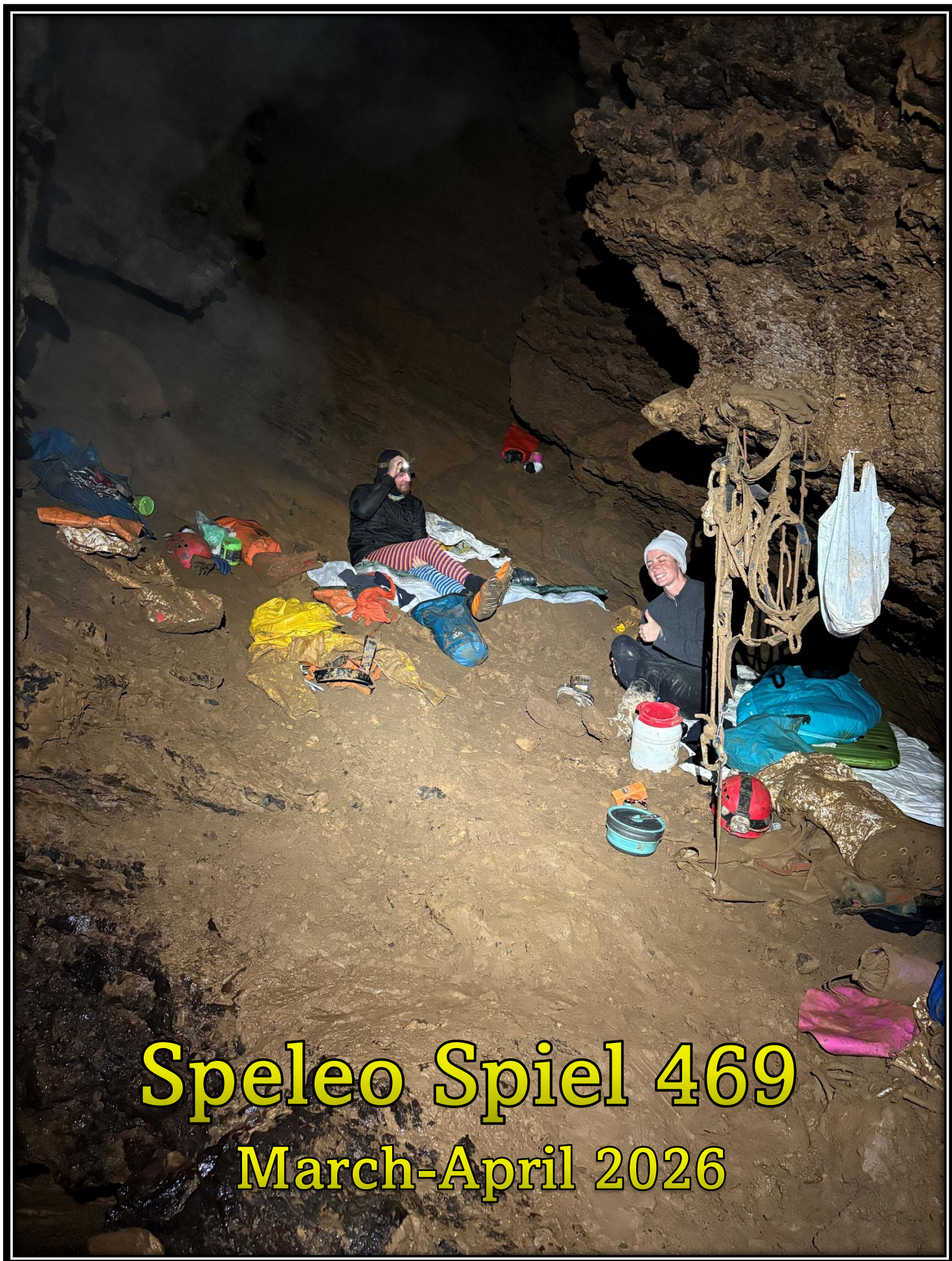




Speleo Spiel 469

March-April 2026

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Front Cover: Underground camping is just so much fun. Image: Jemma Herbert in JF-207 Voltera.

Back Cover: Henry Garratt, in the mud in JF-207 Voltera. Image: Jemma Herbert.

Speleo Spiel 469 was prepared by Ciara Smart, with subeditorial assistance from Janine McKinnon, Greg Middleton and Alan Jackson.

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

Speleo Spiel

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Editorial

Hello cavers. Welcome to another full issue. I have to apologise for the tardiness of this one, the editor has been a bit too busy for her own good. Thanks to Ric and Janine for knocking off the final touches on the last *Spiel* while I was sweating in Vietnamese karst. We've had an influx of new members over the last few months. Welcome to the club: Kris Clauson, Gabe Naylor, Tom Bates and James Grant.

Stuff and Stuff

Save-the-date - STC turns 80: 16 October 2026

The 80th Anniversary of the birth of organised caving in Australia will be held in the upstairs bar at Boodle Beasley, 315 Elizabeth Street, North Hobart from 6 pm until midnight on **16 October**. Meals and drinks will be pay as you go so no pre-payment is required. If you are planning to attend contact Jacko at pmjackson@dodo.com.au. All those even tangentially related to the club are welcome to attend.

Thank you to VRA Rescue NSW

Thank you to VRA Rescue NSW who donated 30 UHF radios to the club at our last rescue exercise. These

radios will improve communication during exercises and will be invaluable in the event of a real rescue.

From the Archives



Credit: Steve Bunton (2009)

An unnamed STC member found this in their travels through the STC archives, taken from *Speleo Spiel* 275, p.15. Now 17 years later, it still seems relevant.

Trip Reports

Mount Anne: Search Camp and Upper Sandfly Creek

17-21 December 2025

Stefan Eberhard

Party: Stefan Eberhard, Steve Jacobs

We walked into Search Camp with heavy packs. The track was very boggy after the recent rain. The next day we followed Sandfly Creek downstream from Search Camp, then turned right and headed upstream at the first tributary. This led to a small, impenetrable resurgence. We recorded the location and photographed it. We then proceeded up the ridge towards a depression high on the flank which I had seen from the top of the ridge a couple of years previously. The lower part of the route up the ridge is scrubby and topographically confusing, with numerous small valleys and dolines. It is easy to get disoriented and tangled up in patches of horizontal scrub. Further up, the forest is more open before it gets scrubby again with scoparia. We passed several chains of dolines along the way and at an elevation of around 720 m above sea level and about 2 km from camp we returned to camp having run out of time.

The third day we headed upstream from Search Camp along Sandfly Creek itself, following the main channel until we eventually located a major resurgence point in an area of deep silty impenetrable pools, at an elevation of about 460 m. We were very pleased to find this as it confirms that there is significant groundwater discharge occurring at this northern end and western flank of the Northeast Ridge — indeed it is the source feeding the main headwater channel of Sandfly Creek - we named it Sandfly Creek Rising. There are several other small tributaries joining Sandfly Creek in this area, and these may also be fed by karst springs near the break of slope.



Sandfly Creek Rising. Image: Stefan Eberhard



Small impenetrable rising near Search Camp: Stefan Eberhard

On the fourth day, we returned to the previous day's high point on the ridge and continued towards the depression at an elevation of about 800 m. The depression turned out to be an elongated feature with multiple small inner dolines filled with a jumble of large quartzite boulders which had tumbled down from higher up the slope.

On our way back down the hill, we found a small cave at lower elevation near Search Camp, at about 510 m. We recorded the find and noted the presence of cave crickets for the Adelaide University project currently underway. Steve did a terrific job of collecting some very elusive *Anaspides* in Sandfly Creek for identification and DNA sequencing. It will be interesting to see how they compare with cave specimens collected high up on the Northeast Ridge on a 2022 trip. Overall, this was a very successful trip and on the following day we walked out.



Sandfly Creek Rising, not a dive prospect. Image: Stefan Eberhard

JF-15 Hairyoat Hole Dig #1

9 January 2026

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Kynan Bonnice, Stephen Fordyce, Natalie (Nat) Powell (NSW)

I was in the Junee-Florentine for three weeks and the first order of business was to actually tackle the dig at the bottom of Hairyoat Hole – the reason everyone kept trying to find it for all those years (see SS462, p.15 for the discovery, and SS466, p.16 for the only assessment of the dig this century). The cave saw three trips over January, tackling three successive digs.

Kynan and Nat formed an enthusiastic team, and it was just as well. I was privately very optimistic about the dig being a goer, as despite it being a fist-sized hole it could be seen to get bigger after a metre or two. As usual my optimism was rather inflated, but eventually proven correct – it took six hours of hard digging, much of which was spent making a trench in the floor (which turned out to be quite wet and gloopy) so that we could

access the dig proper. Many tools were put to work, and some good old fashioned desperate hand digging techniques were also used – the crux saw us taking it in turns to spend one minute at a time lying head down in a sloping squeeze grabbing a single handful of crud at a time.



Nat enjoys digging from the trench in the floor at the original dig site (Dig #1). Image: Stephen Fordyce

Faith was shaken, but thanks to the judicious use of modern digging techniques (roughly half a box of them) progress was made. Finally, Kynan wriggled through and Nat not long after. I sent them off to scope it out while I made it a bit more pleasant – as with many digs, only the diggers will truly appreciate how awful it originally was.

Around the corner was... underwhelming: a short section (~20 m) of small meander passage complete with mud grovelling leading to what looked like a pitch but with a lot of rock in the way of it being human sized. The character of the cave had completely changed – despite the small entrance, it's pretty spacious and dry in the upper bits. However, at and beyond the dig is wet slurry and tight grovelling. The draught was there but not enough to be felt on the legs (however nobody was game to try it in shorts like a true Hairygoat).

We gladly left the digging tools and rigging in place, and retreated after a longer day than expected.



Nat and Kynan on the shovels at Dig #1. Image: Stephen Fordyce

JF-387 Porcupine Pot

10 January 2026

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Ashlee Bastiaansen, Kynan Bonnice, Stephen Fordyce

The annual Porcupine visit, with an eye to making some progress towards the finishing (or expansion) of that project. We went to the downstream rockpile (the Gift Horse Rockpile), where I haven't had a chance to stop and smell the roses for a very long time – we keep getting distracted by specific things like aid climbs and grovelly wet leads. The roses didn't smell that great, but the rockpile is extensive enough that I think it to be worthy of a fine-tooth comb effort to systematically/exhaustively map and push. If this Niggly retirement thing sticks, Porcupine seems like the logical place to redirect some of that energy. It's the mastercave after all, and all this winning at Mastercave or Bust is getting boring.

For the record, here are all the trips to the Gift Horse Rockpile area:

- SS421, p.11 (2017) – PS report on 2017 PS/AK/PE trip (discovery)
- SS424, p.4 (2017) – SF report on 2017 SF/AK/PS trip (survey)
- SS450, p.20 (2022) – PS report on SF/GK/PS trip (poking about)
- SS454, p.24 (2023) – SF report on 2023 SF/KA/CS aid climb
- SS458, p.13 (2024) – SF report 2024, SF de-rig & survey the aid climb, BM & KB checked leads
- SS463, p.7 (2025) – SF report on SF/HG wet grovelling

Kynan went up over the rockpile and noted some pitches, but we confirmed these went to the dry streambed below. I pursued that at base level, for the first time since 2017, and got a surprising amount further (15-20 m) than then – a bit more looked possible but it was very gnarly and would be best done fresh. We looked at a climb on the RHS of the chamber that was impossible to get to, but by ducking under and squirming briefly, there was a way to it from the other side. Another slope led up from this little room to a drafting rock-choked climb I'd noted in 2021 – one big rock was in the way, and I gingerly poked it from not quite directly below it. Moves easily but seems to be a wedge shape and didn't want to come down. Tricky, but not part of the rockpile so I think worth some careful and perhaps innovative effort.



The old concrete screws (the only vaguely relevant photo I have from the day). Image: Stephen Fordyce

From that same spot was a triangle shaped grovel. Ashlee went in and reported that it connected back to the main passage just before the big Gift Horse chamber (via a small passage with a wall across it from previous looks). It would be interesting to survey this and see what it's doing. There have been plenty of pokings about, but the current sketch map is, well, a bit

sketchy and pretty much none of what we checked out is surveyed or shown.

We also replaced all the concrete screws (installed 2021-05, with a few re-used from several years before that). One at the nasty pitch-head broke, so we took the opportunity to (finally!) improve that and remove the

now unnecessary étrier. NOTE FOR NEXT VISIT: take a few metres of rope and two maillons to make a bit more rope length. The concrete screws were left with Alan for break testing purposes. The rope is 9.5 mm Bluewater and went in in 2021-05 – I paid for it, so no need to worry that club rope is being tied up on this extremely slow-burning project.

JF-15 Hairygoat Hole Dig #2

11 January 2026

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Ashlee Bastiaansen, Kynan Bonnice, Stephen Fordyce, Natalie (Nat) Powell (NSW)

Ashlee joined the team, which was a little the worse for wear on the third day in a row of caving. Still we put in a pretty heroic effort at Dig #2. This was where the floor of a meander dropped away into some kind of pitch – estimated 5 m. You couldn't even get close enough to look down it, but it seemed like a decent chamber down (ha, there's that inflated optimism again).



Left to right: Nat, Ashlee, Steve, Kynan. Image: Stephen Fordyce

So we spent the best part of another longer-than-expected day using modern digging techniques (and some good old fashioned brute force). It was expert level and a one-person job, and tight enough that overtaking someone else was a major luxury. As the only expert present, I did the close and personal stuff and the others took it in turns to crouch behind and hand me things – thanks guys. Those not on handing-things duty hung out back at the pitch practising SRT and other skills.



This drill provides an indicator of the conditions in the dig. Image: Stephen Fordyce

Finally the pitch was reasonably accessible, and I used the last of the drill battery to put in a pair of concrete screws. Rather like the pitch-head in The Fistula/Voltera, it was extremely difficult to find somewhere wide enough to get the drill at right angles to the rock. After much anticipation, we descended to find... not much.

The “pitch” was more like 1.5 m and could be free climbed, but would be better with an étrier (rigging notes in next report), and the chamber it gained was big enough for the team but starting to get pretty cosy with four people standing in it. There were some leads at a few levels, and the draught was still present. We got two body lengths into a tube at chest height (with room to turn around) but decided the best prospect was another somewhat damp dig at floor level. Mud and small rocks at this stage.

Progress had been made and the next obstacle determined (although enthusiasm was distinctly dented), so we pulled out the digging gear, but left the cave rigged in anticipation of some of that famous NUCC enthusiasm.

Mount Anne – Northeast Ridge

12-20 January 2026

Stefan Eberhard

Party: Stefan Eberhard, Steve Jacobs

We departed Gelignite Creek in warm conditions with heavy packs. Our plan was to camp near the base of the ridge and do some low-level reconnaissance in an area where there is a series of intermittently sinking and re-surfacing streams. We located a small clear perennial stream where Steve collected *Anaspides*, and nearby, to our pleasant surprise, we found a major resurgence with clear water and strong perennial flow - we named it Hidden Spring. The resurgence was impenetrable, being blocked by dolerite colluvium, and approximately 30 m up slope there was a doline which obviously fills with water back-flooding from the spring during high flow. We scouted around nearby without finding anything further. This is a significant discovery establishing another major karst outflow on the western flank of the Northeast Ridge. It is speculated that other tributaries of Sandfly Creek, between Search Camp and the standard route to Pandani Shelf, also discharge from karst springs near the break of slope.

The next day we slogged up the ridge with 33 kg packs and set up camp in the forest near AAK. On the third day, we dropped into AAK and photographed the doline and base chamber. Steve was very impressed.



Steve Jacobs. Image: Stefan Eberhard

On the fourth day, we made our way to the Cone of Silence and rigged it for photography the following day. On the fifth day, the weather was cold, calm and overcast. I dropped into the Cone of Silence — a spectacular free hanging 48 m pitch — and took many photos of Steve on and off rope, both colour and monochrome. Late afternoon, we did some tripod shots from up the hill looking down into the doline. A very good day.

On the sixth day, we rigged the top section of the variant main pitch into Kellers Cellar, and another rope in a parallel shaft entrance, ready for the next trip to do survey and photography. Following a golden sunset, that night the Milky Way was spectacular, and there was a diffuse green aurora pulsing behind Mount Lot and Mount Anne. The seventh day was a day of rest, of course, albeit Steve went on a mission to Pandani Shelf to collect *Anaspides* specimens — ensuring a great addition to the geographic sampling coverage for both ends of the Northeast Ridge, along with the cave specimens I collected from Deep Thought in 2022. There was another faint aurora on the last evening, and the eighth day we walked out.



Hidden Spring. Image: Stefan Eberhard



Successful trip. Image: Stefan Eberhard

JF-36 Growling Swallet: Coelacanth Retrieval

13 January 2026

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Stephen Fordyce, Ben Hofmann

Yet another trip on the dregs of the Coelacanth Sump dive project – sadly the four tanks and 30 kg of lead hadn't magically moved since my last clean-up trip in August. Ben needed a crash course in JF caving misery ahead of Niggly so this was perfect for his first Tassie caving experience (ha!). We carried in 3 mm wetsuits, did the roof-sniff for the final time (I got a shock at how cold it was not in a diving suit – the last time for me was five years prior) and got three tanks plus untold numbers of weights back to the campsite. The roof-sniff was pumping draught, a last reminder of the potential that remains in this area. Nothing was left at the sump.

We left 9 x 1.5 kg threadable weights at the campsite (on the original cinema rock, ~25 m downstream from the sandy sleeping spots, really obvious). Everything else was shoved into two heroic bags each (and a weight belt each with five weights) and we managed to get it to Slaughterhouse Aven. My quadriceps were not going to do any more pitches like that so we left the weight belts there, with the hope that someone on an easy through trip might wear them out. A third weight belt (empty) was left hopefully wrapped around the

brontosaurus tree at the old hut site just where the Slaughterhouse track diverges from the Growling track – for weight removal purposes.

The surface was gained and everything hauled back to the car well before dark. I was extremely relieved to have got that done. Ben was none the worse for the experience and even professed to having enjoyed the day. A good sign of things to come.

Destiny Pitch and the approaches were left rigged. Unless anyone takes over the derig I'll wrap that up in a few months. Ideally the 9 x weights left at the camp should come out on that de-rig trip.



Assorted retrieved paraphernalia (two of the cylinders seeing the light of day for the first time in two years). Image: Stephen Fordyce

JF-36 Growling Swallet beginner trip

17 January 2026

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Stephen Fordyce, Hannah Simmerman, Jamie Ward

It was a prime summer Saturday for some hard JF caving, but Mt Anne aches and Niggly trepidation did a good job of scaring the usual suspects away, and the NUCCers were still en route from Mole Creek. But a couple of keen newbies had seen my trip advertisements last year and been proactive about expressing interest. So it worked out nicely that the prime Saturday could be actually enjoyed, while providing a useful service.

SRT experience was a bit borderline, so we focused on other underground skills instead – going in the main Growling Swallet entrance, doing all the interesting climbs and getting to the bottom of Windy Rift in good spirits and acceptable time. We did some faffing and noted that the maximum flood over the past year was ~17 m (well below the ~40 m required for an overflow event). We made it out with greater confidence on the way up the climbs. Nice work Hannah and Jamie, your

enthusiasm and company was appreciated, and I hope to see you on more gnarly caving trips soon.

Thanks to Alan for dealing with sorting out the crew with club gear.



Cave fog at the entrance. Image: Jamie Ward

JF-796 Mantrap and surface walking

18 January 2025

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Stephen Fordyce, Ben Hofmann, Alice (Ally) Kelly

A follow up from my day looking for the missing JF-568 Chrisps Creek Swallet water in August (SS466, p.11). First we did a short side-quest to find JF-568 itself – meant to be easy but was not. We found the tag in the end. The cave and gully around it were not exciting. From there we followed the gully uphill, mostly on the north side.

Ben stayed high and followed the base of a nice limestone cliff (roughly 10 m high). There was a break between cliffs with a steep upward slope and near the top there were a couple of vaguely taggable things (without draught), and some tiny holes with draught (no obvious digging prospects, annoyingly). We enthusiastically tagged JF-793 Giraffe (there was a stick nearby that vaguely looked like one), JF-794 Bad Vibrations (the walls were covered with live mosquitoes stuck in spiderwebs, ewww) and JF-795 The Shincident (in honour of our semi-fallen comrade Laurie, who gave her Acropolis-battered shins a day off). Horizontal entrances with less than 2 m of cave. These caves might be better accessed from the Tachycardia track (they are only about 50 m away).



Ally points to the giraffe stick near JF-793

Eventually we got sick of it and headed back to the gully, and some rather painful going through fallen trees. The base of the limestone cliffs was interesting and might be worth another look by a fresher group.

We kept a bit of an eye out but didn't see JF-252 or JF-253. Mantrap was gained, and tagged JF-796 – so named because it's a big (3 m round and deep), freshly scoured out hole with overhanging dirt walls. It would be very easy to climb in and get stuck, and/or have it collapse on you, and a quite stereotypical thing for a man to do (however, in the interests of gender equality, Ally joined the party at the bottom). The hole was pretty cold, but draught less apparent than when I was there in winter.

We came prepared with much digging gear, and took turns hacking at a small hole at the bottom. Limestone wall, a possibly going hole blocked by a large limestone rock, dolerite and mud fill around. The large rock was removed and a crawlway went about 1 m. However at regular intervals bits of the dolerite/mud wall and ceiling spontaneously calved off and fell into it. A new level of man trap was achieved! Nobody was game to actually get in there, and it didn't look like there was any limestone or that it went, from where we could see. We resolved to retreat and that it should be checked in 6-12 months after it had had some time to stabilise.



Ben contemplates the man trap within Mantrap

Before going home, we zipped the short distance up the gully to check on the new water sink point. It hadn't changed appreciably since August and while I've tagged worse and we probably should have (it's a major JF swallet after all), the lack of limestone and enthusiasm won the day. The easy walk back to the car I had promised did not eventuate this time, as we strayed too far south into horrendous ferny and log-strewn regrowth (with no sign of limestone). We spent at least half an hour within 100 m of the car before finally swimming our way out of the cutting grass. 0 stars, would not recommend.

JF-15 Hairygoat Hole Dig #3 and de-rig

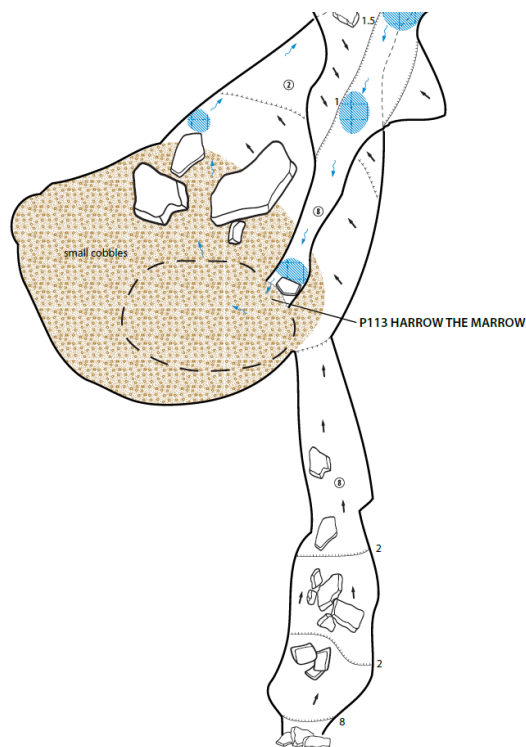
21 January 2026

Stephen Fordyce

Party: Stephen Fordyce, Ben Hofmann, Lauren (Laurie) Joliffe, Alice (Ally) Kelly

So the enthusiasm wasn't that high – we were between the horrors of Voltera and the trepidations of Niggly and the ceebs [*Ed: can't be bothered*] towards the end of the trip were growing. Still, everyone got to the new final chamber and hung out there. The NUCCers egged each other on (and I did some egging too) and cleared a nice amount of mud and rocks out of dig #3 at floor level. You can now see about 2 m ahead; the draught is faint but present, and it's going to need more optimism than the preceding digs (a decent effort will be required, but at least it's still hand-digging for now).

So we de-rigged as planned, but left hangers/concrete screws in place to entice a future visit. I might get around to having another look eventually; happy to see anyone else have a crack in the meantime. It certainly looks like connecting into Splash Pot – only 70 m in the horizontal and nicely in line with an inlet at the base of Harrow the Marrow. However, with a vertical gap of ~240 m, that could mean a very big pitch, or a horizontal overshoot into the likes of Mad Englishmen And Dogs. On a wet day in winter, there would probably be enough water trickling through HGH to be visually observed in Splash Pot (most likely starting at base of P2).



Here's a better look at the closest bit of Splash Pot



Scale plan view showing relationship of Hairygoat Hole (blue is 1970s, orange is January 2026) and Splash Pot (pink). Gap is 70 m in the horizontal, about 240 m (!) in the vertical, between closest points.

Future visits should also consider checking two alternative pitches – one is a hole in the floor that you go past at the base of the entrance climb; it is tight but negotiable, at a pinch could be done from a rope around the entrance tree (25 m rope would be heaps) with a few rubs. Appears to be at least a couple of metres deep. The second is parallel to P2 (starts roughly halfway down) and could use the same anchors/rope – does not seem to re-emerge at the bottom of P2.

Rigging notes

- Shorthand:
 - CS: concrete screw
 - LHS: Left Hand Side (looking down the cave)
 - RHS: Right Hand Side (looking down the cave)
- P1 (3 m): 10 m rope, or 26 m rope for P1 & P2 combined. Plus 3 m sling if you prefer for the natural.
 - 1x CS head high LHS

- 1x natural RHS – bollard on wall, slightly sketchy, consider replacing with a concrete screw
- Y-hang down to bottom
- P2 (10 m): 14 m rope, or 26 m rope for P1 & P2 combined. Plus 3 m sling if you prefer for the natural.
 - 1x CS far LHS
 - 1x natural at centre, around the rock column
 - (it's a somewhat awkward climb down LHS hole, may be easier if rigged RHS with new anchors)
 - Y-hang down to bottom
- P3 (14 m): 19 m rope, plus 2 m rope for redirect
 - 2x CS on RHS wall/ceiling at large boulder before open muddy slope. ~5 m down the steep muddy slope is...
 - 1x CS redirect right in the corner of the ceiling (2 m rope)
- P4 (2 m): 6.5 m rope, or 2 m rope plus étrier
 - Tight and nasty, consider leaving SRT kit at base of P3 and rigging with étrier (as an indication – it's climbable with no rope/aids, especially if a spotter is below).
 - 2x CS opposite walls
 - Y-hang to bottom (be careful of rub)

MA-2 Kellers Cellar Survey and Photography

29 January – 2 February 2026

Stefan Eberhard

Party: James Barnes, Stefan Eberhard

It was a very warm and muggy first day, with lots of mozzies and march flies, as we walked into Anne-A-Kananda and set up camp in the forest. The next day, after a leisurely start, we completed the rigging of the main pitch into Kellers Cellar, as well as a separate parallel rope for the photographer. We did some test shots looking down the main shaft with James on the rope in the late afternoon light.



Stefan on MA-2 entrance pitch variant. Image: James Barnes



James Barnes. Image: Stefan Eberhard

The following day started with rain, then hail, and then snow. It snowed all day and settled on the ground. We were mostly tent-bound, quite happily, however I did two hours of black and white photography in the snow-cloaked alpine cloud forest. That night there was a brilliant full moon.

The next day was our final caving day, as James only had five days available for us to nail the big shot, which I had been planning, preparing and hoping for over the last three summer seasons of visits. The time of day around the summer solstice, ambient temperature, humidity, cloud cover, wind and barometric pressure all played into the lighting and atmospheric conditions

in the shaft which could make the difference between an okay shot or a fabulous shot. On this day it was cold and cloudy, giving soft uniform light conditions inside Kellers Cellar — we shot firstly from the top looking down, then from the bottom looking up. We got some very pleasing photos that will be published in due course.

While most of the day was spent on ropes, we did run a quick DistoX survey of the base chamber of Kellers Cellar, and measured the variant main pitch, which checked in at about 135 m or so. The KC cave survey

was tied into the KC MA-2 tag and then linked into two nearby GPS control points established on my previous trips. This last bit of missing survey now finally enables mapping integration of the major caves clustered in this section of the ridge, including Cone of Silence, Deep Thought, Potatoes and AAK.

The following day we walked out. This was a short but very productive trip with long-standing survey and photo missions both accomplished. Many thanks to James for his patience hanging around on the rope for ages.

IB-14 Exit Cave: Claire's First Steps into the Dark

7 March 2026

Michael Glazer

Party: Ashlee Bastiaansen, Mike Butcher (UK), Claire Glazer, Michael Glazer (Trip Leader), Alice Shackles (UK), Raelene Watson

The plan was simple: meet at Ida Bay at 9 am, making it easy for our visiting Poms, Alice and Mike, to find us without getting themselves lost in the Tasmanian wilderness before we'd even started. Ashlee rolled up at the same time, and after the usual round of introductions and gear shuffling, we all convoyed up to the MC carpark.



Left to right: Ashlee, Alice, Claire, Michael, Rae, Mike Image: Mike Butcher

The weather had been kind to us for a change, so the track in was fairly dry — just a few minor muddy patches to keep things interesting. We made good time and arrived at the cave entrance at 10:46 am.

Everyone dug into a quick bite to eat while gearing up. This was Claire's first ever caving trip, and while she was doing her best to play it cool, I could detect a hint of nervousness behind the brave face. Can't say I blame her — staring into the mouth of Exit Cave for the first time is enough to make anyone's stomach do a flip.

Water levels were very low, and the temperature was on the warm side, which was a nice bonus. I headed in first to unlock the gate, while Rae worked her magic keeping Claire at ease as the rest of the group filed through the entrance. Rae's a natural at that — calm, reassuring, and just the right amount of 'you'll be fine, it's brilliant in here.'

Once inside, we had a lovely easy walk up the streamway, the group falling into a comfortable rhythm while taking in the sheer scale of the Exit chambers. There's something about those massive passages that never gets old, no matter how many times you've been through them. A bit of route finding was needed along the way, and I'll admit I managed to miss the turn-off to the Ballroom, leading us all the way to the rockpile before realising my mistake. A quick backtrack and we soon found where we should have been. Nobody said a word, but I could feel the smirks burning into the back of my head.

We carefully made our way up to the Ballroom and spent a good while soaking in the beautiful formations. We parked ourselves on the path for a break — more food, a few photos, and the kind of quiet appreciation that only comes from sitting in the middle of something genuinely spectacular.



Image: Mike Butcher

The temperature in the cave was noticeably warm, and by this stage I was down to just a t-shirt. I wasn't the only one — the others were commenting on the heat too. More importantly, Claire had completely found her feet by now, the earlier nerves well and truly gone. It was great to see her relaxed and enjoying herself.

We took a slow wander back towards the entrance, stopping for a few more photos along the way. We were back at the gate by 2:20 pm — a good honest day underground without any drama, which makes a nice change from some of my other trips.

Before locking up, I gave the Parks padlock a fresh dose of Lanox to keep the corrosion at bay. I also grabbed the spray can I'd stashed there on a previous trip — it was starting to go rusty, so it'll need replacing on a future visit.

Back at the cars and out of our gear, Alice and Mike came back to the Glazer farm for the evening. A few glasses of Guinness were knocked over as we swapped stories, before they continued on their way exploring Tassie the next day.

All in all, a cracking day out. Claire survived her first trip underground with a grin on her face. I'd call that a win.



Claire Glazer. Image: Michael Glazer

JF-35 Gormenghast

12 March 2026

Janine McKinnon

Party: Deb Hunter, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney, (visitors - Rostok University) Christoph Höpel, Stefan Richter

The German *Anaspides* researchers were back. The numbers and persons have varied over the several years they have been making their summer excursions here, but these two have been constant. Stefan is a Professor of Entomology and Christoph his PhD student. Tasmanian *Anaspides*, and their distribution and speciation, has been Christoph's thesis subject (I'm sure the topic is more specific than my lay-ignorance has described, but you get the gist of it). Various STC members have helped them with accessing potential hunting grounds underground over the years, and it has been fun and educational for us all.

Now, Christoph has his PhD, but... wait for it...they are back with a new project! Personally, I think they just like coming here and keep finding excuses for their working visits (You can't really call them holidays. They work very hard).

The new topic of interest is an invertebrate even smaller than *Anaspides*. It is *Eucrenonaspides*. Just to educate you all a bit, Wikipedia says of them:

'Eucrenonaspides oinotheke is a species of crustacean in the family Psammaspididae, endemic to Tasmania, the only species described in the genus Eucrenonaspides. Eucrenonaspides is in the order Anaspidacea. It was described from a spring at 9 Payton Place, Devonport, Tasmania in 1980, making it "the first spring-dwelling syncarid recorded from the Australian region". It is listed as a vulnerable species on the IUCN Red List. A further undescribed species is known from south-western Tasmania.'



Just perfect for an orthopaedics promo. Image: unknown

Education over, back to the more important topic of caving.

Christoph had been to Gormenghast a few years ago to collect *Anaspides* and had seen some of these *Eucronaspides* in there too (*Speleo Spiel* 454). Now he wanted to go back to collect some. He asked Ric and me if we would take them. We haven't been there for many years. Possibly as many as 30 years. So a reminder of the access was undertaken by us a few weeks earlier. Spoiler alert, we found the cave. The track is in remarkably good condition now.

We all met up in Maydena and car convoyed to the end of the 8 Road. The walk to the cave took about 40 minutes and is flat and pleasant. Fortunately for us the forecast rain held off and it was only cold and moist on the walk. It had rained about 50 mm over the past 24 hours, but also fortunately the area had been so dry that all that rain only resulted in a small stream running down the cave - it is a stream cave and of small dimensions, so a good flow guarantees a thorough soaking.



Stefan and Christoph displaying awesome eyesight. Image: Janine McKinnon

Ric led down, with our two scientists following him. The rehab patients came last, so we could retreat easily if either of us found that our new prosthetics weren't up to the challenge. I, for one, had no idea how I would go with all the climbing and scrambling. This was my first trip underground since my replacement in mid-December – it was still early days.

The cave was pretty-much how I remembered it, except a lot drier. I hadn't remembered it as a very pleasant cave but surprised myself by really enjoying the down climbs and nature of the caving. This was possibly because we were moving quite slowly as the three ahead moved carefully down the cave.

About half-way down the vertical series they stopped at the spot that Christoph had found specimens last trip and he and Stefan started searching. They found four specimens, so they were very happy. These things are tiny! I have no idea how they see them in the water, I had enough trouble even when they were in a collection tube.

We continued further down and Deb decided she had stressed her new shoulder enough when the climbing became more constricted and squeezey. I decided that would therefore be enough for me too and we turned out.

The other three decided to go a little further as Christoph wanted to look for samples at the bottom of the climbs.

Deb and I had a relaxed and enjoyable trip back up the cave and arrived at the surface by 12.30 pm, unscathed. My new hip had passed the test, so I could now complete the test tag Alan had so thoughtfully gifted me. It had been raining whilst we were underground but was between showers as we came out. After a cuppa and lunch we wandered back to the car. We even managed to get changed before the next lot of showers arrived.

The others arrived about 1.5 hours later, having only progressed 50 m further into the cave before finding a climb that Stefan wasn't happy doing. They did spend half an hour looking for more critters in small pools down there, unsuccessfully, but found another one at the first site on their way out. Apparently five is a very successful result for them. So everyone was happy.

We were on our way home by 3.30 pm.



A successful (orthopaedics) test. Tag courtesy of Alan Jackson

IB-14 Exit Cave

29 March 2026

William Grant

Party: Shawn Few, Jemma Herbert, Geoff Hurst, William Grant

TLDR: Enjoyable trip to Exit Cave, potential aid climbs were scoped.

The plan began as a trip for Henry and Jemma to aid climb some potential leads they had been told about in the Western Passage of Exit Cave, whilst extending an open invitation to others to come along. Henry unfortunately got roped into running two sections in the Kunanyi Mountain Run team race the day before so was 'too tired' to come. Sounds like a lack of dedication to me, but I guess they did win. Undeterred, Jemma and the three ring-ins set off.



Aid climbing prospect. Image: Will Grant

The walk in went uneventfully, albeit long and by midday we were entering the cave. Moving quickly through the lower reaches of the cave, we were all surprised by how warm it was. Perhaps as Tasmanian cavers we are not used to being dry. Some time was spent mucking around getting lost in the rock pile, with us venturing a hundred metres up the wrong passage (Sibbs Extension?). Eventually we were able to find the correct way onward. The Hat Walk proved to be as entertaining as we were promised and we were soon at the branch to Western Passage. Being there, we went

for a look see the pretties in Edies Treasure, something I was not expecting for this trip. 'Oooh, ahh. Needles, coral.' Maybe there is more to caving than finding new passage.



Pretties in Exit Cave. Image: Will Grant

We were soon in the large chamber next to Angels Lair, where we decided to leave our bags and scope out some of the climbs. After much neck craning, we decided on a climb. Being already mid-afternoon and having four people for a two-person climbing mission, we decided to call it for the day. Knowing where to go, we exited the cave in a fraction of the time it took to get in, even with a quick detour into the Ballroom.



Image: Will Grant

Exiting the Cave about 5 pm, we were excited to see that it was still daylight outside. This made the slog back up the hill to the car a little more pleasant.

JF-207 Voltera

10-12 April 2026

Jemma Herbert

Party: Ashlee Bastiaansen, Henry Garratt, Jemma Herbert

We had this weekend pencilled in for a Niggly camping trip to push upstream Chrysalis, but the weather forecast didn't agree with that plan. Also, Henry had promised Steve he'd get the Warbler out of Voltera before it flooded and ruined some expensive kit. Ashlee was keen for a camping trip, so the plan became a Voltera camping trip, to have plenty of time and energy to climb some of the many climbable avens down there.

We set off Friday after work, with the usual mad scurry of last-minute forgotten bits and bobs and made it to the carpark around 7 pm where it was rainy and dark. The trip almost ended quickly when I couldn't find my helmet. Henry was very enthusiastic to offer me his helmet so he could go home instead. Unfortunately, the helmet was found and we were forced to proceed. We made it about 20 m from the car before the next opportunity to bail. We spent a good 15 minutes pretty much within sight of the car, going in circles saying 'the track definitely has to go this way,' 'this is definitely not the track,' over and over again. We even tossed around the idea to sleep at the car and wait until morning, but again we were forced to proceed when Henry stumbled onto the actual track in a totally different direction to where we'd been looking.



Lost 20 m from the car. Image: Jemma Herbert

We bumped into the cave around 8 pm and bitched and moaned our way through the Fistula and Stairway to Niggly. Ashlee had never been to Voltera but was justifiably sceptical of the 'two hours to camp' estimate and the 'getting back up the Fistula really isn't that hard' assessment. Around midnight we found a campable spot beside The Pit, but we still had to run a late night errand to retrieve Steve's bloody Warbler from the mud bath. We had been told it all packed into its own Pelicase and to bring a bit of extra bag capacity to get it out again. Silly of us to assume it was a nice little Pelicase. It was bloody huge and heavy and definitely wasn't going to fit in the small bag I had brought for it. We swore a lot and grumpily wriggled our way back to our new camp for some late-night camp improvements.

Camping at The Pit was very muddy, kinda crowded and not at all flat, but having a proper water source literally in camp is super awesome. I knew it would be kinda convenient, but it was really really nice. I would 10/10 prioritise being at water over spacious flat ground again. Although next time, I'd camp at the base of the climbs we did, that was flat and clean and pebbly AND had water; it'd be a really nice spot.

We slept in on Saturday, then went to check out the #1 climbing lead on Steve's list, which was up above the normal commuting rift about halfway between the base of the 30 m pitch and the pit. A short easy climb gets you out of the rift into a pleasant pebbly chamber. We um-ed and ah-ed a bit about exactly what to climb, and ultimately decided to start on the longest option, then go do the shorter option afterwards.

I climbed about 17 m mostly on rivets up a muddy, vertical and fairly featureless wall to an opening above with a small inlet coming out of it. It landed on a pleasant pebbly ledge, with more potential to free-climb above. The others came up, and we free-climbed (starting on climber's left, traversing back right, a 7 m rope would be helpful) through some crumbly ledges up to the next break. It popped out into another large aven, maybe 30 m. Again, fairly featureless vertical wall, with a small inlet coming down it. It was possible to wriggle through behind a flake on climber's right to get into a parallel aven that looked largely free-climbable up to about 20 m, if you placed some protection. It was heading straight up, into maybe a hole in the roof, but not the distinct fossil level passage we'd hoped for. We left a rope on the main climb (18 m rope, two concrete screws on stainless hardware, with a rivet minor redirect 2 m down).

Next Henry took the lead on his pick of climbs, up the climber's LHS of the same chamber. From the ground you could see a narrow vertical rift with an opening at 7 m or so. He climbed up there and called it dead but encouraged a second opinion. I came up and thought it was maybe squeezable, but after a decent and slightly sketchy effort, still couldn't get through. It didn't look at all promising even if you got through the first

constriction. I didn't want to sacrifice my dynamic rope to leave on that indefinitely, so convinced a reluctant Henry to derig it. With all our rivets used, we moseyed back to camp for an early night.

The way out the next morning was slow with heavy bags, but generally pretty fun, given we had had plenty of sleep and weren't in any rush. There had been a lot of rain over the weekend, and the waterfalls were absolutely cranking. The rigging maybe keeps you out of the water when the water is low, but oh boy you still get pummelled when it's up. So that was exciting. There was some deceleration coming back up the Fistula, Ashlee said 'if I wasn't so dehydrated I'd be crying right now,' but she made it through. Henry swore a lot at the unwieldy Warbler, and I swore at a

particularly heavy bag full of wet climbing gear. But, back to the car by lunchtime, we were all pretty chuffed.

Notes for next time. 3-day trip in a weekend is pleasant and leisurely, better than an epic single day IMO. Next time a better camp would be at the base of 17 m climb, up above the 3 m climb between the 30 m pitch and the Pit. Probably sleeps four comfortably on cobblestones, maybe a bit drippy. Lots more climbing to be done down there, including above the 17 m. Bring some legit bolts (not rivets) for free climbing. Bring safety glasses for the mud. There are other climbing leads apparently from above the 30 m pitch, and at the upstream end of Ramraid Streamway, and from the end of the balcony beyond The Pit.

IB-171 Rocket Rods Pot

26 April 2026

Janine McKinnon

Party: Alan Jackson, Ben Jackson, Becca Lunnon, Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

Internal new hardware was integrating very well, as far as I could tell. So it was time to give it a try on a pitch, and some crawling/scrambling manoeuvres. To that end, a pleasant day to the top chamber of this cave was selected.

I had advertised this as a beginner-friendly trip, but none surfaced (Becca is new to caving but can certainly handle more than a trip like this). Not to worry, I gathered an excellent team for the day.

We left the car park around 10:15 am. The turn off from the Exit track is well marked and easy to find

when you know which one it is. The marking of the route from there was much less well defined than on our previous visit. There have been a lot of tape falls. Luckily we know the route well. The track was very dry and heavily churned up by the ubiquitous lyrebirds.

Alan rigged the entrance pitch, with Becca taking a keen interest.

We all dropped down, and all but Ric wandered off to check out the decorations in various nooks and crannies of the rockfall chamber. It is a highly decorated cave for southern Tasmania, a point I am reminded of when I visit every few years or so. No-one had shown any interest in bringing gear to go further down the mud-fest pitches continuing below this chamber.

I wasn't timing but I think we were underground for about an hour and a half, maybe two.



Ben, posing in Rocket Rods Pot. Image: Alan Jackson



Becca in Rocket Rods Pot. Image: Alan Jackson

Other Exciting Stuff

Desktop Caving: Junee-Florentine Data Updates

Stephen Fordyce

I've been enjoying the pleasures of desktop caving, including some intensive (and ongoing) JF (Junee-Florentine) data crunching. Here are some pearls of wisdom.

JF Overall Compass Project

This hadn't been updated in a couple of years. After various updates, connections and shifts of surveys it got a birthday. Most useful for comparing nearby caves, and for general wonderment. Note there are still surveys based on old co-ordinates that need to be shifted, but none relevant to current projects or speculations below.

The project is also used to generate a .csv file to display name and altitude (and other info) for all survey stations in QGIS. It lives in the JF QGIS project (fresh copy in the archive 2026-04-28) at Junee-Florentine QGIS\JF Overall Compass Project. These are some of the observations that came from that.

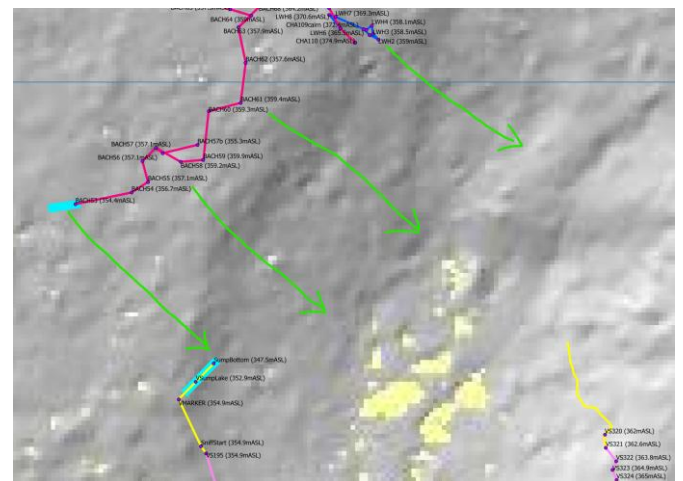
For the latest general wonderment, open file "JF_Overall_v6.1.plt" in Compass.

Voltera shifted 17 m closer to Niggly (increased connection possibility):

With an updated start point derived from LiDAR data, the Voltera survey shifted quite a bit towards Niggly. It's now 49 m closest distance, but shifting the passage so that the traced sumps align (green arrows), it's much closer.

With the Mud Bath dig and the Voltera Sump written off, and the likelihood of the Myopia Sump being dived

or aid climbs in Myopia equally low, I think this tantalising connection is now in the realm of the aid climber. Actually, I think that with enough effort, the chances are pretty decent with the angled bedding plane and cave development in this area, utilizing a new in-cave form of 'Snakes and Ladders'. Or to put it another way: the way down is up. I'll leave that to the climbers to explain (and/or make sure it's explained properly in the project wrap up).

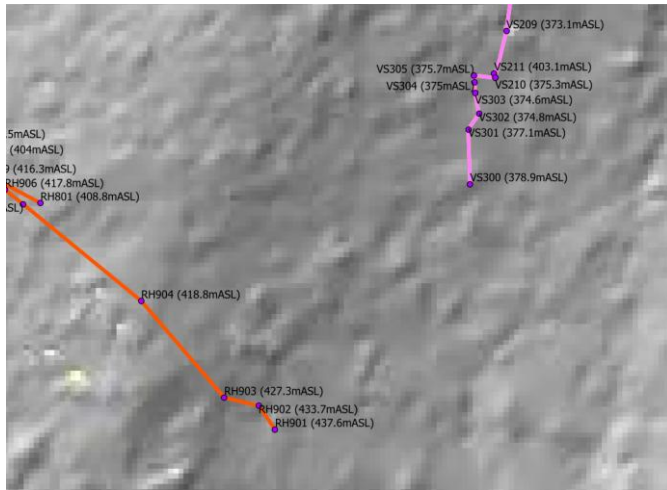


Niggly/Myopia in dark pink, Voltera in pink/yellow, sumps light blue.

Voltera also shifted 17 m closer to Sesame/Ring Hole (connection possibility):

The caves are converging very nicely with only 60 m horizontal distance and not much vertical difference. They both end in avens or climbs though, a fair way from home – presumably both formed by the Ram Raid water but at different times. See the previous *Spiel* for my report on the mystery of the Ram Raid/Voltera waterfall source. On further reflection, JF-787 Turbojelly Swallet is my best guess, as it is on a line

nicely parallel with the development at high and base level in Voltera.



Sesame/Ring Hole in orange, Voltera/Ram Raid in pink

Sesame Shifted a bit:

Due to the Niggly connection, and also making it match updated entrance locations derived from LiDAR data. I also reverse-engineered survey data from the map to include the JF-211 (vertical entrance) in the plot. It does not join where it might be expected at station SES26a.

Hairygoat Hole is heading for Splash Pot, a connection would likely bypass Close To The Bone

See previous *Spiel* for detailed maps/explanation. Could join at various levels.

Khazad Dum (KD) and Splash Pot are begging to be connected

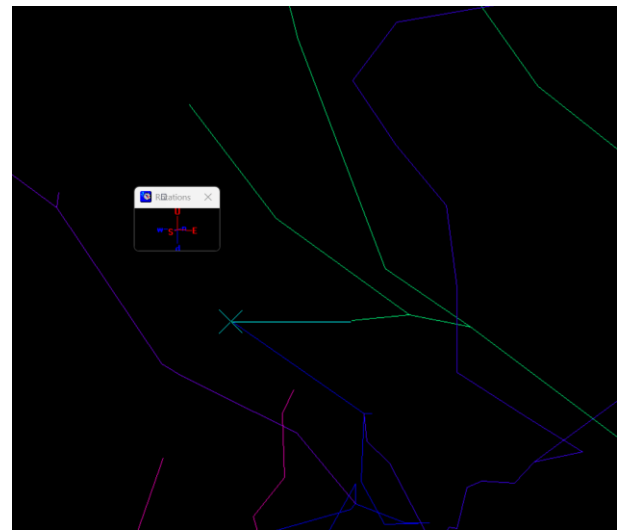
They are so intertwined that you have to colour-by-survey and do some careful 3D orbiting to tell which is which. Some close points (JF010_SP269 and 00KD246) are only 5 m apart in the horizontal and 0.5 m in the vertical, which is well within survey error.

They are actually overlapping by 8 m in the vertical (ala Negative Dig), and under 10 m in the horizontal. Given the vertical linearity was confirmed by dye tracing, all that remains is to fill the hole up 8 m to make the gap zero and thus connect it.

Growling Swallet/Niggly/Sesame depth calculation

This is on hold pending depth sensor data over this winter. Previous results have shown that with a decent flood, it's uniform across the whole mastercave (!!), and we already have a height difference between the Pool of Promise and the end of Mother of God within about 0.5 m using this method. There are survey loops with excellent consistency from the surface to Pool of Promise. So, all that's left is to get a depth measurement between the end of Mother of God and the Most Non-Triumphant Sump at the deepest point. This requires only a moderate flood at a level which

happens most years, in fact it probably happened on the April weekend that Henry wisely called off his planned Niggly trip.



Khazad Dum and Splash Pot, coloured by survey and showing the measurement (light blue with X) between stations JF010_SP269 and 00KD246

JF Dye Tracing Project

A giant collection of detector data spanning years of effort has been hanging over my head for a long time. It desperately needed organising, another pass at analysing, and some reporting. Somehow the appetite (guilt?) for that sort of hardcore desktop caving came at a time when I had an opportunity to act on it. The entrée is finished and being digested.

The data is now organised, accessible and all the device placements (hundreds) and dye releases plot nicely on QGIS, matching the updated survey stations. Some of the spreadsheet tools are updated with macros and other cool things. 40GB of duplicates and inefficient grapher spreadsheets are consigned to my personal archive.

When I get hungry again, the main course will be re-checking and linking dye releases to peaks on detectors. There is also water level and air pressure analysis to consider.

JF QGIS Project

All of the above stuff is reflected in the JF QGIS project (a fresh copy in the archive), which has had a few other updates including:

- A choice of contour lines generated from LiDAR (2 m, 5 m, 10 m, 25 m)
- A bit more work on reconciling historical surface surveys to locate caves without good GPS fixes
- Cave survey overlays organised a bit better (project cave folders made easier to access)
- A new layer with sinkholes/low points highlighted, generated from LiDAR

STC Approved Trip Leaders (May 2026)				
Horizontal	Caves that require no gear.			
Ladders	Caves that require no more than handlines or short (belayed) ladder sections (<10M).			
Basic SRT	Caves requiring ropes using pre-placed bolts and/or established (straightforward) rigging guides.			
Advanced SRT	Exploration rigging – placing bolts and selecting natural anchors as a component of exploration.			
Name	Horizontal	Ladders	Basic SRT	Advanced SRT
Alan Jackson	Y	Y	Y	Y
Alex Motyka	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ciara Smart	Y	Y	Y	Y
David Rueda Roca	Y	Y	Y	Y
Deb Hunter	Y	Y	Y	N
Henry Garratt	Y	Y	Y	Y
Janine McKinnon	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jemma Herbert	Y	Y	Y	Y
Karina Anders	Y	Y	Y	Y
Michael Glazer	Y	Y	N	N
Petr Smejkal	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ric Tunney	Y	Y	Y	Y
Stefan Eberhard	Y	Y	Y	Y
Stephen Fordyce	Y	Y	Y	Y

Becoming an STC Trip Leader

Janine McKinnon

For a caving trip to be an official STC trip it must be led by a recognised STC Trip Leader, qualified for the level of caving being undertaken.

The Trip Leader is ultimately responsible for the safe and successful execution of a trip. This is quite a difference to being just a participant on that same trip. If you want to be a Trip Leader you need to be aware of this - sometimes things just seem to happen effortlessly if the trip is being well-led, and you may not notice all those little extras your Trip Leader is doing during the trip and the knowledge behind it all.

On some trips, all members have a high level of caving skills and know the caving being undertaken. They know what to do for a trip to be safe and successful. This significantly reduces the pressure on the Trip Leader. Often no one really 'leads' the trip - it is all done by co-operation. However, Trip Leader status for a given caving level assumes that they are leading a trip of relative beginners. This is often the situation. The Trip Leader needs to be very skilful.

This document is intended to be a basic guide for club members wishing to become Trip Leaders, and what they need to know to be considered for Trip Leader status.

The ASF Cave Leadership guidelines are a much more comprehensive document and should be read to gain a full understanding of what being a Trip Leader entails and requires.

<https://caves.org.au/administration/codes-and-standards/>

This is the rule in STC for appointing Trip Leaders:

“9. Trip Leaders

9.1 The Executive shall maintain a list of Trip Leaders who are eligible to lead caving trips.

9.2 A person may be included on this list only if all of the following conditions are met:

- (a) The person is a financial member of the Organisation.
- (b) The person has been a financial member of the Organisation, or of another organisation with similar objectives, for at least 12 months.
- (c) The person has taken part in at least twelve caving trips.
- (d) The Executive considers the person to have sufficient experience, to be sufficiently responsible and to be sufficiently capable to be entrusted with the safety of others.

9.3 Sub-categories of trip leaders may be created, such as horizontal caves only and vertical caves

9.4 Trip Leaders shall observe the requirements of Land Management Authorities.

9.5 The Executive may remove a Trip Leader from the list, or change the category of a Trip Leader, in cases where

- (a) the Trip Leader has not actively participated in a recognized club trip within the past 3 years, or
- (b) the Executive considers the Trip Leader no longer has the skills to be in a particular category, or
- (c) the Executive considers the Trip Leader no longer meets the conditions listed in Section 9.2”

This looks very formal. Also, it doesn’t really specify what and how. It does give the club Executive broad authority. This is what the Executive is looking at:

1. The basic personal and inter-personal skills any leader needs (as outlined in the ASF Guidelines) are considered by the STC Executive when a member applies for Trip Leader status at any level. This means taking care of people (mental and physical), and having some idea of how to plan, organise and make sensible decisions as the trip happens.
2. The STC rules require a minimum of 12 caving trips with the club. These can be horizontal or vertical. This is a test of experience.
3. Knowledge of the general risks associated with caving, particularly in Southern Tasmania. Some of these to be particularly aware of are flooding, rockfall, hypothermia, exhaustion, getting lost on the surface. These risks can be learnt during the required 12 trips with the club. Ask questions of your Trip Leader. Get them to explain why they are doing certain things (Why are we carrying this rope?) and why they are making certain decisions (Why are we turning back now?).
4. You need to know where at least some caves are, how to get to them and what you expect to find in them. You can’t run a trip if you have no idea where to go. This knowledge does not need to be extensive as you can build on it over time whilst leading trips. Being able to read a cave map is very useful.
5. Even horizontal trips may include small climbs. On a beginner trip (or a trip where members have poor climbing skills) the Trip Leader needs to be prepared to belay a party member on any climb where they want a safety rope. The Trip Leader needs to know how to belay someone, and what gear they need to carry (harness, sufficient length of rope, gloves, belay device). Tying a Munter Hitch is required knowledge.
6. The Trip Leader needs to get the people together, get them to the cave, take them through the cave

and get them home. The Trip Leader should rehearse the trip in their mind, think about what can go wrong and plan for this.

7. Go on lots of trips. When you think you are ready, talk to a Trip Leader. The Trip Leader may want you to run a trip with a Trip Leader present. Ask the Trip Leader to ask the Committee. In almost all cases the Committee will follow the recommendation of the Trip Leader.
8. If aiming for **Vertical Trip Leader** status:
 - You need to be a competent SRT caver. You need to understand the operation of the personal gear sufficiently to help vertical beginners if they are having trouble.
 - You need to be able to read rigging notes and cave maps.
 - You need to understand the basic physics and rules of safe rigging - angles of Y hangs; checking for rope damage; rope calls; getting on and off rope safely. This should be mentored on the trips you do before becoming a Trip Leader. STC does have a one-evening “course” that can explain these technical details. Ask, and you may receive.
 - You need to know how to tie and use, at least: Figure 8, Figure 8 on the Bight, Tape Knot, Alpine Butterfly, Munter Hitch. Also useful (but not obligatory) are Fusion Knot (replaces Figure 8), Fishermans, Double Fishermans, Clove Hitch, various Bowlines and more.
 - You need to have done some mentored trips with a vertical Trip Leader (where you do the rigging – under supervision) for them to be prepared to recommend you to the Executive. These trips should involve a variety of types of rigging, and with more than one Trip Leader. They are not going to write up a report! Just ask them if they think you are ready, or to tell you when they think this.
9. The Trip Leaders who took you caving want you to become a good caver who is a Trip Leader. The number of trips needed to be capable of running a trip – particularly a vertical trip – varies enormously between individuals. Some only take a handful of trips, others a few years. There is no set time.

