

passages are genetically related, implying potential for discovery of linking sections. The furthest surveyed point in Living Fossils lies 40 m above Swallowing Gullet and about 150 m beyond it in an easterly direction.

Living Fossils increases the surveyed length of the Growling Swallet by 390 m. It is unclear what this means in terms of the overall length of the cave, given the state of disarray of the JF36 data in the STC archive. A map of the new section accompanies this article (see page 9), indicating the relationship Living Fossils, Coelacanth and Space Rat Alley at the eastern end of Servalane (thanks Alan). The map includes additional data collected by Stefan during a dive in Swallowing Gullet (see his article elsewhere in this issue). That dive

concludes this minor renaissance of exploratory effort in Growling Swallet.

References

- EBERHARD, R. 1994 *Inventory and Management of the Junee River Karst System, Tasmania*, report to Forestry Tasmania, Hobart.
- HUME, N. 1985a Diving downstream Black River. *Speleo Spiel* 210: 5-6.
- HUME, N. 1985b Survey/dive of “Coelacanth”. *Speleo Spiel* 210: 7-8.
- HUME, N. 1988 Growling Swallet in depth! *Speleo Spiel* 235: 3-5.

JF36 Growling Swallet – Diving Coelacanth Sump

Stefan Eberhard

15 March 2015

Party: Milos Dvorak, Stefan Eberhard, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Chris Sharples, Petr Smejkal.

This trip was a finale to the resurrection, during the last two years, of explorations in the downstream Coelacanth section of Black River in Growling Swallet. As described in the other trip reports by Rolan (Eberhard 2015), these explorations resulted in several hundred metres of dry upper trunk passage named “Living Fossils” which terminated in rock-fall. This termination prompted renewed interest in the Coelacanth sump which represents the semi-active lower level running more or less underneath Living Fossils.

Coelacanth sump was dived once previously by Nick Hume in 1988. Using a back-mounted tank system Nick reported a clear descending passage to a gravel blind at 18.34 m depth (Hume 1988). At the time this was the deepest point in the Ice Tube – Growling system. My interest in revisiting this sump was not in its depth but its relationship with Living Fossils and the strategic easterly direction it was heading - towards an inevitable intersection with the undiscovered master conduit that must carry the combined waters from Porcupine Pot and all the caves between PP and Rainbow Cave which ultimately drain to Junee via Niggly Cave. In planning to revisit the Coelacanth sump I hoped that the “gravel blind” might turn out to be a constriction that was passable using side-mounted tanks.

With terrific support from Chris Sharples, Alan Jackson, Andreas Klocker, Petr Smejkal and Milos Dvorak, all the gear fitted inside six large cave packs and was transported in fast time to the dive base at the Black River sump / roof sniff. While Chris and Milos inspected the upstream section of Black River, Petr, Alan and Andreas donned wetsuits and helped with carrying the two 7 litre steel tanks to the sump. From here they took off to check the end of Living Fossils for leads while I prepared to dive. The sump pool is static, with no in-flow under normal conditions, but evidently this entire section of cave floods occasionally and there are flood deposits high up in Coelacanth and Living Fossils. The sump pool is clean, clear and inviting (see picture), apart from the chilly 6 degree water, this time made tolerable with the luxury of a dry suit. Nick’s line was still in place.

The sump trended southeast, roughly along strike with occasional bends down-dip, and descended at a steady angle to the bottom of a classic U siphon. To my disappointment the

obvious upward trending continuation was completely choked, albeit with beautifully rounded and polished calcite-veined pebbles and cobbles, tumbled like gemstones when floodwaters surge through under many metres of hydraulic head. Nick’s line disappeared into the nest of gemstones. His line placed more than 30 years ago was still in good condition and even the taped line markers with metre distances written in Texta were still legible, although some of them had slid out of place along the line. I turned and surveyed out. The surveyed plan length was around 70 metres, somewhat longer than shown on earlier sketch maps. Alan has appended the sump survey to the main Growling survey (see page 9).



“Down among the Red Men” - The heroic volunteers who carried the dive gear: Andreas Klocker, Petr Smejkal, Milos Dvorak, Alan Jackson, Chris Sharples.



Coelacanth sump. Stefan checking it out during reconnaissance trip in January 2013.

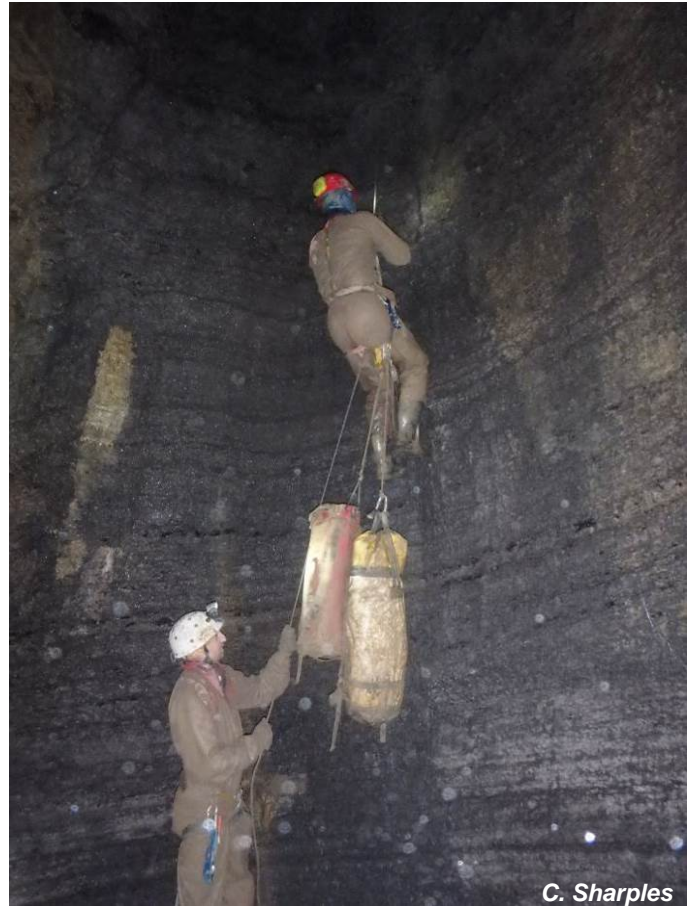
After grovelling back to dive base in Black River, I briefly contemplated the option of diving upstream into Pendant Pot to check the feasibility of free-diving this short siphon which, if safely negotiable via a breath-hold dive, would make for a very sporty through trip. I should mention this was Rolan's idea as he scooped the first and only ever Pendant - Growling pull-down through-trip followed by "on-sight" sump dive with a single pony bottle more than thirty years ago. Beyond the Pendant Pot connection there also lies the prospect of revisiting Nick's earlier and possibly inconclusive upstream underwater explorations. The return of the Living Fossils crew, who reported no new leads, and the late hour dissuaded any further diving on this trip. I must say I don't feel highly motivated to return to push upstream Pendant and I am very happy for others to take on this challenge. With this in mind I left four dive weights (and possibly also two line weights?) cached at the Black River dive base to assist the cause of future upstream explorations, by whomever is game. We collected an additional 4 litre tank left from trips the previous year and made our way out with heavy loads. Rolan's rope on Destiny pitch was left coiled at the top of the shaft as we had no space for it in any of the packs. We surfaced after about nine hours underground.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Chris Sharples, Andreas Klocker, Petr Smejkal, Milos Dvorak and Alan Jackson who selflessly and efficiently carried the packs of very heavy dive gear all the way into Black River and back out.

References

EBERHARD, R. 2015 JF36 Growling Swallet – Living Fossils Extension. *Speleo Spiel* 411: 4-6

HUME, N. 1988 Growling Swallet in Depth! *Speleo Spiel* 235: 3-6



C. Sharples

Milos Dvorak and Petr Smejkal (on rope) at the base of the 27 m Destiny pitch which drops into the Black River section of Growling Swallet.

JF633 Ring Hole – and a sump it is!

Andreas Klocker

31 October 2015

Party: Serena Benjamin, Andreas Klocker, Fleur Loveridge (Oxford University Caving Club), Grant Rees.

It'd been less than a fortnight since I'd arrived back from my annual stint to Oxford (UK) when I had one of my close Oxford caving friends visit on the end of a work trip to the lameland. Fleur loves cave exploration (and hence surveying ... at least that's what I extrapolated from her love for exploration) and I'm not big into tourist trips (there's way too much exploration to be done to waste time touring) so we decided to continue with our work in Ring Hole. A few days before the trip I also heard via Alan that Grant Rees also just moved to Tassie to do some real caving, so another young and dumb one who didn't know what he was getting into when he signed up (much more grown up and pleasant than Dickon though) and in the end even Serena came along (she's back!). So that made four of us, three of whom have never been to Ring Hole. The plan was to continue down the pitch which Steve Fordyce ran out of rope on (Fordyce 2015) and connect into Sesame (so the plan at least).

So off we went, through the wet and the tight, until we arrived on top of the first pitch head (down the left at Grande Junction). There the ladies decided to survey (what lovely

ladies!) and Grant decided to come with me and try not to freeze while I was fixing lameland rigging (I who on bloody earth would put a single 6 mm concrete screw on top of a pitch head!!). Whatever happened, I placed a second anchor, tied in a longer rope and continued to Steve's last Y-hang where he ran out of rope, replacing his rope for the longer one I brought, put in another Y-hang and dropped the last ten meters. Once at the bottom I was going to wait for the others to bag some booty but I only had to look ahead to see the one thing I didn't want to see – a sump!!

So once the others came down Grant and myself did some acro-yoga to climb over the sump, just to find out that there's no way around/over it with some pretty nasty mud on the other side – the sort which tends to eat gumboots. So after some gummi bears and swearing we headed back up, did a quick tourist excursion to the other pitch head and headed for home.

And while this trip report is late and full of crappy English grammar (only I am to be blamed for this), thanks to Fleur we brought back the best sketches which have ever left this cave! She even drew them up for me as a pdf before she left the country!! Maybe we should send David Taberner to visit her in the UK and learn a few things about drawing up cave surveys

Reference

FORDYCE, S. 2015 JF633 Ring Hole. *Speleo Spiel* 409: 7-8