

A photograph of a person rappelling down a dark, narrow cave shaft. The person is wearing a blue shirt, dark pants, and a red helmet, and is secured by ropes. The cave walls are dark and textured, with some light reflecting off the surfaces. The person is positioned in the center of the frame, looking towards the camera.

Speleo Spiel 465

July-August 2025

Newsletter of Southern Tasmanian Caverneers Inc. ISSN 2208-1348

STC Office Bearers

President: Karina Anders
Ph: 0478 228 639
karina_anders@hotmail.com

Vice President: Janine McKinnon
Ph: 0427 889 965
jmckinnon@caverneer.net.au

Secretary/Spiel Editor: Ciara Smart
ciara.m.smart@gmail.com

Treasurer: Russell Fulton
Ph: 0427 956 297
FultonRL@bigpond.com

Science Officer: Chris Sharples
Ph: 0408 396 663
chris@sharples.com.au

Training Officer: Henry Garratt
hwgarratt@gmail.com

Equipment Officer/Public Officer: Alan Jackson
Ph: 0419 245 418
alan.jackson@lmrs.com.au

Librarian: Greg Middleton
Ph: 0458 507 480
ozspeleo@gmail.com

Search & Rescue Officer: Jemma Herbert
herbertjemma@gmail.com

Webmaster: John Oxley
Ph: 0409 129 908
joxley@bigpond.com

Archivist: Michael Glazer
michaelglazer@outlook.com.au

Social Secretary: Philip Jackson
pmjackson20@yahoo.com.au

Front Cover: Ashlee Bastiaansen on rope in IB-9 Big Tree Pot. Image: Stefan Eberhard.

Back Cover: The famously inconvenient straw in JF-10 Splash Pot remains intact. Original sign placed by Jeff Butt. Image: Henry Garratt.

Speleo Spiel 465 was prepared by Ciara Smart, with assistance from Greg Middleton, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney and Alan Jackson.

Answers to page 22: 1e, 2a, 3h, 4g, 5b, 6d, 7c, 8i, 9f

Speleo Spiel

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PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006
<http://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com/>

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

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Editorial

Apologies for the tardiness of this *Spiel*. Life happens, at least in between caving trips anyway. In this *Spiel* we have a hodgepodge collection of reports, including one long and entertaining report from National University Caving Club. They spent a few weeks in the Junee-Florentine earlier in the year.

This issue contains the concluding reports of the most recent Splash Pot project. I think Splash Pot has officially been put in the ‘future generations’ basket and future visits are at least a decade off, based on past trends. The next generation will have to carry dive tanks down there to one-up the aid-climbing project.

Welcome to several new club members: Felix Wikstroem, Jeff Umbers, Meril Umbers, Gemma Umbers and Ben Niblett.

Stuff ‘n’ Stuff

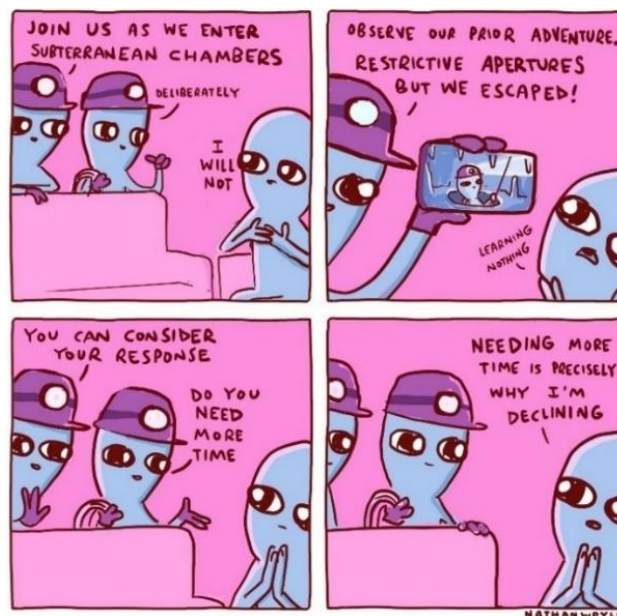
STC anniversary BBQ – 17 October

STC is turning 79. That also makes it the 79th anniversary of organised caving in Australia. There will be a casual BBQ to celebrate on Friday 17 October, site 9 at Waterworks Reserve, Hobart, 4:00-9:00 pm. BYO drinks and food. The event is open to

all past and present members, associates and families of TCC, SCS, NC and TCC Maydena Branch.

Upcoming Vertical Rescue Exercise

There will be a rescue exercise 21-22 February 2026. Details to be confirmed. All welcome. Save the date.



Cartoon credit Nathan W. Pyle (online).

Trip Reports

Mount Anne Project

Multiple dates summer-autumn seasons 2023-24 and 2024-25

Stefan Eberhard

This update covers the trips done over the last two seasons since the previous article about this project appeared in *Caves Australia* 227, February 2024. During the summer-autumn season of 2023-24, five multi-day trips were made to the dolomite ridge. Four of these trips focused on the SW end of the ridge and one trip was made to the NE end of the ridge in the headwaters of Sandfly Creek where a doline with a prominent headwall on the flank of the ridge revealed a cave that descended steeply via a sketchy down climb (best rigged as a pitch) and rockfall to the head of a further short drop needing a rope. At the SW end of the ridge efforts were directed to GPS recording of entrances and other karst features and ironing out some survey anomalies in MA-2 and Anne-A-Kananda (AAK) plus photography. An alternative entrance pitch to MA-2 was rigged, which is about 15 to 20 m higher than the traditional entry hole, then it hangs free all the way. A highlight of this summer-autumn season's trips was capturing the stupendous auroral storm event of 11 May 2024.

This last summer-autumn of season 2024-25, the number of trips to Mount Anne was limited by intensive Nullarbor campaign work and preparation of the Nullarbor book which was published in June (see <https://savethenullarbor.org>). However, two extended multi-day trips were done in December and February. Both trips focused on the SW end with a foray towards the centre and SE prong of the ridge. The entrance tags for MA-2 and MA-21 were surveyed into GPS elevation control points for accurate plotting of vertical relationships. Between AAK and MA-21 a couple of the smaller caves documented on the SUSS expedition were located and their entrances GPS recorded. A narrow shaft, unrecorded to date, was also found in this area. An alternative access route to MA-1 in the central part of the ridge was scouted, and several dolines, all typically plugged with frost-shattered rock debris, were GPS logged and photographed. At the base of the ridge near Fern Camp, two intermittently disappearing clear-water creeks, considered prospective resurgences for the AAK system, were followed upstream for a distance with no sign of an efflux. Further exploration and mapping trips are planned for this coming spring-summer.

National University Caving Club visits the Junee-Florentine

15-28 April 2025

Collaborative report

Party: Lachlan Bailey, Lauren Jolliffe, Alice Kelly, Alek Meade, Cole Neering, Eliza Tarcoveanu, Carl Walsh

Pre-blurb

(Laurie) It was decided early on that this trip report would be styled as an RPG campaign [*Ed*: ‘Role Playing Game’]. Many nights were spent by the heater working on our stat. blocks, considering cave maps and otherwise being nerds. For keener readers, you may consult *Speleografiti*, 30(1) for our complete character sheets. For those less inclined we have included here a summary of our adventures.



Left to right: Lachlan Bailey, Cole Neering, Eliza Tarcoveanu, Alice Kelly, Carl Walsh, Laurie Jolliffe and Alek Meade (front) (selfie)

JF-36 Growling Swallet – JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot Through Trip

A Sandbagging Affair

17 April 2025

Carl Walsh

Party: Carl, Alek, Cole, Eliza

Our first day in the Junee-Florentine (except for 3 of us...)! We successfully got Moose, our hired steed - a brand-new Hyundai Venue (no insurance, sorry Steve) to the Eight Road car park with only minor beepings and grumbings from the car's traction control system. After a quick and awkward group photo (above) we split into two groups for our Slaughterhouse-Growling crossover. Lachie tactfully chose to take the group (himself, Laurie, Ally) entering Slaughterhouse, which meant starting with the Wet Concrete Crawl and

abseiling the pitches. Alek, Eliza, Cole and I went in through JF-36 via the Dry Bypass bypass (read: not the Dry Bypass), adjusting to the climbs we'd been promised. Down down down to the pitch to Windy Rift, poked our heads down to the sump (yep, sumpy), and proceeded up the pitch.

Now comes the fun bit, Windy Rift. My first encounter with this delightful bit of passage involved waiting at the back for 30 minutes while the rest of the party shimmied through. Needless to say, I got cold, I got cranky. Yay my turn to shuffle through, and on the other side found the other group waiting. Gratuitous rant about being effing cold ra ra ra.

Despite my complaints, I was having a great time, particularly when we got to the Slaughterhouse rockpile. Carrying blessedly small bags, we followed the trog trail (and pink tape) up through the rockpile. A misinterpretation of the map meant we got about 60% through the Wet Concrete Crawl before realising it was the Wet Concrete Crawl. Alas, no point taking your SRT kit here, onwards and outwards!



Pitch in Slaughterhouse Pot. Credit unknown.

JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot – JF-36 Growling Swallet –Through Trip

The Lazuppa Losers

17 April 2025

Alice Kelly

Party: Ally, Lachie, Laurie

Naturally, when faced with the option of a cruisy abseil down Slaughterhouse versus a long pitchy slog back out, we made the sensible call and followed Lachie to the top of the hill with the plan to cross-over with the others and exit out of Growling Swallet.

Having been thoroughly warned about the Wet Concrete Crawl, we were wary as we descended the first few hundred metres of the cave. Turns out that with only a few bags to carry and the freshness of a first day in Tassie, we'd scooted straight past the squeeze with little note.

Buoyed by the smooth start, we sailed through the first of the few pitches (I only made a few pitiful squeaks upon seeing how exposed they all were) and the rockpile was well marked. Not content with the squeezes in the rockpile, Laurie took it upon herself to take a slide into a slot in the floor with the intent to bypass the small pitch at the base of Slaughterhouse. This, predictably, did not work and we spent the next 15 minutes fishing her out.

Windy Rift followed in a similar nature, though in this case we took turns needing to be fished out. It was here we met the others, who'd already been thoroughly chilled by the rift. We cheerfully reminded them that they would get the chance to warm up on the long series of prusiks out and continued on our merry way.

Soon the streamway was before us. Lachie took this opportunity to point out the flood line high on the roof above us and I took this opportunity to tell him to shut up. Tasmanians, I have also decided, have an unusual bar for what should be a climb and what is better off as a pitch. Either that, or they are all incredibly tall, or can stick to walls.

Upon stopping for a breather we decided, as is tradition, to turn off our lights for a bit. Strangely, the chamber refused to dim in its entirety. Glowworms! A nice surprise, especially considering we were slightly lost. Every right turn since hitting the streamway we had decided was the Yorkshire Drain, yet this could not have been true. Eventually we decided to look up and saw the way on glaring blatantly back at us. Oops!

The rest of the trip out went without incident, and I stopped a moment as the exit came into view to appreciate the glorious sight and drink the fresh Tassie water. This unfortunately placed Laurie, who was behind me and apparently not finding peace on Earth, in the path of a torrential waterfall as she waited for me to conclude my contemplation. Nat 1 [*Ed*: a gamer's term meaning 'natural'] on perception there from me (but a pass for Laurie on water breathing). We made our way back to the car with the dwindling light, dubbing ourselves the "Lazuppa Losers", after Laurie's cult-like lunch obsession. But safe to say we

all had a new obsession. JF was closer than ever and I fear to say we'd grow quite addicted!



Left to right: Lachlan Bailey, Alice Kelly, Laurie Jolliffe (selfie)

JF-99 The Chairman

The Notes (don't) Lie

18 April 2025

Lachlan Bailey

Party: Lachie, Laurie, Alek

I can't be bothered writing this in the Dungeons and Dragons style, having never played it, so you're getting a bog-standard report here. Alek, Laurie and I went to JF-99 The Chairman. We walked up the hill and the route was beautifully easy to follow. Apparently, I'm meant to be describing this as "Lachie rolled a Nat 20 on perception and we found the path magically cleared".

Anyway, whatever the hell that is. The notes were great; we rigged the first pitch. Got down to where the second rebelay is; couldn't find the bastard. Alek and I collectively spent about an hour swinging around looking for the damn thing. It remains missing in action, although I could see the subsequent bolts. It had a nasty rub point as a result of the bolt missing in action, so we fuffed around and called it a day. Picked some mushrooms on the way back to Maydena – a good feed of shaggy ink caps (*Coprinus comatus*). Most of the group wasn't willing to eat them until they saw me eating them; it was almost like they thought I was going to poison them!



Dr Bailey takes a short rest. Image: Laruen Jolliffe

JF-221 Owl Pot

Owls Potentially

18 April 2025

Carl Walsh

Party: Ally, Carl, Eliza, Cole

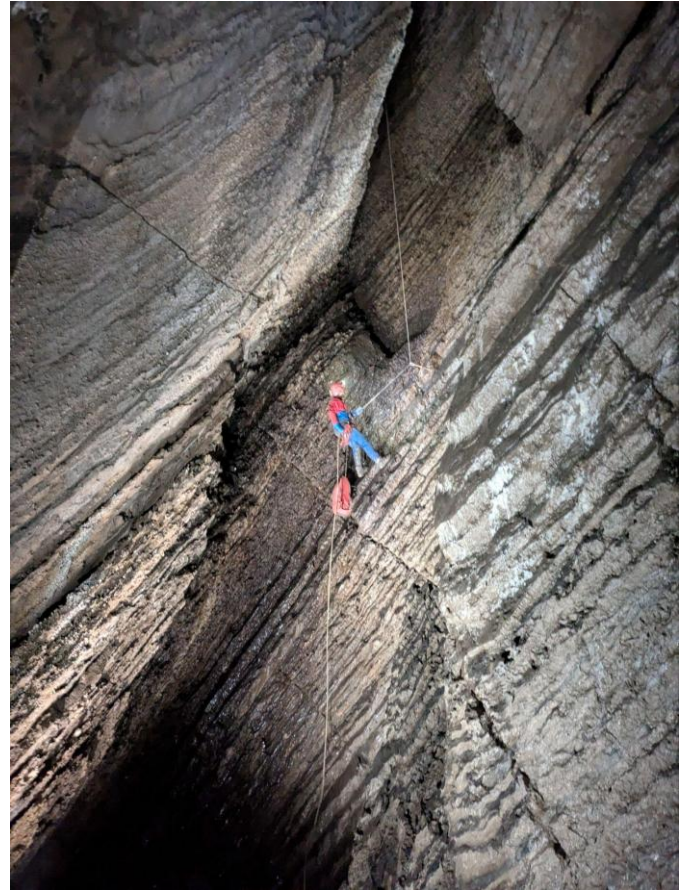
“YO! ARE YOU CAVERS?” Alan said (I don’t think he said ‘yo’), “YEAH, WE’RE NUCC!” said Nuccers in the car driving up Florentine Road. We pulled over. Our first encounter with Alan Jackson and none of us knew who he was. Apparently, these guys were going to Niggly to do some bolting; sounds like thirsty work, so we invited them back to our crib (Maydena AirBnB) for a beer when they were done. The old guy (not the British guy) was asking if we were up to getting our tiny hire car up the Nine Road. “Yeah! We have a chainsaw!” declared Ally proudly (crit fail). “Yeah... my chainsaw...” replied Alan (who had lent us a chainsaw). It was then we realised... this was Alan Jackson (of “Bah” *Speleo Spiel* fame).



Terrifying. Image: Carl Walsh

After our encounter with Alan and Ben, we felt the need to come good on our claims that Moose was good for the harsh JF conditions and skidded up the Nine Road to the Owl Pot carpark. The entrance pitch: muddy. Pitches 2-4: lovely. Thanks to the slips and slides of cavers past and some helpful tips from Alan,

we had a very easy time navigating and made it to the base of pitch 4 in good time.



Cole on a pitch in Owl Pot. Credit unknown.

After a bit of a poke about and lunch, we went up and decided the first pitch is significantly worse in that direction.

Sometime after we returned to the Crib, Alan and Ben rocked up looking only slightly worse for wear. Beer and dinner revived them.

Urbex Side Quest

19 April 2025

Written by Laurie

Party: Ally, Lachie, Laurie, Carl

Intent on a long rest, some of our adventurers committed to a day above ground. The gear-washing set up was optimised, SF issued with his new codename (Scuba Fantastic) [I assume this is a caver with the initials ‘SF’ – *Ed.*], ice-cream was enjoyed, doggos met, and perhaps too much cider consumed.

Inevitably, come lunch time, boredom had set in, and our adventurers found themselves conducting a bit of urban exploration. Caught up in their own quest, the party almost failed to notice that the team underground was approaching their call-out time. Panic ensued,

Bunnings was speed-run for essential supplies, and the Woollies stop skipped entirely in favour of the party high-tailing it back to Maydena. Of course, the underground team had made it out intact (although late). But, as a result of the panic, our adventurers were now out of booze, and on plague rations for the next few days (if only someone had not eaten all the chocolate).

JF-35 Gormenghast

Gormenghnasties

19 April 2025

Lachlan Bailey

Party: Alek, Eliza, Cole

This blather is written by Lachie; I clearly am neither Alek, nor Eliza, nor Cole, and was preoccupied with drinking cider while this trip was happening. All of the above NUCCers were unavailable for comment at the time of writing, so you shall be left with some generic remarks collected from the Gormenghast group on the day.

These are as follows. Firstly, Cole rates the side passages as quite beautiful. Secondly, Alek did a shower squeeze and got wet. Thirdly, they got horrendously lost and were worried about not making callout so didn't sump the cave. Lastly, there were some fun chimneys and fun climbs.

All in all, having been in Gormenghast previously, I think I'd still take the cider tasting if given an option again. It really was quite excellent cider, and definitely better than my efforts with homebrew cider using roadside apples.



Dampness in Gormenghast. Image: Cole Neering

JF- 2 Cauldron Pot

Following the Man in Yellow

20 April 2025

Written by Carl

Party: Carl, Ally, Cole, Laurie

After our first encounter with Alan (the famous chainsaw incident), we were hugely stoked to follow Our Man In Yellow into Cauldron Pot for an epic mission (bolt testing). As Alan has already written a trip report (*Spiel*, 464, p.13), we will distil only the most salient points.

Firstly, accusations of nattering were well founded. As we were essentially “Passenger Princessing” on the way down, we yapped Alan's ear off as he furiously tried to rig his way ahead of us to no avail.

The real fun began on the way up, where testing of the bolts was conducted with a live load, and also the bolt tester. The packs grew heavier with rope, boots grew laden with water and the ascent of Bills Bypass began. What had seemed rather innocuous on the way down proved slightly more of a hurdle on the way back up although I (Carl) was appreciative of the tip to strip down the SRT kit and drag the pack up on the tether and cowstails, whereas the others missed this and hauled packs up hand-over-hand. Ally unleashed her distaste by emptying a gumboot of fetid boot juice... right on Alan's head. Luckily, he was in PVC and escaped the worst of it.

The drive back was perhaps the most adrenaline-inducing part of the day, where we timid NUCCers were introduced to a new extreme sport: riding in the Wallaby Snuffer. This mechanical beast has a thirst for native wildlife and an apparent disdain for potholes. It has almost as little regard for Tasmanian native wildlife as Sustainable Timber Tasmania...

Big thanks to Alan for his patience. He's pretty spry for an old guy and is a delight to cave with (for a Tasmanian). Our experience in Bills Bypass has also inspired other adventures, including Bills Wine-pass, Bills Bed-pass, and others.

JF- 387 Porcupine Pot

Porcupikers

20 April 2025

Lachlan Baily

Party: Lachie, Alek, Eliza

Some delicious weather today, and while the rest of the group was helping Alan in Cauldron Pot, Alek, Eliza and I went for a sticky-beak into Porcupine. Mumbling

and grumbling about the weather, we followed the taped route in and were thoroughly soaked by the tree-ferns by the time we got there. We cruised happily down the first couple of rigged sections, bringing a spare 30 m rope with us, as there'd been a rockfall hit to the rope with unknown consequences for the last STC group to visit the cave.

In the long run, we didn't get too far. I am long, and my leg bones do not like bending through squeezes. As a result, I declined to do one of the vertical squeezes, which was rather close to the bendiness limit of my legs. Alek and Eliza – both being less elongated people – got through it with barely a blink. I probably could have gotten through it had I applied myself more thoroughly, but my enthusiasm was lacking on account of thesis lassitude (yes, I'm going to wring this excuse out as long as I can).

Alek and Eliza roamed onward for another half hour or so, before returning. We called it a day and meandered back up the cave. Alas, we didn't get down to see if the rope was damaged (as per Suspicious Figure's instructions) [a caver with initials SF I assume – *Ed.*] Consideration was had of visiting JF-7 Frankcombe Cave, but with the rain, we decided we'd head back to the cottage and chill, as everyone was planning some exertion in Growling the next day.

JF-36 Growling Swallet

To Mainline and Beyond

21 April 2025

Lachlan Bailey, Carl Walsh

Party: Lachie, Cole, Carl

Author's note (the author is Carl): I write this 30 something hours into flying across the globe (in economy); thus you're getting the Delirium Experience.

Tl;dr [*ed.* Too long, didn't read] We went to Dreamtime Sump, Lachie pondered where Herpes I and II were, Cole experienced Windy Rift upside down.

We went in via Growling. We at least found the Dry Bypass this time; the climbs are sketchier that way than the Dry Bypass bypass. Since we were leaving them rigged (1 concrete screw + tape) for the others to climb out on, Lachie decided to showcase the advantages of a rack over a bobbin style descender and abseiled the tapes (Carl tried to do likewise and promptly got jammed).

Up through Windy Rift which was quickly becoming my favourite passage in JF (I know most of ya'll are neurospicy so to be clear, this is aggressively sarcastic), up and down through Slaughterhouse Aven and Trapdoor Streamway, until we were staring at

Herpes III. This crawl is full of deliciously squelchy mud and ensures total coverage (see the after photo). Later, Lachie was heard musing that he couldn't find Herpes I and II on the map, which was odd because why else would there be a Herpes III? Alan later cleared this up for him (apparently, you can find Herpes I and II at some of the local establishments).



Filth. Left to right: Carl, Lachie, Cole (selfie)

After that comes Necrosis and Bronchial, convoluted interwoven sets of passages that would be a nightmare to navigate. Thankfully, Alan got tired of people being lost in there and taped the shit out of it, making it a pretty straightforward exercise to follow the pink tape. Once through there we dropped into Mainline – yaaaaay stomping streamway!

We followed this and off into some dusty thing Lachie was trying to find (near Ice Tube) which connected to Dreamtime without having to get wet (we all know how Lachie feels about getting wet). We found this thing (I remember now, it's Bloody Smokers) and followed it down through a clay-lined slot which was hilarious to get back up later.

We went and sniffed around the Dreamtime Sump. I really like how the character of the streamways changes between different passages. Dreamtime is definitely lower energy, with smaller (well-rounded gravel - cobbles) sediment rather than the cobbles and boulders in Mainline which clearly takes more water.

Notable things as we headed back up were the slip-n-slide we made of the clay slope up in the slot now that we were a bit wet. A few mild navigational challenges in Bronchial and Necrosis where we got turned around (up, down, back, every which way) and once again the crawl back through Herpes III, which was somehow worse on the way back.

The real fun, as always, was Windy Rift. This time, I shuffled through and thought "yay, won't have to do that again this trip!" Lachie followed and had some troubles with his foot loop getting stuck. He managed to unclip it and thrutched his way through to the safe side, leaving it for Cole to grab on his way past. Cole started through with his bag behind him

[... intermission, as Carl presumably boards a plane at Helsinki Airport, with Lachie taking over...].

...and proceeded to get it jammed on the chockstone. This left Cole in a rather precarious position, staring headfirst into the rift, and jammed on his pack.

It was not a tenable long-term place to be, so Carl slithered back into Windy Rift (and over Cole) to unjam everything, while I supported him at the freedom end of the rift. After a bit of heaving (and a nearly new Scurion almost lost down Windy Rift), Cole was freed, but with a substantial expenditure of effort for an end of day activity. Carl made his third transit of Windy Rift for the day, and we all headed for the entrance to Growling. Happily, there were no more surprises on the way back up the cave, as I think some general fatigue and soreness was beginning to set in. Happily, booze and dinner were waiting for us back in Maydena.

[...back to Carl, as the plane arrives in Stockholm Airport and Google Drive tries to reconcile two different accounts of the trip..].

Dropping down into Growling, we definitely slowed the pace and took care on the climbs coming back up the dry bypass. We arrived back at the car to find it VANDALISED by a bunch of goons operating under the banner of “Destiny’s Children”. We took off back to Maydena, all of us wistfully thinking about all the hard liquor waiting back at the house.

JF-337 Slaughterhouse Pot

Destiny’s Children

21 April 2025

Alice Kelly

Party: Alek, Eliza, Ally

Destiny was most definitely with these divas as we made our glorious return to Slaughterhouse Pot. This much was obvious as I immediately found my lighter (which I’d lost days prior) at the entrance to the cave [Note to all Tasmanians: I fear your judgement and I am aware y’all don’t get foul air. The lighter just happens to live on my helmet normally]. The descent went as smoothly as it had the first time and we soon found ourselves looking out over, what was to us, new passage. We paused for some lunch and to assist Eliza with her progress through the 2 m of fruit leather she’d purchased. With HP [Health Points – *Ed.*] maxed we hopped down into the trapdoor streamway.

It took a small amount of bumbling about to find the turn off to the Destiny Pitch. Bumbling which led us to a large and mysterious aven a short way down towards Herpes III. We poked around the old rope hanging at

least 30 m above us in the roof before figuring that this was probably not the way on.

Back on track, we enjoyed the radical curves of BYO Skateboard, lamenting our ignoring of the name and vowing that next time we would carve sick moves. It was here that we finally reached the fabled pitch. For Alek, this was as far as he’d ever visited so we were eager to see what was beyond. I was somewhat less eager upon inspection of the exposed drop before us, but shut my eyes tight and was soon at the bottom.

I was definitely glad to have opened them again as I got off rope, both for practicality and also because a number of *Anaspides* were staring (admittedly blindly) back at us. Most bodacious! After ogling for a few minutes, we started the climb up through the rock pile. While Eliza and I took some time exploring the upper chamber, Alek gallivanted ahead to the camp at Black River (originating the “HI” written in rocks that would be later discovered in our July visit to Growling).

Content that we had sufficiently manifested destiny, we decided to pack it in for the day. Windy Rift was as unpleasant as usual (but we at least restrained ourselves from any head-first bungee jumping) and we took the opportunity to introduce Alek to the actual Dry Bypass (previously bypassed). Before long we were once again standing in the refreshing (cold) Tasmanian (cold) air (cold air). Eliza and I poked around for bioluminescent mushrooms with no success so instead set our attention on graffitiing Moose. With our profanities sufficiently carved into the car’s muddy windows we turned tail for the cabin and enjoyed a luxurious dinner before our muddy compatriots finally unearthed themselves.

Geomorphological Reconstruction of an Archaeological Site in the Nepean Peninsula

21 April 2025

Laurie Jolliffe

Party: Laurie

As my first experience as a trip leader, there were some learning points. Left behind at The Crib to finish my incumbent lab report, I noted that I had been left without a first aid kit, and thus was without Panadol to combat the crippling dehydration from the previous days of caving (I view this as a failure on my behalf as trip leader - not ensuring adequate safety gear). However, with access to a tap, I did succeed in following the ANU Sport guidelines of having 6 L of water per person per day. Nonetheless, the mission was a success, with dinner made, and the lab report completed and submitted. Although Lachie did insist on adding the word “soil” at least once in every paragraph.

The Lumberjacks

22 April

Laurie Jolliffe

Party: Cole, Ally, Laurie

Another rest day was in order for our intrepid adventurers, and a walk along the trainlines (equipped with flannel) ensued. We alarmed some locals by testing out the two adult loading capacity of the local playground swing, met some more doggos, and speed ran a shop in New Norfolk (we were no longer on the plague rations - huzzah). Following a nerd-out with “Squid Feelings” [again, a caver with the initials SF – Ed.] on Teams about the geomorphology of Juneec-Florentine, we retreated to the Bush Inn for a relaxed dinner, and hit some EDM bangers on the drive home.

JF-207 Voltera

No Extraction Necessary

23rd April 2025

Lachlan Bailey

Party: Lachie, Cole, Eliza

It’s an easy walk in, and quite a nice entrance pitch. The Fistula was closer to the bottom of the entrance pitch than I was expecting. The overwhelming advice from (most of) STC had been that this was the good bit of the cave, so stop here. Cole and I crawled into the horizontal part of the Fistula, looked at the bolts, and crawled back out again. We were more than willing to accept the collective advice of STC. Eliza was more keen to have at it, so jumped down the pitch. Muffled comments were heard as she cruised down and then back up, but she seemed to enjoy it, so all’s well that ends well.

Despite Eliza’s entreaties of Cole and me to proceed onwards towards Stairway to Niggly, neither of us were budging in our steadfast acceptance of STC’s advice. We posited that it would be absolutely churlish of us to ignore the freely and kindly given advice of the local cavers; nay, it would even be an insult to all Tasmanian cavers everywhere. So we cruised back up the entrance pitch, and out of the cave. It really is a lovely entrance pitch.

The sun was out when we exited the cave, so Cole and I chatted to the birds a bit on the walk back to the car. I think Eliza was more than a bit baffled by this. Poor Moose enjoyed the trip back down the hill even less than the trip up it, with Cole adopting a fang it and hope for the best attitude to maintaining traction.

JF- 387 Porcupine Pot

The Double Date

23 April 2025

Laurie Jolliffe

Party: Alek, Carl, Ally, Laurie

The quest to find Friendzone! The challengers: the four people sharing the queen beds at the AirBnB. We insisted on taking a “before friendzone” photo at the cars; just in case we made it to Friendzone and our relationships did not last.



*The AirBnB couples did not know what awaited them at Friendzone.
Image: Alice Kelly*

Note: We were informed that a flake had come off on the 20 m pitch with the extended access line on the last trip to Porcupine, and that the rigged rope may have been damaged. However, on inspection the rope appears undamaged and several large chunks of rock (fresh breaks, minimal mud) are sitting at the base of the first section of the pitch. The rock was probably 30-ish kg unbroken judging by the size of the remains at the bottom of the pitch. More could’ve kept bouncing down the rest of the pitch series. All ropes on the rest of the pitches into the rockpile chamber are intact (albeit very muddy so some minor damage might’ve been missed). The concrete screws are looking a bit worse for wear in some places (corroded), particularly the last two deviations going to the rockpile.

After the descent down the ropes, and a scramble through the rock pile, we began our search for the elusive Friendzone. After much shuffling and crawling Laurie stuck her head up a squeazy hole and, finding a bunch of formation, insisted that this path could not possibly have been trogged. After some conferral below, Alek and Carl also wormed their way up and quickly ascertained this must be the way on to Friendzone. After a quick slide down a slope, and a short scramble, sure enough we were there - our relationships were over.



Above: Friendzone proved too much for our new relationships.
Image: Carl Walsh.

After sussing the awesome cross straws in Friendzone we took lunch (LAZUPPA) in the Gormy stream. The lads (now broken-up) checked out the sump and the wet crawl while the ladies (also broken up) ascended the pitch series while composing the latest NUCC album. Future Porcupiners may note that there are fewer loose rocks on the pitch heads. It might also be noted that vertical squeezes can be fun on the way down, but very average on the way out.

Emerging to a romantic, studio Ghibli-esque landscape of glow worms, Carl was unfortunately beset by a clump of mud to the eye and unable to take in the beauty of it all. On the drive out, we were forced to briefly contemplate our mortality, when we encountered a landscape aflame. Of course, this was merely the loggers burning off-cuts. But the adrenaline rush was real.

The Needles Bushwalk

24 April 2025

Lachlan Bailey (mostly)

Party: Lachie, Carl, Aly, Laurie, Alek, Eliza, Cole

We all felt like a bushwalk today to enjoy the okayish weather, plus, a rest day was in order, as the tail end of the trip was pretty packed. After much haggling over bushwalking destinations (insufficient park passes for Mt Field, Mount Mueller was too much walking, Ida Bay was too far away), we settled on a jaunt up The Needles, a tad to the west of Maydena. It was a bushwalk; we walked up the hill, had a cuppa at the top, then walked down the hill. Nice views of the south west were had, and spleen was vented about Fake Pedder.

On arrival back at Maydena, it was decided* to see who could fit in Carl's 120L duffel bag – just for shits and giggles, of course, not with any ulterior motive of breaking the QANTAS-Virgin Australia airline duopoly on future caving trips. Eliza is potential baggage-fodder, with Carl a close runner up. The rest of us are stuck with full-price plane tickets.

* Lachie was asleep for most of this and thus not able to comment**

** Lachie would like to add that there are photos of him in the duffel bag, and thus he was awake for at least some of it.

JF-207 Voltera

Voltera Voyage

25 April 2025

Carl Walsh

Party: Carl, Alek, Ally, Eliza, Laurie

With STC in Niggly poking at the prophesied Voltera connection and Steve's voice in our ear, we went to Voltera. Several days of silliness leading up to this meant that group morale was limited and we opted for a quick in and out, rather than slogging it down Stairway To Niggly (a notoriously taxing meander). Eliza maybe had a bit too much energy and started pushing a new dig where the water disappears down a 5 m gap into the cave. I instead went to the pitch and found it a lot nicer than the wet gravel which she quickly abandoned.

The first pitch drops about 60 m and is well worth the visit, abseiling down through a large aven and finishing up near the base where it craps out into a choked rockpile. Luckily there's a terrific bypass called The Fistula! We'd been promised horror and misery in Voltera and told we'd certainly find it in The Fistula. Much to my disappointment (having brought extra gear to rig a fun haul), no one got stuck.

At the top of Stairway To Niggly we finished our mission of muddying the waters (to help the Niggly crew trace the water coming from Voltera which worked fabulously). Ally and Eliza, being the smaller members of our posse, were unbothered by the thought

of crawling back up through The Fistula and decided to give us a headstart by poking their heads down the meander. The rest of us thought small thoughts and wriggled back up (once again, slightly sad I dragged two pulleys and a second rope in).

After successfully navigating The Fistula, I must've levelled up and gained an additional skill point because on the prusik back up the first pitch I magically unlocked the ability to rope-walk. This was great for the first 40 or so metres, blasting up the pitch and feeling like hot shit. Unfortunately, my cardio didn't get a similar buff and before I hit the top my arms and legs were cooked.

On the surface Laurie whittled Bug (a bug), I made tea and Alek bumbled about. After a second cuppa and no sign of the smols [Google this one – *Ed.*], I had almost (almost) resigned myself to trogging back up and going to the top of the pitch to check for them when Eliza emerged from the entrance. Huzzah! Homeward to drink beers after a hard day caving.



Voltera Entrance. Credit unknown.

JF- 36 Growling Swallet

*New Feeling (*insert feelings pun here like every other New Feeling trip report*)*

25 April 2025

Lachlan Bailey

Party: Cole and Lachie

Cole and I had no intentions of going to Daily Cases on the 26th, and as a result, felt no overwhelming desire to suffer pointlessly in Voltera for the day. Instead, Cole and I decided to go check out New

Feeling, part of Growling Swallet I've wanted to visit for ages after multiple trips walking right past it. The crawl at the entrance needed some flood debris removed, but otherwise the route finding was pretty good. The old ropes at the 14c in the *TCC Explorations Journal* map are extant, and while a bit muddy and water swollen, still fit for purpose.

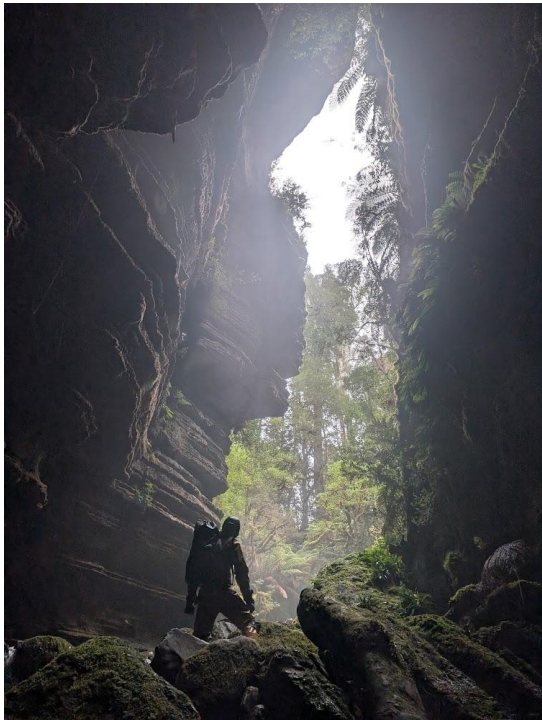
We were looking for the bypass route at this 14C described by Jeff Butt in *Southern Caver*, 58. We thought we found it, and thus spent an embarrassingly long time in New Feeling Chamber being confused and thinking we were at Mini Khan Chamber. It didn't help that neither of us have actually ever been to MC-1 Kubla Khan, so didn't exactly know what we were looking for, beyond it being a big ol' lump of flowstone. A quick perusal of historic Tasmanian caving literature suggests that we're decidedly not the first people to make this mistake....

The setup of the bolts on the 12 m pitch to get down from the phreatic tunnels to Mini Khan Chamber had my fingers itching for a hammer drill and a couple of surplus expansion bolts to optimise it. Despite this, the bolts themselves seemed in decent enough nick (well, the new ones that is, the old ones are nasty). Mini Khan Chamber was worth the stroll to get there, with a striking big lump of flowstone in the middle.

More impressive were the mud speleothems, with some excellent conulites that had had sediment eroded around them, producing a delicate tracery. This is an interesting bit of cave, with some surprisingly large phreatic passages. Cole and I bummed around in here for a few hours before toddling back to the Growling carpark around dusk.



Image. Cole Neering



Growling Swallet entrance. Credit unknown.

JF-223 “Tassy Pot”

26 April 2025

Lachlan Bailey

Party: Laurie, Ally, Cole, Lachie

We had the best of intentions to go caving. Some of us were actually in the cave for upwards of an hour (!). Faff ensued, and we ended up at Gordon Dam. Photos of faff attached below. I (Lachie) managed to not get arrested for climbing on Hydro-Electric Commission property, and tried to talk the HEC employee into joining STC rather than rousing at me.



Looks like a cave. Credit unknown.



Navigation Check. Image: Lachlan Bailey

JF-761 Delta Variant: Daily Cases Bounce

26 April 2025

Carl Walsh

Party: Carl, Alek, Eliza

While the others slacked off and went touring above ground, Alek, Eliza and I strolled up to Delta Variant with perhaps the lightest packs to ever grace the trail. Our goal was to bounce Daily Cases; the ~165 m pitch that drops from near the top of the hill down towards the connection with Niggly. On the way up we detoured to some of the other cave entrances, including the original Niggly entrance, JF-237, which has an awesome and ominous canyon-like gully leading up to it. Arriving at Negative RAT Hole (JF-758), we had some clues we’d found the right place by the pile of packs outside belonging to the STC group currently at the pointy end of the cave.

Up until now, Second Father had maybe oversold the gnarliness of the JF squeezes (we mainlanders have some good shitty squeezes and not much else to do). Negative RAT Hole however, was certainly as tight as promised. After a bit of thrutching about, we got down the short entrance pitch and into Superspreader. This shoots you out at the top of Daily Cases, the aforementioned very big pitch with 9 or so rebelay, dropping 165 m. Several of the concrete screws were a bit loose which added to the excitement somewhat. Down down down, rebelay after rebelay. The aven itself is hard to grasp the size of as it’s too big to see the bottom, mostly because of the water spray in the air. Looking back up from the bottom, Alek and Eliza’s headtorches seemed a loooooong way up.

After regrouping we clambered through Close Contact and reached the top of Freedom Day, the next big pitch after Daily Cases. This was probably going to be our turn around point, but I was keen to poke my head over the edge, so rigged my Stop and dropped the first leg of the pitch. Above me, Alek’s foothold decided to part ways with the wall it was attached to, sending him

(clipped into the traverse line) for a bit of a ride, and the rock sailing past my head. No harm done but that was enough excitement for us for the day, and we promptly turned tail.

Arriving back at the bottom of Daily Cases and looking up, we were once again pretty thrilled to have essentially empty packs. This was going to be a slog. At the top of the pitch I decided to be belligerent and record Alek and Eliza topping out the pitch and get their first thoughts. Alek declared "I am so not ready for project work," and Eliza reckons "I'm going to have massive biceps after this".

After the prusik up Daily Cases, Superspreader seemed more annoying and catchy than it had on the way in, sapping energy which was needed for the rebirthing experience of coming up Negative RAT Hole. For this, as we had pretty small packs, I figured it wouldn't be **too** bad to prusik with them attached, but maybe it would've been a better idea to haul them separately. I writhed and wriggled a bit too much, popping my Pantin off, which left me reverting to the high energy approach of just pulling/pushing hard and thinking skinny thoughts. I did recover a carabiner in a crack that was dropped on the way in though! Alek came up next, making short work of the ascent. Eliza seemed to be taking a long time which was ok with me and Alek who were lying down on the surface admiring the rainforest. As it turns out this was because her primary light had died. Oh well, nowhere to go but up towards the smidgen of daylight!



Delta Variant entrance. Image: Carl Walsh.

27 April - 5th July

Lachlan Bailey

Having come to the end of our trip, nothing remained except gear cleaning and house decontamination. This took us most of the 27th, and was apparently convincing enough to fool Jetstar and Virgin Australia into allowing the group's luggage to be checked onto a plane back to the mainland. It also somehow convinced the AirBnB owner, who gave Laurie a glowing review after the trip. An emergency run to the Lachlan Hotel at Ouse was required though, as we were finding the cleaning to be very thirsty work, and had promised the STC crowd in Niggly a beer if they stopped past on the way back to Hobart.



Clean! Image: Alice Kelly

Departure day dawned and panic ensued to get everyone into vehicles and out of Maydena in time for flights home. Once everyone else departed, Eliza, Alek and I had a more relaxed time of it, departing northwards to deposit Eliza at Launnie airport. This was duly done, although poor Eliza had a delayed flight, and multiple issues getting back home to Canberra.

Unlike the slackers who headed back to Canberra by plane, Alek and I continued to slack off in Tassie. Alas, this didn't last long before we were back on the ferry, and between the two of us, we utterly failed to sneak any booze onto the ferry to ease our passage northwards – couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery.

Alek had a pesky PhD to show his face for, and ignored my advice that PhD timelines were a moveable feast. So he dumped me in Geelong (that well-known part of Tassie) and roared off into the sunset. Happily, my parents happened to be in the same postcode, so I was able to scab a lift to warmer climes. I proceeded to faff for two months before getting back to Canberra, but I'm pretty sure Alek still got back to Canberra faster driving than Eliza did by plane.

IB-9 Big Tree Pot

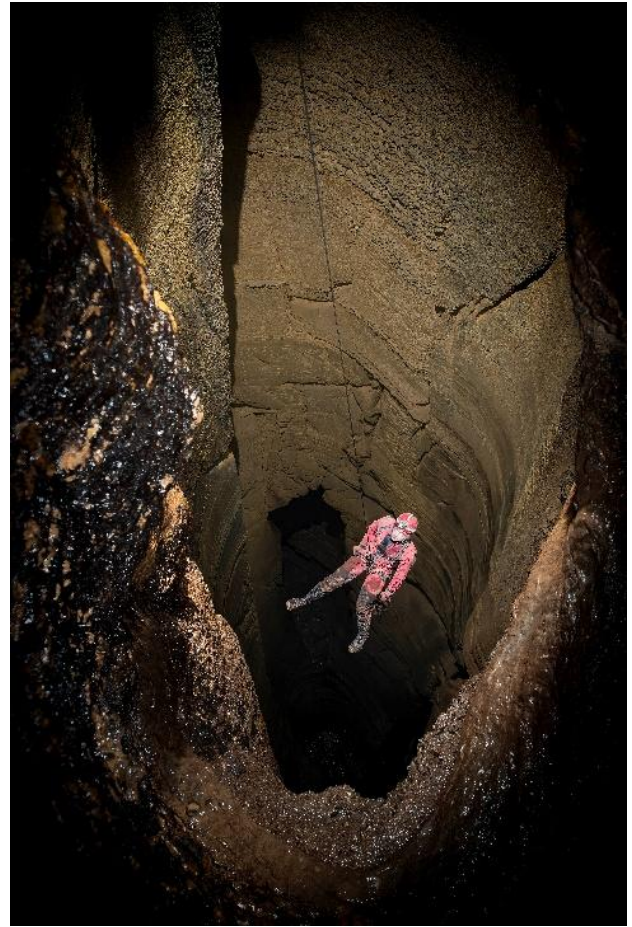
6 May 2025

Stefan Eberhard

Party: Ashlee Bastiaansen, Ben Honan, Stefan Eberhard

This was the planned photography trip after the rigging trip a few weeks earlier. The main aim was to photograph the spectacular fifth pitch. All went well. The three remote-triggered wireless slave flashes synced together somewhat sporadically however we eventually managed to get some reasonable shots from the bottom looking up the 90 m pitch, and some nice shots of Ashlee and Ben near the top of the pitch. Some notes on the rigging: the old spits and through bolts are all serviceable but the 3 x spits need bolts with hangers and the 2 x through bolts need a hanger (RP keyhole bracket fits fine, take a spanner); first four pitches are traditionally linked together with a tie-back to previous pitch as backup, however ~80 m of rope length suggested in an old trip report proved too short on our trip (allow ~90 m rope); Second pitch has a rub point on the lip which needs a rope protector or other innovation; take plenty of rigging cord or long slings for this pitch, and others; third pitch can be made to hang free via a redirect around small stal halfway down opposite the ledge; traditional tie-back for the 90 m pitch is around the large column – need extra ~10 m rope; the old spit and spike are now superseded by the Y-hang through bolts further along the ledge; 90 m pitch can be rigged as a single drop or broken into 4 (or fewer) optional rebelay to make ascent quicker, easier and safer; a skyhook will be handy; the lowest optional rebelay is a long tension traverse right (facing in) to

avoid the bulge ~30 m off the deck (contact me for details about the rebelay gear placements). Many thanks to Ashlee and Ben for being such terrific models and flashgun wranglers, and for carrying all that rope back!



Ben on rope. Image: Stefan Eberhard

JF-10 Splash Pot

31 May 2025

Henry Garratt

Party: Henry Garratt, Jemma Herbert

I'd planned to totally finish the Splash Pot project while Jemma was away in Patagonia; re-aid the traverse, continue climbing (into barrelling fossil passage), survey it all and derig the cave (hopefully via a new entrance)! However, reality took its toll on these lofty expectations, and so here we are doing our next Splash Pot trip eight months on from the last.

The goal for this trip was to re-aid the pitch we'd climbed, recover our stuck tyrolean rope and assess what's on the other side, and maybe de-rig the cave. We'd come prepared with camping gear at the carpark so we could have a long day and not have to drive back to Hobart.

We made our way back to Harrow the Marrow, having forgotten just how much Close to the Bone sucks, but

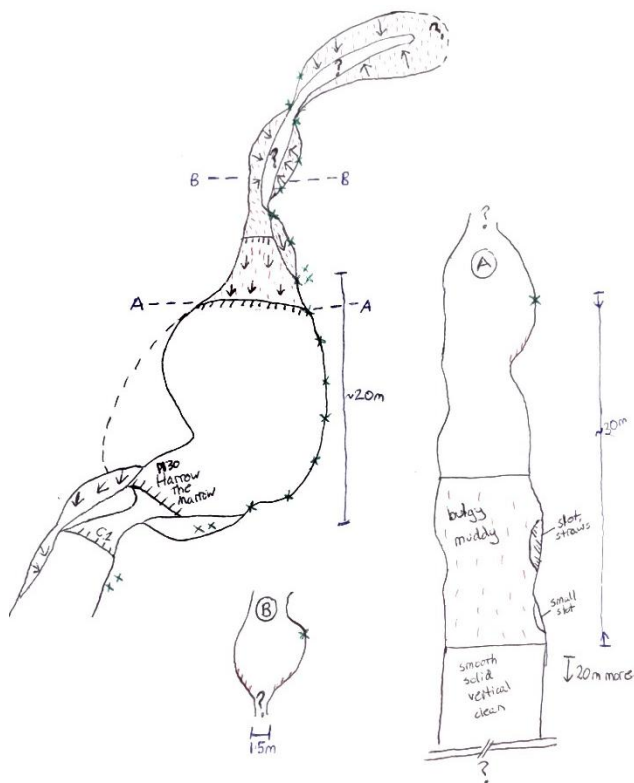
being grateful it wasn't high water like last time. I re-led the first pitch Jemma had led the year before, taking one lead fall when a bat-hook blew. It was the first aid fall I'd taken since one particularly nasty ground fall a few years before above ground, being 113 m off the deck was comforting – nothing to hit. I got across to the anchor and then began continuing. However, I had run out of bolts to get any further. The rock also seemed to be getting progressively worse. I decided to call it there, break pitch at our original tyrolean anchor and bring Jemma across.

Now, in our quest to reduce the amount of weight we'd have to drag up Close to the Bone we'd decided to only bring one set of aid gear, and no quickdraws. Clipping bolts with only a single carabiner is fine right? Both of us had forgotten about rope drag. Belaying Jemma back was the most friction-filled belay I've ever done! I was having to use my hand jammer to haul slack in. We also only had one set of aid ladders and daisies on a traverse. With a traversing pitch the second can't ascend a rope to clean, they have to re-aid climb it. So thus, we were using a skinny tag line to pass the rather

important gear between leader and second. Miraculously our tag-lining went smoothly and we happily passed gear back and forth as needed. Jemma put another 20 m or so across, found that the floor was just a false floor and it would require significantly more climbing to continue across the rift.



Quite the tangle. Note the safety glasses. Image: Jemma Herbert

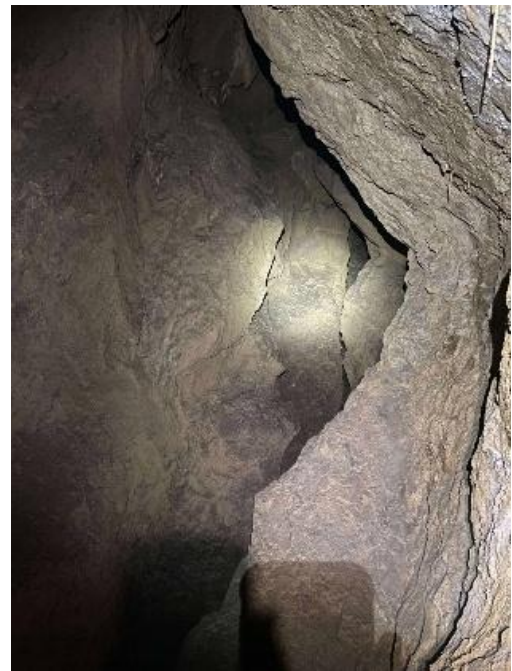


The end of the aid (not surveyed). Sketch from memory: Jemma Herbert

We derigged our ropes and headed out. We managed to get the cave mostly derigged, but left some ropes on the far side of Close to the Bone to be collected later. We got back out at 1 am, having spent 14 hours underground.

For future prospective climbers, good luck. The first pitch should be easy to re-lead, there is a

series of empty 8 mm holes leading across to the triple bolt belay on the far side. Every second 8 mm hole is shallow, to accept a bathook, and every other hole is 40-60 mm long to accept a removable dynabolt (or a pulse bolt). The wall is very pleasant, clean washed gently overhanging limestone. Very fun climbing in a spectacular location. The triple bolt belay is 3 x 8 mm stainless steel tru-bolts, with maillons and static rope equalised together into a rap ring. The second pitch from the belay on is the same arrangement, but good luck finding the holes as the whole wall is covered in mud. Enjoy getting an authentic experience as you re-lead it! Or curse us for not using parsnips.



The lead for the next generation: looking towards the ongoing rift passage from the furthest point of the climb. Image: Henry Garratt



Looking up at the home side of the rope-to-rope transfer loosey goosey tyrolean thing (Henry's words). Image: Henry Garratt

JF-761 Delta Variant – Re-bolting

Alan Jackson

12 June 2025

Party: James Barnes, Alan Jackson, David Taberner

A trip to finish the hole drilling and conduct the hole filling. We left the entrance ‘pitch’ as is (2 x stainless 8 mm expansion bolts) but drilled a couple of holes for a y-hang on the short climb in Superspreader (only a matter of time before someone tired after four days down the hole with a heavy bag falls on this climb and does themselves a mischief) and finished the approach and top few rebelay on Daily Cases. We then continued to the bottom of the cave and glued our way

out. 60 installs in total (there are a lot of offset rebelay, myriad approach lines and short shitty pitches). No dramas on the day other than me making the exit of Negative RAT Hole look difficult followed by Dave making it look nearly impossible – we’re both getting old.

Thanks very much to James and Dave for helping out with this trip, Ben for his assistance on the first bolting trip and Karina for her patience on the previous trip. Yay for Henry and Jemma who contributed free drill and battery hire. And of course a big thank you to the ASF Grants Commission for throwing \$500 towards the costs and for STC for making up the balance. Once the rigging is swapped over the whole thing should be much more enjoyable than it was.

JF-207 Voltera

28 June 2025

William Grant

Party: Henry Garratt, William Grant, Ciara Smart

We figured it was about time someone finally dropped the pitches in Accalmie. Alan and Laure had originally not bothered with them when they explored the area in 2014 (see Alan’s report in *Speleo Spiel*, 403, p.11) thinking they likely connected back into the Great Erotic Vagina (the main 80 m pitch from which the Accalmie area splits off). They did still need dropping, so we figured we may as well be the ones to do it. Alan originally offered to come with us and show us where they were but was unfortunately unable to attend due to a family commitment. He did give Henry a description of where the leads were, which augmented the existing map and the 2014 report.

According to Alan, the Accalmie area was accessed from an 800 mm high space formed above a fallen slab, approximately 20 m down the first pitch, the Great Erotic Vagina (GEV). We opted to send Henry down GEV to look. Thinking he had found it or at least found something where the whole party could wait, he installed a short traverse line across the void to the ledge where we could get off-rope and start looking. By heading directly across, we found we could descend off the slab via a 2 m high chimney. At the base of this, the cave continued for a couple of metres before coming to a point where the entire floor dropped away into a pitch.

Considering it appeared to be less than 10 m deep, we were unsure as to whether this was the 18 m pitch described by Alan. Regardless, we rigged it and dropped it, finding the base to be in rift passage, with perhaps a false floor. We named this pitch ‘Better When its Wetter’. At this point we were quite certain

we were in new cave (exciting), but not the cave we were looking for (less exciting).

Heading up the rift was too tight, and we found that heading down along the rift spat us straight back out into GEV. We were able to continue abseiling directly down for a few more metres, but it also choked out. We dubbed this extension pitch ‘The Wrong Hole’. With no more leads to follow in this section, we decided to survey the area and head out. On the way out, we found we could reach the backside of the Better When it’s Wetter pitch head by climbing up and around the back. Unable to find any survey stations in the GEV, we opted to leave a survey station on the ledge with a very nice cairn built by Henry and tied our survey into the survey station in the Vomit Chamber (the GEV pitch head).



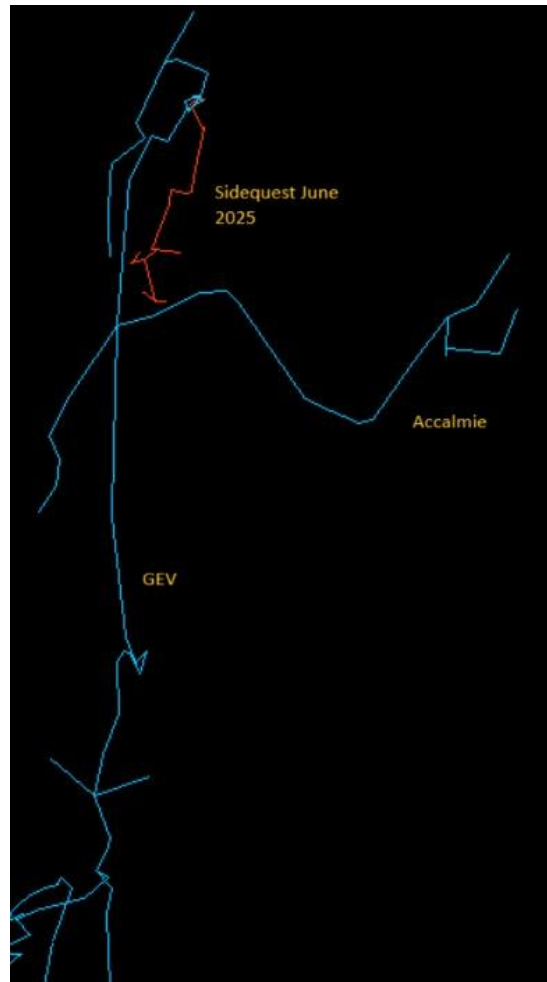
Will showing off his home-made pack. Image: Ciara Smart

Derigging was left to Will whilst Henry and Ciara surveyed out. On the descent, Henry had had no difficulty in reaching the ledge, being able to step across to it from the rebelay in GEV. Returning was a different matter. With no natural holds to reach for, just two concrete screws at waist level approximately 1.5 m away, the only way to avoid a factor one fall was to either descend the slab and take a large swing into the wall, or step across and lock off with one hand on the mess of rigging. After much delay, Will opted for the latter option and managed to execute it well, letting out the characteristic scared Will whimper of “Werrr” as he did so.

With the usual caving style mess of heavy bags and twisted ropes, the remainder of the cave was derigged fairly easily. Note, only stuff installed today was removed, existing rigging was left as is.

Although we didn’t even find the pitches we intended to drop, let alone drop them, we did add at least 20 m to the known world, Will got his name on the survey, and we all learnt where the pitches weren’t. We were even out of the cave in the daylight and home for dinner; how bizarre.

Right: One day there will be a beautiful, updated map. In the meantime, please accept this barely adequate labelled survey. GEV = Great Erotic Vagina. The new extension, ‘Sidequest’, is in red.



JF-10 Splash Pot

14 June 2025

Collaborative report

Party: Karina Anders, Jemma Herbert, Adrian Hill, Ciara Smart

(Ciara) Sometime mid last year, Henry and Jemma mentioned to me that they were keen to push an aid climb deep within Splash Pot. With luck, it might go somewhere interesting. With so many other projects on the go, this one sounded fun, but I wasn’t overly enthusiastic, mostly because of Splash Pot’s infamous reputation (and that pesky thesis-induced lassitude). Splash Pot remained unvisited and unloved since the resurvey project of 2011. This is despite Splash Pot containing one of the highest scoring pitches on the pitch-bagger’s list, the 113 m Harrow the Marrow. Unfortunately, to get to this pitch, you must pass through an extended obstacle known as Close to the Bone. A few people had told me their shoulders had never been the same since navigating this extended squeeze-meander. I had no desire to do my shoulder in, and conveniently, I also had a thesis to finish, so I felt no obligation to assist in the aid climbing efforts.

By all accounts, the project sounded brutal. Between June 2024 and May 2025, Jemma and Henry managed

five trips into Splash Pot. In the middle of that, when Close to the Bone became too tedious, there were a couple of digging trips in the nearby JF-40 in the hope of creating a bypass. The bypass failed to eventuate. Karina and I watched on and promised we’d help on the derig.

By May 2025, Jemma and Henry had started the derig, and this weekend’s trip was to be the final trip. Henry, however (who is somehow yet to participate in a proper derig) fortuitously scheduled his wisdom teeth removal the day before the trip. Although Henry is a tough caver, he’s apparently not tough enough to manage Close to the Bone with bleeding gums and high on Temazepam. Luckily, Adrian Hills stepped in.

To collect the stashed gear we only had to go down the first section of cave, then through Close to the Bone. The entrance series is quite fun. Jemma and Henry had followed the original explorer’s rigging to a tee; it was indeed all on naturals. The naturals were bomber, except for the last rebelay on the second pitch which was a small protrusion with a trace wrapped around it. It seemed good enough, and it held up, but as Adrian was coming down it was disconcerting to hear a loud crash. Adrian didn’t hit the deck; it was only a large patch of mud that had given way on the opposite wall, not the anchor.

From what I saw of Splash Pot, it's not a half bad cave. I don't know what everyone was complaining about, Close to the Bone is a piece of cake... on the way down. Karina, Adrian and I slipped down with ease, guided by Jemma's beta. There were a few squeezes, but nothing too intimidating. The way up, however, was not cake. Even with only two bags between four people, it was still very tedious. I can see how it takes two hours to travel one-hundred metres when loaded with bags.

(Jemma) One moment of excitement was on the pitch above Close to the Bone. We had a rebelay rigged off a trace on a spike of rock. It comes immediately after a bit of a traverse, so there's a decent amount of slack in the rebelay. Henry and I both had a good look at it when we rigged it, and decided that even though it was a pretty thin flake it has a lot of downwards cross-sectional area, so should be plenty strong in the direction we're loading it, but it still wasn't super confidence inspiring. Anyway, all of us had come down past it, each person looking at it with some suspicion but carrying on. Then Adrian was about 5 m below the spike, still 15 m above the ground, when a bunch of rock/mud came raining down on him from above. He wasn't hit badly, and the rope still seemed attached, so there wasn't much to be done but to carry on down. When we came back to go up, I gave the rope a vigorous bounce test, then juggled very gently up to the rebelay. The whole time I was imagining exactly what would happen if that spike blew. You'd fall a good 4 m of slack in the system, then swing into the jagged wall, and the rope would rub horribly over a sharp edge. But that didn't happen; it was fine. I got up to the rebelay and the spike was fully intact, the rock must have come from further up the pitch.

(Ciara) We were back on the surface by 2 pm, meaning we were only underground for about four hours. Extremely efficient. I am satisfied to have done Close

to the Bone, and while I'd be willing to do it again, I'd have to think very carefully if I had to take a heavy bag through. Big kudos to Jemma and Henry for making their ambitious project happen. Pity it didn't go though.

(Karina) I got to try out my new Landjoff PVC suit, and while I did have a slightly damp bottom due to the stitched seams, the suspenders were amazing. Even though I bought a small suit (which is tailored for a man so a slim fit around my hips and legs but overly spacious in the chest/shoulder region) the torso was still way too long for me, however the built-in suspenders meant I went through Close to the Bone without a harness or belt. Definitely a win and I highly recommend it if you have a short torso.



Two extremely flattering outfits. Image: Jemma Herbert

H-8 Wolf Hole

Beginner trip to explore Wolf Hole.

13 July 2025

Bianca Curran

Party: Bianca Curran, Geoff Hurst, John Oxley

The party met at Hastings around 9:30 am and headed to Chestermans Road. A short scramble up hillside. John's keen eye leading the group to cave entrance. The forest was quite dry and weather mild.

Set up of ropes and gear. Entered the cave around 10.00 am. Very dry in cave, with a few muddy clay areas. Party headed through to Lake Pluto. Cave has some roped off areas to help visitors avoid certain areas/formations (2000 survey).

Evidence of recent amount of water flushing through in some sections, with rocks washed clean. Great display of straw formations throughout. Quite a lot of broken straws scattered about on the floor of the cave in some sections.

After a look around and some photography of Lake Pluto, retraced route back to the cave entrance. A quick lunch at bottom, then party began ascending. Out of cave around 2 pm.

Spotted several large cave crickets jumping around, and one harvestman. Glown worms present on the inside of log at cave entrance.

I would personally like to thank John for his guidance and patience. It was a wonderful experience to be able to get into and see the cave, and also a great introduction to ropes and climbing.



Image: Bianca Curran



The classic shot of Lake Pluto. Image: Bianca Curran

MC-38 Genghis Khan and MC-64 Tailender

17 July 2025

Alan Jackson

Party: Finn Bayles, Jess Bayles, Alan Jackson, Ben Jackson, Nick Jördens, Yara Kes

A school holidays ‘parents and kids’ trip to some Mole Creek classics. Yara (and husband, Kai) have recently

taken over the pub at Mole Creek and their son, Nick, has decided caving is a good thing. This must be encouraged.

Genghis first – delightful, easy, slightly underwhelming by MC standards. Tailender second – gymnastic to start with, pretty cool second half, good trip.

Twas good. Would do again.



Genghis Khan. Image: Alan Jackson



Tailender. Image: Alan Jackson



Tailender. Image: Alan Jackson

Drum and Argyle (NSW)

Shame, Shame, Shame

26-27 July 2025

Alan Jackson

Party: Alan Jackson, Anna Jackson, David Rueda-Roca and miscellaneous NUCCers

Anna resides in Canberra these days. I lowered my standards and allowed myself to recreate in a NSW karst area for the first time in order to introduce Anna to the circus that is NUCC.

We opted for a canyon (Long Gully?) at Bungonia for Saturday. Winter is obviously an ideal time for canyons. A bit cold but it was nice.

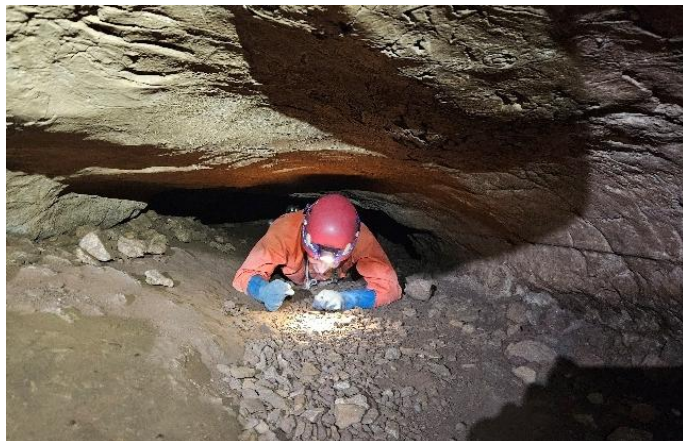
On Sunday I lost my NSW cave virginity and toddled into Drum Cave and Argyle Hole. I was aware there would be bad air in spots but I wasn't prepared for the bad bolting; some of the placements in Argyle were worse than amateurish. Nice caves though.

A massive thanks to Lachlan, Carl and Lauren in particular for rolling out the welcome mat so genuinely and enthusiastically. NUCC are a good bunch of souls with never a dull (or quiet) moment.

Hopefully I learn from this trip and ensure I never stoop as low as caving in Victoria.



Optimum carabiner-flexing bolt placement. Image: Alan Jackson



A flattener in Argyle Hole. Image: Alan Jackson



The excuse offered was 'it was placed for ladders.' Image: Alan Jackson

Other Exciting Stuff

Match the Caver to their Last Adventure Meal

Jemma Herbert

Answers: Page 2.

1.	Ben Honan	a.	Gravel
2.	Stephen Fordyce	b.	Leftovers Lollies
3.	Henry Garratt	c.	Cous cous with tuna Whittakers chocolate slice Dry Mi-Goreng noodles Half a carrot cake Soy crisps
4.	Ciara Smart	d.	Muesli bars Chocolate bars Lollies Scroggin Pies
5.	Karina Anders	e.	Cheesy Arnott's Shapes marinated in cave water Slimy sour gummy snakes, marinated in cave water
6.	Adrian Hill	f.	Vegemite and cheese roll Lindt chocolate balls Dried mango Nuts
7.	Jemma Herbert	g.	2 x Croissants, preferably Pidgeon Hole
8.	Alan Jackson	h.	16 fun size Snickers bars 1 box of Arnott's Shapes 2 muesli bars 1 cheese and bacon roll
9.	Janine McKinnon	i.	Muesli bar Cheese, salami and crackers



Mmm. Lunchtime. Image: Jemma Herbert



**EXTREME!!
CARE!!**
very vulnerable. Please
leave them intact as
the original explorers
have done. str-2000