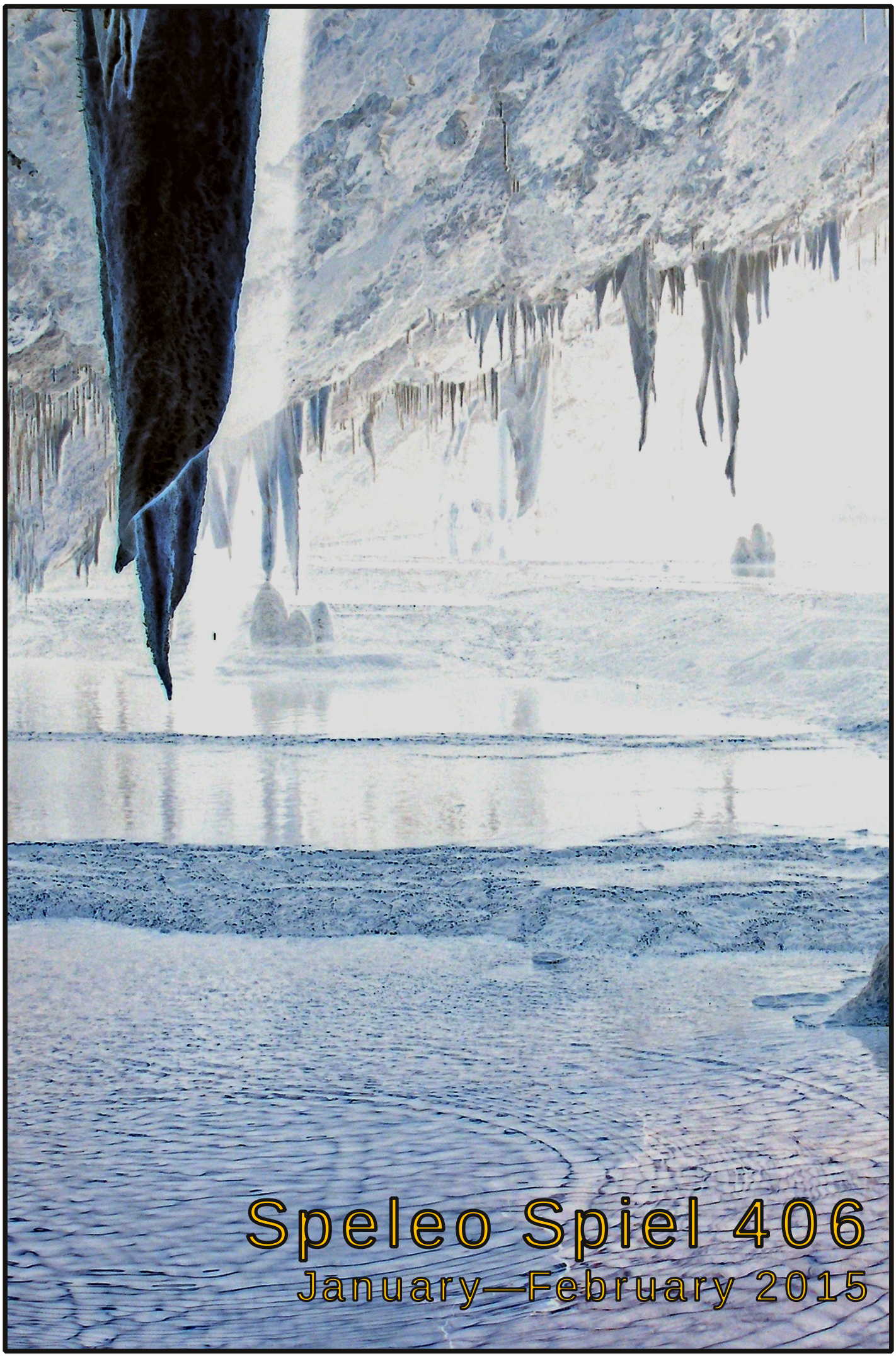

Speleo Spiel 406

January—February 2015

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

Front Cover:
MC13 Croesus Cave. Photo by Ric Tunney and edited by Matt Cracknell.

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

Speleo Spiel

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Newsletter of the
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc.
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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

This issue of the *Spiel* could well be called the "Ric and Janine Special Edition" due to the substantial number of reports documenting diving trips. If you are really keen you can relive the drama on Vimeo. Personally, I was not aware of this particular online video repository until putting together this issue. I even viewed one of the videos. I am not sure watching Janine having her harness adjusted for several minutes will go viral ... but stranger things have happened?

There are also reports detailing "standard" caving trips. The Chrisps Rd area of the Junee-Florentine is receiving a bit of, long overdue, attention. A political theme appears to be developing with these discoveries too. There are trips to well trodden paths and a few to untrodden paths.

I must acknowledge, not begrudgingly I might add, that all the reports submitted for this issue were accompanied by excellent reference lists (although some still failed to include in-text citations). Thanks to all contributors for making my life rosy.

Matt Cracknell

Stuff 'n' Stuff

Magnetic declination parameters for 1 January 2015

Junee Florentine (146° 37'E, 42° 45'S) – +14.419° (14.4°), 1 Jan 2014 was 14.4°

Ida Bay (146° 52'E, 42° 30'S) – +14.951° (15.0°), 1 Jan 2014 was 14.9°

Ric Tunney

The return of the once extinct club light

The gear officer has been busy creating a couple of 'robust' caving lights that members can hire. They are a miners type head piece with an LED insert from CustomDuo in the UK. They run off an alkaline 4.5V flat battery (those old enough will remember them as the Petzl Zoom battery), which the person hiring will need to get themselves. I've used this set up for Exit trips and the battery should last three trips or so. These batteries are still readily available and according to the guys at Battery World in Argyle St they have a bit of demand for them so should be around for a few years yet. If supply dries up the lights can be converted to another power source. Hire cost for light and helmet is $5.

Geoff Wise

Hang Són Doòng

Uploaded to Vimeo recently is a quite spectacular short (6 minute) film clip of Hang Són Doòng (Mountain River Cave) in central-north Vietnam. Filmed by Ryan Deboodt on the ground (cave floor and rainforest jungle surrounds) and aerially (obviously with a drone) and accompanied by music. The clip contains a series of short film sequence snapshot images including cavers near the entrance and on the massive stalagmites, and in and around the first and second tiankeng-like collapse dolines (skylights) which are 2.5 km and 3.5 km inside the cave respectively. There are also some great time lapse filming sequences.

The Vimeo website link also contains some film clips of Hang En by Ryan Deboodt.

See https://vimeo.com/121736043.

To see a portfolio of some of Ryan Deboodt's photography, including more spectacular images from Hang Són Doòng, Hang En, Phong Nha Doòng and other caves in the World Heritage Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park, check out his website photo gallery at http://ryandeboodt.com/.

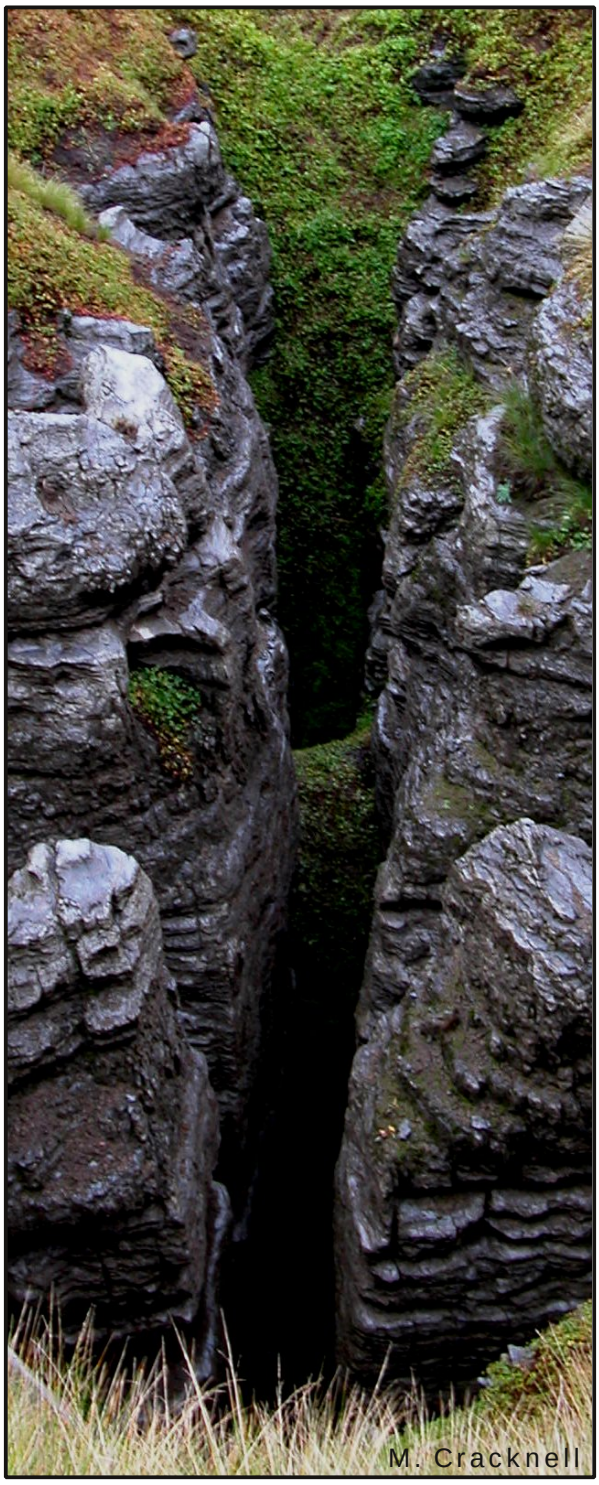
Given just the brief glimpse of Hang Són Doòng from Ryan Deboodt's photography, you would have to say it would be environmental vandalism to see any broad scale commercialisation take place in and around this magnificent karst feature, as well as a really horrendous insult to the UNESCO process of World Heritage Area listing. Hopefully, the Sun Group's proposed $212 million cable car development which would run through three caves including the entire length of Hang Són Doòng, will never get off the ground (no pun intended).

Arthur Clarke

STC April Social Meeting

The April social is pencilled in for Friday 24 April, usual time and place (7 pm at Guy's). Tony Culberg will be providing the slides. Please let me know if you might attend.

Guy Bannik



Circular Ponds, Mole Creek

Trip Reports

Mole Creek Weekend

8-9 November 2014

Janine McKinnon

Warning: This trip report imitates a mainland caving report. Lots about what was for lunch and the cafes on the drive, and little about the caving itself [*Does it?! - Ed.*].

The annual STC Kubla Khan weekend had rolled around again. We were staying at the Northern Caverneers (NC) hut again too. Ric and I were the only two who had been there before. This is relevant because we arrived several hours before the others and set up camp in the Possum Shed, leaving plenty of room for others to join us in there. The rest of the Hobart party arrived in one car around 11 pm. We had told them the layout of the hut, and the two bunk room sleeping options. They arrived, and promptly all disappeared into the back (tiny) room of the main old house. Ok, they all got on so well together on the drive up that they want to bunk together, I thought. Sweet, we get this (very large) room to ourselves tonight.

MC1 Kubla Khan

8 November 2014

Cavers: Natalie Brennan, Milos Dvorak, Ben Lovett (NC), Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer (Pax) & Ric Tunney (Kubla Guide).

As usual, the Kubla trip was on Saturday. Ben, a recent arrival from the UK now living in Launceston, is an experienced caver. We had had a spare spot so he had jumped on board.

Ben volunteered to write this trip report, but it appears the pressure of two toddlers and a full-time job, whilst setting up a new home, has proved somewhat distracting from the task. So, rather than an interesting and amusing account of a trip through Kubla as seen through new eyes, you get me again.

So, from me you get ... the party was an excellent one. Competent cavers, fit, fast when moving, efficient when taking photos, and always having fun. It was a great trip.

The cave is the same as always, and water levels were quite low. All went well.

MC13 Croesus Cave

9 November 2014

Cavers: Natalie Brennan, Milos Dvorak, Janine McKinnon, Michael Packer & Ric Tunney.

After a very pleasant social evening at the hut, and a room to ourselves again, we were up for a moderately early start to do Croesus Cave before driving home in the afternoon. The early start was destroyed when we discovered, as we went to drive away, that we had a flat battery on the Subaru. Jump starting didn't work, the battery was really flat (from charging video lights). After much amusement and false starts we managed to do a tow start with Pax's 2WD.

Finally we were off for a late start caving trip.

The cave is as beautiful as ever. I took video and Pax took lots of still photos. We went all the way up past the Golden Stairs, to where it stops being a pretty cave. The only point of note is that the platypus stools on the sand banks all look very old, so I surmise he/she isn't living in there any longer. The trip took 4 hours.

We were rolling home by late afternoon, after picking up our gear from the hut.

P.S. Do you want to know the real reason we got the very large bunk room to ourselves for two nights, whilst the three others stayed in the very small room? Surprisingly enough it wasn't because they:

1. Got on so well together they wanted to sleep with each other's feet shoved up a nostril, or
2. They had some threesome organised.

Just as we were leaving the hut to drive home on Sunday afternoon, and while closing the doors, Pax decided to look inside the Possum Shed. Apparently for the first time all weekend. He exclaimed in amazement at how big it was. He called in the others. They squealed in amazement. None of them had looked in at any time. They had assumed all rooms were the same size. Such lack of curiosity (or being polite) has its consequences. Because we are such nice people Ric and I only chuckled to ourselves for half the drive home.

If you are interested in viewing the short videos of our trips, they are on Vimeo. For Croesus go to https://vimeo.com/117770777 and for Kubla go to https://vimeo.com/117142443.

JF11 Rainbow Cave

Sump dive

12 November 2014

Janine McKinnon

Cavers: Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

This was yet another of the small, grotty, sumps scattered about the JF that needed looking at. It is the furthest upstream cave that feeds the resurgence at Junee (JF8). It has never been dived. Of course I didn't expect to get quite that far, 14 km (by flying crows) is a bit ambitious. Actually, I didn't expect it to go at all. The cave is shallow and short, and the sump very unprepossessing. However, the pool, or puddle really, did have open passage visible for the first 1 m, so, nothing ventured, and all that.

We had all the gear packed into two Aspiring packs and made the short trip from car to sump by 10:30 am. This has to be one of the easiest access sumps in Tassie; a five minute walk from the car to the cave entrance, and 10 minutes to the sump, if that. There isn't a lot of room to kit up, but luckily I don't need much.

The surface of the pond is covered in debris but after

JF11 Rainbow Cave: Janine returns from the dive.

pushing that aside I got a good view of clear water for 20 seconds, or so, before the dirt I was lying on side down the slope and obscured all visibility. I managed to get myself into the water and about 2 m down slope before I lost visibility. The underwater part, instead of continuing along the trend of the above-water cave, turns sharply back to the left, as if it were making a bee-line to Junee. The passage was tending steeply downwards, at about 45°. It was wide, arm width wide, and I was briefly surprised and optimistic. Rapidly, it choked off to a hole I could just fit my gumbooted foot into. I felt my way the length of the wall/floor interface but found no other way forward. I returned to the surface to report. Ric said no light was visible at all until just before I surfaced. I submerged again for another feel around.

Ultimately, I spent half an hour in the sump, carefully checking, and rechecking, for any way through, with no success. I am sure I have exhausted all possibilities for diving here. The water goes where humans cannot follow. We counted knots on my dive line and measured the length penetrated to be 8 m. We were packed up and back at the car for a midday lunch. It doesn't get much easier than that.

JF337 Slaughterhouse Pot

Replacing the Permanent Ropes

15 November 2014

Janine McKinnon

Cavers: Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

The top two ropes in Slaughterhouse Pot were installed in March 2007 by Ric and myself (McKinnon 2007). The bottom rope was older (Butt 2002). We had been talking for a year or so of replacing them. Some months ago, Geoff Wise allocated us three ropes for the purpose. I understand these were donated to STC by Tony Veness before he left for the mountains of Holland, and they are in excellent condition. Thank you, Tony.

One forgets how pleasant an easy caving trip can be. We entered at 9:30 am and were out by 3:00 pm and there was, perforce, lots of sitting.

P1 – We knew from previous trips that the rope was labelled as 32 m and that there was about 3 m in the bottom bundle. This meant a 29 m rope should do, so we were happy when Geoff gave us a 30 m rope. The rigging is on two p-hangers, with an approach line around some formation about 4 m back. We pulled up most of the old rope and installed the new rope, making sure we didn't waste excessive rope on the approach line; we didn't want the rope to be too short as we only had 1 m spare! We put Loctite on the maillons as the pitch is accessible from the entrance.

Janine went down, releasing the old rope and its bottom bundle from the redirection as she went. "The rope's too short!" she reported. She was able to get off on a ledge about 4 m above the traditional bottom of the pitch and easily climb back and underneath to reach the bottom.

The old rope is labelled "R82 32m", written on green and white striped tape. At home, we measured the rope at a little over 36 m, but it's hard to get a precise measurement as the rope is very stiff and kinky. So it could be closer to 37 m.

So, we have been stuffed by bad measuring by someone some ten years ago. However, the rope was usable; it's an easy, safe climb from the end of the rope on the ledge, and a climb down through a hole behind the rope.

Note: Alan has saved everyone else from having to do this in the future by re jiggering the approach line at the pitch head to give extra length at the bottom (Jackson 2014).

The old rope was badly damaged 4.5 m below the lower knot, with a small amount of damage 0.3 m higher up. This is one of the worst rope damages I have seen. All of the sheath has been damaged and the core was showing. The damage is so great that it is easy to form an acute angle in the rope. I cannot confidently work out how this may have happened. The rope is not lying on anything here, so I can't see how a falling rock could cut it. It is roughly at the redirection, but no one has reported damage.

P2 – The pitch is rigged from two p-hangers. A 22 m rope was the perfect length. We did not use Loctite as the pitch is only accessible to cavers. We installed a short approach line as one climbs down above the drop to reach the pitch head.

P3 – The pitch is rigged from two p-hangers. A 24 m rope was about 3 m too long. Again, we did not use Loctite. As it is necessary to lean out over the pitch to reach the rope, we installed a short approach line. The inner end of this is a bit low, but there was only one satisfactory natural anchor.

References

Butt, J. 2002. Slaughterhouse Pot (JF337) Logbook Installation: 23 August 2002. *Speleo Spiel*, 332:5.

Jackson, A. 2014. JF36 Growling Swallet. *Speleo Spiel*, 405: 8-9.

McKinnon, J. 2007. JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot - Growling Swallet Thru Trip (Changing the Ropes). *Speleo Spiel*, 359: 7.

Damaged rope removed from P1 in JF337 Slaughterhouse Pot.

JF229 Welcome Stranger

Sump dive

Janine McKinnon

26 November 2014

Cavers: Janine McKinnon, Jeffrey Prado & Ric Tunney.

I had read Nick's trip report from the early '80s (Hume 1981) and decided that this was worth another look-see. They had very basic gear and not much cave diving experience when this first attempt was made. Also, they are bigger guys than me, and things can change in a cave over 33 years. All good reasons to pop in and see for myself how it looked.

Ric was on hand to help, as usual, and Jeffrey was a visiting student from Tennessee, doing a 1 month project in Tassie, who was keen for a day out of Hobart. He was thus roped in to help get gear to the sump. I had inspected the sump about two months earlier, and whilst there was a large pile of sand and gravel at the start of the sump, I could see clear water under the wall that looked large enough to just fit through. I was hoping that it would enlarge once I got past the waterline at the wall.

As I dressed, Ric tied off the line around a boulder about 4 m back from the start of the dive, as the primary tie-off. He also put a silt stake into the gravel at the start of the sump, as a secondary tie-off. All geared up and ready to go, I grabbed the reel and I squeezed over the mound of gravels and under the wall.

I had visibility in the murky water, and could see somewhat less than 1 m. The width of the passage was extended arm, so 1.5-2 metres wide, as reported in Hume (1981). The height was significantly less than the "less than one metre" reported by Hume (1981). The walls are rock but the floor is silt and gravel and I could just fit. The floor sloped down at 30°.

Forward progress was very slow. I was pulling myself along the bottom and was pushed against the roof, so I was sliding along the gravel. The silt I stirred up soon enveloped me and I was in zero visibility. Flow was present but very low. The passage got tighter. I turned around at this point so I would be backing down, feet first. With the steepish angle and jammed body position, I felt more comfortable continuing feet first. I also thought it would be easier to retreat from such tight confines if I was already facing uphill. If it opened up then I could turn easily to head down again. So far this was not sounding like Nick's dive.

A few metres more of backing downhill with force, pushing against the gravel floor, and I could not move any further. I was jammed. The passage was still the same width as far as I could tell. My feet were still free to move, just nothing else. I put a silt stake in the floor, tied off and cut the line, and exited, counting knots as I went. My measurement of distance gained was 9 m. So I had not got as far as Nick had [*30+ m - Sub Ed.*] and the passage was much tighter than he had reported. He would not have been able to fit through, I am sure.

There has been significant logging on the hillsides of the catchment for this cave in the intervening years. I postulate that this increased sedimentation has introduced more fill into the passages of the sump. It is quite a steep uphill slope to the dry passage, and the water flow is inadequate to push this sediment out of the sumped passages and into the "dry" cave to be washed downstream. This is why there is a mound at the start of the sump.

There is no prospect of further progress in this sump unless there is a massive flood event that washes out the gravels and silt considerably. This is not impossible, so I will keep an eye out (as long as I am diving) for such an event. I left the exploration line in situ.

Dive Summary

Depth: 4 m.

Dive time: 20 minutes.

Water temperature: 8°C.

Compass bearing into dive: 128° from magnetic north [*Or that could be reported as 142.419° from grid north – Ed.*].

Kit: 7 mm semi-dry suit. One Shearwater Petrel computer. Razor sidemount harness and MTD 9 kg mini-wing. 2 x 3 L tanks. Apeks cold water first and second stage regulators on short hoses. Mares fins (unnecessary). Alpha closed reel. Petzl helmet and Rude Nora cave/dive light. Two Nova backup lights mounted on helmet.

If you are interested in viewing a short video on this trip, it is on Vimeo at https://vimeo.com/116629420.

Reference

Hume, N. 1981. Florentine Valley – Welcome Stranger Sump Dive. *Speleo Spiel*, 168:5.

JF229 Welcome Stranger: sorting dive gear.

JF229 Welcome Stranger

26 November 2014

Philip Jackson

Cavers: Russel Fulton, Philip Jackson & Stewart Jackson.

We arrived at the entrance just as Janine, Ric and Jeffrey Prado had exited and locked the cave after bagging another sump. With the planets well aligned the gate was unlocked without too much cussin'. We wandered up the main streamway with a few minor diversions into the side passages. Stewart was impressed by the decorations, while Russel and I were somewhat disturbed by the amount of straws that have completely disappeared. At the sump we encountered Janine's guideline into the sump. Sadly, despite our assurances Stewart couldn't be persuaded to take a deep breath and have a go. After a few moments pondering the sanity and fortitude of Tasmanian cave divers we ambled back to the entrance. By now the planets were fully misaligned and the gate required some inverted moonwalking and break dancing to relock.

Not withstanding the loss of formation this was a blissful experience.

Marble Cliffs on the Gordon River

Dive exploration

7-8 December 2014

Janine McKinnon

Cavers: Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

I had looked at these cliffs with interest a couple of times in previous years, as I passed by during boating trips on the river. They are limestone cliffs extending for some 300 m along the river, on the outside edge. They are about 80 m high. There are a couple of places that slight streams can be seen coming down over the cliffs. There are interesting holes along the waterline. There is a sinkhole marked on the topographic map on the top of the cliffs. The area has very high rainfall. If there are streams sinking up the top then there is cave development potential reaching the river under the waterline. Those holes looked interesting and they have never been dived.

We headed up there with a week of time to play with, a compressor to fill tanks and a plan to explore the cliff line looking for caves.

On the way upriver Saturday to camp, five minutes boating above the cliffs (situated in an old workers' hut PWS has maintained), we looked carefully at the cliffs for the most likely place to start exploring. We saw a small hole in the cliff, with a stream coming in over the rock. That looked very promising, so decided that is where we would start the next day.

Bright and early (8:30 am) we were at the dive site. It was blowing about 10 knots down river and we had some difficulty getting the anchor to hold. So we ended up anchored about 50 m from the cliff. I swam across and started searching at the head of the alcove. Visibility was 10-15 cm at most, and I quickly decided that I wanted a line, even in the open water. This was because as I dropped below the surface, checking out the wall of the cliff, within 2 m depth I was in absolute total blackness. The light didn't penetrate from the surface. That meant I could feel my way along wall into a cave and not know it, as it would have been black anyway. I surfaced to put in a line. I had a lot of trouble finding somewhere to tie-off along the smooth walled rock. There were no projections anywhere to use. In the end I tied to a tree branch dangling near the water!

I headed back to the start of the alcove and felt my way along the wall, going up and down to cover the area underwater. It's very hard to tell if you've missed something when visibility is a few centimetres and the water 10 m deep! After a few metres I felt a change in direction, to the direction I thought a cave would be heading into the hillside. I suddenly had a roof. I did a secondary tie-off and continued. I ran out 30 m of line, with a few tie-offs, to a depth of 10 m. The wall changed direction again, in a way that felt like I had reached the end of a passage (swinging back in the direction I had come from). I tied-off, cut the line and headed for home. I was chuffed. I thought I had new cave. We headed back to camp to fill tanks and enjoy the afternoon. I hadn't used a lot of air but it was a very spooky place and one dive for the day was enough. We had all week, after all.

The next morning we were back. There was no wind so we were able to anchor very close to the dive site. Only 10 m away. I returned to the end of my previous dive and after carefully looking/feeling I saw that there was a narrow cleft heading in the same direction behind the projection I had tied-off to the previous day. This looked wonderful. Going cave. It was a very narrow rift with roof and two walls. I was off again. I laid 25 m more line. The other wall disappeared out of sight and touch but I wasn't concerned about that as I thought I was following along one side wall of a passage. I ran out of line and so tied-off, cut the line and exited. I was planning to get my other exploration reel and continue.

As I approached the boat Ric had a wicked grin on his face. This did not look like a good sign. The first thing he said was that he had been able to see my bubbles all the time. Progressing along the wall, stopping, starting travelling again, stopping again, and then reversing direction. So, what seems to have happened is that I have found a groove in a wide ledge that runs along the wall just under the waterline. It has a roof and two walls in places but as I could see almost nothing I couldn't tell that the outside wall doesn't go to the floor. I could only feel my way along one wall and once the other wall went out of arms reach on the other side I had no idea where it was. This was disappointing. I explored along the wall on the other side of the alcove for about 20 m but found nothing.

We looked at the other holes along the wall for other potential caves but none looked as good as the one I had just explored. It did not seem worthwhile to dive any of these. We went for a walk onto the area above the cliffs later that day. There are many blind dolines up there. The sinkhole marked on the map coincides with a perched lake we found. This had a dry stream leading from it and running to the cliff edge directly above where I was diving. I assume this runs in high rainfall times when the lake overflows.

Janine swimming into the alcove at Marble Cliffs on the Gordon River.

JF8 Junee Resurgence

22 December 2014

Janine McKinnon

Cave: Janine McKinnon & Ric Tunney.

It was my birthday. I wanted to do something fun. That meant not gardening, shopping or sitting at home. A dive from our boat was an option but the weather was bad at sea, as had turned out to be typical for this summer.

So I thought a trip through sump 1 of Junee would fit the bill nicely. I needed to check how the permanent line that Pax and I replaced last summer had survived the winter floods. A wander through For Your Eyes Only (FYEO) with the Gopro and my new video light would be pleasant too.

We got an early start and I was ready to dive before 10 am. Ric did most of the heavy Sherpa-ing, as usual, whilst I got dressed in many layers of underclothes (well, two anyway). I had a good look at the line as I swam the sump and found it all still in situ and looking good. That was a relief. It would be a bit embarrassing if our job hadn't even survived its first winter.

I spent an hour or so in FYEO, then back to base. We were all sorted, with all gear back at the car, for a nice 1 pm lunch. A short video from my efforts in FYEO is available to view, for anyone interested enough, on Vimeo at https://vimeo.com/116576788.

Exit Cave

D'Entrecasteaux sump explorations

26-29 December 2014

Janine McKinnon

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

This was a continuation of the explorations I began alone in this area of Exit Cave in 2013 (McKinnon 2014a; McKinnon 2014b; McKinnon 2014c; McKinnon 2014d). We had chosen this time of year as we were hoping to catch the water levels at the optimum height to continue explorations of the flow. Too early in Spring and the levels would be too high to access the site, too late in summer and no flow makes finding the way the main flow is going difficult (as my previous attempts proved).

Day 1 – Boxing Day

Boxing Day was simply a gear haul to the dive site. Water levels looked good. Some flow but relatively low water levels.

Day 2

I had discovered, after I had dropped a load of gear at the dive site two weeks before, that the line I had placed through the restriction at the end of my previous explorations there had been abraded free sometime in the intervening 18 months. I now carried some 7 mm Telstra line to replace it, and also run this permanent line all the way through Sump 1 (Sanguine Expectations – SE).

We assembled our kit, moved it to the sump and the dive started at 11:45 am. I led through the sump with Pax following several minutes behind to allow me time to lay the line. This was somewhat difficult as I was carrying 100 m in a small caving pack, and it was very buoyant and kept trying to fly [float? – Ed.] away from me.

I was just finishing tying it off to the boulder where the original line was tied-off, when he arrived in Never Say Die (NSD) chamber. We dropped tanks and waded off upstream to explore the system, as an initial trip. The water level was about half a metre higher than 2013, and the flow was visible. This was good. We were carrying a 3 L tank each for future use in the system. Pax had a set of (my) regulators on his. We had left a second 3 L tank each back at the base site for taking in the next day.

We passed the line heading into Sump 2, went over the line into Sump 3 (both still taught, so in situ) and swam through the roof sniff in between. We followed the swimming passage to the right to a rockpile. I thought this was the Sump 3 rockpile I found last year (I now have reasons to doubt that). I could see large passage through the rockpile at the far left-hand end and gaps up through it. There was a moderate volume of water flowing through the rockpile in many places and we determined that it was probably sufficiently leaky to allow flood flow.

We took off our harnesses and fins. I moved some rocks and started squeezing up. I needed to remove my helmet. I just fitted through and then started gardening behind me for Pax. Meanwhile, he had found a squeezy way through further to the right, and was down at water level. I had a clear path down the 5 m to the water and dropped down. We reunited and swam out of the rockpile to find ourselves in Sign of the Times (SOTT) passage. We were through! We followed this to the IB232 sink just to be sure were in the right place. We spent some time exploring the maze of passages in this entrance area. The sink was open but obviously higher than 18 months ago.

We retraced our (swimming) steps to the rockpile. Significant water was flowing through a hole on the right-hand side (looking downstream) and I crawled through it for several metres. The water then sumped. We looked for the permanent marker Alan had left at the furthest end of his survey in 2013 but couldn't find it. We then went back through the rockpile and headed down stream past the junction back to NSD and along the smaller passages in that direction.

A few metres past the turn to NSD I found the end of my line through Sump 2. So this short sump cut through the wall from NSD into the passage leading to the main IB232 flow. This meant that the rockpile I had found on the day I dived through Sump 2 last year, and didn't look closely at because I thought it was not the correct direction and I was doing an initial reconnaissance, was the rockpile to IB232. We continued on, along the muddy crawl-ways I explored last year. The higher water levels made it swimming and sliding rather than sticky, deep mud crawling so we moved much more easily and quickly than my progress last year. A few places were short roof sniffs, with a very short duck but we got through. We went further than I got last year and Pax reached a climb up from the stream where the water suddenly went through slots too small to fit. We decided to return the next day to survey and do the climb.

Pax dived out SE first and I followed doing some line adjustment, and looking for the pack with remaining line, that had gone missing. No sign of it. Visibility was reduced to about half metre by our movements upstream. We left the gear high on boulders near the sump for the night with plans to return the next day. Ric was waiting back at the base at the start of the passage. We left caving suits and lights at the cave entrance and walked out to the car in a little over an hour with light packs. We reached the car at 5:30 pm.

Day 3

Pax and I arrived at the "base camp" near D'Entrecasteaux passage at 10:15 am. Ric stayed outside the cave to do stuff and planned to meet us at the base camp at 2:30 pm. Pax and I organised survey

gear and were ready to dive at 11 am. Pax went through SE first. I tied loose line as I went through sump. The line was looking good by the end of the swim.

We left all dive kit at the end of the sump except fins for swimming. We moved to the start of survey Sump 2 position as a known survey station and the start of swimming. Pax went ahead and found survey points and did book. I did instruments too using our old disto (could afford to drown it) and Pax's OSTC wrist mounted dive computer with compass facility. This was the best we could do trying to survey whilst swimming, reading a caving compass was impossible. Clino not used as we used points at water level.

We surveyed down to the rockpile then up through the rockpile (with clino once we left water level) and joined in to Alan's permanent station on the rockpile at the end of SOTT left in March 2013. We then swam back to the junction with NSD passage and started the survey in the other direction. The disto was quite damp and the beam very fuzzy. After 10 minutes attempting sights we abandoned it. It would not give a reading beyond 2 m. We did not have a tape measure with us. We had deemed it excess gear to carry and unlikely to be used. So we used knotted dive line for distance for this part of the survey. Knots at 2 m intervals. We surveyed through low passages, in water and with a couple of roof sniffs and a duck, until we couldn't follow the water any further as it disappeared into cracks. There was a climb up here (turn around point yesterday), which we surveyed up and found ourselves in a dry chamber with access to the surface. We surveyed to the entrance and found a tag, IB191, which we surveyed to.

This was the end of the day's work. We returned to base camp at 2:30 pm and found Ric waiting. This was the end of our plans for this exercise and so we started packing gear for the removal. We carried all gear back to the cave entrance, in two loads each. We then secured some to pick up the next day and some to carry out then. It was raining as we walked back and the river had risen a little. We were back at the car at 5:30 pm.

Day 4

There were some problems with the survey of Exit near station ExTh1020, just past the rockpile on the river. We had offered to resurvey the area. This encompassed from survey station ExTh1020, up towards Camp 2 and The Western Arthurs, and across to the higher entrances to Dribble Passage and back to the river. Today was the day to do this. It took the three of us about three hours to complete the task. The forward and back bearings, with only three personnel, was what chewed up the time. There was a lot of running backwards and forwards to stations, many involving scrambling up boulders to reach. We were also going to link in the lower entrance of Dribble Passage to station ExTh1020, however, we were unable to find any survey stations for the first 50 m or so up the passage. We presumed these had been washed away in floods.

After completing our job we took 40 minutes to get back to the entrance of the cave. It was raining, and looked like it had been for quite some time. We picked up another load of dive gear each and had a fairly miserable walk back to the cars with heavy loads on a muddy, slippery track in the rain.

2 January 2015

It had rained heavily the night of Day 4 and was still pouring the next day so we deferred the final gear retrieval until Friday. We had Cherry (Pax's girlfriend) and Amy Roberston along to help with the gear. We planned to look at the D'Entrecasteaux sinks and IB232 entrances, and survey downstream IB191 from the entrance chamber as well today. Water levels were significantly higher by about 1 m.

We went around to IB232 and found it sumped. We then went to IB191 and found the upstream passage (that we had surveyed on Monday) sumped. Pax and I then followed the downstream cave to its terminus in a rockpile with the stream sumping into small but not impossibly small passage. This is probably worth a look at low flow times to see if it is crawlable or diveable. There was a survey tape on a small rockpile in this final chamber but as we had no record of a map in the archive we decided to do another survey, assuming the first had been lost to the club. We surveyed back to the tag. The tag was only loosely attached to the rock wall at the entrance. Having seen this the previous day, we had bought the tagging kit with us today and Ric bolted the tag permanently a metre away from its position in good rock. We did a survey shot from the old to new tag position. We then went for a wander to look at the sinks along the valley floor before returning to the cave entrance to pick up the remaining dive gear and walk out.

When we got home Ric discovered that this part of the cave had been surveyed in recent years as part of the Exit Project and that a map was coming. We have therefore abandoned our version.

Dive Summary

We connected and surveyed Exit Cave and IB232 sink via SE and rockpile. Sump 2 leads into passage to rockpile connecting SOTT. Sump 3 line was intact in NSD but was not found at rockpile. The passage leading away from the Sump 2 intersection was almost sumped and most of it would be sumped most of the time. Survey from NSD to IB191 tag complete. In low water levels NSD can be reached without diving from IB232. The standard of surveys varies with instruments used in different sections. Labyrinth of side passages in SOTT still not surveyed. The water connection from downstream end of IB191 to Exit Cave suspected but not confirmed.

We did not follow the dive line from NSD through Sump 3 to a rockpile because at the time I thought it was just undercutting the wall and arriving at the rockpile that leads through to SOTT. This was a big mistake as I now have serious doubts that it arrives at the same place as the rockpile we climbed through to SOTT because:

1. The survey from last year implies a different passage.
2. The rockpile doesn't look the same (from viewing video taken last year).
3. We didn't find the dive line near the rockpile we surveyed through this year.
4. There were more holes in this year's rockpile (including the two we climbed through on Day 2).

I suspect that Sump 3 leads to another part of a bigger rockpile than we think is here, with other passage accessed from there. Another visit in the future to check this Sump 3 terminus should be planned. Given the very poor visibility in this water, we would not have seen any potential side passages running off underwater along where we swam and surveyed. Possible dive exploration along these walls may find additional passages.

If you are interested in viewing a very short video of our activities, it is on Vimeo at https://vimeo.com/118454518.

References

McKinnon, J. 2013a IB-14 Exit Cave – D'Entrecasteaux River Sump: Dive 1. *Speleo Spiel*, 395: 8-9.

McKinnon, J. 2013b IB-14 Exit Cave – D'Entrecasteaux River Sump: Dive 2. *Speleo Spiel*, 395: 12-13.

McKinnon, J. 2013c IB-14 Exit Cave – D'Entrecasteaux River Sump: Dive 3. *Speleo Spiel*, 395: 14-16.

McKinnon, J. 2013d IB-14 Exit Cave – D'Entrecasteaux River Sump: Dive 4. *Speleo Spiel*, 395: 17.

Chrisps Road Area Junee-Florentine

4 January 2015

Philip Jackson

Cavers: Russel Fulton & Philip Jackson.

The notion of submitting an article to the *Spiel* to disclose the location of a new find is new to me. In the dark ages such finds would have been regarded as operational matters and kept secret. That is until you got back to the Junee Homestead where the Yorkshire Interrogator would be waiting with his Escort van load of home brew tongue lubricant. I hope this method of disclosure has less painful side effects.

Historically cavers have gone up the hills towards the contact in search of depth records and glory. This has left great swathes of untrogged ground with most caves located in clusters close to the contact and near to tracks and roads. One such untrogged area is that between Chrisps Road, Sunshine Road and Dewhurst Quarry Road. Contained within this area are several watersheds and a good few kinky contours and one particularly intriguing hill about 400 m southwest of Satans Lair. It was this hill and its surrounding steep slopes we were keen to investigate.

We headed into the bush from the south side of Chrisps Road about 200 metres down the road from the first of the two sharp east facing bends before the top with the aim of following the contour out to the hill. The first 100 metres or so was crap with a few log falls and road works rubbish. After this it was reasonably open forest with plenty of limestone outcrops and stump sized depressions or depression sized stump holes. At about 200 metres in one of these depressions had a small cave of about two metres long and half a metre in diameter. It had cave spiders, crickets and some hard dry moonmilk type formation.

From here the scrub was pretty easy, a fire long ago seems to have cleared the undergrowth. We headed to the top of the hill and had lunch so now its called Lunch Hill. On the western side of the hill is spectacular limestone gorge with cliffs on both sides of about forty metres. The gorge is about 450 metres SSW of Satans Lair and is part of the Satans watershed. A most pleasant spot if it wasn't for the jack jumpers.

We then headed north along the ridge from Lunch Hill for 100 metres or so and then northwest towards a steep limestone slope via a gully. Russel took a southern approach while I went slightly to the north and up through some shite. I was in the middle of a torrent of vitriol with respect to the shite when Russel suggested that I could come around to the left or come and look at this cave. That seemed to do the trick. Just below the crest of the hill was a rift of an estimated 6-8 metres depth. In light of the appalling lows reached by our federal politicians we named it Chocolate Teapot in honour of the second most inept federal opposition leader this country has ever seen. Russel took a couple of photos and we continued on our way back to the road taping as we went. The problem was we only got another five metres before we come across another rift. This one appeared to go further, about 13 metres or so. With Chocolate Teapot already used we named this one after a pompous inbred cloth-eared ruling class twit, Mr Rabbotts Burrow. As a small sacrifice to the Gods of Cave Location and Documentation we taped the route back to the bend on Chrisps Road.

We learnt two things from this trip. The first one is that there is limestone outcrop in most of the area covered and even some caves. The second is that disclosing secrets to the TCC or even STC by writing about it in the *Spiel* is not as much fun as the old method but it doesn't result in the debilitating headache.

IB14 Exit Cave

Valley Entrance through trip

10 January 2014

Stephen Bunton

Cavers: Stephen Bunton & Geoff Wise (STC), Jim Blyde, Greg Tunnack, Mark Wilson & their assorted offspring (Blue Mountains Speleos).

Mark, Jim and Greg enjoyed their Easter caving trip to Tasmania so much that they booked an action replay. Last time Sarah guided them through Exit up to the start of Conference Concourse and back. On this trip they were keen for a Valley Entrance through-trip. This was arranged and it all went off without a hitch. This is one of Tasmania's classic caving trips for anyone who hasn't done it, put it on your bucket list.

IB136 Half Way Hole

Re-rig and addendum surveying

11 January 2015

Janine McKinnon

Cavers: Serena Benjamin, Milos Dvorak, Sarah Gilbert, Janine McKinnon, Petr Smejkal & Ric Tunney.

Ric and I have wanted to do this cave for many years, but getting a party together willing to do the long walk with caving gear has not been possible. The Exit Project had some questions about the location of this cave in relation to the surface and more floor detail was wanted. We tried again to get a party together and this time we succeeded.

The cave has not been visited since Jeff Butt was there in 1994 (Butt 1994) and the cave was rigged with hand drilled spits, thus, re-rigging would be required. Our packs were heavy, and the route from the Southern Ranges Track saddle was poorly marked after many years of neglect. The tree falls and undergrowth were significant. It took two hours to reach the entrance from the cars. Near the entrance Sarah surveyed from a GPS location to the entrance tag.

We planned to rig the cave with SS 8 mm through

IB136 Half Way Hole: Petr drilling.

IB136 Half Way Hole - IB14 Exit Cave: Sarah mapping and Ric playing with himself.

bolts, and to leave the SS hangers in situ. Petr was keen to do the bolt placement. We placed the new bolts where we thought was the best location, not where the previous spits were placed. Sarah sketched more detailed floor information to add to the existing survey. It took four hours to reach the bottom.

After a (late) lunch break the party split. Ric, Milos and Sarah went out via IB14 (Exit Resurgence). Sarah had some sketching to do in Exit Cave itself, and Ric and Milos were keeping her company on the trip out. We three others were the de-rig party.

I started up, to wait at the top of pitch 3, with Serena and Petr following and de-rigging the bottom three pitches. At the top of pitch 3 they leap frogged past me, and I de-rigged pitches 2 and 1. We removed the plastic plugs from the old spit holes where possible or cut them off where they were jammed and reachable. A couple were out of reach with our new rigging and were left behind. Tape was left on (almost) all new hangers to aid relocation. The second hanger on pitch 2 was inadvertently missed and I had no tape when I got there. It is easy to find though.

I was last out of the cave, two hours after starting up the bottom pitch. The walk back to the car took one and a half hours. Despite the hard slog up the rough ground to the saddle the improved taping we placed on the way in made for a quicker trip through the scrub. The Exit exit party reached the cars twenty minutes after us.

Reference

BUTT, J. 1994 Halfway Hole (IB 136): the Saga of a new vertical route into Exit Cave. *Southern Caver*, 57: 9-13.

Rigging Notes

Ric Tunney

P1 - Speculation 8p (10 m rope), 4 m tape around rock. Bolt RHS.

P2 - Piquant 59p (75 m rope). Approach bolt RHS. Bolt RHS at top of pitch. Two bolts, RHS and LHS, at ledge at -18 m. LHS bolt is not necessary for rebelay (hanger removed).

P3 - Gusto 16p (25 m rope). Approach spit RHS. Bolt LHS at top of pitch.

P4 - Zest 7p (15 m rope). Approach from rope around column RHS. Bolt LHS at top of pitch.

P5 - Deriggers Reward 9p (14 m rope). Y-hang from two bolts.

P6 - Easy Exit 44p (50 m rope). 2 m tape around spike LHS for approach. Y-hang from two bolts. Rebelay from bolt RHS at -15 m, offset about 3 m to right of fall line. There is a (very thin) hero loop on bolt to aid grabbing when rigging. Rebelay loop needs to be large enough to swing across to rebelay.

1. "Bolts" are 8 mm x 80 mm stainless steel thrubolts installed January 2015. Hangers left in situ January 2015. Do not remove hangers.
2. "Spits" are 8 mm Petzl hand-drilled installed 1993. Spit hangers removed. There are other spits which may be unsafe. Some spits had jammed plastic screws which have been cut off.
3. All directions are looking down.
4. Rope lengths are liberal.

Lunch Hill Area Junee-Florentine

11 January 2015

Philip Jackson

Cavers: Russel Fulton & Philip Jackson.

The aim of this trip was to circumnavigate Lunch Hill from the western side and up the gorge on its eastern side to see if any karst is there. The hill and gorge are covered in the trip report of 4 January 2015. [*See p. 10 of this* Spiel – *Ed.*]

We started out from the taped track to Chocolate Teapot and headed south straight down the main gully on the western flank of Lunch Hill. The bush was reasonably open and easy going except for the odd pocket of tree fall. At a point due west of the hilltop we were halted by some limestone cliffs 4-6 metres high with dark spaces underneath. Without any uppers or downers we opted for a circumnavigation in the

opposite direction. These cliffs are worth descending sometime to investigate the dark crevices below. The route back to the other side was over a steep limestone buttress being the western flank of Lunch Hill and through the saddle on the northern side. From the saddle access to the valley floor was east down a steep gully with limestone cliffs both north and south of the gully. At the bottom we went up the dry valley to within about 200 metres of Satans Lair. Both sides of this valley were limestone buttresses and cliffs with lots of wombat sized holes and crevices but nothing large enough to enter. This is a reasonably pleasant valley on a hot day with tolerable scrub.

We then returned down the valley to continue the circumnavigation of Lunch Hill. At a point due east of Lunch Hill and a few metres above the valley floor was small cave of 5-6 metres length and descending at about 45° with a dense cricket population.

After the valley heads west, the northern side is a tier of cliffs 10 metres or so high to the top of Lunch Hill. The southern side is forest and thick discouraging undergrowth with some occasional glimpses of limestone outcrop. We continued down the valley to within about 200 metres of Dewhurst Road. The cliffs on the right continued most of the way down until they eventually formed a steep hill with dense limestone outcrops. The left side was still the same nasty messiness.

From here we ascended the steep hill to the ridge that is on the western side of the gully we started our original circumnavigating from. Once we were on the ridge it was easy going back towards Chocolate Teapot. There was limestone exposed most of the way except in a few of the flatter areas where some soil had managed to settle.

With so much limestone in this whole area there must be some caves in there somewhere.

JF2 Cauldron Pot

12 January 2014

Stephen Bunton

Cavers: Stephen Bunton (STC) Jim & Peter Blyde, Greg Tunnack, Mark & Holly Wilson (BMSC).

I had not done Cauldron Pot since Mark and I met on his first trip to Tasmania, during May 1980, when he was a mere 19 years old. The most memorable feature of that trip was that, as a callow youth, he lacked the required stamina and he fell asleep in the armchair at the Junee Homestead whilst dinner was being cooked and then again whilst eating it ... every night! Mark's excuse was that he did the cave in a wetsuit and he was tired from working out against a rubber suit. I am not sure why in those old days that we thought wetsuits were the optimum caving attire. Certainly the rigging was not as good and you were more likely to get wet but surely not that wet!

Times have changed. Cauldron has been bolted, Mark has endless stamina, he rigs well and they always cave on nice skinny 9 mm ropes. Our mission was to replace the stainless steel hangers that were supposed to have been left there in April 2013 but were mistakenly removed, rendering the rigging notes (McKinnon 2013) slightly misleading. As a result of this trip the cave is now rigged as per described with well-marked stainless steel Throughbolts with stainless steel hangers.

All went well until we hit the bottom and continued on from the bottom pitch. Despite clear instructions in my Vertical Caves book (Bunton 1984), which none of us read immediately prior to the trip, we had a delay in finding the Au Cheval Pitch. When we finally found the pitch, it was exactly where it should have been, as described. The advantage of this sort of blundering around is that we did find some interesting stuff around the deepest point in the proximal part of the cave. There are two small streamways here, one is the main Cauldron flow, the other could be a braiding of this or it could be from some other cave.

The architecture of this cave is magnificent, as it cuts down through the steeply dipping limestone beds. This isn't always obvious in the confines of Bills Bypass or where collapse has modified the cave but once over the Au Cheval it again shows itself as impressive passage.

My objective was to go beyond where I had been before and see the downstream streamway, which is actually the downstream passage of KD. Unfortunately the Cauldron passage degenerates into a sand and cobble crawl that narrows to a triangular squeeze where the sediment almost meets the roof. The others raced through but I knew I couldn't make it and Jim had his doubts. I wasn't sure how far it was to the streamway or how extensive it was so Jim and I decided to wait. Because I assumed (wrongly) that we would always be on the move I dressed too lightly and began to get too cold. I hopped back over the Au Cheval to keep warm. Jim on the other hand took a rock to the infill and started to enlarge the crawl-squeeze such that he could fit through. I wished I'd have thought of that!

Jim joined the others just as Mark was rigging the Fire Hose Pitch dry with a bit of climbing wizardry. They descended to the sump and then returned. By this time I had got cold again and started out. With plenty of time on my hands I thought I'd just look at my watch to time the various stages of the exit. So times for an old bloke not hurrying, do what you will with them, were: one hour for the pitch series, 35 minutes for Bills Bypass and 15 minutes for the entrance pitch – so about two hours out from the bottom chamber.

It was another two hours before the others got back to the surface. Waiting messes with your head! I had visions of having snagged the rope and stranding them etc. Lots of scenarios that meant that I would have to mount a rescue the next day but none prepared me for the reality of what happened next...

The next morning in the wash-up, Jim realised that he had left his camera where we were sitting together on the far side of the Au Cheval Pitch. I am not sure when that will get retrieved. This cave was certainly fun and will continue to be a deep sporting classic now that it is a clip-up. Possibly good enough to do twice in the matter of a week or so!

References

BUNTON, S. 1984. *Vertical Caves of Tasmania*. Adventure Presentations.

MCKINNON, J. 2013. JF-2 Cauldron Pot Rigging Guide. *Speleo Spiel*, 395:5.

JF2 Cauldron Pot

Camera Rescue

25 January 2015

Stephen Bunton

Cavers: Stephen Bunton, Milos Dvorak, Sarah Gilbert & Andreas Klocker.

The point of this mission was to retrieve Jim Blyde's camera so that I could post it back to him on the Mainland. Apart from the unfortunate circumstance of leaving it at the bottom of the cave, the Blue Mountains Speleos missed out on their Ice Tube trip because the water levels were up. In fact throughout the last part of January quite often the forecast of "showers for

Hobart", has realistically meant that the rain has only fallen in the southwest.

I looked at the amount of water that was pouring down the first pitch and it seemed like a lot more than 12 days previously. At the bottom of the pitch great swirling clouds of mist filled the air and the waterfall covered the whole extent of the aperture to the sky. Very impressive! I waited for a consensus from the others. I didn't want to endure Bills Bypass, down and up, for no reason but the others were blissfully unaware of what this really entailed. Andreas was hardening up for Mexico so he decided that we should "suck it and see", so we did.

At the streamway the water levels were up possibly five times on what I had previously experienced and with rain predicted for the day I was respectfully nervous. Nevertheless, the rigging is good and easy. We made it to the bottom comfortably and stopped for a bite to eat before going over the Au Cheval Pitch. To my joy the camera was exactly where I expected. At this stage, Sarah decided to head out and did so without fuss.

Milos, Andreas and I continued on. The now dug out crawl offered no physical or psychological barrier this time and we all enjoyed exploring Cauldron's nether regions. Andreas saw no potential for diving in this neck of the woods, which is certainly a relief. I am not coming back with diving gear!

At about the deepest point in the cave Milos managed to smash his flimsy light fitting into the roof and break the mounting bracket. He exited the cave looking like an anglerfish. Once we were back at the packs, over the Au Cheval Pitch, I did a bit of running repairs on it with some cable ties that I carry in my emergency kit. We then started the long trip out and gave Milos the pack with the bottom ropes in it and told him to go straight out without stopping. This was probably a mistake because in hindsight it was probably more weight than he needed to carry and he struggled on some of the rebelays.

On the entrance pitch, Milos got hung up on the bottom rebelay. When he managed to finally cross the rebelay he got snagged on the next rope so that he could go neither up nor down. From below, Andreas and I could just see this drama unfold and we thought that, should he get stuck there, we would all die of hypothermia. When Milos stopped moving at all I could see that the bottom rope was "free", or that it could be weighted, so I sprinted up as fast as I could. I hung from the bolt by my cows-tails while I raised the bottom rope and unthreaded it from Milos' gear and then threw it back down to a relieved Andreas.

Earlier Andreas intervened when he noticed that I had snagged the rope as I ascended and he called out to me in order to avert the very situation that I was supposed to be remedying. Irony can strike you anywhere! Once Milos was free to move again we all exited the final pitch in a communal little conger line. Sarah had waited patiently for us at the entrance. It was almost dusk as we trudged through the forest ... and it rained on us ... and the water streaming down the tyre ruts on the road indicated it had rained a bit throughout the day. We were all quite lucky really.

An All New Cave Hill?

Alan Jackson

1 February 2015

Cavers: Alan Jackson, Philip Jackson & Andreas Klocker.

In an attempt to tease Jacko regarding progress in Voltera (it being an old SCS haunt) I'd been supplying him with line plots on maps periodically. While observing said maps Jacko made an interesting observation: east and downhill of the right branch of Chrisps Road is a small hill not dissimilar to Cave Hill, in morphology and elevation, with no entrances marked on it. Jacko surmised that historically cavers look to go uphill from the spur roads for maximum depth potential and to avoid non-limestone surficial deposits that mantle much of the JF's lower slopes. Jacko has numerous theories and many are not worth pursuing, but this one seemed logical.

Jacko and another washed up ex-SCS old-timer, Russel Fulton, recced the area in early January (4th and 11th [*See p. 10 and p. 11 of this* Spiel *respectively – Ed.*]) and found plenty of limestone, generally agreeable vegetation cover and, on the first trip, two entrances worth returning for.

We parked at the first sharp bend in the upper section of Chrisps Road and bumbled east and slightly downhill, scoffing at Jacko's insistence that the caves were only ~80 m from the road. About 80 m later we came across the caves, both of which looked inviting. The first (southern-most) was tagged JF649 on the right wall by Andreas while I climbed in (~8 m) and sussed it out. There was a short pitch 20 m in so rigging gear was sent for. Jacko went surface bashing while Andreas and I explored. Natural anchors (and 11 mm rope) got us to the bottom of a P8 which led to a couple of short climbs (very loose) and a second pitch (P12). More naturals got us down this one and the obvious way on evaporated. A number of squeezy bits, climbs up and down were pushed but all seemed to end in chokes. No draught was discernible at any point in the cave. We surveyed out.

Jacko was back and excitedly reported a new shaft nearby. First we dropped the nearby 'old' entrance to see what it did. It proved to be a 13 m deep nothing. It was tagged JF650 on the back wall (north-eastern). The survey suggests it was heading for a connection into the lower levels of JF649 if it hadn't been choked.

Discussions all day had revolved around conservative politics and the deep-seated hatred Jacko has thereof. Cambell Newman's spectacular demise in Queensland the night before was stoking the fire and spirits were high. Federal politics was getting plenty of attention too. Asked to name the caves Jacko proffered Mister Rabbotts Burrow for JF649 and Chocolate Teapot for JF650, in honour of our Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition respectively (but not respectfully).

Jacko then led us along the contour to the NE to his new shaft. While an impressive feature a few metres in diameter, it looked blocked about 10 m down. I confirmed this while Andreas and Jacko thrashed around the gully/depression north of the cave. We tagged it JF651 on a rock face a metre back from the lip of the shaft on the ESE side. There was nowhere the shaft itself could be tagged without going several metres down and making the tag hard to see and unreadable from the surface, so we opted for the otherwise sub-optimal, potentially moss-growing face off to the side. With some pink tape behind the tag, an entrance/tag photograph in the archive and a GPS waypoint I think we can be pretty confident the tag will be found again in 30 years' time. Continuing the political theme Jacko christened the cave Toads Hole in honour of our federal treasurer.

We had too much gear for a comfortable surface bash so we abandoned the area. As it was still early though Andreas suggested he'd like to inspect JF398 Boulder Jenga to assess current water levels. While he and Jacko did that I wandered through the scrub adjacent to the Florentine Road looking for JF231. This cave is somewhat of an enigma (most SCS caves are), in that the only records I have ever found for this cave is in

Eberhard (1994), where it is listed as a 15 m long cave in Table 5.2, and a labelled dot on Rolan's unpublished 'JF-Z cave map' (my term, not his) which is associated with his 1994 report. I didn't find it, but didn't have the map with me so I'm not even sure I was in remotely the right spot. If anyone out there has any recollections or records of this cave then please let me know.

'Twas a pleasant day out and clearly the whole lower Chrisps Road/Dewhurst Road area needs a thorough going over.

Reference

EBERHARD, R. 1994. *Inventory and Management of the Junee River Karst System, Tasmania*. A Report to Forestry Tasmania.

JF36 Growling Swallet

Sump diving and aid climbing

7 February 2015

Alan Jackson

Cavers: David Bardi, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Michael Packer, Petr Smejkal & Sandy Varin.

This was the second dive attempt in the Dreamtime Sump. Andreas was forward probe this time. Knowing how thrilling waiting for cave drowners is I had my own entertainment package planned. Having seen Andreas kitted up and dragged, kicking and screaming, to the edge of the sump, Pax, Petr and I bumbled up Dreamtime to a spot about 30 m upstream of the main Bloody Smokers connector passage intersection and aid climbed an interesting-looking rift that heads east in the direction of good things. I was keen to trial some new toys from the Hilti Shop – 6 x 45 mm DBZ wedge anchors. Apparently they're all the rage in Europe these days. They worked superbly (no fiddling round with spanners) and I was soon up the first ~4 m climb, only to be confronted with a second 4 m climb. We scaled the second climb and ten metres later the passage came to an abrupt end. Alas.

While Pax and I climbed, Petr looked skyward and theorised. He climbed back up into the large chamber just back into Bloody Smokers and noted an audible connection between there and us via the continuation of our rift on the western side of the stream passage.

The 'lead' is marked on the TCC Growling map. I've extracted a bit and drawn in our findings in red (see Figure 1).

Meanwhile, the dive didn't go well, with the tight start proving a bit too high on Andreas's discomfort meter. He did get to the far side of the sump pool and 20 m into the sump proper, which is about 40 m further than I'm ever interested in going!

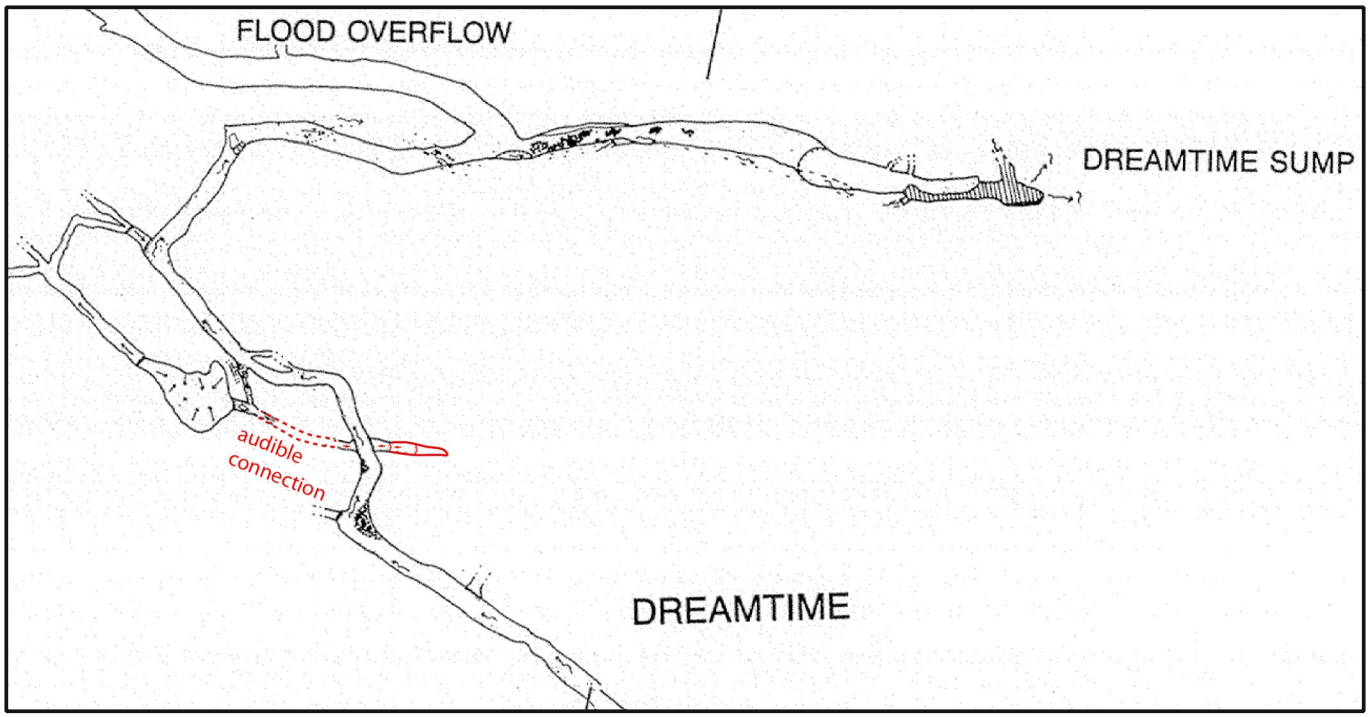


Figure 1. Annotated section of the Growling Swallet map.

JF633 Ring Hole

Ring Hole it is ...

8 February 2015

Andreas Klocker

Cavers: David Bardi, Andreas Klocker & Sandy Varin.

Last August, during a trip with more people than we had surface bashing in the JF for a long time, and apparently with all the hallmarks of a circus (Jackson 2014), David poked his head into a small swallet (err...I should say the size of the entrance was small, definitely not the amount of water entering it) which was likely to be JFX44 Ring Hole. This entrance is now tagged JF633 (Jackson 2014). Returning from this brief adventure (in a very saturated state) David decided it goes, but he is not sure if it looks like the old sketch of Ring Hole, so a return trip was deemed necessary.

So many months later on a sunny Sunday we returned. This time we were slightly better equipped, all dressed with rain coats over our trogsuits (none of us had PVC suits). Luckily the water level was down compared to the previous trip and the draft was up! So off we went though a few piles of loose rocks and dodgy climbs (some memories from Boulder Jenga suddenly reappeared), testing several different ways on. The first option, following the water, just got smaller and smaller with no draft, but the second option, the 'dry' way, turned into a nice meander which we followed until it too got too small. Nevertheless, it was obvious that this meander is where the draft is coming from! So it was clear that a return trip, involving a game of

Boulder Jenga, was necessary.

Once we got back to Hobart, stopping for our now standard respite at the Burgerhaus for an excellent burger and a cold beer, we compared our memories with the old sketch of Ring Hole (Hume 1982), and in a democratic vote we then all decided unanimously that the cave we just got back from is indeed Ring Hole, i.e. it is now officially JF633 Ring Hole.

References

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

JACKSON, A. 2014. Cave Hill Escapades. *Speleo Spiel*, 404: 8-9.

JF36 Growling Swallet

The dry bits

21 February 2015

Alan Jackson

Cavers: Alan Jackson & Michael Packer (There were six others on this trip but their mission will be covered elsewhere).

Not keen to see Growling in slow motion yet again, but still keen to help with the Dreamtime dive project, I lined up a swift ally in Pax for this trip. Pax and I took our share of the dive gear (a 7 L steel tank) and surged into Growling ahead of the others. In the Bloody Smokers stash we grabbed the 20 kg of lead weights and fins and lugged it all down to the dive site. Then we bounded along upstream Dreamtime like birds released (one light pack between the two of us).

At the final large chamber that marks the start of Frownland we investigated the theorised Serendipity/Dissidence 'resurgence'. The gap between ceiling and floor only looks about 200 mm but the floor is only sediment and small cobbles and probably wouldn't be all that hard to dig; still a low priority on the 'things to dive' list, especially if it's like that for 200 metres.

Next we jumped into Frownland proper and pushed on to very nearly the bitter end before surveying back to the limit of survey from 2012 (Euston 2012; Jackson 2012). I say very nearly, because the third 'lie in the stream and squeeze under a block' in quick succession was getting too much for me and my memory told me it was less than ten metres from the end anyway. We managed it in about 20 legs (140 m). It is worth noting that Frownland, even at the end, carries a magnificent draught; it goes somewhere!

Back in the first Frownland chamber we scouted about for a reputed climb lead (one of Trevor's). We could find nothing of interest in a westerly direction but we did scale the mud bank in the eastern end of the chamber to check the dashed continuation shown on the TCC map. It closes down straight away.

As we approached the sump we were overcome with a heady aroma of chicken noodle soup, which was reducing visibility to a few metres, and we joined the others till Stephen returned with 350 m less line than he headed in with. It was then time for off.

References

EUSTON, M. 2012 JF-36 & JF-37 – Growling Swallet and Pendant Pot. *Speleo Spiel*, 393: 9-11.

JACKSON, A. 2012 Perfidy, Frownland and Pendant Pot Surveying. *Speleo Spiel*, 393: 13-19.

JF633 Ring Hole

So many virgin pitches

22 February 2015

Andreas Klocker

Cavers: David Bardi, Andreas Klocker & Sandy Varin.

Two weeks ago we were stopped in this cave by a very narrow meander with a strong draft blowing into our faces. Now we returned after practising our skills at the game of Boulder Jenga and the art of 'thinking skinny'. It seems like David and Sandy have practised those skills very well and after some interesting manoeuvres made it through the squeeze while I still struggled getting my beer muscle through the constriction. While I tried to convince my six-pack to change its shape to that of the meander, David and Sandy toured the cave beyond, finding much larger cave which finally, as usual in the JF, ended in a pitch head.

Knowing that the cave continued I focused even more on 'thinking skinny', and finally succeeded at getting through the squeeze. So I went on and had a look at the pitch head, following what I thought was the obvious way on, and ended up at another pitch head, different from the one David and Sandy had found before. Both ways on split in a large chamber after the meander opens up, with the option David and Sandy took being the right tunnel and the one I took being the left. So now we have got two leads – the pitch which David and Sandy found, which is approximately 10-15 m deep and with another pitch obvious further back, and the pitch I found which is approx. 20-25 m deep. Both pitch heads are not too far apart from each other, and there is a good chance they might re-connect, but who knows before we get back to drop both pitches. Maybe one heads to Voltera and one to the downstream extension of Niggly?

Since all the mainlanders had to fly back in the evening, and since we couldn't do much more in Ring Hole without rigging and survey gear, we headed back to meet the other team (which was busy in Tyenna Tomo). Luckily it was one of those few real summer days we got this year and we enjoyed a pleasant rest in the sunshine until the others appeared.

Even though this weekend was so successful, Ring Hole will have to wait a bit until we continue on since David, Sandy and myself are off to San Agustin in Huautla/Mexico to push an undived sump and the cave beyond. Luckily caves don't run away on human time scales and its always good to come back to some going leads!

Space filler.

Other Exciting Stuff

IB1 Revelation Cave

Some notes

Ric Tunney

Revelation cave was discovered and explored in June 1969 (Collin 1969; Goede 1969). At this time "The cave was added to our list of numbered caves (No.1)". I think this means it was tagged.

The cave was surveyed in September 1984 (Hume 1984). The original survey sheets do not specifically refer to a tag at the entrance, just a survey station. On this trip, it is possible the IB233 entrance was found. "A small hole just above "Revelation" contained a short pitch..."

The map produced from this survey (7IB1.TCC197) shows the cave dropping steeply from the only entrance to a sharp left-hand dogleg not far in. It shows the tag as being just to the left of the entrance. (This map and entrance was to be a source of later confusion by me.) There is no indication of a second entrance.

In a summary of Ida Bay caves from August 1986 (Clarke 1986) the cave is described, "IB1. . . (Revelation Cave) : Two entrances; lower (first explored) one has tag on left wall; tagged entrance becomes a swallet after heavy rain. Cave descends steeply with two short drops and one 18 m pitch; upper (collapse) entrance enters cave onto rubbled slope leading up from of one of the short drops. Depth surveyed to 125 metres. Approx. 25 minutes walk WSW of Mystery Creek Cave and accessed off Hobbit Hole track from Blaney's Quarry."

This shows that, in 1986, it was known the cave had two entrances.

Throughout the naughties, Revelation Cave was visited for desultory digging at the far end as it is close to Exit Cave. It seems the bottom entrance was used, as this is almost walk-in. I think that, during that decade, common knowledge of the top entrance had been lost. (This was to be a source of later confusion by me.)

In February 2004 the tag (on the lower entrance) was GPSed (McKinnon 2004) and the entrance was photo-tagged, showing a tag on the left wall.

In August 2005, a trip to the cave (Hosking 2005a) found a large landslide had come down Revelation Valley. The bottom entrance had been partly buried and the cave inside had been almost filled with debris. The party seems to have entered by the (untagged) IB233 entrance and used a 10 m handline and 4 m pitch to bypass the 19 m pitch a short way in. They did not actually prove that IB233 joined Revelation Cave.

In December 2005 (Hosking 2005b), the cave was entered from the IB233 entrance, descended by handline and proved to join. They commented on the existence of another entrance. (The "upper" entrance of earlier times.) Apparently there is yet another alternative Revelation entrance nearby, apart from the known tagged entrance, although the location of this is now a mystery.

A memory sketch, superimposed on the cave map was published with this report. (However, where it showed IB233 to join Revelation Cave was wrong and was to be a source of later confusion by me.)

In June and September 2006 (Hosking 2006; McKinnon 2006), the IB233 entrance was tagged (at last!) and the new parts surveyed. And now the previously alluded-to confusion struck. There were few relocatable stations in the cave. The best is the pitch head for the 18 m pitch half-way down the cave. When I superimposed the recent survey on the 1984 map, it fitted the lower part of the cave, but there was little correlation with the top part. The entrance shown on the map was nowhere near the IB1 tag. The passage shown on the map leading to the entrance was nowhere near the IB1 entrance. The IB233 part did not correspond with the map at all. It was somewhere else and didn't join the cave! More work needed doing.

In December 2011 and January 2012 (McKinnon 2011; McKinnon 2012), the cave was visited in a final attempt to sort out the problem. We ran a survey towards the now-blocked entrance. There was some exploration. Ken Hosking found a steeply-ascending rift which ran off quite a way below the junction of the passages from IB1 and IB233 entrances, and this was surveyed. There was no daylight visible. Later processing of the data and comparison with the original map showed this was where the map showed the entrance.

I have mulled and procrastinated for two years, but I think I have sorted out the matter.

1. The IB1 tag is on the "lower entrance". (This tag is now buried by the landslide but the entrance is still there.)
2. The "upper entrance" was never tagged.
3. It seems the 1984 survey party surveyed from the "upper entrance", not from the (tagged) "lower entrance". Although their map shows a tag, there was no tag on this entrance. They did not notice the route to the "lower entrance", so did not show any indication of its presence on the 1984 map.
4. IB233 pot is the "small hole just above" the "upper entrance".
5. The "upper entrance" is somewhere between the IB1 entrance and the IB233 pot. It has not been relocated.
6. There is a doline next to the IB233 pot. At one time, I thought this was the location of the "upper entrance". This confused me as it is not near the entrance shown on the 1984 map and I suspected survey blunders. It took a while to disprove this, but I am confident it is not the "upper entrance".
7. The original explorers of IB233 suggested it be called "Chorale Cave" (Hosking 2005a). I have recorded that name in the Ida Bay number listing.

References

Clarke, A. 1986. Cave Numbering "Policy" at Ida Bay. *Speleo Spiel*, 219:6.

Collin, B. 1969. Hobbit Hole and Others. *Speleo Spiel*, 36:3.

Goede, A. 1969. Revelation Cave. *Speleo Spiel*, 37:2.

Hosking, K. 2005a. IB-1 Revelation Cave – Revelations and Mysteries. *Speleo Spiel*, 349:14.

Hosking, K. 2005b. IB-1 Revelation Cave. *Speleo Spiel*, 351:12.

Hosking, K. 2006. IB-1 Revelation Cave – A breath of fresh air. *Speleo Spiel*, 356:3.

Hume, N. 1984. Revelation Cave – Martyn's Ripping Yarns. *Speleo Spiel*, 202:10.

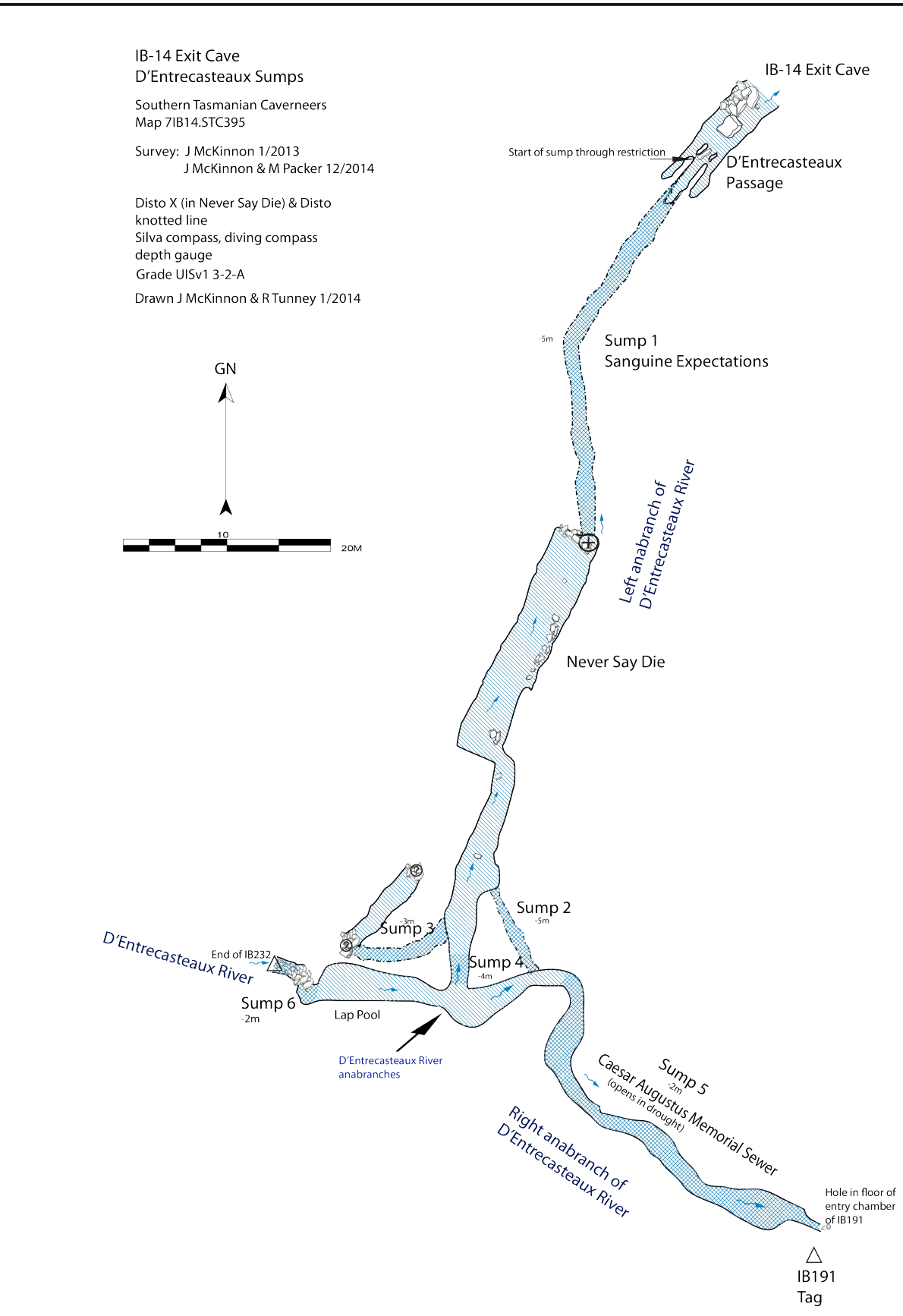
McKinnon, J. 2004. Searching for IB-1 Revelation Cave. *Speleo Spiel*, 340:7.

McKinnon, J. 2006. Ida Bay Surface Work. *Speleo Spiel*, 356:12.

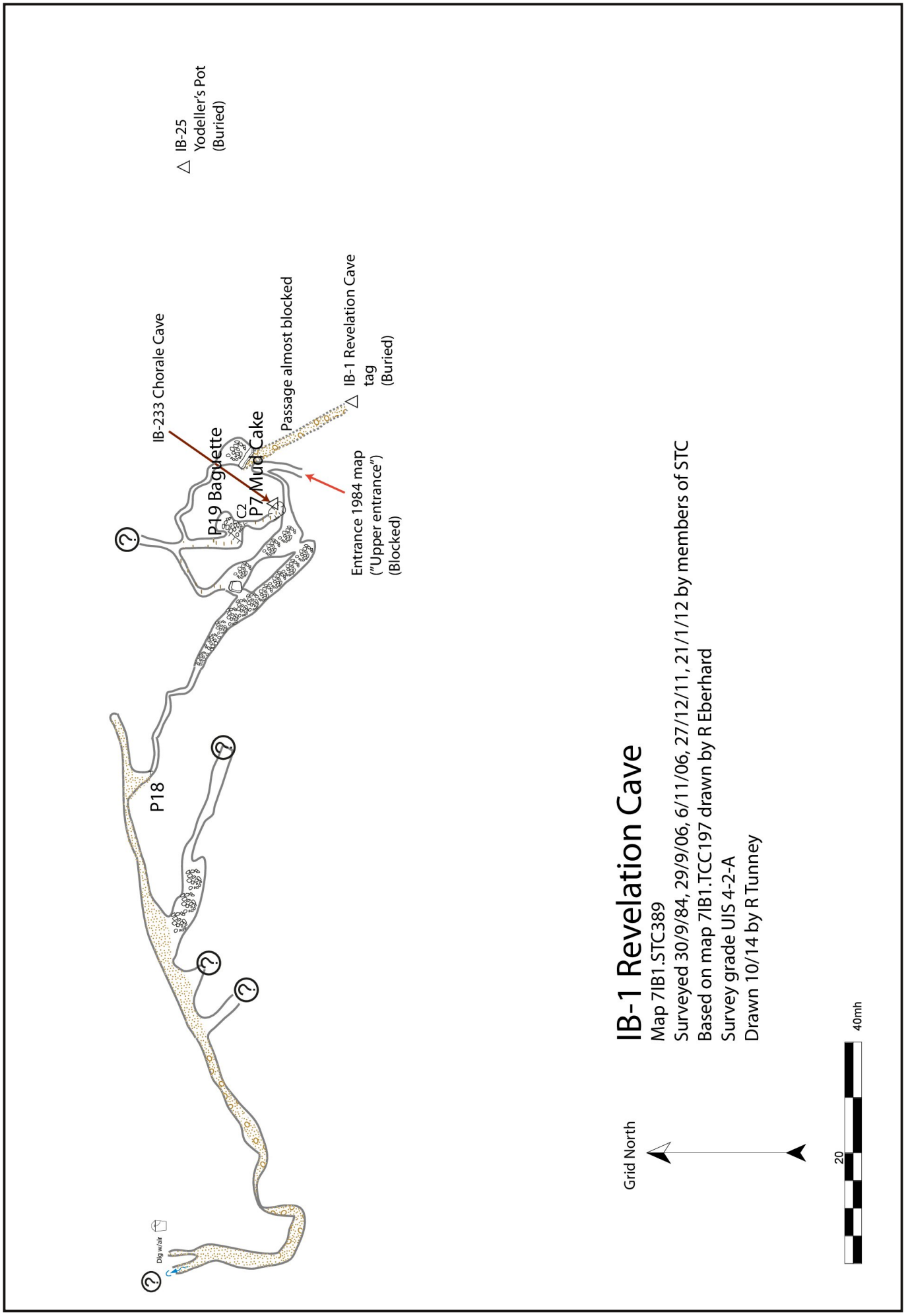
McKinnon, J. 2011. IB-1 Revelation Cave. *Speleo Spiel*, 388:4.

McKinnon, J. 2012. IB-1 Revelation Cave. *Speleo Spiel*, 388:6.

Surveys



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



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

JF-649 Mister Rabbotts Burrow

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF649.STC396

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

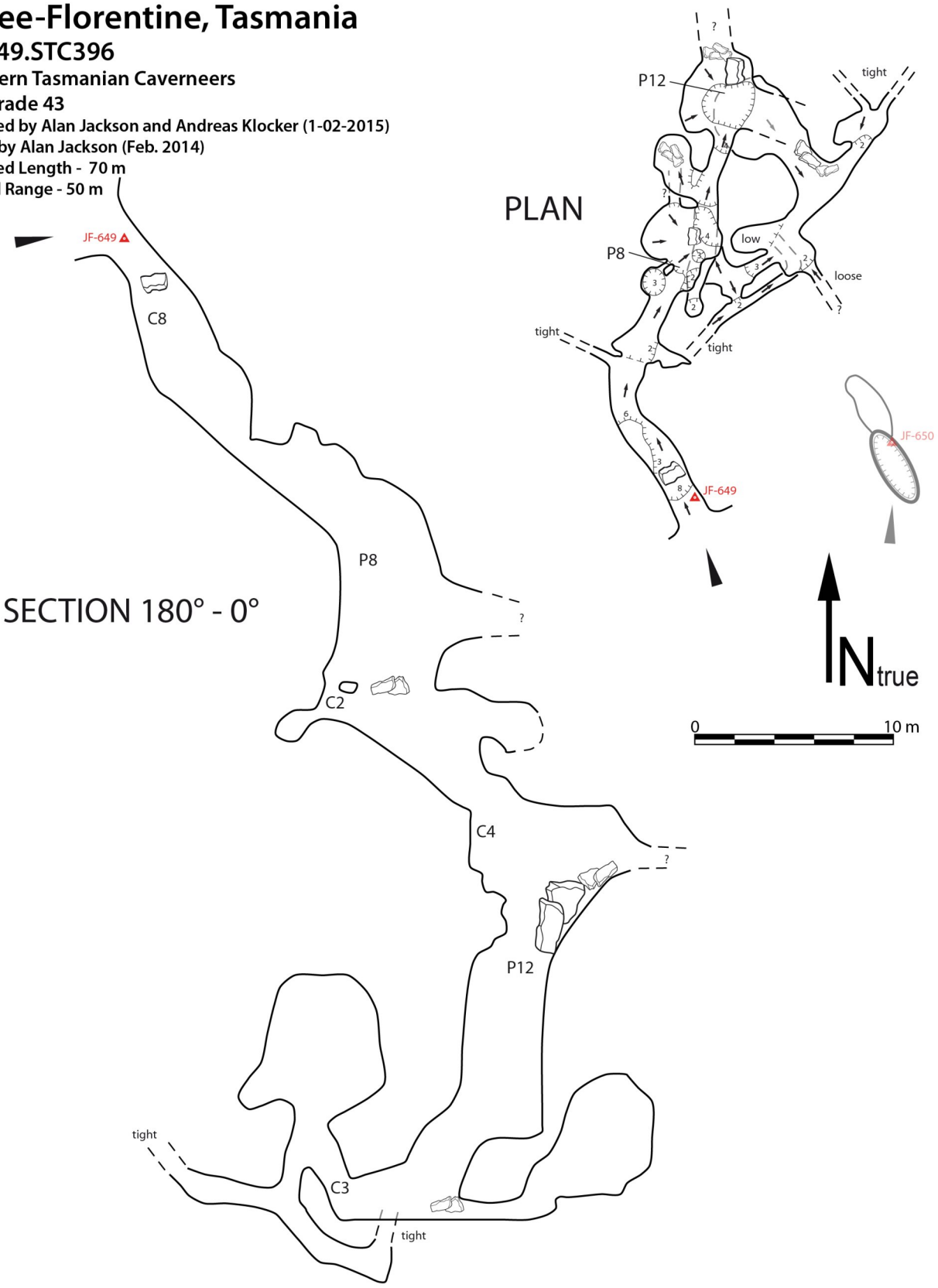
ASF Grade 43

Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Andreas Klocker (1-02-2015)

Drawn by Alan Jackson (Feb. 2014)

Surveyed Length - 70 m

Vertical Range - 50 m



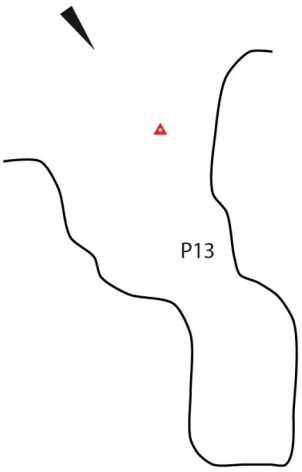
Note full resolution version is avaliable from the STC Electronic Archive on request. Contact Ric Tunney: rtunney@caverneer.net.au.

JF-650 Chocolate Teapot

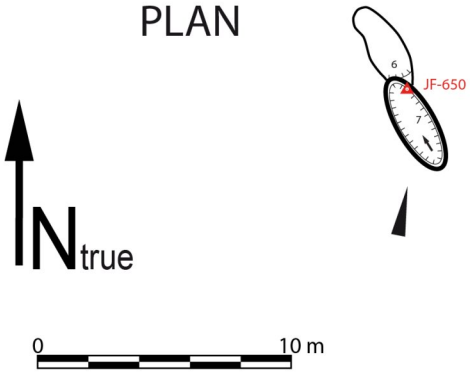
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF650.STC397
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 43
Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Andreas Klocker (1-02-2015)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Feb. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 13 m
Vertical Range - 13 m

SECTION 180° - 0°



PLAN

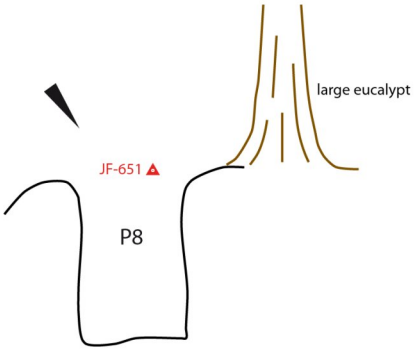


JF-651 Toads Hole

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF651.STC398
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 33
Surveyed by Alan Jackson (1-02-2015)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (Feb. 2014)
Surveyed Length - 8 m
Vertical Range - 8 m

SECTION 20° - 200°



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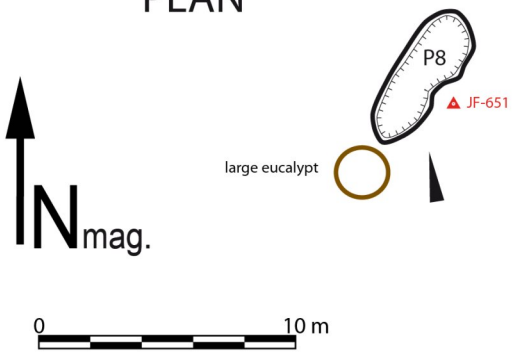

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