Speleo Spiel 425

March-April 2018

Newsletter of Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc. ISSN 2208-1348

Front Cover: *Devils Pot, the traditional route.*

Photo: Grant Elliot

Back Cover: *Systematic desensitisation therapy –Session No.1.*

Photo: Mal Chandler

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

Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated

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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.

Issue No. 425, March-April 2018

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Editorial

Well I have now completed one year in this role of *Spiel* editor and it has certainly proved an interesting experience, and steep learning curve (in more ways than one), as I observe in my Editor's report. On that note, it is "reporting season" for the club and therefore all of the annual reports from office bearers are reproduced here for the record, and for you to read all gathered together for those of you who wish to do so. Also, the record of the results of the election of office bearers for 2018.

So as not to make this issue of the *Spiel* too dusty we have trip reports, as usual, from the somewhat recent past. A couple of them are possibly more detailed than the average reader would wish (and yes, I am to blame for one of them) however it is to be remembered that this magazine, as well as hopefully being an enjoyable and entertaining read, is also the only record for the club of what our members are doing, where, when and how. Anyone who has delved into the archive searching for information on past exploits will attest to the frustration they feel when they find no trip reports about caves they are interested in, no rigging notes, or worse, accounts of past explorations with no useful details. Pertinent information is always worth recording even if no-one is interested in reading it at the time. That reminds me of several PhD theses I have seen.

Surprise, surprise, we also have THREE maps this issue. Yes, count them, three. That breaks the drought we have been suffering since I took over this role. It does beg the question as to where the maps for all this (other) exploration that we are hearing about are. Remember, if you haven't mapped it you haven't discovered it.

All this makes for a bumper issue. Even bigger than that epic of the recent past, *SS* 422, with the seemingly endless report of Isabelle's rescue. So sit back with a large Latte and enjoy.

Stuff 'n Stuff

- EuroSpeleo 2018 will be held at Ebensee, Austria from 23-26 August 2018. This event is held every two years at differing venues in Europe. I have mentioned this here before. Details: http://www.eurospeleo.at/

- The ASF Biennial Conference is to be held at the end of 2018. This time it is northern Tasmania's turn. I have given details on this before too, so this is just to keep it in your mind. Details here: https://asfconference2019.com/

- In an attempt to show a lack of partisanship, and scrupulous fairness, I will now put in a plug for "the other" sort of caving. I report the 18th International Vulcanospeleology Symposium will be held in Lava Beds National Monument in late July 2018. For those of you prepared to brave US immigration in these times of Trump the link to the website is here: http://18ivslavabeds.com/

- Alan Jackson is giving us all a fit of déjà-vu with his reprise of the role of *Caves Australia* magazine's general everything person. You will all have noted that said publication ceased to appear regularly after Alan last ceased producing it. In fact only 2 issues appeared in the almost 3 years since he was in control. It hadn't appeared in anything like a regular timeframe for several years before he last took over production (anyone following me here?). So here we go again. It will come out regularly and on time now. All it needs is content worth reading, so I will be presumptuous here and suggest that if you have anything interesting to report then send it to Alan for inclusion. AFTER it has been sent to me for the *Spiel* of course.

- This note is by Alan Jackson and refers to the updated map in the latter part of this issue of the *Spiel*: "The map of JF-268 Pooshooter with 2017 extensions is based on Madphil's 2007 map. His PDF (from original file created in Corel Draw) opened nicely in Illustrator and allowed me to fiddle with it. I took the opportunity to rotate the plan view so north was up the page instead of inexplicably skewed 70 degrees. I also noticed his north arrow wasn't aligned to true north (as stated on the map) but was magnetic. The new one is genuinely aligned to magnetic north, I promise. I deleted the inset box showing plan detail at the bottom of SOS and added the label 'Long John Silver' to the lonely arrow on the elevation. Hopefully I've made some mistakes too, so the character of the original map is maintained."

- For those of you not up-to-date on your social media skills, much of the non-verbal communication within the club now seems to have moved to the STC Facebook page. Trips are advertised there much more frequently than on the listserver (those few trips that do get advertised to the general membership). Photos are posted, general comments and banter happen, events advertised and organised. So, if you are missing out on all that and want to keep up and see what's happening then you need to get on board.

- I am always looking for interesting snippets for this section of the *Spiel* so if you come across any interesting bits of cave related information, or amusing anecdotes, or cartoons, then please send them to me. Otherwise you will just get whatever I can put here. Attribution too please. Photos come into this category as well, with credits.

- Finally, on a sadder note, we marked the passing of John Dunkley recently. For those of us who have been around for a while, or those involved in Speleo-politics (or both) John was a long - standing member of ASF and contributed to caving in many roles over many decades. The club, through our secretary Chris Sharples, sent a note of condolence to his widow, Jeanette. Vale John Dunkley, you will be missed.

Office Bearers' Reports

President - Philip Jackson

The year just gone has seen the usual exploration in the Junee-Florentine. Much of this has been the labour-intensive business of cave diving with a few leads explored to termination and a few more discovered in the process. The majority of this was in Niggly Cave and Porcupine Pot. All this work is gradually exposing more glimpses of the Junee Master System. The JF area has also seen plenty of training, tourist and just for fun trips.
The Upper Florentine has also seen a couple of trips to the Bookend Trust Cave search region with several small caves located including some not previously located by the Trust activities.

The Hastings, Ida Bay, Weld, Mt. Ronald Cross, Mt Cripps areas also had some visits with an exciting rumour of a recent discovery at Hastings. Mystery Creek Cave at Ida Bay was also the venue for two genuine cave rescue missions.

All the rescue training that has been happening in the last few years was put to good use with two successful rescues undertaken in Midnight Hole. The first was a simple haul of an exhausted caver to the surface from the base of the last pitch. Club members carried out this rescue. The second was extracting a visiting Swiss caver with a fractured leg from the bottom of the fourth pitch. This rescue involved Police, Ambulance Officers and cavers working effectively together. No doubt the SAR training in recent years contributed greatly to the success of this rescue. These rescues are well documented in *Speleo Spiel* issues.

Following these rescues the club applied for funds from ASF to purchase a Petzl Nest stretcher and associated necessary rescue equipment for use both in training and actual rescues. With no response from ASF the club applied to the Tasmanian Community Fund for the money and was successful. Much credit goes to Andreas Klocker for kick starting this process and for his work in organising the training sessions.

The club decided to investigate the possibility of a hut or some form of accommodation in or nearby Maydena. There are several possibilities ranging from a basic hut in the bush somewhere to a house in the town. I am currently building up a file of the different possibilities, probabilities and ultimately costs.

This accommodation will be a slow process, but it has been years since we had the Junee Homestead so one or two more won't hurt.

Tasmanian caving was shown to the world with the release of the film *Sixteen Legs*. This film, outlining the life cycle of *Hickmania troglodytes*, was part of the Bookend Trust program and enjoyed by several club members at its Hobart premiere.

Early in the year two intrepid filmmakers, Fraser Johnston and Andrew Terhill began work on their film, *Tartarus*, about cave exploration in the Junee-Florentine. They have been dragged through some serious caves to collect footage of underground exploration and cave diving. There is a tantalizing trailer on the *Tartarus* Facebook page featuring Stefan Clooney.

Well done to all members and office bearers for their dedication and contributions to the efficient operation of the club.

This was my third year as President so I am unable to stand in this position.

Vice President – Petr Smejkal

Reading through the last year minutes I've never had anything to report (I think I brought the "I've got nothing to report" sentence to a perfection).
Anyhow for myself it was a steep learning curve in terms of understanding the necessary bureaucracy that keeps the club running.

During the last year I did sign a few forms and cheques but except for that I do not feel like I am doing that much for the club. I've got nothing against improving my "nothing to report" sentence in 2018 but if you feel like that is not enough I am happy to pass the function on to anybody who feels more politically competent.

Secretary – Chris Sharples

It seems to be in the nature of the Secretary's job to not have a lot to report. I took the meeting minutes, wrote them up and circulated them before the next meeting (always!), occasionally checked the PO box for glossy cave magazines and bank notices, and actually wrote and sent only a very few letters on STC business. From a secretarial perspective the highlight of the year was assisting Andreas Klocker, Tony Culberg and Petr Smejkal in various ways with our successful application to the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) for a grant for Cave Rescue Equipment. I strongly suggest we follow this up with a cave rescue training exercise showcasing the shiny new gear, our capabilities (and the TCF support) for the media, which I think will be essential if we want to apply for further grants in future.

That's about as exciting as the secretary's job got. I am happy to stand for one more year (my third) of the same.

Training Officer – Alan Jackson

Quite a few training sessions and beginner trips were run in the last 12 months (the usual things at Fruehauf, bolting action behind Waterworks and furniture rigging on my living room floor). Other than the motivated Nat, there never seemed to be much demand until you advertise a session and suddenly you're overwhelmed with interest and attendees. I made various promises about regular summer Fruehauf sessions but never really got it going; Children make life hard. I could probably do this role again unless someone else has their eye on it.

Treasurer – Tony Culberg

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

For the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

INCOME	**2017**	**2016**
	$	**$**
Membership (44 members)	3870.00	4714.50
Membership (9 Introductory)	405.00	-
Subscriptions Speleo Spiel	120.00	80.00
Late Payment penalty	30.00	-
Gear Hire	378.00	283.00
Donation	30.00	1.00
Interest	218.96	169.08
Sundries	-	10.00
Wonderstruck book	-	2530.00
Trip fees	-	90.00
Grants	-	500.00
TOTAL INCOME	5051.96	8377.58
EXPENDITURE	**2017**	**2016**
	$	**$**
ACKMA membership	40.00	40.00
ASF	2990.00	2886.00
Auditing	93.50	93.50
Annual Report Filing	61.20	59.20
Gear store costs	84.90	51.30
Gear repairs	80.00	-
Gear replacements	1523.40	70.00
PO Box rent	196.00	191.00
S & R Airfares	317.52	510.57
Spiel production	322.42	567.02
Stationery	2.00	-
SUB TOTAL	5711.01	4358.59
SURPLUS (LOSS) for calendar year	(659.05)	4018.99
Plus, Extraordinary Income item		
Crowd Funding Appeal (Note 8)	410.00	
Actual Loss	(249.05)	

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 December 2017

MEMBERS' FUNDS	**$**	**$**
Balance as at 1 January 2017	16216.95	
Less		
Loss for 2017	249.05	
Balance as at 31 December 2017	15967.90	
REPRESENTED BY		
CURRENT ASSETS	**(2017)**	**(2016)**
Cash at bank account	5967.90	6216.95
Term Deposit	10000.00	10000.00
	15967.90	16216.95

NOTES

1 The above accounts are prepared on a cash basis

2 Two accounts have been presented in early January 2018 which relates to costs in the 2017 year - $73.35 and $151.45. I have not accrued them

3 The gear store manager is owed money for his work in 2017, 30% of 378 = $113.40

4 A grant for $6590 has been approved for S & R gear, the money was received on 17 January 2018. All this grant plus more will be spent by 31 March 2018

5 Membership is: Full single 24, concession 7, family 6, introductory 12, life 4

6 The club no longer holds any petty cash – it was banked in March

7 *Spiel* costs includes payments for 2 issues from 2016, $79.90

8 The crowd funding appeal will not be repeated

Further comments from the Treasurer

The real loss for 2017 of $659 is a worry. The net membership fees after paying ASF is $1285. We spent $1603 on rope, helmets and repairs. We also spent $317 on airfares for Al Warild to provide expert advice at a Search & Rescue training session.

I totally approve of that spending – it is what the club is about!

But the reality is that the spending on core activity was $1920 and the revenue only $1285.

In the long run, we will soon be dipping into our reserves, especially as there is work being done on making the archive more accessible and usable. There will be software, and possibly hardware, costs involved.

The Editor, Janine McKinnon, and I are concerned that the amount being recovered for hard copies of the *Spiel* does not cover costs. Costs were $240, revenue only $120. We are required by law to supply a copy of *Speleo Spiel* to each of the Tasmanian and National Libraries, so some cost there is unavoidable. And we do exchange some hard copies with other clubs, and thus build a library.

In late 2018 we can expect heavier than usual wear on our ropes, as we will be hosting field trips after the ASF Conference. While we will receive some income form visitors, this might not cover the real cost.

Notwithstanding the above comments, I recommend that the fees for 2018 calendar year remain the same as for 2017.

Social Secretary– Alan Jackson

We had some slide shows at Guy's (thanks Guy and family for putting up with the occasional invasion) and a BBQ or two. Rope testing was kind of social too. The Midnight Hole cave rescue was very social (particularly the post-rescue gathering at Marion Court – good job, Serena). We could do a lot more though. Someone else should do it in 2018.

Public Officer – Serena Benjamin

Almost, but not quite, nothing to report. The year just gone saw a couple of cave rescue situations unfold. There was potential for the Public Officers role to be more than just a redundant position, however Tasmania Police and more vocal members of STC handled media enquiries, returning of gear and so forth.

I have embraced the feeling of being redundant and am happy to continue in the position unless someone else is desperate to. It's not very taxing.

STC Librarian / Archivist – Greg Middleton

Since February 2017 the Library has received only 34 new paper journals (ten less than last year – continuing the trend to digital), bringing our holding to 4,977.

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

ACKMA Journal: #105, #106, #107, #108, #109

The Very Latest (CSS): Vol. 22(1)

Binoomea (JCH&PS): #167, #168, #169

ISS Newsletter: Vol. 23(2) - (4)

SUSS Bull.: Vol. 55(2) - (4)

Trog (KSS): Vol. 52(7) - 53(7)

CEGSA News: Vol. 62(1) - (3)

CEGSA Annual Report 2017

Speleo Spiel: #419 - #424

NZSS Bull.: Vol. 11 (211 – 214) + digital copies back to No.1, 1952.

NSS News (USA): Vol. 75(2) – 76(2)

J. Cave & Karst Studies (USA): Vol. 78(3) - 79(3)

Cave & Karst Science (UK): Vol. 44(1) - (3)

17th ICS Proceedings, Sydney (2nd Edn., 2 vols)

The library received no new books; our holding remains at 426.

Our CD/DVD collection grew by 1 to 52.

I'm happy to continue in the position but would also be happy to hand over to someone really keen to take the job over (*Who has a spare house for storage? - Ed)*.

Webmaster – Yoav Bar-Ness

Not sure if being webmaster is a "real" office (probably not!) but here's letting you know that our web page is still live!

At the AGM/GM I'll try to round up some numbers about visitation.

I'm aware that Facebook is swamping over a fair bit of trip planning and correspondence but I haven't been checking that regularly ... however, our web page is serving as our public presence so do give it a glance over.

Any suggestions or contributions, let me know, I'm happy to help and happy to continue on into next year.

Search and Rescue Co-ordinator-Andreas Klocker

2017 has been a very exciting year from a cave rescue perspective!

Firstly, we had our first "proper" vertical cave rescue which was a great success (see Spiel articles for all the detail). Part of this success was due to the fact that STC members, Police, Paramedics, and SES worked together really well. The other part of this success was due to the fact that many of STC's members have honed their cave rescue skills at the annual exercises over the last few years. There is really not much that could have been improved at this rescue, apart from a fancier stretcher (a problem now solved). Nevertheless, hopefully there won't be another cave rescue for a long time.

Secondly, STC was successful in getting a grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) worth $6,590. STC agreed to co-fund $2,240 and Tony Culberg collected another ~$600 through crowd funding. Alan Jackson is currently putting in a huge order with EXPE in France for a shiny new stretcher and a lot of other rescue gear – this should arrive soon. Thanks a lot to Chris Sharples, Tony Culberg, and Philip Jackson for helping to write that grant. Once the gear arrives I am hoping to organise a cave rescue weekend together with Police so we can test the new gear and do some media work for TCF.

Thirdly, the annual cave rescue exercise happened again over two weekends in Nov/Dec 2017. It was fun and productive, with most participants from all over Tasmania being repeat offenders, resulting in a continuous increase in cave rescue capability in Tassie. Al Warild came along again for those weekends and helped out teaching us, so thank you to him. I am currently communicating with Police SAR to try and align dates for the next cave rescue exercise with their calendar; since November and December are very busy for them this might mean we will have the next cave rescue exercise during another time – stay tuned!

On a national level, ACRC has done exactly the same as all the years before – absolutely nothing! Let's see if STC's Sarah Gilbert can do magic and change this …

That's it for this year. I am happy to continue on if that's what people want.

Gear Store – Geoff Wise

This year was business as usual for the gear store. We got some new rope, cut some older rope, tested some rope until it broke and labelled some rope. We will probably need some more rope in 2018. Most of the gear is in pretty good condition, the trog suits are falling apart but these are all second-hand donations and to be expected.

We bought some new helmets more light modules and now have four club lights.

Gear was borrowed and mostly returned. Some was even cleaned. We lost a couple of pieces of SRT kit which need to be replaced. It is worthwhile if you borrow an SRT kit to check you have all the bits at the end of the caving trip and that they are not taken by someone else.

This year we also adjusted the rules to make gear hire per week in an attempt to encourage people to return gear promptly. Maybe it worked.

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

Electronic Archivist – Michael Packer

After putting up my hand to take over the reins of the electronic archive from Ric, who'd done a sterling job for the preceding 352 years, I immediately regretted it when Ric introduced me to the map draw and filing cabinet that goes with the position. After a significant amount of work to relocate said draw and cabinet (thanks to Ric for the assistance) I settled back to survey the contents. After delving past the original stone copy of the ten commandments, the lost Dead Sea Scrolls and previously unknown amendment to the Magna Carta granting peasants the right to eat cake in church I discovered a lot of very detailed maps and information stretching back many years. A similar goldmine of info was unearthed in the filing cabinet and the actual electronic archive itself. Seriously guys, if you want to know about a cave, then there is a high chance that there is something about it in the archive.

After stuffing myself silly on all the information it occurred to me that it was a pity that it wasn't more available to the club membership so I embarked on an investigative exercise into the possibility of putting it all online. Opinions were mixed, technical issues were raised and addressed, discussions were had, documents were drafted, quotes were gained, example systems were built and tested and then I got distracted by life stuff. I hope to revitalise this idea.

During the year various people have been provided with maps when requested, new map numbers where provided when required, updated maps and other info was incorporated into the archive when provided. That said, more caves have been explored than maps have been drawn but apparently that is pretty normal (it takes a special kind of person to like paperwork).

I'm happy to continue looking after the electronic archive.

Science Officer – Stefan Eberhard

Last year's *Speleo Spiels* record a lot of caving activity by club members. The main area of focus in both surface and underground exploration and documentation has been in the Junee-Florentine karst, most notably the Upper Florentine (Summers Creek catchment) and the Junee Master Cave system (Porcupine Pot and Niggly Cave). The hard-core exploration, diving and mapping efforts in Porcupine Pot and Niggly Cave are especially noteworthy. To date the huge efforts put into these push trips has yielded little in the way of new passage, however it's only a matter of time before the next big breakthrough … maybe it will be a successful dive connection between Niggly Cave and Growling Swallet, or a breakthrough near the Junee Cave end of the system, via JF341, or

Junee Cave itself. Whichever, it's an exciting new era of JF exploration, with discoveries posted on Facebook before the mud has dried on the face of the new generation of speleologists, and/or captured live in 4K video for the *Tartarus* film project. Thumbs up!

At more leisurely pace, there has been some surface exploration in the Surprise River (Mount Ronald Cross karst), and recent revitalised interest in the downstream drainage of the Mount Anne / Weld River karst.

Along with many other speleo groups, mapping caves is probably the most important scientific contribution that STC makes. In terms of published surveys there were few traditional style maps published in the *Spiel* this year, however significant data wrangling and digital visualisation went on behind the scenes … the most interesting of these that I saw was a topographic overlay of the two surveys of Niggly Cave, and finally … 35 years after the original survey data was collected … a 3D projection of Porcupine Pot. It's been terrific to see these surveys applied to direct and stimulate further exploration which has led to new discoveries. Thumbs up to those who have contributed to the resurrection of these two sleeping giants!

Petr Smekjal has been undertaking fluorescein dye tracing experiments to improve understanding of the hydrological pathways in Niggly Cave.

Club members assisted with collection of cave *Anaspides* for a major study by researchers from Germany and Sydney. We are still awaiting publication of the results, and the researchers plan to return to do further work in coming years. Arthur Clarke assisted Prof Dave Merritt with his ongoing glow worm research at Ida Bay.

My apologies if I have missed any items worthy of inclusion in the Science Report.
I am willing to stand for this position again.

***Spiel* Editor – Janine McKinnon**

I have been doing this job for a year now. All six issues have managed to come out on time. It has been a steep learning curve, particularly on how to format everything so it doesn't look like a complete amateurish mess, and I still have a lot to learn. It is fun and interesting though, although trying to find/create copy when you don't have much isn't so much fun. I know I can waffle on a bit but sometimes even my skills are stretched.

I do want to thank all those who have sent me copy, and to active cavers who send me trip reports. Most of you do but certainly not all. It is valuable to the club to document all our trips and activities, and the magazine is only worth reading, and producing, if there is plenty of interesting stuff to read in it.

I also want to very gratefully thank my regular sub-editors: Tony Culberg, Greg Middleton, Alan Jackson, and occasionally when others are too busy, Ric Tunney. Yes, it is quite a few but they each bring particular skills and foci to the task. I regularly read professional magazines and newspapers (and books) with more grammar, typing and other errors in them than our little amateur rag has, and that is due to our awesome sub-editors. I am happy to keep going at this for another year.

Results of AGM voting:

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

Trip Reports

JF-659 Slipslide Pot

19 November 2017

Chris Sharples

Party: John Webb, Janine McKinnon, Chris Sharples

John Webb and Chris Sharples were out blundering about in Norske Skog's Florentine Valley "Settlement Block" one day during July 2017 when they came across a sinkhole with a narrow vertical hole going out of sight from its lowest point. On a subsequent inspection of the area with Forest Practices Authority personnel, John dropped a rock down the hole and got a healthy-sounding splash after a few seconds. The possibility that this could be a stream cave connecting to the main known resurgence stream cave at the Settlement, JF-459 Nameless Spring (Sharples & McKinnon 2016) meant that further investigation was needed.

So it was that John and Chris returned with Janine McKinnon on 19 November 2017. With a bit of digging and the removal of a dead fern tree trunk, the entrance hole grew to a size that looked actually enterable (about 0.5 m wide) and could be seen to be descendable for at least 4 metres or so vertically. So, a rope was anchored and Janine went first, soon pronouncing that there was plenty of space down below. The vertical entrance hole turned into a rift a couple of metres long that widened out below the entrance and a few metres down turned into a spacious but steeply inclined, rather slippery and muddy passage descending about 20 metres to a small but strongly flowing stream. So slippery was the descending passage in fact that the rope was needed all the way to the bottom, not to mention on the return. So much so that after considering a few alternatives the name Slipslide Pot was selected for this cave.

In the chamber at the bottom of the passage the stream emerged from a narrow un-enterable rift on one side and flowed only four or five metres across the bottom before entering a sump pool about two metres wide and looking to be perhaps a metre deep. Fresh mud deposits on the passage walls indicate that much of the descending chamber probably backs up with water at times of high inflows (*So it is not very likely that the sump-passage is of big dimensions. Damn. - Ed).*

Chris followed Janine to the bottom and was subsequently followed by John who by this time had judged he would fit through the entrance – which he did, although his later exit did require some effort! Following this, John relaxed by installing the JF-659 tag on a limestone outcrop adjacent the entrance, confident that this hole warranted it.

Although the enterable stream passage at the bottom of the cave was only a few metres long, the flow is sufficient to suggest the possibility of connections with both the resurgence cave at Nameless Spring (JF-459) and one or more of the stream sinks on the eastern side of the Settlement Block that have previously been dye-traced to Nameless Spring (details to be published soon in the *Spiel*).

It is clear that a return visit for the purpose of dye tracing will be necessary, and Janine thought that the sump pool looked worth a return visit for an initial exploratory dive. So, stay tuned (assuming you are enthralled by the search for a minor master stream cave beneath the Settlement Block).

Reference:

Sharples, C., & McKinnon, J., 2016: JF-459 Nameless Spring, JF-73 and JF-652; *Speleo Spiel*, Issue 413, March-April 2016, p. 14-15, 18

Janine contemplates the sump pool at the bottom of JF-659. Our steep descent inevitably released enough debris into the sump pool that the initially-clear water became turbid before we had a chance to see its bottom.

Photo by Chris Sharples

Janine exiting the grotty JF-659 entrance.

Photo by Chris Sharples.

Search for JF-459 Nameless Spring suspected master cave connector "Lucky Day Caves"

14 December 2017

John Webb

Party: J. McKinnon, C. Sharples & J. Webb

The "Lucky Day Caves" (LDC) tag was given by Rolan following a work day failed attempt (flooded cave) to investigate bones in the JF-659 "Slipslide Pot" stream way. We decided there were nearby features on the Nameless Spring surface trog LiDAR map we could check out so an hour later we had five potential leads with one stream sink, one diggable entrance and three other entrances. It was late in the day as we visited a couple of other features earlier so we decided to return another day when the water was lower and make it an STC trip.

Trip advertised, Janine gave the date and Rolan wasn't offended that he couldn't make it. After the essential Banjos stop where a second caving party was also fuelling up we arrived at the stream sink at 10:15 am. It had the look of a potentially large stream cave from the entrance but at around 15 m it closed to a point where wetsuits are needed for a more comfortable grovel in the steam. I'm a sensible older fastidious type (soft) caver. I was going to label all of us with that but Chris sent me to the dictionary for "dilettante" (his personal preference) and I can't fair-mindedly lower Janine to my level, anyway we stayed dry, tagged it (JF-671) and went in search of the next LDC.

It is a 3 m by 4 m, 4 m deep doline situated on the top of a hill, which promised much and quickly delivered disappointment (could have named it 'Teenage Romance') with 5 m of narrowing passage to an apparent vertical choke. A small and uninteresting cave that was, as it turned out, on Chris's observation tagged as JF-116. Not so lucky and not an effective bone trap either where scavengers can walk in to eat anything unfortunate enough to tumble in a near vertical side. We moved on to the next LDC, a diggable entrance expanded to 0.5 m by Chris and Janine at the northern side of a 5 m deep by 15 m doline. It widened inside and was navigable to around 8 m in clayey soil passage to limestone boulders with no way on. With no real cave and no exposed bedrock to tag in any case we left for the next LDC.

Bedrock outcropping on a southerly slope held the next entrance, with a 3 m ovate chamber from the 1 m entrance offering a couple of passages with the lower one blocked by an immovable (on the day) chock stone at around 10 m from the entrance. The upper passage gave Janine access to the lower passage just above the choke so that was done too and we tagged it JF-672 and headed off for the final LDC with dwindling expectations. This cave was a dual entrance on a south-east-facing bedrock outcrop that didn't deliver enough passage to warrant a tag. We had time to investigate a couple of nearby surface features with no new caves found.

Without future substantial progress in the stream sink passage on a day with no chance of rain (for me in any case) and low stream levels the LDC series is finished. This is a bit of a letdown.

There was amusing pre-trip banter around the possibility of being able to use the JF-666 tag on the day but nothing extensive enough eventuated. There's still another surface day left in the NSM, with the ever-elusive master stream cave awaiting discovery and exploration, or possibly sump dived (JF-659) or pushed in the case of JF-671. Maybe a re-tag with a very wicked name could be in order.

JF-387 Another trip to Porcupine

16 December 2017

Andreas Klocker

Party: Serena Benjamin, Gabriel Kinzler, Andreas Klocker, Chelsea Pasutto (visitor from Canada)

I had a visitor here in Tassie for a week and a bit, and she was dead keen to see some local caves. The first weekend we headed to Rescue Pot to check out a rock pile I've wanted to look at for a while (*SS* 424) and this weekend the plan was to head into Porcupine and have a look around the rock pile, just below all the pitches, to see if anything had been missed during the original exploration.

The first thing Chelsea found on a look around was a turd - a rather well-conserved turd - not the best thing to show an overseas visitor - may its owner live in shame forever! Luckily, we soon found things more exciting. Only a few minutes from where we usually take off our SRT kit, Serena suddenly found a rather large pitch – it went down for probably around 8-10 metres, and up for quite a far way. Soon after all of us found even more drops, and Serena got very excited about coming back for some rigging practice. Most of the pitches were clean washed, but without an active flow, and went up further than one would expect from all the shortish pitches in the rest of the cave, comparable to only the Notre Dame region which we found previously further upstream.

All of those drops required a rope (or I should say – a rope is recommended unless you're a die-hard Eberhard) and hence we left the pitches for another time. It is very likely that these pitches just drop into the streamway leading towards the crawl-that-goes-on-for-too-long, but we'll have to come back to confirm! Maybe they could connect into a new part of the cave ... unlikely but who knows.

We then continued towards the upstream end of the Gormenghast streamway for a bit of touristing, had some Gummi Bears, and then exited the cave at a leisurely pace. Definitely a very easy and enjoyable day out!

JF-387 Porcupine Pot

6 January 2018

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Andreas Klocker, Stephen Fordyce, Petr-the-machine Smejkal, Fraser Johnston, Han-wei Lee, Anna Ekdahl

While the rest of Australia experienced a record-setting heatwave, some of the usual suspects and a few new ones made our cold and miserable way to the far upstream sump of Porcupine Pot for a dive attempt, and of course some filming for the *Tartarus* documentary (check out the trailer at https://www.tartarusfilm.com/).

We made good use of the advance order of TFM-spec caving bags from Aspiring Safety to transport an impressive amount of gear to and from the sump.

A happy-looking pre-caving party

Photo: Stephen Fordyce

Andreas's dive wasn't successful due to silty conditions - low water conditions meant that the water was clear, but the flow coming out of the sump (if any - might have been seeping through elsewhere) wasn't strong enough to wash away the suspended silt generated from a quick foray and return for more weight. Andreas reported the silt was rolling down the gentle slope ahead - he felt around trying to get through it but with no luck.

We were 13 hrs underground, with a slow trip out laden with all dive gear (except fins and weights) and a broken cameraman. Fraser Johnston also set a world record for the most whinging ever on his way out. His caving bag stood up well to some spectacular verbal abuse.

Somewhere along the way

Photo: Stephen Fordyce

IB-131 Old Ditch Road (ODR)

7 January 2018

Janine McKinnon

Party: Nicole Baillie, Tim Featonby, Janine McKinnon, Grant Rees, Ric Tunney

Tim was down from the mainland to do a cave diving project with me and I thought we'd give him a little taste of Tassie dry caving whilst he was here. Nicole was his partner, and a member of FUSSI like Tim. ODR seemed like a good choice for cavers who hadn't caved in Tassie before. This was to be the second time we had done this cave as a pull through trip. This time we decided to avoid the P-hanger on the first pitch (which is placed in a very poor position) and rig from the window directly above the second pitch. This makes for much easier access to the second pitch head. However, the only safe and suitable rigging point was around a fairly oblique corner. We decided to leave a permanent tape around this natural and run the double rope through a ring on the tape. The rope was rigged with double butterfly knots, so it was not in a state for a pull down (also not possible for the abseiler to go down the wrong side and kill themselves - never say I don't learn lessons). The tail on one end was also tied into one of the P-hangers on pitch 2, as a loop to aid with the passing of the now-rebelay at the second pitch-head (clear as mud?). Two ropes tied together were used for the 38 m second pitch (and the similarly-sized fourth pitch). This proved to be a better way to do this first pitch, and transition to the second pitch. The best solution (even for SRT return trips) would be a new bolt in a much better position on this first pitch.

All descended this with not too much trouble. However, when I came down last (using a rack), I took out all the knots on the first rope to make for as little friction as possible on the pull down. I descended to the top of pitch two and tried to pull pitch one rope down. Alas, this proved impossible. You can blame weak, old woman muscles; however, I think serious friction was in the mix there somewhere too. I finally abandoned the attempt and left the rope to be retrieved from the top on our way past the entrance at the end of the trip (which Ric and I did, plus removing the impermanent permanent tape).

All other pitches went smoothly, with pitches rigged as single rope descents using both P-hangers and me coming last and converting them to double rope (single P-hanger) pull down abseils.

We touristed through the Ball Room, and through the main passage to the entrance at a leisurely pace. Water levels were very low. The gate was a little difficult to undo from the inside but not ridiculously so. We left a can of WD 40 on the inside, to partner the one on the outside of the gate.

Ric, Grant and I marvelled at the redecorating in the entrance area by the rock fall in recent months. It certainly means dry feet getting across the now non-existent pool and makes the steps up the wall redundant I would think.

We were back at the cars by 4:30 pm.

A dye tracing experiment at the Settlement: looking for a minor master cave in the Florentine Valley

January 2018

Chris Sharples

During the 2000s, Chris Sharples was contracted by Norske Skog, the freehold owner of the Settlement Block in the Florentine Valley, to undertake several surface karst mapping projects over the Settlement to assist with forestry management (rumour holds that some previous such mapping had occurred but that – in the usual manner of such things – the resulting paper maps could no longer be found). Numerous sinkholes and cave entrances were found, their locations mapped in GIS format and documented in a final report (Sharples 2009). Subsequent pre-harvest surveys by Norske Skog workers continued to locate more karst features, and John Webb (of Norske) organised a number of field days with STC members during which some of the cave entrances found were explored and mapped.

During all this work, five notable stream-sinks taking perennial streams were located close to the south-east boundary of the Settlement block, and just one major resurgence spring cave (hilariously named Nameless Spring JF-459 by Chris Sharples; see Sharples & McKinnon 2016, which includes JF-459 plan) was found on the western edge of the block, adjacent the banks of the Florentine River (see Figure 2). The nearest known other significant karst springs lie several kilometres to the north and south, outside the Settlement block (Burns Rising to the south and Frankcombes Spring to the north). In-between all of these, a number of long surface stream channels within the Settlement Block are dry at nearly all times. Given the notable volumes of water flowing into the stream-sinks and out of the resurgence cave, it was obvious that the Settlement block is underlain by a substantial underground karstic stream cave system. Additional evidence for a cave stream system was apparent from the surface karst mapping which shows that many of the sinkholes in the block lie in roughly linear chains suggestive of collapses into underlying stream caves (see Figure 2). Given that much of the land surface in the Settlement block lies less than 20 metres vertically above the local hydrological base level defined by the Florentine River on the west side of the block, it is clear that cave streams beneath the block must be mainly at shallow depths, making it unsurprising that stream cave roof collapses might propagate upwards to manifest as surface sinkhole depressions.

It seemed obvious that there must be some significant stream passages beneath the Settlement, most likely connecting the known stream sinks to Nameless Spring. The surface chains of sinkholes hint at stream passages heading in plausible directions that would connect the stream sinks and spring, with long sections roughly following the NNW – SSE-striking limestone bedding directions and shorter sections at right angles looking like joint-controlled passages. Yet despite a large number of generally short shallow caves having been found and explored across the Settlement, up to 2014 none had given access to a flowing stream except for the short final section of stream passage explored at Nameless Spring itself.

A number of us were discussing the likelihood of a minor master stream cave under the Settlement during 2014, including Chris Sharples, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney and John Webb. We agreed there was scope for a campaign to further explore the Settlement karst with the aim of trying to locate and explore at least parts of the master stream cave that it seems obvious must be there. Janine suggested a foray into the Nameless Spring resurgence cave to see how far upstream it might be possible to explore, while Chris advocated that a good parallel step would be some dye tracing experiments to see which if any or all of the known stream sinks drain to Nameless Spring or elsewhere. Based on the results of this we could make further inferences about likely connecting stream caves and identify priority locations for surface trogging to try to find entrances leading into the master cave passages that we felt sure must be down there somewhere.

As serendipity would have it, right about this time Chris received an email from Jeffrey Prado, an under-graduate student from Sewanee: The University of the South in Tennessee, who was doing a semester of overseas study in Australia and was looking for a project in Tasmania. The suggestion of a dye tracing study in the Settlement Block worked for him, and we were able to set up a project with fluorescein dye and field assistance supplied by STC, charcoal detector bags and instructions provided by Rolan Eberhard (DPIPWE), site access facilitated by John Webb of Norske Skog, and funding provided by Peter McIntosh of Forest Practices Authority to enable analyses by Tom Aley of the Ozark Underground Laboratory (OUL) in Missouri.

Charcoal detector bags were initially placed in the outflow from Nameless Spring (JF-459) during November 2014 to provide baseline measurements prior to inserting dye into the system. These were retrieved and replaced after a week, then Jeffrey, Sarah Gilbert and Chris Sharples had a spectacular time (see Photo 1) inserting more dye than strictly necessary into one of the stream-sinks on the eastern side of the Settlement, a strongly flowing but un-enterable sink in a blind valley known only as SF-267 (from the field numbers used in Chris' previous mapping for Norske (Sharples 2009).

A fast sample analysis by OUL confirmed that the SF-267 stream flowed to Nameless Spring (see Table 1), and Jeffrey was able to write up his project report (Prado 2014) before returning home for Christmas. John Webb and Chris decided to follow up the initial dye tracing success by repeating the process with the southern-most and northern-most of the known stream sinks on the eastern side of the Settlement (SF-262 and JF-652) during 2015, allowing about four months between each test for dye from the previous tests to be flushed from the system. JF-652 was (awkwardly) enterable with about 28 metres of passage, and was subsequently re-visited and mapped by Janine, Ric, Serena Benjamin and Chris: see Sharples & McKinnon (2016), McKinnon (2016). Both of these proved to flow to Nameless Spring as well (see Figure 2 and Table 1), so we felt it would be superfluous to test the

several other stream sinks in-between the tested sinks (Figure 2), as it seemed unlikely they would flow anywhere other than Nameless Spring.

Also, during 2015, John and Chris happened to be pottering around in JF-155, a notably spacious cave by Settlement standards located in the northern part of the Settlement between Nameless Spring and Frankcombes Cave. This cave has a small but flowing stream entering a small sump pool near its lowest point, and it seemed likely that this cave could be close to the northern boundary of the subterranean Nameless Spring catchment. A further dye tracing experiment was done, placing dye into the JF-155 stream and detector bags at both Frankcombes Cave stream and at Nameless Spring (see Table 1). However, the dye failed to show up at either detector location, a result which might be explained by the relatively low stream flow in JF-155 at the time, or by the existence of a third spring somewhere else. It would be worth repeating this dye trace at a time of better stream flow in JF-155.

Photo 1. Jeffrey Prado inserting fluorescein dye into the SF-267 stream sink, 15 November 2014

Photo: Chris Sharples.

The challenge now is to find some enterable parts of the stream passages connecting the sinks and spring whose connection has now been demonstrated. Neither Nameless Spring nor the stream sinks examined are humanly enterable for more than a few tens of metres, and despite the numerous sinkholes and small cave entrances that have been mapped across the intervening expanse of the Settlement, until very recently none had given access to any active stream passages that might be parts of the expected master cave.

The quest is not hopeless, however. During 2017 John and Chris found an unassuming (and in fact uninviting) little vertical hole in a part of the Settlement directly between the stream sinks and Nameless Spring which upon being tested with dropped stones yielded a delayed splash. As described in a separate trip report, John and Chris returned with Janine and upon entering this grot-hole – now tagged as JF-659, Slipslide Pot (Photo 2) – found a spacious chamber descending steeply to a short section of strongly-flowing stream, sumping in a pool.

Photo 2. John Webb at entrance tag to JF-659

Photo: Chris Sharples

The possibility that this is part of the sought-after minor master cave seems high, and further dye tracing plus an exploratory dive by Janine (who doesn't seem to mind diving small uninviting sumps (*You take what you can get-Ed*)) are planned.

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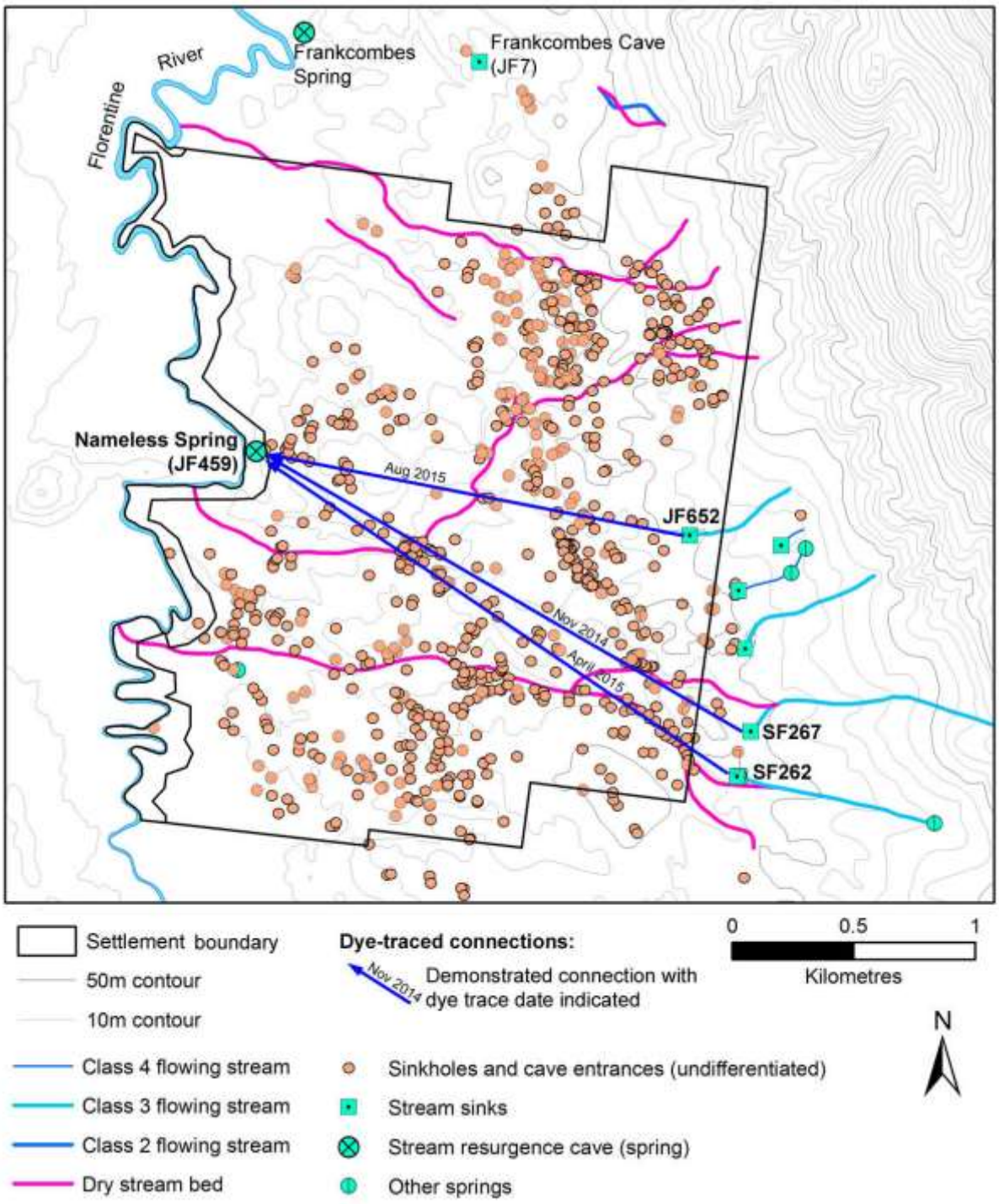


Figure 1: Map of the Settlement Block (Florentine Valley), showing all currently – known surface karst features and stream sink to spring dye tracing connections. The surface karst features are a compilation of features mapped by Chris Sharples during 2002 to 2007 (Sharples 2009), plus numerous additional features mapped during subsequent Norske Skog and STC field work. 'SF' numbers are feature numbers used by Sharples (2009), and 'JF' numbers refer to tagged cave entrances (stream-sink and spring).

Following page:

Table 1: Fluorescein results determined by Ozark Underground Laboratory (Protem, Missouri, USA). Results are measured in fluorescein peak wavelengths (nanometres, nm) and concentration of dye (parts per billion, ppb). ND means no dye detection. 'SF' numbers refer to feature numbers used by Sharples (2009), 'JF' numbers refer to tagged cave entrances (stream sink or spring) where these have been applied.

Detector Bag no.	**Date / Time placed** (DD/MM/YYYY; 24hr)	**Date / Time removed** (DD/MM/YYYY; 24hr)	**Hours immersed**	**Flourescein Analysis results**		**Comments**
				Peak (nm)	Conc. (ppb)	
Stage 1: Stream-sink (SF267) to Nameless Spring (JF459)						
Baseline detector bags placed in Nameless Spring (no dye injected into stream-sink)						
NS-1A	7/11/2014 13:45	11/11/2014 12:30	95	ND	ND	No dye detected.
NS-2A	11/11/2014 12:55	15/11/2014 10:30	93	ND	ND	Second baseline test: no dye detected.
Detector bag placed in Nameless Spring, then 0.5 kg dye injected into stream-sink SF267 (15/11/2014 12:15)						
NS-3A	15/11/2014 11:00	20/11/2014 10:00	119	516.2	3,020	Strong dye signal (connection confirmed)
NS-4A	20/11/2014 10:15	24/11/2014 13:00	99	516.1	1,580	Second detector bag placed: continuing strong dye signal.
Stage 2: Stream-sink (SF262) to Nameless Spring (JF459)						
Baseline detector bags placed in Nameless Spring (no dye injected into stream-sink)						
NS-5A	12/04/2015 10:05	17/04/2015 13:30	124	516.0	0.958	Faint background dye signal – residual from Stage 1 test
NS-6A				516.2	0.919	
Detector bags placed in Nameless Spring, then 0.25 kg dye injected into stream-sink SF262 (17/04/2015 15:01)						
NS-7A	17/04/2015 13:40	24/04/2015 9:57	164	517.0	552	Major increase in dye signal (connection confirmed)
NS-8A				517.1	921	
Stage 3: Stream-sink cave (JF652) to Nameless Spring (JF459)						
Baseline detector bags placed in Nameless Spring (no dye injected into stream-sink)						
NS-9A	12/08/2015 16:00	18/08/2015 14:09	142	515.2	0.339	Faint background dye signal – residual from previous tests
NS-9B				514.8	0.500	
Detector bags placed in Nameless Spring, then 0.25 kg dye injected into stream-sink cave JF652 (18/08/2015 15:23)						
NS-10A	18/08/2015 14:25	24/08/2015 13:23	143	515.9	266	Major increase in dye signal (connection confirmed)
NS-10B				515.9	203	
Stage 4: Testing stream cave JF155 to: Nameless Spring (JF459) and Frankcombes Cave base flow stream (JF7)						
Baseline detector bags placed in Nameless Spring (no dye injected into JF155 stream)						
NS-11A	21/10/2015 16:20	28/10/2015 12:50	165	517.0	1.75	Faint background dye signal – residual from previous tests
Detector bags placed in Nameless Spring and in Frankcombes Cave base-flow stream; then 0.25kg dye injected into JF155 cave stream (28/10/2015 15:30; low flow with sump pool ~0.3m deep)						
NS-12A (JF459)	28/10/2015 12:50	06/11/2015 15:35	219	517.0	1.96	Residual dye signal from previous tests; no connection demonstrated.
FC-1A (JF7)	28/10/2015 14:15	06/11/2015 15:30	217	ND	ND	No connection demonstrated
New detector bags placed in Nameless Spring and Frankcombes Cave base-flow stream, no further dye placed in JF155 cave stream (testing for possible very slow dye travel time)						
NS-13A (JF459)	06/11/2015 15:45	16/11/2015 16:05	240	517	1.83	Residual dye signal from previous tests; no connection demonstrated.
FC-2A (JF7)	06/11/2015 15:30	16/11/2015 15:55	240	ND	ND	No connection demonstrated

Mole Creek Caving

Janine McKinnon

Day one: 10 January 2018.

AM - Lynds Cave

Party: Nicole Baillie (FUSSI), Grant Elliot (Hills Speleos), Tim Featonby (FUSSI, CEGSA), Chris McMonagle ("Parks" Karst officer for Mole Creek) Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

A mixed bag of ASF cavers (plus one blow-in National Parks ranger) gathered for a few days of dry caving before diving in MC-275 (Kubla resurgence) started. Tim was my dive buddy, Nicole his partner, and Grant a friend conveniently passing by.

Neither Ric nor I had been into Lynds for many years, probably in the order of a couple of decades. We had remembered it was pretty, had a shallow stream, one small waterfall climb, and was accessed by crossing the Mersey River, only ankle deep when not in flood, as I recalled, inadequately as it turned out. This was true EXCEPT for the 3 m swim across the pool directly in front of the entrance. We had told everyone not to wear wetsuits as they wouldn't really get wet. Oh well, we are building a myth about Tassie caver's versions of wet.

Lynds Cave. Photo: Grant Elliot

The cave was longer than I remembered, less decorated in the front bits and more decorated in the back bits.

The trip was 3 hours, back to the cars for lunch.

Chris in Lynds Cave. Photo: Grant Elliot

PM - Croesus Cave

Party: As above.

Only Tim had a "point and shoot" camera for this trip, so the pace was better than could be usually expected for a trip into Croesus. We were all wearing wetsuits with trog suits over so everyone was quite comfortable for a leisurely stroll up the stream. It is as beautiful as always and it is lovely to go there with people who appreciate its splendour.

A new stainless-steel gate was sitting outside the cave waiting for the contractor to fit it, sometime in the following couple of weeks. So, it should be in place next time an STC party goes there. Very impressive it looks too.

Chris admiring his turf in Croesus Cave.

Photo: Grant Elliot

We spent 3 hours in the cave, although Ric took Nicole out an hour earlier as she was cold.

We turned around at The Golden Stairs. These were almost dry.

Chris was even more impressed with the caves in his new domain than the morning trip had inspired. Which had been our cunning plan (increasing awe rather than anti-climax).

A clichéd shot, definitely, but it is for a good reason – Croesus Cave

Photo: Grant Elliot

Day two: 11 January 2018

AM - Marakoopa Cave

Party: Tim Featonby (FUSSI, CEGSA), Chris McMonagle ("Parks" Karst officer for Mole Creek) Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

We had had a bit of attrition for this morning's caving. A party of four is a nicer number in any case. We did the through trips of Marakoopa 1 and 2. The fossils in Marakoopa 2 are always worth another look. Water levels were really low, as was true of all the caves we entered on this trip. We had no trouble finding the route cross country to the Devils Pot track for the walk back down the hill. We took our time going through both caves and were back after one and a half hours.

PM - Genghis Khan

Party: Tim Featonby (FUSSI, CEGSA), Chris McMonagle ("Parks" Karst officer for Mole Creek) Janine McKinnon, Nicole Baillie (FUSSI)

A little mix and matching with the punters and we were off again in the afternoon. I haven't been into Genghis for probably a decade but my memory of this one was a little more reliable. My description matched reality. There was no water involved though, so maybe that was a factor.

Nicole and Chris found the entry a little challenging but otherwise all went well. No-one had serious camera gear so a few "happy snaps" didn't make for too long a trip. 1 hour was about it really.

Day three: 12 January 2018

Kubla Khan Cave

Party: Nicole Baillie (FUSSI), Grant Elliot (Hills Speleos), Tim Featonby (FUSSI, CEGSA), Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

This was a CEGSA permit so I could take Tim on a tourist trip through Kubla, seeing he hadn't been to Tassie before, and if he was diving the grotty bits he should see the nice bits. Nicole got to tag along and, as I had had no interest from STC, Grant (the passing-by friend) got a spot too. Ric was happy to come for the day, rather than sit in camp, and we still had one free slot I had been unable to fill. It amazes me.

I had rigged the bottom entrance the previous afternoon whilst we were there to do Genghis, so that speeded up the morning start.

I rigged the entrance pitch, with Ric coming last. We had a moment of serious stomach flip flops when Ric declared, JUST as the pull-down rope on the first pitch hit the ground, that he had left the gate key at the top of the pitch. Bugger. I was trying to think how we would fix this (and climbing the pitch wasn't on my favourites list at all), when he found it tied to his pack. False alarm. The rest of the trip was an anticlimax after this drama.

It was a slow trip, despite no serious photography. We stopped at the usual places. Water levels in Sallys Folly and River Alph were low despite rain the previous night (maybe 20 mm) and heavy showers forecast for the day. Conditions in the area were very dry though.

I emerged first to a heavy shower which fortunately stopped as I got back to the car. I waited one and a half hours for the last of the party to arrive back at the cars. One VERY slow prusiker can make all the difference.

Day four: 13 January 2018

Devils Pot

Party: Grant Elliot (Hills Speleos), Janine McKinnon

They were dropping like flies. We two were the only starters for this trip. I decided to do the traditional route for a change.

I rigged down and Grant followed taking photos. It would have been nicer if it hadn't rained just as I started down. Grant came up first and I de-rigged. This is always a wonderful place to visit, by either route. The trip was 3 hours as we spent lots of time admiring the view and just chillin'.

I did a few minor changes to the rigging, and the rigging notes have been adjusted accordingly. Anyone wishing a copy just needs to ask.

Devils Pot

Photo: Grant Elliot

MC-275 River Alph resurgence (Kubla Khan)

A tale in two styles

14-18 January 2018

Janine McKinnon

Party: Tim Featonby, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Part 1: The search for the lost gumboot.

David Wools-Cobb had a problem. One of his party members had lost a gumboot and he thought it might be somewhere along the Sunless Sea section of the River Alph. That is the 1300 m of passage that runs from Cairn Hall to the resurgence of the river. Unfortunately for David's punter that section is protected by a sump at Cairn Hall, and also at the resurgence. He needed help from cave divers. Never one to fail to come to the aid of a man in distress, this (not) maiden rode to the rescue … albeit 12 years too late. Oh well, you can't have everything.

An authority to dive the resurgence was obtained from "Parks" (after three years of negotiation), a plan devised, a dive buddy found (two actually, but one failed to materialise at the last minute due to body failure ... thus the value of the clever plan to ask two) and gear organised. We were ready to go on the grand search and (hopefully) gumboot rescue operation.

Day 1 of diving Tim and I headed in, equipped with all the paraphernalia a sump diver needs. I was going to multi-task, as we all know women do particularly well, and survey the passage as well as gumboot search, and maybe look for new cave whilst at it. Tim was going to demonstrate his ability to be a girl by multi-tasking too as his job was to lay line whilst simultaneously searching for the elusive gumboot and look for new passage. It's important to keep those multi-tasking skills tuned. Unfortunately, we had reel problems at the 250 m mark, which was sad, but we found a "boot wash station" plastic bucket, which was good. It wasn't what we were searching for but it was a bonus find, as was the (very old) diver's knife Tim found as well. It was a veritable treasure trove in there! However, no gumboot. So far, at least.

Day 2, reel problems sorted, we continued the search to the end of Sump 1, some 500 m into the cave. No gumboot. But ho! there was another treasure waiting to be found. An old reel and tangled line was sitting patiently at the water's edge as we came out of Sump 1. The booty just kept coming in this cave. We also had some dry bits where we could get out of the water. This was doubly good (we could get out of the water) and bad (we had to carry all our dive gear over the dry bit). We looked around in the 100 m of dry passage for the gumboot (and other treasures), took some photos and video whilst we were at it, and surveyed too, just 'cause I had to practice that multi-tasking thing. No gumboot.

We were at our turn pressure for gas and so hit it on the head for the day and headed out (still looking …).

Day 3 we headed back in with more gas, kept looking, headed through the 120 m of Sump 2, surveyed and looked (for that damn gumboot) and finally reached the AWESOMELY big bits of Sunless Sea. This was finally in the dimensions of the Kubla we all know and love. A hundred metres of big stuff, another couple of hundred of not so big stuff, and another sump. But not to worry, this was the short (30 m) one that leads to Cairn Hall. All good then. No gumboot (or other treasures), not so good. We surveyed that stuff seeing we were there and headed for home, still with four eagle eyes peeled.

So, the job was done. Unfortunately, my "white knight" performance had been a dismal failure. No gumboot. No new cave passage either, which was also a bit sad. At least we got to do a few days of excellent diving and caving, saw passage not seen for decades, got the ingredients to make a more detailed map while we were there and had fun.

So not a totally lost cause then.

Apologies to David Wools-Cobb for using his name somewhat in vain, although the lost gumboot, dive reel and line, and boot wash station, are real.

A well-known hazard of cave diving - blackberries

Photo: Janine McKinnon

Report on surveying and exploration in MC-275 River Alph resurgence (Kubla Khan Cave)

14-18 January 2018

Janine McKinnon

Part 2: The serious version

Undertaken within an authority issued by Tasmanian National Parks.

Project co-ordinator and leader: Janine McKinnon (STC)

Divers: Tim Featonby (Cave Exploration Group of South Australia-CEGSA), Janine McKinnon

Support: Ric Tunney (STC)

Note: Both Ric Tunney and Janine McKinnon are Kubla Leaders.

I wish to thank Ric Tunney for invaluable surface support, Rob Buck (Parks Ranger) who facilitated the authority to allow diving, Chris McMonagle (Mole Creek Karst Officer-Parks) who found the contact details for the farmers whose land we used for access, and generally being very helpful, Jeff and Jenna who let us access the resurgence through their land. Nicole Anderson for letting us stay at Mayberry Hut for 10 days. Anyone else I forgot!

Background: The resurgence of the River Alph from Kubla Khan was first dived somewhere back in the 1970's but the first sump was not completely penetrated (anecdotal information). The first documented dive was done by a group of Cave Divers Association of Australia (CDAA) divers in 1978 (there is no written report in the archive) who completed the entire Sunless Sea passage through to Cairn Hall and did a memory sketch (which is in the STC archive). Tasmanian Caverneering Club (TCC) members did a few dives in the early 1980's *(SS* 176, *SS* 193, *SS* 199*)* and did a survey using knotted line, depth gauge and compass for the underwater bits, and straight survey for the dry chambers. Sketching was not done (or isn't on the map anyway).

The Sunless Sea passages have not been visited (at least not to the knowledge of STC or Parks) since then. Parks took over management of Kubla Khan after these dives in the early 1980's and permission to dive has not been given since.

Day one: Sunday 14 January 2018.

This first day was not intended to involve entering the cave. It was a planning, organising and reconnaissance day. At 9:30 am the team drove across farm land to the closest access point available by vehicle and walked the 200 m to the resurgence of the river. Water was resurging about 5 m away from the MC-275 entrance. The water then flowed 20 m in a small trench to sink into the entrance of MC-274. Beyond this, the surface valley was completely dry. The pool within MC-275 was still and clear. Diver access would be easy.

We set up a temporary stile across the fence dividing Parks land from the farm land, to more easily facilitate transport of diving gear across the fence. We then returned to camp and discussed how an emergency evacuation from Cairn Hall in Kubla Khan cave would work and the plan for the first dive, to be undertaken the following day.

Emergency exit from Cairn Hall plan:

Ric would rig the bottom entrance to Kubla Khan, unlock, and lock open, the bottom entrance gate to the cave, and leave both Janine's and Tim 's SRT kits at the bottom of the entrance pitch. Thus, if there was an emergency, or problem with returning through the Sunless Sea passages, and the divers were close to Cairn Hall, they could exit through the normal route out of the cave.

A vehicle would be left at the Kubla carpark, with keys hidden nearby and a phone in the car.

The Parks gate into the reserve would be left closed but not locked (but appear locked to casual observance) and the padlock hidden nearby.

The Kubla key would be hidden near the gate to the main road, as this could not be left unlocked as it is the farmer's access gate.

This was all to be set up before the divers entered the water on their first day of diving.

Gear preparation:

The afternoon was spent checking and preparing diving kit, developing the first day's dive plan, preparing survey gear and marking the dive line. The line was marked at 15 m (station) intervals with tape, and numbered, starting at 1. This meant the sump passage could be sketched at 15 m intervals to develop the shape of the passage.

Divers kit: Both divers.

Helmet with Scurion dive light

Fins, mask, weights.

Safety reel

Dive reels: 6 reels, marked with tape at 15 m intervals. 4 with 200 m of 2 mm exploration line, 2 with 100 m of 2 mm exploration line.

Drysuit

7 Lt steel tanks (X2)

1st and 2nd stage Open circuit regulators.

2 pressure gauges.

3 cutting devices

Hood

3 spare dive lights

Spare mask

Janine:

Razor harness with bum bag.

Spare tools (for emergency underwater kit repairs)

Santi 190 Flex undersuit with thermals (first day)

Santi BZ 400 undersuit with thermals (day 2 & 3)

9lt Carbon Fibre tanks (X2), day 3.

Gloves

Survey slate, with compass attached.

Survey notebook

Disto X2

Lumix Camera

Gopro camera and video light

2 dive computers

Tim:

Armadillo BC

Silt stakes

Day two: Monday 15 January 2018

7 am: Ric left camp to set up emergency exit plan. We divers were not to start diving until his return. We prepared gear and moved it to the cave entrance. We returned to camp at 8:30 am.

Ric returned to camp at 9 am. The emergency exit was in place. Ric and I took two cars to the Kubla carpark, left one as the plan outlines and set gates and keys as planned. We returned to camp.

We all then discussed rescue call out protocol. It was to be as follows:

Midnight was the call out time. If Tim and I had not returned to camp by then Ric would immediately send a warning message to the STC Search and Rescue officer (Andreas Klocker). He would leave camp and check the resurgence first, then go around to bottom Kubla Khan entrance and call down. If there was no response he would return to camp via a second check of the resurgence entrance. This process was expected to take about 1 hour. Ric would then activate an emergency rescue call-out. This would include calling Tasmania Police, STC Search and Rescue officer, Cave Divers Association of Australia (CDAA) sump rescue team co-ordinator (Dr Richard Harris) and Northern Caverneers.

10 am. Tim and Janine leave camp for the resurgence. The first diver (Tim) entered the water at 12 pm. Tim laid the line and I followed closely behind sketching the passage, and measuring, at 15 m intervals, as planned. The flow rate was very low, in fact undetectable. Visibility was about 3 m. This was all looking good.

Reports from the previous trips talked about hauling gear the first 100 m of passage before the first sump started. We found no dry passage and were able to dive from the entrance pool, although there was air space above us for quite a bit of this first 100 m.

At the end of the first reel of line (250 m) Tim tied off the reel and pulled out the second reel, preparatory to continuing, however the line was jammed on the reel. He spent about 5 minutes trying to un-jam it, whilst I waited nearby (after I caught up). He then moved to the next reel (#3), which was also jammed. Reel #4 jammed too. Reel #5 was good but was insufficient to continue to the end of sump 1 (another 250 m). I was cold by now and, knowing that we would not get to the first dry chamber this dive, decided to "call the dive" (Divers' term for returning to the entrance).

We reached the entrance at 1:06 pm.

Dive time: 66 minutes.

Maximum depth 4 m

Gas used (Janine): Start pressure: 250 bar per tank

Finish pressure: 210 bar per tank.

Gopro footage was taken by Janine.

Tim hoping he is carrying enough reels.

Photo: Janine McKinnon

Analysis:

Tim and I thought that the reel jams were due to the previous day's marking of the lines. We thought that we hadn't put sufficient tension on the lines when we reeled them back onto their spools after marking, and that when the reels got wet the line loosened just sufficiently to jam.

Otherwise, the dive had been successful as a

familiarisation dive for the conditions. I determined that the undersuit I was wearing had insufficient thermal insulation for the water temperature. I planned to use a warmer one for the next day (hopefully I wouldn't get too hot in the dry cave passages). Sketching had been done to the point of turn around.

Observations:

The rock was very friable and fragile.

There were large numbers of troglobitic (totally white) shrimp-like invertebrates swimming in the water. They looked like troglobitic *Anaspides tasmaniae* that I had seen in other caves in Tasmania, but without proper identification this cannot be determined.

Water temperature was 9-10° C

At the point of turn around (co-incidentally) a large black plastic tub of the type used as boot wash stations in Kubla Khan was found. Tim carried this out.

NOTE: When David Wools-Cobb was queried about this that evening (by email) he reported that a boot wash tub had disappeared from the base of the Pleasure Dome during the large flood event the previous year. This was quite a distance for this tub to travel.

Tim also found a diver's knife, presumably from the initial exploration party in 1978, or the divers in 1984.

Day three: Tuesday 16 January 2018.

The plan was to reach Sunless Sea chamber, having surveyed along the route, and to survey that chamber. If time permitted to continue through to Cairn Hall (CH) and return the same route.

Each diver would also look carefully for previously undiscovered passages running from the main route.

Tim would continue laying the line to the end of Sump 1, with Janine following and continuing sketching and surveying. There was no intention of keeping together. Both divers were happy diving "alone" and this would speed up the processes of both line laying and surveying. Tim would wait in the dry chamber for Janine, and they would reassess the plan.

At 10 am Tim lead into the resurgence and I followed 5 minutes behind, confirming the sketching of the previous day up to the start of the new line, and then starting to sketch and survey the rest of Sump 1. I also looked for side passage as I surveyed. I arrived at the end of Sump 1 after a 1-hour dive. Gopro footage was taken en-route.

I surfaced to see Tim's dive kit but no Tim. He reappeared as I finished de-kitting. He had walked to the end of the dry chamber and inspected the start of Sump 2. I took a few still photos (Lumix), some video, and we did a sketch and survey of the chamber. I had carried a Disto X2 into the cave in double pelican boxes.

We found a very old, rusty, dive reel with tangled line still attached, at the edge of the pool.

We then discussed where we thought we were. There was some confusion as our interpretation of the old reports, and memory maps and line survey, was a little at odds with the distance we had come. We weren't sure if we were in Sunless Sea (SS) passage, or the dry chamber before it. If the latter, then we had a 117 m sump to traverse before reaching SS. If SS, then only a 30 m sump separated us from CH. We assessed our gas supplies. I still had 30 bar before reaching thirds turn pressure. Tim was at turn pressure. This decided the action. We had to return to the entrance and do the next dive with extra gas in case we had the 117 m sump to dive.

Janine in the small chamber after Sump 1. Note the "tide line" of black mud coating the flowstone where the presumed normal water level sits.

Photo: Tim Featonby

Tim started the dive out at 1 pm and dived independently to the entrance. He would inspect the passage for possible unexplored passage as he went. I followed 5 minutes later, with the same intention, although reduced visibility would hamper any possibility of finding side passages.

Dive time 40 minutes (homeward leg).

Maximum depth: 4 m

Gas used-total (Janine): start pressure: 250 bar per tank.

finish pressure: 120 bar per tank

Addendum:

As stated, the water in the dived cave was still, or very close to. The sump pool at the entrance is still water. However approximately 5 m down the dry streambed water reappears from a spring and runs down stream for 20 m before disappearing back into the cave wall at MC-274. This is flowing water. The spring was investigated by Tim, who tried to excavate it a little to no useful effect. The spring is considerably smaller than a human could enter. Tim investigated the sink at MC-274. He reported that the passage was navigable for approximately 40 m, but of small dimensions. The stream then sank into the gravels and the cave terminated.

A survey of this small cave was not done.

Wednesday 17 January 2018

Plan: Continue through to SS, survey, video, go through Sump 3 to CH, return and pull out all lines if job completed.

I changed to 2 X 9 litre, 300 bar Carbon Fibre tanks. Tim had added a 7 litre steel stage tank to his kit.

Tim started into resurgence at 10 am, planning to lead and run line to SS. He would continue at his own pace. I started in at 10:10 am. I swam straight through Sump 1 and arrived at the dry chamber as Tim was about to start into Sump 2. Tim was able to walk across the chamber carrying all his kit. I am not so strong. I took three trips to get my kit across the chamber, which added considerably to the time I took to get to SS. I also surveyed in Sump 2 (which proved to be the 117 m passage), and looked for side passages, which further slowed my progress.

On arrival in SS neither Tim, nor his kit, were present. I assumed he had moved to Sump 3 and thus went to the end of SS, where I found a dive line heading in to sump 3. Cairn Hall was the other side.

Once we had rejoined we discussed our next moves and decided we both felt comfortable to complete the task to video and survey Sunless Sea that day. The main (dry) chamber of this cave passage is several hundred metres long, and 40 m high, this section alone took one and a half hours.

The job complete, I started the dive out at 3:05 pm. Tim would follow and retrieve the lines. We had decided to remove all lines as we had not been given permission to leave them in-situ, and they were unlikely to be intact whenever any future dive party visited (as this may be some time in the future, possibly!). As the floor of SS main chamber is mud and water, the time spent walking up and down had disturbed this considerably. As the flow is downstream a lot of this flowed into Sump 2 during our time in the chamber. Thus, we both faced zero visibility as we started back through Sump 2. The visibility improved to approximately half a metre periodically by two thirds of the way back to the first chamber. The water in Sump 1 was not affected as there was no flow through the chamber at the time of the project.

I was back at the entrance at 4:30 pm. Tim was 15 minutes behind.

Gas used total (Janine) Start: 280 bar per tank

Finish: 200 bar per tank

All line was removed from the cave. Survey completed.

Thursday 18 January 2018

Ric retrieved Kubla Khan key from its hiding place, locked Kubla bottom gate, hauled out the two packs of SRT gear and de-rigged Kubla Khan bottom entrance, removed safety vehicle, locked Parks gate, and locked farmer's gate.

Divers tidied up the dive site and removed the stile.

Conclusion:

- The project is completed. No further diving is planned.
- The dive was completed from the resurgence of River Alph at MC-275 through to Cairn Hall in Kubla Khan.
- Sketching of both underwater and dry passages was done.
- Measurements of underwater passage dimensions at 15 m intervals was done.
- Video of underwater passage (representative, not all passage) and both dry chambers was done.
- Still photos in the smaller dry passage with a Lumix camera was done.
- All line was removed from the cave.
- Invertebrates that appear to be *Anaspides tasmaniae* (troglobitic) were seen.
- No side passages were found. The single, main passage appears to lie along a very straight line for over 1000 m.
- Flow was almost non-existent due to low summer water levels. However, "high tide" marks were seen in both dry chambers indicating a regular (normal?) water level 2-3 m higher than at time of visitation.
- The surface stream bed appears to be an overflow route when the cave is at high levels. It was completely dry at time of project. Flowing water bubbling out of the surface stream bed approximately 10 m from resurgence pool, and disappearing into the cave a short distance away, indicates that the low-level flow follows a route too small for human navigation, and possibly a plethora of micro conduits. The river only flows along the surface streamway when this conduit is overwhelmed.
- The unusually straight line of the entire route, coupled with the lack of side passages (found) indicates the flow is along a fault line or major joint in the rock.
- The shorter video version can be found here: https://youtu.be/uUHW4kEdv5M
- A map will follow in due cause

JF-237 Niggly Cave

19-21 January 2018

Stephen Fordyce

Camping, diving, exploration and filming

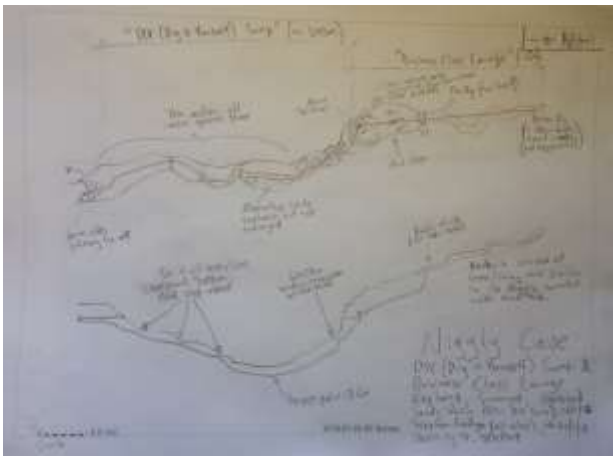
Party: Patrick Eberhard, Stephen Fordyce (diver), Andreas Klocker, Petr Smejkal, Andy Terhell (cameraman)

Introduction

The camping trips into Niggly Cave seem to be becoming somewhat mundane, and perhaps we are getting good at them, but that just seems to lead to carrying heavier loads and more objectives, and we are all just as broken afterwards as usual.

I ended up doing two trips through the sump into the new dry chamber "The Business Class Lounge" to (unsuccessfully) try to make it go, while the others experimented with Petr's new dye-tracing apparatus and pushed the Mother of God streamway upstream to discover a new sump, with potential to connect to the Dreamtime/Growling Swallet dive.

We got up at 6 am on the final day and after a slow grind out and then down the hill, the final trip to the airport was more nerve-wracking than the dive, but I made it in time for the 9:35 pm flight back to Melbourne.



In case you can't be bothered reading the rest, here's the sketch of the new stuff

Logistics and getting in

With the derig and project wrap-up in the offing, it was time to haul in all the gear for another dive in the upstream sump, which was the main purpose of this trip, and it was my turn to dive this time. After running out of line on my Growling Swallet dive some years ago (it eventually took 500 m and still goes) there was no way I was going in under-prepared, so the five of us hauled 70 kg of gear 1 hr up the steep hill to the cave entrance, dragged it for hours through the tight and meandering "Tigertooth Passage", lowered it 250 m down various pitches and finally dumped it at the sump, 360 m below the cave entrance.

While I may have a reputation for being a bit enthusiastic when it comes to bringing along discretionary items, I should mention that among our collective load was an aluminium coffee pot, an off-camera screen/recorder, a tripod, and a lifetime supply of salami.

This dive was particularly exciting/nerve-wracking as it had been on the list for so long, had the potential to set a new depth record for Australian caves, and open the door to a whole new section of gigantic JF master cave streamway passage.

Having fallen into the usual trap of "we're camping in there, so it doesn't matter if we leave a bit later", we faffed about spectacularly all morning on various important tasks - sleeping in, buying more gas for the stove, divvying up all the dive gear, placing a dye detector in Junee Cave and most importantly - stopping at Banjo's for a last frothy coffee. After enjoying Porcupine Pot two weeks back, Fraser had piked on the Niggly trip but guiltily carried a load up the hill to the cave (and filmed us kitting up) and then went and dropped some dye into Growling.

After all that, we made it to the cave at a rather disgraceful 2 pm or thereabouts and made our slow way down. We belatedly discussed whether the dive was today or tomorrow - with me keen to get it out of the way so I could sleep (and also in case it impacted our plans for the next day), and could we get a bloody move on. Andy had been unceremoniously told that no sherpa capacity could be spared for camera gear, and his caving bag was probably the most heroic single bag anyone has ever carried in Niggly. Sadly, he received little credit for this from everyone else who were enjoying two only slightly less heroic bags each.

Having far more than one bag each, we made good use of the "elastic chain" concept - where you grab a bag and carry it forward until you meet the person in front and hand it over to them (or if you have space, stash all the bags in a pile). This was quite effective, as you get very familiar with your piece of cave and all the little snaggy bits to avoid/obstacles to negotiate - in fact, 2-3 of us got seven big bags through the Tigertooth Passage and up/out to the surface in about two hours on the way out.

Diving the Sump

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.

Some filming and other faffing was done on the way down, and we finally got to the sump pretty late. I was still keen on getting the dive done and still feeling pretty good (yeah that extra hour of sleep in the morning was so worth it), so I committed to it and after getting in the mood with some chill music and being mercilessly interviewed by Andy, I finally submerged just after 10 pm! As I explained to the other guys, there were a few options for the dive, which would dictate how long I would be gone:

1. The dive would go deep - I would use the gas in my tanks much quicker and also incur decompression obligations, so would probably be back in as little as 1 hour.

2. The dive would stay shallow (as it mostly did for nearby Growling Swallet) - I had enough gas for a 2 hour dive, maybe a bit more with surveying on the return.
3. The dive would surface into a dry chamber, which would require exploration. This would take the longest, as de-kitting and then re-kitting would be required, then the dry chamber exploration would be totally open-ended. This could take as much as 4-5 hours.

We agreed that if I wasn't back at camp (10 minutes of caving from the sump pool) by the ungodly hour of 3:30 am, the emergency plan would be set in motion. Someone also asked about a potential option 4, where the cave doesn't go. Well, that wasn't really an option - it would just require digging harder.

For the record, here is the dive gear I used:

- 2x 9L carbon fibre tanks, each with 280 bar of air (sidemounted)
- 3x ~1.4 kg weights on each tank
- 8x ~1.4 kg weights on my weightbelt (8 wasn't enough)
- Drysuit and undergarment, 3 mm wetsuit gloves, 7mm hood
- 2x reels with 350 m white 2 mm line, plus another reel in there, plus safety spool
- 10 silt pegs in drysuit pocket
- Helmet primary (flood) light with GoPro on TFM mount, plus hand-mounted (spot) backup light, and two other backup lights

Once in the water my face was burning from the cold (the water was 7°C) but I was in exploration mode so that didn't really matter. I followed the guideline (white, 2 mm, with distance-labelled tape every 3 m) laid by Sandy Varin on the first dive over a year ago, taking my time and giving it a careful inspection. The silt was pretty reasonable and flow non-existent (despite there being some overflow out of the initial sump pool). I was pleased to find the line extremely tidy and well-laid, with the only thing out of place being a silt peg that had been pulled out. There wasn't any abrasion either, and although the line was silty, there was minimal debris caught on it. Interesting what this says about the flow or lack thereof, even in winter conditions.

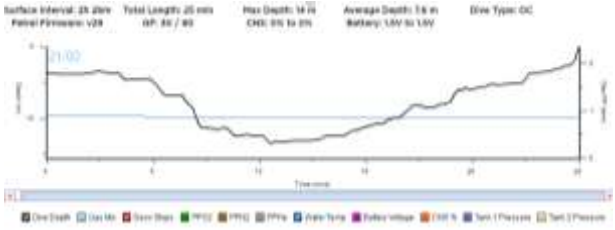
The visibility was excellent at 6-8 m, and silting was not as bad as I'd been expecting, so while getting to the end of the existing line (about 80 m) I could look around to record the cave on GoPro and to get a feel for it as well as checking for side leads/alternative passages. The floor of the cave was gravel, and the ceiling was horizontal and flat, with dark layers of rock sticking out and making steps in the ceiling as it went down. Where these ceiling steps met the gravel, there were some tight restrictions requiring wriggling and some sweeping aside - there were three of these, and these are why Sandy called it "The DIY (Dig It Yourself) Sump". There was some scope for the creation of "line traps" but the line was well laid and secured through the centre of these restrictions.

The sump bottomed out in a flat section with deepest point 13.5 m and a gravel floor with the odd rock - it was slowly trending up again as I reached the reel and picked it up to keep going. About this time I had a light failure, which was annoying, but since I still had three sources of light plus my Shearwater there was no issue with continuing on. I was able to stay in position and fiddle with lights for maybe 1 minute, noting (with surprise) that there was minimal silt raining down from my bubbles on the ceiling.

Continuing on, now reeling into virgin passage the sump kept on trending upwards, with more rockfall on the floor among the gravel. I looked ahead to see a dead end in rockfall, but as I reeled towards it a small window became apparent high on the right-hand side. It took a little wriggling as the rocks were irregularly shaped, hard and not smooth, but I got through into large passage again. By this point it was a pretty sure thing there was going to be a sump pool, and sure enough I saw the glimmer of a large surface above.

I surfaced carefully, saving precious visibility for checking leads before touching anything. It was a classic rockpile/crescent-shaped sump pool, the most impressive I had seen in the JF at least, with the pool approx. 8 m x 4 m, and the ceiling 5 m above. A steep mud slope lead upwards to a choke point with an obvious hole, about 20 m up the slope. I checked both points of the crescent lake, the northern one being choked with mud, but the southern having clean-washed rock, and a tiny bit of flow coming out of an uninspiring section of rockpile. I had a couple of looks at this and didn't think much, but there is a grovelly dive lead from the main sump pool that deserves another look if someone is ever there again. I'd admittedly pre-planned a name for the first dry chamber: "The Business Class Lounge" - ask me about it in person, this thing is getting too long as it is.

Before going any further, best to note some dive stats. I surfaced with 210 bar and 270 bar in the cylinders, and was only underwater for 8 minutes, with a maximum depth of 13.5 m, and added 30-40 m of guideline to Sandy's (originally about 80 m). A dive profile is below - note that this is for the RETURN DIVE where I surveyed/re-surveyed the line as that took 25 minutes and gives better resolution. A sketch of the dive and the dry chamber are included later.



Profile of first return dive while surveying (for better resolution). Blue line is temperature (7°C).

Exploring the (dry) Business Class Lounge

Once all the in-water leads were checked and written off, I made a careful pile of gear and made a proper tie-off of

the guideline, and also attended to some 4k GoPro selfies for Fraser and Andy's *Tartarus* documentary. Turns out I'd picked a good spot - a metre to one side and all the mud and rocks that later rolled down the mud slope would have hit it!

I've always hated caving in a drysuit, but there wasn't much alternative so I kicked steps into the mud slope and headed on up. This was a (relatively) big, impressive chamber and as far as I was concerned, there was an even bigger one up through the gap at the top with the next Mount Niggly in it. The climb (even at only 2 m) was nasty to look at, even nastier to attempt, and more parts of it fell away with every failure to launch. Classic mud-covered, loose-rock, sloping mud base, nothing to push against JF misery. I was also very mindful that there would be no rescue from this remote and lonely place in the event of injury.

Eventually I was able to brace an elbow off a roof step and dig some holds in the wall, and bracing off elbows, knees, shoulders, butt, and even head I made it up. As soon as I looked up, I groaned - there was no big passage, just choking, muddy rockpile pinching upwards. Since I was there, I spent 2 hours wriggling and sliding around, moving rocks and trying to find a way onwards and upwards. There was some hope - the rocks were flaky and often moveable once the surrounding mud was scraped out, the ceiling was reasonably stable and I made some progress initially. A larger rock stopped me, but with a small void beyond I spent about 30 minutes working on it until I could squeeze past. The obvious lead up to the left sort of went, and there was another checkable lead around to the right that I poked at as well.

Digging with your hands while wearing a drysuit is hot and painful - and I eventually remembered it was well past bed-time, not to mention approaching "call in the cavalry" time. I bailed out while I still had enough motivation to survey back, resolving to sleep on it and decide on a return trip in the morning. I'd been dreading going down the nasty climb and it was about as anticipated - with holds disintegrating and a hail of mud/rocks that rolled all the way down to the sump pool. I was pretty glad when I made it back to the relative safety of the dive gear.

Surveying out through the sump was uneventful, although my hands were so cold that it was hard to write, and I was pretty over things in general. I now cursed Sandy's careful line-laying as I recorded 1 m and 1.5 m shots ... At least the visibility was pretty good for a return trip (1-3 m), although the survey dive took 25 minutes compared with the 8 minutes to get in. I surfaced and ditched most of the dive gear before crawling back to the staging point where my wet/muddy cave suit was waiting - getting out of my warm drysuit, into soggy wet caving gear for the 10 minute trip back to camp and a warm sleeping bag was terrible (and the next day I just did it in the drysuit). There is squeezing and climbing as well as walking, but it's doable in a drysuit.
Some of the crew were zonked out and snoring, but others were still awake and anxiously(?) awaiting my return. I always try to manage expectations so support crew don't get worried, but it's always nice to be reunited. By this point it was 2 am and all were thoroughly shagged and not in the mood for long conversations, so with a brief "it went dry and crapped out" we all went back to sleep. Not before I demolished the cold and delicious remains of Andy's remaining spaghetti bolognaise though.

Stephen contemplating the puddle Photo: Andy Terhell

Day 2 - List Ticking Day

It was a sluggish start (although Andy started crossing items off the shot list left, right and centre and was interviewing all and sundry) after the late night, but after a reasonable sleep I could now (but only just) face the prospect of a return to the Business Class Lounge. Although it wasn't very promising, it was JF master cave after all, and as Andreas pointed out "we're not coming back for a maybe". It needed another crack while the dive gear was down there. So while not particularly enthused, I resolved to take a caving suit and the only digging tool we had (a microscopic and flimsy dual pick/shovel) through the sump to give it a red hot go. This illustrates the importance of doing the dive on the first day - had we waited, it would not have been possible, and the opportunity would have been lost.

Meanwhile the others would push the various streamways near Mother of God passage to see if they found anything. They did - a nice square, diveable sump about 50 m upstream from where you first hit the water (which is where Stefan Eberhard saw dye from Growling – Stefan Eberhard pers. comm.). This is prime position to connect with Growling Swallet, if only all those rockpiles and Mount Niggly weren't in the way. It's on the list for later (including surveying to it). The main Mother of God streamway was also pushed into rockpile but no further, and it was noted that it seemed to have more water than was coming from the upstream sump where I was diving.

Petr and Pat also trekked to the far end of the cave to experiment with Petr's dye tracing setup, and to show Pat the end. They found dye in the Never Never Sump (low down in the rockfall beyond the currently last marked survey station) indicating this is just part of the main streamway.

With all the gear set up and ready at the sump, it was easier to get ready and go. I first did a quick dive to check an underwater lead on the right-hand side - it joined back up with the main line and is shown dashed on my sketch. I returned to surface - I had my caving suit and undergarment in a drybag that I hoped would keep it reasonably dry and I dragged it along with me this time. Despite the 1.4 kg weight I put in, it was extremely floaty

and so was I, so diving was rather exciting - fortunately with much thrashing and bouncing along the ceiling things became a bit more manageable when the bag (and my drysuit) compressed at 8 m. Surfacing on the other side was similarly exciting - I cannot recommend this unless you are an experienced sump diver and know what you're doing.

Good news - the drybag survived well, with caving undergarments no soggier than they had been to start with. I delicately (and rather precariously - not a lot of flat real estate in the Business Class Lounge) got changed and selected hard core caving mode, charging up the mud slope and the nasty climb - much nicer with actual freedom of movement. I chipped away at the left-hand lead for a while, until it got even more improbable, and then switched focus to the right-hand lead.

I was able to progress a good deal further and decided this was the best lead by far. A roof step with rocks underneath held me up for a while, but after some determined archaeology I made it past and onto the next challenge, about 1 metre further along. The way all through the rockpile was characterised by low (5-20 cm) voids beneath a firm ceiling stepping upwards. So, I wasn't digging a tunnel so much as clearing a path under the ceiling.

The rockpile continued in this way, with progress 1 metre at a time, until a steeper section, a bit more choked than the rest. It held me up for maybe 45 minutes, and I started getting cold and sore arms (who knew - lying in the mud only using one arm to dig awkwardly at arms-length?!). I could just squeeze through with helmet off and see more uninspiring low voids, although still heading upwards. I was getting too cold to continue, pretty sick of being there and was also mindful of being back well before my curfew (9 pm?), so I gave the cave the finger and headed back down to the sump. I didn't survey the dry section but have estimated and sketched it. I spent maybe 4 hours up there digging. I was pretty negative about it at the time - and I still don't particularly think it's worth a dedicated dive trip, but if dive gear is down there, it's worth another day of digging. Knowing that the sump is short, I'd need much less gear next time (i.e. wetsuit, which I could then cave in, smaller tanks, no wing, no reels, etc.).

Nice guys finish last

I was very glad to be on the way back to camp, perhaps a bit too glad, because it was only once I was starting to put tanks on that I remembered I'd left Andy's GoPro up in the rockpile. Well, nobody can hear you swear when you're beyond a sump, which is probably a good thing in this case. It had taken ages to get changed back into my drysuit and I was actually warming up a bit - so after some serious contemplation about leaving the dratted thing, I bit the bullet and headed back up in my drysuit as the cave gave me the finger back. Having nailed the nasty climb in my caving suit, it was back to floundering around and also sorts of creative low-flexibility moves in the drysuit. With the GoPro retrieved, my last reserves of motivation were fast disappearing, although I was a little worried about getting submerged in the sump pool with a floaty bag, and without much ceiling to push off (it's nearly vertical until the rock window). Incidentally, my plan in the event of the floaty bag getting too hard to deal with, was to stab it with a siltpeg. I got down ok and the bag compressed, and I remember thinking how I was nailing this sump diving stuff, and then spent some more time admiring Sandy's line work as I moved through the sump and surfaced on the home side.

Because I'm a nice guy, and I like efficiency, I made three trips crawling from the sump pool to the staging point so all the gear could be there for packing in the morning. I was also going to pack it into caving bags since I was comfortable and warm in a drysuit. I was just organising things into piles when I froze and started frantically throwing gear everywhere - the bright blue dry bag with my caving suit in it was nowhere to be found ... Needless to say, the idea of exiting Niggly without a caving suit did not thrill me, so after another comprehensive round of swearing I transported all the gear back to the sump and re-kitted. Nice guys finish last?

Now usually the chances of seeing anything in a sump that has been traversed twice already that day are slim to nil, and I wondered if I'd have to desperately feel for the bag on the ceiling. Amazingly, the vis was still ok and my only issue was a sore neck as I craned to look upwards. You can only imagine my relief when I saw it stuck on the ceiling in about 10 m (the double-ender clip had come undone) and how tightly I held it as I turned and swam out for the final time. I didn't even care that the bag had partially flooded and everything in it was soaked - at least not until putting it on. I made three more trips to get the gear back to the staging point and called it a day, it was getting uncomfortably close to curfew. I couldn't face getting into the sodden caving suit, so managed to get back to camp in my drysuit without shredding it or overheating. I got back well and truly over it at about 8:30 pm, plenty of time (half an hour?) before the cavalry would be called in.

All the leftover cous cous and 2 kg of salami later I was a bit happier, and Andy was also happy, having collected my return and recounting of the day's events on camera. The other guys were just in the process of going to bed and we sort of swapped stories and tried to make plans for "birthing day" tomorrow. Andy had pointed out that we had been gestating in the cave for three days, so this was the appropriate terminology.

Niggly streamway. Photo: Andy Terhell

Birthing day

The final morning faffing was impressive, but big thanks to Petr and Pat who were sufficiently efficient to go back

to the streamway, pack four bags of dive gear and bring it back while the rest of us were doing our respective things. Some of these things didn't fit in the poo tube so ended up in a Darren drum with my drysuit undergarment (since it was going to be washed anyway). We were up at 6 am and left camp at maybe 8:30 am for the grind out. Andy enjoyed the Pantin I lent him and got his hero bag up the 105 m pitch like a trooper. Well, a really slow, heavily loaded trooper. Petr and Pat had already started confiscating my bags so Andy's hero bag was also confiscated and the three of us tackled the tight upper reaches of the cave, while the other guys followed at a more reasonable pace.

We were back in daylight around 3 pm and at the car at 5 pm. A quick stop at Junee Cave to retrieve dye detectors (I'll let Petr report on that) and some more faffing, and suddenly my flight back to Melbourne was looming. Some mad packing and weighing, and I had two bags of 32 kg each and 15 kg of carry-on, excellent (this does include the cylinders). Note to self, security people at the airport are suspicious when you have several hundred metres of string in your carry on.

As a postscript - I hadn't realised the other guys had found another sump until we were walking back down the hill, so we ended up carrying all the dive gear out (including tank rigging and weight belts, only leaving weights). We could have realised some efficiency and left a few things down there had we established that, but in reality most of it had to come out.

Final stuff

Leads/to-do list for Niggly:

- Survey to new sump, see where it sits in relation to other stuff (all)
- Checkout dive of new sump (SF)
- Another day of pushing the Business Class Lounge (need a new tool) (SF)
- More dye tracing experiments (PS)
- Downstream MoG surveyfest (SF) - maybe by surveying in minute detail something will reveal itself
- Waterfall aid climbing (and/or dye trace from the top) (AK)
- Beyond-the-Waterfall pushing and survey (PF)
- Push water drain from BSG pitch (SF)

Left in the cave:

- Dive weights but no rigging or anything else
- SF camping gear
- PS tarp & mat
- Misc food and stuff (need to eat it!!)
- NO STOVE - BRING ANOTHER ONE!
- Other per GoPro video

JF-673 Rocky Hollow

Alan Jackson

10 February 2018

Party: Gavin Brett, Nelly Brett, Alan Jackson, Anna Jackson and Mal Chandler (SSS)

The children had been getting needy about returning to explore their cave so we finally lined it up. Mal Chandler (Sydney Speleological Society) happened to be in the area and tagged along with a desire to do anything limestone-related (above or underground).

The next generation of cavers? Possibly.

Photo: Gavin Brett

The creek at the bottom of the hill was bone dry again (this seems to be a recurring intermittent occurrence now). The girls did well up the hill carrying packs. While people kitted up I installed the JF-673 tag on the southern face of the eastern (larger) entrance about 400 mm down from the surface. This entrance has a small manfern growing next to it and a ~200 mm diameter ex-manfern with tree roots of something growing across the entrance. It was draughting very strongly (in).

Gavin did a quick recce to the top of the first pitch. The ~3 m entrance climb was deemed a bit tricky so a short ladder was thrown down for the girls. I then headed in, followed by Anna, and we negotiated the entrance climb and the second ~2 m climb that soon follows. At this point is a small chamber at a junction. The northern passage gets too small but a well-aimed rock suggests a small drop exists. The western passage continues down via a tightish slot to a steep ~5 m slope to a ledge and then a ~14 m pit. I whacked in a concrete screw Y-belay on the southern wall above the slot and then a super short single concrete screw re-direct (hanger and crab only) to direct the rope through the tight bit. Gavin and Nelly had arrived by this point and room was running out.

I abseiled down the awkward slot to the ledge overlooking the pitch. I placed another concrete screw Y-belay and shot down for a look. It was a very pleasant pitch (slight bend near the bottom but no rub when on rope) with various bits of squishy moonmilk. A few metres below the rebelay a horizontal passage headed back east under the others and a thrown rock suggested a pitch in there too. At the bottom of the shaft was a large collection of bones (including several large hoppers –

wallabies, kangaroos or something even older – dentition matched extant species). The way on was a too-tight vertical slot between bedrock and a fallen slab cemented in clay with dig possibilities. I called the others down. Anna arrived and took a safe seat while I started digging clay out of the way. Gavin prepared the pitch for a non-SRT caver (more ladders). After ten minutes of clay and boulder relocation I squeezed through and popped out at a ~8 m pitch. Gavin then called for moral support and encouragement so I returned and distracted Nelly from the horrors of down-climbing ladders and the even more terrifying horrors of the ladder not being long enough and being convinced to just let go of it and be lowered off. Gavin then came down and another bit of ladder was joined in for the ascent.

What you have to do when you take a non-SRT caver along on a vertical trip. Photo: Mal Chandler

With limited entertainment facilities available the children set to clay modelling in the dig (they obviously haven't read the minimal impact guidelines) while Gavin was torn between being a good parent (i.e. starting the Nelly-extraction process) and just waiting a bit longer until I'd rigged the next pitch to see if it went …
I placed a single screw to allow me to lean out over the pitch then placed a two screw Y-belay overhead (above the undercut I'd entered the pitch/aven system from). At the bottom was a nice little bedrock chamber with more dead animals and some passage heading to crappy draughting rockpile. Gavin was tasked with managing the children's exit while Mal and I had a quick push and survey.

A tight spot down was found and it opened up into ~2 m wide bedrock passage with a boulder floor (and ceiling). I poked my way down, along and over many gaps in the rock, some of them draughting lightly) but didn't find a nice way on. I didn't look all that hard though and it seemed worthy of a return without small children on your mind.

Mal and I then surveyed our way back out to the entrance. Below the rebelay on the first pitch I swung across into the moonmilk horizontal passage and clambered in. There was indeed a pitch (quite a long one) which I suspect is the same as the second pitch we descended below (the survey data suggests so) and an upper bit likely heading to the northern passage option at the pitch head above mentioned previously. Probably a better way down as it avoids the bones and the clay slot.

This must be the visual part of "children sounding needy"

Photo: Mal Chandler

The forecast rain had started and the children were sounding needy when Mal and I surfaced (maybe 10-20 minutes after the others had). They were ignored while a short surface survey to link the cave to nearby Pooshooter was completed. The original plan had been to also tag and explore the other cave found up that way last year (Unfair Pot) but the protests pouring from Nelly's noise hole put paid to that. Another day. We stumbled down the hill, reaching the cars around 5 pm. Caving with children is clearly inefficient. We sent Mal off with instructions on how to find Growling Swallet then headed home.

The survey data says 75.5 metres long and 44 m deep. It is trending NW towards Pooshooter and is actually VERY close (a metre or two) to making a connection in the vicinity of the 6 m pitch (the dead end 'third' pitch first explored before The Orifice was spotted and found to be the way on). Interesting. Joining the two would add next-to-no depth to the system, certainly not enough to make that -196 number -200.

Rigging Notes – I used a combination of long and short concrete screws and the holes are unmarked. I think I only used two short ones (one at the rebelay on the first pitch and one on the main belay on the second pitch). You'll work it out. A 25 m rope got us all the way down P1 with a few metres spare and a 12.5 m rope got us down P2 just nicely. Using the ropes around the other way would probably get you down the alternative route.

All smiles back at the car. Photo: Mal Chandler

Other Exciting Stuff

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Tasmanian Pitch Bagger's guide was developed by Ric Tunney & Janine Mckinnon in 2010. They are not original thinkers and thus stole the idea from the Hobart Walking Club's "Peak Bagger's Guide". Alas, it has failed to inspire the fanatical obsession with point gathering that the HWC one has. I re-submit it in the hope that the new generation of cavers are more gullible than the last and will become infected with this pointless pastime. Maybe, we'll give special extra points to anyone who does Yodellers Pot.

Pitches >=40m

No	Cave Name	Cave Number	Pitch Length	Pitch Number	Pitch Name	Data Source	Length	Below another	Hard access	Beautiful	Technical	Tot
1	Niggly Cave	JF-237	191	P7a	Black Supergiant	1993 Jeff Butt survey	9		2	2	1	14
2	Tachycardia	JF-270	170		Bermuda Triangle	2006 Alan Jackson survey	8	1	2			11
	Gordon Dam		*140*			*wikipedia*						
3	Keller Cellar	MA-2	120	P1-2		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	6		3	1	1	11
4	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	118	Heartbeat P4	Heartbeat	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	6		4		2	12
5	Splash Pot	JF-10	113		Harrow the Marrow	Speleo Spiel 319	6				1	7
6	Mini Martin	IB-8	110	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	6			1		7
7	Niggly Cave	JF-237	103	P7b	Xenophobia	1990 Survey	6	1		1	1	9
8	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	100	Priority Paid P9	Priority Paid	Vertical section 2002	6		5		1	12
9	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	93		Psycho Killer	Vertical section 2002	5	1	5		1	12
	Batman Bridge Pylon		*91*			*en.structurae.de*						
10	Big Tree Pot	IB-9	90	P6		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	5		1	1		7
	Big Hole & Devils Coachhouse		90									
11	Niggly Cave	JF-237	85	P3b	Antidenomination	1990 Survey	5				1	6
12	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	85	Priority Paid P10		Vertical section 2002	5	1	5		1	12
13	The Chairman	JF-99	84	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	4			1		5
14	Voltera	JF-207	80			Speleo Spiel 402						
15	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	76	Dessicator P11		Vertical section 2002	4	1	5		1	11
	Wrest Point		*73*			*www.emporis.com*						
16	Tassy Pot	JF-223	71	P4		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	4	1		1		6
17	Pooshooter	JF-268	70		Truth and Delusion	Speleo Spiel 424	4	1	1	1		7
18	Lost Pot	JF-338	70	P3	G-Force	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	4			1		5
19	Arrakis	MW-1	68	P1	Jadbar Pitch	1986 survey	3		2		1	6
20	Dwarrowdelf	JF-14	67	P6		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	3	1	1	1		6
	Dribblespit Swallet	JF-13	66	P1		1988 survey	3					3
21	*Tasman Bridge*		*60.5*			*wikipedia*						
22	Boulder Jenga	JF-398	60		Hydrophobia	Speleo Spiel 402						
23	Halfway Hole	IB-136	59	P2	Piquant	1993 survey	2		1			3
24	Victory 75	JF-110	57.5	P3		1976 survey	2					2
25	Giotto Pot	IB-104	57.5	P1		1985 survey	2					2
26	Scratch Pot	JF-250	56			survey	2				1	3
27	Col-In-Cavern	MA-1	55	P1		Speleo Spiel 334	2		3		1	6
28	Dwarrowdelf	JF-14	55	P3		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	2					2
29	Florentine Pot	JF-371	55	P3		1985 survey	2	1				3
30	Dissidence	JF-382	55		Vertical Euphoria	Map 7JF382.STC138	2				1	3
31	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	54		Apocalypse	Vertical section 2002	2	1	4		1	8
32	Armadillo Pot	JF-368	53	P1		Speleo Spiel 362	2					2
33	Comet Pot	IB-98	52		Prayers on Fire	survey	2				1	3
34	Midnight Hole	IB-11	49	P6		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1			1		2
35	Icetube	JF-345	49	P6	Fabulous Spangley Pitch	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1		2	1		4
36	Skyhook Pot	IB-134	47	P4		1984 survey	1		1			2
37	Milkrun	IB-38	47	P6		1985 survey	1	1				2
38	Un-named	MA-19	46	P1		Speleo Spiel 334	1		3		1	5
39	Judds Cavern	C-17	46	P1	Propylaeum Entrance		1		2		1	4
40	Tachycardia	JF-270	45		Art Deco		1		2	1		4
41	Deep Thought	MA-10	45	P2		Speleo Spiel 334	1		3		1	5
42	Cyclops Pot	IB-57	45	P3		1985 survey	1	1				2
43	Cyclops Pot	IB-57	44	P1		1985 survey	1					1
44	Icetube	JF-345	44	P9	Killing Joke	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1	1	2			4
45	Serendipity	JF-344	44	P5	Phobos Pitch	Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1		2		1	4
46	Anne-A-Kananda	MA-9	43	Dessicator P6	Roaring Forty	Vertical section 2002	1		4		1	6
47	Halfway Hole	IB-136	44	P6	Easy Exit	1993 survey	1	1	1			3
48	Florentine Pot	JF-371	43	P1		1985 survey	1					1
49	Holocaust	IB-45	42.3	P1		1985 survey	1					1
50	Khazad Dum	JF-4	42	P13		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1		1	1		3
51	Tassy Pot	JF-223	42	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1					1
52	Dissidence	JF-382	42		Negative Reality Inversion	Map 7JF382.STC138	1					1
53	The Shaft	CP-218	42	P1		Beyond the Light 2008	1					1
54	Garage Door	IB-183	41.7	P3		Survey	1		1	1		3
55	Milkrun	IB-38	41	P1	Pint Bottle	1985 survey	1					1
56	Cauldron Pot	JF-2	41	P1		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1			1		2
57	Shooting Star	MC-300	41	P1		Speleo Spiel 333	1					1
58	Hobbit Hole	IB-15	40.2	P1	Hydrous Hobbit Pitch	1983 survey	1					1
59	Three Falls Cave	JF-225	40	P5		Vertical Caves of Tasmania	1		1			2
60	Zulu Pot	JF-215	40	P1		Southern Caver May 1975	1					1
61	Lost Pot	JF-338	40		Iron Anniversary	Estimated. Sketch Survey	1		2			3
62	Thun Junction	IB-20	40	P2	Thun Pitch	1991 survey	1		1			2
63	Yodellers Pot	IB-25	40	P3		1987 survey	1		3		1	5
64	Dismal Hill Pot	IB-128	40	P1		1987 memory sketch	1					1
65	Old Ditch Road	IB-131	40	P4		1987 survey	1					1
66	Devils Anastomosis	MC-131	55	P2		2014 Map	2					2

The longest pitches on the Mainland are 90m Big Hole, Wyanbene, NSW and 90m Devils Coachhouse, Jenolan, NSW.

This point scoring guide is, I feel, a matched set with "The Pitch Baggers guide" and represents balance in the universe. Ying for Yang, so to speak – Ed.

Speleo-Sloth in Tasmania

This guide has been developed to encourage members to enjoy some of the less active caving in Tasmania. Points can be claimed for the same activity as many times as you wish. Points have been carefully awarded according to the following principles

A: level of inactivity. B: Ease of access C: Level of enjoyment

Visiting Junee Resurgence.	10
Parking your car at any caving car park and not leaving it.	5
Googling "carabiner". (We're not insinuating you're a gear freak though!)	1
Drinking in the Mole Creek pub, but only if you haven't caved that day.	4
Buying a Scurion but not actually using it more than once. (Now you're a gear freak!)	2
Reading *Caves Australia* magazine.	1
Going to 10 m from a cave entrance and not going any closer.	1
Membership of a caving club.	5
Visiting the same cave more than once.	1
Viewing a caving program on television.	7
Reading trip reports in *Speleo Spiel*, but only if you're not one of the attendees.	10
Visiting Mole Creek without staying overnight in the cavers' hut.	2
Getting comfortable in front of a fire with a coffee-table book on international caving.	8
Walking through a karst area without going underground or finding an undiscovered cave.	2
Attending an STC Social Meeting without photos of your recent caving trip.	8
Attending an STC Business Meeting and raising an item of business.	6
Planning a caving trip and getting someone else to run it.	5
Eating underground any food which is not cake.	3
Driving to the top of Tim Shea.	4
Going on a guided tour cave tour.	6
Not having your birthday party underground.	4
Staying home to watch the cricket or footy.	1

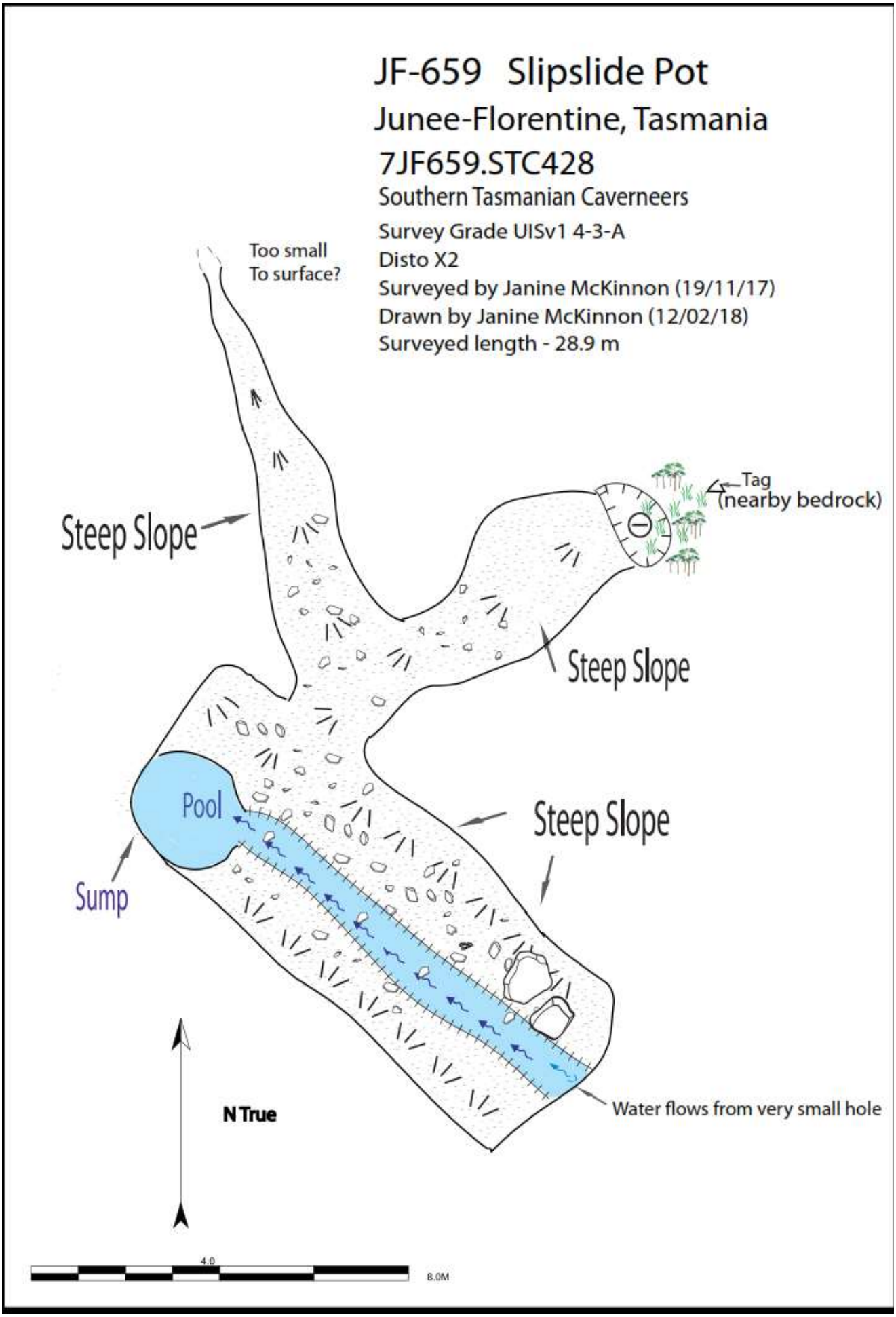
SOME ACTIVITIES WHICH LOSE YOU POINTS

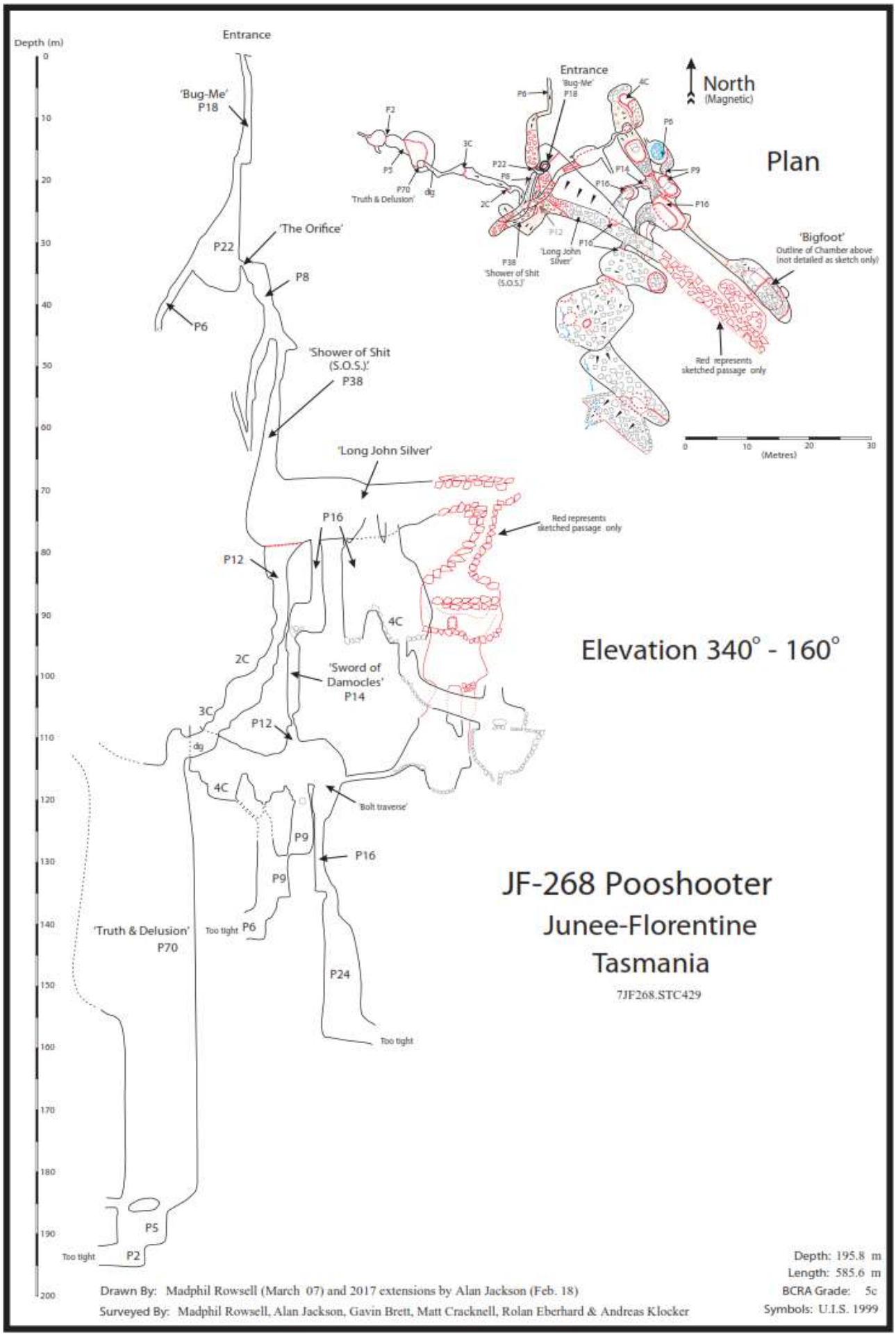
Attending more than two caving trips per year.	-2
Entering a cave with a pitch listed in the "Pitch Baggers Guide".	-1
Owning gear which looks used.	-3
Caving with Alan Jackson (lose double points if you are actually Alan Jackson).	-10

Categories of slothfullness:

Disgustingly Active	<50 points
Member of Sloth Brigade	50-99
Dishonourable Sloth Bagger	100-199
Honourable Sloth Bagger	200-299
Sloth Bagger Extraordinaire	300-499
Sloth Bagger Supreme	500+

(With apologies to "Sloth Baggers Guide to Tasmania" by Peter Zund and Heather Ashcroft.)


JF-659 Slipslide Pot
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania
7JF659.STC428
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
Survey Grade UISv1 4-3-A
Disto X2
Surveyed by Janine McKinnon (19/11/17)
Drawn by Janine McKinnon (12/02/18)
Surveyed length - 28.9 m
Too small
To surface?
Tag
(nearby bedrock)
Steep Slope
Steep Slope
Steep Slope
Pool
Sump
N True
Water flows from very small hole
4.0
8.0M


Depth (m)
Entrance
'Bug-Me'
P18
'The Orifice'
P22
P8
P6
'Shower of Shit
(S.O.S.)'
P38
'Long John Silver'
P16
P12
4C
2C
'Sword of
Damocles'
P14
3C
dig
'Bolt traverse'
P9
P16
P9
'Truth & Delusion'
P70
Too tight
P6
P24
Too tight
P5
Too tight
P2
Plan
North
(Magnetic)
Entrance
'Bigfoot'
Outline of Chamber above
(not detailed as sketch only)
Red represents
sketched passage only
'Truth & Delusion'
'Shower of Shit
(S.O.S.)'
'Long John
Silver'
(Metres)
Elevation 340° - 160°
JF-268 Pooshooter
Junee-Florentine
Tasmania
7JF268.STC429
Drawn By: Madphil Rowsell (March 07) and 2017 extensions by Alan Jackson (Feb. 18)
Surveyed By: Madphil Rowsell, Alan Jackson, Gavin Brett, Matt Cracknell, Rolan Eberhard & Andreas Klocker
Depth: 195.8 m
Length: 585.6 m
BCRA Grade: 5c
Symbols: U.I.S. 1999

JF-673 Rocky Hollow

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF673.STC430

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

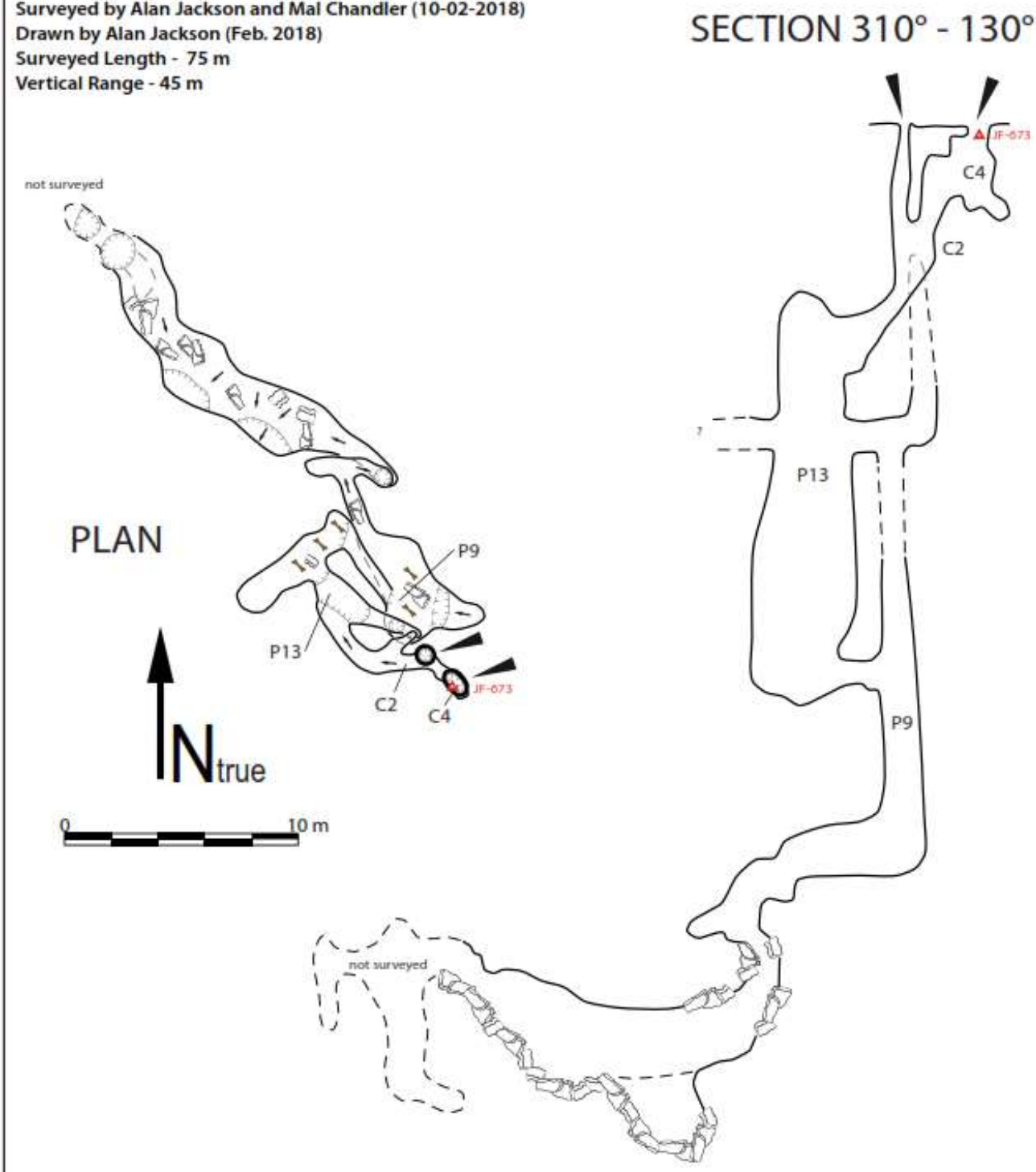
ASF Grade 43

Surveyed by Alan Jackson and Mal Chandler (10-02-2018)

Drawn by Alan Jackson (Feb. 2018)

Surveyed Length - 75 m

Vertical Range - 45 m



Fun and Diversions

Ye Olde Farte Zone

I am calling for photos from readers' archives. Dust them off and email them to me, with captions identifying the people, place and hopefully time (aeon at least). You can put a brief description if you like. Here's a good chance to exercise your hidden wit.

Photo credit too please, if possible.

Time period is from when TCC was founded until five years from current issue.

Email address: jmckinnon@caverneer.net.au

As I have received no submissions (again), here's another from the Tunney/McKinnon archive. Some input here would be good people.

Blah, blah, no-one seems to be reading this anyway.

Surely someone has a naked caver photo, that should spark up a bit of interest.

What a wonderfully comfortable looking campsite this is. Serena still manages to have a day-time snooze though (zoom in). Photo: Janine McKinnon

Arrakis campsite and entrance. STC weekend trip December 2010

Answers to last issue's helmet recognition quiz:

Thank you to Petr Smejkal and Serena Benjamin who submitted answers. They both had some success but neither got it all correct. I would have been amazed if they did.

If you remember, the challenge was to name both the wearer of the helmet and the location they are in.

Answers in order from left to right:

1. Milos Dvořák **in** Half Way Hole, Ida Bay
2. Serena Benjamin **in** The Serpentine, Khazad-Dum, Junee-Florentine
3. Gemma Umbers **in** Windy Rift, Growling Swallet, Junee-Florentine
4. Alan Jackson **in** Close to the Bone, Splash Pot, Junee-Florentine

The Last Page

I couldn't pass up the opportunity to creep out those with arachnophobia. You must get over it if you want to cave in Tas.
JF-673 Photo: Mal Chandler