# Speleo Spiel 418

## January - February 2017

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

## STC Office Bearers

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

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

**Secretary:**
Chris Sharples
Ph: 0408 396 663
Chris.Sharples@utas.edu.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:**
Stephen Bunton
Ph: 6278 2398 (h)
stephenbunton@bigpond.com

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

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

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

**Front Cover:** *Looking out of Tom Thumb Cave, Isle of Caves*
*Photo by Greg Middleton*

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

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**Issue No. 418, Jan - Feb. 2017**

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## Editorial

Well I hope everybody had a good summer and at least some sort of a holiday. As I announced in my last editorial this will be my last *Spiel* and I am hoping that somebody steps up to the mark to take over the production of this fine rag. The next issue is easy because most of it consists of the office bearer's reports. So this is an early reminder to think about what you want to say at the AGM, get it to the Secretary and include a CC to the Editor, me – I'll pass it all on to the new person who with rudimentary word processing skills can produce a publication of which they too be proud. *Stephen Bunton*

## Stuff 'n Stuff

### 2017 Christmas BBQ

The end of the year was celebrated at Mt Stuart Park with an informal BYO shindig that was well attended. Philip Jackson apologized that he couldn't make it but sent his regards anyway in the form of a bottle of whisky from his place of employment. He assured us that said bottle of whisky would retail at about $400 which is too rich for scumbag cavers to afford on an everyday basis but for this special occasion it went down the hatch in lots of about $10 a slug. Thanks Jacko! Only the other Jackson was less than appreciative. Not only do they compete for surnames but they also work for competing grog enterprises and Alan could not help but inform us that his stuff was better. The question asked by those present was "Well, where is it?" Most of us were happy with the bird they had in hand and nobody didn't drink it because they thought it was inferior. *SB*


***Jacko's Christmas present before it was consumed. Stephen Bunton.***

### Bunton's Non-Caving Travels Reveal More Caves

This January Kathy and I went to East Africa to climb Mt Kenya and Mt Kilimanjaro. Both are volcanic in origin and so we did not do any preliminary research into the caves of the area before we set out. Nevertheless as expected we did see a few interesting features. Wherever there were lava flows there were small overhangs; some were where the molten lava had flowed away from underneath, although we did not see any fully fledged tubes. On Mt Kenya, which is quite a glaciated landscape, there were interesting overhangs where it appears voids in the lava flows were formed due to percolation of groundwater into the plane above the U shaped valley. *SB*

***"Lava caves" on the north side of Lake Michaelson. Mt Kenya. Stephen Bunton.***

***"Lava cave" at Shira II camp, Mt Kilimanjaro. Stephen Bunton.***

### Vietnam Caves

A friend of mine in New Zealand just sent me a feature article that appeared in the Christchurch press about caving in Vietnam. The article mentions the formation of the local company Oxalis and the role of local cavers as well as Howard and Deb Limbert. Neither Trev the trog who now guides cave trips in Vietnam nor Alan the recent expeditioner to this area, receive any glory, although they can check out the snippet in the library. Unfortunately these types of articles are hard to reference when they come out of the Escape features section of the newspaper. *SB*

## Trip Reports

## JF237 Niggly Cave

### - Bypassing the Microwave Pitch

***Petr Smejkal***

**19 November 2016**

**Party:** Andreas Klocker, Petr Smejkal

The previous attempt to do a dive in the sump at the bottom of Mt. Niggly, November 5th, was a failure. We thought about abandoning the trip at the top of Pitch 4 (7 m) after a rock as big as a baby bath tub, with Ben Armstrong hanging on it, fell off the wall and rolled over Ben's thigh. Fortunately nobody got seriously hurt and while Alan was helping Ben out of the cave the rest of the group kept descending despite a bit of trepidation. At the top of Pitch 6 (26 m) we started discussing the safety of this pitch. In the past we had experienced a few falling rocks on this pitch. The name Microwave refers to the size of the first rock we saw falling past our heads whilst descending. After what happened to Ben, we thought let's not push our luck any further. Instead of going down we were looking for an option to bypass Pitch 6. We identified a spot that would be safer and after clearing a bit of loose rock, we returned to the surface.

On this trip, two weeks later, Andreas and I brought a hammer drill and some bolts. First we fixed the damaged rigging at Pitch 4. At the top of Pitch 6 we spent at least half an hour discussing where to put the anchors. Anything we touched fell apart. Everything around us looked like a limestone-mud sandwich. To find anything stable in those conditions was pretty hard. Well, at the end we decided to put the first bolt into something in the floor. Even though it looked stable we put another two bolts in the wall and used a short rope to join all three bolts together. From here we led another rope into a Y-belay above the top of the bypass pitch (~25m). After that you still need to pass another two re-belays before you hit the top of Pitch 7 (130 m).

When we were happy with the bypass rigging we started climbing up. We got out of the cave after seven hours underground. It was still sunny when we stuck our heads out of the cave. Even the walk back to the car was rather pleasant. We left with a good feeling that everything is ready to make the next diving attempt possible.

## JF237 Niggly Cave Trip Report

***Stephen Fordyce***

**26 November 2016**

**Party:** Dave Bardi, Stephen Fordyce, Andreas Klocker, Petr Smejkal, Sandy Varin.

After a new streamway and upstream sump at the northern end of Niggly Cave was discovered, plans to dive finally succeeded. Niggly Cave is the deepest cave in Australia at a depth of about 380 m. The new streamway is at about -360 m. Our last attempt three weeks ago ended with some rigging issues and we left all the gear halfway down the ~250m of abseiling in the bottom part of the cave. For this trip we had burned through enough sherpa enthusiasm that the team was down from nine to five people, so we had a rather interesting time negotiating the final 150m of ropework and a bunch of re-belays with two bags each.

The haul up and over the Mount Niggly rockpile at the bottom and the final pack-chaining exercise through the squeezy bits at the end went smoothly and soon we'd run out of excuses and had to get into it.

As always, there was a lot of faffing around for the dive, but we set up the gear while Sandy got dressed and were glad we'd brought the 14 x 1.2 kg weights! Sandy wore a drysuit, with dry gloves, and had two carbon fibre tanks - the tanks had four weights on each. After a final crawl to the sump, Sandy was off and the rest of us settled in to wait, with hot drinks and top-secret experimental cave-popcorn. After a 40-minute dive, Sandy returned and reported a series of decidedly uninspiring restrictions but a going cave. She had a hot drink and went back to survey it over the course of a "short" 50-minute dive. Considering the water temperature of 8°C, the scary nature of the cave and the long trip out, we all thought this was a pretty good effort.

***Sandy about to start the dive having run out of excuses. Stephen Fordyce.***

***Sandy starting the dive. Stephen Fordyce.***

***Top secret cave-popcorn. Stephen Fordyce***

Sandy surveyed about 60 m of underwater passage, which continued heading downwards to a max depth of 12 - 14 m. The results are shown at the end (see Fig.1). With the deeper part of Growling Swallet / Dreamtime sump not far away at a depth of 25 m, there is still a ways to descend. Andreas has a theory the deep points may be dictated by a surface stream directly over the Growling / Dreamtime deep point - hopefully the next dive will find out! Sadly, nothing useful came from the GoPro footage from the dive.

During the second dive, Petr and I had a look downstream in what may now be known as "The Popcorn Streamway" and pushed through a couple of squeezes to find a much nastier sump / roof sniff. This obstacle is probably passable but it will require full body immersion. We will look at this more thoroughly another time. The Growling Swallet / Dreamtime water should come in somewhere along the stream in that direction. My current theory is that the low point at the north side of the Mt Niggly rockpile is where the stream crosses from one side of Mt Niggly to the other. This is in line with Petr & Serena's "side passage", potentially indicating a cross-fault. Opposite the side lead but low down in the rockfall there is hopefully the continuation of the passage and that would be exactly where the surveys indicate that the Growling water enters. Petr also reported hearing a stream near the low point at the base of Mt Niggly.

After a quick triage, we stashed the weights and some of the dive gear out of the way of the most likely flooding areas and packed everything we were able to take out. Nobody put their hand up for taking two packs, so we left one at the bottom of the pitches (a CF tank, brought out later by Al Warild & co - thanks guys!). The way out was a bit of a grind! We climbed the 250 m of rope, negotiated the twisty / squeezy Tigertooth Passage, and various other nasty obstacles, that culminated in the 80 minute stagger back to the cars, through the temperate rainforest in the dark and drizzle.

We arrived back in Hobart just as the glow of dawn was showing on the horizon and collapsed into bed without even bothering with dinner. Sunday we were all well and truly broken but were already planning the return trip over breakfast!

As always, many thanks to our fearless leader Andreas Klocker, and the rest of the crew for this trip - Sandy Varin (diver), David Bardi, Petr-The-Machine Smejkal. Well done to Sandy for adding a bunch of hard-won nasty little passage to the cave :)

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

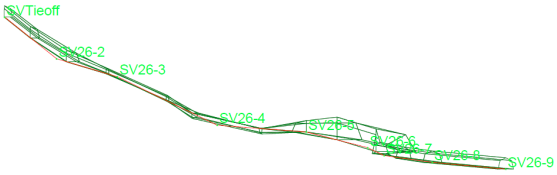


***Fig. 1 Profile View of the sump.***

## JF221 Owl Pot Cave Rescue – The Retrieval of the unfortunate: A practice run.

***Yoav Bar-Ness***

**10 December 2016**

**Party:** Andrew Baker (NSW), Serena Benjamin (STC), Zac Brown, Dave Butler (NC), Stefan Eberhard (STC), Dan Haley (STC), Cath Hemsley (NC), Alan Jackson (STC), Steve Jacobs (NC), Andreas Klocker STC), Janice March (NC), Petr Smejkal (STC), Greg Tunnack (NSW) Al Warild (NSW), Mark Wilson (NSW), Ali (Nat Brennan's Mum -NSW), Steve? (QLD), Barry ? (QLD).

Hello Caverneers. It has been far too long since I have made a recounting of a trip for this august publication, and what better trip to launch into it than the recent cave rescue exercise in Owl Pot? The past two rescue exercises had been truly educational: on the first, I realised that the police S&R were inexperienced in particular style of rescue torture found underground, and on the second, I realised I had woefully underestimated the equipment required.

In the years since, though, Al Warild's body of work and the training sessions have made us more agile and prepared for a self-rescue, and on this last exercise we were able to do great things with a much smaller quantity of rope.

When Dan, Serena, Zachary, Alan and I arrived at the Owl Pot road, we found a large group of mainlanders who had been busy getting their equipment dirty and challenging themselves in the caves of the Florentine. We were also joined by other STC members and some of the Northern Caverneers, making for party of approximately twenty people. If a real rescue comes to pass here in Southern Tasmania, we should be so lucky as to have so many experienced cavers on hand. Unfortunately, with so many people in mud-covered trog suits, shining their bright lights all around, it was hard to remember names and faces.

At setup, Al gave some basic guidelines on dividing up teams and equipment, but amongst the participants there was enough experience and sense to organise ourselves effectively. I was teamed up with two mainlanders (their names escape me) and we soon took our place in the queue at the first pitch.

Owl Pot was as muddy and slippery at the entrance as I recalled, and the pitches below were straightforward. With so many people on the ropes it was relatively sociable at the pitch heads. We kept a decent pace until the twisty rockfall section, and after we were all squirmed past the squeezy rockfall, we entered the dramatically tilted "Bedding Plane" section of the cave.

The parties gathered in this hallway above the steep stream leading to the last waterfall pitch, and charted out three tyroleans and a few short haulways. One of the mainlanders (Ali?) volunteered to be a rescue victim, and she headed down the waterfall with Petr, Al and another mainlander (Steve) to strap into the Petzl Nest stretcher that Al had brought down. It would be very convenient if there was one of these available for us here in Southern Tasmania; perhaps we could ask around on the island and arrange to store it somewhere on the Midlands Highway where it could do the most good.

The versatility of the concrete screws and the electric drills helped make the entire affair less torturous than the pulley hauling I recalled from 2005. My team placed our triplet of bolts and our overhand-knotted rope anchor and tensioned a rope against the anchors of the team beyond us. Almost immediately thereafter, Al came past and warned us that the anchor was too low and the stretcher would hit the ground. So we undid all of it and a few minutes later I was hanging on a cows tail and pushing in on the drill. Great fun, if you like this sort of elaborate torture.

When the ropes were set up, we all headed down to the top of the waterfall pitch and received the patient on her way up. We were able to pass the stretcher along quite smoothly with teamwork, moving along like tank treads around her. The operation moved up a steep streamway and, despite a few falling rocks, made it up to the flatter hallway. We clipped Ali onto the tyroleans and began hauling her slowly across. On two of the tyroleans I found myself clipped in by ascenders to capture the progress, and all told the ropework went very smoothly for the number of people there. She soon passed the next tyrolean, and upon landing Al called it a success and she exited back to her own feet.

After that, it was time for rope wrangling, pack hauling, and trudging on out. The queues to exit the rope were slower this time, but again it was a sociable experience. Janice from the Northern Caverneers surprised us with a batch of homemade baked deserts - hurrah! Towards the final pitch I could feel the weight of the day and simply groveled up the muddy pitches. At about that point Al caught up with me and appeared to be simply dancing up out of the cave.

At the entrance, it was a warm dark night and a short rainforest walk back to the cars. The first ones out waited several hours for the last. The cave was slowly derigged by a brave and enthusiastic crew. I recall Petr running back into and returning from the cave several times in the dark while I scavenged snacks with Zack and Serena in the back of the ute.

Once everyone was out, we rolled back down to the campsite to discover the mainlanders had started their campfire and were working on their cups of tea. It hadn't occurred to us to join them, and after only five minutes at the fire it was time to head to Hobart.

So, what did I learn from the rescue exercise?

* I reckon a crew of competent mainland cavers is more up to speed on these things than the official S&R; perhaps we should hire a helicopter ready with the engine running to whisk Al away from NSW should the need arise.

* Having now finally been in a cave with not only Andreas AND Stefan but also with Al Warild, I can get more street cred with the other cool cavers.

* Unfortunately no owls were spotted at Owl Pot.

* Some excellent practice drilling bolts.

* A good introduction to several experienced mainland cavers, although I hope I can remember their names when I see them next.

* It'd be good to have a sleeping bag, stove, toilet kit and some food packed up for a rescue exercise like this.

* Finally, that squeezy corner in the rockfall. Not a chance that the stretcher would have made it through. There are rumours of a good technology to blast sections off the rock, but I'd very much like to see this in action. Would we bring the rockpile tumbling down? Would they explode and fill the tunnel with rock dust? Would an earthquake be felt across Tasmania? I suppose these answers will have to wait until the next rescue exercise.

***Looks like a rescue. Cathy Hemsley***

## JF237 Niggly Cave

***Alan Jackson***

**28-29 December 2016**

**Party:** Stephen Fordyce, Alan Jackson, Fraser Johnston, Andreas Klocker, Michael Packer, Petr Smejkal

Fraser is making a movie about Australia's deepest cave so it only seemed reasonable that he got to the bottom of it during the process. Not yet being Australia's most proficient caver, we figured Fraser needed one day to get down and another to get out if he was to survive and have enough time to collect good footage.

***The start of a long, wet walk in. Stephen Fordyce.***

As usual it was pissing down with rain for the walk in but at least it was warm rain. The leeches enjoyed my bare legs. Pax and Petr took the Black Supergiant route into the cave while we others took the 'old' route, getting some footage on the way. After a bit more footage was collected, we set up camp on the lower foothills of the far side of Mt Niggly (down low on the silt banks so all traces will disappear in next season's floods). The scum slept on the ground while I stayed high and clean in my hammock.

***Looking down the original 85m pitch. Stephen Fordyce.***

Stephen went and pushed the downstream section of the new streamway under our camp while I cooked dinner. He came back soaking wet with horrendous Go Pro footage of ducks and other stream-related horror. It doesn't go.

In bed around 9 pm, we dozed until full bladders and beeping alarms raised us from our slumber at 6 am. Andreas took coffee and breakfast in bed then we packed up, collected more footage in the Mt Niggly Chamber and headed out. Pax and Steve took the Black Supergiant, derigging the 200 m rope in the process. We others coaxed and encouraged Fraser up the 'old' route. It was quite a sedate pace and I could probably cave till I'm 70 if my pride would ever allow that much resting.

***Andreas in camp. Stephen Fordyce.***

The BSGers reached the top of the 85 m pitch not long after we did so we redistributed bags (now that we had one with 200 m of rope in it) and thrashed our way through Tigertooth and out into the welcoming afternoon sunlight.

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## JF4 Khazad-Dum – Wet Way bolt fest

***Alan Jackson***

**6 January 2017**

**Party:** Kate Greenham, Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Nick Stubbs, Ric Tunney

It was 12 months since this project was commenced so it was time to start aiming for closure. Kate and Nick are a pair of visiting climbers/canyoners from NSW who popped up at the right time to tag along.

I'd been verballed by Andreas on the Niggly trip after Christmas with regard to the piss poor rigging I'd installed in KD, which he'd attempted the previous day. As is always the case with this nutter, 90% of his criticism was based on his own ignorance and lack of intelligence. For example, asking me with a flabbergasted expression 'why didn't you just put f**king bolts on the first pitch instead of stuffing around on crap naturals?' was met with me referring to the email I'd sent him the previous week from which I quote: "First little pitch isn't rigged (I turned the original 6 mm bolt holes into 12 mm glue-in holes).

You'll need to take a ~10 m bit of fat rope and just do a dirty IRT rig on naturals." It was hard to take his other criticism seriously after that start. Despite this I did agree with him that the sideways abseil half way down pitch 2 would benefit from a tensioned line to clip into to minimise the chance of flopping out into the spray zone in high water levels and generally make it easier to negotiate; one valid point out of five wasn't bad, I guess.

I pissed myself as I headed down pitch 2 first reinstalling the rebelays the crack team had failed to put in on their whinge trip. It was no wonder they got wet and didn't like the rigging (that's what happens when you only use every second rig point!). Sometimes I don't know why I bother writing detailed trip reports

explaining the location and rationale of every bolt placement.

Ric, Nick and Kate did the tourist thing down to the top of the (old) first small streamway pitch while Janine and I finished hole-making. I drilled up from the start of the pitch 3 traverse, putting a new rebelay on the lower section of pitch 2 to deal with the dampness issue one encounters here when water levels are high, while

***Alan Jackson in heaven- something throbbing in each hand. Janine McKinnon***

Janine then headed to pitch 5 to finish the last hole she'd run out of juice on during her previous trip while I headed up to the top of pitch 1 to swap the drilling gear for gluing gear. I squirted my way down the cave, getting 24 installs out of one tube of glue. (It's amazing how far a tube goes when you don't have to refill a nozzle between installs). I swapped cartridges at the bottom of pitch three, glued pitch four then toddled down to pitch 5. Confusion had reigned and we had a case of insufficient battery power yet again (about 20 mm short…). I glued the four holes that were ready, had a dummy spit, then flew back up to the top of pitch one to get my drill. The tourists were making their way back up pitch five by this point. Back at pitch 5 again, I finished and dressed the last two holes, glued them and chased the others out. I got my exercise for the day.

The route now just needs load testing and surveying (and of course the all-important sign off from Mr Attention-to-Detail at some point).

## JF341 – A Balls Out Adventure

***Alan Jackson***

**14 January 2017**

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Kane Parsell

I had the p-hanger bug from KD and was looking for somewhere else I could use up left over glue before it passes its expiry date. The opportunity to upset Raschy by even going to 341, let alone considering placing bolts, was a strong attraction.

The walk in was awful (no one's been there for a long time – i.e. numerous tree-falls and overgrown sections) and we had various short off-track excursions and memory failures. It took one hour and ten minutes to get to the cave! The big log you used to have to stoop under is now considerably closer to the ground and it is a pack off muddy grovel.

The first little drop has convenient and sturdy naturals. Andreas "why didn't you just put a f*#king bolt in" Klocker would have bolted it but we shouldn't stoop to his level all the time. The second drop also has oodles of naturals, including a redirect partway down. After the redirect there is a passage wiggle after which it is a pretty straight-forward (but steep) scramble/free climb where nervous nellies might like a rope. I refrained from placing a bolt here, as there is one good natural anchor, inconveniently high and difficult to reach, for a rebelay if people were so inclined.

At the third drop I had installed a bolt for an approach line many years ago. Unfortunately it was a mild steel 8 mm expansion bolt (short life and hard to get out). Mea culpa. Back in the good old days the approach was rigged from a dolerite boulder cemented into flowstone (squishy moonmilche, really). It doesn't look like it would survive a shock load (which is what you'd get if the primary anchor let go, as the primary is higher than the cemented boulder). I drilled two holes for an approach/back up. The primary anchor is a slightly fiddly natural thread placed while bridging (comfortably) over the pitch. A couple of bolts would be easier but the anchor is bomb-proof and it'll upset Andreas if he ever goes there (so all good).

At the fourth and final drop (38 m) I was reminded how exciting the rigging was. The primary anchor is a large bedding plane projection, which is solid but prone to falling off if the draught blows the wrong way. Then there's a bomber rebelay on the lip (but getting to it while hanging off the primary is enlightening. Down at the next (final) rebelay is a seriously old spit and a second spit (slightly under-drilled…) installed by Raschy in 2001 (Rasch 2001). Raschy's trip report contains one of the best pieces of artwork I've ever seen in the *Spiel*. While in black and white it is fairly benign the image is available in colour in the 'JF-34/341' folder. It looks like a close up of someone's hairy chest with some strange piercings.


***Raschy's masterpiece, in full colour, from Rasch (2001)***

I rigged the pitch the old way and sent the other two down to tourist while I drilled two holes to replace the spits and two holes for a new primary anchor. I then glued all six new bolt placements. Having two whopping great 10 mm glue-ins for a primary anchor means you can do away with the first rebelay at the lip and still feel like you'll survive but it does mean you get an annoying snaggy rub on the roof once you reach the last rebelay. You can either still use the lip anchor as a rebelay (time consuming) or just use the bottom part of this anchor (nice little thread) to put a very short (150 mm) redirect on. I recommend the latter.

I then shot down to the others and convinced them a more thorough tourist was required to see a bit more and give enough time for the glue to harden so I could load test the new anchors on the way out. Now the fun began.

Kane was wearing my Cordura trog suit, which has a tendency to blow its Velcro around the groin under strain. This, combined with Kane's rooky mistake of deciding he didn't need to wear underpants under his slightly decrepit thermal bottoms, lead to a total loss of control of his genitalia in the crawls. Let's just say he took some skin off by the time we'd reached the large crystal pool in the 'SCS Extension'. He had little skin left to lose by the time we got back to the pitches.

All six bolts passed test on the way out, while Kane passed testes on his way out. Kane was shattered physically, emotionally and 'testicularly' by the time we reached the entrance. He'd had a big day out and his balls had had an even bigger one.

**Reference:**

RASCH, D. 2001 – JF341, rigging trip and Surface wanderings-Saturday, June 16 2001. *Speleo Spiel* 325:6

## Other Interesting Stuff

# Isle of Caves, Frederick Henry Bay

***Greg Middleton***

**Historical Background**

Early in 1793, French captain Antoine Raymond Joseph de Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, who was searching for missing French navigator, La Pérouse, sailed his ships the *Recherche* and the *Espérance,* into what he named the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. From there he and associates explored the mouth of the Derwent River (which he called Rivière du Nord) and Frederick Henry Bay (which he called Baie du Nord). A chart drawn by the expedition's hydrographer, Beautemps-Beaupré, clearly shows a small island in the north-east of the bay (Fig. 1), which he apparently did not name. This chart was published in Paris in 1807 as part of *Atlas du Voyage de Bruny-Dentrecasteaux …en 1791, 1792 et 1793.*

The chart was apparently a very good one for its time. Two decades later Matthew Flinders enthusiastically praised it, saying: "The charts of the bays, ports and arms of the sea at the south-east end of Van Diemen's Land, constructed on the expedition by Mons. Beautemps-Beaupré and assistants, appear to combine scientific accuracy and minuteness of detail, with an uncommon degree of neatness in execution; they contain some of the finest specimens of marine surveying, perhaps ever made in a new country" (Flinders 1814, p. 93).

Flinders visited this part of southern Tasmania with George Bass in December 1798 on their voyage in the *Norfolk* proving Van Diemens Land was an island separate from what was then called New South Wales (Flinders 1814, 182). Sailing up D'Entrecasteaux Channel, across the mouth of the Derwent and past Betsey Island and east of South Arm, Flinders recorded their progress:

> *… This opening is the North Bay [Baie du Nord] of D'Entrecasteaux [now Frederick Henry Bay]; but I was totally ignorant, at that time, of its having ever been entered.*

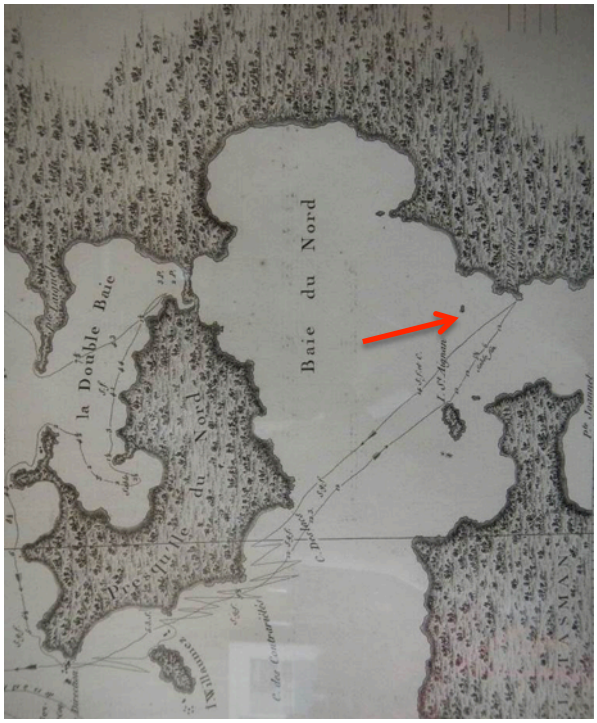


*Fig. 1. Detail from Beautemps-Beaupré's 1792 chart of D'Entrecasteaux Channel and surroundings, showing Isle of Caves (arrowed); reoriented as the original has west to the top.*

[Apparently Flinders was not aware of Beautemps-Beaupré's 1792 chart when he sailed into Storm Bay, and only had a rough chart drawn by a Captain John Hayes, "a seaman who had been sent in 1794 by the East India Company to explore the Australasian part of the huge domain subject to their monopoly, and who, in ignorance of the French discoveries, had made these discoveries again, and had given them English names" (Wood 1922).]

> *Dec. 15, the wind being at north-west, we passed a sloping island (Isle St. Aignan of*

*D'Entrecasteaux)*[shown on Fig. 1 – subsequently renamed Sloping Island], *and steered north-eastward, to explore the inlet. After running three-and-half miles, with soundings from 13 no bottom, to 5 fathoms, we anchored under a small island, which lies S. 75° W., one mile and a half, from Point Renard, the uppermost station of the French boats* [as indicated on Beaupré's chart]. *This small spot received the descriptive name of Isle of Caves, and lies in the passage from North Bay to a large extent of water which appeared to the eastward* [which Flinders named Norfolk Bay after his own vessel], *and which the French boats did not explore. From the Isle of Caves we ran six miles, E.S.E. up the new bay, for Smooth Island. The width of the entrance, from Point Renard to Green Head, is two miles, the soundings are from 6 to 16 fathoms, and there are no dangers. Smooth Island, behind which we anchored in 4 fathoms, and where I again landed to take bearings, is three quarters of a mile long, and covered with grass and a few small trees. It had been visited by the natives, as had the Isle of Caves; but from the eggs of gulls found upon both, I judge they do not go often* (Flinders 1814, p. 182).

So Flinders anchored in the lee of Isle of Caves, clearly observed its sea caves and must have gone ashore, as he refers to finding gulls' eggs there. Unfortunately he doesn't seem to have made any observations concerning the caves, beyond commemorating them in naming the island. His chart of the area, prepared in 1798 (Fig. 2), was an improvement on the French one.

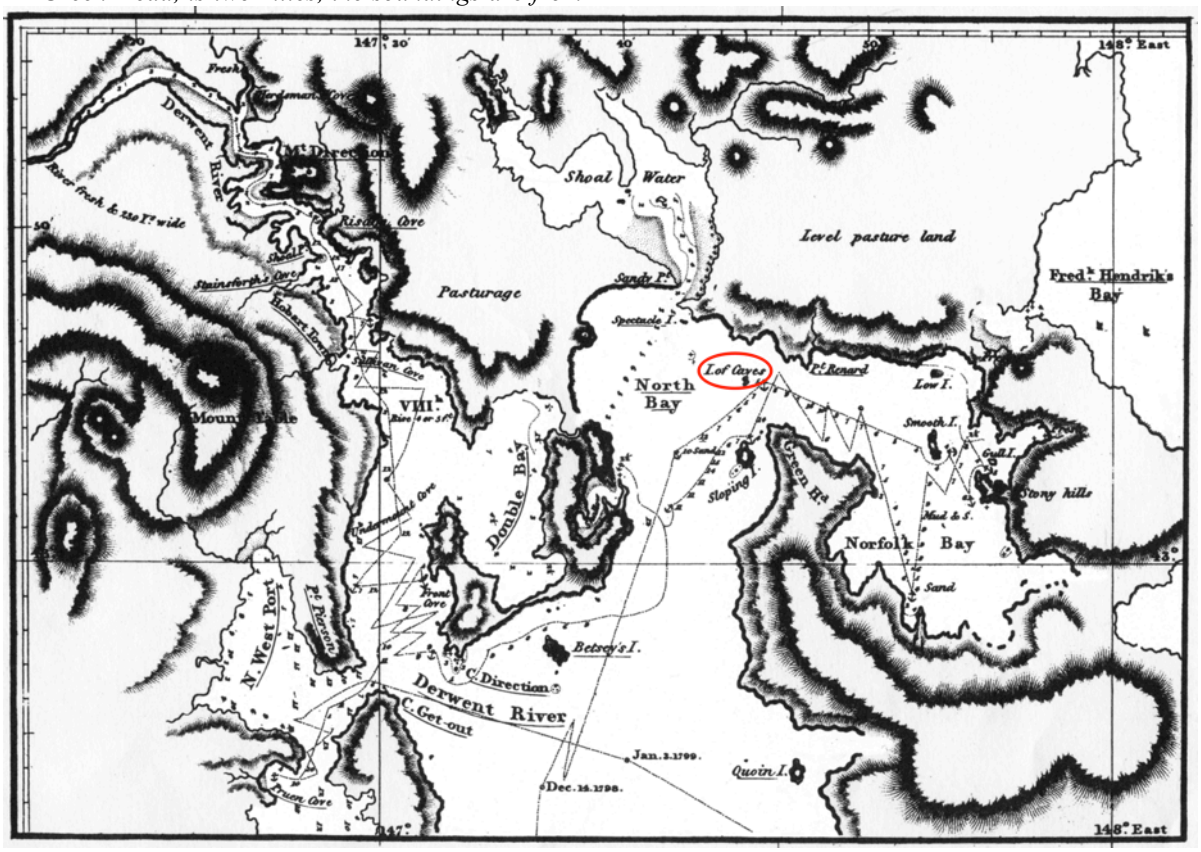


*Fig. 2. Flinders' chart of the entrance to the Derwent, North Bay (now Frederick Henry Bay) and Norfolk Bay, showing Isle of Caves. (It was Flinders' custom to underline names assigned by others before him.) This was published as an insert on his 1798 "Chart of Van Diemens Land".*

**Other Reports**

In 1996, Grant Dixon prepared an inventory of sites of geoconservation significance on Tasmanian islands (Dixon 1996). Of special interest on Isle of Caves, he described:

> *Numerous joint or small fault-controlled sea "caves" in dolerite. Many small hollows ("caves"), rarely >1 m deep and 2 m high, on north side of island, at back of shore platform and at storm wave height; also tufoni-type weathering. Three larger caves, at sea level, occur on south side of island; largest is 4 m deep, 4 x 3 m entrance.*

At the time the island was unallocated Crown land.

In 2002 the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service drafted a management plan for small south-east islands (Parks & Wildlife Service 2002). As Isle of Caves was still not reserved, the plan was intended to act only as a policy guide for management. This draft plan has not, to date, been brought into effect. The draft plan recorded that the island lies at 42°57'S, 147°39'E, is 1.4 hectares in area and hosts breeding populations of little penguins, pied oystercatchers, sooty oystercatchers, silver gulls, kelp gulls, crested terns, Caspian terns and black-faced cormorants. It also noted:

> *With its numerous joint or small fault-controlled sea caves, the island is considered to be a representative site of geoconservation significance at the local level (Dixon 1996).*

The draft plan also noted that there were no known cultural values and that social/recreational values related to sea kayaking, fishing and yachting around the island and that landings are rare. It summarised the island's special significance as lying in its geoconservation values and as a bird breeding site. The draft plan listed management issues as the vulnerability to disturbance of the tern and black-faced cormorant populations and the fact that its unallocated Crown land status did not adequately reflect its values (Parks and Wildlife Service 2002).

The island was proclaimed a Nature Reserve under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*, effective 9 November 2005 (Statutory Rule 2005 No. 122). The boundary of the reserve is low water mark and the official area is 2.346 hectares (Central Plan Register 6581).

**Survey visits**

Having noted the name of this island on maps (though some call it "Doughboy Island" – a name applied to other small islands around Tasmania), I thought it would be an interesting place to check out. At some stage I mentioned this to Rolan Eberhard and on 3 October 2014 he organized a trip there in his inflatable Zodiac.

Rolan, with his son, Byron, picked me up and we drove to a boat ramp at Gypsy Bay, just beyond Primrose Sands. We launched Rolan's Zodiac and motored across to Isle of Caves. We circumnavigated the island, noting one large open cave at the north end and three others on the south-east corner, one of which appeared the deepest.

Byron and I landed, with minimal difficulty, on a shingle beach on the north-east but due to wave action and the steepness of the beach, Rolan felt he had to stay with the boat. At first I tried to get to the caves in the south-east. This was not possible at sea level due to the height of the tide so I tried to go over the top. The higher parts of the island were covered in thick patches of purple-flowering weed, which sheltered large numbers of cormorants and their nests. I was reluctant to disturb these birds and thought that it would have been very difficult to get down to the caves anyway. So we then walked over to the northern cave, which was easily accessed, and surveyed and photographed it (Photos 1 and 2). Although the rock is clearly dolerite, it seems to have unusually rounded edges, in some respects like sandstone weathering (the 'tufoni-type' weathering noted by Dixon 1996).

I subsequently drew up the plan of the cave (Fig. 3), which we simply called North Cave (in view of its location on the island).

We walked back to the beach, were picked up by Rolan and returned to the boat ramp.

*Photo 1. Isle of Caves from the sea, showing the prominent North Cave.*

*All uncredited photos by Greg Middletlon.*

*Photo 2. Close up of North Cave (Byron Eberhard).*

The opportunity to return to survey the southern caves arose when the Parks & Wildlife Service organized a study of Sloping Island (largely funded from the Hamish Saunders Memorial Trust, based in New Zealand) in 2015-16. Isle of Caves is close to Sloping I. and was included in the Hamish Saunders project as an adjunct to the main survey, by virtue of proximity and geodiversity interest. Rolan was able to arrange transport to the island in the Service's boat "Princess Melikoff" on 2 March 2016.

Rolan and I were dropped ashore at the large cave in the far south. It was a near-perfect day, with a low tide and a calm sea. I surveyed and we photographed the largest cave (which we later named Flinders Cave) (Fig. 4, Photo 3). While I did the survey, Rolan studied the surface of the rock, looking for clues to the mode of speleogenesis (Photo 4) and sampling crystal material that may play a role in the process. We then went further north to the twin caves; I surveyed the larger one, then the smaller (later named Norfolk and Tom Thumb caves) (Fig. 5) (Photo 5).

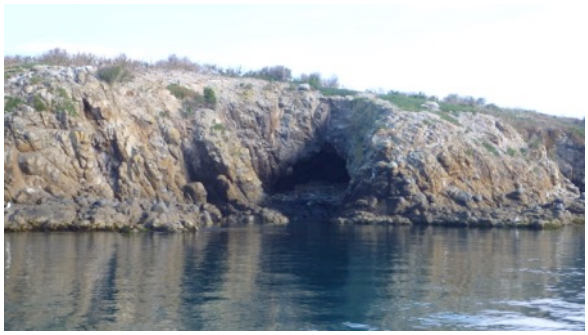

*Photo 3. The larger (Flinders) cave, from the sea.*

*Photo 4. Rolan investigating at rear of Flinders Cave.*

*Photo 5. Tom Thumb Cave EC4 (left) and Norfolk Cave EC3 (right), Isle of Caves.*

Later we walked around to North Cave, which Rolan hadn't seen close-up. On the way we checked out a series of small eroded joint-controlled overhangs (Photo. 6). I then walked around the west side of the island where there are a few more small overhangs and a steep-sided gulch, which probably is the result of the collapse of a former large sea cave. We met up again in the vicinity of the blowhole at the extreme south of the island. This could well be classified as a cave but it is generally mainly water-filled and thus inaccessible without diving gear. It is also a very active feature, with waves causing towers of spray as compressed air blows water out of the cave (Photo 7).

The form of the island and the location of the caves and other features are shown on Photo 8.

Having completed our survey of the island, we were picked up by Zodiac from the south. On the return trip we went north to check out Spectacle and Little Spectacle islands. The latter has a cave/arch apparently in sandstone. I started going ashore but then noticed a PWS sign saying 'No access 1 Sep. to 31 May' [due to nesting seabirds] so we departed without surveying the cave.

**The cave names**

To the best of my knowledge, none of the caves on Isle of Caves has previously been named, officially or otherwise. Rolan and I have therefore taken it upon ourselves to give names to the main cave features.

***North Cave EC1.*** This was the first cave I visited on the island and, purely because of the need to give it a distinguishing name, 'North' was chosen as this is the only significant cavernous feature in the north of the island.

***Flinders Cave EC2.*** As this seemed to be the most impressive cavernous feature on the island and as Matthew Flinders had named the island because of its caves, it seemed only logical to name this cave after Flinders. Besides, there are apparently no other caves in Australia named after this exceptional navigator.

***Norfolk Cave EC3***. We decided to name this cave after the ship that Flinders was sailing at the time he saw and named Isle of Caves, HM Sloop *Norfolk*. He applied the name to the bay to the south-east of Isle of Caves.

***Tom Thumb Cave EC4***. Flinders sailed the 2.5 m open boat known as *Tom Thumb* to explore the coast of New South Wales in 1796. We applied the name to this cave because of it also being relatively small.

***Isle of Caves Blowhole.*** We note that there is apparently a water-filled cave at the blowhole but we were not in a position to investigate or survey it; nor did I see fit to allocate it a cave number.

The *EC* prefix indicates these caves fall within the East Coast cave region (for the recording and documentation of non-karst caves).

**Sloping Island Project report**

Subsequently Rolan contributed a chapter on Isle of Caves to the PWS report on the Hamish Saunders Memorial Trust Sloping Island project (Eberhard 2016). In this he pointed out that the tufoni-style weathering (as noted by Dixon 1996) is of interest because this form of weathering is much more typical of sandstone and granite than dolerite. He also noted that the significance of the caves lies more in their morphology than their extent. Apart from the fundamental role of marine/wave action in initiating the caves, a further two speleogenic processes are at work:

> *Firstly, the corestones indicate gradual chemical decomposition of the bedrock along joint-controlled blocks, releasing crumbly material and ultimately the central kernel. Secondly, the angular fraction indicates vertical stoping of undercut rock masses through mechanical failure. … The expansion of clays released during weathering likely plays a critical role in this. In a coastal setting such as Isle of Caves this tendency may be compounded by the action of marine salts precipitating out in fractures.* (Eberhard 2016)

In relation to the whitish crystalline deposits noted on some of the cave walls, analysis identified stellerite (42%), heulandite (33%), smectite (24%), gypsum (1%) and a possible trace of quartz (Bottrill & Woolley 2016). This zeolite-clay assemblage is typical of those found in veins and breccias in Jurassic dolerite in many places in Tasmania.

The report concludes that the cavernous landforms of the Isle of Caves are an interesting case study in non-karstic speleogenesis and that the caves are robust features requiring no immediate management attention (Eberhard 2016).

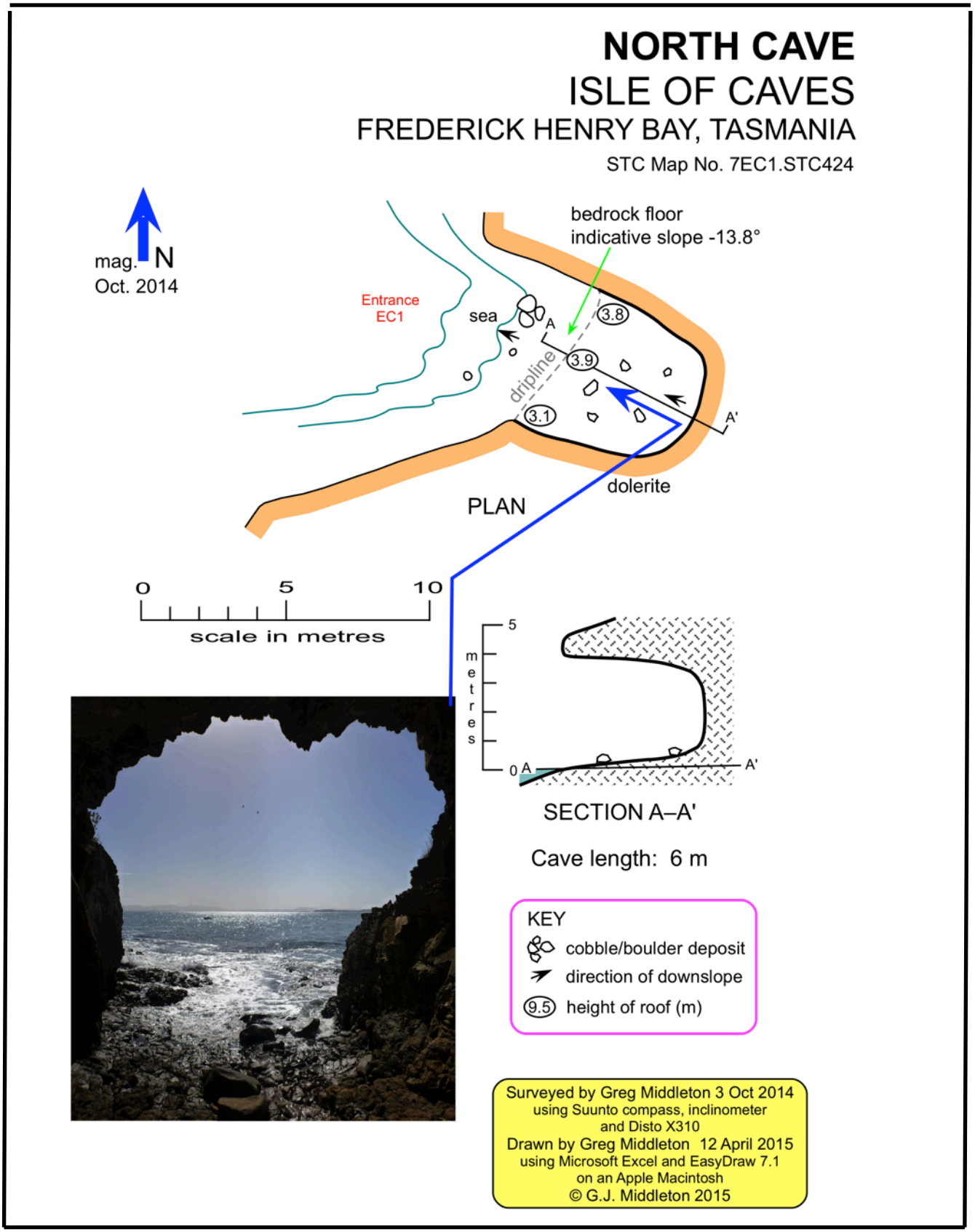


*Fig. 3. Plan and section of North Cave, Isle of Caves.*

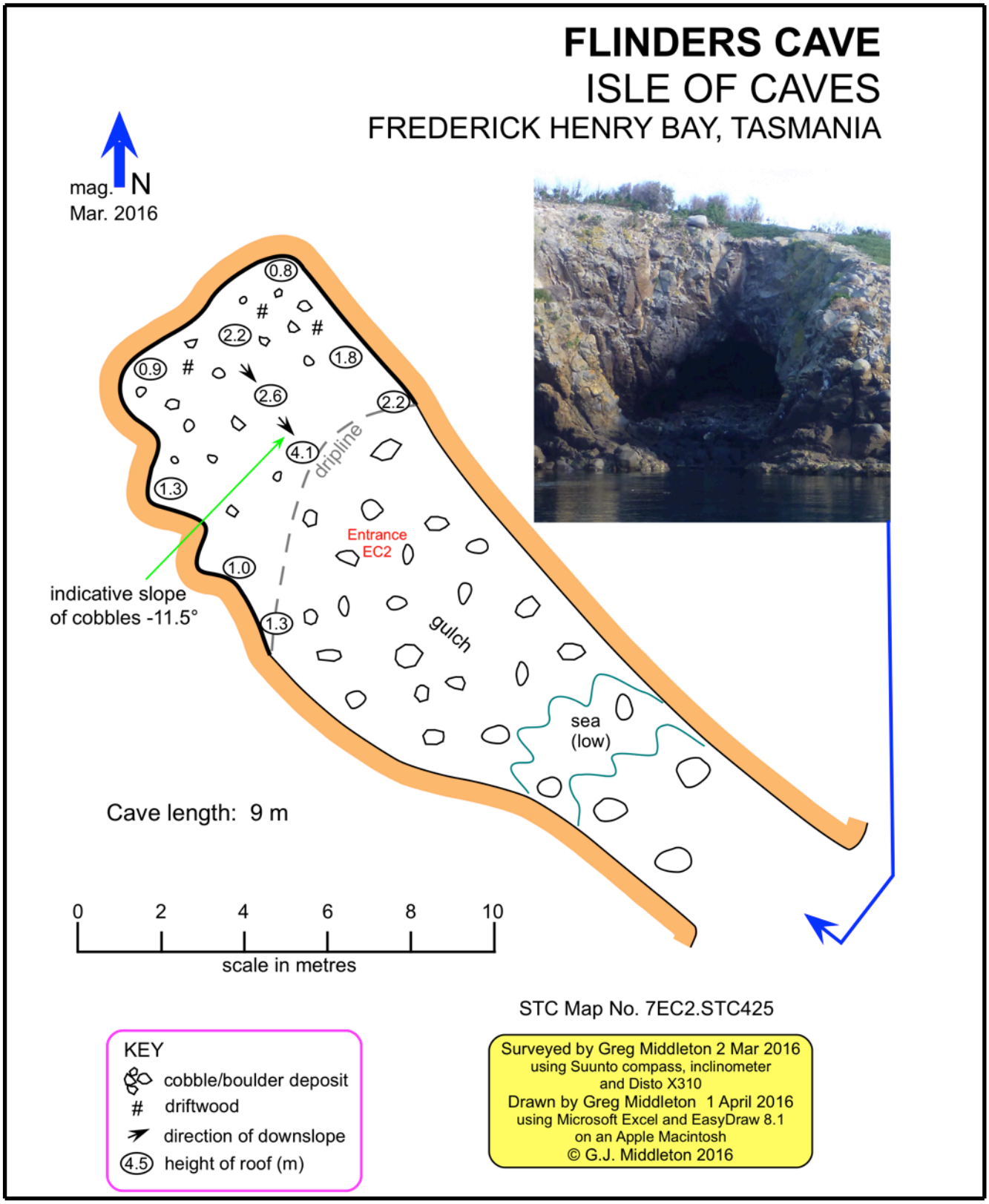


*Fig. 4. Plan of Flinders Cave EC2, Isle of Caves.*

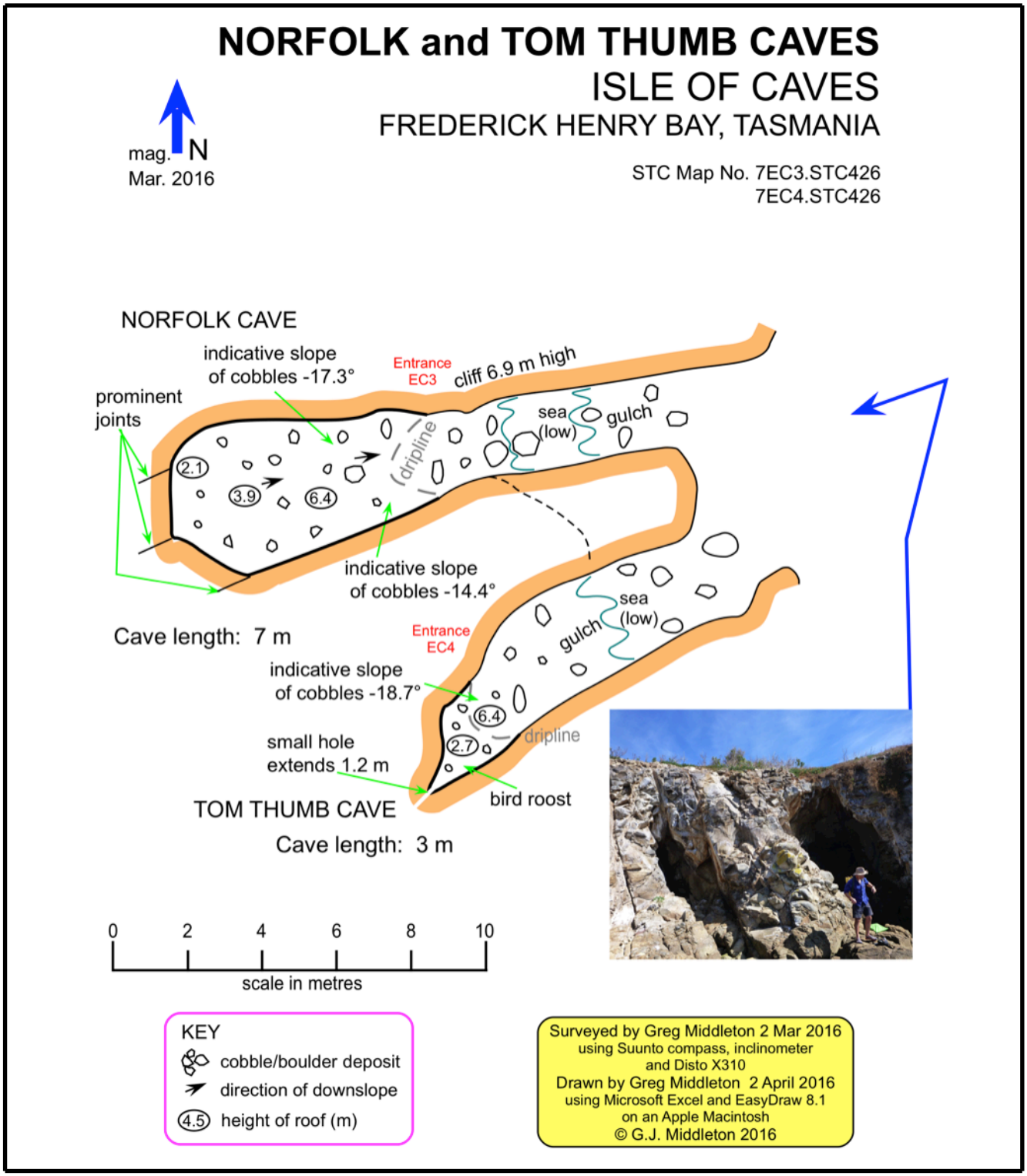


*Fig. 5. Plan of Norfolk Cave EC3 and Tom Thumb Cave EC4, Isle of Caves.*

*Photo 6. Strongly joint-controlled erosion in dolerite on northern end of Isle of Caves.*

*Photo 7. The blowhole in action.*


*Photo 8. Aerial photo of Isle of Caves showing the locations of the surveyed caves and other features. [annotated from www.thelist.tas.gov.au]*

**Acknowledgements**

My thanks to Rolan Eberhard for providing and arranging transport to the Isle of Caves to make our two visits there possible and to Sam Thalman and Kris Carlyon of DPIPWE for operating the boats used on our second visit. Rolan also kindly critically commented on a draft of this report.

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## Port Davey Sea Caves

### *Yoav Bar-Ness*

There are some remarkably strange caves at Port Davey - I was fortunate to receive a writing assignment from *Wild* magazine that sent me on a seven day kayak excursion out of Melaleuca. On the western side of the Breaksea and Kathleen Islands, and on the exposed craggy coast of the mainland, there were a number of remarkable caves. With perfect conditions, we were able to have a good look inside some of them. After snapping thousands of blurry photos through spattered lenses, there were a few pictures worth sharing. Enjoy!

***Looking into a sea cave. Yoav Bar-Ness.***

***Paddling out of a sea cave. Yoav Bar-Ness.***

***Looking out of a sea cave. Yoav Bar-Ness.***

## Mystery Neverland Caves, Lombok

***Yoav Bar-Ness***

Well. So you find yourself in Lombok, just one island east of Bali, and after you've gotten bored of silly old stratovolcanoes you're just dying to see some different rocks.


***The enticing signage. Yoav Bar-Ness.***

A good thing that about the southern surf town of Kute is that it happens to have a Mystery Neverland Cave nearby. It's up on the ridge to the west overlooking the water. Apparently its terrifying, but since you're a caver, you may as well check it out. If you'd like to make it more interesting, why not bring along your wife and infant child? And wear crocs with no tread? And if you'd like, why not walk around in the daylight in 35°C temperatures?

When you get there, check out the funny signage. There's a bat with a snake and a love heart and it tells you the Mystery Neverland Cave is only 100m. Try not to notice the total slag that's being made of the laterite nearby as they search for tiny flakes of gold; the coral reefs offshore won't notice a thing.


***If the first sign sucked you in then this is the disclaimer. Yoav Bar-Ness.***

Walk on in and see the limestone on the roadside. Pay the dude smoking cigarettes the extortionate fee. Notice the sign that says "Let us take you to your true nightmare." Hold the wife's hand while you all pick your way down sharp limestone into the gorge. Climb along the cliffside to a small low cave entrance - the baby thinks this is all awesome! - and then make absolutely sure you look concerned and sympathetic when the wife says there is no way that she is going into that cave. There is thick guano and chittering bats coming from past the sharp stals. Observe carefully also that the thought that the baby would go inside has not even crossed the wife's mind, and take heed not to mention it at all.

***The enticing entrance. Yoav Bar-Ness.***

Next, head into the steamy cave with local guide. Try not to compare it with Mulu World Heritage Caves in Borneo. Use dodgy LED torch to see bats rushing at you, politely decline the invitation to see the poisonous snake that lives here. Chat with the local guide about the rocks, and realise that he doesn't know anything about how this cave formed. Have a bizarre conversation comparing the volcanic rocks (point vaguely in the direction of Rinjani Peak) with the limestone rocks (point to your teeth and talk about seashells). Decide after ten minutes that you've got this cave as figured out as you're ever going to have it. Tactfully exit to the sunlight, smile at the wife, try not to touch the baby after crawling around in bat shit and let the guide enjoy his easily earned rupiah.

***The moral support crew. Yoav Bar-Ness.***