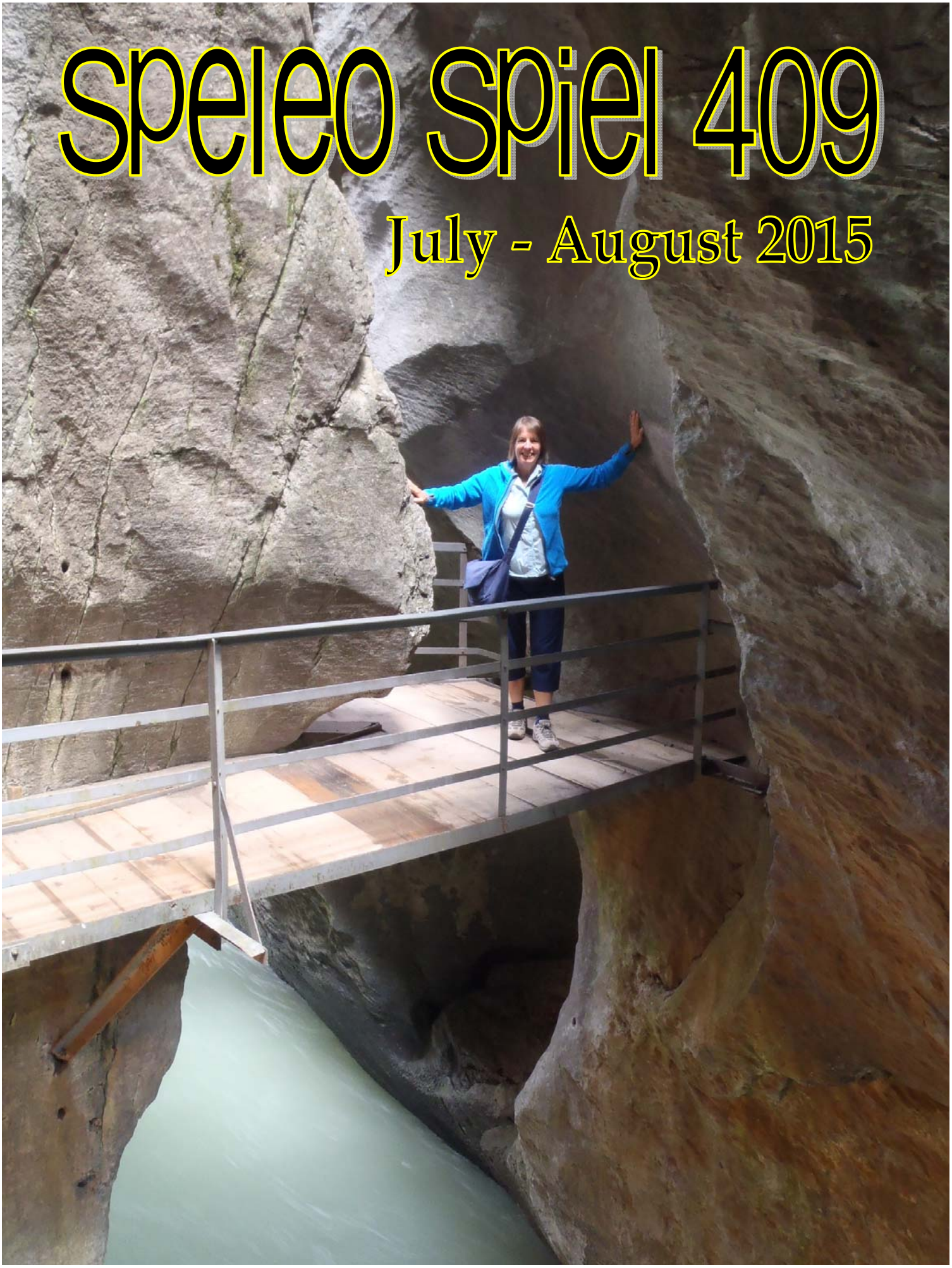
speleo spiel 409

July - August 2015



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)
crowdang@yahoo.co.uk

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: Cover girl! Kathy Bunton strikes a pose in Aareschlucht gorge, Switzerland. *Photo by Stephen Bunton*

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

Newsletter of the
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated
PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006
http://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com/
ABN: 73-381-060-862
ISSN 1832-6307

Issue No. 409, Jul. – Aug. 2015
Published Nov. 2015

CONTENTS

Editorial

Green Editorial boxes, Bill Gates-approved word processing, slack referencing etiquette … it's back to the future for the *Speleo Spiel*.

It looks like you'll have to put up with me again for a few issues until Matt's therapist says it's ok for him to start editing again. Putting this issue together has been a bit like slipping back into a comfortable pair of old caving gloves – the cotton lining's gone crusty, the water leaks in all the holes you'd forgotten about and there's an annoying bit of sharp limestone down the end of the index finger of the right glove that irritates you wildly but refuses to rinse out – ah, the memories.

Thanks very much to Matt for holding the fort for two years. Despite things getting progressively tardier as the months rolled by, the quality was always worth the wait. In my opinion, taking the piss out of fellow members is the key role of the Editor and Matt did that well. The repeated use of Bunty as a 'space filler' was bloody genius.

If you've submitted something recently and it doesn't appear soon then blame Matt and supply it again.

The focus in the short term will be a bit of catch up publishing and then we can refocus on character assassination.

Alan Jackson

(Acting Editor)

Stuff 'n Stuff

CHRISTMAS BBQ

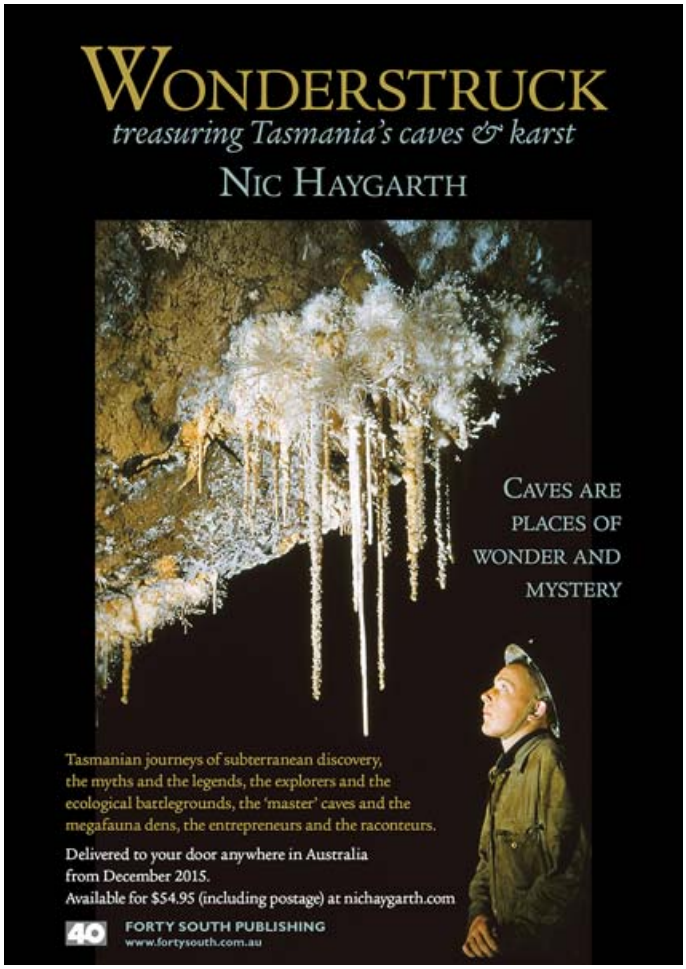
Friday December 18 at Mt Stuart Park, Mt Stuart. A start time was not discussed at the November meeting but let's take a punt and say from 5 pm. The park can be accessed off the very end of Benjafield Terrace or midway along Keith White Crescent.

Facilities-wise, I believe there are some gas bbqs, shelter, a few picnic tables, a playground (with a whiz-bang slide and rock climbing wall) and a large grassed area for ignoring your children in. Please note that you can't play golf there.

Alan Jackson

Space filler

WONDERSTRUCK



Nic Haygarth (Tasmanian historian) has finally got his Tasmanian cave history book, *Wonderstruck*, over the line, ready for the rampant consumerism of Christmas. STC has assisted with the funding of the book and, in return, members (all categories: active, inactive, family, life, friends of STC etc.) get a 20% discount off the RRP (i.e. $40 instead of ~$50) and the opportunity to have the book signed by the author.

The Mole Creek launch is called 'Cave tourism at Mole Creek - a conversation with Nic Haygarth about his new book *Wonderstruck*', and is at the Mole Creek Hotel, Saturday 12 December at 2.30 pm, introduced by Meander Valley Mayor Craig Perkins.

In addition there will be book signings:

- Tuesday 15 December 12 noon at the Devonport Bookshop, Rooke St Mall, Devonport
- Wednesday 16 December 11 am at Petrarch's Bookshop, Brisbane St, Launceston
- Thursday 17 December 5.30-6.30 pm at Fullers Bookshop, Collins St, Hobart

The book is also available from Nic's website for $54.95 (including postage) at http://nichaygarth.com/

Alan Jackson

JF36 GROWLING SWALLET – FROWNLAND SURVEY

The map associated with survey trips in 2012 and 2015 is done – see page 16 of this issue. For background reading, see *Spiels* 393 and 406 (and 249 if you're REALLY interested).

Trip Reports

JF36 Growling Swallet – Dreamtime Sump dive II

Stephen Fordyce

13 March 2015

Party: David Bardi, Stephen Fordyce (Diver), Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Ken Murrey, Michael 'Pax' Packer, David Taberner, Sandy Varin.

Summary

Following the successful breaking through the restriction at the downstream end of Dreamtime Sump in December 2014 (Fordyce 2014), another attempt was made to explore further into the sump, and also to survey it properly. All things went more-or-less according to plan and ~350 m of line was added to the ~150 m laid previously. There was another significant airspace and then the sump plunged to a depth of 26 m before coming back up nearly (but not quite) to airspace at the turn point in a high rift passage barrelling onwards. All guideline in the Dreamtime Sump was successfully surveyed on the way out, with the resulting plot showing the sump heading for the Mt Niggly section of Niggly Cave and only 200 m away.

Disclaimer

This was a solo dive. There are plenty of other places to discuss the pros and cons of solo diving, but as part of the trip, the risks, equipment, plan and diver's abilities were assessed and accepted by the team leaders, the team and of course, the diver.

Detail

I'll spare the details of the trip to the sump – this was covered in much detail in my previous report on Growling (Fordyce 2014). Many of the same crew were along again, with Alan and Pax last minute additions (and welcome tank sherpas) although with a different mission: to check out some leads and do some surveying at Frownland, deeper into the cave. With an earlier start and making good time through the cave, we were a well-oiled machine moving at slightly more than one third optimum Alan Jackson speed.

The equipment for the dive was selected as follows:

- 2x 9 L carbon fibre tanks with 6 kg of weight strapped to each
- 1x 7 L steel tank – clipped "over the top" of the carbon fibre tank on my left
- Drysuit with 7 mm hood, Fourth Element "Arctic" undergarment plus polypro thermals, and a thick synthetic jumper
- 4.5 kg of weight on a weightbelt
- ~10 yellow silt pegs (all were used)
- Three reels with a total of ~500 m of line (there was no way I was going to run out again!)

The gas plan was to dive in breathing only the 7 L steel until it was basically empty, then dive out breathing only one of the carbon fibre tanks (unless it got too low to make an exit on if the full tank failed for some reason), coming out with two largely empty tanks, and one full tank which could be left in the cave for next time, while still maintaining enough reserve gas to safely exit the cave in the event any piece of equipment failed. This plan was carried out successfully, however we reluctantly brought out the full tank anyway for reasons explained later.

My recorded gas pressures at various points were:

Point in the dive	7 L Steel	9 L C.F.	9 L C.F.
Start of dive	240 bar	240 bar	240 bar
End of sump 1 ("Dreamtime")	200 bar	240 bar*	240 bar*
End of previous line	170 bar	240 bar*	240 bar*
End of sump 2 ("She Goes Tunnel")	145 bar	240 bar*	240 bar*
Furthest point reached in sump 3 ("Niggly-Bound")	15 bar	240 bar*	240 bar*
Return from sump 3 to "30 m Long Lake"	15 bar	110 bar	240 bar*
End of dive	15 bar	60 bar	230 bar**

*Extrapolated afterwards, checked at the time but not written down

** The slight change in this tank would be due to using it for wing/drysuit inflation

Narrative

Arriving at the sump, there was the usual dance of trying to get changed from filthy wet trogsuit into dry undersuit and drysuit, without getting too much mud on the zip (all this on a small mud/sandbank with about 1.4 m vertical space). With plenty of willing hands to make the process quicker, I was promptly geared up and stomach wriggling out into water deep enough to float in.

It wasn't too much of a drama getting through the first long and flat restriction with the third tank, in fact having it unclipped was a pain and it was much easier leaving it clipped for the way back. I made good time and popped up into the small chamber at the end of sump 1, crawled across the couple of muddy metres and continued into sump 2. The line was pleasantly still in the same condition (excellent?!) that I left it and didn't need much tidying up.

Vis seemed to be a slight improvement on last time at ~3-4 m, and pretty soon the reel was unspooling into new cave (after noting gas pressures), with the nice "She Goes Tunnel" 3 m wide and 1.5 m high at only 1.5 m water depth going straight ahead. The profile was square, with a flat silty floor and weak rock or mud chunks on the walls that preferred to fall off rather than be tied off to. Silt pegs were used occasionally, but the straight tunnel allowed a good long distance between them. At regular points there were shallow air pockets on the ceiling, one big enough to stick my head up into.

The tunnel constricted ahead and I wondered if it would be a terminal rock pile, as there were rounded rocks about 10-30 cm in diameter piled at the bottom of a slope in 3.5 m water depth. But no, although low and sloping up, I could happily fit through and after having some difficulty jamming a siltpeg in at the start of the slope, I followed the sloping restriction upwards. The gentle current had started to push some silt ahead of me, but I was relieved when the ceiling disappeared and I broke the surface into a nicely sized chamber. Actually, it was

really pretty big, being about 30 m long, 4 m high and 3 m wide!

As I came out of the water, I noticed the cave actually took a 90 degree turn to the right, in a high passage with a shallow lake and a beach. I took a moment to sunbathe, catch my breath and also make a solid couple of tie-offs and stick on an arrow pointing home. It was interesting to note the same little white cave shrimp in the water, similar to the ones at the start of the Dreamtime Sump. Checking my gas I still had heaps left for penetration, and if the cave kept on at this depth, it was going to be one seriously epic long dive and I would probably run out of line again!

But the cave had other ideas: after wading the 30 m long "30 m Long Lake" lake and sumping again, it dropped straight to 12 m. Ok, that was fine, I still had plenty of gas for that ... but over the next 200 m (and tying in the third reel!) the passage continued to slope down in regular steps (with low sections, but nothing too bad) before it bottomed out at 26 m. Getting towards turn pressure, at 25 m+ depth and with only 9 L tanks (also by this point a good hour away from the support crew) there were definitely some mind games going on. I reckon being on edge at times like these is a very useful survival mechanism!

Having a bit of penetration gas remaining, a conservative plan and an airspace not too far back, I pushed on ... and the cave came up! Up a series of steep slopes with some tight/flat bits, with a few balls of silt rolling down, until the cave turned into more of a rift passage in 5 m water depth. It was showing all the signs of surfacing again (into fabled gigantic master cave), and with not much penetration gas left I followed the ceiling, eventually reaching a tantalising 1 m water depth but with no cigar, and no surface either. The rift passage looked high as I couldn't see the bottom, and it didn't seem to be going all the way to airspace, although it was certainly going on ahead.

With turn pressure reached and my 7 L steel tank now basically empty I reluctantly wound in 10 m or so of line to find a final tie-off point, having long used all the silt pegs. With the reel clipped off and wet-notes out it felt good to be heading home, even though it was a cold long way which all had to be surveyed, which is what responsible explorers do. This helped keep me focused and the gentle current made for a nice swim back in relatively good vis compared to most sump exits, due to the percolation of silt off the ceiling from exhaust bubbles. Turns out I'd added 350 m of new line that dive, and surveyed 500 m in that dive; a pretty good effort! Mind you, considering the 85 person-hours of in-cave time, perhaps this is debatable.

Epilogue

Everyone else was still there and cold and it took some considered faffing to get packed up and moving again. We had a quick council of war and decided to bring all the tanks out – this was sad, but it was felt that for the effort involved to go much further, the next push would need a different approach that probably wouldn't happen before winter. However, we left all the weights (no belts or rigging) tied to a protrusion on the wall, back from the sump in the larger passage. Hopefully they will survive the winter floods.

The trip out was ... like most trips out of caves. Enough said.

Alan plotted the survey data the next day and the sump has surprised us – rather than heading for upstream of Niggly (Porcupine leg) and projected master cave beyond the terminal (upstream) Niggly rock pile, it is heading for the eastern end of Mt Niggly chamber (and only 200 m away) right where there is a record of a stream entering through rock pile ... With key personnel unavailable, an attempt at making the connection is going to have to wait until next summer and plans of attack are under discussion: stay posted for the next instalment.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

The usual thanks go to Andreas for generally organising pretty much EVERYTHING, Alan for mapping and generally being a JF guru and everyone who carried gear or did setup trips. This sort of thing is not done so someone can have a fun dive – it's to carry out meaningful exploration and bring back data with purpose. I'm glad we as a team could achieve this.

Reference

FORDYCE, S. 2014 JF36 Growling Swallet, Dreamtime Sump dive. *Speleo Spiel* 405: 9-13

IB104 Giotto Pot

Janine McKinnon

19 July 2015

Party: Anna Ekdahl, Sarah Gilbert, Han-wei Lee, Janine McKinnon, Chris Sharples, Ric Tunney.

Ric and I had decided that a nice Sunday outing underground was in order. We planned for something laid-back, not too long, and not too strenuous, for a mid-winter stroll.

We advertised and got four other like-minded souls.

After due consideration, Giotto Pot was chosen. It is pretty much straight down (hence, a 'pot'), so not lots of grovelling required. It is just off Skinners Track, on the Pseudocheirus Cave track, so not a long walk. It only has four pitches, the last 6 m one not worth the bother, so not heaps of vertical work. Perfect.

I have been there before but couldn't find the trip report. Actually twice, I think – once with Madphil and once with Geoff Wise and others – but still couldn't find a trip report. Maybe we didn't write one. Not to worry. [*Well, that took 30 seconds: with Madphil –* SS*336: 11-12; with Geoff Wise – I don't think it was published – Ed.*]

We had no problems finding the cave and were ready to head in at 11 am. I went first. It was definitely familiar; particularly the crappy climb down at the entrance. Not the squeeze around the corner to the slope leading to the first pitch though. Another case of my brain excising the bit it didn't like.

The top of the 58 m pitch was slightly awkward to rig but not ridiculously so. After some discussion we chose the naturals to use. A couple of redirections were needed on the way down but it was pretty much a free hang for most of the drop.

Sarah followed me and we started working on the next obstacle - a short, 2 m, climb up with no hand-holds to use, and a TINY foot hold not in an ideal place. In the end I used her shoulder as a balance point and dragged myself (inelegantly) up. I rigged a tape, and rope, with hand-holds and foot loop for the others to use.

We were now on a ledge above the 13 m pitch. The others all arrived by the time we had this rigged. I headed down, and started rigging the next pitch as everyone else followed promptly. Sarah was next down and we discussed where to rig

from. The pitch is reminiscent of one in Little Grunt. It is a vertical slot in the floor and quite tight. We finally got it rigged and I started down first. Sometimes it's good to be small. The pitch head wasn't particularly tight for me – not when I knew how it would be for everyone else.

Eventually we were all squeezed in at the bottom. A quick look down to the end of the cave, and going back up started. The things we do to amuse ourselves.

I came up last, de-rigging.

Listening to some of the expletives, and various other noises, as each person got themselves out of the top of the third pitch was interesting. It took quite a while for some. I started to worry how hard it was going to be. As I said, sometimes it's good to be small. I found it a major anti-climax when I got there.

Sarah waited at each pitch head to help me. At the top of the second pitch, and the climb, we rigged a rope around a stal to do a classic abseil off the climb, and pull the rope down after us. This worked well.

We arrived at the bottom of the first pitch to find Anna and Han-wei still waiting to get up. It is a small cave.

Eventually I got up the pitch, and found Sarah, Anna and Han-wei scattered from the pitch head to the climb out, waiting to pass packs. This worked well and made the job of getting everything out much easier for Sarah and me.

We were all out by 4:30 pm; a little later than I had anticipated, but not bad for a party of six.

We even made it back to the cars, and were driving, before dark.

Rigging notes:

P1 (58 m). 65 m rope. Long trace on tall pillar on RHS above head height, 2 m back from lip. Tape around head-height boss on LHS, 1 m from pitch head. Deviation from chockstone above pitch. Deviation from small column on LHS about 15 m down.

C2. 6 m rope or tape as an aide to this could be useful. Tie around column at far side of ledge (also used for second pitch).

P2 (13 m). 28 m rope will do both P2 and P3. Tape around column at pitch head. To get to rope, a tape around stal can be used for safety and to hold on to. Deviation 2 m down around boss on RHS (opposite side of pitch).

P3 (11 m). Use rope from P2. Trace through thread on RHS to get past bad rub at start of slot. Backup to previous pitch (same rope does this).

P4 (6 m). We could not find a reasonable belay for this pitch, but we did not intend dropping it, anyway. Maybe tie to previous rope, but there will be rubs.

[All directions looking down.]

Some brief caving at Risbys Basin

Janine McKinnon

22 July 2015

Party: Serena Benjamin, Janine McKinnon, Adrian Slee, Ric Tunney.

We had picked the worst (only) bad weather day of the week. It was the only day that suited everyone though, so a leisurely start saw us through the forestry gate and parked beside a very convenient shed, getting organised in the rain and cold, at 10 am.

It is nice when you don't have to stand in said rain to get organised.

We were here because Adrian had elicited our help to enter and map a hole he had found on a recent contract he was undertaking in the area. So we had come with ropes, rigging gear, bolting gear (just in case), tagging gear and survey gear.

Adrian led the way, and a half hour walk found us at his prospective cave. It was a small entrance and not breathing, so potential was low.

The entrance was in a very muddy doline and sloped to a drop which disappeared around a corner. So we rigged a rope, and Ric placed a tag (RB11) at the same time. I headed in, down the climb, and around the corner was a steep, muddy slope, so I stayed on rope for safety and it looked like it turned into a pitch about 4 m down. I rigged a rebelay off a piece of bedrock, thinking I had a drop just ahead.

Just ahead, 2 m, my pitch turned into a 1 m drop to floor. The cave terminated here.

I could hear discussion at the entrance and eventually Adrian appeared with our DistoX. We did a quick survey and left. [*See page 15 for the map/masterpiece – Ed.*]

After that thrilling event no-one seemed terribly enthused to explore more caves, it was still raining and the temperature had plummeted. We headed back to the car via a couple of interesting features Adrian had found and needed tagging. We placed a tag on one of these (RB12). (The other was a doline.) It was a short cave that goes about two to three metres (according to Adrian). We did not enter.

After much grovelling over fallen trees and debris, and some brief looking at interesting dolines, we arrived at his main point of interest, for us, a rising of Pillingers Creek. It was tagged RB13.

It looked tight but interesting, so we will return during the summer to have a better look.

Still raining, with brief dry periods, we returned to the cars and were driving by 3 pm.

Tagging:

We took the bundle of Risby Basin tags and used the next tag in the bundle.

RB-11 Vertical cave 8 m deep in very muddy doline.

RB-12 Small cave at base of 3 m cliff.

RB-13 Pillingers Creek Rising.

After we returned home, we discovered that RB-11 had been allocated to Pseudo Risby Basin Cave (Cracknell 2007). Apparently Matt was going to return to the area to place the tag. I'm guessing the tag was never placed. Otherwise, someone made two RB-11 tags and we now have two RB-11 caves! [*Why the bloody hell can't people do their background reading BEFORE they head out for the day rather than afterwards? – Ed.*]

Reference:

CRACKNELL, M. (2007), Risbys Basin 21 October 2007, *Speleo Spiel* 310:7-8

JF633 Ring Hole

Stephen Fordyce

25 July 2015

Party: David Bardi, Stephen Fordyce, Andreas Klocker, Fordyce, Ken Murrey (Team 1); Dave Bardi, Craig Howell Michael "Pax" Packer, Sandy Varin, (Team 2)*

*We entered the cave together and split at the main fork going off to the three different pitches, regaining this junction at the same time and exiting together. A separate report will be completed for Team 2, but to sum up their activities:

- Approx. five new pitches were rigged with approx. 160 m of rope (and subsequently derigged)
- This terminated in a sump
- A drill survived a 15 m fall and subsequent full immersion to drill another day
- There remains one undescended pitch of the three we started with
- All was surveyed back to the junction point

Preamble:

Ring Hole is of interest, because it has flowing water which is theorised to emerge in JF207 Voltera nearby, and also because it has passage right above and heading for JF210 Sesame Cave (also nearby). Either of these would make for very significant connections - especially (and as is most likely) in the case of Sesame, which has high potential for new discoveries.

Report:

The weather was chilly but fine and there hadn't been much rain in the past week. So we were able to get in quite comfortably for Ring Hole, getting thoroughly dripped on but not quite completely soaked – although the rain-jackets brought by some of the party for the initial section seemed like a good idea.

Having passed the initial wet sections within 20 minutes or so, we proceeded through the drier but much tighter squeezing sections. This involved a series of small and sometimes uncomfortably small passages with various flat and rift squeezes that had until recently prevented exploration of the cave beyond them. Apparently the mud was about as dry as anyone had ever seen it. Maybe 40 minutes later the cave started to reward our efforts by opening up enough to stand and then into a series of larger chambers, and the one where we would split up.

We divvied up the packs with plenty of rope and rigging gear for each team to "drop some virgin pitches", which soon became the slogan of the day. Our pitch was not far away and Ken and I fidgeted while Andreas took the first turn at rigging, with a mildly technical pitch head giving a choice of flowstone or mud-covered rock for anchors. I also took the opportunity to take some test photos with my head-up mounted "ChoPro" camera, and the result is below.

Well rigged, this pitch (#1) turned out to be a nice 25 m or so, dropping into a large chamber approx. 5 m x 8 m and with a flat floor and barrelling horizontal passage.

To his credit, Andreas held his horses until Ken and I were down and then we all charged off into the unknown and glory ... quickly to be dashed as the cave flattened alarmingly and looked as though it would end.

Rigging the first pitch.

Fortunately we crawled through and found ourselves perched halfway up the side wall of a very large room! This room would be at least 50 m long, 20 m high and 8 m wide, and it seemed to go down further, beyond where our lights could shine. We made a quick trip back to the previous pitch to grab the remaining packs and crawled through a high level bypass to emerge again 30 m further along the room, but with crumbly mud/fake rock, down-climbing was not an option. There followed another painful pitch-head which required me to be wedged in the crack while reaching out and drilling into the ceiling to create pitch #2.

A good drop was achieved and the descent made without incident – about 15 m. However it was only a few steps and a short down-climb before the floor dropped away and the drill was required again. With very little horizontal cave between the pitches, it was now Ken's turn to rig the pitch and get sore arms while Andreas and I tried to avoid the drips and not get cold. By this point, all of our socks were squelchy, which was rather sad, but the cave was still going so we weren't going to let that stop us.

Pitch #3 again required some careful thought and technicality, as the access was over a false floor made of mud and boulders. Again there was a choice of flowstone or mud-covered rock, with a Y-hang requiring a precarious bridge that was certainly nerve-wracking for the spectators. The resulting anchor bolts are in good rock and with a good hang, but would benefit from relocation of one of the anchors for ease of access. The pitch ended up being about 20 m ... and led almost straight to pitch #4.

At this rate we were dropping very quickly and Andreas swore that he could smell Sesame. All I could smell was Ring Hole, but I was happy to defer to Andreas' more refined senses. However this didn't get me out of being assigned to practise my rigging skills on this final (we only had half the last rope left) and rather technical pitch. With a steeply sloping ramp, I was able to put in a redirect to avoid a rub and then proceed almost but not quite down - another rebelay was necessary. This was difficult as the good overhanging walls were all too far away to get to, and all the walls were covered in at least 50 mm of crumbly mud/rock, so that any bolt would be in a hole, and rub on the mud around it.

Eventually I was able to get sort of to the other side and an overhang and put in a pair of bolts for a reasonable hang. These are more or less ok, but it may be better to use them to

establish some better anchors - and I would like to get a second set of eyes on them before they become a thoroughfare. Actually that goes for the whole pitch #4 really. A final tantalising anticlimax – I was able to drop down a further 15 m to just reach a small ledge before running out of rope. The shaft continued down approx. 10-15 m to a large puddle on the floor (chamber at floor level approx. 6 m x 10 m), and a tunnel sloping out of sight.

Epilogue

After I'd spent the best part of an hour hanging off the rope messing about on pitch #4, and the others had spent a similar amount of time shivering and getting dripped on, motivation for doing anything else was low. Thus we beat a hasty retreat towards the comfort of the outside world and the wrath of Alan Jackson without doing any surveying. This will be completed on the subsequent trip when we come back with more rope to finish the job.

We returned to Hobart before midnight and congratulated ourselves on the comparatively good timing over the lamb which had previously been sacrificed (and curried) to appease the weather spirits. Sunday saw the start of the forecast "thundersnow" and so a shorter day of replenishing our surveying karma (in Sesame) was the order of the day. Ring Hole will no doubt remain near the top of the list of "stuff to finish off" and hopefully we will be able to report a connection to Sesame in the near future.

JF210 Sesame – Cleaning up the Sesame survey mess

Andreas Klocker

26 July 2015

Party: David Bardi, Stephen Fordyce, Craig 'Drop Bear' Howell, Andreas Klocker, Sandy Varin

Our primary plan for this Sunday was to head back to Ring Hole to continue pushing the going passage from the previous day, but everyone who has been to Ring Hole knows that this cave is not a good combination with a weather forecast predicting 'thundersnow'. So we decided not to risk getting flooded in and went for our now regular backup plan – Sesame Cave. The main reason for heading to Sesame is to re-find the passage Rolan had found many years before (Eberhard 1995). That naughty boy never surveyed it and Jeff Butt was not successful in re-locating it either (Butt 1998)!, ending in a siphon heading towards the elusive downstream extension of Niggly Cave. Our second reason was to clean up the survey mess that exists for Sesame, i.e. combining the existing maps which lack the line data, the line data which lack maps and tie that into the one and only existing relocatable survey station in the whole cave!! Or in short – our plan was to re-survey it all since hardly anything useful survived from the old days when it was originally surveyed. At least we got some motivation for cleaning up that disaster since it seems very likely that our newly discovered passage in Ring Hole will connect into Sesame (fingers crossed).

So challenge one of the day: say 'open Sesame' and hope for the tight entrance to open up enough to fit us all in; success. Challenge two of the day: hand the survey gear to David, Sandy and Steve and hope to get some good survey data at the end of the day. We'll see if successful once we tie in the top entrance and close the loop. Luckily this part didn't need a sketch since we had the original map. While D, S and Steve were doing their duty I showed Craig around the cave and then returned to find the others still inching through Nematode Crawl shouting survey numbers in between some domestic banter. Very entertaining! Since this was going to be a short caving day since the mainlanders had to catch a flight we didn't bring any extra survey gear and stopped surveying at the top of the handline pitch.

The plan on the way out was then to tie together both Sesame Cave entrances with a surface survey, but once we got to the surface it was pissing down in typical JF style and we ditched that plan and instead approached the Burgerhaus at a very reasonable time.

The lesson learned from this trip (or any current Sesame trip): make sure you survey everything you explore and make sure the survey is stored in a safe place, otherwise future generations will use all sort of bad language when referring to YOU (I don't have to mention names here I hope).

A smattering of snow, four ugly mugs and a rude gesture in the Sesame doline

Reference

BUTT, J. 1998. A 1 (14/6/98), 2 (21/6/98) at Sesame 1-2 (JF210-211), *Speleo Spiel* 308: 10-11.

EBERHARD, R. 1995. Recent Discoveries in Niggly and Sesame Caves, Junee-Florentine Karst, *Southern Caver* 59: 7-12.

JF210 Sesame

Alan Jackson

2 August 2015

Party: Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker.

After a spate of Nullarbor caving it was time to flush the dust, dryness and warmth from my system. Continuation of exploration in JF633 Ring Hole was the original plan but the forecast was ordinary so we opted for a work trip in Sesame instead. The survey legacy in this cave is less than ideal. The data from a 1982 survey doesn't appear to exist anymore, but at least Trevor got round to drawing the final map. Rolan found some new stuff beyond the 'last pitch' in the early 1980s (but didn't survey it). Once Niggly let go of a few of its secrets in the 1990s Sesame became interesting again and Rolan returned in 1994 (Eberhard 1995) and found even more (but didn't survey it). Trev and co. surveyed Rolan's 1980s extension in

1997 (Hawkins-Salt 1997) but while the shot data exists electronically there is no book work and the data hangs off a crude extrapolation from Trev's 1982 map; they also left no relocatable stations. Jeff Butt got in on the act soon after and did two trips (Butt 1998). On the first they ferreted around in the muddy stuff looking for Rolan's 1994 extension but failed. On the second they dropped the old final pitch and surveyed it, tying it in to what they knew to be Trev's final station from the 1997 survey trip. Jeff even published a map with his trip report and put a labelled tape on the tie in point – progress. So after thirty-something years of effort in Sesame we have very little to show for it. Ring Hole looks like it'll join into Sesame so we've decided to have a crack at sorting it out once and for all (until the next generation of Eberhards come along to stuff the system up).

We entered via JF210 (bottom entrance) and rigged our way to the bottom of the two bigger pitches. It was quite unpleasantly wet. Andreas directed me to the lead he'd spotted on the left a couple of metres before the massive flowstone chockstone at the start of the false-floored streamway section (Klocker 2015). I determined 'modern technology' was not required, just someone skinny. I popped through the hole (not draughting strongly this day) and climbed down ~4 m. Straight ahead and right both ended abruptly but left (back towards the pitch) went for a bit to a narrow point full of dolerite and gravels. I shifted a few rocks to get a better look but it didn't really look worth the effort of either traditional digging or modern digging.

We proceeded to the last pitch and descended it. High water levels made any prospect of pushing the final sinking point that Jeff describes very undesirable. We surveyed out (shot data and LRUDS only) to Jeff Butt's relocatable station at the top of the last pitch. A tourist of the muddy 1980s extension was then in order. Footprints from the 1990s in the lower levels were largely indiscernible, so this area still backs up in big floods. We didn't find the way into Rolan's 1990s extension.

Back at the top of the last pitch we picked up the instruments again and surveyed (shots and LRUDs only) all the way back out to the top of the ~20 m 'Handline Pitch', which is where they'd got to from the JF210 tag on the previous trip. We were greeted at the entrance by a blanket of snow which made for a slippery but spectacular walk and drive home.

Dreaming of a white Triton

So, we now have shot data for JF210 to the old bottom of the cave which we can marry to Trev's 1980s map and Jeff's 1998 map. A resurvey (including sketching) of the 1980s extension is now required, as well as a first ever survey of the 1990s extension (if we can find it); and a survey of the JF211 pitches etc. I have instructed Andreas to ensure he loses, burns or eats all the survey notes so we can continue Sesame's legacy of crap data management.

Andreas refuels at the bottom of the 1970s 'last pitch' before commencing the survey

References

BUTT, J. 1998. A 1 (14/6/98), 2 (21/6/98) at Sesame 1-2 (JF210-211). *Speleo Spiel* 308: 10-11

EBERHARD, R. 1995. Recent Discoveries in Niggly and Sesame Caves, Junee-Florentine Karst. *Southern Caver* 59: 7-12

HAWKINS-SALT, J. 1997. Sesame JF-211: 15th June 1997. *Speleo Spiel* 302: 6-7

KLOCKER, A. 2015. JF210-211 Sesame Cave – A weekend of Dickon Morris flashbacks. *Speleo Spiel* 408: 4

Other Exciting Stuff

Limestone, limestone everywhere and not a cave in sight!

Various countries – April-July 2015

Stephen Bunton

The good thing about Long Service Leave is that it affirms that you have worked too hard and too long at the one place; that you lived a long time and that it really is possible to tick things off the bucket list! With that in mind Kathy and I headed on a whirlwind, worldwide walking trip with the intention of bagging a few prominent non-technical peaks.

We began our trip by trekking in Bhutan as the first part of the acclimatisation schedule. We could have done the missionary position thing and gone to the Nepal Himalaya but for a little extra expense we thought we'd go somewhere more exclusive. As well as this I had always been fascinated by the nation's concept of Gross Domestic Happiness. Because Bhutan is Buddhist, it's a bit like the good parts of Nepal, where the Sherpas live; and Tibet, a place I have boycotted because I don't want to give my tourist dollars to the Chinese Government.

Tourism in Bhutan is well organised and efficient, unlike Nepal. The scenery is just the same only it's less crowded. We saw few other trekkers on what is the country's most popular trek, a clockwise circuit through western Bhutan starting at Paro and finishing at Punakha, going via Laya. This involved crossing four passes over 5000 metres. However the weather gods intervened and snowfall, on the day we were scheduled to cross our first pass, meant that the trek was re-routed as a shorter circuit. After a few days of hanging around Chomolhari Basecamp we were able to proceed over the first pass and then the following day we crossed another pass back into the upper Thimpu River catchment. We only just snuck over the Yole La in worsening weather and reduced visibility but through the snowflakes I could tell that this was a glaciated karst landscape. It reminded me of Mt Owen in New Zealand. Heavy overnight snowfall obliterated lots of features but later in the day we entered the Thimpu River Gorge, which was quite a spectacular "thing", especially with its untouched cedar forests, dusted with snow and replete with an understory of rhododendrons (see Photo 1). Few people trek this valley and it was a real privilege to see it. We were lucky in a way that it was our bail out route.

Unfortunately our trek ended, as they all do, with the culture shock of returning to civilisation; a civilisation that was creeping towards us in the wilderness rather than the sudden surprise of just arriving at a farm or road head. Our last morning was marred with the sound of chainsaws and the quagmire that was to become a new road up into this beautiful uninhabited valley. There is one monastery and our guide assured us that the road was to serve the monks. I didn't believe him.

Bhutan regulates its tourism very carefully. They regulate everything really, including the population. Bhutan exports refugees, ethnic Nepalese, some of which have come to Hobart, and imports cheap Indian labour for its road crews. Apparently you can't build a hotel or cut down a tree without the king's permission and yet we saw a lot of both these activities. I did wonder how Gross Domestic Happiness translated into sustainability. Mostly it is a pseudonym for the laissez faire economics of the developing world.

Mountaineering is also banned in Bhutan, there are no expeditions, nor independent travel by mountain groupies like myself. Hardly anyone knows the names of the prominent Bhutanese mountains and so people don't come unless they are with an expensive organised trek. This has reduced the number of visitors and preserved the emptiness of the valleys. It also means that, in the foreseeable future, caving expeditions are pretty unlikely.

Photo 1. *Thimpu Gorge, Bhutan*

Photo 2. *The Moroccan coast between Essaouira and Casablanca, Morocco*

Our next port of call was Morocco where we went trekking through the Atlas Mountains and climbed Mt Toubkal (4167 m) the highest peak in that range. After the trek we headed to Essaouira and then to Casablanca along the west coast. Most of the scenery along the coast consisted of limestone pavements, weathered into interesting but small karst features (see Photo 2).

For the next part of our journey we hired a car in Spain and drove from Madrid to Zurich. For those cavers who have literally been living under a rock, most of the mountains in Western Europe are limestone. We saw a lot of limestone but we had made a conscious decision not to carry caving gear with us. We had enough crap to cart around as it was!

Just south of Madrid is an interesting little area called the Park Natural de las Lagunas Ruidera. This area was characterised by a series of little lakes that flowed from one to another in a series of short waterfalls over little tufa dams. We did a short day walk around a number of these without seeing much in the way of caves but we did enjoy the prolific wildflowers (see Photo 3). Most of the endemic flora would be considered weeds in Australia. Many species were probably introduced into Australia, by falling out of a sheep's bum. Merinos are native to Spain.

Photo 3. *Kathy and the Spanish wildflowers of the Ruidera, Spain. Note the unmistakable limestone in the background*

Near the start of the walk was La Cueva de Montesinos. We equipped ourselves with head-torches for an investigation despite the signs at the entrance stating that entry was forbidden and we had to contact a guide. We were just about to ignore all this and jump over the low entrance barrier when we heard voices inside. Several minutes later a family group exited the cave with a guide. That could have been embarrassing. Subsequent to this, a perusal of the map seemed to suffice (see Photo 4).

Photo 4. *Map of La Cueva de Montesinos, Spain. Murcielago is Spanish for bat or Lamborghini for supercar*

As we approached southern Spain we could start to feel the warmth as the summer approached us. In a few months the temperature would be well over 40°C. In a few places the locals have solved the climate crisis by living underground in "cave houses". We stopped for a gawk at people's residences in the towns of Purullena and Guadix (see Photo 5).

Photo 5. *Cave house Purullena, Spain*

With only a vague plan for the first few weeks of our road trip we pretty well just made stuff up as we went. A quick look at the map showed us that the Fontaine de Vaucluse was only a short detour from our proposed route. This is possibly the world's most famous and enigmatic resurgence. After nearly a century of cave diving, including one trip that almost killed Jacques Cousteau (Farr, 1991), it was finally bottomed at -315 m (see Figure 1). Other resurgences around the world are often referred to as Vauclusian springs. The Fontaine is in a large arched entrance at the bottom of a 200 m high cliff at the edge of a large limestone plateau. Really there is nothing much to see but a deep circular blue pool (see Photo 6). A few platforms for decompression stops are visible, alluding to its depth. Always the inquisitive type, I took a half-brick sized rock and lobbed it into the pool. To my surprise the rock took more than 10 seconds to disappear from view, such is the clarity of the water and the depth!

Beside the walkway up to the cave there is a small museum, Le Monde Souterrain (see Photo 7). The museum was closed for lunch at the time we wandered past. We were just peering in the window as the attendant returned but a quick glimpse was

sufficient. All the interpretation was in French and most of the gear on display looked like it had been sourced from my gear shed; it was out of date and tattered!

Anyone who has watched the Tour de France will know that there is spectacular limestone everywhere along the route. The route north up the valley from Sisteron to Grenoble and Albertville showcases some of the best scenery with the Massif du Vercors and the Chartreuse rising as great walls of grey rock.

Photo 6. *Fontaine de Vaucluse, France*

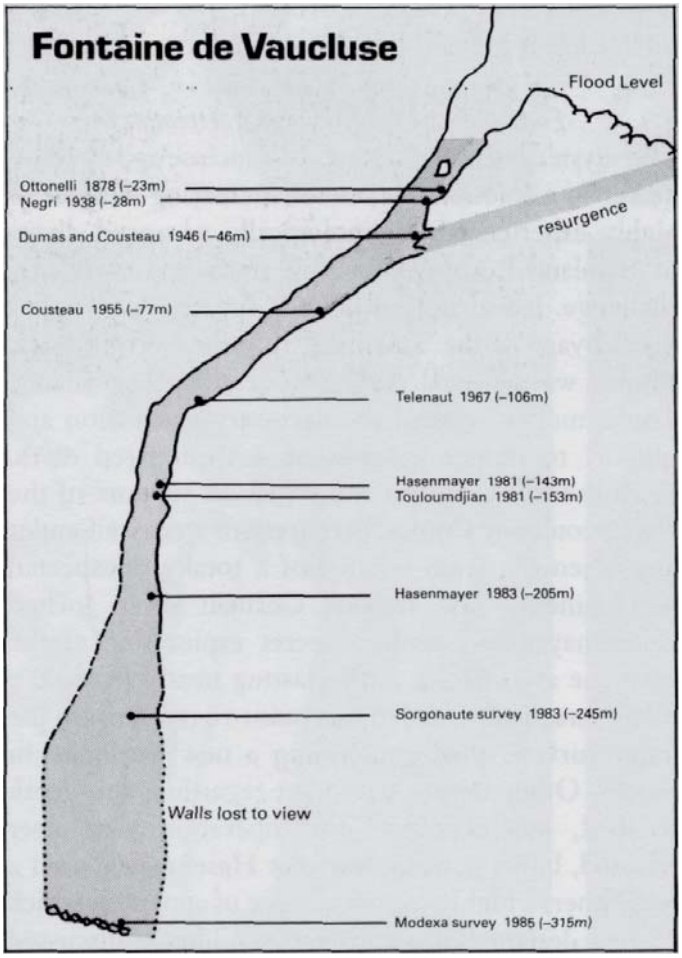


Figure 1. *Diagram of Fontaine de Vaulcuse (Farr 1991)*

Kathy and I rented a gite for two weeks near Courchevel in the Three Valleys ski resort area. Here we went walking everyday amongst the spectacular scenery of the Vanoise massif. One of the most interesting walks was up the Dent du Villard. This peak is in the middle of the valley area and thus offers great 360° views. Most surprising though was the fact that the summit ridge was interesting doline karst. Most dolines were plugged with snow or blocked with frost shatter (see Photo 8). Again we saw no caves. No doubt the locals know where the caves are.

Photo 7. *Le Monde Souterrain (The Underground World), Fontaine de Vaucluse, France*

Photo 8. *Karst on the summit of Dent du Villard, France*

Our next port of call was Switzerland, whose mountains are even more spectacular and also riddled with caves. One particularly pretty little town is Meiringen. Just east of the famous resort town of Interlaken. Meiringen is famous as the place where Sherlock Holmes and his arch-enemy Moriarty met their respective ends but the most intriguing attraction is the nearby Aareschlucht gorge. This is a very narrow limestone chasm through the chain of the alps, formed by modification of the landscape during glacial retreat. A walkway enables tourist visitation without having to resort to the via ferrata installed during the world wars, should Switzerland have needed them (see Photo 9).

In North-eastern Switzerland we accompanied our friend Thomas Sutter on a spectacular walk through amazing karst in the Appenzeler. Unfortunately our walk was marred by rain that, as we ascended, became snow so deep we had to abort our mission to climb Mt Santis. One day we will return to complete this walk and possibly to undertake some of the more exciting ridge traverses and climbs.

The climax of our trip was climbing Mt Ararat (5137 m) in Turkey. Mt Ararat is a spectacular volcanic cone that rises almost 4 km out of the surrounding landscape. For all but the

last century, when western civilisation finally discovered Mt Everest, Ararat was thought to be the world's highest mountain. It's not surprising that if you were going to write a compelling story of death, destruction and recreation, that you would choose such a site for the climax. Ararat seemed a worthy inclusion on the bucket list!

Ticking it off proved to be climactic in more than one sense of the word. It had snowed a few days before our climb and when the weather cleared, the wind picked up. Nevertheless we managed to get to the top despite being strafed continuously by sago snow that really hurt even through hoods and beanies. We spent all of five minutes on the summit, before beating a hasty retreat.

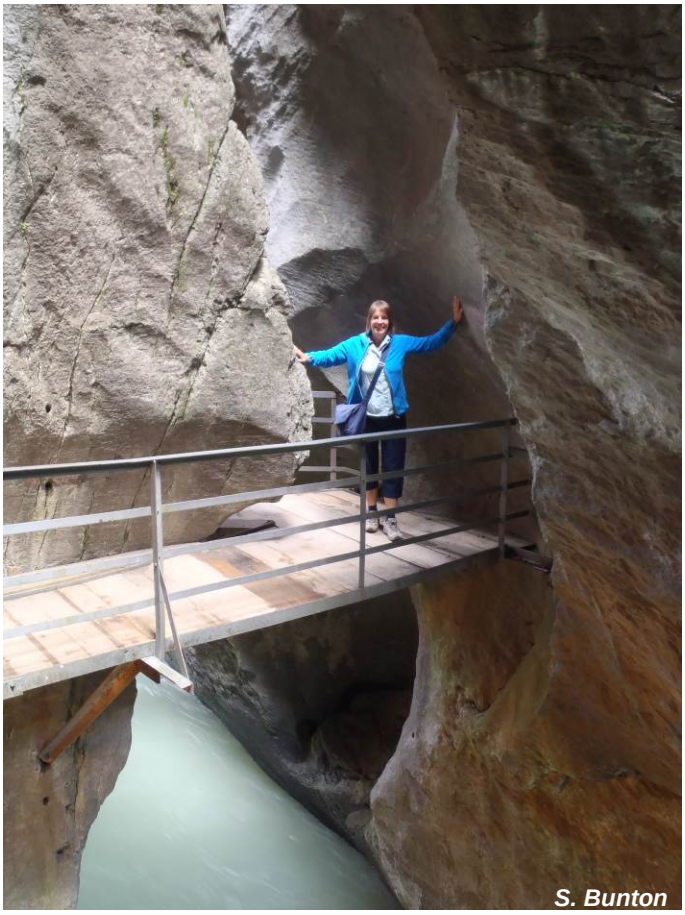


Photo 9. *Aareschlucht, Switzerland*

After this we travelled around Turkey as backpackers. Our first port of call was Goreme, in the region of Cappadocia, famous for its troglobitic population. These days there are lots of cave hotels, which are a bit of a gimmick but in the past it was to escape the heat of summer. The landscape here is volcanic ash that is easy enough to carve out; even easier these days with modern power tools. The most exciting way to see the extent of this subterranean city is, ironically, from the air in a hot-air balloon (see Photo 10). Yes, this is another gimmick and we succumbed to both. The best walk in the local area is the euphemistically named Love Valley (see Photo 11).

From Goreme you can visit the World Heritage listed underground city at Derikuyu. Here thousands (up to 20,000!) early Christians lived underground, to escape persecution as the militant early Muslims went on their own "one God, our way..." evangelical mission. The city of Derinkuyu is dug out of the soft rock to a depth of 55 m and has 17 levels! These are inspirational achievements albeit somewhat claustrophobic to explore, despite the ventilation shafts and escape tunnels, one of which extends 8 km to the neighbouring town of Kaymakli. These cities contained churches, grain and wine stores and could even house animals. The inhabitants got their water from wells at the bottom of the ventilation shafts and using clay pots, could keep their shit together for months on end.

Photo 10. *Ballooning over Cappadocia, Turkey*

Photo 11. *The Love Valley, Goreme, Turkey*

Another must see attraction in Turkey is Pamukkale, a huge tufa deposit. It's possibly not the biggest expanse of brilliant white flowstone on the surface of the planet but it is certainly the most well known outside the USA. (Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park is larger but it is a mix of white, yellow and orange.) When Kathy visited Pamukkale in 1989 tourists were allowed to walk all over the place. More recently, in order to protect the site, visitors have been restricted to a set path that rises from the town to the ancient Roman city of Heirapolis that sits atop this phenomenon with a commanding view (see Photo 12). Hierapolis was built to take advantage of the natural mineral water springs that deposit the travertine and the ancient Roman baths are still in operation, albeit they are wrapped in a modern façade. This infrastructure is designed to cope with the huge numbers of visitors daily. We did not partake of the bathing experience. The health benefits of the carbonate waters are probably outweighed by the chances of contracting some disease from the thousands of obese Germans!

The popularity of this attraction is so great that there is a new modern resort built in the amphitheatre at the bottom of the flowstone mountain. Unfortunately in order to fill the resort's swimming pool water is harvested from all over the site using a drain at the edge of the tourist road up the tufas (see Photo 13).

This has meant that large expanses are now without water and are therefore drying out and dying. Another brilliant place being loved to death and mismanaged during its demise!

A lot of Turkey's most spectacular karst rocks have been quarried by the Anatolians, Greeks and Romans and turned into temples that are in a remarkable state of preservation thanks mostly to UNESCO World Heritage funding. Ephesus is the best preserved of the ancient cities and well worth a visit.

Photo 12. *Pumakkale, Turkey*

Photo 13. *Pumakkale, Turkey*

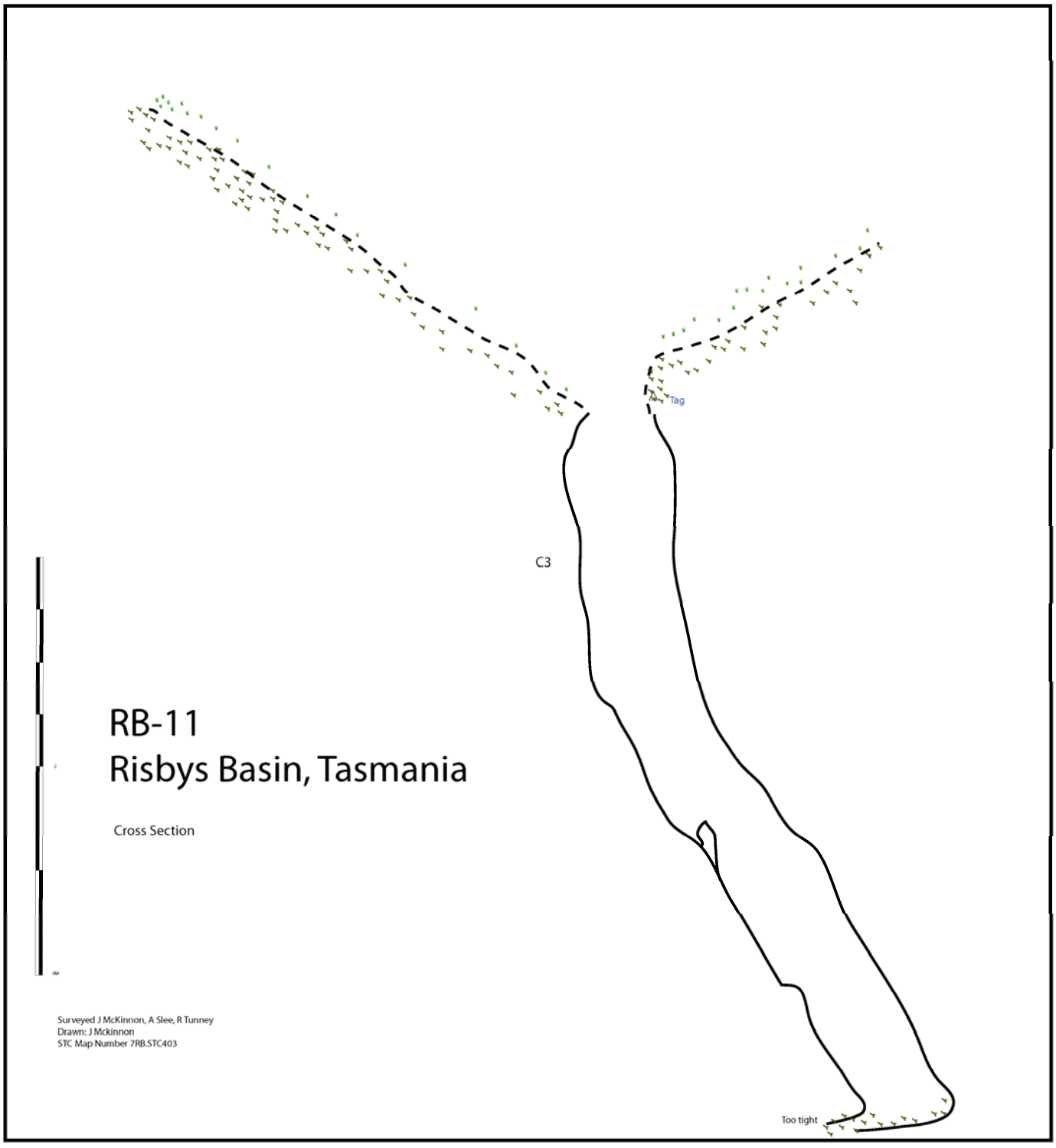
The last port of call, literally, was Antalya where we enjoyed a boat cruise out to an island that you could swim to. Inside the island were two caves that would have been resurgences when this block of limestone was still attached to the mainland and the catchment was much larger (see Photo 14). So we did finally get underground albeit without trog gear. On the way home the boat stopped at a waterfall that emanated from a spring at the top of a cliff near the city docks. As the boat nosed (bowed doesn't seem the appropriate term!) in under the waterfall, one of the crew performed the party trick of showering beneath it, mostly to wash off all the grease and crap from the anchor chain. They have different OH&S and expectations here. There is no way I'd bathe under a resurgence that drains from below a city of 1.7 million people but that's why you travel to see what other people do with their lives. No I don't. I just go for the scenery and a bit of exercise.

Photo 14. *Pirates Island, Antalya, Turkey*

References

FARR, M. 1991 *The Darkness Beckons.* Diadem, London, pp. 28-30 and p.174.

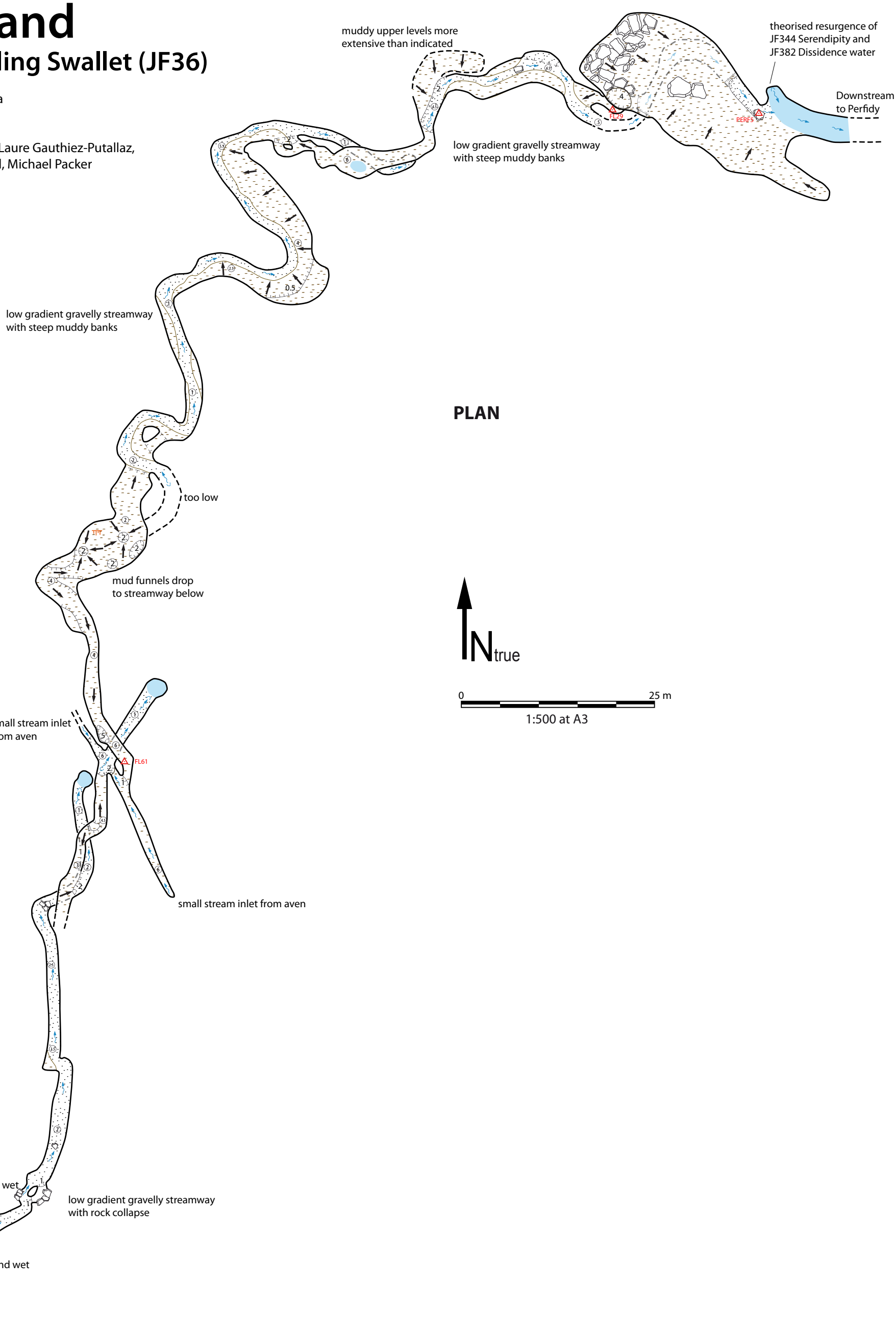
(There is a second edition of this publication that might be in the club library?) [– Sorry, it's not _– Sub-Ed/Librarian]


Tag
C3
RB-11
Risbys Basin, Tasmania
Cross Section
Surveyed J McKinnon, A Slee, R Tunney
Drawn: J Mckinnon
STC Map Number 7RB.STC403
Too tight

Frownland

Part of Growling Swallet (JF36)

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania
7JF36.STC402
Grade 54
Surveyed by Mark Euston, Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz, Alan Jackson, Phil Maynard, Michael Packer
(09-12-2012 & 21-02-2015)
Length 353 m



PLAN

N true

0 25 m

1:500 at A3