb on the right, down to a passage that is reported to lead 20 feet to a small chamber although the depth is recorded as only 3 m (Eberhard 1996). We took people at their word and only looked into the cave.

Further around the knoll to the North we located JF334 and documented it. Below that cave was JF335 which is a drop-in entrance that is tagged but the nicer entrance is the outflow entrance that had a very short, shallow meandering surface stream canyon. Inside, the cave swung hard left and closed to a low wet crawl that was not sufficiently enticing for me to trog up. The cave was full of midges. We fully documented this cave as JF335 Midges.

We knew that JF336 must also be in the area and so Andrew led me off across the top of the knoll just above the level of Nanwoon. We encountered a nice, circular, clear, almost grassy doline that could have been a golf bunker, also a bedding plane slot that was un-enterable heading towards another doline with exposed limestone features and fissures but nothing really enterable there either. The next feature was the one that matched the JF336 description. Andrew had recorded it as CS-24 (CS for Cave Search). He has about thirty or more of these that he has recorded over the last few weeks. Within a minute we had found the JF336 tag and then began our documentation. The cave matched the description except that the 5 m pitch was a 3 m chimney climb. I had a handline if needed but Andrew was sufficiently intrepid without it. He explored the cave and I sketched it remotely from his description recording it as JF336 Handline Slot.

We then headed overland back to the Adamsfield Track and followed it west to where it was joined by Tims Track. A short way further along the Adamsfield Track crosses the Florentine River. At the river are a series of huts, an old Hydro gauging station, the remains of a substantial bridge and the cable for a flying fox across the river. We enjoyed lunch at a most pleasant spot. I suspect another Hydro plot was to flood the upper Florentine and divert the water west into Lake Gordon but I suspect that even the Hydro engineers were aware of the leakage that emanates from dams in limestone that renders them non-functional.

In this vicinity we were looking for Frodshams Cave JFX124, which is reported to be "on the eastern side of the Florentine River near Frodshams Track" (Twelvetrees 1908 in Eberhard 1996). There was a cave just to the left of the track 50 m back from the huts that Andrew had previously noted. I looked in and decided that it seemed worthy of trogging up and surveying.

Immediately inside the entrance there was a pink tape that probably dated to the era of forest protests in this area since it matched the tapes that marked the walking tracks. At some stage STC was approached to undertake cave-hunting in the Upper Florentine in order to strengthen the case for the area's protection but I think STC apathy prevailed. As a future project we need to contact the Wilderness Society and see if they did document any caves in this area.

The cave somewhat matched the description offered by Twelvetrees in his report; "about 10 feet wide at the entrance and 4 feet high, sloping down 20 feet at a low angle into the water". The dimensions were exaggerated somewhat although there was a slope down to a muddy floor that could be covered in water at wetter times of the year. Beyond where water may lie inside the cave entrance, there was more extensive passage. This is more than any documentation suggests and this probably means that it is not Frodshams Cave. There were trog marks through most of the accessible

JF333 Nanwoon Cave, Andrew looking at ferns.

parts of the caves but these are probably not from real cavers who would have documented such stuff. The caver's records seem to suggest that Frodshams Cave is "lost" (Eberhard 1996). The main issue in determining the identity of this cave is finding out the location of Frodshams Track. I contacted Tasmanian historian Nic Haygarth who suggested that I consult the original records in the Mineral Resources Tasmania library.

The main thrust of this further research would be to determine if Frodshams (original) Track was upgraded and renamed the Adamsfield Track when the mining started there later, in 1925. Thomas Frodsham, in his two efforts to find an overland route to Macquarie Harbour (1878 and 1890), did cross the Florentine before heading south, failing on his 1878 mission and eventually in 1890 exiting via the Weld. Frodshams Pass on the Strathgordon Rd is named in his honour. This tends to indicate that the cave we found was in the correct location despite the fact that it doesn't quite match the description.

In the meantime this low phreatic cave, with its roof-pendants extending into the floor sediment, could almost be considered a single chamber as it only has a few side passages. I named it JF644 Protestor Cave.

It was a pleasant 55-minute stroll back to the cars from this point.

I was pretty excited about the day's proceedings but the most significant part of the day for the online primary school lesson was that Stephen Bunton wears stripy thermals. I'm glad that this was the only deviant behaviour Andrew witnessed for the day because the sky's the limit for what could be published on the Internet!

References

EBERHARD, R. 1996. *Inventory and Management of Karst in the Florentine Valley Tasmania*. Forestry Tasmania, p. 25.

GOEDE, A. 1983. Cave Numbering - Junee Florentine. *Speleo Spiel*, 189:2.

JONES, R., COSGROVE, R., ALLEN, J., CANE, S., and KIERNAN, K. 1988. An archaeological reconnaissance of karst caves within the Southern Forests region of Tasmania, September 1987. *Australian Archaeology*, 26:1–23.

Settlement Area

Bones, Bubbles & Brevity

15 September 2014

Alan Jackson

Team Bones: Rolan Eberhard, Amy Koch (FPA) & Peter Macintosh (FPA).

Team Bubbles: Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

Team Brevity: Alan Jackson & John Webb.

Team Bubbles arrived first to start their assault on the dive in JF631. Then John and I arrived to check inspect the last couple of possibly enterable caves in the area for forest harvesting planning purposes. The bone boffins arrived later again to collect samples from JF643.

John and I exchanged pleasantries with the bubblers then wandered into the pines to John's "features 216 and 217". The former is just a three metre deep narrow slot blocked at the bottom but the latter, a few metres north, is a more significant feature – a pit about 2 m deep, 4 m long and 1.5 m wide. At the lowest point was a narrow slot with a drop below it which John had apparently heard water plopping noises using his preferred pine cone sonic estimation technique. We were armed with a post-hole shovel so we removed a rotten man-fern and soil that was filling the hole in order to get through but a large block of limestone was hiding under the dirt and prevented access. I decided this hole might warrant a return one day with rock-persuading tools so we tagged it, JF645, on the western wall of the pit about 40 cm down from the surface.

Next was "feature 182". We overshot it, finding ourselves at "feature 155" (which almost looked like it was worth climbing down into (~3 m deep pit), turned back to another patch of flagging tape (there's lots of it about) but John convinced himself he must be lost so we about-faced again and charged off into nowhere until John unconvinced himself he had been lost (but admitted he now was) and we headed back to the previous patch of tape … and there was the hole! All good exercise. It was a nice little horizontal entrance but a large rock blocked it and I couldn't quite get my hips through. Deciding it looked like it was worth the effort, John wandered the short distance back to the car to fetch my very big hammer while I tagged it JF646 on the right (northern) face at the entrance. A couple of good whacks with the hammer and top of the rock yielded. I scrambled in to find less than 10 m of passage and some low and tight ways on. Done.

Back at the car we noticed the boners had arrived. They had a massive array of digging implements, the like of which I'd never seen before. They'd transformed the previously tight entrance into a gaping maw, but still weren't happy with two rocks in the tightest bit. I helped them pull out the smaller one and send the lower (larger) one down into the cave. They then eagerly set to investigating the deposit.

Concerned I might learn something I ran away to see if Ric and Janine needed help. They were in the process of abandoning their first attempt, so I helped them with their second. Janine's record of the trip below covers most of the details. All I'd add is that during her dive her bubbles moved from the northern side of the pool (where she initially submerged) to coming up against the eastern side of the pool, then they started coming up into the small (0.7 metre diameter) side pool off the south of the main pool before ceasing to come up at all. So she went far enough to have her bubbles collecting into some other place, and probably in a southerly direction. After watching Janine get tangled in pine roots for half an hour I've christened the cave Tangled.

After derigging JF631 we chatted with the bone team, who'd just finished also. They'd found plenty of jaws, some with interesting dentition, and were keen to get on their way. We left also, going via the JF619 Twenty Pinecones area to inspect a tight entrance John thought might be worth looking at with a crowbar in hand. While the cave beyond the tight entrance was certainly interesting the crowbar wasn't going to help. Probably the best thing to do is tell Rolan there are bones in there and he'll have it open for us in no time.

Dive report JF631

Janine McKinnon

We rigged a ladder down the entrance squeeze, and another from a tape around a natural on the wall at the top of the drop to the water. Ric then put a bolt in the wall at the top of the pitch, to use with a pulley to get dive gear up and down the pitch.

I headed in wearing my wetsuit and Ric passed the three packs to me, which I hung from the ladder. I moved to the bottom and found a very precarious spot to get off out of the water. It was a steeply sloping mud bank above the pool of water. Ric passed one pack down but I realised I was never going to be able to assemble, and don, my dive gear balanced so poorly. So

up it went again, all gear out of the cave, plus me, to rethink.

I decided to go with minimal gear, assemble the regulators on the tanks before lowering them, and probably kit up in the water. Luckily Alan had arrived at this stage, having finished working with John nearby, and he was coming down with me. That was going to make things easier.

I went in again, we lowered packs with Ric outside, Alan at the pulley, and me at the bottom. I hung the packs off the ladder above the water, moved to the other side of the pond and up another mud bank, and Alan passed the packs across to me. I had a flat spot at the top of the mud bank to gear up here, which was much more convenient.

Alan helped me rig up and then I slid into the pond fully kitted. The 3 l tanks I was using made life a lot easier.

My exploratory line I had tied off up on the bank and I couldn't find a secure secondary tie-off so I used the ladder as a temporary measure. The pool was now totally silted out, not the crystal clear water that had looked so inviting at the start. It was going to be diving in zero visibility. Again.

I headed under, feeling my way, and couldn't move forward. Roots had tangled my fins. Up, sorted, try again. Then the ladder was in the way (there wasn't a lot of room down there). Up, pass the end of the ladder to Alan, try again. A couple of more false starts and I finally got away.

The floor was soft mud and silt and the passage dropped steeply and swung to the right (I think). It stayed about 1.5 m wide and was about 1 m high. I followed it some distance and thought I was on a winner here, but suddenly it started narrowing down. It closed down to a small depression only big enough to fit my foot into. I felt around for an alternative route but couldn't feel one. All this is being done in zero visibility so I can't be 100% certain that I have covered all options. As the pool is static, and the water a bit warmer than usual (9°C), I am happy that I have determined that there is not divable passage there. The water is percolating through smaller fissures and conduits.

I tried to tie-off the line but there was nothing solid down there, so I turned around (with difficulty) and reeled back to the pool.

Dive time: 10 minutes. Max depth: 5 m. Distance penetrated: 35 m roughly (counting knots in line).

Kit: 7 mm semi-dry suit. Razor harness with UTD 9 kg wing. 3 l tanks. Short hoses on XTX 50 Apeks second stage regulators. Apeks cold water first stages. Mares light-weight fins. Light Monkey reel. Ric's helmet with his Rude Nora light.

Alan videoed the whole thing on my Lumix, including sitting in the dark with me out of sight. So total blackness. Listening to his comments and self-amusement was certainly amusing for me to view afterwards.

JF4 Khazad-Dûm

Beginners and Bolts

20 September 2014

Alan Jackson

Cavers: Milos Dvorak, Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer, Chris Sharples, Ric Tunney & John Webb.

A beginner trip with rigging lessons was requested by Rob Krachler, so I organised a trip I could achieve that as well as get some other jobs done. Interest was high (up to ten people at one point) but the usual strategic retreats were made, including a dose of man flu for Rob.

We toyed doing a main/serpentine exchange to spread the group out a bit but eventually went for a slow and steady 'all together' approach with a staged exit strategy to avoid traffic jams.

Pax and Janine went first, with Pax rigging. Chris, John and Milos tagged along behind them in tourist mode. Ric and I did bolting and testing duties. I could find no record that Jeff Butt ever actually load tested the old Loxin eyebolts from the late 1960s so I set Ric the task of applying the new 7.5 kN test to any Loxins in the cave that we still rig from. The Scaling Pole pitch bolt passed, which was reassuring, but since it is a single bolt and placed for ladders, not SRT, I placed two new glue-in eyebolts up high and further out over the pitch for future use. A free hang wasn't achievable but it's very close and with 11 mm rope and a half-smart caver then any rub will be avoidable or at the worst tolerable.

Ric then tested the Loxin at the next short pitch (~4 m) – it passed. Jeff only installed one p-hanger up high on this pitch, arguing it was complimented by the Loxin. But the Loxin is low and off to the side (again, for ladders) and just makes the rig stupid. I placed a new glue-in above the existing p-hanger.

Ric and Janine wanted to place a permanent bolted traverse line at the next pitch/climb/obstacle but I stuck to my guns from ten years ago when it was first considered. Instead, I'd brought a rope to rig this one as a pitch to prove that if you're too crap to do the traverse then you can rig it satisfactorily as a pitch instead – just bring 10.5 mm rope as it has some minor rubs.

At the 21 m pitch Ric tested the Loxin (it passed) and I installed two new glue-ins a couple of metres above the old Loxin on the left wall (facing into the cave). These will provide an approach line to the two p-hangers several metres out over the rift which might actually save you from serious injury if you slip, rather than condemn you to death or worse as per the existing arrangement. Note – the Loxin on the ~9 m pitch between the Dry 90 and the 21 m pitches was not tested.

At the first streamway pitch Ric and John turned back. The rest of us continued on, Janine first testing the new approach bolt (placed in December 2013) – it passed.

The second streamway pitch needed some work. Jeff's 'mini-bolt-traverse' arrangement here has proven very user-unfriendly. Pax rigged it the old fashioned way (up onto the platform then down the other side (using the last of Jeff's p-hangers for a rebelay). Pax, Milos and Chris then headed on to continue rigging to the fourth streamway pitch, with instructions for Chris and Milos to turn back from there and start out. Once Janine turned up we discussed my thoughts on how to make this rig better. The options were numerous and, once the old Loxin passed the load test (only the one for the main drop), I got stuck deciding if they should be ignored totally or remain in use (same dilemma with the p-hangers below too). The easy decision was to place a new bolt higher on the wall for the initial 'up' manoeuvre and ultimately we will leave a short piece of old 11 mm rope on this bolt so the climb up is protected for the first caver. The hard bit was down the other side. From the Loxin the rope runs over a couple of nasty edges to the rebelay and I wanted to eliminate these. There is a large projection of rock from the left wall which overlaps the hang from the Loxin and I was hopeful I could place a bolt or two into that in a high spot to start a new main hang, but the rock proved to have a layer of loose crap in all the good spots. In the

end I placed a single bolt as high as the rock quality would let me which should take a bit of tape for a redirect which will keep the rope clear of the rubs between the Loxin and the p-hanger below. It could also be used as a rebelay. If what we've done turns out to be shite then I might just start again and ignore the existing bolts and start afresh. KD needs more bolts anyway.

By the time we'd finished faffing Chris had returned and started heading out. Down at streamway pitch four Pax rigged a line down the chute and out to the new bolt I'd installed in December 2013 above the ledge. Milos was given his marching orders while Janine and I tested both the old Loxin and the December glue-in – they both passed. We then exited the cave, de-rigging. We all got out within 20 minutes of one another so the staged exit worked reasonably well.

Unfortunately the remaining original foot broke off the load tester during the second last test (the other original foot broke off for the Dove Canyon guys when they borrowed it last year – which they replaced) so it needs some repairs.

Things still to do:

- Load test the seven bolts installed on this trip and all the untested Loxins that remain in the cave
- Install an approach line bolt on the last/sixth streamway pitch.
- Place a bolt or two on the final 42 m pitch to make the start a bit more sensible.
- Oh, and bolt the wet way ...

JF229 Welcome Stranger

5 October 2014

Petr Smejkal

Cavers: Rogan Adams, Milos Dvorak, Sarah Gilbert, Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer with his partner plus three kids, Chris Sharples, Patrick Smejkal, Petr Smejkal & Ric Tunney.

The trip ended up as a party of 13. The original plan was that Alan and his son Ben would go with us, making a group of 15. Still, this was the largest trip I have organised so far.

On the Saturday morning, we all met at our place at Chigwell, missing Alan and Ben. I was hoping that Alan would be with us, as he was the most confident person to find the way to the cave. We had Ric and Janine who had been in the cave 25 years ago and Pax who had a smart phone with the GPS location of the cave.

Even though the previous week had been windy, there were no tree falls on the road and after a bit of confusion we found the road to the Welcome Stranger car park.

The track to the cave seemed as though it had not been used for a while but thanks to Pax and his GPS we did not have any trouble finding the cave entrance. Chris unlocked the gate and we went in. Patrick and I went in last to make sure that we didn't slow down the rest of the group. Patrick carried his little toy digger into the cave to do some serious excavation. Patrick did not like the crawling at the entrance much but for the rest of the trip he was happy and singing the tune of Frere Jacques. Ric reached the end of the cave first; he turned immediately and went back to car park with the intention of marking the track between the cave and carpark. The rest of the group met at the end of the cave a bit later. We had lunch and Patrick tried to use his digger to get further but without much success. After a bit of a rest, some lunch and a chat, we turned and went back to the entrance. The way back to the car park was easier thanks to Ric marking the track for us.

The trip was pleasant and everybody seemed to enjoy it. Even the smallest one did not spend much time crying.

Patrick using his digger in an attempt to access virgin cave. Unfortunately he was unsuccessful ... at least this time.

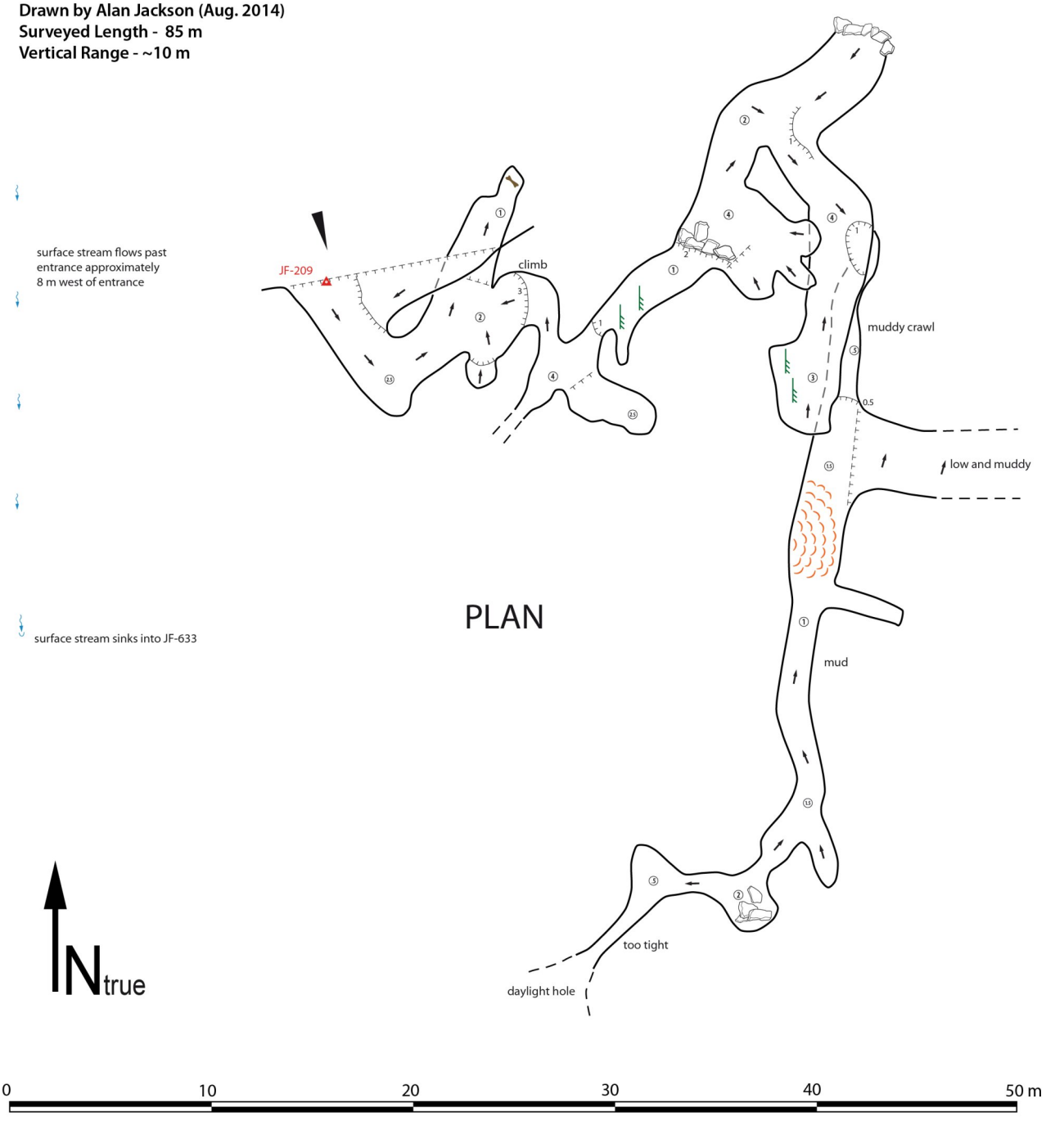
Surveys

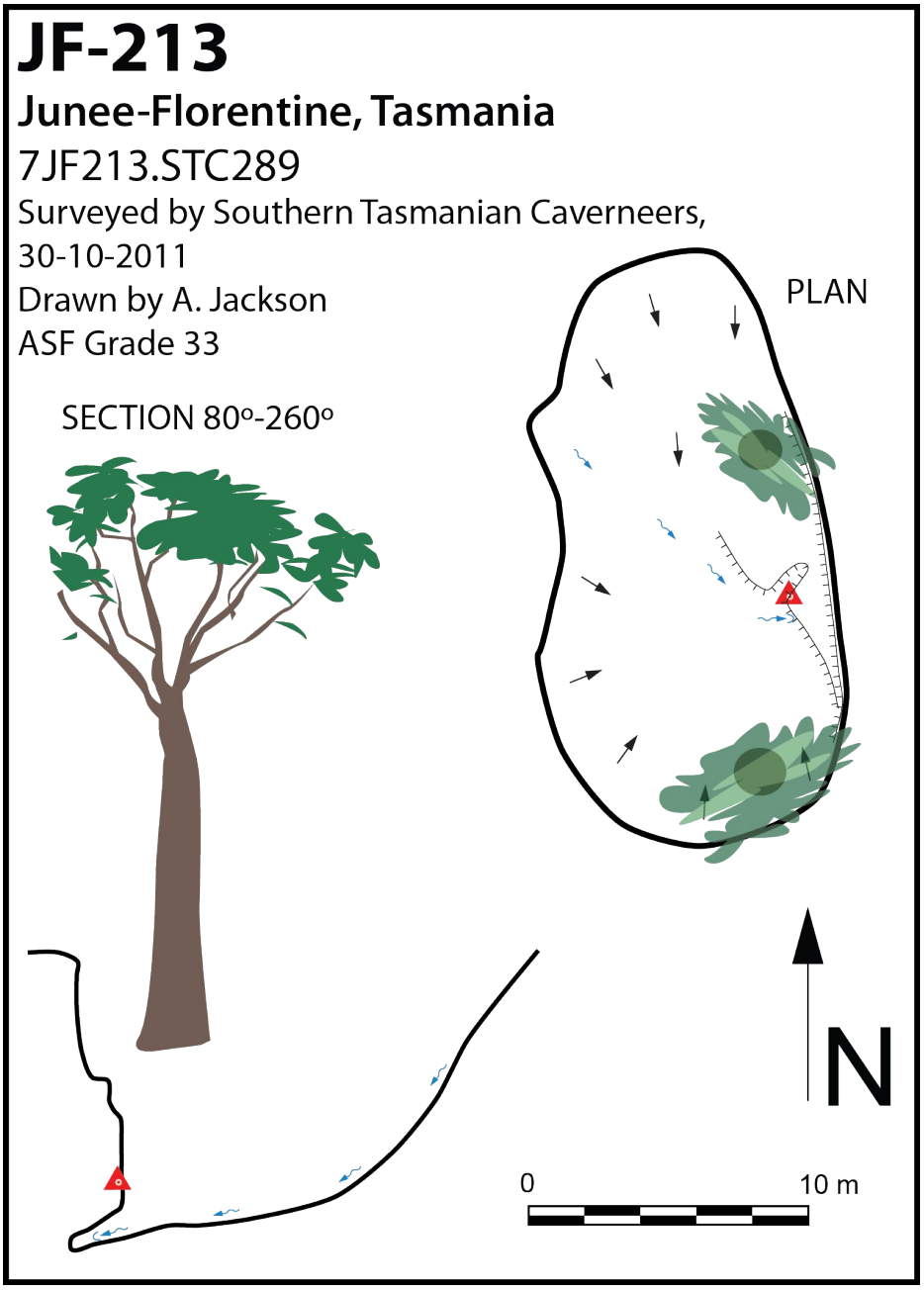
Note full resolution versions are avaliable from the STC Electronic Archive on request. Contact Ric Tunney: rtunney@caverneer.net.au.

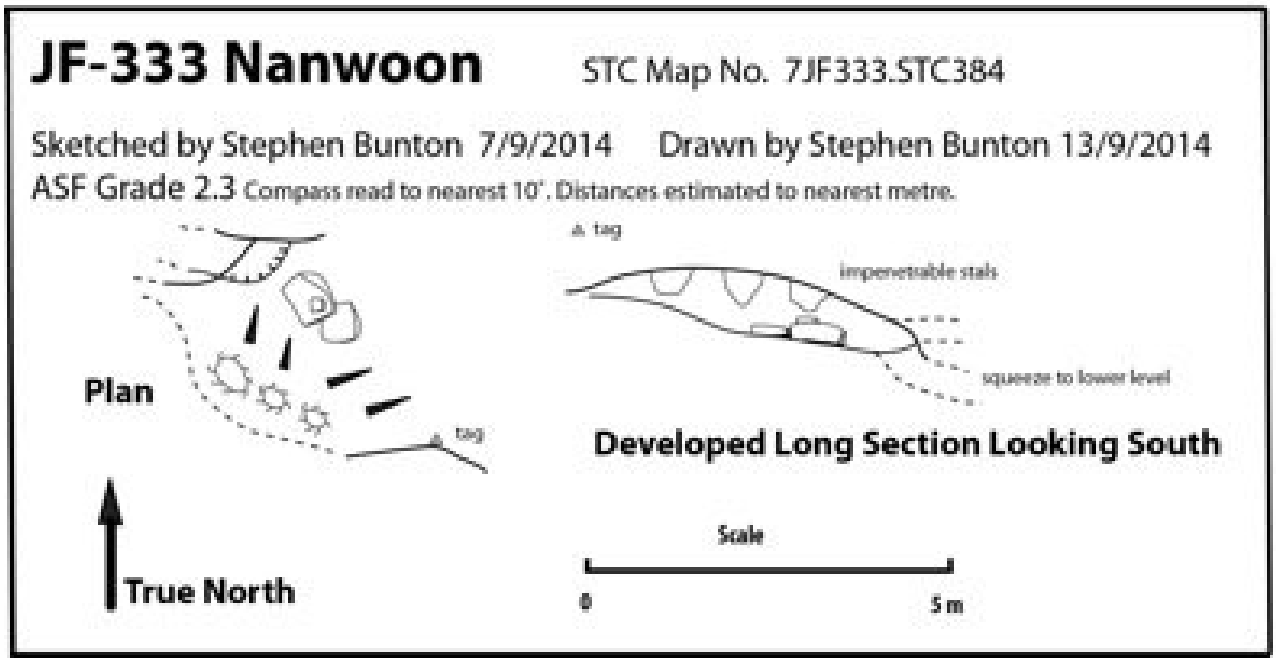
JF-209

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF209.STC371
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 54
Surveyed by Stephen Bunton, Alan Jackson, Rob Krachler and Michael Packer (24-08-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Aug. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 85 m
Vertical Range - ~10 m




JF-213
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania
7JF213.STC289
Surveyed by Southern Tasmanian Caverneers,
30-10-2011
Drawn by A. Jackson
ASF Grade 33
SECTION 80º-260º
PLAN
N
0
10 m

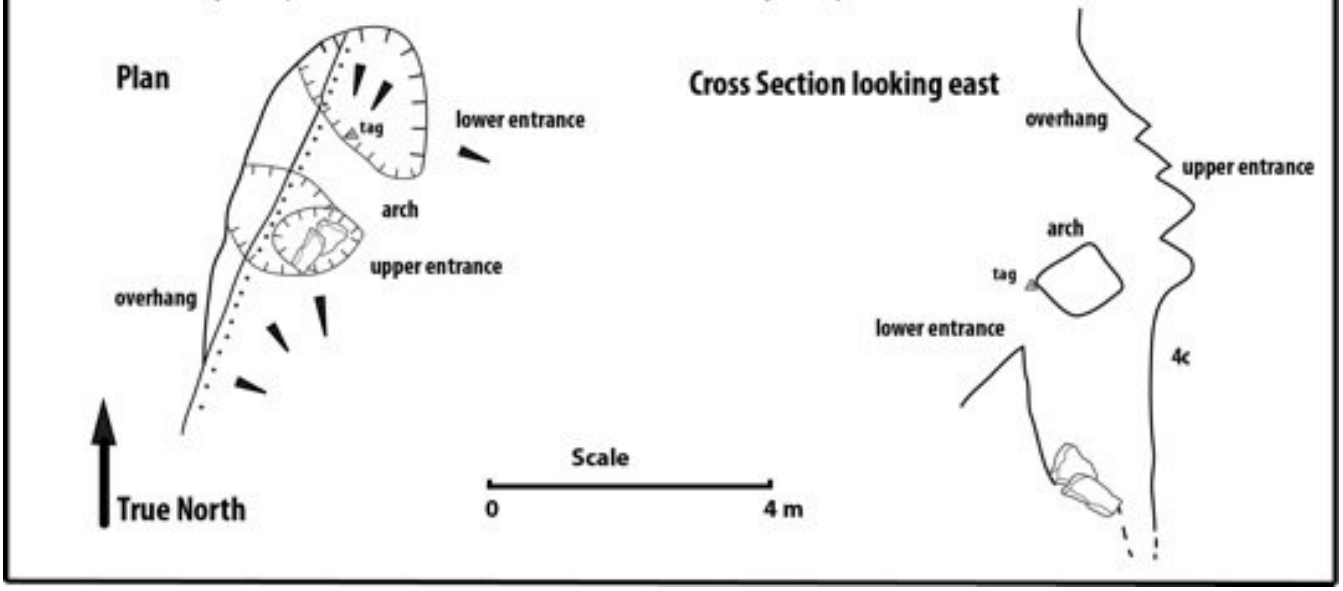

JF-333 Nanwoon
STC Map No. 7JF333.STC384
Sketched by Stephen Bunton 7/9/2014
Drawn by Stephen Bunton 13/9/2014
ASF Grade 2.3 Compass read to nearest 10°. Distances estimated to nearest metre.
Plan
tag
tag
impenetrable stals
squeeze to lower level
Developed Long Section Looking South
True North
Scale
0
5 m

JF-334

STC Map No. 7JF334.STC385

ASF Grade 2.3 Compass read to nearest 10°. Distances estimated to nearest metre.

Sketched by Stephen Bunton 7/9/2014 Drawn by Stephen Bunton 13/9/2014



JF-335 Midges

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF335.STC386

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

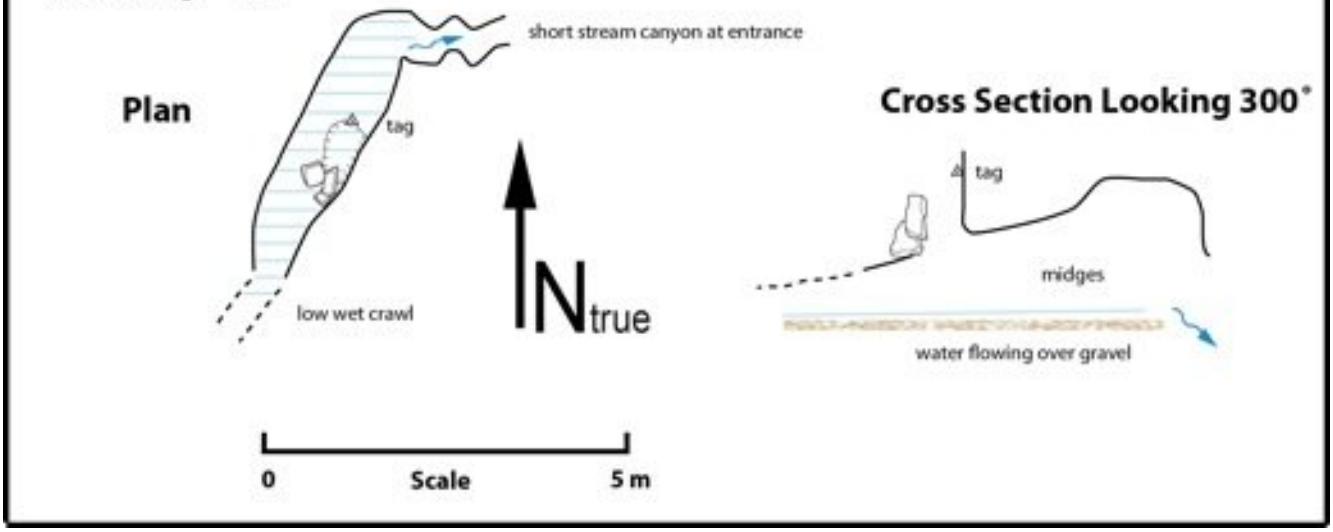
ASF Grade 2.3

Surveyed by Stephen Bunton 7/9/2014

Drawn by Stephen Bunton 13/9/2014

Surveyed Length - 6 m

Vertical Range - ~2 m

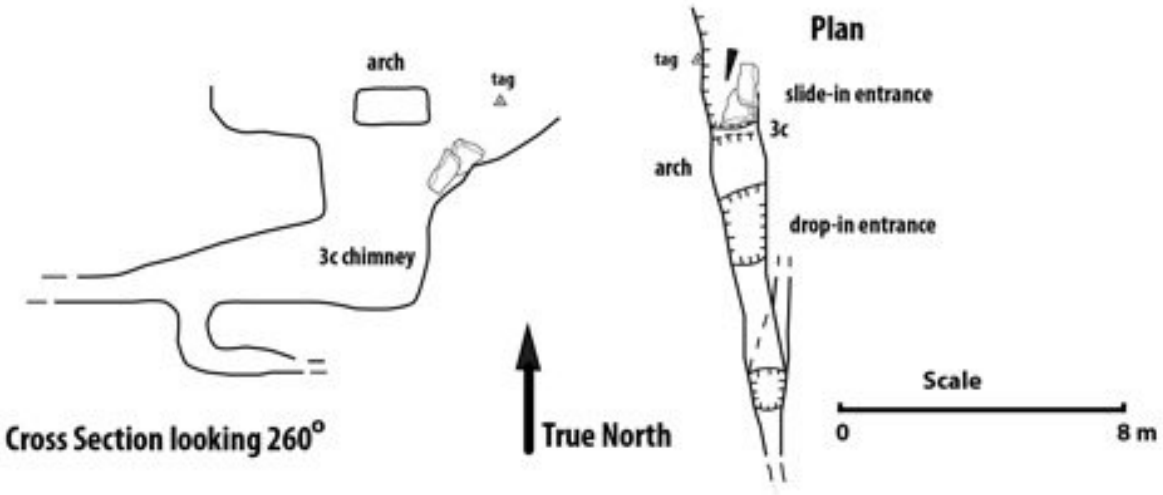


JF-336 Handline Slot

STC Map No. 7JF336.STC387

Sketched by Stephen Bunton 7/9/2014 Drawn by Stephen Bunton 13/9/2014

ASF Grade 2.3 Compass read to nearest 10°. Distances estimated to nearest metre.



JF-644 Protestor Cave (Possibly Frodshams Cave JF-X124)

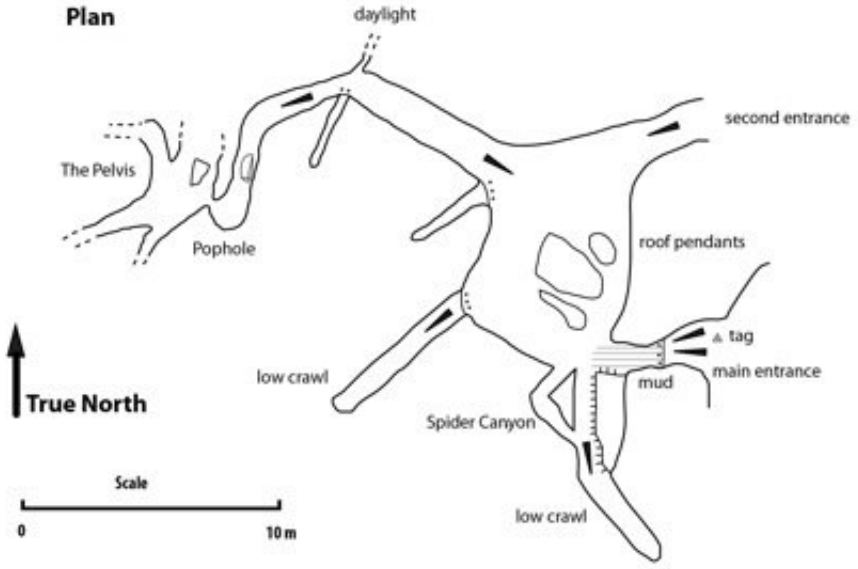
Surveyed by Stephen Bunton and Andrew Hughes 7/9/2014

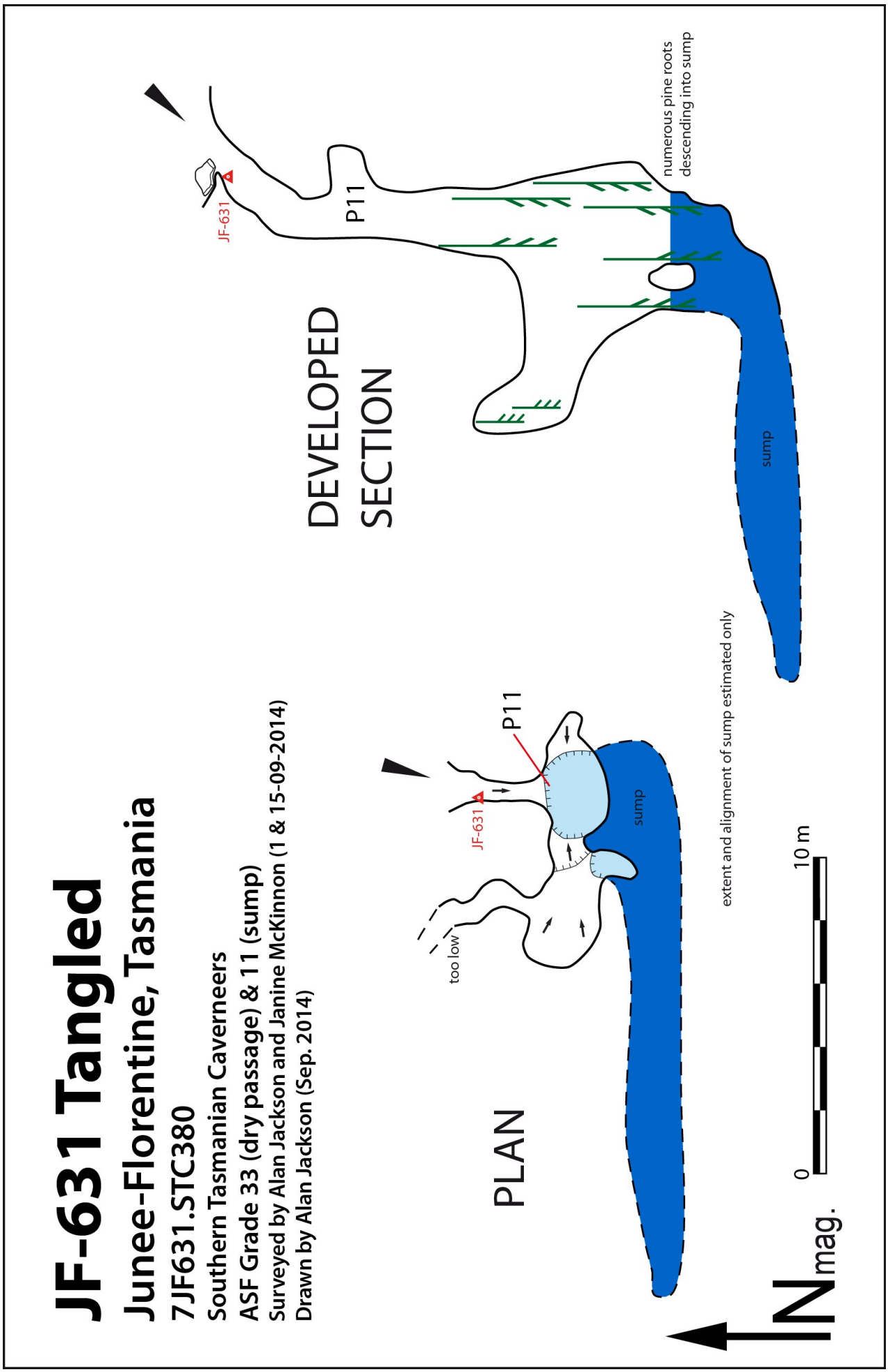
Drawn by Stephen Bunton 13/9/2014

ASF Grade 3.3 Compass read to nearest 10°. Distances estimated to nearest metre.

STC Map No. 7JF644.STC388 Length 75m Depth 3 m

Developed Long Section




JF-631 Tangled
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania
7JF631.STC380
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 33 (dry passage) & 11 (sump)
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1 & 15-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)
DEVELOPED SECTION
JF-631
P11
numerous pine roots descending into sump
sump
PLAN
JF-631
P11
too low
sump
extent and alignment of sump estimated only
N mag.
0
10 m

JF-632 Corkscrew Cave

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF632.STC381

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

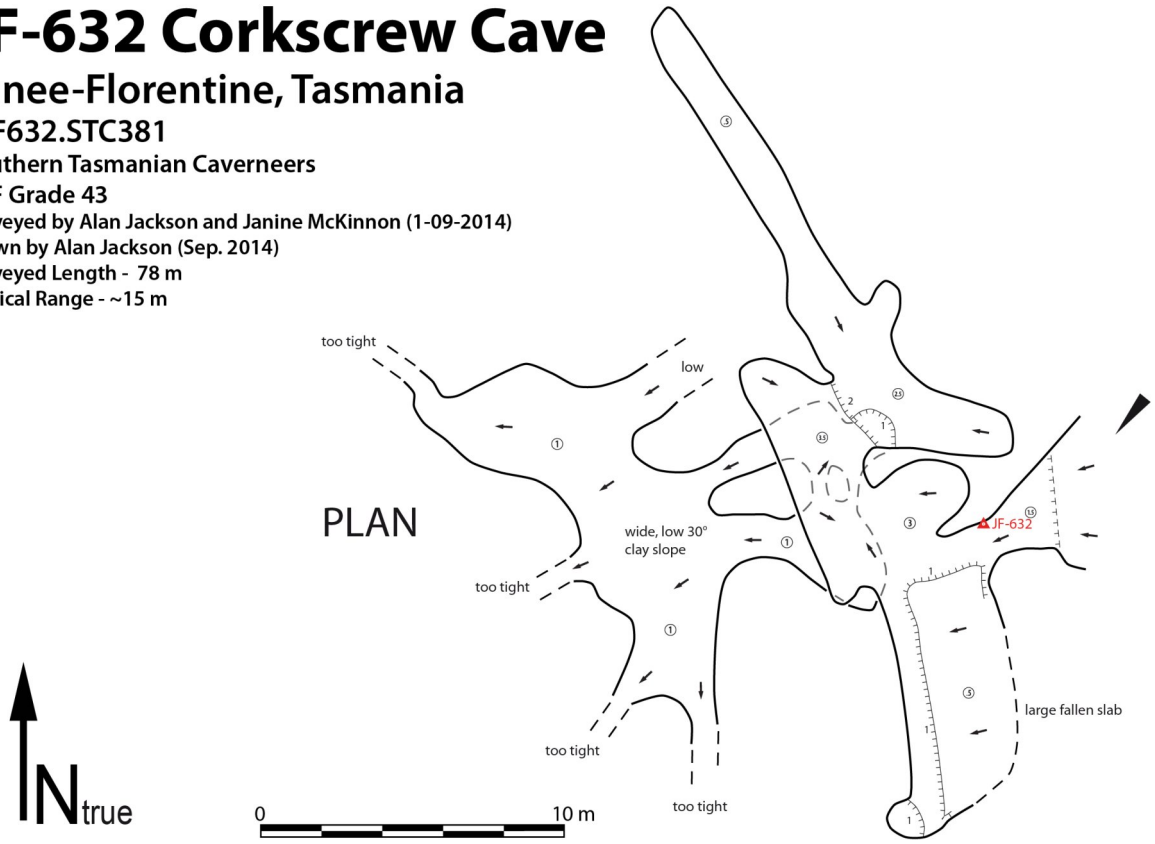
ASF Grade 43

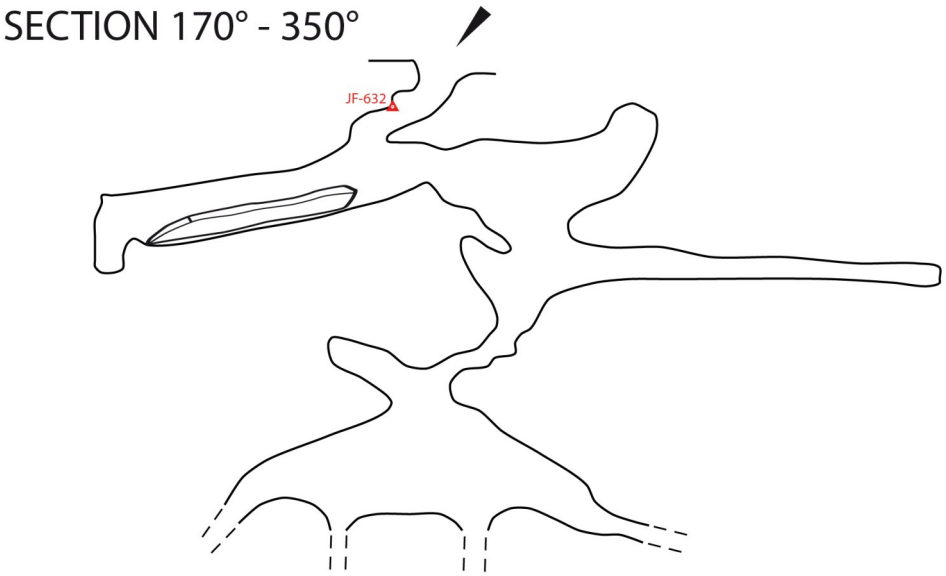
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)

Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)

Surveyed Length - 78 m

Vertical Range - ~15 m





JF-634 Dead Cow Cave

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF634.STC372

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

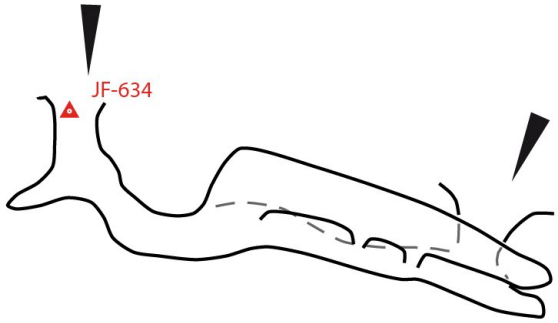
ASF Grade 43

Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)

Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)

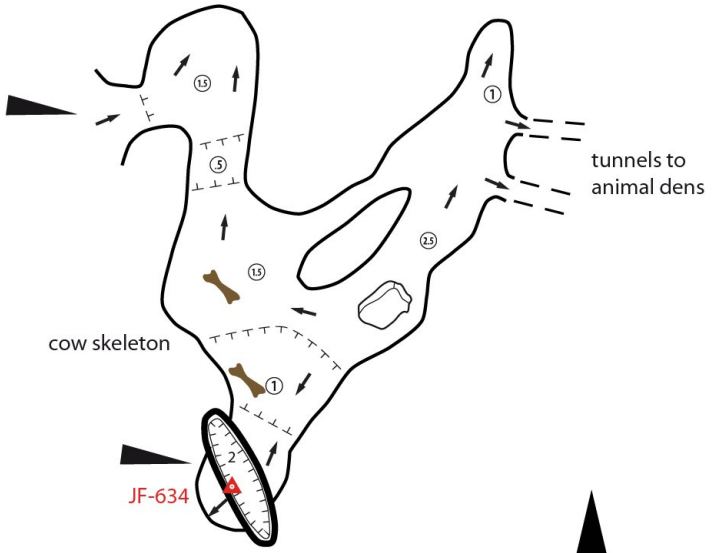
Surveyed Length - 24 m

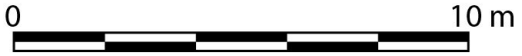
Vertical Range - ~5 m

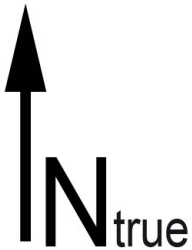


SECTION 270° - 90°

PLAN







JF-635 Three Pointer

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF635.STC373

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

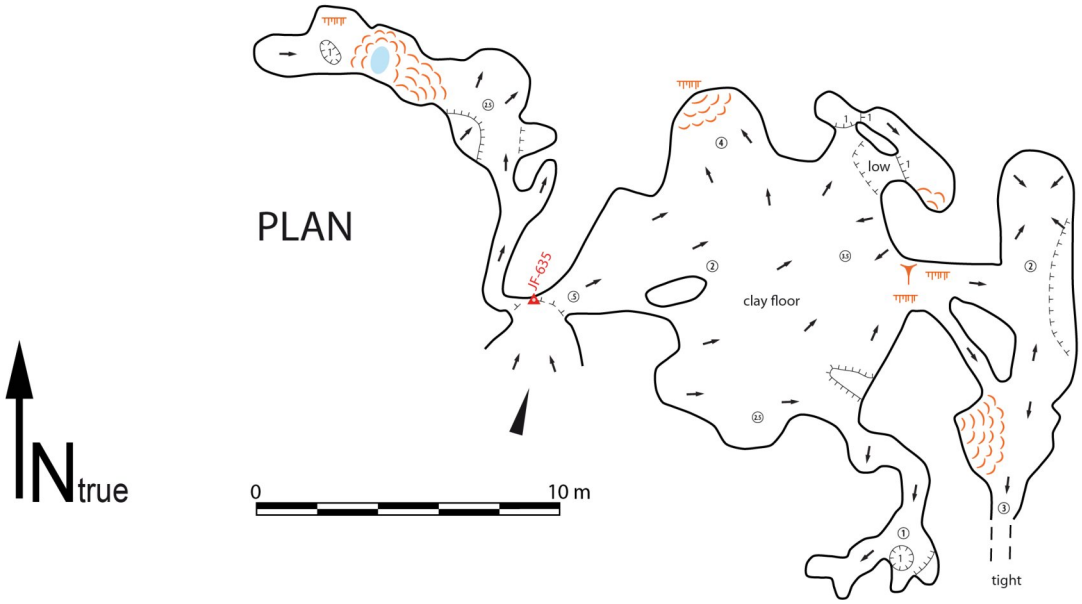
ASF Grade 43

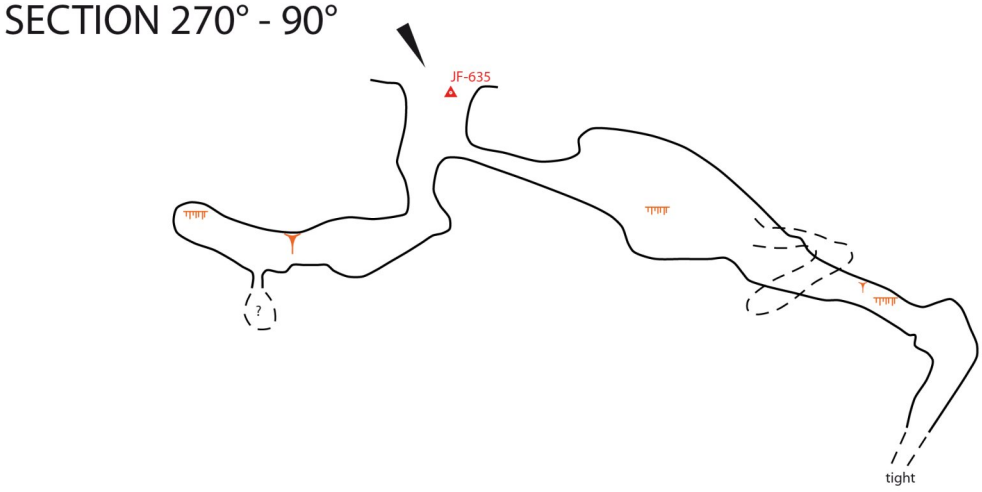
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)

Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)

Surveyed Length - 7 7m

Vertical Range - ~12 m



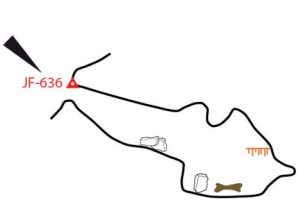


JF-636 Caught in the Act

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF636.STC374
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 7 m
Vertical Range - ~4 m

PLAN

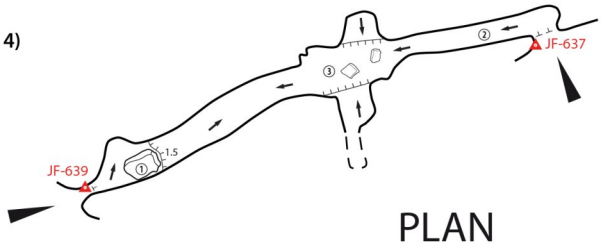


SECTION 160° - 340°

JF-637- JF-639 Walk Through

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF637.STC375
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 20 m
Vertical Range - ~5 m



PLAN

SECTION 250° - 70°

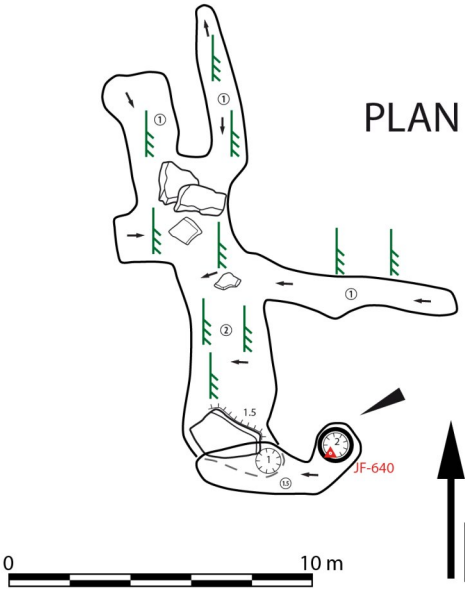
JF-640 Femme Française

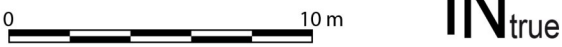
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF640.STC376
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 33 m
Vertical Range - ~6 m

SECTION 180° - 360°

PLAN



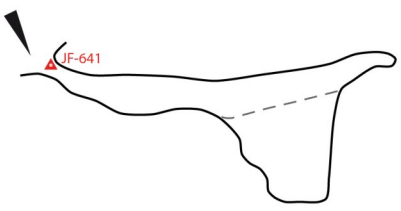


JF-641 Empty Nest

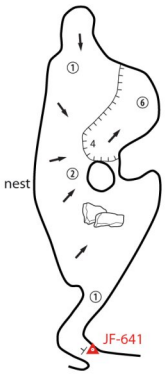
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF641.STC377
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 18 m
Vertical Range - ~5 m

SECTION 270° - 90°



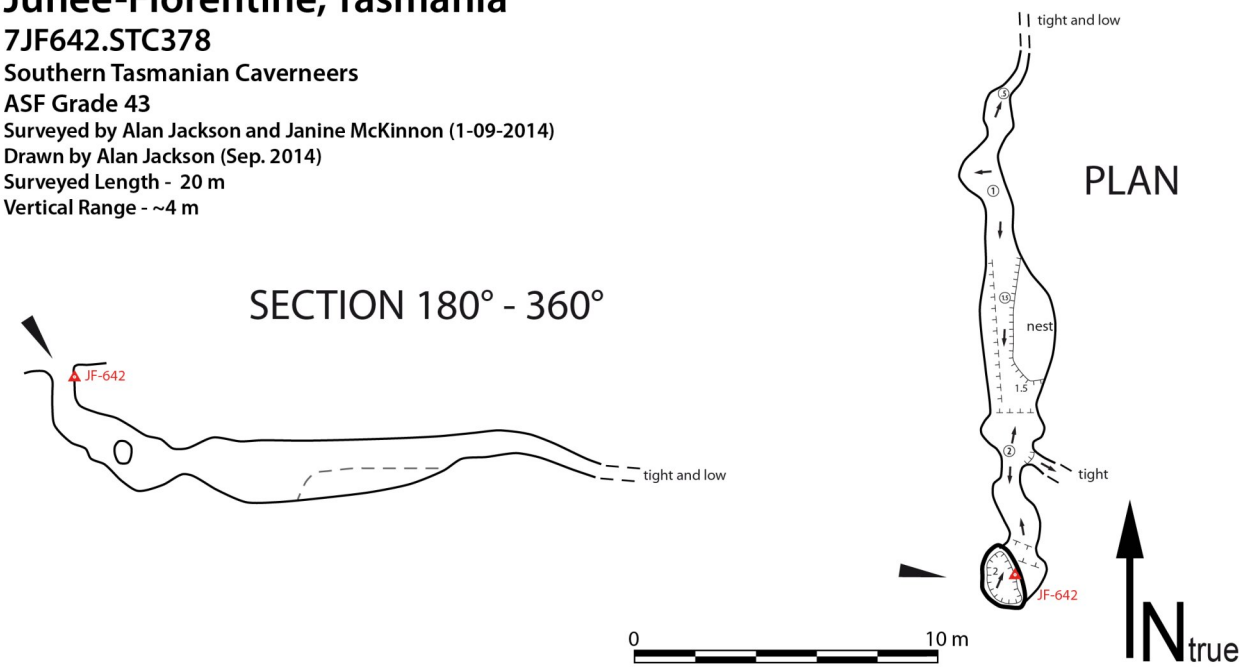
PLAN



JF-642

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

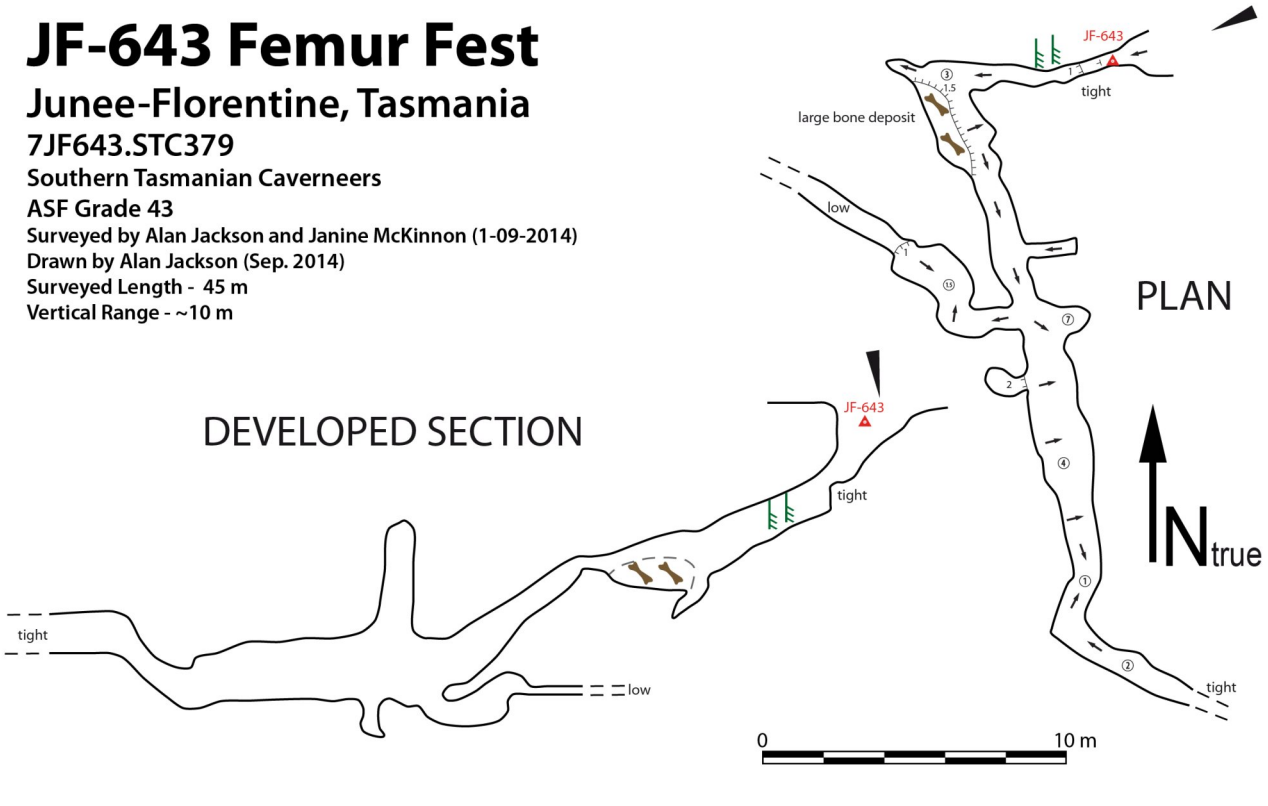
7JF642.STC378
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 20 m
Vertical Range - ~4 m



JF-643 Femur Fest

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF643.STC379
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Janine McKinnon (1-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 45 m
Vertical Range - ~10 m

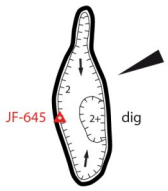


JF-645

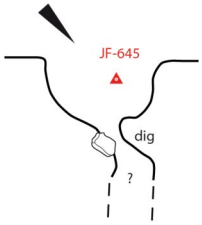
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF645.STC382
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 33
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and John Webb (15-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)

PLAN



SECTION 0° - 180°

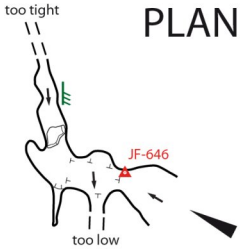


JF-646

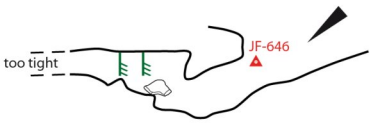
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

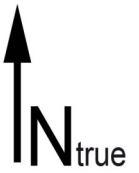
7JF646.STC383
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and John Webb (15-09-2014)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Sep. 2014)

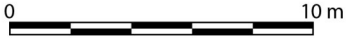
PLAN



DEVELOPED SECTION







MC130 Devils Pot.