

# Speleo Spiel 419

March – April 2017



Newsletter of Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc. ISSN 1832-6307

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### Front Cover:

*Checking the tension of the Tyrolean is important (S&R Training)*

*Photo by someone using Stephen Fordyce's Gopro*

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



# Speleo Spiel

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

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## Editorial

Well, the AGM has come and gone, office bearers have changed, and so has the *Spiel* editorship. Bunty has handed the baton to me. He has done an excellent job in the year he has held this position, and I only hope I can do half as well. His stewardship follows on from Alan's, so I have two pairs of large boots to fill. Being only a size 7.5 Aust (W8 US, 5.5 UK, 39 EU), this will prove challenging. Maybe I need to wear extra socks.

Can I be as witty as Steve? Probably not.

As acerbic as Alan? Impossible.

I (we) will just have to wait and see how my style unfolds. Hopefully it won't be too boring.

This issue is largely full of the office bearer reports for the last year, as is usual for the *Spiel* following the AGM. I have added a few of the trip reports from the period, just to give you an incentive to keep reading. No skipping pages! This is by no means all of the trips in this time period, but there would be far too many electrons for you to carry around otherwise.

## Stuff 'n Stuff

### AGM

The time allowed by the constitution for a member to hold a specific position on the executive is three years. This AGM two, of the four, completed their innings. Thanks very much to Alan and Geoff for fulfilling their respective roles so efficiently.

We have old, new blood, in the form of Tony Culberg, joining the executive as Treasurer. Welcome aboard Tony. Tony has held this position with TCC, our

forbear, previously, and has also been Treasurer for other organisations, I understand. He is therefore well experienced and qualified to undertake it for STC.

Also, we have new, not-so-old blood in the shape of Petr Smejkal, our new Vice President. Petr came for a short study visit to Tasmania some years ago and we haven't got rid of him yet. Maybe he should stay as he's of some use to those STC members wanting to visit Eastern Europe. Welcome Petr.

### 17th International Congress of Speleology (17th ICS)

<https://www.speleo2017.com/>

It's still coming up. If you are keen to attend this event, and haven't registered yet, then soon would be a good time. You have missed the opportunity to join any field trips if you hadn't signed up by mid January. Still, the lectures and socialising in Sydney may have appeal to many. Judging by the number of the field trip that have been cancelled due to insufficient numbers to be viable, most of the attendees are happy to sit around Sydney. New Zealand has been very popular though.

There were five field trips available in Tasmania. Two by Ric and myself down south (JF and IB), a Pre and Post Kubla Khan and Cradle Mountain joint trip by David Wools-Cobb, and an Arts and Caves trip by Cathy Plowman. ALL failed to reach sufficient numbers to run. Not enough takers for Kubla? Go figger. At least we have done our bit by offering trips.

Here's a gratuitous photo from Kubla just to remind us all how silly these overseas visitors have been not to book onto a trip there. For those unfamiliar with the cave, the tiny red bits are people. *Photo by Grant Elliot.*



## Office Bearers' Reports

### President-Philip Jackson

I thought I might read the Vice President's report for some inspiration, or even something to plagiarise, but my attention span failed catastrophically less than half way through.

The past year has seen plenty of action. Not so much of the major discoveries such as the extensions in Voltera and Ringhole, but none-the-less there has been quite a bit of activity in preparation for some future anticipated breakthroughs.

Andreas and his team of lamelanders, sherpas and various expendables have been undertaking epic kit hauling trips in preparation for future dives in Niggly and Porcupine Pot. The outcome of all this effort is something to look forward to in 2017. The sherpas may be wishing one outcome is that they come out somewhere civilised like the Junee Resurgence or even Growling Swallet. Sandy dived the Dreamtime Sump in Growling, pushing it some 400 metres but with no breakthrough.

Alan has been busy re-bolting KD to improve safety and comfort, and Al Warild further improved safety with another informative cave rescue training weekend.

Early in the year Alan introduced the Beginner's Trip list. This has been a great success and I would urge people to continue to advertise their proposed trips on the list server and facebook so members, novices and otherwise, can access trips and thereby perpetuate the corporate memory that Bunty bangs on about.

In October we had a dinner to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of TCC. This was attended by 40 past and present members who were entertained by some excellent slides from Stefan, Bill and Ric. It may be that we will have an annual barbeque to celebrate future TCC birthdays.

There has been some exploration in the Upper Florentine area investigating 40 or so entrances found by the Bookend Trust's Cave Search. For every entrance investigated, it seems an additional new find gets added to the list.

The next year should see excitement in the results from Niggly and Porcupine Pot, and more work in the Upper Florentine. Personally I hope to get to the Dante River next summer.

I would like to commend and thank all the office bearers and members whose commitment and efforts continue to improve the club's operation, activities and outlook.

### Vice President-Alan Jackson

It's a hard job but somebody has to do it. By my records I've done three years, so time to relinquish my power and be put out to pasture.

### Editor-Stephen Bunton

I have enjoyed editing *Speleo Spiel* this year. The procedure is fairly simple. People send in trip reports by email and you knock them into shape and publish them. This is quite easy since the literacy levels of most members are quite high. This matches the activity levels and so overall, the club's regular publication is quality entertainment.

I have improved my word processing skills and this has been quite satisfying. There is a bit of frigging around with large photos and file sizes but these challenges have been overcome thanks to the help of Alan Jackson and Greg Middleton. Alan and Greg also do the proofreading. Thanks to Yoav Bar-Ness who puts the PDF up on the website for all the world to see.

This year, as scheduled, six issues were published and they all came out on time. The unseen part of this job is sending out the hard copies to libraries and a few people who still like the feel of paper.

Unfortunately I cannot allocate the time to continue in this role this year; maybe some other time in the future. So a most enjoyable and rewarding opportunity awaits someone with basic computer skills. Good luck to the new volunteer!

### Gear Officer-Geoff Wise

The club's gear continues to see regular use. An increase in active introductory members has seen high demand on SRT kits, helmets and lights. However tardiness from a number of members in returning gear has led to some problems when people come to get gear and it hasn't been returned. Despite numerous email reminders this issue has not improved. The club's rules have been amended to clarify gear hire, time will tell if financial penalties will improve the situation. There is no reason why gear should not be returned during the week after a trip, it's not the gear officer's role to chase you up about returning gear or paying hire fees.

Rope lengths continue to shrink due to natural attrition and we will need to buy some new rope in 2017. Rope testing will also need to be done.

We have bought parts to build 2 extra club lights and these should be finished in the next month.

I'm happy to continue to look after the club's gear for the next year.

## Webmaster-Yoav Daniel Bar-Ness

Webmaster here. It's still up and running fine on [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com). I know there's a fair bit of chat and photo sharing on the Facebook page but I'll confess I don't check in too often on that platform.

Some numbers:

For calendar year 2016 we had 1443 visitors and 8288 page views. By comparison we had 1356 visitors and 6718 page views in 2015.

We can certainly use the site for hosting documents such as the *Spiel*, other publications from allied clubs, and the latest in our own club paperwork.

I'm certainly glad to carry on as webmaster.

## STC Librarian / Archivist-Greg Middleton

Since February 2016 the Library has received 43 new paper journals (exactly the same number as the previous last year), bringing our holding to 4,948.

Digital copies of journals are stored on a 1TB hard disk. Additions in the last 12 months include:

ACKMA Journal: #102, #103, #104

ASF Annual Report: 2016

Helictite: Vol. 42 (2016)

The Very Latest (CSS): Vol. 21(2)

Binomea (JCH&PS): #162, #163

ISS Newsletter: Vol. 21(4); 22(1)-(4); 23(1)

J. Sydney Speleo. Society: Vol. 59 (2015)

SUSS Bull.: Vol. 53(4); 54(1), (2), (4); 55(1)

Trog (KSS): Vol. 51(6) – 52(6)

CEGSA News: Vol. 61(1)-(4)

Southern Caver: #69 (2016)

Speleo Spiel: #412 - #418

NSS News (USA): Vol. 74(1) – 75(1)

J. Cave & Karst Studies (USA): Vol. 78(1)-(2)

Cave & Karst Science (UK): Vol. 43(1)-(3)

The library received 42 new books, bringing our holding to 426. These included donations from Stephen Bunton and the Culbergs.

Our CD/DVD collection grew by 2 to 51.

Since 2005 I have been producing *Southern Caver* in digital format, publishing otherwise unpublished or rare material. #69 reprinted reports of HEC cave surveys in the South-West in 1983.

I'm happy to continue in the position.

## Electronic Archive and Map Archivist-Ric Tunney

I should like someone to take these over.

The electronic archive can be done by anyone who can take an extra drive in their PC and has a decent backup regime. Activity consists of adding Spiels and lumps of other data to the archive. Occasionally people ask for an updated version. This is done by copying the archive onto a USB drive.

The map archive contains paper copies of our maps. The only work involves issuing map numbers. This could be done by someone with a PC and space for a filing cabinet, set of map drawers and a dozen mailing tubes.

Lacking a volunteer to take over, I'll continue in the role.

## Search and Rescue Co-ordinator-Andreas Klocker

The most important - we didn't have a real cave rescue this year. Let's continue this.

The annual cave rescue exercise at the end of last year was a great success again (I think). This has now been the third time and I feel like the exercises are getting smoother every year as people are getting more skilled. Hopefully we can continue this trend. The main difference to this year's exercise was that ASF's ACRC contributed nothing - the ACRC head didn't even bother answering emails - and hence STC covered everything. The only costs were return flights Sydney-Hobart for Al Warild, so I think little cost for lots of value. For the future I think we need to decide if STC just keeps covering those costs or if we ask non-STC attendees to chip in a bit or..... Something worth discussing. Also if someone has ideas how to improve on those annual exercises please let me know!

I mentioned previously that I think we should purchase a stretcher and some other rescue gear (pulleys, Stops, etc.) and I was going to write a grant for that....sadly that hasn't happened yet since work kept me too busy...hopefully it'll happen next week! Deadline for the community fund grant is mid-March....

There has always been talk about doing some little one-day exercises to practice rigging/knots/other stuff in addition to the main exercise some other time during the year. If you've got something specific in mind let me know what you want to practice and I'll organise something. Once we get a stretcher we can practice more with that as well.

I've been the SAR officer for the last three years. I'm happy to continue this but am also happy to pass on the role and help out whoever wants to take over.

### **Social Secretary-Guy Bannink**

Well there were a few social events this year. Mostly hosted by other club members - Thanx everyone.

Had a couple of sessions up at Fern Tree which were fun.

I think we need some new social blood for this position.

### **Scientific Officer-Stefan Eberhard**

This year the club continued its excellent record in speleological documentation of caves. This included surveys of numerous relatively small but significant caves in the Florentine, in addition to a host of interesting caves developed in non-karstic rocks. The abundance of karstic caves in Tasmania means that non-karstic caves have tended to be overlooked by most cavers, however Tasmania hosts a rich assemblage of caves developed in sandstone, quartzite, siltstone, dolerite, granite and other rocks. Tasmania's rugged coastline is peppered with many spectacular sea caves, including some with enormous dimensions. Many of these caves and their contents, including speleothems, sediments, bones and artefacts, are of high aesthetic, scientific and cultural importance. Greg Middleton and colleagues are doing a terrific job with the systematic and meticulous documentation and mapping of these caves. This year's efforts included the Isle of Caves, Spectacle Head, Mount Wright, Quamby, King Island, Flinders Island and Port Davey (Yoav). Another highlight is the documentation of Ranga Cave on Flinders Island, developed in aeolian calcarenite, this type of cave is common on the mainland but rare in Tasmania.

Many Tasmanian caves contain bone deposits, some of which are very old and scientifically interesting. Building on the early work of Albert Goede and Peter Murray, Rolan Eberhard has been expanding research and knowledge of cave bone deposits, and collaborating with palaeontologists from Melbourne and Naracoorte.

Other activities with a speleological / scientific theme include the cave *Anaspides* research project which has just kicked-off, with visiting researchers from Germany and the Australian Museum here this month, and who are being assisted by cavers at Mole Creek, Ida Bay, Hastings and hopefully also Juneeflorentine. This exciting research has already revealed several new cave dwelling species, and doubtless there are more cave species waiting to be discovered and described.

This last year also saw completion of the *Sixteen Legs* filming project. The film premiered overseas late last year and hopefully it will be appearing on a big screen here soon.

I apologise for non-attendance at this AGM. I am willing to stand for this position again.

### **Public Officer-Serena Benjamin**

A year has passed where I have had to do absolutely nothing. I have, however, been practicing my moving skills just in case something happens and I need to elude the media hounds. I am happy to continue in this position unless someone else is dead keen to show they can do nothing better than I can.

### **Secretary-Chris Sharples**

I have now been secretary for one year since the March 2016 AGM, and to my surprise have managed to get the minutes typed up and distributed each month prior to the next GBM. Including March 2016, I have taken the minutes for 9 GBMs, with Phil Jackson managing in my absence for the November meeting, and the December GBM lapsing for want of a quorum. Apart from recording the minutes, my role has mainly consisted of recording and passing on incoming correspondence, including newsletters & journals, from other organisations. Most out-going correspondence was handled by other members of the executive as relevant, with the exception that I have organised a number of restricted cave permit applications during the year (which in several cases I invited myself onto as a sort of *quid pro quo*).

I appear to be doomed to another two years of secretarial duties, and am happy to continue in this role in acceptance of my doom.

### **Training Officer-Petr Smejkal**

In the last year we had few people coming through. I did not bother to do any statistics but I would guess the number of people that contacted me was somewhere between 15 and 25. Also the number of people that could be interested in a longer relationship with STC was this year slightly elevated if compared with 2014 and 2015.

There are two names that I would like to highlight. Fraser Johnston and Andrew Terhell, from Crow's Nest Media. Andreas introduced these guys to what we are doing and they became interested in making a documentary about Niggly. Fraser and Andrew worked really hard, practised on the surface and underground. The first trip these guys did was Owl Pot. I've never bothered taking them horizontal (*Ed. They came on one of my D'Entrecasteaux sump dive trips in 2013; that's their horizontal introduction to caving*). By now both of them have made it down to the bottom of Niggly and back! Well hopefully they will stay keen even after they finish the documentary.

Another name that I can think of is Nat Naelstrom. I did not take her for any trip but she grasped the SRT theory very quickly and excelled at the training. She also survived a trip with Alan to KD, and I met her caving at the Owl Pot rescue. So if she contacts you for a trip you don't need to hesitate to take her on board.

There are more names but from those some did their three trips and never contacted us again, some got terrified after their first SRT trip, some people did SRT training and never went to cave and some even didn't make it to the SRT training, the usual story really.

I've been training officer for the last three years. I am happy to continue for another year but if there is anyone who wants to take over I will not be disappointed in passing the duty.

#### Treasurer-Geoff Wise

I know you have been waiting for this!

The financial statement is included below, the club made a surplus of \$4018.99. The larger than usual surplus was due to the repayment of the \$2500 loan made in 2015 to Nic Haygarth for publication of the book *Wonderstruck*. Excluding the loan, the club is making a surplus of over \$1000 a year fairly consistently over the last few years. A number of suggestions have been made over the last few months to use funds to purchase equipment for cave rescue exercises and these should be supported.

Despite an increase in income from gear hire this year, there is probably another \$70 - \$100 in outstanding gear hire fees as a number of members are forgetting to pay for hire. What gear attracts a hire fee and the rates are available on the website.

Lastly, I have been treasurer for 3 years and my time is up so STC needs a new treasurer for 2017. I achieved my goal of not spending any petty cash in this time!

#### Fees for 2016

The ASF has not increased fees for 2017. I propose that STC membership fees and gear hire rates remain unchanged.

#### Summary of Membership 2016

STC continues to attract new introductory members although few go on to become full members. The resurrection of the forward programme for trips may improve this.

STC currently has 22 Single, 7 Concession, 5 Family memberships accounting for 15 members, 2 Active life members, 3 inactive life members, 2 Family memberships with active life members. There are 11 Friends of STC.

#### Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated

##### Financial Statement for Year Ending 31 December 2016

	This year 2016	Last year 2015
<b>Income</b>		
Membership fees	\$4,714.50	\$4,458.35
<i>Speleo Spiel</i> subscriptions	\$80.00	\$130.00
Gear hire	\$283.00	\$171.00
Trip fees	\$90.00	\$0.00
Donations (to STC General Funds)	\$1.00	\$0.00
Donations (to STC Science Funds)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Grants	\$500.00	\$0.00
Interest	\$169.08	\$222.25
<i>Wonderstruck</i> book	\$2,530.00	\$770.00
Sundries	\$10.00	\$0.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$8,377.58</b>	<b>\$5,751.60</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<i>Spiel &amp; Sthn Caver</i> Production	\$567.02	\$183.33
ASF Fees	\$2,886.00	\$2,918.60
Gear purchases	\$0.00	\$256.50
Science equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00



Equipment officer Honorarium	\$51.30	\$69.60
Audit fee	\$93.50	\$88.00
Annual return fee	\$59.20	\$59.20
PO Box Rental	\$191.00	\$181.00
Club Admin/Stationery	\$0.00	\$0.00
Memberships	\$0.00	\$40.00
<i>Wonderstruck</i> book	\$0.00	\$4,270.00
Training	\$510.57	\$0.00
Sundries	\$0.00	\$113.50
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$4,358.59</b>	<b>\$8,179.73</b>
<b>Net surplus (loss)</b>	<b>\$4,018.99</b>	<b>-\$2,428.13</b>
Balance Sheet		
Petty cash	\$8.55	\$8.55
General Account	\$6,208.40	\$2,219.41
Science Account	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fixed Term Deposit	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Less unrepresented cheques	\$0.00	-\$40.00
Plus receipts to be deposited	\$0.00	\$10.00
<b>Total cash position</b>	<b>\$16,216.95</b>	<b>\$12,197.96</b>
Account Reconciliation		
Opening cash position	\$12,197.96	\$14,626.09
Add total receipts for the year	\$8,377.58	\$5,751.60
Less total payments for the year	-\$4,358.59	-\$8,179.73
Closing cash position	\$16,216.95	\$12,197.96
<i>Reconciliation Error</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>

#### Results of AGM voting:

President	Phil Jackson
Vice President	Petr Smejkal
Secretary	Chris Sharples
Treasurer	Tony Culberg
Gear Store Officer	Geoff Wise
SAR Officer	Andreas Klocker
Librarian	Greg Middleton
Editor	Janine McKinnon
Social Secretary	Alan Jackson
Training Officer	Alan Jackson
Science Officer	Stefan Eberhard
Public Officer	Serena Benjamin
Electronic Archivist/KID Officer	Michael Packer
Web Master	Yoav Bar-Ness
ASF Representative	Sarah Gilbert



## Trip Reports

### Rescue Exercise Weekend

3&4 December 2016

Stephen Fordyce

**Party:** Lots - from STC, Northern Tasmania, Sydney, Queensland and a solitary but super-doooper chap from Melbourne (me).

We spent Saturday practising stretcher transfers on rope (by tyroleans, counterweighting and lots of hands) and Sunday rescuing unconscious victims in various predicaments on ropes, i.e. "pick offs".

Perhaps the most exciting exercise was a French-inspired manoeuvre which involved two people abseiling off a single ascender, with the added excitement of a minor shock-load on static rope after the rope was cut between the victims' ascenders.

The weather was nice all weekend, with sunburn and being pleasantly warm an interesting change from freezing our nuts off in a JF cave. My turn in the stretcher was highly relaxing, although sadly the rescue crew could not be convinced to let me hang upside down like a bat, for a highly amusing photo. Special mention to Al Warild for facilitating the exercise, bringing the stretcher and generally feeding large quantities of knowledge to all and sundry. Another special mention to Andreas Klocker for organising stuff. There are probably special mentions due to other people but it's been too long and I've forgotten - sorry.



*This convenient rockface provided a reliable stop for the stretcher.*

*Stephen Fordyce.*

## JF-4 Khazad Dum (KD)

27 December 2016

Stephen Fordyce

**Party:** Serena Benjamin, Rolan Eberhard, Stephen Fordyce, Fraser Johnston, Andreas Klocker.



*The master artist (Fraser) in action.*  
Stephen Fordyce

I had intended to dodge out of this trip report by doing the Niggly one, but Alan beat me to it. A month later, memories have faded and motivation is spectacularly low, but fortunately a picture is worth a thousand words, so really this is quite a long and detailed report.

The trip had something to do with Fraser wanting to get footage of waterfalls and see how waterproof a very, very expensive camera he'd gotten his hands on was, so KD seemed appropriate. We followed "The Wet Way" on Alan's apparently dubious (but later well justified) new rigging until we were wet enough and bailed out. This wasn't particularly far into the cave.

As a side note, we had a small (except not) bottle of helium for experimenting with helium balloons for lighting. When this exercise was written off, it was required that the helium be used for voice altering fun-times.

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## JF-387 Porcupine Pot

4 February 2017

Stephen Fordyce

**Party:** Ben Armstrong, Stephen Fordyce, Fraser Johnston, Andreas Klocker, Andy Terhell.

Needing a break from ongoing stuff in Niggly Cave (to be continued in 2 weeks!), we went into the other current project cave - Porcupine Pot. The downstream end is only (!!) 3km from Niggly but we went to the upstream end to drop off some dive gear at the undived sump going into unknown territory. We also took the opportunity for Fraser to do some proper filming of the cave and as such, "The Crawl That Goes On For Too Long", a.k.a. "The Horrible Crawl", etc. is now committed to film, thanks to heroics by all involved. This is a 75m long, low flattener where you get to try lying on your belly in the 7degC water, grinding your knees on rocks and doing one-handed pushups. Thanks to Summer, the water was as low as we'd ever seen it and we barely even got soaked - great success!!

Andreas, Ben and I spent a bit of time walking up and down for the camera crew (Fraser and Andy) in the large master cave streamway, which is the reward for completing the horrible crawl, before they beat a soft retreat to the comfort of the series of nasty pitchheads and the surface.

We headed on upstream through various damp cave sections, going waist deep in a few places and negotiating an exciting couple of squeeze rockpiles, before crawling the final 100 m to a comfortable room complete with a large arrogant rock bearing resemblance to a certain much-discussed political figure. It was saluted and named "Trump Rock". This is the designated gear-up spot for diving.



*Ben disappearing into the rockpile*  
Stephen Fordyce

The sump was another 50 m of low flat passage away, none of which was pleasant, and most of which involved immersion to levels requiring much squealing. With the water level way down, the way on was suddenly much less obvious, but lots of organic debris was interesting. After we got sick of floundering around, we busted a move to warm up again. With two empty bags jammed into one pack, we set a world record for the heaviest empty bag in the world, and tried to avoid it the whole nasty way out.

With all obstacles negotiated in reverse we made it back to the surface just as the last light was fading, and were back at the car a very civilised 10 minutes later (much better than the epic 1 hr Niggly walk!). We've just about run out of excuses and the next Porcupine trip (in a few months) will be a dive.

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## JF-4 Khazad-Dum – Wet Way bolt testing and survey

12 February 2017

Alan Jackson

**Party:** Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney (with a cameo from Stefan and Patrick Eberhard)

Heatwaves, bushfires and floods on the mainland; snow in Tasmania. Underground seemed the safest place to be.

After some entertaining 'back and forth' as R&J determined who was at fault for leaving Janine's gumboots in the car in Moonah we wandered to the entrance (Janine in sandshoes). We plodded slowly down the cave testing the new bolts and surveying as we went (after a false start from Ric, who had left his Stop at the entrance ...). There's a lot of bolts and the test rig is horrible to use so it was slow, tedious and hard work. At the head of the third ('traverse') pitch Stefan and Patrick arrived, taking their chance to have a bit of a tourist of the new route (Stefan had unfinished business on Animal pitch from about 30 years ago which I'd suggested he should come and settle). Ric had had enough at this point and headed for the surface while Janine and I soldiered on. Some of the bolts required a lot of swearing to get the tester in a good position but they all passed. One of the feet fell of the tester immediately after the last bolt was tested – good timing (less weight to carry out ...).

At the bottom of Animal pitch we had a bit more to eat (it was about 4 pm) and we located what looked like a survey station from Jeff Butt's era to tie in to. While transferring the rigging onto the new bolts the Eberhards returned – they'd rigged down to the third streamway pitch for me and dumped the remaining rope there, in preparation for a future attempt on the 42 m pitch the wet way in the near future. They overtook us as we did more surveying and stripped concrete screws.

Things seemed a bit wetter on the lower pitches but we weren't convinced till we got to pitch 2, which was going crazy; it had clearly rained quite a bit. But the rigging kept us dry and all was good. Back at the car Ric informed us that it had absolutely bucketed down for a while.

A cunning plan was devised to leave the lock undone for Stefan and Pat, as they were dawdling in the getting changed process, but Ric had a senior's moment and managed to lock it anyway. We were at Glenora when Stefan rang asking us to please release him. The atmosphere was a little tense as we back-tracked 20 minutes to unlock the gate. Ric's woes continued when we got back to my place when he couldn't find his car keys. They were eventually found in my jacket pocket (which he'd been wearing to keep warm while waiting in the car all afternoon). Janine looked ready to kill him. Just before going to bed I realised I hadn't locked my car after opening it so Ric could search for the key, so I tried doing it through the window but with no result. Figuring a door was slightly ajar I headed out to find Ric had not simply left his door ajar but completely open. Does anyone know a good nursing home?



*Alan & Ric testing the bolts.*

*Janine McKinnon*



## H-8 Wolf Hole (Hastings) Beginners Trip

18 February 2017

Chris Sharples

**Party:** Michael Packer, Chris Sharples, Sherry Smart and their kids, Charlie and Isabell.

This trip was advertised as a beginner's trip. Although I had neglected to mention that the "beginner" aspect included me taking responsibility for rigging the 30 metre entrance pitch, this was alleviated when Michael Packer decided it was a good opportunity to introduce his partner, Sherry, and their kids, Isabell and Charlie (13 and 11), to vertical caving. Fortunately we had 100 m of bombproof 11 mm rope so we were able to rig the pitch as two side-by-side ropes which allowed Michael to carefully chaperone each of his partner and the kids down and up the rope. As a result Michael ended up descending and re-ascending the pitch six times on the one trip!

I descended first and rigged a rebelay at the lip of the entrance shaft about 8 metres down, which I guess was OK as I received no complaints. Although there are two other rebelay bolts further down, I decided not to use these as the rope only briefly touches the smooth mossy rock at a couple of places during the descent and with 11 mm rope these seemed superfluous, which is possibly why the bolts are not in any case supplied with permanent hangers (*Ed: Nope, Ric and I just didn't leave our personal hangers in when we bolted the pitch. If the cave was done more often we would*).

After some waiting at the bottom of the spectacular entrance shaft, the whole party finally assembled at the cave entrance, where the logbook indicated the last visit was a group led by Serena about two years ago. The route to Lake Pluto is fairly well trogged and the kids seemed to enjoy the only-slightly labyrinthine passages which took us there. Having only managed to achieve seriously dreadful photos of the lake on my several previous visits, I was keen to try getting some better images using my new Panasonic Lumix which actually does time exposures – apparently a rarity with modern 'tough' cameras. Together with a dear little mini-tripod and some light-painting using headlights, I was reasonably pleased with the results.

Lake Pluto has formed as a result of Permian siltstone granules funnelling down a narrow pipe from the surface and accumulating in a large alluvial fan that obstructs the cave passage drainage. On a previous trip Rolan Eberhard collected some charcoal fragments from the fan and obtained a carbon-14 radiometric date of around 23,000 to 17,000 years BP, which was around the maximum intensity of the last glacial climatic phase. I have previously noted similar layers of siltstone granules in the soil on the slopes of Hastings ridge above the cave, and it looks like a combination of freeze-thaw weathering of what would then have been an unvegetated siltstone cap above the

cave plus snow-melt waters washing the granules underground through karstic pipes has resulted in this rather unusual phenomenon (fascinating if you are a geomorphologist, but here endeth the lesson if you don't care).

The party returned via a detour into South Park and a long but orderly process of extracting the beginners up their first ever 30 metre pitch, which went without incident and resulted in a bunch of people back at the cars who all seemed well pleased with the day's outing.



*Reflections on Lake Pluto*

*Chris Sharples*



*Lake Pluto*

*Chris Sharples*