



SPELEO SPIEL 417

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2016

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Front Cover: Cephalopd Stream in flood. IB-10 Mystery Creek Cave.
Photo by Lynette Graham

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

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Editorial

Some of you may be aware of the fact that I retired earlier this year and as a consequence of this I have been able to dedicate a fair bit of time to editing the *Spiel*. I hope I have maintained the high standards of both production and content. The content is however, very much dependent upon the contributions of you, the keen active cavers in our club. Make sure you go on good trips, write them up, take photos and send them to me. We have got over the winter lull and now the level of activity should increase.

My retirement plans don't really involve much in the way of active caving, nor editing the *Spiel*. Doing the editing has been a bit of a stepping stone, a chance to up-skill. I am an old dog and these computer things are new tricks! Nevertheless I am keen to learn because next year I am going to study Architecture at UTas. Unfortunately it is only offered in Launceston, so that involves a weekly commute and hence a big time commitment. The point of this early warning is that somebody needs to think about making a commitment to editing the *Spiel* next year.

Stephen Bunton

Stuff 'n Stuff

70TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Congratulations to Philip Jackson for organizing the STC Dinner to commemorate this important milestone. We used to have annual dinners but when the number of cavers dwindled to a handful the practice ceased and an end of year BBQ was about the best we could manage. Amalgamating the three southern caving clubs increased the size of the caving fraternity and consequently caving activity also increased. It is important to note that it is also 20 years since this amalgamation, another important milestone that was noted during the celebration.



(L-R) A relaxed Yoav BarNess, Peter Cover and Jeff Watson. Stephen Bunton.

The event was held at Derwent Sailing Squadron Saturday 15 October.

I'm just amazed that Jacko remembered or noticed that such an auspicious occasion was looming and that he was pro-active in making this event happen.

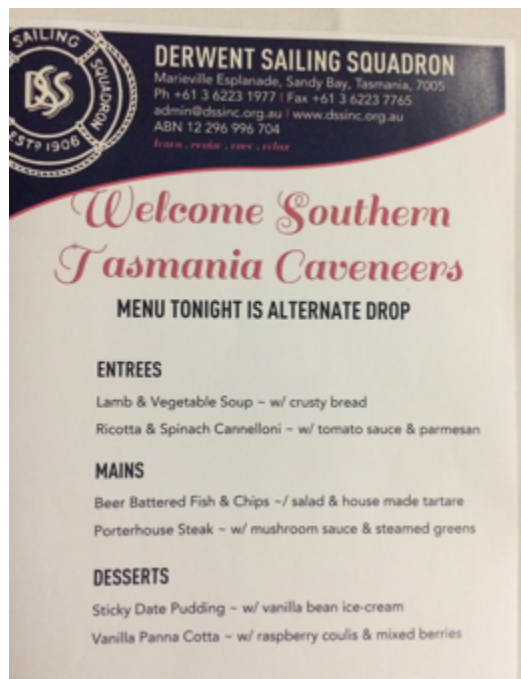
FAREWELL SARAH GILBERT

It is with great sadness that we farewell former President and much loved caving club member Sarah Gilbert. My own opinion is that Sarah was one of the most competent presidents in the club's history. Her always smiling, no fuss, never get flustered style was most refreshing and revered. Sarah is the only female to have served as president of STC.

Sarah has worked in the Geology Dept at UTas for a number of years. Her ground-breaking research into new analytical methods was of such significance that she was able to incorporate it into a Ph.D. Now Sarah feels the need to broaden her horizons academically and literally. She is moving to Adelaide, capital of Australia's flattest state. There are caves there but, as we know nothing in the same league as we have here in Tasmania. Nevertheless we wish her all the best in her future endeavours.



Sarah smiling in the face of adversity whilst competing in the Speleosports at Chillagoe 2011. Stephen Bunton.



They don't really know who we are or how to spell our name but the food was good. Stephen Bunton.

JF237 Niggly Cave – Lake Niggly

Stephen Fordyce

23 July 2016

Party: Andreas Klocker, Stephen Fordyce, Dave Bardi, Sandy Varin, Gilly Elor, Petr "The Machine" Smejkal, Serena Benjamin

On Saturday 16th July, many of the usual suspects headed to Niggly Cave to squeeze, climb and abseil down 375 vertical metres and a good number of horizontal ones to the bottom of the deepest caves in Australia, with a variety of objectives including checking out dive potential in a sump at the bottom. Yeah, that will be a fun exercise!

Sadly Petr got nearly to the bottom of the 190m "Black Supergiant" pitch and found himself just above "Lake Niggly" rather than the expected rockpile. This put our sump approx. 20m underwater! After a lot of yelling and echoes, this news was conveyed to the other team, about to descend the final 103m "Xenophobia" pitch on the alternative route. While the rest of the team started heading out and Petr bounced his way back up the BSG I dropped down Xenophobia to get some GoPro footage of the water.

Sadly, the rope ended 15m above the floor and I had some tantalising glimpses before changing over and starting the grind back up 250 m of rope to the surface. I ran into Gilly on the way up and we spent a little bit of time admiring the pretties on the way out before emerging into the twilight.

JF237 Niggly Cave

Stephen Fordyce

6 August 2016

Party: Andreas Klocker, Stephen Fordyce, Dave Bardi, Sandy Varin, Serena Benjamin

On Saturday of our weekend trip, Andreas, Sandy, Dave, Serena and I headed back into Niggly and thanks to our discovery of a new sump, it has a very good chance of connecting to Growling Swallet and becoming even deeper.

Reprising our trip of a few weeks back, we made better time through the squeezezy top-level Tigertooth Passage and the 250 m of glorious abseiling. This time we were armed with more rope and the knowledge that the weather had been good the past few days so the flood should have subsided. After some considered faffing, we finished the rigging and arrived in the chamber at the bottom of the Black Supergiant pitch, via the alternative "easy" route.

We ditched our SRT gear and made a beeline for the gigantic Mount Niggly chamber, which proved to be as ridiculously huge as described. It is big enough to dwarf the 50m high Mt Niggly rockpile and the upstream (NW end) of the cave. After a bit more giant passage we hit the breakdown at the end of the cave, where on the basis of a trip report from a quick visit in the 1990s we planned to hunt for the stream. This would be our best chance of connecting into the 500 m of dive line we laid in Growling Swallet a few years ago. (For a run-down on the Growling Swallet project, check out a rather lengthy article about it here: <http://cavesaustralia.com/2015/growling-swallet-the-niggly-connection-project/>)

Hopes were low as the report and follow up communications indicated a small stream coming out of impenetrable rockpile. The end of the cave choked out into some low mud-covered squeezes that were not promising but slightly further back there was enough space in the rockpile to follow some leads further down. We enthusiastically checked and double-

checked various uninspiring muddy holes. On double-checking one particular dead end we could faintly hear running water, which gave our flagging motivation a real kick in the pants.



Entering the new streamway. Stephen Fordyce

Shortly afterwards, the five of us crawled then stooped, then walked along a properly intact major streamway passage with quickly building hopes making scathing but good-humoured comments about the previous explorers. After about 50 m progress in the right direction, the passage ended in a rather nice looking sump (as far as they go in the JF), with probably about only 150-200 m to the furthest point of penetration in the Dreamtime Sump in Growling Swallet. When the survey data from a subsequent trip was plotted, the situation does not appear that simple!

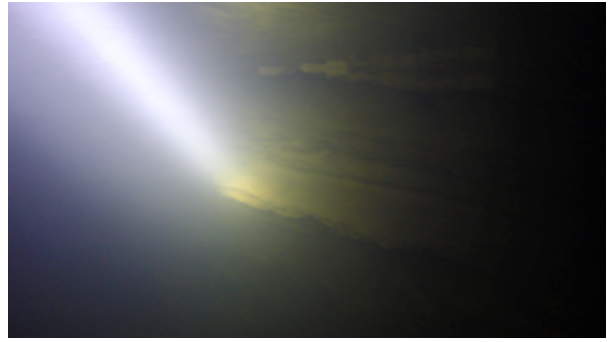


The new streamway passage. Stephen Fordyce.



The new sump. Stephen Fordyce.

Excited, and (for once) devastated that we didn't have survey gear, we made a detour to the downstream section to install a handline and then started the long climb out of the cave. Emerging at 10:30pm, we had the 80 minute night-time bushbash back to the car and the 1.5hr drive back to Hobart to think about just how hard it was going to be to dive this bloody sump! We didn't really agree on the name and I think my suggestion of "Walking Frame Sump" (because we would all need walking frames after hauling dive gear there and back) was vetoed, but that'll do for a temporary name.



Underwater view of the new sump shows it is diveable. Stephen Fordyce.

Subsequent trips have already been made to complete a survey and these have established that the streamway is more likely to be water from Porcupine Pot than Growling Swallet - although it's still 2.6 km away to Porcupine! A rather epic dive trip is planned soon.

The photos are grabs from my GoPro, using light from my ElkLight MkV and everyone else's helmet lights.

JF459 Nameless Spring

Stephen Fordyce

7 August 2016

Party: Andreas Klocker, Stephen Fordyce, Dave Bardi, Sandy Varin

After filling out assorted paperwork and getting a copy of the STC archive (thanks for your help Ric!), I've been faffing about in it a bit making some Google Earth overlays and waypoints that include the journal references. These are currently in draft form. One interesting thing I discovered was the "Karst Features & Hydrology of the Settlement Block, Florentine Valley: Explanatory Report and Data Dictionary" report, by Chris Sharples, 2009 (commissioned by Norske Skog, not for reproduction/publishing without permission).

This report detailed, well, pretty much what the title says - the Settlement Block is a chunk of limestone which appears to be rarely visited and perhaps because it does not contain caves as deep or epic as the other JF areas, it not as popular. Anyway, mention of a spring as the main resurgence of the area was very exciting as a diver and it sounded like quite a good dive prospect - especially given it's not too far away from Tigers Eye (although different limestone). JF459 is tagged but referred to as SF-162 in the report. It quite easy to find with GPS and is even a pleasantly short walk from the nearest car access.

The hardest bit was getting everyone up and motivated after the Niggly sump discovery (and subsequent 3am bedtime), but once bundled into the car sleep was forgotten (or gone back to). It turned out the drive was about 45min past the Niggly parking spot and we knew we wouldn't have long, with a plane to catch back to Melbourne that evening. As far as I can tell from

archive stuff, it hasn't been dived before, but it sure looked like a great prospect when we found it. There was a main pool of decent size and obvious flow coming out of a cleft in the rocks. There were a few holes nearby which led into the streamway upstream - and showed it to be tight but passable with dive gear. Downstream, the water went through a series of pools joined by tunnels, before flowing into the Florentine River about 100m away. It was interesting to see the milky white water from the spring flowing into the tannin-stained water of the river.



Water emerging for the nameless spring. Stephen Fordyce.



The mixing of the two waters. Stephen Fordyce.

Hopefully the milky water is just a result of recent rains and a wet winter in general. It was certainly pretty cold and no-one could be convinced to go for a swim to check it out. We will return and insert one of the crew with small tanks and some kind of exposure protection to see if it goes!

Upper Florentine - Little Florentine River region.

JF333 Nanwoon, JF334, JF335 Midges, JF336 Handline Slot, JF654 Bookend Cave, JF655 Weak Link Cave, JF657 Crypt Cave, JF658 Cracker Cave

Philip Jackson

21 August 2016

Party: Russell Fulton, Sarah Gilbert, Philip Jackson, Greg Jordan, Chris Sharples and John Webb.

This was the first trip to this area after our recce on 19 June so we had a plan of sorts. This plan was to survey JF654 Bookend Cave, locate and explore the nearer Cave Search caves.

We headed off to the Little Florentine River, which was about 50 cm higher than on the previous trip but was still easy enough to cross. From here we went another five hundred metres or so along the track to an old sawn log where we left the track and headed WNW towards the plateau, crossing a small stream after about 250 m.



Crossing the Little Florentine River. Sarah Gilbert

While we were beating about the bush following GPS arrows Greg decided to follow his instincts along a string of dolines and found himself a cave. This cave's position did not correspond to anything on the Cave Search list so this was another new one. This cave was given the number JF657.

Sarah described the cave as: "The entrance is at the base of a cliff on the edge of a small doline sloping down to a 10m wide chamber with some flowstone in one corner. A small duck-under leads to a second chamber with extensive flowstone floors and white moonmilk walls and stalactites. At the rear of the chamber there are two crawls following the bedding plane (dipping 40 degrees west). One crawl sloped upwards with a muddy floor and extensive roots. The other lower climb with very loose rubble floor and a large mobile tombstone slab poised above a slot into a

(Janine McKinnon and Ric Tunney recently explored this see SS:413 14 and there is a map on page 18. What's the point of producing a Spiel that is up to date if even the most active members don't read it! Ed.)

small lower chamber – probably choked but unexplored."



Crypt Cave. Sarah Gilbert

The name decided on for this cave Crypt Cave, which pays homage to the tombstone slab in the lower crawl. While Sarah, Chris and John surveyed this cave Russell, Greg and I went 50 m northeast to survey JF654 Bookend Cave and JF655 Weak Link Cave. The survey shows that the high point of Bookend Cave is only four metres from the JF655 tag.

With surveying and lunch done Chris, John and Sarah did a tour of JF333, 334 and 335 while Russell and Greg rummaged about in JF336. I checked out the small stream that runs parallel to the Little Florentine River. This stream meanders in and out of the talus at the base of the scarp but has no acceptable entrances. The water was clear, unlike the murky water of the Florentine and Little Florentine Rivers.

With any more corporate memorising of this small area liable to compromise its wilderness value it was time to decide to move on. The next part of the adventure was to investigate CS5, 6 and 7, which were about 400 metres SW of our present position. Some Englishmen may disagree but the bush is quite easy going through some fairly massive old myrtles and eucalypts.

At the coordinates for CS7 we found a large double doline approximately 12 by 6 m and about 5 m deep. The northern part of the doline had nothing while on the western side of the southern half there was a small cliff about halfway up with a fine slippery-slide style entrance at its base.

Chris provided the following description: "This cave comprises a series of steep slippery but spacious passages which zig-zag up and down along an inclined limestone bedding plane. There are sump pools at the lowest points in the passages and several spaces cross-connecting between the bottoms of the passage zig-zags (see cave survey when surveyed!). Total passage length is probably of the order of 60 – 80 m, and the limestone is notable for an unusually high density of

soft bituminous layers weathered proud of the more soluble limestone matrix.”

While I fixed the JF658 number tag on the face above the entrance the rest of the gang disappeared down the entrance and out of sight. Chris emerged to describe it as a cracker of a cave. By misunderstanding sometime long after the trip this cave was given the name Cracker Cave.

With CS7 tagged and bagged it was a short 40-50 m trek south to CS5 and CS6. These caves were both in enticing vertical slots in an area with a lot of limestone outcrops and stacks. Both slots were approximately 3-4 m wide, 8-10 m long and similar in depth. These slots were parallel and ran towards the Cracker Cave doline.

Greg and John scrambled down for an evaluation. One slot (probably CS6) had a choked hole half way down on the Cracker Cave end and was choked at the base.

The other, CS5 had a pool under cliff on the eastern side. This cave would be worth another investigation in drier times.

With eight caves visited and the sun low in the sky it was now time to scarp back to the cars and home, bringing to an end a bonzer day in the bush.

In summary we tagged and surveyed one previously unrecorded cave, JF657 Crypt Cave, surveyed another previously tagged cave, JF654 Bookend Cave, investigated CS5, 6 and 7, and visited JF333 (CS25), 334, 335 and 336 (CS22 and 23).

JF387 Porcupine Pot

Serena Benjamin

20 or 27 August 2016

Party: Serena Benjamin, Andreas Klocker

According to Wikipedia “porcupines are mammals with a coat of sharp spines, or quills, that protect against predators. They are large, terrestrial, and strictly nocturnal and occur in various shades of brown, gray and white”. Deep down in Porcupine Pot in some of the old, dry side passages are some of the best displays of aragonite clusters I have ever seen. Was the cave named for this spectacular display, somewhat reminiscent of a Porcupine’s quills?

No.

I’ve since checked with Rolan and apparently the cave was named for being a scratchy prickly horror. My ability to repress memories is obviously going well as I don’t recall it being that bad.

It is also wet. Very wet!

A previous attempt to get to the cave had rapidly been altered to a track maintenance day. The amount of water everywhere, combined with Andreas’ tale of his last trip through the wet crawl with the mainlanders that involved lots of water and a lot less airspace, dissuaded us. Andreas wanted to check out the upstream sump for its dive potential. Having not been further into the cave than the entrance doline I was keen for a recce. Sadly, Petr and Pax couldn’t join us for a second attempt so on a chilly Saturday morning, following a much needed caffeine hit, Andreas and I went to have a look.

The pitch heads were narrow but didn’t seem as awkward as I’d been led to believe. The wet crawl proved as committing as described and I was glad I’d worn my wet suit. At the rock pile where Andreas and crew had turned back last time we climbed up to search for the way on. It opened up into a chamber and it was here that we found a heap of formation. Frustratingly we couldn’t find a way back to the stream so eventually we went back to the start of the rock pile. Andreas poked his nose into some leads at water level and after a bit of splashing called out that he had found a squeeze that he wanted me to check out.

Reluctantly I went back into the water. Oh joy! Squeezing up and over a boulder I found, not just the way on, but a rib on my right side that I ordinarily have no cause to think about. It must be the way you go over it as Andreas found the same thing. An annoying amount of stooping through stream passage later and we were at the sump. According to Andreas it has potential but is not highest on his priority list. More problematic for a dive is keeping the sherpas happy when they are completely soaked. I’d just found out, pausing for more than a minute chills you down fast.

After a brief pause at the sump we did an about face and headed out. I lead the way up the pitches and Andreas tidied things up behind. Tight, awkward pitch heads may seem easy on the way down but they proved to be a bit more entertaining on the way up. While the pitches were mostly OK and no swearing was required, there was one about which I had a few doubts.. After I eventually succeeded, Andreas joined me and I suggested some improvements. The test will be on the next trip.

DW4-5 Spectacle Head Sea Cave revisited

Greg Middleton

2 October 2016

Party: Philip Jackson, Ros Skinner, Greg Middleton

Back in the dim dark days of his youth, Philip, aka Jacko, explored – and surveyed! – a surprisingly

extensive sea cave on Spectacle Head, Dodges Ferry, all recorded in Jackson (1981). Being interested to see this cave, Ros Skinner and I set out on 1 September to find it. We scrambled all over the headland and even tried to traverse around at sea level from the east (Carlton Beach) and from the north (Red Ochre Beach). We were not successful.

When I complained to Jacko that we had not been able to locate the cave using his report, he offered to take us

there. We did this on the afternoon of 2 October, the tide being reasonably favourable. We followed the informal path out to the end of the point and scrambled down in the only place this appears to be possible, as I had done on our previous visit.



Photo 1. Jacko checks out Spectacle High Arch.
All photos by Greg Middleton

In the process we passed a thin high dolerite arch that I have called Spectacle High Arch (Photo 1). As the top of this arch is comprised of decomposing thin slabs of dolerite, it may not be in place very much longer.

Having reached the bottom, a metre or so above the sea, we turned west and proceeded through the arch and scrambled around to a gulch – or was it a geo, or perhaps a zawn? According to a dictionary, a gulch is “a narrow and steep-sided ravine marking the course of a fast stream.” A geo is “a long, narrow, steep-sided cleft formed by erosion in coastal cliffs”; hmm, sounds a bit more specific and relevant. A zawn, according to Wiktionary is “a deep and narrow sea-inlet in the British Isles, especially Cornwall and the south-west, cut by erosion into sea-cliffs, and with steep or vertical side-walls.” How appropriate is it to transfer such a term to the other side of the world? (*We use the word swallet. Ed.*)

Anyway, at the back of the gulch/geo/zawn there is a small indentation, which Jacko set out to explore (Photo 2). When I asked Jacko what had happened to the 80 cm deep pool he showed at the entrance on his map he suggested it might have been filled by wave-washed rubble. Soon Jacko realized this was not The cave and he disappeared through a narrow slot. As this is roofed I think it could be called Spectacle Low Arch

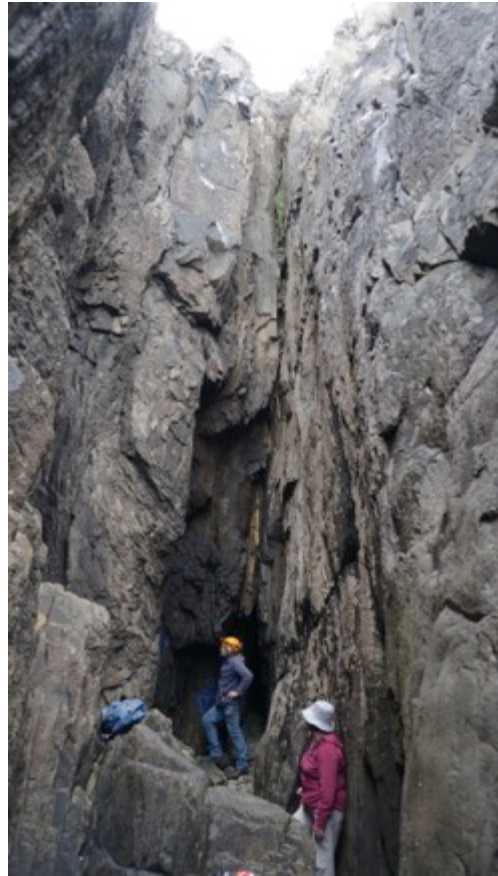


Photo 2. Jacko trying to look as though he's in The Cave; Ros looks on, less than convinced.

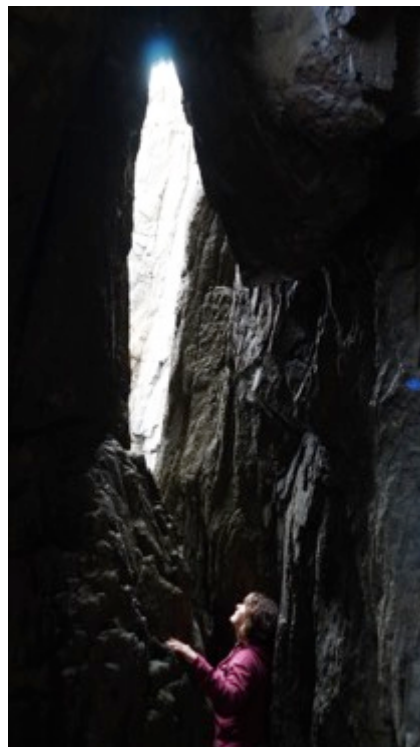


Photo 3. Ros admires Spectacle Low Arch, wondering if she's going to be able to get through.

(Photo 3). Slipping through it and scrambling around a bit further we found Jacko proudly announcing the real Spectacle Head Sea Cave (Photo 4) with a pool at its entrance just as his map showed (well, it was 36 years ago!). He even went further in to demonstrate this was

more than just a zawn (Photo 5). As Ros and I weren't feeling like braving the swells we decided to call it a day at this point, having been satisfied that the cave exists. We really should go back when the weather is a bit warmer and get some pictures inside – and maybe survey in the Low Arch, which is almost part of the cave.



Photo 4 opposite. Jacko at the pool at the cave entrance.

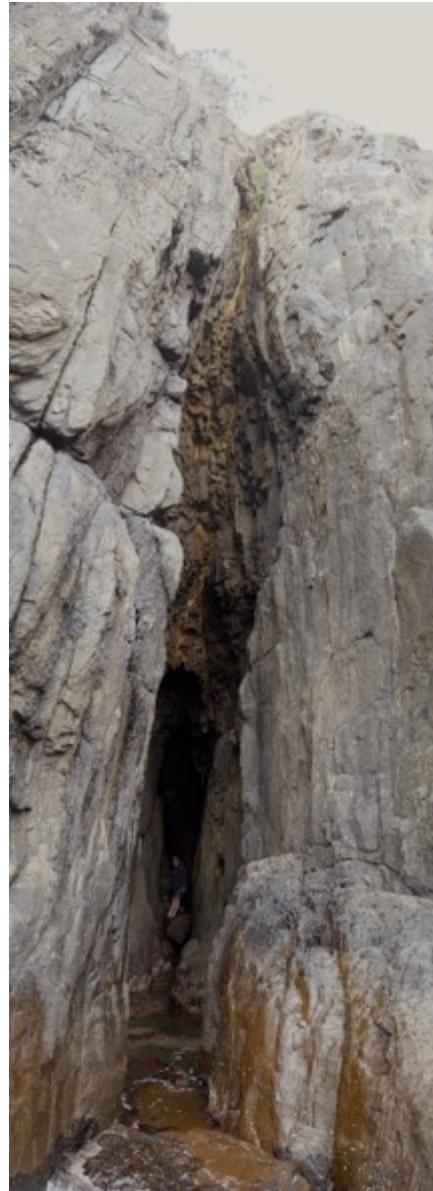


Photo 5. Jacko in the right branch.

Thanks to Jacko for guiding us to this sea cave.

REFERENCE

JACKSON, Philip 1981 Dolerite sea cave at Dodges Ferry. *Southern Caver*, 12(3): 48-49.

Little Florentine River

Tony Culberg

15th October 2016

Party: Tony Culberg, Peter and Barbara Meyer, Grady and Mary Koolhof, Norman Poulter, Heath Jackson and 3 UTas students, Feifei Wang, Yingyao Cheng from China and Hawa Abdul Latif from Africa.

The main purpose of this day out was to tidy up the existing track to the Little Florentine River, to facilitate access to the new area currently being prospected. It was not an advertised STC trip – in fact no STC members attended.

We met at Maydena at 9.00 am and, after a toilet break, headed for 5 Road, with the newly acquired key to the gate. It took nearly an hour to get to the gate as there were a good number of trees impinging on clear travel. We parked all four vehicles neatly – all pointing out for a quick getaway – and proceeded to Churchill Hut and along the old \$WD track to Adamsfield. Peter Meyer was intrigued that the GPS on his iPad kept changing its mind about whether we were on a road it knew about. It was happy once we started along the Adamsfield track.

At about 12 we returned to the cars for lunch – that took only 20 minutes walk – and then at 1.00 pm

returned to the scrub. By about 2.30 pm we had reached the Little Florentine River.



The group at Churchills Hut. Mary Koolhof.

The

Three UTas students, one Civil Engineering, one Education and one TBA, had not been out into Australian bush before and were, I think, stunned. While this area does not have the really magnificent tall trees of the walk to Growling Swallet, it does have its own grandeur.

The walk back from the Little Florentine River took just on 32 minutes for me, others were a little faster or slower.

(Background on the participants. Peter Meyer is Treasurer of The Royal Society of Tasmania, Mary Koolhof is Publicity Officer for the RST. Both were involved with the RST talk by Alan Jackson and the trip to Growling Swallet early in 2016. Heath Jackson is a client of my practice who gets roped in to doing things for me. John Webb reckons Heath is one “of the finest bushmen I have seen in a long time”. Norman Poulter OAM, was a member of STC. The three UTas students were brought along by Peter and Barbara Meyer, who are ‘mentoring’ them.)

JF4 Khazad-Dum

– Where there’s a drill there’s a way

Alan Jackson

20 October 2016

Party: Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Geoff Wise

Public holidays are a blessing. Getting paid while going caving puts a spring in one’s step.

Terms and conditions clearly stated that if you didn’t have your own drill then you couldn’t attend, so the three of us headed in appropriately armed. The cave had been derigged on the previous trip so there was a bit of faffing while I fiddled with concrete screws and ropes. Water levels were definitely in the exciting range with incessant drizzle in most parts of the cave, gale force winds at the bottom of pitches and frequent bucket-loads of snowmelt surging into your face on the maelstrom that is pitch 2.

We safely negotiated our way to the last ‘Wet Way’ pitch (Animal – pitch 5) and I re-rigged it (with a rope that proved to be about two metres short). Janine then did a tourist of the pitch to enjoy its aesthetic fabulousness and check the rope was out of the water even during the rather hectic water levels. She was then in charge of preparing three 12 mm holes for the two rebelay on her way back up while Geoff and I did the same at the pitch head. We made three holes then relocated to the relative safety of the side passage at the bottom of pitch 3 (it was a bit wild at the bottom of this pitch). Geoff then started up pitch three, pre-drilling

new bolt holes with an 8 mm drill bit, while I made 12 mm holes in the middle of the tornado at the top of the small pitch 4 (this drop, which is a relatively easy climb/scramble in low water levels, was a seething mass of white water and probably the most exciting part of the trip).

We all came together again at the top of pitch 3 and learned that Janine had only done two of her three allotted holes before experiencing technical difficulties. We resolved those difficulties then set about sorting out the new rigging for pitch 3 and its traverse approach. We lost big drill power before completing the last of the traverse holes and made our escape. Pitch 2 proved to be moderately damp in sections and some rethinking of the rigging in a couple of spots will be required. At pitch 1 we upsized the existing 6 mm holes to 8 mm holes then departed (via the Serpentine Route to avoid drowning).

It was a surprisingly productive trip with regard to holes drilled; I thought we’d run out of batteries much sooner but the rebirthing Pax has done on my drill seems to have given it a new lease on life. The water levels not only made for high levels of excitement but also provided a benchmark for the rigging. We were all of the opinion that if we can get the rigging spot on for keeping out of the water at those water levels then that’s the best we can hope for. Any higher and you’d be swept off your feet in the spots between pitches. I can’t wait to have this route open to the masses.

IB10 Mystery Creek Cave

Stephen Bunton

2 November 2016

Party: Stephen Bunton and Lynette Graham

Lynette is the wife of George the groundsman at Friends' and I just happened to meet them at the Mt Field Centenary Open Day. Lynette was one of those unsuspecting types who were blissfully unaware of what caving really involved but thought she might like to try it anyway. George and Lynette have been walking and exploring in all sorts of places, so with their interest pricked they thought they'd investigate the Florentine and see if they could find a few caves for themselves. They bumped into some STC members who bluntly told them that you have to be really hardcore to go caving, it would not suit them and they wouldn't like it. Not good PR for the club! So, feeling some collective guilt, I took Lynette through Mystery Creek Cave.



Lynette at the cave entrance. Lynette Graham collection.

This was a rather uneventful round trip to Matchbox Squeeze and back. The creek was in spate so I was cautious about the creek crossings inside the cave. The stream was flowing wall to wall down to the Shipwreck Chamber. Lynette was understandably nervous so I didn't mention the Taroom High School disaster until we were out of the cave. Lynette is my age and she had forgotten all about the incident after all it was over a quarter of a century ago. I think that's a good thing that very few people in the community now know about the tragedy and that caving can reclaim its reputation as a smart, sensible, enjoyable and legitimate underground activity.



Some cave scenery. Lynette Graham.

Thanks to Alan and Geoff who lent us their Scurions for the midweek trip. Lynette is a keen photographer but was worried about taking her camera, tripod, flash and sundry other crap into the cave and having it survive. In the end she just took her camera and made do with the light of the Scurion. I was impressed with some of the results.

JF237 Niggly Cave

– Sumpthing Went Wrong

Alan Jackson

5 November 2016

Party: Ben Armstrong, David Bardi, Alex Burton-Johnson (random Pom), Stephen Fordyce, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, David Rueda-Roca, Petr Smejkal, Sandy Varin.

The plan was to overwhelm Niggly by numbers and poke Sandy in the new drowning hole. We failed.

We almost didn't manage to get out of the cars due to torrential rain but eventually Sandy's nervous energy needed diluting so we performed feats of contortion getting changed inside the cars and dragged our bedraggled arses up the never-ending hill. Tigertooth Passage with dive gear was about as enjoyable as we had anticipated. It was my first time down the new and improved (sic) rigging of the original route. I headed down the 85 m pitch first with Ben behind me. I then negotiated the following ~5 m pitch and started on the bolt traverse on the next pitch. I was just commencing my descent when I heard a blood-curdling scream accompanied by loud crashing sounds (of the falling rock variety). Thankfully, it was followed by swearing

and moaning which implied the obvious casualty was both alive and conscious. A bit of shouting back and forth indicated we had a situation that needed resolving so I headed back across the traverse and found Ben dangling a couple of metres off the ground on the redirect, a new pile of shattered rock on the floor and a large block of limestone attached to the rope (but not the wall) perched precariously on the ledge above Ben's head.

Petr and Steve had arrived at the pitch head by this stage. They inspected the double bolt back up and confirmed the anchor looked sound so I passed up the tail of the rope (which was thankfully long enough) to Ben, who passed it to Petr and this was tied into the back up anchor and then Ben transferred onto this rope and abseiled to the floor. Petr then removed the concrete screw from the hanging block and moved it to a lower energy state. Ben had copped a large rock to his left thigh and was in quite a bit of pain. He could hobble on it though and it was clear he hadn't fractured his femur (thank fuck for that) and there wasn't any blood oozing through his trogsuit. Wary of haematomas and other such scenarios I immediately decided that Ben was leaving the cave while he could still move. We waited for traffic to clear on the 85 then headed out. The others considered the situation (extra

bit slim so I'd taken a few chances and I miscalculated for this pitch. Dan found himself five metres off the floor with no more rope. He tied in an extra bit and got off then I then improvised with tapes and squeezed out enough rope to make it reach when loaded (and remain just in reach when unloaded).

The plan had been to leave the cave rigged for the impending cave rescue exercise but I needed the rope from the bottom pitch the next day and clearly pitch two couldn't be left like it was so only the ropes on pitches one and three were left behind. We sussed out rescue options on the way out and came to the conclusion it would be a tyrolean fest.

Back on the surface we wandered up to Tassy Pot and finally got round to placing a redirect bolt at the top of the first pitch to negate the horrible rub. Traditionally one just takes a big fat bit of 11 mm rope for the first bit but people are stupid and think all the world's problems have been solved by the p-hanger project and

that anything thicker than 9 mm is the devil. So I've idiot-proofed it.

The bolt hasn't been formally load tested yet, so use it at your own risk. The idea now is; start at the massive sassafras then pick a line down between the man ferns to the lip. A redirect high on the small tree here (musk?) or the last man fern will keep the rope up off the first rub quite nicely and then you can proceed down the rock chimney for a bit. The new bolt is out on the left wall, behind you as you're abseiling. A 1-1.5 m long redirect will keep you off the next rub point and land you conveniently beside the first rebelay. I went to great lengths to ensure I placed the bolt in a spot which Janine will struggle to reach.

We then chainsawed our way down the road to make it a bit more easily navigable for the plethora of cars which will visit in a fortnight.

JF4 Khazad-Dum

Alan Jackson

27 November 2016

Party: Alan Jackson, Dan Mitchell, Nat Naelstrom

Dan was over from Melbourne for the weekend so I figured I'd give him his money's worth. The rest of the family was away for the weekend so I had a full leave pass too, which helped.

Similarly to the previous day I had ulterior motives when choosing the venue. We started by popping in the Serpentine route to avoid getting unnecessarily wet on the first climb. Then we headed down the 4 m pitch, the 15 m pitch/climb (rigging it as a pitch) and the Dry 90'

pitch. We turned around at the top of the 9 m pitch, having no more rope.

On the way out we collected the drill from the top of the 4 m pitch and popped down Scaling Pole pitch to the streamway. I tasked the others with practising their knots and rigging by placing a dirty 11 mm rope option down the first little pitch on natural anchors while I over-drilled the existing 8 mm holes to 12 mm on that pitch. They then observed and practised knot tying while I drilled 12 mm holes on the start of the next pitch (getting another three done).

Then headed out the wet way (a bit sporty) and did some track maintenance on the walk out.

Plenty of birds killed with the one stone.

Other Interesting Stuff

Sea Caves

Stephen Bunton



**Kathy looking into a sea cave at Richmond Beach NSW.
Stephen Bunton**

Caves, caves everywhere and no need for a light. On a recent beach holiday to the big island Kathy and I went swimming, surfing, snorkeling and sunbaking but somehow the caves followed us again. Murramurrang

National Park NSW has several secluded beaches the headlands of which contain sea caves. One of these, Richmond Beach, marks the unconformity between the horizontally bedded Sydney Sandstone and the tilted phyllite "beds" beneath. It is these phyllite beds that contain the best sea caves.

The Olive Oil Saga

– Boy Rescued At Naracoorte

Now that I am no longer a school-teacher it is probably OK to make jokes about oiling up little schoolboys. This happened at Naracoorte recently where they had to rescue some unfortunate fellow who got stuck whilst on a school camp. Anyway that's the official version. In future I'm adding about a litre of extra virgin to my emergency kit, possibly some balsamic vinegar and this will go nicely with the clove of garlic that I always carry to keep the vampires at bay.

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/oct/21/olive-oil-to-the-rescue-after-adelaide-schoolboy-gets-trapped-in-cave-crevice?CMP=share_btn_link

Cave *Anaspides* research project 2017

Stefan Eberhard



Now, more than 120 years after its first discovery, the genus *Anaspides*, including numerous new cave dwelling species, is finally being thoroughly researched.

Dr Stefan Richter (University Rostock, Germany) and Dr Shane Ahyong (Australian Museum, Sydney) will be visiting Tasmania for one month during February-March 2017. They plan to collect specimens from numerous surface locations, and as many caves as possible. For the cave collections they will be very grateful for any assistance from local cavers.

This research is focusing on two themes: (1) Speciation and evolution of *Anaspides* in relation to Tasmanian glacial history; (2) Brain anatomy (including compound eyes) of cave *Anaspides* in comparison to surface forms.

In previous work, Shane Ahyong (2015) described three new species, *A. clarkei*, a cave form from various caves of southern Tasmania, *A. jarmani*, a surface form from southern Tasmania and *A. swaini*, from the Weld River area. Shane is currently publishing descriptions of more new cave and surface species, including a new species from Niggly Cave, *Anaspides eberhardi*. It appears that *Anaspides* may be undergoing active speciation in many parts of its range, with many more species present than currently known. Especially interesting is the expansion into caves and potential speciation events correlated with this subterranean immigration. This study of *Anaspides* will add very important data to understanding evolution in caves, especially in a southern hemisphere context.

If you are interested in helping with this exciting research project contact Stefan Eberhard (stefan@subterraneanecology.com.au) who will be liaising with Stefan Richter and Shane Ahyong during their visit in February / March 2017.

REFERENCE

AHYONG, S.T. 2015 Preliminary diagnoses of three new species of Tasmanian mountain shrimps, *Anaspides* Thomson, 1894 (Syncarida, Anaspidacea, Anaspididae). Zootaxa, 3957(5): 596-599

Sixteen Legs – More Cave Biology

The Film of the Sixteen Legs Project premiered in the USA in early October. The Australian Premier will be at the Australian Museum in December and after that it will be screened in Tasmania early in the New Year. The trailer can be viewed at:

<http://www.jeancocteaucinema.com/film/sixteen-legs/>

World's Deepest Cave Dive

A team of Polish explorers recently established the record for the world's deepest underwater cave. The flooded limestone sinkhole is at least 404 m deep beginning at a depth of 70 m below the surface. Known as the Hranicka Propast (Hranice Abyss) the cave is located in the Hurka u Hranic Nature Reserve in the Czech Republic.

The abyss was explored numerous times by Polish explorer Krzysztof Starnawski over the last twenty years. The deepest penetration was undertaken by a Remotely Operated underwater Vehicle (ROV) deployed by Starnawski from a depth of 200m.

Some other notable deep dives:

Pozzo del Merro in Italy	(392 m)
Zacaton in Mexico	(339 m)
Vrelo Cave in Macedonia	(330 m)
Boesmansgat in South Africa	(270 m)
Dean's Blue Hole in the Bahamas	(202 m)

REFERENCE ABC News Online, 2 October 2016.

