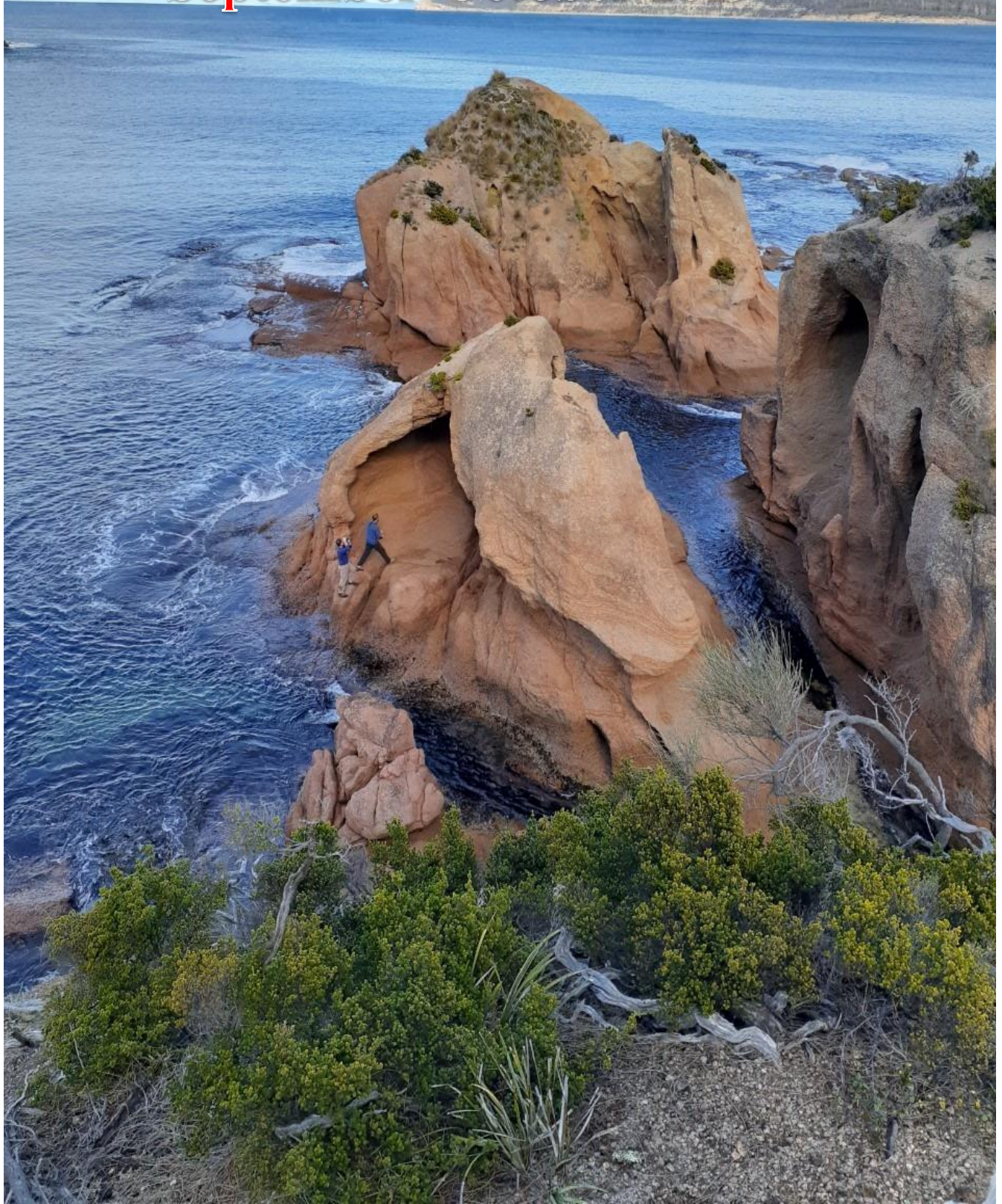


Speleo Spiel 434

September-October 2019



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Front Cover: *Does this qualify as a boatpark cave? We didn't survey though.*
Rolan & Alan investigate The Keyhole, Riedle Bay, Maria Island.
Photo Serena Benjamin

Back Cover: *At least someone was working.*
Rolan Eberhard, Alan Jackson (obscured), and Ric Tunney at one with nature, with technological help.
Cape Maurouaud, Maria Island.
Photo: Serena Benjamin

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

Speleo Spiel

Newsletter of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Incorporated

PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006

<http://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com/>

ABN: 73-381-060-862

ISSN 2208-1348

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

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Editorial

Tragically, this month we have a report of two Polish cavers dying in a cave in Poland in August. Details are sketchy but the two were trapped by rising water and died of hypothermia according to autopsy. Caving is not statistically high for reported accidents and deaths but that doesn't help if you, or someone you know, is involved in an unfortunate and serious event. We all think we know the risk associated with our sport. It varies depending on the cave, of course, but even the easiest caves have the potential for major dramas to occur, resulting in serious injury or death. As a case in point, older members may remember the Petrina Quinn incident in National Gallery a few decades ago. (No, I am not going to reference it. Do some research if you are interested). Unfortunate incidents like this one in Poland can act as a reminder to us all to always be aware of the specific risks and dangers associated with the cave we are visiting, and the generic risks that come with caving.

Cave safely and stay safe.

To continue the maudlin theme, in this issue Bill Nicholson expands on his report in *Stuff 'n' Stuff* in SS 433 on the John Boyle disappearance. John disappeared on a caving trip in October 1969, so Bill's article is spot on the 50th anniversary. The title of the article is very apt considering the postscript to the tale that he has activated by his enquiries.

The caving scene has been a lot quieter over the last couple of months, judging by the reduction in trip reports for this issue of the *Spiel*, compared to the last couple of issues. However, there is still plenty to keep you occupied over a cup of tea, or something stronger, particularly if you follow a couple of the links to further reading. For those really after something to get their teeth into, there is the link to the conference proceedings from the ASF conference held in Devonport last January. That should keep you busy for many cups of tea.

Stuff 'n' Stuff

- Yet another highly successful STC social evening was organised by our intrepid Social Secretary, Gabriel Kinzler, and again held at the residence of Tony & Pat Culberg. The food was excellent - supplied as a "potluck" by the attendees - and the entertainment informative (that's Petr's bit) and, well, entertaining (the interactive slideshow part). Petr presented an illustrated talk on the history of the cave he started his caving career in - Býčí skála - in the Czech Republic. This cave has a fascinating history, which Petr detailed very professionally.



Petr educating the masses. Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

- The 31st ASF conference proceedings have gone 'live' on the ASF website. This link will download a 22.8 MB zip file: <http://tinyurl.com/yxzm2vxg>
- A massive search and rescue operation was undertaken in southern Poland, starting on the 23rd of August, to find and rescue two cavers. According to media reports, the two became trapped behind a sump created by rising water on Saturday 17th August while exploring uncharted parts of the Wielka Snieżna cave in the Tatra mountains. The cave, Poland's deepest and longest, has 24 kilometres of passages and a depth of 800 meters. Sadly, reports are that the two cavers were found dead fairly soon after searching began. Plans for body retrieval are underway but it is reported that this will be difficult and involve explosives to widen some very narrow passages.
- As part of Science Week UTAS presented a talk by caver and cave diver Craig Challen – member of the Thai cave rescue team of 2018 and joint Australian of the Year 2019. STC attended in force and supplied a display in the foyer prior to the event. Serena Benjamin is to be commended on the very professional and eye-catching display she organised. STC members manned the stall to answer questions and "chat" with interested members of the public. After the talk Craig joined 12 of us at a local restaurant for dinner. That's two social evenings in less than two weeks. Surely a record.



There's more at the other end of the table.

Photo: Serena Benjamin

- Speculation on exploring Lunar caves has been going for a while, but how to do it? Some people seem to be getting serious. Here is a link to an article launching a search for ideas campaign: <https://tinyurl.com/yxqbx77z>. I am sure some of you have truly brilliant ideas for this, so here is the ideas campaign page: <https://tinyurl.com/y6tgtdd44>

Trip Reports

Hastings: Introducing ‘H-11 Big Mama’ – A new depth record?

April 2019 – July 2019

Gabriel Kinzler & Chris Sharples

Parties (aggregated): Serena Benjamin, Gabriel Kinzler, Liz McCutcheon, Chris Sharples

Previously on ‘Hastings’ (said in an ominous voice), we’d stumbled upon a series of dolines perched up high on the slopes of upper Hot Springs Creek and, with the previous jobs out of the way, we finally set out to get some real exploring underway. These marked depressions, between 5 and 15 m across at the rim, all seem to follow the contact over several hundred metres and their sequential proximity to one another indicates that some of them might well be connected and part of an extensive system. Clearly, the Swiss Cheese effect is in full swing in that area. We’d located a few entrances in different dolines back on 23 December 2018 with Ola Löfquist, but didn’t enter any at the time because we had an objective for the day (H-5 Chain of Ponds) and had learned previously that this area was so rich in cave entrances waiting to be discovered we’d never finish the day if we explored everything we found when we found it. And then we found something so good we immediately broke our brand-new rule.

Outing #1 – 21 April 2019

Serena, Chris and I returned to check a couple of the most interesting entrances. And that’s when we hit the true mother lode (and where the maternal qualifiers began). Twice before, we’d managed to walk just past a giant doline, about 40 m in diameter, so close and obvious it hurts in retrospect. We didn’t miss it this time. The cave it dives into was subsequently named Big Mama (H-11) because, well, it’s big, and because it was discovered on the day of my [Gabriel’s] mum’s birthday: I figured it’d be a nice way of honouring her from the other side of the world (better come and visit now).

We temporarily forgot our list of tasks for the day, deciding instead to rig and descend the 45 m shaft at the bottom of the doline immediately. This lack of discipline was rewarded by the discovery of an enormous (to us) chamber below.

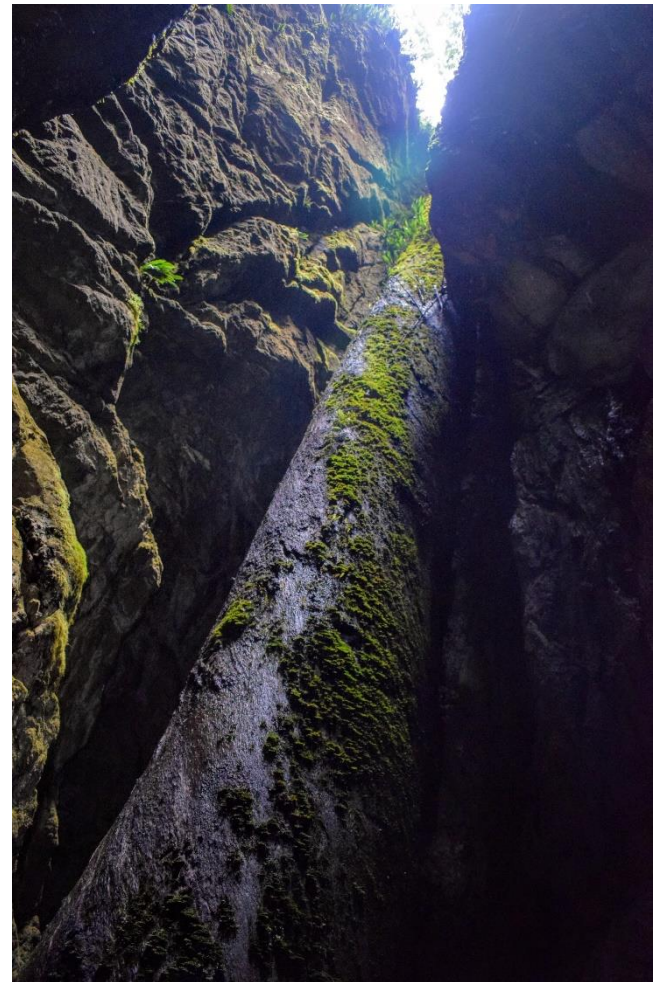
That day saw only superficial exploration of the cave, by way of some questionable rigging and prolonged gasping at the sheer size of it, but we noted several different leads and Chris did some preliminary sketching. We then decided to leave serious inspection to another day, so we could, for once, achieve what we had planned for that particular trip.

We thereby carried on with the initial plan of exploring ‘H-12 The Dining Room’ and ‘H-13 Jukebox’. H-12 is a short, inclined rift in a sinkhole (3 m dia. x 2 m deep), leading to a low squeeze entrance into a pretty chamber (4 m dia. x 2.5 m high) with some decent stals. It looks like an intimate, cosy little place to enjoy a nice meal by the candlelight, and

Serena soon pointed to a live cricket trapped in the large web of a hungry *Hickmania*, hence the name. Chris sketched it and we moved on. H-13 turned out to be another “committer”, with an early pitch promising to take up more time than we had on our hands, so we just packed and went home, adding it to our ever-growing to-do list.

Outing #2 – 8 June 2019

We returned this time with visitor Liz McCutcheon standing in for Serena. The objective was a full assault on H-11 Big Mama: tagging, rigging, surveying, lead pushing, photographing. Nothing less. On the way up, Liz tried her hand at distracting us by discovering a new cave, ‘H-14 Helter Shelter’, which, you guessed it, we left to survey for another day. Once back at H-11, I quickly proceeded to install the tag and started rigging the entrance pitches, while Chris and Liz fiddled with the Disto and started to survey from the doline rim above me into the cave.



H-11’s entrance is quite the looker.

Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

Halfway down the doline, which can be reached relatively safely from two different directions, a trickle drips through lush vegetation into a precipitous shaft, exposing generous outcrops of dolomite. A first pitch of approx. 19 m lands you on a large horizontal platform, not unlike Wolf Hole’s entrance, and opens sideways into the first properly roofed

section of the cave, which immediately houses the second pitch of approx. 26 m. There is a lot of debris on the way down, mostly bits of wood and large logs, including one of those seemingly eternal giants, right at the entrance, covered in moss and catching the last rays of light before you go in. It is a truly beautiful entryway.

At the bottom of the consecutive entrance shafts, more timber and logs sit atop a mound of various sediments, fungi and bones. The trickling water brims over one last ledge, under the terminal mound and into a continuing narrow passage, which constitutes our very first open lead: a downward squeeze. The big surprise, however, comes when a 90° turn of the head to the side at the pitch bottom shows an enormous, fairly round chamber, approx. 40 m wide and over 20 m high in places. It houses a rock pile that never had a chance to wash away and instead got covered in layers of sediment. Various skeletons can be observed, and abundant scree makes progress noisy.



Glowworm Gabriel into the abyss.

Photo: Chris Sharples.

The rock pile in the big chamber descends another 20 m or so from its highest point, which takes the cave's depth to 69.5 m from the tag (88.9 m from the rim of the doline): already deeper than Wolf Hole (62 m according to data by Matt Cracknell) and Newdegate Cave (58 m, ditto).

At Hastings, only the Trafalgar Pot/Waterloo Swallet system is reportedly deeper (76 m, according to an ASF Grade 22 survey by SCS). The lowest point of Big Mama is a wet sandy-mud infill which doesn't terminate, rather promises at least a bit more passage after some wily digging. That's lead #2. With an estimated 20 to 25 m vertical depth potential before hitting the water table, H-11 has a very decent shot at bettering the Hastings depth record.

But that's far from all, leads #3 and #4 being marvels of their own: high above the rock pile, a massive window can (will) be climbed and could theoretically lead to some of the neighbouring dolines, while a 10-metre+ spacious pitch plunges below the rock pile at the back wall, hopefully opening on the elusive base level. Additionally, back at the surface, Liz discovered a separate shaft a few metres away from the doline, which we believe joins a hole in the roof of the main chamber and would thus establish a second entrance to the cave. With a gross survey of the cave done, we naturally ran out of time on this fine day so close to the winter solstice and vowed to flesh it out next time around by pushing our four leads.



Serena heading down H-11.

Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

The action didn't end on that note, however. We blundered back down Hot Springs Creek in the dark, but as we approached the Hastings car park, we started hearing a deafening brouhaha of what sounded like hundreds of crows and other nondescript, definitely-non-endemic species. We were able to surmise it must be a performance of some sort (we had seen power cables laid down in the morning on the way in),

....but nothing could prepare me for what happened next: as I neared the tourist boardwalk aiming for our usual entry/exit spot, it was now crowded with a bunch of spectators sitting on logs cut specially for the occasion, surrounded by big loudspeakers making the commotion.

I must have come too close for comfort, because a woman who shall remain anonymous for her sake (*you mean you know who she was?* - Ed) panicked over my arrival and accosted me to tell me (not ask, tell) to turn off my headlight. Of course, me being me, but also tired and ferrying wet and muddy gear through the dark scrub after a long day, I decided not to accommodate. I just wanted to go home: it

would have taken me five seconds to walk by, tops. But she'd already seen enough and promptly proceeded to grab my helmet with one hand and try to turn off my Scurion with the other, fortunately to no avail. That was enough to send me into a very unusual (for me) rage with a fair amount of cussing, while Chris and Liz soon regrouped to pick me out of there, leaving the audience of the show bewildered or maybe just guessing it was part of the act. At about this time, we started to realise that what we had stumbled into was a Dark Mofo performance, which we later discovered was portentously called "Hrafn: Conversations with Odin".

As if that encounter wasn't enough, another member of the staff, a man my age desperate to make amends, escorted us all the way back to the car and then (there's no other word to describe it) harassed us for half an hour while we were sorting muddy ropes and stripping near-naked in front of him, first in the most positively condescending way you could imagine, then simply in very bad faith, taking photos of my license plates and insinuating he would report us to the Parks & Wildlife Service for having walked into his precious art performance staged in a publicly accessible national park, how dare we. Admittedly, I wasn't helping the situation as I considered it a great chance to spill out my frustration on someone who was clearly never going to be in my good graces anyway. After finally being asked to just leave (!), I told the belligerent to take a hike and we drove off, only to hear later that fellow caver Arthur Clarke had witnessed it all, being sat unobtrusively amongst the assembly (*I'd have thought you would have been justified in complaining to the MOFO organisers for such poor behaviour towards your group by that employee, as you were undertaking a legitimate activity and they had failed to adequately delineate the area of their activity - Ed*).

Outing #3 – 6 July 2019

Unmoved and proud, Chris and I subsequently went back on an affirmed "maintenance" trip to mow down our backlog of to-be-tagged caves, the shorter days of winter not lending themselves to a larger scale rigging and pushing mission of H-11.



H-11's main chamber. Spot the caver's light.

Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

We started by tagging and mapping 'H-14 Helter Shelter', a small cave sitting high on the shoulder of a gully with a stooping entrance leading to about 7 m length of spacious passage with mainly flat floor, which made us believe it might have potentially had use as an indigenous shelter.

Higher still and past H-11, we tagged the above-mentioned 'H-12 The Dining Room' as well as tagging and finishing the exploration of 'H-13 Jukebox', an elongated surface rift (5 m long x 1 m wide) which descends approx. 7 m (easy scrambling) then more vertically 8 m (abseil) to a gravel floored chamber with a pit bottoming at 17 m depth with no further leads. The narrow and elongated entrance reminded me of a slot machine, and I was in a musical mood, hence the name.

A small hike further west then brought us to the main stream swallet that flows into H-5 Chain of Ponds, which we named 'H-34 Chain of Logic', a lovely name reflecting our logical deduction (see description in SS 433) that it connects to H-35 and thus to H-5. A bit further still, we tagged 'H-33 Disappointments Lair' (see SS 433) and adjacent 'H-37 Fools Errand' (a silly cave with a silly entrance and a silly caver previously stuck in it for 45 minutes). All the same, Chris noted that the ceiling of H-37 exposes a Permian-age cobbly and laminated palaeokarst sediment infill in what was either an ancient dolomite doline or possibly a cave shaft in the Late Carboniferous Period before the great Permian marine transgression which blanketed a former landscape in Permian-age glacio-marine sediments (phew). Finally, we visited a 4 m deep stream sink nearby (previously recorded by Houshold & Sharples in 2003), but devoid of enterable cave, so we decided not to assign it a number. Finally, with all our tasks for the day ticked off, we returned once again down Hot Springs Creek in near darkness. It must be confessed that we were secretly disappointed to discover that the Dark Mofo performance was not playing this evening, and so we reached the car without incident.

The next series of trips will have us finalise exploration of H-11, then continue following the contact along the valley slopes to check for more dolines and cave entrances.

Cave Hill, Florentine Valley

7 July 2019

Bill Nicholson

Party: Kirsten Laurie, Callum Nicholson, Bill Nicholson

The objectives for today's frolic was to give Kirsten a taste of some wild caving, experience something awesome, get muddy and to have a go at a bit of laddering. For Callum it was simply to go bush and get underground. We achieved all that and more over some hours by completing a through trip in the Pepper Pot Master Cave.

We assessed the lead near the base of JF-442 as do-able, only requiring the relocation of a small amount of collapse debris. From this point we can see about 4 metres of clean low passage heading N to NW back into the hill towards JF-218 approx. 15 metres away.

IB-1 Revelation Cave

19 July 2019

Janine McKinnon

Party: Serena Benjamin, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

This was planned as a pleasant, and not long or difficult, day out in the depths of winter.

We haven't done this cave in about six years, no-one else has been there (to our knowledge) and thus the track hasn't been walked in that time. We expected a bit of an outdoors gymnasium course after leaving the Southern Ranges track, but we were reasonably pleasantly surprised. Tree falls existed but weren't too bad, thus we reached the cave entrance in 50 minutes from the car and started kitting up.

Now this cave has a couple of entrances, the one everyone remembers, and calls the cave by, is in the header to this report.

Well, we didn't go in this entrance as it's almost buried. Not wanting to dig our way in (lazy buggers that we are) we went in the slightly higher entrance - IB-233.



Serena testing her own rigging. Note the rope length confidence.

Photo: Janine McKinnon

Anyway, where was I? Oh yes, kitting up. Serena was "dressed" and ready to go first and wandered over to where we thought the entrance was. She had trouble finding it and started searching about, with us supplying encouraging suggestions on micro-direction. She couldn't find the entrance and I looked up hill and thought there was a slight wear pad going uphill. I (distractedly) finished kitting up (there is a hint of dramas to come here) and headed uphill and found the doline we wanted some 20 m higher, and 10 m further around, the hill. We then took a few minutes to find the pitch tucked into the side of the doline. Our memories weren't proving to be totally reliable (the smug amongst you can have a chuckle here). So, after these delays we were finally off and running, so to speak. Starting into the cave at 11:15 am.

Serena rigged down. We found a couple of the nuts on the bolts rusty, which was surprising and annoying as we had used 316 stainless steel bolts, nuts and washers when we rigged the cave initially. Apparently the odd "not 316" one creeps into the boxes (we replaced them on the way out).



Serena in her natural habitat.

Photo: Janine McKinnon

I had remembered this as a lovely cave, and it was. I had forgotten a climb in the steeply dipping passage between pitches 2 & 3 that I had always found hard (memory-blocking is a great tool if you want to keep doing outdoor pursuits over many years). My legs for bridging (or anything really) are short. With much encouragement and spotting-help, I managed to climb it much more easily (if somewhat slowly) than past trips. I'll remember the moves for next time

As Serena was rigging the third pitch I glanced down and for some inexplicable reason finally noticed that I didn't have my chest harness on. Bugger. Remember the distractions at the kitting up point? Well they were sufficiently distracting that this old duck forgot to put her chest harness on. In my defence (is it?) this is a first for me...and did I mention the distraction?



Now that's a well-fitting suit. Photo: Janine McKinnon

Improvisation to the rescue. We had plenty of rigging tapes with us and Ric fashioned a chest harness for me. It looked pretty dodgy but how else to keep going (and get out)? So down the pitch I went.

We wandered to the terminal dig, looked at it and decided that keener people needed to come to dig (Amy, that's a call to you. Your project, as I recall). Time to go home.

Ric re-jiggered my chest harness adaption at the bottom of Pitch three whilst Serena prusiked up. I came up last. The rig worked surprisingly well. It wasn't a lot slower than I would expect normally. Not that I would like to do a big vertical cave with it.

The trip out was smooth, and we were all out at 3:15 pm.

Updated Rigging Notes:

IB-1 Revelation Cave: IB-233 entrance

Original Rigging notes (from *Speleo Spiel* 356)

P1 (7 m) Mud Cake: 12 m rope. 3 m Tape around horizontal fallen log beside pot at its lowest side. It is a bit rotten, and broken off, but works, for now. Back-up to large tree 4 m back from lip. 3 m tape around tree. There are a few glancing rubs down the pitch.

P2 (The Baguette): 19 m from bolts, 16 m from take-off ledge. 22 m rope, plus approach lines. Belay from 2 x 8 mm bolts on LH wall level with top of large boulder. A 5 m approach line from a boulder on the floor protects the rigger when reaching the bolts; 3 m tape around boulder.

It is much easier to take-off from ledge 2 m down-pitch, approached from underneath the boulders on RHS (obvious way forward). Again, a separate 5 m approach line would be helpful for beginners or very cautious cavers. However, it is easily possible to safely approach the ledge and reach the rope without a safety line.

Redirection from knob, 2 m below bolts, level with take-off ledge, and opposite take-off ledge on opposite wall. 2 m tape required, 4 m if doubled. This holds the first metre of the rope away from the wall.

P3 (18 m): 25 m rope. 4 m tape or trace around blade directly above pitch on RHS. Back-up to 8 mm bolt, about 5 m vertically above pitch head on RHS. (This is not easily spotted; look out and around corner when climbing down to pitch head.)

All bolts have had hangers removed, but have plastic tags. Rope lengths are approximate.

All directions looking down.

Bolts are 8 mm Powers Through Bolts, installed 12/2011.

JF-237 Niggly Cave

25-28 July 2019

Alan Jackson

Party: Serena Benjamin, Stephen Fordyce, Alan Jackson, Gabriel Kinzler,

Steve likes to think he's in charge and delegates roles and jobs to everyone regarding who'll write which bits of trip reports etc. It's kind of sweet. Anyone who knows me properly knows that if I think anything important happened on a trip then regardless of what anyone else does I'll be writing a detailed and tedious account of the exploration; no one else can be trusted to do it properly.

After the excitement of Wish You Were Here on the previous trip Gabriel and I were keen to have another poke about as soon as practicable. With only a couple of possible weekends between me returning from the Nullarbor and Gabriel scooting off overseas we chose the 28-29 July weekend. Steve jumped on board in the hope of getting another dive or two in and managed to convince himself that the trip was primarily a dive support trip, bless his cotton socks.

DAY 1

Gabriel and Steve departed Hobart early on the Thursday with an unpleasant amount of dive gear (two bags each, I believe). Serena and I got away from Hobart around 3:15 pm with only half a bag of dive gear and a poo tube between us. Luxury. We got to camp about 7:30-8 pm and found a demoralised Gabriel trying to dry his sleeping bag out and no Steve (he was off inspecting the sump and preparing dive gear). They'd spent the afternoon playing hide and seek with the camp gear which had been distributed around the Mt Niggly chamber by a rather impressive flood. Fortunately, they'd found everything but it had required quite a bit of effort by all accounts.

DAY 2

Day 2 dawned (sort of) and S, G and I were up and ready to go before Steve had even extracted himself from his sleeping bag. We wished him luck and bugged off over Mt Niggly. Our first obstacle was the Vietnam Pool – the recent flood had left it very full and dangerously close to overtopping gumboots. We dug a channel to lower the level a few inches and performed some acrobatics to get across mostly dry. We plugged on until we reached the end of the last trip's efforts (station RAG46 at the start of Sabretooth Passage).

Gabriel led the charge into the unpleasantly narrow vadose canyon. The abundance of groovy straws and helictites did little to distract us from the tightness but thankfully it opened up a bit and got into higher levels which were drier and liberally coated with gypsum fluff and dust.

A few bypasses and climbs were required to negotiate fallen blocks and the like and eventually it all came to an end after the passage split in two with each branch terminating in soaring avens. Alas. We surveyed our way back out. Snow Go has been suggested for a name, since there was lots of white stuff and it didn't go.

Back at station RAG46 we considered our options. Up high a fossil continuation could be seen, so we climbed up onto the sediment ledge we'd first scaled on the previous trip and assessed the traverse required to enter the continuation. A bolt was placed up high to gain some height then a second was placed higher and nearer the point of the arête which allowed us to swing and traverse attached to the rope. A quick recce showed a promising lead so everyone popped over. A steeply ascending slope in wide, tall fossil vadose canyon terminated in yet another ~50 m blank wall, but a few metres back a side lead dropped down and to the west. This accessed a breakdown chamber with various ways on which all ultimately terminated in rock fall or likely connections back to Sabretooth Passage streamway. We surveyed out and headed back down Wish You Were Here.

At RAG12 (the four-way junction at the start of the 'big' stuff) we hit the rubble slope. Serena went middle and high, I went left and medium high and Gabriel went right and high. My passage went along for 60 m or so in moderate dimensions to a rock fall blockage with a couple of small inlets. Potential for pushing up into the rock fall at the end was noted but not attempted. I surveyed out and met the other two halfway along. Serena's high lead had petered out in large blocky rock fall (overlying where I'd just been) and she didn't seem enthused. I shot a leg up there to get the general gist but didn't check it out. Gabriel's right-hand lead came to a short pitch so he was off to gather some rope. He was all up for a dodgy natural rig from a boulder on the floor but I convinced him that boulders that can be pushed down the pitch are best excluded from one's potential anchor list and he begrudgingly fetched the drill and placed a delightful free-hang rather than a death rig with a rub. While he rigged, Serena headed back down to the stream to have a look and a shout in the unexplored inlet at station RAG53 to see if Gabriel was just doing a round trip. She returned having failed to establish any connection and with a scathing review of the inlet – 'Festy Fuck-Fest' has been abbreviated to Triple F in the interests of a G-rated final map.

The pitch was about 8 m and led into large, tall, fossil meander with a rubble floor. An ascending ramp to the right was investigated by Serena and led to a ~15 m pitch. Straight on though the fossil meander barrelled along until it terminated in a blank vertical wall of rock. A patch of gypsum crust on the wall reminded Serena of a woman ... or a horse ... or something. Essentially this passage is a fossil upper level of the active streamway used to access Wish You Were Here.

On the way out I ran some survey legs up Serena's ramp to the pitch. There was the main drop (wet) and a small side chamber (dry) on the right which would also require rope. We were sick of it by this stage so we left the ~8 m pitch rigged and headed for camp. I shot a few legs up Triple F to be able to see how it sits in relation to the upper levels.

On our way back to camp we found a note from Steve at the bottom of Mt Atlantis outlining that he'd abandoned the dive

attempt (too much water) and had spent the day tidying up some survey in the Mt Atlantis area.

Later analysis of the survey data indicated that Sabretooth and Snow Go continue to parallel (now overlap) the Dreamtime area in Growling, sitting 100-120 m above it. The termination is just short of Bloody Smokers and the elevated sections of Ramp and the nearby connection down towards Mothers Passage.

All very interesting. About 660 m of new passage surveyed.

DAY 3

Day 3 saw a Gabriel and Serena mutiny. Steve and I headed for GoT/GOAT area for some tidying up. First job was the Bucks Luck lead at the end of GoT (station SAG91). Steve burrowed his way up a dribbly rock fall armed with a crowbar and after 25 m of tedious vertical progress a spacious side chamber was intersected. At the chamber mid-point a ~15 m pitch dropped into more chamber/rock fall. Lacking a rope we surveyed our way out. The survey data suggests it's trending north ('downstream') and directly over the top of the ~12 m aven/waterfall in the southern split at



The Schism. More up options in the rock fall await the committed caver.

Alan and Gabriel crunching data in comfort

Photo: Stephen Fordyce

Next mission was into GOAT. We stopped at station GOAT25 to check the small inlet passage Gabriel and I had gladly

ignored on the last foray in this area. Steve took one look and expressed his displeasure. The passage was low and wet. I grovelled through about 15 m of 'lie in stream' horror until the passage was wide enough to turn around and seized the opportunity. It's still going (low, wet and narrow) but someone more sadistic than me is required. No survey.

Wet and miserable (me, at least), we continued upstream to station GOAT14 (note, this station is not marked/labelled) and popped into Gabriel's 'most beautiful aven in the world'. It was nice. A bypass to the aven was followed up over much flowstone and moonmilk which circled its way back around and up via a series of small sketchy climbs to a window back down the initial/lower aven. All rather pretty and stuff but a bit pointless. If going up in this area becomes a priority at any point then the adjacent Mountain Goat climbs appear a much easier prospect.

We bid this area adieu and headed downstream to the pitches (insert stupid Steve GoT names here). The downstream continuation of this passage had not been pushed or surveyed. Best case scenario: it would connect through to the junction with the downstream Gotcha streamway but the foothills of Mt Atlantis were always likely to get in the way. It started large but the wider upper levels crapped out in rock fall so a narrow (very narrow) active stream canyon was

pursued instead. This soon popped out into another section of wider passage for a bit but crapped out in rock fall horror as expected. It was good to get it surveyed and off the job list. We returned to camp (but noticed the possibility of accessing extreme upper levels of Breeze Blocks from near the summit of Mt Atlantis).

The day's three surveyed escapades added ~92, ~54 and ~43 m respectively. Hardly a triumphant return but it all adds up.

DAY 4

Day 4 was the usual grind out of the cave with unpleasantly large packs.

JF-441 Index Pot: One Too Many Danishes

28 July 2019

Callum Nicholson

Party: Phillip Jackson, Bill Nicholson, Callum Nicholson

We left Jacko's at an ungodly hour Sunday morning and arrived at Cave Hill sometime later and trekked up to The Plateau. "Index Pot!" roared Jacko, who at the time was in a sweat and scoffing down a few heart pills. After about three attempts, and a few cheeky comments about each other's stature, Jacko conceded the lead to Callum. After some explicit language and grovelling, Callum made it down as far as one could without clearing more rock away. "She still goes!" he said to much surprise, considering the depth of the main tunnel. A spider looked at Callum funny, making him decide not to wait around any longer. Despite original observations, the hole seemed a lot tighter to Callum (probably due to the Danish he had eaten) and struggled to haul his way back out of the entrance. Bill was not having a bar of this silliness and directed operations from the surface. Callum emerged with the help of a cantilever lift and fell into a heap resembling a foetal position on the forest floor.

A considerable draft can be felt coming out of Index Pot, and the further passage which was too small at the time of the trip seemed to be heading in the direction of Tarn Creek Swallet, although this is more of an educated guess than anything.

Multi-tasking surface work

14 August 2019

Janine McKinnon

Party: Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Back in the mists of mid-June I went to assess the dive potential of a sump in Exit Cave that Rolan (Eberhard) and Chris (Sharples) had "discovered". Yes, it looked lovely as a dive prospect, yes, water levels were really low - even summer low - so let's get organised to dive it soon we thought. Permit sorted, date fixed...then the rain started.

This following Saturday was dive day, and I thought that maybe, just maybe, a look at how much water was running down Mystery Creek on the surface was a good idea. This was the day to check.

We also thought we would wander along the track to Hobbit Hole whilst we were in the area with some time. We haven't

walked that part of the IB-1 track for more than a decade, no-one has been into the cave since most of the modern era of cavers were in primary school, and as we plan a visit to the cave next summer (motivated by Serena Benjamin - that woman has too much enthusiasm) it seemed prudent to ascertain if we could find it still, and what the track was like after years of neglect. You don't want to do that carrying heavy packs of cave gear.

It was looking very wet and boggy as we walked along the track to Mystery Creek Cave. We weren't hugely surprised to see Mystery Creek running quite high, with evidence of recent serious flooding. There was no way I was going to be able to swim against that flow in the cave. So Plan A for Saturday is delayed until further notice (Plan B activated).

We then continued our walk up the IB-1 track, turned at the junction, and continued to Hobbit Hole. We were surprised that the track was in quite good condition and we were only delayed a few minutes at a time in the areas where I was uncertain of the route.

The Hole doesn't look any more inviting than it did the last time we thought of doing it, but without a river running down the mouth it will be more appetising. Late summer I'm thinking, after lots of dry weather.



And a very enticing looking entry it is. Water flows in just out of sight.

Photo: Janine McKinnon

It only took us 50 minutes to walk back to the car, without rushing, and the track is easy to follow now, albeit with a few gymnastics-requiring spots.



Another view, for scale.

Photo: Ric Tunney

Maria Island Mission

17 August 2019

Janine McKinnon

Party: Serena Benjamin, Rolan Eberhard, Alan Jackson, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

This was a trip long on the agenda and very quick in the execution.

It has been a “target” trip since early March 2017, when Alan first suggested it to me. It sounded like a great excuse for a fun day out. All we needed was suitable weather for a small boat to journey to, and from, halfway up the outside of Maria Island, on a weekend, and everyone to be available on that day. Most of summer would be out as the sea breeze is a gale by early afternoon. The day couldn’t really be planned a long way in advance due to the aforesaid weather issues. Easy peasy. Huh! So I put it in the back of my mind and kept an eye on a suitable day.

We almost made it happen a couple of times, but then the weather crapped out.

This particular Saturday had been earmarked for me to attempt a dive in the sump in Mystery Creek passage in Exit Cave, so a couple of the “Maria mission” people were already booked for that. Then we discovered on Wednesday that it was too wet for the dive. Then I looked at the forecast for what else I might do with that weekend....and it looked good for Maria Island by boat. What a co-incidence. What a surprise for everyone when I suggested it.

As Thursday and Friday came and went the weather report became just a little less favourable - with 20-25 knots (about 40-50 kph) winds by mid-afternoon - but still safe, so we were in business. I didn’t want to cancel again!

We all gathered at the Boomer Bay boat ramp at 7:30 am and headed out in glassy and mainly smooth conditions for the trip across to Maria Island. The ride took an hour as it is 20 nautical miles (nm) - about 40 km.



The perfect landing spot.

Photo: Rolan Eberhard

Rolan had some sea caves he wished to photograph and document along the southern part of the island, so we doodled slowly up close to shore, stopping whilst he did his bit. We went into Haunted Bay to inspect a shore feature he had been told had a good drop and the sound of water, we

could see it from the boat, but the southerly swell precluded a safe landing. Onward to Alan’s objective.

Alan had information, and co-ordinates, for some caves at water level in Riedle Bay. They faced south, so landing at the spot was not happening, however there was a convenient bay about a few hundred metres away that was lovely and sheltered. We anchored there and were even able to nose up to shore to allow everyone to step ashore onto rocks dry-footed. Ric stayed to “man” the boat and the rest of us headed off over the hill to the cave.

The terrain and vegetation were pleasantly very mild, and we were at our objective in a leisurely less-than half hour. Caves were looked at, photographed, surveyed (by Alan) and the location generally enjoyed. Alan grovelled up the back of the largest cave and declared that it could, just possibly, be the 40 m length reported to him.



Alan off up the back.

Photo: Rolan Eberhard



It’s “Where’s Wally?”, or in this case Janine and Alan (I think), for scale.

Photo: Serena Benjamin

The analysis of the cave rock is best described by a concatenation of Alan and Rolan’s opinions:

The assumption is that the cave(s) is/are predominately formed by the wave action rather than proper karst processes. The features have clearly developed along parallel joints in the Permian sediments, which are obviously ‘limy’ (plenty of stals and the like on the face above the entrances). The sediments themselves contain lots

of small and medium rocks. The rock is certainly conglomerate at Three Caves Point. The larger pieces are mainly lumps of granite (or at least granitic rocks), plus a mixture of other rocks types; 'bouldery conglomerate' is a reasonable description.

The conglomerate is probably a basal layer within the Parmeener Supergroup and formed at a time when the underlying granite was being eroded, before things settled down and the conglomerate was covered over by lower energy sediments including crappy limestone.

The surrounding granite is older but the dolerite sitting over the top is younger, so some baking on the upper levels would have happened.

The tufa likely comes from leaching of impure limestone further upslope (Parmeener Supergroup). The matrix of the conglomerate could be calcareous and if so may contribute to the tufa, although it's probably not the main source.



OK, this is "do it yourself" caption.

Although "Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dee" pop to mind

Photo: Serena Benjamin

We looked at a couple of other interesting shore features on the way back to the boat. It was now around 11:30 am, so close enough to lunch time. We had a relaxed lunch on board in a tranquil setting, in sunshine and about 18C; pretty good for August.



A very interesting patch of rock.

Photo: Rolan Eberhard



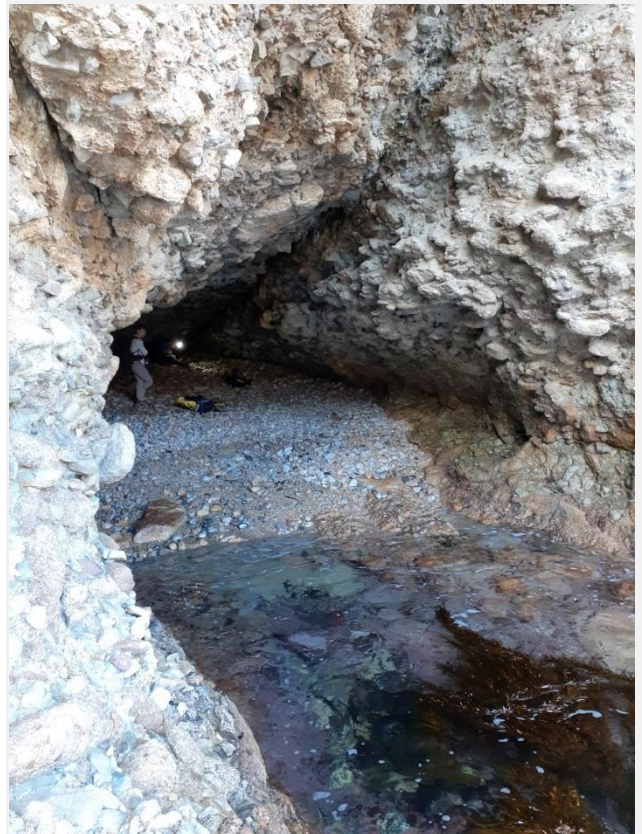
Another interesting feature in the rock. Maybe a knowledgeable reader can send me a Letter to the Editor explaining these tube-like features.

Photo: Serena Benjamin

We thought about looking at another feature on the list but the wind was picking up outside our cove, and was forecast to be quite strong later in the afternoon, so we opted to head back via a scenic tour up to Mistaken Cape, a few miles further north.

Once out of the bay and into the wind we were pleased with our decision. The wind had picked up to 15-20 knots and it was a slow and bumpy ride to windward to look at The Cape.

Once we turned south for home, we were running into the swell but it was only 1-1.5 m and the wind was behind us. We had a fun run down-wind to the Marion Narrows (well I did, driving) and arrived back at the boat ramp at 1:30 pm. That was a surprise as we had not rushed the day at all. Getting back before the wind increased to the next wind-strength bracket had been a good plan though.



A closer view of the entrance. Photo: Serena Benjamin.

Other Exciting Stuff

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Speleo Spiel 174, February 1982

They say it didn't happen that long ago when it was within your own memory. So, here's another recent one for you; from the editor's perspective.

*Sesame II has been back on the club's agenda (albeit with some missing trip reports), we have Stefan's old photo later in this issue, so this report from **Trevor Wailes** seemed like an appropriate piece. You will see that there are quite a few current members gathered together in this one. (note: all grammar and punctuation are verbatim, for verisimilitude)*

SESAME II (JF-211)

Originally discovered by a party from SCS who made three trips in before reaching the final chamber where the stream sinks into a low passage between boulders. They drew a rough survey which was published in the "*Southern Caver*" and their estimated depth was amazingly accurate.

As far as I know, the first TCC trip into this pot was early in 1981 when Chris Davies, Pete Hutchinson and myself took enough ladder to go as far as the top of the "big pitch!" We were suitably impressed and some months later, led another trip in with Di Davies, Bill Nicholson, Niel Gibson and others. Our first trip had been in good weather; this second trip was decidedly damp. Chris and myself however, descended the "big pitch!" and apparently turned back just before the 6th pitch. Sad to say, some of the members on this trip we have not seen since.

Chris and myself had not forgotten this mini-classic and had planned to return but the trip seemed to be permanently shelved. The Australia Day long weekend arrived, however, and, as Sesame II was on the trip list and lots of keen members were around, we decided not only to make a concerted effort to bottom it, but to survey it as well.

Chris and myself, knowing the entrance series difficulties, split the group. Chris, Geoff Fisher and Craig Crossby would rig and keep going while Rick Tunney, Janine McKinnon and myself would survey after them. The entrance shaft, roomy and obvious, was rigged with 11 metres of ladder. A slope then led down to a short climb up over a hole in the floor to the top of the second pitch which was all in daylight. The second pitch of 8 m is into a large aven with blocks littering the floor. The way on is not obvious but is in the left between blocks, down a small abandoned stream runnel.

The 3rd pitch is at the end of this short squeeze and is like the opening of a 9 m letterbox- getting gear back through this section is awkward - with a ledge halfway down. The 4th pitch also of 9 m, follows immediately and is free hanging with a squeeze to start with. These entrance pitches now give way to some horizontal development.

A deserted stream passage littered with blocks is high and roomy until it merges into a large high aven- "Mr Hooper's Hall". In the right-hand corner at the lowest point in the hall is the short low crawl into "Sesame St.". In wet weather, a small stream sinks at the foot of the 1 m step into the main passage which runs both ways.

A high narrow passage with clothes ripping projections leads on into more roomy, impressive stream passage minus stream. The water there is, disappears down a crawl but the

main way on is up over a mud bank and into the hall above "Big Bird's Nest". A hand line is used to descend a 20 m slope to the more solid "Nest" area where a further 20 m ladder pitch leads down the rift to the start of "Snuffleupacas' Serpentine Passage". This handline and ladder pitch is what was previously referred to as the "big pitch" and the "Nest" was the termination of our original trip.

We were still surveying and caught up with Chris at this point. Craig was still above and Geoff had gone on ahead to the next pitch for which we had no tackle. We continued surveying as Geoff passed us on his return.

The spacious serpentine passage has a unique false floor which makes for easy going. We had surveyed about a hundred metres before I started to feel faint from lack of food and we decided to call it off and return, leaving the system rigged for Chris to solo it the following day.

As usual, motivation was difficult with damp clothes from the day before. The TCC party was diminished as Craig Crossby and Geoff Fisher had returned to Hobart. But as a party of the SCS were staying with us at the Homestead, they were convinced that they should do some caving(!) and so their ladders (plural) were commandeered to use on the last three pitches. It was decided the survey party should go in first and continue towards the pitch an unknown distance away.

Chris Davies and Ross Chapman (RANCA - ex!) were to follow immediately and continue rigging with the SCS group generally having a good look round. Well! The best laid plans!! It took us 20 mins approx. to reach our last survey station and a further 15 mins crawling to cover the remaining 35 metres through Snuffleupacas Crawl to the top of the next pitch - "Oscar's". We sat in the large chamber and waited for our rigging party. Janine passed the dry breadrolls round (ughh!) Rick ate his and I chewed mine. Janine ate hers and I still chewed mine. Then, for amusement, ignoring the imagined rattles of our rigging party catching us up, we did the I spy thing. R for rock had them baffled for a while but B for bread was the killer...I was still chewing it! After 45 mins waiting, we thought something was amiss and returned to the foot of the 20 m pitch in time to find Chris down and Ross well on the way.

We quickly returned to Oscar's pitch, rigged it and descended a superb 10 m pot to a small pool and continuing passage. Chris and Ross went forward but were beaten to the next pitch, after two short climbs by the survey team. This pitch, the Count's, posed a problem as there was no belay point obvious. Chris climbed out over the pitch and found a suitable anchor but it was impossible to gain access to the ladder. A free climb down 3 m of the pitch was the best

method so a long trace and a 4 m ladder was used from the original belay point. This is another superb streamway "pot" to a pool and high rift continuation – 'Ernie & Berts Rift'. A surveyor's dream with 10 to 20 m legs, roomy high passage and obstacle free until the rift dipped down and closed in to a point where we had to climb up to gain further access.

Chris and Ross were looking for a suitable belay to descend to the rapidly dipping floor of the rift as further horizontal traversing was becoming impractical. Chris launched avalanches of loose talus into the void below. Having found a suitable concreted rock in the vertical rift, we threw down all the ladder we had (20 m) and I descended down an easy climb with 1 m between the walls. Only 10 m of ladder is necessary to reach a gently dipping sandy floor. When a stream flows here, which of course it must have, it heads off at 90° down to a chamber on the left. The rift, however, continues upwards for a short way before closing down completely to a narrow crack issuing a trickle of water. The chamber on the left is roomy but not large. A rift at right angles to the one just vacated drops 10 m and is easily free climbed to another small chamber with blocks to confuse the way on. A further climb down of about 2 m shows what is possibly the end(?). Below, down a narrow climb, a way on which looks quite small between blocks seems to be the only possibility for continuation. This is where I finished chewing the bread! (It's still there!)

Our exit was uneventful and we met up with Phil Jackson at "Big Bird's Nest" showering us with gravel from the handline pitch above. The SCS contingent had looked around Mr Hooper's Hall where a narrow connection with Sesame I is believed to be. They found some crawls off, but no information is available! (Competition is healthy!)

Tackle retrieval was indeed awkward through the squeeze at the top of the 3rd pitch but at length we all exited from what must be one of Tasmania's best "moderate" caving trips entirely on ladder.

I hope the original discoverers (SCS) of this highly sporting system have no ill feelings to us - the TCC - resurveying it and naming parts of the system after Andrew Briggs' favourite intellectual T.V. show (Edikashon never did mi no gud!) I suppose their name was from "Open sesame"?! Anyway, as trips in the Florentine go, this is one of the best by far! (personal opinion).

1st Party: Rick Tunney, Janine McKinnon, Craig Crossby, Chris Davies, Trevor Wailes

2nd Day: Rick Tunney, Janine McKinnon, Chris Davies, Trevor Wailes (TCC), Ross Chapman (RANCA), Phil Jackson, Russell ? (*maybe Fulton?* - Ed), Lindsay Wilson and wife (SCS)

Tackle list for Sesame II

entrance 1st	11 m ladder	short header
2nd	10 m Ladder	short Header
3rd	10 m Ladder	short header
4th	10 m Ladder	Short header
5th	Handline 25 m to Nest	
6th	20 m Ladder	25 m Handline
Oscar's 7th	10 m Ladder	Medium header
Count's 8th	4 m Ladder	Long header
Ernie& Berts 9th	10 m Ladder	Short header

“Opening a can of worms”:

The John Boyle investigation.

Bill Nicholson

Bill reports on a fascinating, and somewhat bizarre, postscript to a story well-known to all Tasmanian cavers and bushwalkers from the era of the late 1960s through the 1980s, and possibly even later years.

I was told the tale of the disappearance, and subsequent search for, this lost caver almost as soon as I arrived in the state in the early 1980s. It is Tasmanian folklore. The “Bombardier Track”, which runs across the Sandfly Creek plain to the base of the NE ridge of Mt Anne, was made for that search (by a Bombardier tracked vehicle, of course). The formal search was large and went for seven days, so it is even more amazing that the authorities had “lost” it as a documented event.

Thanks go to Bill for motivating this correction to a bureaucratic injustice long forgotten. John Boyle's family deserve this - Ed.

Much earlier this year, having decided that I really needed to put together an article on John Boyle but lacking enough correct information, I approached the Tasmanian Coroners Court requesting their findings into his disappearance, only to be told that no such findings exist and they suggested I contact Tasmania Police Missing Persons Unit. Thus, I followed through and received an email from Sergeant John Delpero of State Intelligence Services saying an initial search found no record of John Boyle and I would need to submit a Right to Information application in order to facilitate a more detailed search. The next morning, with the appropriate form in hand partly completed, I received a phone call from Sergeant Delpero in which he informed me not to worry submitting the application as they had decided to open an investigation into this matter.

To cut a long story short, a nation-wide investigation including the relevant State Police and Federal agencies, Government departments, caving clubs etc. was launched. A number of members, past and present, of the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers were able to provide or rule out crucial information, particularly Greg Middleton in undertaking countless painstaking hours searching through STC archives. Many people have contributed in this process that will ultimately provide an opportunity for some level of closure for John Boyle's extended family, friends and all involved in helping to try to find him.

As cavers, by the very nature of what we do, irrespective of what level of caving we are engaged in; we as a club have been fortunate to not have a repeat of the situation such as the disappearance of John Boyle on a club surface exploration trip on 18th October 1969. My intention in presenting this article is to mark this event that happened 50 years ago out of respect for John Boyle who at the time was a member of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club.

The following are extracts from the “**Report of the Field Operations of the Mt. Anne Search - October 1969**” by Mr R.G Williams, civilian ground search controller; published in the *A.S.F Newsletter #47*: “John Boyle, aged 26, formerly of Sydney, but resident six months in Hobart,

became separated late on Saturday, October 18, 1969, from a party searching for caves and potholes at the head of Sandfly Creek, 2.5 miles NNE of Mt. Anne in the rugged south-west of Tasmania. Despite an intensive search involving aircraft and about 130 ground searchers, the missing man was not found, and the search was called off late on Sunday, 26th October 1969.

“General description of search area.

The headwaters of Sandfly Creek drain into relatively open buttongrass plain oriented east-west and widening downstream to about 1.5 miles where it is crossed by the Hydro-Electric Commission’s Scotts Peak Road. Camp was set up by John Boyle and party in scrub just beyond the plain and about 4 miles off the road. South of the camp country rises steeply 2.5 miles SSW to Mt. Anne. North and east of camp is a ridge averaging 1800 feet compared with 1450 feet at camp. Beyond the land falls to Weld River. The general area (save for the buttongrass plain) is clothed in dense rainforest with a well-developed understory of horizontal scrub, dissected by numerous gullies. Visibility in forest is very restricted except from Camp Spur and the ridges leading to Mt. Anne. Local rock is mostly dolomite and there are a number of small potholes. Progress is physically exhausting and navigation difficult. Only competent, well equipped walkers were employed in much of the search area.

“Events prior to the search.

A party comprising Alan Keller (leader), John Boyle, Paul Taylor and Andrew Cole arrived at a quarry on the Scotts Peak Road on night of Friday October 17th and camped overnight. Next morning they walked to the head of the buttongrass plain (4 miles) and set up camp just inside the scrub at the foot of Camp Spur which joins to the north-east ridge of Mt. Anne. They left camp at noon to search the Camp Spur area for potholes; it was agreed that no-one would enter a pothole alone. They spread out, Andrew and Alan on left, John and Paul on right. Contact was maintained between all the members of the party at intervals. At 3.30 pm, Alan asked John to turn back down the spur and join Paul to locate a sweater accidentally left by Andrew at a pothole. Voice contact indicated that John headed off in the right direction, but he was not seen again. The other three members met shortly afterwards and proceeded to the camp, arriving about 5 pm. A large smoky fire was lit and searching by torchlight and shouting continued to 10 pm.

“At the time of his disappearance John Boyle was wearing a cotton singlet, long trousers and an old oilskin parka. His boots were Paddy Pallin “Sherpa” type. He had matches but no compass. The area in which he was last seen was within half a mile of camp and there are several vantage points from which the buttongrass plains may be seen.

The next day (Sunday) searching resumed until noon, when Alan left to obtain further help from Hobart. Fine but overcast conditions with low cloud on Mt. Anne prevailed until late Sunday afternoon. Rain then started and continued all night with snow above 2000 feet.

“Search Operations

Sun. 19: Members of the Climbing Club, TCC and Police arrived at midnight.

Mon. 20: Search began 8 am after advance party reached camp. Helicopter pad was cleared near camp. Footprints,

definitely established as John’s, were found in bed of Camp Ck, and traced to within 250 yards of camp. Hobart Walking Club, SCS and TCC personnel arrived in evening. Low cloud, poor visibility.

Tues. 21: Search extended to Sandfly Ck. Catchment. Walkie Talkie contact maintained throughout. Footprints found in creek bed ¾ of mile below Sandfly saddle. The footprints were lost later in the day. Helicopter arrived later in day in poor weather, flew over Weld Valley and the buttongrass area between Search Camp and Scotts Peak Road.

Wed. 22: Reinforcements arrived to replace a large party which had to return to Hobart. A party equipped for three nights went to join the Weld River downstream in hope of intercepting Boyle should he be attempting to follow river downstream. Only footprints were found, and these obviously preceded those found on Tuesday. During the day sweep searching carried out in valley of Camp Creek was continued.

Thurs.23: More replacement searchers. Three search parties in operation. Weather fine all day.

Fri. 24: Navy Wessex helicopter arrived. Dropped a 5-man party by winch into Weld Valley and picked them up 5 hours later after an unsuccessful search in the area.

Sat. 25: Continued pattern search in several areas.

Sun. 26: Continued pattern search in several areas.

Mon. 27: Search was called off on Sunday night and the last searchers vacated Search HQ on Monday morning.

Tues. 28: Large flock of black jays reported in Weld Valley area by helicopter pilot, searched unsuccessfully by party on November 1-2.

“Movements of John Boyle.

The only evidence we have of John Boyle’s movements after he became separated from his companions lies in the tracks in Camp Ck, in creek 2 and leading out of creek 2 in direction of “Radio Hill”. The footprints were made by the type of shoe worn by John, and while this type is popular with bushwalkers, no searchers were in the area before they were found, and it is extremely unlikely that another party was in the area at the time of his disappearance. It is not possible to determine whether the prints in creek 2 were made before or after those in Camp Ck. Smoke reported by aircraft was in all cases traced to searchers and there is no evidence that John managed to light a fire at any time. His movements remain conjectural. It should be noted, however, that the tracks found were not the result of a deliberate attempt to mark a trail. Had such an attempt been made, the search would probably have been successful.”

Conclusion: Bill Nicholson.

The following article is not intended to pre-empt in any way the findings or the Tasmanian Coroner into the disappearance of John Boyle.

The facts

From the edited report by Mr Reg Williams, “John Boyle was wearing a cotton singlet, long trousers and an old oilskin parka. His boots were Paddy Pallin ‘sherpa type’. He had matches but no compass.”

During the time of the search and immediately after, the Tasmanian Mercury Newspaper published a number of interviews with the parents of John Boyle, who had arrived from Sydney. They stated that John had previously become lost in rugged country in N.S.W and walked out by following a river, also and most importantly they said that John wore glasses and without them his vision was limited.

Last year I spent some time with Brian and Jenette Collins, we talked about John Boyle as they both knew him and had spent time with him in the bush and underground. They were of the view that he was inexperienced in surface exploration in difficult karst and was most likely, if lost, to keep pushing on regardless until he could go no further.

What we do not know is whether John Boyle had any additional clothing, did he in fact retrieve the sweater that he was asked to locate, did he have a spare set of glasses, a whistle, map, food or water?

In my opinion, John Boyle's movements west of the NE Ridge, on Camp Spur, appear somewhat haphazard. If John had lost his glasses, easy to do in scrub if not careful, with limited vision he could have become disorientated, he may have fallen into a pothole or found himself down along the Weld River, to the east. All this is of course conjecture.

May you rest in peace John Boyle, wherever you lie.

At the time of writing, Tasmania Police are yet to present a report to the Coroner, and then it may be some time before the Coroner will make their findings known. I will then be able to provide an update and several discussion points.

Tasmania Police Facebook Page post 11 June 2019:

****Thanks to social media and your shares and comments, following our below post yesterday, police have spoken to a relative of Mr Boyle. Thanks everyone for your ongoing support and assistance.**

Are you related to John Boyle who lived in Sydney NSW before/in 1969?

Tasmania Police is reviewing the disappearance of John Boyle who was last seen in Tasmania's Southwest National Park in 1969.

In October 1969 Mr Boyle, who some months earlier moved from Sydney to Hobart, was part of a group exploring Mt Anne.

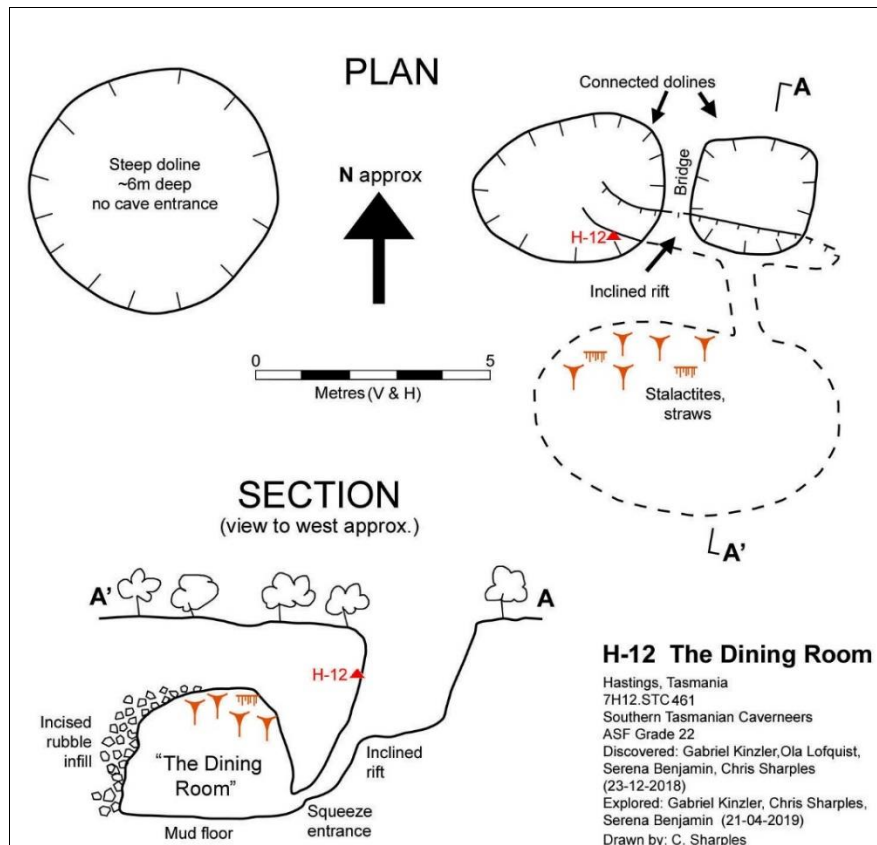
During the exploration, Mr Boyle became separated from the other group and sadly, despite an extensive search, he was not located, and no trace of him has been located since.

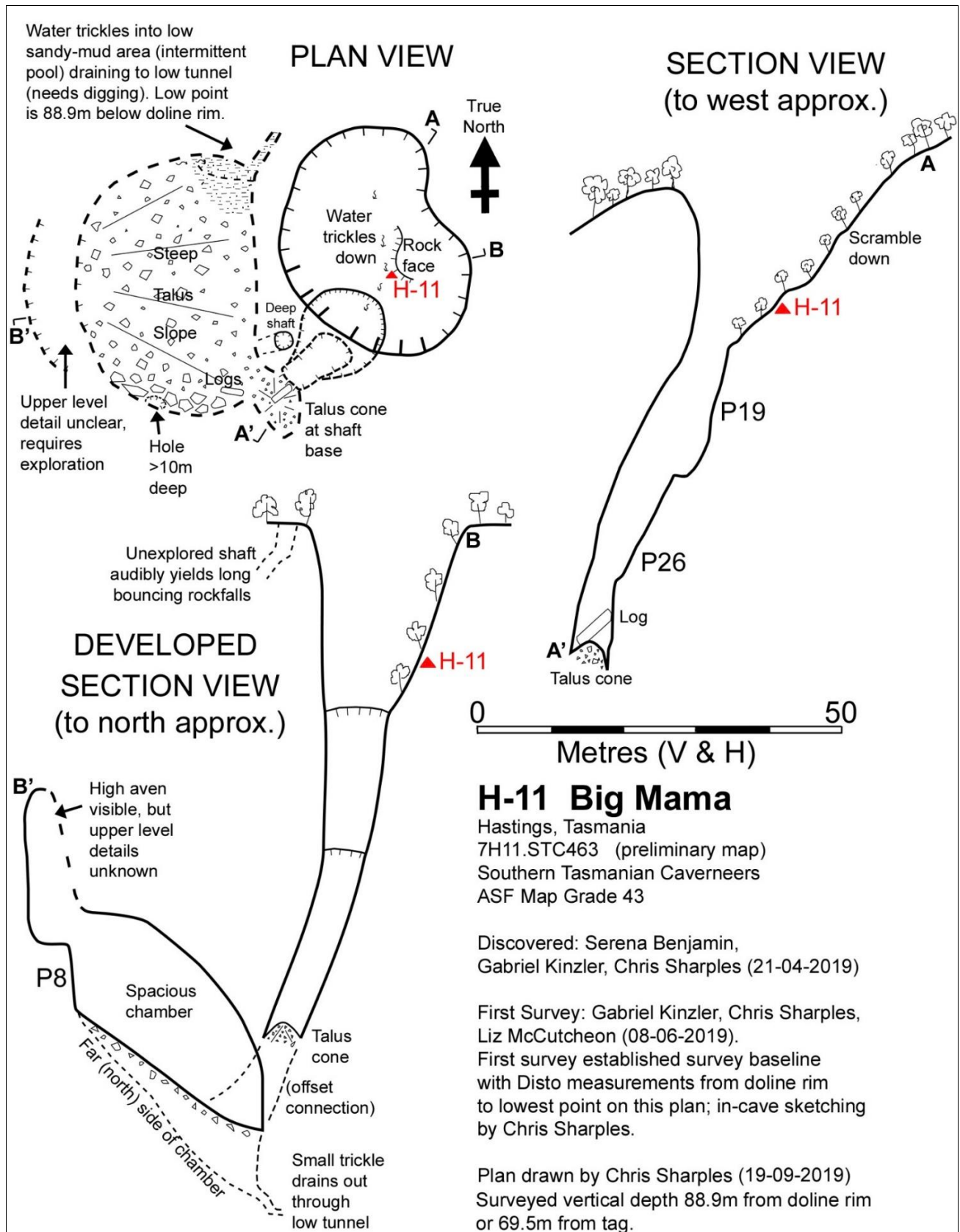
At the time he went missing, Mr Boyle was 26-years-old.

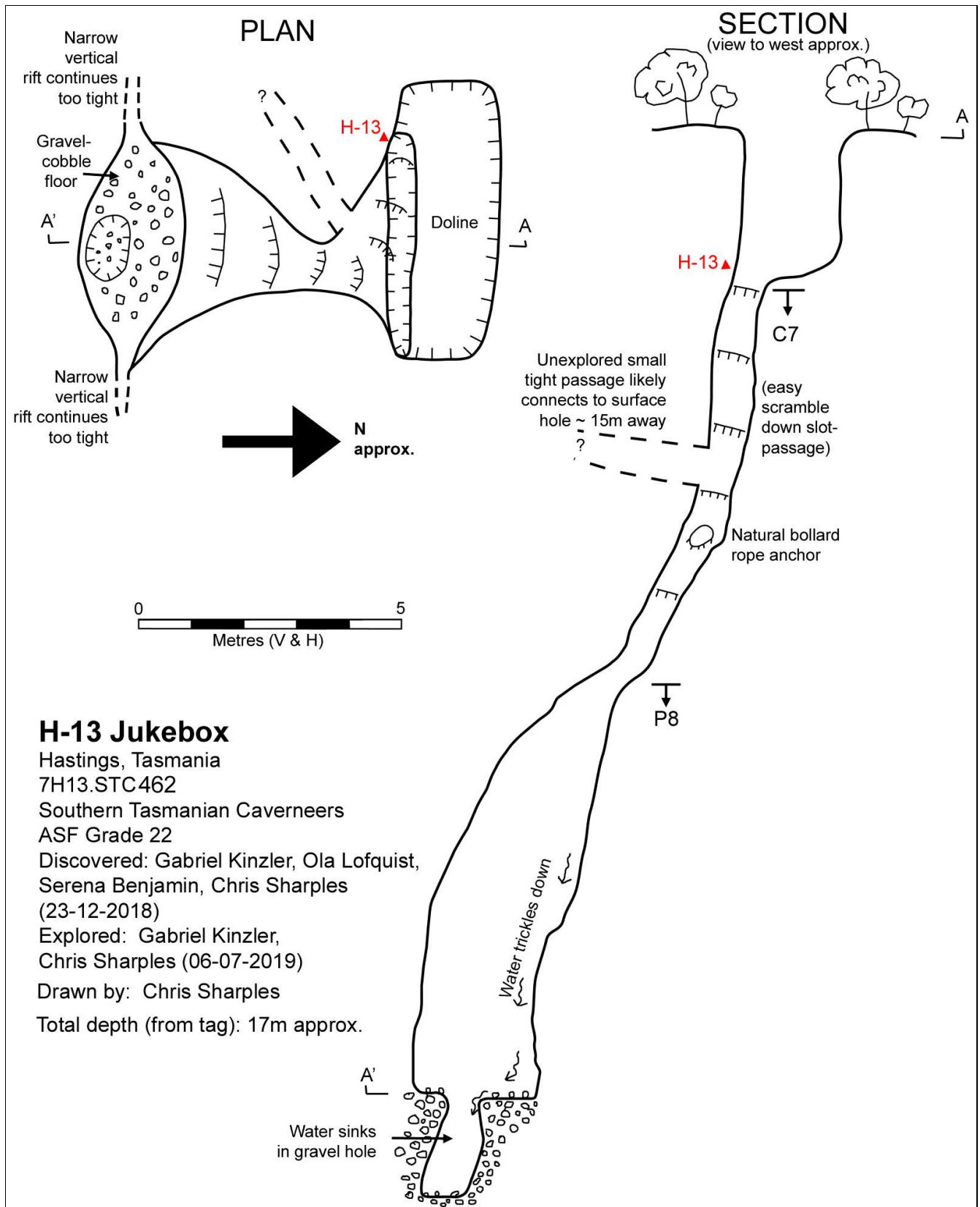
As part of the review, Tasmania Police would like to speak with relatives of Mr Boyle. He was the son of Edward Boyle and brother of Ken Boyle who at the time were living at Fairfield in New South Wales.

"Given the passage of time since Mr Boyle's disappearance a report is being prepared for the Coroner and, as such, we're reaching out across Australia with the aim of finding a sibling, a cousin or any other relative," said Sergeant John Delpero

Relatives of Mr Boyle are asked to contact Tasmania Police on (03) 6173 2426 during business hours.







H-13 Jukebox

Hastings, Tasmania

7H13.STC462

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

ASF Grade 22

Discovered: Gabriel Kinzler, Ola Lofquist,
Serena Benjamin, Chris Sharples
(23-12-2018)

Explored: Gabriel Kinzler,
Chris Sharples (06-07-2019)

Drawn by: Chris Sharples

Total depth (from tag): 17m approx.

Letter to the Editor

Re: Herberts Pot Conservation Project

In the last *Speleo Spiel* (issue 433) Stefan Eberhard provided a detailed report on the progression of a Cave Zoning Statement for MC-202 Herberts Pot at Mole Creek. While I consider 99% of the assertions made in the report are factually accurate, I'd like to place some of these assertions in a broader historical context.

Firstly, I'd like to argue that the 'Herberts Pot Conservation Project' is not strictly a TSLC initiative. Yes, it was raised as described during the northern CAP meeting in late 2018 but what is not mentioned is that earlier at the same meeting a virtually identical concept was proposed by Parks/DPIPWE. This project was coming, in a form very similar to how it is currently progressing, regardless (see below).

Secondly, on the same theme as my first point, this whole 'bureaucrats and cavers' working together to manage caves is not a new concept in Tasmania. The individual clubs and TSLC (and its previous iterations) have been working constructively with the relevant management authorities for decades. Many of these projects go well back before my time and I don't claim to be an authority on them. But even in my time on the scene there have been lots of joint projects, both formal and informal. A few good examples from around the state of which I have working knowledge are provided here:

- Exit Cave survey project (mapping commenced circa 2009 and digital drafting is ongoing). This project involved DPIPWE staff and cavers from STC, northern Tasmania, mainland Australia and even international visitors.
- Kubla Khan mapping project (2013 to 2017). In excess of 700 hours contributed by DPIPWE staff and cavers from STC, NC and MCCC.
- Kubla Khan conservation measures (circa 2000[?] and ongoing). The efforts of David Wools-Cobb and others in this cave and multiple others in the Mole Creek area, largely under the banner of Karstcare, are simply phenomenal. Thousands of hours have been spent by local, mainland and international cavers undertaking track marking, route cleaning and other measures to reduce visitation impacts on the caves and demonstrate to Parks that the caving community is serious about cave conservation.
- Honeycomb Cave entrance stabilisation project (2015) – a project spearheaded by Deb Hunter and MCCC/NC, supported by ASF and Karstcare funding to mitigate erosion initiated by pedestrian access and exacerbated by floods.
- Glue-in bolt projects ('P-hangers'). Initiated by Jeff Butt in the late 1990s/early 2000s and still going strongly, this project has proven a valuable collaboration between DPIPWE and cavers to improve safety and reduce the impacts of bolting in caves across the state. The installation guidelines created to facilitate this project are now formally signed off by Parks and are even used by

Parks to guide non-cave bolt installations on Parks-managed land around the state.

- Cave Access Policy and resulting Cave Zoning Statements for multiple caves completed (Mystery Creek Cave, Bradley Chesterman Cave, Loons Cave, Folly Cave [Arthurs Folly], Junee-Florentine 'vertical caves', Welcome Stranger, Kubla Khan, Genghis Khan) and multiple others in progress (Exit Cave, Hastings [all caves], Junee Cave, Blackshawl-Spider Cave complex, Herberts Pot, Croesus Cave, Lynds Cave, Honeycomb Cave).

The long list of Cave Access Policy caves and their related Cave Zoning Statements are of particular note. The CAP was finalised in 2014 but the concept was first discussed with cavers several years prior. The caving community was consulted and contributed to its content throughout the entire process. The idea was it would provide a tool to ultimately assess all caves under Parks jurisdiction systematically and consistently. The bureaucratic checks and balances required for Parks to make a decision are particularly labourious and tedious, as most members of the public know. The CAP provides Parks with the framework necessary to make management prescriptions for the caves under their jurisdiction with confidence and consistency. Bureaucracy is still bureaucracy and the CAP/CZS process is far from perfect, but I believe that without it caves like Herberts Pot would still be sitting on the shelf in the 'too hard basket'.






It can be argued that Herberts Pot is a special case, as it has been out of bounds for so long (largely due to factors external to either cavers' or Parks' control), but even that doesn't bear scrutiny. The Blackshawl/Spider/Pyramid/Cow caves situation is practically identical: the cave was on private land, landowner issues resulted in caver access being denied, Parks managed to acquire the relevant land over the years, northern cavers (David Wools-Cobb in particular) lobbied Parks for access, Parks eventually permitted some familiarisation trips and a comprehensive survey to be done (which commenced in early 2014 and finished a couple of years ago) but a final decision was difficult to obtain until the CAP framework came along and in June 2019 a CZS for the system was more or less signed off at a northern CAP meeting and probably by the end of 2019 the CZS will be approved and cavers can start visiting the cave again. It is my belief that without the CAP framework the mid-level bureaucrats responsible for developing the access policy to be provided to senior bureaucrats for sign off didn't have the confidence to do so.

The 'Herberts Pot Conservation Project' is a fancy name for just another carriage on a train that was already coming down the line. The railway corridor for that train was constructed on decades of collaboration between cavers and land managers and the CAP is a recent upgrade to the rails themselves, allowing fast and efficient (by Parks standards!) travel.

So, credit to all those individuals involved in the process undertaken so far in Herberts Pot – I applaud you – but don't forget upon whose shoulders you stand.

Alan Jackson

Fun and Diversions

¹ B Battery	<h1>The Caving Periodic Table of Substances</h1>				² He Helmet	GROUPS Metaloids  Elongated Circumstructures  Non-Gaseous Fluid  Mixtures  Polymers 
³ Sc Scurion	⁴ Rh Rhope	⁵ W Water	⁶ H Ham Sandwich	⁷ Ts Trog Suit		
⁸ De Decender	⁹ S Snakes	¹⁰ U Urine	¹¹ Ca Carbide	¹² P Pack		

Caving is an elemental pursuit

(Hat-tip to Tom Gauld)

Frozen moments in club history



If you can read the fine print on this photo you will see it is "Sesame Cave ca 1980. Copyright Stefan Eberhard"

Rolan Eberhard on rope.

Cavers were usually younger than middle-aged back then. Sub 30 was the norm.

So exploration in this less than impressive cave (this is only the editors opinion, of course) started a while back, and has come full circle with ongoing potterings in its bowels still going on today. Or should I say "revitalised in the last few years after decades of neglect?"

The kit being used has changed a bit over time though. Thankfully.

The Black and White photography certainly gives it the patina of age, not that the caving kit hasn't done that already.

I am always on the lookout for old photos for this section. Surely many of you must have some digital snaps hidden away in your computers. They don't have to be excessively old ones.

Send photos to jmckinnon@caverneer.net.au identifying the people, place and hopefully time (aeon at least). Include photo credit where possible. A brief description would be good too. Time period is from when TCC was founded until five years from current issue.

The Last Page

