

Editorial

We survived the AGM and we survived Easter in the JF. The perils of the AGM paled into insignificance when pitted against the weather experienced at Easter.

For those not on email (do these people exist anymore?) then this issue contains the various annual reports of the office bearers. As a result it's a pretty large issue and I've left a few submissions for the next issue, so I won't waste any more space with editorial. Enjoy.

Alan Jackson

Stuff 'n Stuff

JANINE SPROUTS FINS

Janine has been accepted as a full member of the ASF Cave Diving Group.

Her membership number is 34, so it's either very elite or very unpopular. Apparently, as far as ASF is concerned, she can now go anywhere as long as it's very dark and very wet.

Ric Tunney

LIFE MEMBERS AND ASF FEES

After much list server discussion and meeting action a motion was passed at the AGM to discontinue the practice of paying STC life member's ASF fees. If you're a life member and haven't seen the email banter or attended the meetings then contact the treasurer (Ric) and he'll get you up to speed with what this means for you.

29TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION INC.

6th – 11th January 2013 - Galong, NSW, Australia

Hosted by the New South Wales Speleological Council



If you have an interest in caves and caving the 29th Biennial Speleology Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) is an event not to be missed. The organising committee invites you to get along to TROGalong, at the St Clements Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong, NSW from Sunday 6th to Friday 11th January 2013.

This national conference provides an ideal forum for anyone with an interest in the science or exploration of caves to share in the knowledge, research and exploration experiences of Australia's caves and karst landforms. International presenters will also be most welcome. Presentations will be variable and nominally 20 minutes duration although longer presentations may be negotiated. Absentee presentations may also be accommodated. Posters are encouraged and will be displayed throughout the duration of the conference.

Artists are also welcome to present cave related artwork (commission applies to any sales).

Be sure to enter the cave photography competition, speleo sports and prusik events.

Experience some NSW tourist or wild caves on the pre and post conference field trips.

All accommodation, meals and conference events will be on-site so there will be lots of opportunity for socialising and relaxing. The venue has comfortable motel style accommodation with some limited camping options, an in-ground swimming pool and extensive gardens set on the peaceful 800 acre rural property with a rich pastoral history dating back to the 1820s. The venue was also a former Monastery and Minor Seminary.

Further details on costs, closing date for abstracts, program and events will be advised shortly. Please visit www.asfconference.org.au/2013

Students, researchers and speleological club members are strongly encouraged to submit presentations or workshops on any cave-related topic. The ASF administers a small grants scheme to encourage attendance at and active participation in ASF conferences by new ASF members who have not attended any previous ASF conference. The grant provides for whole or part remission of conference registration fees and travel costs etc., and personal attendance and an appropriate presentation is required. Enquiries to the conference organising committee are invited. Please contact the conference convenor, Bob Kershaw in the first instance (rkershaw@ozemail.com.au).

Trip Reports

JF-8 Junee Cave – Sump 1 Dive

Janine McKinnon

29 December 2011

Party: Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

This was my second dive into the Junee Sump 1 since my previous dive in the 1980s. The first was March 2010 on my single tank back mount system. I didn't make it to the chamber "For Your Eyes Only" (FYEO) as I was going slowly and carefully, checking the fixed line, and reached thirds on my air about 30 m from the end of the sump.

After this trip I decided that I needed to upgrade equipment before I dived there again. Thus I spent the next six months buying gear and practicing with it. I was now twin tank sidemount. I had to wait until the lower water levels of summer to have another go though.

By late December the rain had eventually stopped for a couple of weeks after a very wet spring. Water levels had reduced to normal summer levels. Time to go again.

We started carting the first pack load of gear at 9:00 am, on a dry, sunny and warm day. We left it at the viewing platform and returned to the car for coffee and to dress.

This time Ric was in wet suit and warm thermals, and a book for the wait. We were back at the entrance by 10 am, and started in with a rucksack each containing a tank and kit. Only the BC didn't fit into the packs, so Ric returned for it as I started to organise at the beach. A walking pole would have been a good idea to help with stability on the walk up the streamway.

I was kitted up and ready to go by 11 am. Ric took a little video as I headed in.



Kitting up for the dive.



Final in-water checks.

The current took some effort to swim against but wasn't exhausting. I swam with visual on the line but not tethered to it. Visibility was about 2 m. The line was in good condition despite the very high flow rates over the summer. There were no breaks and it was taught. I had passed my point of last turn around and was just thinking the line would be fine all the way when it disappeared into the silt. I took it in one hand and was able to pull it back out, as I swam along. Then it wouldn't come up any more. I dug for a couple of minutes but it was well and truly buried. I tied the cord on my reel to it and kept going, paying out as I went. 5 m further on the line reappeared out of the silt, and I could see the end of the sump above me. I

left the reel there and exited the sump. I had taken 24 minutes to this point.

It took a bit of effort to get settled on the bank. The mud/silt was soft and deep. I took off my tanks and fins in a small back eddy and went for a look around. It is as pleasant a chamber as I remembered. I walked upstream to about half way along but then decided to turn back. Ric didn't expect me to be more than 1.5 hours and time was disappearing.

I took a few photos of the formations but my underwater housing had fogged, so I didn't expect much from them (looking afterwards, they weren't too bad).

I then put my gear back on and headed back into the sump. I picked up the reel and decided to leave the line connecting the visible ends of the fixed line. It took a few minutes to cut and tie the reel line in. My very thick outer gloves make manipulating anything difficult, so I didn't do the best job with that. As I started the return swim from here my inflator on my BC suddenly started filling at maximum. I was breathing from the regulator on that side, and as the roof was only a few feet away, I put the other regulator in my mouth before turning off the air to the scuba feed. By this time I was wedged solidly against the roof with a fully inflated BC. I pushed the dump button and it emptied quickly and I descended back to the middle of the chamber. I thought for a minute and then decided to return to FYEO to check everything. This I did and I disconnected the scuba feed before turning the air back on to that side. I was happy to exit without the chance of that happening again. I used my drysuit as buoyancy.

The trip out was uneventful and took 20 minutes. The surface interval between the two dives was 45 minutes, which shows how long getting gear off and on takes as I hadn't spent more than half that time wandering around in FYEO.

Ric started packing gear as I went back to the car with some of the kit I was wearing (minus tanks, of course). I had started to get cold only in the last part of the exit. The water temperature was 8°C. I returned after changing to help carry the packs back to the car, which took one trip only.

We were organising lunch by 1:30 pm.

Kit: I had a camera in underwater housing, large reel, jump reel, helmet with four lights (one turned on) and a Light Monkey hand held light, twin sidemount tanks, 1 Apeks regulator and 1 Aqualung Regulator, Cold water sealed, first stage regulators on DIN fittings, Suunto Cobra computer, short SPG, Dive Rite Nomad BC, old rocket fins, DUI TLS 350 drysuit, two hoods, two pairs gloves, undersuit and two sets thermal tops, one long john bottoms, rock boots, two tethers, two cutting devices.

JF-8 Junee Cave – Sump 1 Dive

Janine McKinnon

13 January 2011

Party: Janine McKinnon, Ric Tunney

We used the club key to the Junee Road to get to the original car park again. It is a nuisance that the council has closed access over the bridge to cars in the last 12 months.

After a few days of rain, the water levels coming out of the resurgence were higher than my last dive a couple of weeks ago. We decided that it wasn't too high to dive though and started putting the gear into packs at 9:30 am.

Ric carried one rucksack to the end of the track, returned, and carried a second one all the way to the sump, then returned to the car, whilst I got kitted up. He then got dressed in wetsuit and warm gear whilst I started into the cave with my BC. We met again in the streamway as I returned for a second load and found Ric coming in with the second pack, so I turned around and went back to the beach before the sump. Thus all the hard work getting to the sump was done by Ric.

We took some time getting the gear put together and attached to me; possibly 20 minutes to half an hour. I had a few problems with a free-flowing regulator but got that settled down. It didn't make me happy after the malfunctions with my BC last trip. I need to get a gauge and check the pressures on my first stages. The fine silt burden suspended in the water (hence the poor visibility all the time) gets into everything and plays "gremlins" with gear. Everything needs to be dismantled and cleaned after a dive.

As I started into the sump, at around 11 am, I found the current significantly stronger than last trip but not impossible to swim against, luckily. It did take effort though and I developed a headache after 10 minutes. Whether this was exertion, cold, or a combination of both, I don't know. Maybe I should have had a coffee before the dive.

The visibility was worse than last dive, at maybe half a metre. I felt the temperature to be colder too (there had been snow on the mountains in the previous days), however my computer still said 8°C, same as last time. I really question that though. They do quote a 2 degree error margin in measurements. I think the two degrees was on the down side this time.

I swam fairly purposefully to the location where the main line is buried. I was going to dig it out but decided that it was too big a job to bother with. The "quick and nasty" line replacement I did last time was still in place and looking secure. The length of buried line was longer than memory said. The current was strong and I was getting cold quicker than last trip. So I decided that a quick visit to the end was all I'd do.

Maybe my head just wasn't in it this day. The headache didn't help.

I surfaced after 22 minutes and spent 5 minutes looking around FYEO from the water. The stream that ran to the start of the sump last trip was missing. I was sitting in a lake instead. The backwater from the strong stream current that I had de-kitted in last time was under water. This explained why it was so muddy at the edge last time. It is usually under water.

I thought of getting out again and walking to Sump Two, and getting some more photos and having a better look at the chamber for wear by divers, but I was colder than last trip, and I didn't feel like taking the time and effort to get out of my gear, and then back into it again. It is quite slow and a hassle alone and in the cold water. I wasn't in the mood today, for some reason.

No need to push it, there will be other times. I turned around and started back into the sump.

The return dive took a third of the time of the ingress and a lot less of the effort. I had to be careful to not thump into rocks and projections too hard with the relatively fast trip in poor vis. The rocks and outcroppings loomed out of the gloom very quickly.

Eleven minutes after starting the return trip I surfaced at the downstream end of the sump, still suffering a thumping headache.

Ric wasn't expecting me so soon, and had his head in his ebook. He quickly came to assist and I was soon out of the bulky gear and starting towards the entrance of the cave, shivering. I went back to the car with BC and a few bits, and Ric stayed behind to pack the tanks, and paraphernalia, and bring it out. He carried one pack back to the car and I retrieved the other from the end of the walkway, after getting changed. I was back at the car before 12.30 pm.

My headache was gone by the time I had finished changing. So I am guessing it was cold and exertion related.

So, not the best trip I could have wished for, but a successful trip in and out, at any rate.

JF-36 (The Cave Formerly Known as) Growling Swallet – Not a Club Trip

Stephen Bunton

18 February 2012

Party: Stephen Bunton and Ken Hosking (STC), Scott Bacon (Minister for Tourism), Peter Pearce (his Advisor) and Richard Dowling (Advisor to the Premier, Lara Giddings).

It was about May last year that we noticed post holes being dug at the start of the Eight Rd. There was no doubt that the Eight Rd would be gated but was this development a permanent situation or just a temporary arrangement? It was definitely too soon to harvest the regrowth in the coupes along the side of the road and so we assumed it was not a Forestry ploy. We therefore wondered what moves were afoot in the secret world of karst management. Although this situation was discussed at STC General Meetings during 2011, nothing was recorded in the minutes so as not to alert any karst managers within the

membership that we were onto what looked like their scheme. Over the following months we gradually saw the gate arise and take form. In the meantime Ken and I thought we should lobby a politician or two and try and make a stand for public access and commonsense management of Growling Swallet.

During this time Alan made a lot of phone calls to the ranger at Mt Field National Park and to Forestry Tasmania in order to determine the truth of the matter. There was a certain amount of self-interest in opposing this gate. STC members are one of the main user groups in this area and we would definitely be inconvenienced by the extra time it would take to walk the Eight Rd. Should a gate be built, we would really like a copy of the key but this was not necessarily guaranteed. For me it was a matter of public interest and my right to recreate in a National Park of my choosing.

Over the years I have taken friends, interstate and overseas visitors including exchange students, geology students and adventure education students to show them the entrance to Growling Swallet. It is a wonderful place, a geologically