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Front Cover: *Alan Jackson modelling the correct kit to wear by cavers when surface surveying*

Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

Back Cover: *A cave bureaucrat's wet dream*

Photo: Chris McMonagle

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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Issue No. 426, May-June 2018

CONTENTS

Regular bits

Editorial	Janine McKinnon	3
Stuff 'n Stuff	Janine McKinnon	3

Trip Reports

MC-75 Mersey Hill Cave	Alan Jackson	4
H-32 Discordance (1)	Gabriel Kinzler	5
H-32 Discordance (2)	Gabriel Kinzler	5
JF-233 Tassy Pot	Gabriel Kinzler	6
JF-233 Tassy Pot	Alan Jackson	7
JF-341	Dan Mitchell & David Rueda-Roca	7
Surface Surveying near JF-365	Alan Jackson	11

Other Exciting Stuff

From the archive	Janine McKinnon	13
Cave Survey maps	Alan Jackson	15
Assorted photos		17

Fun and diversions

Club history	Stefan Eberhard	18
Cave entrance identification quiz		18
Crossword puzzle		19

The Last Page 20

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Editorial

Lots of interesting, and fun, stuff in this issue, as usual.

You will note two versions of the Tassy Pot trip report. Alan (Jackson) had instructed that his was only a back up in case of failure to launch occurred with one from Gabriel (Kinzler). I thought, however, the two versions made for an interesting comparison: the same experience perceived differently depending where the observers were along the arc of their caving life. I'm sure there is a profound observation on life in general in there somewhere.

Stuff 'n Stuff

- This is BIG news in the world of cave diving, and I am a cave diver, so worth reporting here I think. It shows that perseverance (sometimes) really pays. By FKD (Frog Kick Diver): "For 10 months in 2017 a team of four cave explorers relentlessly searched for the connection between Sac Actun and Dos Ojos cave systems in the Mexican Yucatan, a connection that explorers have been searching for for 30 years, and Robbie Schmittner, the team leader, has been chasing for 14 years. In March 2017, their discovery of a new cave system ideally situated between 3 of the 4 largest cave systems in the world brought the opportunity of the "Holy Grail of Connections" within reach. The conditions, heat, remoteness and terrain above and below the surface made the exploration extremely difficult, day after day after day. Nothing came easy, but rarely is exploration easy. This story follows the team through those 10 months in 2017, exploring the new MOAC cave system and pushing it toward the connection, before the cave suddenly screeched to halt, but never giving up until they achieved their goal of connecting the two systems, creating the longest underwater cave system in the world". https://vimeo.com/257990179
- The new Karst officer for Mole Creek, Chris McMonagle, has already started with gusto, on many fronts, and I will let Chris give the details on four of these:
  - Diamond Cave is now locked, after many years of unrestricted access. Although it is not technically a 'restricted access' cave, anyone requiring access will need to organise a key beforehand – either through myself (Chris McMonagle) in the first instance, or the Great Western Tiers Field Centre in my absence.
  - Croesus Cave gate has been replaced! Almost 3 days of grinding, drilling, dragging, bashing, breaking, welding - and a little bit of swearing now and then. I for one am a bit exhausted, after spending an extended period immersed in that lovely warm water, first locating and then withdrawing all the old gate infrastructure from its icy wet tomb of the past 60 years. Should have bought a thicker wetsuit … All in all a great job by the contractor and all Parks staff involved.

A somewhat sad sight for those of us who have been around a while. Photo: Chris McMonagle

And in the shiny new gate goes. Photo: Chris McMonagle

  - The Lynds gate has been replaced. It was a logistically challenging project, made more difficult due to the lack of pedestrian access when compared to the Croesus gate replacement. The installation component of the project took two full days with four staff members present each day, a small aluminium dinghy for site access and required some good balancing skills whist transporting both the heavy and awkward-shaped gate and the VERY heavy 6 kVA welding generator to the cave entrance. The process went very smoothly - there were no incidents and everyone managed to stay dry! There were a few moments it could have gone either way though …
  - Our next challenge will be the Kubla lower entrance gate, however this will need to wait until relevant staff undertake accredited SRT training, which I am also close to finalising. And by the sounds of it, the logistical challenge for Kubla will make the Lynds and Croesus gates seem like a walk in the park. I'll keep you all posted as no doubt we will be enlisting volunteers!
- Don't forget the upcoming ASF conference: https://asfconference2019.com/

Trip Reports

MC-75 Mersey Hill Cave –

The Saga Continues

3 March 2018

Alan Jackson

Party: Cath Hemley, Alan Jackson, Janice March, David Wools-Cobb

In late 2009 I was talked into starting something I shouldn't have by Stephen Blanden and David Wools-Cobb *(SS 375)*. I don't think any of us, even the locals who mostly knew the cave, appreciated how long this cave is. We had a pleasant day in mostly easy cave and racked up 450 m of survey data. It would be just over three years before we regained the impetus (following Stephen's untimely death) and we decided we'd have a crack at finishing it off with a big group effort on the Australia Day long weekend of 2013 *(SS 394)*. Three survey teams on the Saturday and Sunday targeted various bits and despite a combined survey tally of 1136 m we didn't manage to knock off all the known side passages or extend very far beyond the pitch in the central section of the cave. David got phase three of the exercise off the ground after another hiatus (this one five years) and we headed in confident of getting to the end of the main passage (but probably leaving some side passages to clean up). We put in a good effort but fell short of anything like finishing.

Albert Goede had supplied me with his original 1957 map and some 140 m of other data from 1985 of Jeff Butt's. Jeff's side passage apparently headed off somewhere near the top of the climb up through talus blocks before the pitch back down to the streamway. I located this while the others came up the climb and added it to the list of things to do. No survey stations were obviously marked but hopefully we can find something early on to save having to completely resurvey this. About 25 m before the pitch (near station MH172) I also spotted a narrow vadose rift heading to the south which I checked quickly and confirmed it was worthy of surveying some time.

Down the pitch we followed the 2013 team's flagged stations to the scrappy climb down to stream level. At station A17 was a side passage noted but not surveyed in 2013. The notes said 'goes about 30 m' so we decided to tick it off. Almost 100 m of steeply ascending passage later we were stopped by unscaleable walls with avens heading up around 40 m above us and large lumps of basalt hanging about. Interesting.

Back in the main stream again, we started trying to locate the final 2013 station we needed to start from. The 2016 floods had caused a few problems here and we ended having to redo about ten legs as stations and markers had washed away and I'd failed to pack Jane's original survey notes like I'd planned. The passage was mostly narrow and vadose (about 3-6 m in height) and meandered all over the place; very few pretties.

A minor inlet stream and associated side passage was put on the 'later' list as we were now determined to get to an end. Several hundred metres later the cave changed to multi-level, widely meandering passage with historic oxbows and the like. The surveying pace slowed considerably as I suddenly had lots more detail to capture. After a dozen or so legs in this stuff the lateness of the day caught up with me and my brain was fried. We terminated the survey and had a quick recce up the passage to see if an end was in sight. A hundred metres later the cave was certainly looking less likely to continue (many fallen blocks and restrictions to negotiate) but no end was found and a side passage was thrown in for good measure. Beaten, we headed for the exits.

I charged ahead with the book and DistoX with the intention of gathering some data in the side passages above the pitch while the others caught up but I overshot the climb up point to the chamber with the pitch and continued down the streamway to the choke. It clearly needed surveying so I changed my plan. A few legs back I could see up into a large chamber which I suspected was the bottom of the pitch. I climbed up and confirmed that to be the case. The others arrived at this point, but had also overshot the climb and were down below me. I was now too muddy to go back down the way I came up (it traverses some lovely white flowstone) so I returned to them via the usual route then the ladies made for the pitch while Dave and I surveyed back up the streamway to the climb and tied in the survey.

While waiting for Cath and Dave to ascend and derig the pitch, Janice and I started the survey in the narrow vadose rift side passage near station MH172. We got about 7 legs in before I hit something I couldn't walk on with filthy feet. We found a way to go under it but the others were finished so we headed for home. We finally emerged about 7 pm and raced up the hill to phone in an order for some pizzas from the pub before the kitchen closed at 8 pm.

All up we gathered another 780 m (including about 40 m of resurvey) in 9 hours underground. That's a total of 2366 m of survey data for the cave now (so about 2300 once you cut out redundant shots). I won't be surprised if it exceeds 3 km by the time we finish (if we ever do). Better book it in for 2022.

On the Sunday (4th) we had a look in a new find in the Baldocks/Sassafrass/Hangover/Flyover area (MC477 I think we tagged it). There was a tight pitch head to negotiate which had stopped Dave and Cath the day they'd found it. Janice and I (designated whippets) got through to discover a deep static sump at about -20 m. We put it on the divers' list and called it a day. A great weekend in all.

H-32 Discordance

11 February 2018

Gabriel Kinzler (with notes by Chris Sharples)

Party: Gabriel Kinzler, Chris Sharples

The inception of the discovery of this new cave traces back to the club's Christmas BBQ last December, where Chris Sharples and Serena Benjamin openly mocked me boasting my bush-bashing skills and resilience. According to them, having not yet experienced the *real* Tasmanian bush, I didn't know what I was talking about in the slightest. Being the gentleman that he is, Chris vowed to take me on an authentic scrub-bashing trek one of these days. This materialised in early February, when we headed off to the Creekton Valley, officially to look for dolomite outcrops, to cover a few key areas Chris hadn't yet explored around the rivulet as part of a mapping project of his, and to tag the entrance of H-31 Two Gum Entrance (see *Speleo Spiel* 405).

The chosen itinerary for this outing took us on a small portion of the Adamson Falls Track before veering off to the east to meet our first point of interest of the day: a subjacent doline, which Chris had already looked at with a few other cavers in the past. This very interesting feature is a sinkhole that developed in non-karstic rock, 90 metres vertically above the top of the dolomite, implying a collapse down into what should be a very large cave a long way below. I found that place magical and, never shy of enthusiasm, said I'd come back with a shovel one day to remove a few layers of mud flowing into what looked like a relatively encouraging water inlet, right below the large boulder occupying the central stage of the sinkhole.

Moving on, we narrowly avoided Bell Chamber, passing just north of it, and adjusted our bearings (really, Chris' GPS) on the aforementioned H-31. And this is when the day took a 90° turn. Venturing about sloping parts of the valley, we found our first siltstone outcrop of the day, which quickly led us into a rivulet exposing the great unconformity of Tasmania. And it is immediately below it that we discovered a dark patch of dirt which looked more and more like a cave entrance the closer we got to it. Adrenalin instantly started pumping. I was bolting and couldn't stop jumping. "It's a cave, Chris, it's a cave!" It didn't take long before we entered, devoid of any proper gear. Judging from the absence of tagging and from the various deposits on the floor, including a vast amount of moonmilk, he was instantly able to declare it a previously unvisited cave.

The entrance is covered in its centre by a large, round boulder, which actually makes it a double entrance with two passages left and right of it. The first part of the cave is a succession of generous chambers and corridors (up to 3 metres in width and height), on a slight downwards slope. A few metres in, a side squeeze quickly branches off to the left into the unknown and expands upwards over at least 5 metres. The volumes of the main passage feature corroded flowstone under pebble deposits as well as some stalactites and straws. Further down, the first big question mark quickly appeared: a 6 m deep solution rift in dolomite. We contemplated scrambling down it for a few minutes before reasoning that it would be a tad suicidal given our lack of gear. Across the rift, the cave seemed to continue through a small crawl on an incline, which we would check next time around.

Chris looking at the pristine new cave.

Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

We decided to retreat and come back to survey the many leads of this new cave another time. I was starry-eyed for the rest of the day as we carried on with our mission. We covered more ground in the valley, not finding anything else worthy of interest, and made a quick detour by Two Gum Entrance to tag it, after Chris showed me its sole virtue: within the cave is exposed the contact between the karstic Hastings Dolomite and non-karstic overlying sediments, one of only two or three good exposures of that boundary in the whole valley.

H-32 Discordance

9 March 2018

Gabriel Kinzler (with notes by Chris Sharples)

Party: Rolan Eberhard, Gabriel Kinzler, Chris Sharples

One month later and after many dreams of grandeur and a great deal of impatience over the only thing that could keep me away (my mother's cooking in Paris), we headed back, this time accompanied and assisted by Rolan. Fast-forward the bureaucracy and the renewed, suboptimal bush-bashing, we found ourselves back inside what was now aptly named "Discordance", the French translation of "unconformity". Rolan was quick to notice the presence of a very obvious draught, pointing at a cobweb on the side squeeze near the entrance. But our minds were leaning further down the main passage and so we gathered around the oh-so-promising vertical rift. I started drilling for the anchors and, minutes later, I was graciously allowed to do the honours of being the first to abseil. The rift seemed to narrow further down and I wasn't certain scrambling down without a longer rope was the wisest thing to do. So Chris and Rolan subsequently replaced me for a more sensible appraisal. Rolan slid down the muddy crawl which the rift turned into, but it pinched out in a few metres, and that seemed to be the final verdict. Weeks of hope turned into muddy nothingness.

Not entirely discouraged however, I reset my expectations onto the three remaining leads we had. I first

started crawling my way into what turned out to be the final chamber at that level, which actually contains interesting features, including some remnant corroded flowstone of which Rolan sampled a piece, a Permian pebble deposit under a trickle from the surface and a big rock rib, hiding a 1-metre thick sandy silt sediment infill behind it, flowing into an impenetrable seepage drain. Getting nowhere else there, I retraced my steps and focused on the last possible lead: the side squeeze near the entrance. Its top extension has nothing to it, but the squeeze itself, apart from being a trogsuit shredder with its sharp silica boxwork, keeps going and dives into what sounded like a 6 or 7 metres deep shaft judging from a healthy rock throw. Future will tell. In the meantime, Discordance received its "H-32" tag about one metre and a half above the entrance.

Gabriel showing that a really tall person placed the tag

Photo: Chris Sharples

JF-223 Tassy Pot

12 March 2018

Gabriel Kinzler

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Anna Jackson, Gabriel Kinzler.

This practice trip was initially going to assemble up to six cavers in the party, which would have been painful in several regards. In the end, a couple of them dropped out unexpectedly, including Chris Sharples at the last minute, whose absence would turn out to be a blessing in disguise for me, as Alan was concocting a devilish plan that would see me become the sole rigger that day. On the way to the Florentine, and after lengthily discussing the latest political drama occurring in the southern caving sphere, he surprised me by declaring I would be put to the test. My begging for Serena's assistance didn't yield anything but the promise of "moral support", in her own words.

So there I sat, in the back of the car, contemplating my biggest challenge yet, by having visions of impending embarrassment and disgrace. Fortunately, I had visited Tassy Pot nine months earlier (see *Speleo Spiel* 421) with Ben Armstrong and Pat Eberhard. Having watched the pair do the job like it's no big deal, I wasn't entirely clueless about the proceedings and what to expect, which eventually allowed me to gather my thoughts and start planning in my head. No rigging notes this time, only what I could remember and, of course, Alan not being *that* much of a sadist, a comprehensive refresher course as well as helpful tips, going through all the steps and motions before letting me go. It was a torrent of information overflow, but most of it did stick, and so I headed down, leaving what didn't up to my improvisational skills. The goal was to do things safely, purposefully slowly, and ironing out rookie mistakes.

The first pitch (42 m) goes like this: redirect from a tree, redirect from a wall, mid-descent rebelay, passing a bend knot on a slope, and finally reaching the top of the second pitch over a rift. In that sequence, I had already made two small mistakes. Firstly: I didn't attach the tape on the tree at the entrance in a way that it wouldn't slip down the trunk, which it did, making the rope rub against the soft soil over a few meters. Not critical, but far from ideal. Secondly: upon reaching and securing myself to the rebelay on top of the second pitch, I accidentally let go of the first rope, which now sat out of reach 50 centimetres away. It wasn't impossible to recover, as I simply would have had to get on the second rope first, but Alan spared me the effort as he abseiled before I could even start to work on a rescue plan. A blip I certainly won't reiterate in the future.

From there on, I would submit that the rest of the cave went brilliantly. I overshot the first, scrappy part of the third pitch (18 m) by free-climbing it, which if you're a fan of optimisation is a great economy of time and gear, but considering we also had to accommodate a junior caver in the person of Anna Jackson, it could be considered as a lack of appreciation of my comrades. The truth of the matter is that I climbed it without even noticing it was supposed to be rigged, or at the very least that it would have been wise to do so. Instead, I used the short rope that was meant for it as an approach line for pitch number four (71 m), which went rather well with its two rebelays.

Mere seconds following the final touchdown, slowly realising what I had just achieved, I celebrated by fist-pumping the air and high-fiving boulders left and right while no one could see me, before swiftly returning to my poker face of a totally relaxed dude to greet the Jacksons a few minutes later. I learned a ton of things that day, even came up with a couple of nifty tricks and techniques of my own. The derig was stellar and Serena and I shared dirty jokes on the way out.

A part of caving, Tassie style. Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

JF-223 Tassy Pot

12 March 2018

Alan Jackson

Party: Serena Benjamin, Alan Jackson, Anna Jackson, Gabriel Kinzler

Just a jolly to get some more rope metres under Anna's belt. Serena came for cave therapy and to test some new kit. Gabriel came because you can't keep him away.

We got down and back up again. *(Trip reports don't get much shorter than this - although I think it might just be possible with a concentrated effort. That is NOT a challenge folks. Oh Look, I have just written an editorial comment as long as the trip report!-Ed)*

JF-341 Threefortyone

30 March & 1 April 2018

Easter caving trip

Dan Mitchell and David Rueda-Roca

Party: Liz McCutcheon, Dan Mitchell, David Rueda Roca.

Since January 2018, Sandy Varin, David Bardi, Dan Mitchell, Liz McCutcheon and David Rueda Roca mainly have been performing monthly caving trips to the unexplored sump that exists at JF-341. This report is about the trip that was done in March (*this is the only report I have received to date. If reports for previous trips come to me they will, of course, be published in subsequent* Spiels*, and you will all just have to read backwards in time-Ed)*

This trip report is a joint effort by David Rueda Roca and Dan Mitchell. David has covered the dry caving and Dan the cave diving. Liz McCutcheon has consolidated both parts together and corrected the Spanglish vocabulary.

Day: Friday, 30th of March
Time: 21:00 hour Zulu
Location: Giants Table cottage, bedroom

After enjoying a lovely day with Liz walking the Tarn Shelf track in Mt Field National Park and after having dinner based on a pizza at Mountain Café & Fuel (Friday night pizza) at Maydena, having a hot shower at the cottage at Giants Table and getting into bed with clean sheets I was slowly falling asleep, when suddenly my mobile phone started to vibrate desperately. I was sleepy, with only one eye open, but I grabbed the phone and answered with my Spanish accent "Hello!" (Imagine an "H" with a guttural sound). Dan was at the other end of the line and answered me immediately with "Hi! You know what happened, don´t you?" I started worrying, thinking that a tragedy had occurred, like a plane crash, a car accident or a discovery that someone known has a venereal disease. "No, what is going on?" I answered. Dan responded in a laconic voice, "We missed the flight!" Yes, the only thing that Sandy, David Bardi and Dan had to do was to take the flight from Melbourne to Hobart and to pick up the rental car (*I remember a trip a couple of years back where S&D missed the flight to join me caving-Ed)*. Food and booze had been already picked up by Liz and me and brought to Maydena that day. "Are you coming anyway on the next flight? How did it happen?" I asked. Well, it seems that Sandy, David B and Dan arrived on time at the airport and decided to have dinner before the security check, as the terminals for cheap flights do not offer much on the other side of the safety guys. As they had a lot of time, they enjoyed the dinner, chatting and making plans, until they realised they had been too optimistic with the timing. The Jetstar gate staff were literally latching the glass doors when they reached the gate. That sinking feeling ... three minutes late. David B and Sandy were the brains behind the trip, and missing the flights was to throw away a great deal of prep on their part, and of course meant they couldn't be involved in the trip itself. Great disappointment. Jetstar staff needed still fifteen additional minutes to unload their bags. To book a new ticket for the next day was prohibitively expensive. Therefore, only people with enough airline available points (Dr. Dan) were able to get a new ticket for the next morning at a reasonable price. Dan asked me, "If I go to Maydena, would you be able to guide me to the entrance of JF-341 and from there to the sump?" I was confident I could do so. All good! We knew that with a mid-morning plane arrival, that arrival to the cave entrance, and then to the sump, would be late. This was not going to be our normal routine, but it was the only way to make the trip happen. Dan was so keen for the trip and to tackle his first dive, he was booked for the next flight to Hobart, departing 6 am. The booking was locked in by just before 10 pm. He was in bed by 11:30 pm for a 4 am rise. Yikes!!!

So, here I was, converted into a trip leader by accident ... big responsibility … no dramas, I quickly fell asleep.

When I looked at the sky, I realised that it was not a normal day and that something was different to other trips ... We were fortunate to have sunshine … Then we drove to the car park of JF-341, using the key for the Junee Quarry Road gate that Liz and I had picked up on Friday morning from Geoff´s basement. We arrived at the JF-341 car park and got changed.

The route was well marked and I started recognising the different milestones of the track. The initial wide track uphill, the different fallen trees with cuts to be used as staircases, the ones that you need to walk and use as a bridge, the walk around fallen trees that cannot be climbed, the walks underneath the fallen trees that are too high to be jumped, the two junctions with triple pink tape at the tree, the crossing of the creek, the final climb down to the cave entrance, etc.

We got to the entrance of JF-341, changed into our caving suits and decided to go into the cave. It was ten past one in the afternoon. Ridiculous … how missing that flight changed things.

I am not going to describe in detail the rigging of this

cave. People who read my articles know that I am quite descriptive in the feelings and sensations that I have while I am caving, instead of numbering the rigging instructions or the rope lengths used in the cave. I consider that there are already excellent literature and magazine articles about it like old issues of the *Speleo Spiel*.

Anyway, we decided to progress as fast as possible through the well-known cave until we reached the first 10 metre deep pitch. The cave was rigged from previous trips, so it was easy to go ahead and to descend the first bit (few meters) of the pitch turning to the right. We passed the Y-belay and continue abseiling. The rest of the pitch is more a mixture between slope and pitch, until the bottom, with a redirection at the middle-upper section. The next section was a 30-40 metre slope with 7 metres of rigged pitch. This section has some water on the floor and when you sit down to climb down some of the rocks, you feel happy about using a PVC suit and not getting a wet bum. Then we reached the top of the 38 metre pitch (third one). This pitch is composed of an initial ramp that needs to be abseiled using a Y-belay anchor point at the top, a deviation to avoid some rubbing and at the end of the slope, and a rebelay, where the descent becomes fully vertical and aerial. The party of the previous trip had left the rope coiled at the rebelay to protect it from the falling water. I took it with me, put it into my caving pack and started the abseil to the bottom. It is a nice pitch and can be very, very wet depending on previous rains. In a previous year trip, Alan Jackson found a natural redirection that it is not used in this project, to avoid the water dropping of the waterfall.

At the bottom of the cave, we took off our SRT gear and harnesses and walked through the corridor to the crystal pool. This time, the crystal pool was empty of water and we could not refill our water bottle.

Crystal pool on prior trip, with water
Photo: David Rueda-Roca

We continued through the extensive horizontal part of this interesting cave. Soon, we started crawling into the way to the access point for the long narrow hanged corridor to the Enterprise Streamway and beyond.

The navigation through the horizontal section of the cave is not difficult, however the squeezes, crawls and climbs are a little bit demanding. One thing that I experienced again is that the more you visit a cave, the less energy you need to use to visit it the following times. The mind memorises the different climbs, jumps and how to do them in the most efficient way. The mind also recognises the path through the cave and relaxes saving energy too.

One of the few good GoPro pics from the first 2018 Trip (13/1/18)
Photo: David Rueda-Roca

On the previous (February 2018) trip, the party had rigged three “etriers” (vertical ladders made of tape) in certain locations, where we had previously rigged single tape to climb up or down but found that it could be difficult to pass when you are carrying a pack containing diving cylinders. They are placed at the first climb where a white tape is permanently located between the two first crawling sections of the first sector, at the entrance climb (very well decorated) of the long narrow corridor to the Enterprise Streamway, and at the climb down to the chamber after the long narrow passage.

After passing this section, we continued until the T-junction of the Enterprise Streamway. There we stopped to have something to eat. I do not even remember what time it was, but I am quite sure that it was an early dinner and not an afternoon tea.

At the T junction of the Enterprise Streamway. Great spot for lunch. Happy times!
Photo: David Rueda-Roca

We took the packs full of cave diving gear that were left here on previous trips and continued our way to the sump. Close to the sump, actually before the chamber of the lake, I got slightly confused and tried to go down to the river. Soon, I discovered that it was not the right way. Then, Dan recognised the chamber of the lake and we continued through it to the end of the chamber. On a

previous trip, the party had realised that the sump is just in the next chamber, but that descending the slope to the river causes a lot of the soil from the slope to fall into the water, making it murky and therefore dangerous for diving. So, we decided that only the diver was allowed to access to the next chamber while the dry cavers would have to wait until he comes back from the dive (between 40 minutes and 1 hour).

Dan set off for the dive and Liz and I settled in to wait. While we were waiting for Dan, I took Dan´s feather jacket (I had forgotten mine) and put it on. I put on my balaclava, my additional thermals and put my hands into Liz´s feather jacket pockets (good excuse when you have forgotten your gloves), trying to minimise the cold of the wait. Dan is now going to describe the dive.

Dive Report: D Mitchell

I had little idea as to what gear configuration to take that was going to be functional but very compact. We were expecting the dive to be short, and if it went any way forward, it was expected likely to access a snug chamber with a rock pile, with low expectations of advancing much further. In prep for the trip, my questions to David Bardi and Sandy were all about gear configuration, side mount harness suitability, and exposure protection. Small questions like "will I need fins?" and "how big can these fins reasonably be?" were answered without judgement by these guys and they were most supportive. Special "sawn-off" fins loaned to me easily fit into our cave packs and ticked that box. Setting up my trusty, minimalist Razor side mount harness with 3 L cylinders would work well. I was a little concerned about my 5 mm wetsuit agreed upon for the dive. I love my dry suit, and this was going to be the coldest water I have dived in (7 degrees Celsius), but I would be wet! The dive would be of short duration. My lean body conformation does not provide for thermal insulation. A test dive was undertaken at Ashburton Pool on a Sunday morning to do a weight check with the new gear configuration.

I was not so daunted by the visibility on this dive. For me, the concerns were in getting the gear organised, and the cold water. How long would I comfortably stay in the 7 degree water till my feet and fingers became useless? Team considerations, whether reasonable or not, did play on my mind. One of my major concerns was to not make the dive a waste of time for the sake of the team, and to make a good go of it. We had all lugged the gear in, and I was to use it whilst they waited. I wanted to make the trip worthwhile for all of us (*always a concern of the considerate sump diver-Ed)*.

On our initial JF 341 trip 9/2/18, Sandy Varin, David Bardi, David Rueda and I advanced the dive gear to a point a little way back in the cave not far from the major, open intersection. It pays not to miss a trip in a multi trip expedition, I now learn. I had not seen the approach to the sump, nor the gear stash, and was relying on the advice of others, which was very good. Being absentee on the previous trip, our group had advanced the dive gear was mostly where I'd thought it to be. Then all the kit was laid out. It's not the time you want to forget something critical!

For most of caves I have dived, gearing up is done in an area that is at worst, boulders and dirt. On this trip, after a few hours of dry passage toward the gear-up site, crawling through the dirt/clay and mud, my fingers were greasy with clay. This made basic tasks a challenge to do "cleanly." Fitting threaded regs to the cylinders, it was a challenge to clean clay from the threads. Surely I'm not being overly pedantic with this right? (*correct, that why plugs, and care, are needed - Ed).* The regs do need to function correctly! And simple things like cleaning a mask were not thought to be a challenge. Clay clad fingers are not useful to clean a clay smudged dive mask! As far as lighting, we are often afforded the luxury of having some natural light to gear up. In this dive, the black clay sapping the light made for an interesting gear up. However, the great forgiving was having a gearing up area on well trampled but dry-ish clay, with plenty of room to lay out the gear, assemble it and get changed and kitted up to dive.

From our stash of dive gear, one of the major challenges once geared up was the approach to the sump. The "change area" is approximately 7 m in elevation above the stream way leading to the sump. David Bardi prepared me well at the airport on Friday night just before we headed home after missing the flight. He outlined that one of the major challenges of the approach to the sump was the clay slope that I had to head down to get to the stream way. The slope is at least 45 degrees steep, and the ideal walking approach approximately 12 metres long. And all the silt created easily slides straight down towards the stream way that is upstream of the sump. This then gets channelled, as it dissolves, straight towards the sump I am yet to dive. A 2' length of 30 mm conduit was provided by David to use as a ground peg to secure a 15 m rope to lower myself down the heavy, loose and crumbly clay bank, and back up on exit. It was essential. Once the peg and rope were in place, it was time to get the wetsuit, harness and tanks on.

And finally, I headed out towards the sump. With the rope as support, some heavy stomping to create foot holds as I descended, I made my way to the stream. I was very top heavy with cylinders by my side as I headed down the slope. I managed to get 3/4 of the way down before finally slipping head first off the last 2-3 m of the slope, landing on the rocky banks of the stream, and sadly dumping more clay towards the stream than planned. More so, I now had clay on me that was to fall in the water as I navigated the stream. Downstream sumps are really unforgiving as far as silting, I now learn! Carefully walking beside the stream way (2 m wide), clambering over large boulders with muddy feet made me realise how heavy the 3L cylinders are when climbing! There are some large boulders to scramble over in my muddy dive booties, not so easy. All the while, every small bits of clay continue to enter the stream that was once crystal clear.

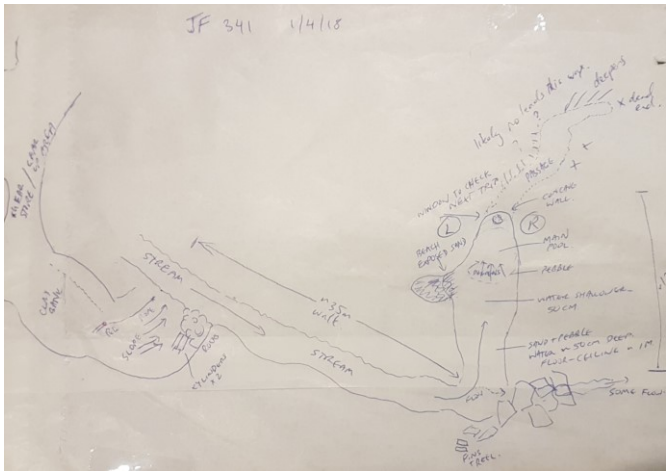
After heading approximately 30-35 m downstream, I could finally see the opening to a low entrance that lead to the sump off to the left, approximately 90 degrees from the direction of the stream way. About 75% of the stream water heads toward the sump.

Further downstream a small amount of water heads through a large number of boulders and the path on that way needs further exploration, but doesn't appear hopeful. The primary line was tied off on the right side of the stream. The stream crossing led to short walk/wade towards the sump in 50 cm deep water under a low dome ceiling about 5 m long, and 2-3 m wide. The ceiling then raised, the chamber widened to be maybe 8 m wide. I was soon walking on a firm pebbled floor with strong flow over it, with water still about 50 cm deep. The final "main pool" where the sump truly starts is about 3 m round, and the floor slopes steeply down to it. There is a concave wall straight ahead, with sheer walls that are well abraded by water-flow.

At the low water level I had on my dive, a 1 x 1 m hole is present in the wall you face as the sump is entered. This hole is about 2 m off the ground, and needs a look into it.

Sump entrance - domed ceiling end chamber heads down into underwater passage. This pic was taken in Feb 2018 when the water level was approximately 50cm higher than my dive on 30/3/18, hence the hole in the end wall is not visible (full with water).
Photo: Daniel Mitchell

The walls from the stream to the sump pool are virtually sheer, and the floor is hard packed pebbles, so no tie offs are possible and silt pegs are a waste of time. Once in the sump, there was approximately 20-30 cm visibility (*so, good then – Ed!)*, which allowed me to place 2 silt pegs to anchor the line to the floor. It seems there is just one passage to dive that is approximately 5-6 m long, no more than 1.5 m deep, with well carved, brittle and corroded limestone lining the sides and the ceiling. The water flow in that passage appeared to be very slow, as the silt was not moving. This I found confusing, given the significant water flow into the end sump pool. I spent approximately 20 minutes exploring this passage for small leads off to the left side and right. It seems that there are no leads on the right, but the left side does stay deeper, and seems a little more promising. Soon, my fingers and feet were numbing, and I had checked all that I could see useful to check. I would like a second opinion before confidently saying the sump goes nowhere. Apology for not recording video of all this, we shall make sure this is done on our next trip. I was more focussed on other things.



A very basic sketch of the gear stash, approach to the stream, and the turn off the main stream towards the sump.

At the end of the dive, thankfully the tanks this time are close to the sump. They are sitting near the sump entrance on the proximal side of the stream way. This should make the walk down the clay bank and downstream much easier. The rope placed at the top of the clay back was essential to get back up the slope with my numb feet! Good call on setting that up, David Bardi.

To end up let's just say that "Sump dive one" for me was somewhat rewarding. It was a great induction to sump trip gear prep, planning and team work. It has brought home that only a very small degree of advancement may come from each trip. There is so much for me to learn in caving and a heap to learn in sump diving. I have a limited understanding about water flow through sumps, and am looking forward to our next trip to hopefully learn a lot from my errors. I do hope we find a way on, but it seems unlikely through this sump. Now, David, to finish the report.

David Rueda-Roca continues:

As soon as Dan came back, we collected all the gear and picked up a yellow caving pack that we had promised to recover for Liz Rogers. Then we started the way back to the entrance of the cave.

Sooner than expected, we reached the crystal pool. There, we stopped to eat something and to collect and drink more water. I was deciding on being the last or the first at the pitches. Being the first would require me to fix anything wrong that could be left after the abseil on the way down. Being the last would permit the others to get less cold. I decided to be first and to wait for them at the top of the pitches. Soon, I reached the top of the 38 metre pitch and started prusiking the easy slope to the 7 metre one. There I stopped and waited for Dan, who was second and Liz, who was the last one. Dan and Liz prusiked the pitches in good order and condition.

Communication at pitches when somebody is on-rope and above or below is often a challenge, and a beautiful Spanish accent can make it a little more interesting. It must be recognised that apart from having an ugly face, I

usually put on a too serious expression when I concentrate during caving. Actually, Dan asked me if I was having fun, as it looked as if I was not … "Of course I am!" I answered.

The three of us reached the surface in the middle of the night. Actually, it was 2:30 am. We took our packs and backpacks and walked all the way back to the cars. It was 4 am when we arrived in Maydena and, after eating some remains of microwaved pizza from the day before, we went directly to bed.

Next day was an easy day, driving back to Hobart and enjoying the tourist Tasmania way of life that you can find in the leaflets, and not the dark, wet, cold and stress that all of us are used to enjoying on our trips. Dan took a plane back to Melbourne that evening. Liz and I left the gate key in the STC material shed and next day continued exploring Tasmania. After that both of us returned to our respective cities. Further trips to JF-341 to be planned.

Acknowledgments
We owe a great deal of gratitude to David Bardi and Sandy Varin for their inputs organising the project and in assisting Dan to get organised for his virgin sump dive. Also for their generosity and patience in holding off doing a dive themselves that they could conquer with relative ease.

We also want to thank Alan Jackson for showing us this cave, Stefan Eberhard for providing information and advice on how to find the sump, Liz Rogers and Lachlan Shore (January) and Ben Armstrong and James Barnes (February) for helping us move gear into the cave.

Surface Work around JF-365 Satans Lair

5 May 2018

Alan Jackson

Party: Alan Jackson, Gabriel Kinzler

Satans Lair (SL) had been left rigged the previous weekend at Gabriel's request so he could have a jolly. He had a crew lined up to join him but the weather forecast was a bit grim and concern it would be dangerously wet quashed the plan. I had little interest in SL but intended visiting the area regardless of the weather to sort out a tagging error from the previous weekend. Gabriel decided to join me in the hope conditions were dry enough to derig AND go surface bashing.

In the end the rain didn't really eventuate, with only ~2 mm at Maydena on the Friday and no rain on Saturday until late afternoon. We headed to SL first and assessed the water level. It was pretty low so we popped down, 'improving' the rigging on the way. We found the 'secret pitch' eventually and pulled up the gear, decided I agreed with Steve's assessment of the stream choke (no hope), then started out. Gabriel learnt some derig lessons on the way (mostly the hard way) and enjoyed the very wet second pitch a second time after dropping the spanner and a maillon. At 1230 we were back in the daylight with increasing winds but still no rain.

With so much time in the day left we decided we'd have a stab at relocating the two features Pax had located back in 2015 (almost three years to the day). No trip report was ever published but Pax had emailed me coordinates and descriptions. From SL we headed NE, more-or-less straight up the slope. It quickly became classic Cave Hill dogwood stick forest on skeletal soils over limestone – i.e. fucking horrible. At around the 650 m contour we found a tiny entrance which lead to a small alcove entirely in clay. It was clearly karst-related but not even something a wombat would be proud of, so we started to contour east to Pax's waypoint '008'. It was a minor streamsink right on the contact in a small but discrete gully. A bit of rotting timber was moved then the cave was explored down a ~1.5 m step, across a couple metres then down another 1.5 m step to a grotty choke. It seemed to be draughting but the wind was screaming on the surface, which was causing some difficulties in assessing draughts. Definitely a cave but at best a desperate dig for in about 30 years' time. We tagged it (JF675) on the left when facing uphill, just left of where the water runs down the small face above the cave. The tag is in mudstone, not limestone. We sketched, photographed, fiddled with GPS coords etc. Pax had called this cave Sparkelation in his 2015 email. He has since told me "*the sunlight sparkled of the water around the entrance, I took it as a good sign*".

Alan Jackson showing that a Scurion is useful even in daylight

Photo: Gabriel Kinzler

The next feature was further east, almost at JF429 (which was the limit of my exploration in Jackson (2008)). We got to the waypoint ('007') and while there was an obvious linear contact karst feature it took us a while to find anything we could regard as a cave. Eventually Gabriel found a small slot beside a young eucalypt (~300 mm diameter tree) and a much larger fallen log. It had stout tree roots growing down it to a floor about 3 m down. Pax's description was "*vertical shaft (approx 500mm dia) dropping about 4-5m to boulder floor. Signs of recent erosion/collapse to mud slop at entrance. No water flowing in.*" 500 mm seemed about right, 4-5 m seemed a bit generous and boulder floor was not entirely accurate (it was clay/mudstone); definitely no water

flowing in. Pax's photo kinda matched so we'll call it so. We threw a knotted rope down and Gabriel investigated. A crawl past the tree roots lead to a constricted way down beneath a few large mudstone boulders. We heaved the rocks out of the way and poked around but it didn't feel any good. We then more-or-less sealed that 'lead' with a larger boulder to gain access to a very low side pocket to the north. Nothing. There was limestone where we'd shifted the boulders but only mudstone at the entrance, and very shitty stuff at that. In the end we tagged the cave (JF674) about a metre off the floor at the bottom of the entrance climb. The mudstone was extremely soft and friable so we basically tagged it in the only spot the strata would hold a fastener in view of the surface. Pax had called this cave 'Golden Gun'. Pax has informed me that I correctly presumed it was in association with the 007 waypoint the GPS auto-generated (007 – James Bond – "Man with the Golden Gun").

We contoured back to the west but decided to head a little higher, more to edge into some open forest than anything else, and to our surprise came across a significant subjacent karst feature 40 m from JF674. It was quite roomy and inviting but never hit limestone (despite about five metres of depth). It was a ~3 m diameter circular pit, easily climbable on the eastern side, which then headed more-or-less horizontally to the south. At the base of the climb you had to duck under a thick curtain of manfern roots. The passage then lowered to a flat-out crawl with no draught. Easy digging would get you a few more metres but it didn't seem promising. Tagging it proved difficult as the walls made Golden Gun seem good quality. I eventually found a semi-solid face well into the cave, beyond the curtain, at the point where the roof steps down from stooping passage to crawl. It was tagged JF680. I called it Man Fur in the book, so I guess that's what it is (man fern … big pubic veil across passage … something wrong with my brain …).

About another 40 m away we stumbled across a large blind doline (~10 m across, ~5 m deep). No limestone or entrance was observed so we continued west, hugging the ~660 m contour line. Gabriel got momentarily excited at JF675 (he's a bit of a goldfish). A little later on he called out he had a small hole to which I replied 'is it the same one we found on the way up?' It was. It was starting to remind me of surface bashing with Ken Hosking. We were back into dogwood stick forest now and it was pretty ugly. We hit a minor gully and there was an obvious water sinking point sitting right on the contact. It was completely choked with logs and assorted crap but Gabriel got excited. He spied a drop down between bits of timber but I suggested we were here to do caving, not wooding. A large excavator might make it go.

At this spot the contact was on a very steep slope so we skipped up a few metres onto the flat above. Another low gradient gully (with a bit of a soak/dribble) was encountered. At the point where it hit the near-cliff (essentially the contact) there was no evidence of any water ever running down the cliff face, so it seemed there had to be a sink under the jumble of logs a couple of metres back from the edge. Gabriel took this as a challenge and starting pulling logs out. He then started mining off the side of a rotten log, insisting there was a hole below him. He tried to fit through but claimed an oversized arse, then insisted I would fit. I decided to humour him and to my surprise there kind of was a hole there. I slipped through quite easily (thus debunking Gabriel's recently made assertion that he and Serena are a similar size/build – I've never seen Serena not fit more easily through something that I could fit through). Past the log squeeze was another narrow point to a near vertical narrow rift. I slipped down and climbed down a good 8 m in real limestone to a small chamber with a gravelly choke and no draught. We tagged it JF681 in mudstone between the log squeeze and the rocky restriction. It's a difficult tag to see from the surface and will require partial entry of the cave to find again, but trust the GPS and ye shall prevail. Following the failure-to-fit of the fat French man I was reminded of Chris Chad's account of a day out between JF34 and JF99 with Nico, the last French man to grace our shores (Chad 2011). With a nod to the unparalleled wit of Chris, I named the cave French Surrender.

Time and daylight was slipping away by now so we gave up following the contour/contact and tried to straight line it to JF258 to sort out the real reason I'd come out to play. Gabriel had truly run up the white flag by this stage and had acquired the ability to appear 12 paces behind you after you'd taken only ten. Abusing him didn't seem to make him any faster so I mooched around like Madphil instead and slowed the pace a bit. We crossed a healthy stream (presumably SL water), then another smaller stream (presumably JF679 water) then finally arrived at the nice little waterfall which was the scene of the crime from the previous weekend. The feature matched Rolan's descriptions in both Eberhard (1994) and Eberhard (1995). Like Steve and co the weekend before, we couldn't find the 258 tag, but unlike Steve and co we didn't take the view that not being able to find the old tag means you assign a new number to the cave and tag it thus, so we ripped off the tag they'd installed and put it back into circulation. I'm deliberately not saying the number (even though it wouldn't be hard to work out) so as to avoid potential confusion for future prospectors in the area.

We smashed down the gully, past the freshly minted JF677, JF678 and JF679, stuffed our bags with the ropes at SL and enjoyed a slow slog back to the car with a waning frog.

Chad, C. 2011 Between Rift Cave and The Chairman. *Speleo Spiel* 383: 12-14

Eberhard 1994 *Inventory and Management of the Junee River Karst System, Tasmania*. A report to Forestry Tasmania (pp 122)

Eberhard, R. 1995 New Junee-Florentine Cave Numbers … *Speleo Spiel* 288: 5-6

Jackson, A. 2008 Sunshine Road – more surface bashing. *Speleo Spiel* 365: 4-6

Other Exciting Stuff

FROM THE ARCHIVE

This issue we visit caving back in the days of vast virgin caving potential. It may sound like a dream come true, but it came at a cost.

Reproduced below is a series of trip reports relating to the construction, and use, of a new track to the recently discovered Exit Cave. The first trips were undertaken by walking over the top of Marble Hill on a route that became known as The Kokoda Track. This was not considered the ideal acccess route, for obvious reasons. Hence the decision to undertake the trauma of cutting a new track.

Note 1: This is not the current route to Exit Cave. This one ran across the plain from the Catarmaran Road. It was flat all the way. It joins the current track only a couple of hundred metres from the cave.

Note 2: The reference to "suitable only for one way traffic" raises an interesting question. Is the expectation that parties will go home via an alternate route with a car shuffle (Kokoda Track?), or do they stay in the cave in perpetuity? My guess is option A. Hopefully one of the old boys from those days (calling Albert Goede..) will send me a "Letter to the Editor" to clarify this confusion.

Note 3: NS refers to New Series. Presumably there was an earlier form of Spiels *however our archive starts at the first issue of this new series.- Ed*

***Speleo Spiel* No. 3 (NS), June 1966**

Much of the club's activity has been concentrated on the construction of the new track to Exit Cave. On **Saturday May 28** a ground party led by Frank and Peter lit two fires to indicate the position of our track from the air while another party consisting of Albert, Therese and the two Mikes made an aerial reconnaissance.

While the trip was an undoubted success there are people who would not care to repeat the performance. The president and vice-president had a competition to see who could use the most paper bags, while Mike Hall took the bearing for the new track and then picked the highest tree around into which to drop a message for the ground party. It's still there 150 feet up in the air if anyone wants to read it.

The next weekend a party led by Brian Collin added another 550 yards to the track. A major engineering feat which included tunnelling through bauera.

On Sunday June 12, Albert and Brian with the assistance of Andrew Skinner and four unsuspecting boys from Taroona High added another 350 yards and reached a point only 150 yards from the button-grass plain. Track cutting stopped abruptly when Brian slashed at a vicious mass of bauera and found his leg in the middle of it.

The track is now 1,300 yards long and two more weekends of hard work should see us at Exit Cave. A suggested name for the track is the "Brooker Highway". It is straight (more or less) with a low gradient and a few roundabouts and is suitable only for one way traffic. For further information consult our "director of works" Brian Collin. Either Albert or Brian would appreciate rags suitable for marking the track preferably bright colours.

***Speleo Spiel* No. 4 (NS), July 1966**

Track cutting to Exit Cave, Sunday, July 3.

Allan Russell (a "former" friend of Brian Collin) and Albert Goede left Hobart at 6.30 a.m. arriving at Hastings at 8.45 a.m. in pouring rain. We were met by Bill Hodge who had taken rather drastic measures to stay out of the track cutting party. He had tripped and damaged his leg on Friday afternoon. Brian Collin, Andrew Skinner and Rodney Hodge had already left. Allan and Albert set out in pursuit encouraged by the fact that it had almost stopped raining. They did not catch up with Brian and party until 11.45 a.m. Brian had already reached our so called "buttongrass" plain - no doubt it was the tallest buttongrass in Tasmania - consisting mostly of 8-10 foot high tea tree with a generous sprinkling of lesser pests. Slow but steady progress was made cutting a track through the stuff. We were encouraged by the sight of the Exit Cave ridge up ahead. The first time we were able to cut without using a compass. Another 250 yards was added to the track making it nearly a mile long. Peter's sword proved itself a mighty weapon when cutting tea tree. Allan said that only a bunch of madmen could have cut a track where we did.

Pat Wessing has given us a large supply of rags for the next track cutting trip. Any volunteers?

***Speleo Spiel* No. 8 (NS), November 1966**

Exit Cave 15 & 16 October

Party – Brian Collin (leader), Bill Hodge, Rodney Hughes, Bill Peterson, Clive and Sally. **Sunday Only** - Albert Goede, Peter Brabon and Hank Meerding.

West Coasters – Ron Kent, Bill Surtees, Janet Goyne, Wendy Reid, Peter Reid.

Ex. Hobart 7.45 a.m., left cars 10.45 a.m. entered cave 4.00 p.m. The main purpose of the trip was to establish the practicability of using a base camp inside the cave as an aid to exploration in lieu of camping outside with its obvious disadvantages.

The camp site chosen was: approx. 1,000 feet (20 mins.) inside the cave on a large sand bank adjacent to and about 10 feet above the creek. The cavern at the camp site being approx. 70' high and 100' wide. After a shadow display and a game of naming the formations the majority retired to sleeping bags about 9 p.m. some glow-worms giving the effect of a starry night.

The party rose about 7 a.m. with difficulty, maybe due to the "cave" effect, or to inherent personal characteristics. After breakfast all visited the "colonade of columns" and then the west coasters retired and the weekend T.C.C.'s continued on to the known end of the cave (Sib's signature.) and on returning to the high level system met Albert, Peter and Hank. After lunch at the sand bank left cave at 4 p.m. and returned to Hobart via a welcome tea and coffee break at Roy's.

Conclusion: Camping inside the cave is practical but of doubtful benefit to exploration, possibly a smaller cavern would be better suited for a camp site.

Observation: The creek had risen some time in September to within 12"of covering the camp sand bank, i.e. about 9' above normal level.

On The Side: The west coasters were full of admiration and expressed great joy (in admirably phrased four letter words) at being given the opportunity to walk along the Brooker Highway; however they will no doubt express their full appreciation of the T.C.C. in the next West Coast Outdoor Club circular. Apart from their over exuberance about the track they proved to be a great bunch to cave with.

Exit Cave - 15-16 October (+ 14th & 17th).

(Special edition to convey the Truth, before the T.C.C. fabricate a dastardly pack of Lies!)

Five members of the W.C.O.C. have completed a trip that will go down into living History - Not for us the dry pages of history books - our trip will be a legend - told about the camp fires for ever - the names of the great shall be forever our companions; for compared with the trip to "Exit", Bourke and Wills went out on a Sunday School Picnic.

Lured on by T.C.C. propaganda (their circular claimed they had cut the track), we headed for Hobart on Friday night and billeted with Clive Morris - an evening that was spent in comfort and gave no hint of the sinister schemes that lay before us.

Saturday found us dragged into the land of the living at the ungodly hour of 6 a.m. By 11 a.m. we were finally awake and standing by the cars on the Catamaran Road, with some repulsively heavy looking packs beside us. Our leader Brian Collin (T.C.C) backed up by five other typical Caverneers, boasted that the record times for the track were 1 hour 50 mins. the shortest and three hours thirty mins. the longest. It was like a red flag to a bull - That record was going to topple - and a steely look came into Bill Surtees' eye, Wendy Reid slung her pack on as though it contained feathers (something that was not a fact as the shape of the kitchen sink could be clearly seen) and Peter Reid and Janet ? paired off up the road in fine style, while the leader cast a jaundiced eye on the Forestry track ahead and mentally composed letters to the Minister for Forests.

Half an hour and one mile later, some deranged individuals with warped and twisted sense of humour, pointed to a solid, unbroken, impenetrable, tangled mess of scrub, and said "That-a-way!" Bill's steely look turned to jelly, Wendy wished she had left the kitchen sink, Peter was visibly shaken, at this stage it was evident that no minister this side of the pearly gates had a show of helping, and Janet – where the ---- was Janet?!

Four hours and 1½ miles later, we emerged. Perhaps the less said the better. Wendy proved a saviour on the last bit by coming to the assistance of a great hulking Caverneer. Seems his pack was pulling him over backwards, and she graciously hitched her pack on in front of him and PRESTO - perfect balance. Unfortunately, no one else suffered from this unbalanced condition, for by this time I'd have given mine to my Grandmother to tote. Bill sat still while a snake wandered round him, but the snake wouldn't co-operate and bite. So he had to go on! And leeches! Cutting grass! Tea Tree! Bauera! Horizontal rotten logs! all added their subtle touch to that Saturday stroll.

The cave was inspiring, to those who were capable of being inspired, the glow-worms delightful and Sally's (T.C.C.) mushroom soup tea delicious. Bill Hodge (T.C.C.) took the absence of a certain curly haired W.C.O.C. member hard and settled for tea spiked with rum, just enough that it took a mug of cold water in his sleeping bag to wake him the next morning. The sunrise was fantastic as one trog lamp after another was lit.

The trip out was enough to make a strong man cry - (it must have been the onions they left behind. Ed.) - the heroism that was displayed. I was all for staying there to die in a certain amount of comfort, but my party was strong, determined and courageous as they crawled on their hands and knees to the bush. If it wasn't for a certain bottle Janet produced the leeches would have had the last of our blood - as it was, one bite and they fell off hic-coughing!

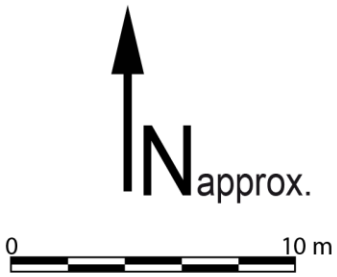
Our thanks goes out to T.C.C. for a grand weekend and we look forward to being their hosts on the Kelly Basin trip. Also, we are duly grateful to the army for the use of their Land Mines, Booby Traps and Poison Spikes on the forthcoming Kelly Basin trip; but it is feared they will prove second rate to that ++?!+&£+?!!@+?! track.

Anyone for Exit!!!

JF-674 Golden Gun

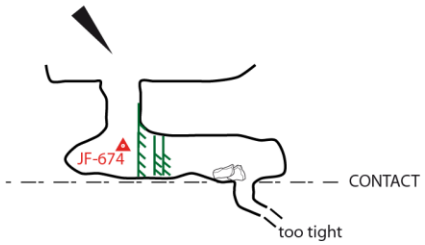
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF674.STC432
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 32
In-cave notes by Alan Jackson (5-05-2018)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (May 2018)



PLAN

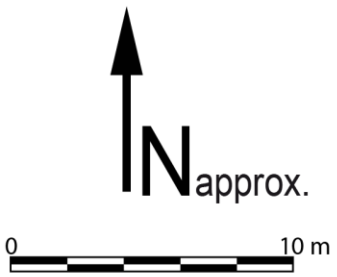
SECTION 320° - 140°



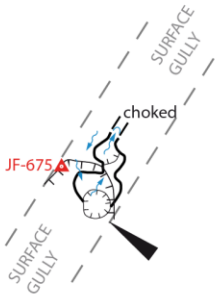
JF-675 Sparkelation

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

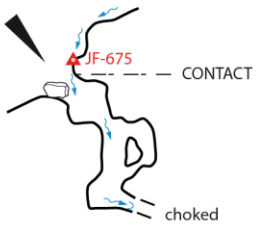
7JF675.STC433
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 22
In-cave notes by Alan Jackson (5-05-2018)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (May 2018)



PLAN



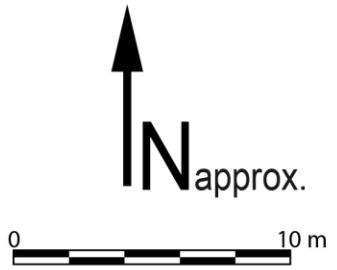
SECTION 210° - 30°



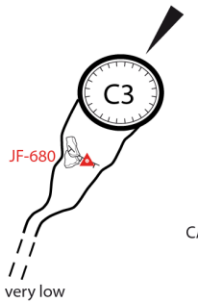
JF-680 Man Fur

Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

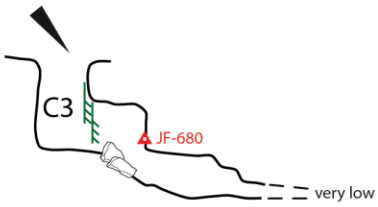
7JF680.STC434
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 22
In-cave notes by Alan Jackson (5-05-2018)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (May 2018)



PLAN



SECTION 20° - 200°

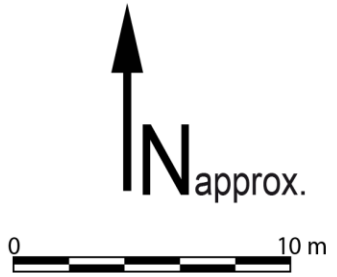


CAVE ENTIRELY IN MUDSTONE

JF-681 French Surrender

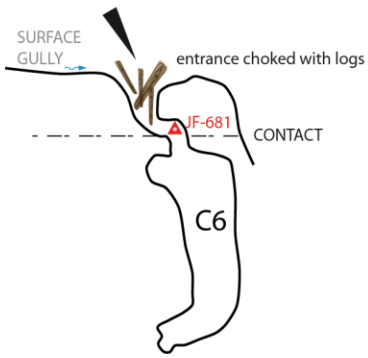
Junee-Florentine, Tasmania

7JF681.STC435
Southern Tasmanian Caverneers
ASF Grade 22
In-cave notes by Alan Jackson (5-05-2018)
Drawn by Alan Jackson (May 2018)



PLAN

SECTION 340° - 160°



Chris Sharples has recently had an unhappy lesson in why a basement is not a good place to have your office when the floods come.

Below are a couple of photos he took after the wild weather Hobart experienced in May.

The lengths caving addicts will go to to make work feel like their weekend obsession..

Photos : Chris Sharples

A few more photos of the installation of those new gates

Photos: Chris McMonagle

Above: The hydrophobes' remedy

(access to) Lynds Cave, Mole Creek

Top right: New Lynds Cave gate

Bottom right: New Croesus Cave gate

Fun and Diversions

FROZEN MOMENTS IN CLUB HISTORY

Stefan relates the background to this picture:

Proudly wearing my "new" side-mount rig, which was a cheap second-hand Tas Uni Dive Club buoyancy compensator, with pony tanks kindly donated by Frank Salt, and with pressure gauges strapped to each wrist, so one could find them and hopefully read, in near-zero visibility, how little air was left in the small pony tanks. This was British Cave Diving Group, style of the time. Of course it's impossible to read anything in zero visibility, which remains a problem for cave divers to this day. I had big hopes for Weerona Cave as it is the resurgence for a sizable stream with the nearest likely sink points some distance away and higher up. Also, the owners of the farm related the myth that it opened up into caverns measureless to man, etc. The sump was disappointing. A few metres in it became a scary narrow vertical slot and completely cloaked in very fine black silt, a legacy of the land clearing and farming. I decided to leave it for the next generation.

Send photos to jmckinnon@caverneer.net.au identifying the people, place and hopefully time (aeon at least). Include photo credit where possible. A brief description would be good too.

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

Stefan Eberhard in Weerona Cave, Gunns Plains.

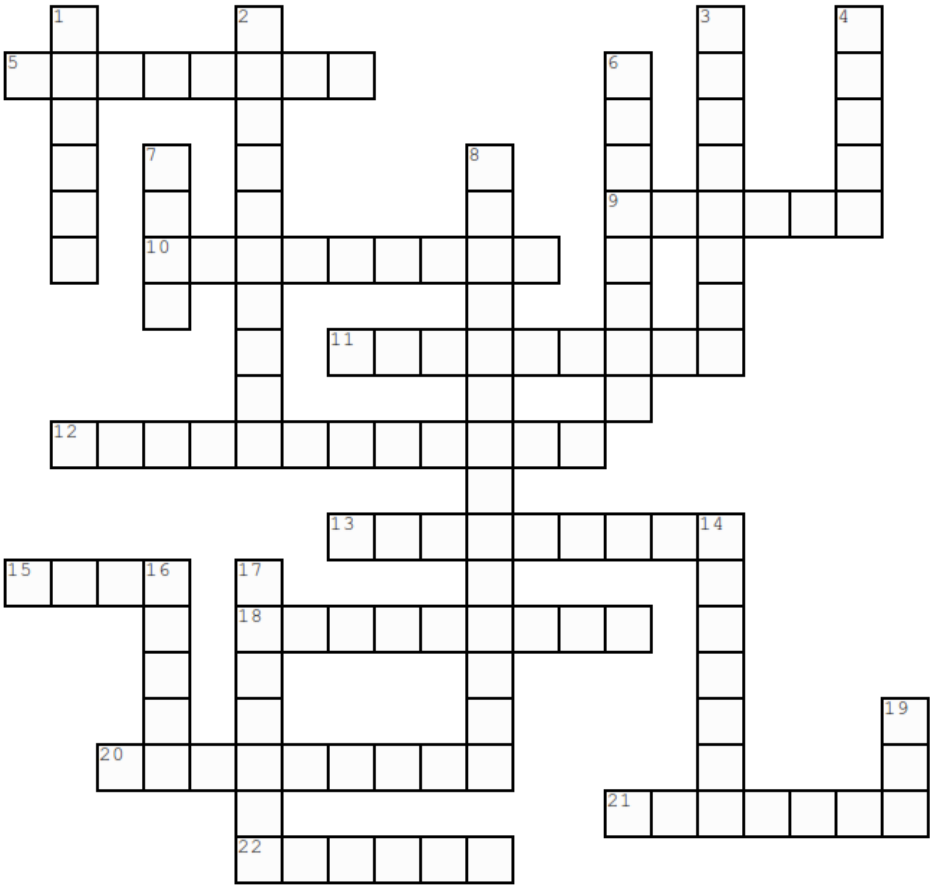
Circa 1994. Photo: Julie Styles

NAME THIS ENTRANCE

Here are a couple of cave entrances. Test how good your cave identification is. If you want to impress the rest of us send your answers to me (email address above) and you will get fame and glory in the next *Spiel.*

If you have any photos of entrances then I will happily publish them to test our collective knowledge, photo credit of course.

Caving kit



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Puzzle Generator

Across

5. No cave pack should be without this
9. Michael Jackson got it half right, two is better
10. fancy cavers shackle
11. It can be very dark without these
12. don't mistake them for a breakfast cereal
13. my cable guy tells me these can be very useful
15. you can go as well
18. it's hard to get up without these
20. American brand of rope
21. type of rope for cows tails
22. the rope every vertical caver loves

Down

1. you can't safely do '14' without this
2. standing is not an option
3. the epitome in cave footwear
4. for when naturals aren't apparent
6. outer wear
7. versatile descender
8. flexible, old school style of pitch navigation.
14. popular light
16. a name, a brand, an icon
17. useful for more than just coats
19. what plastic suits are made from

Here's another crossword to test your caving knowledge. It shouldn't prove too difficult.

Answers in the next issue.

The Last Page