



# FUSSI Newsletter

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**Front Cover Photo Credit:** Bronya Alexander.  
**Front Cover Photo:** Eric finds the going tight in  
Childrens Cave.

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# CAVING AROUND BUCHAN

Clare Buswell and Heiko Maurer

Somebody in the club hatched this week-long trip idea around the middle of 2007. Homework was done, SRT practice done, gear sorted, cars, planes and whatever else organised. We arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January to bush fires and Elvis helicopters working from 7.30 in the morning till 6 in the evening. We did not manage to score a ride in one, dammit, so had to be happy with looking at one Elvis and two other choppers landing on the local oval for four or five days.

The trip was the first FUSSI trip to this area, so it was a bit of a suck it and see type event. We were helped immensely, by three cavers/VSA members: Kym and John Van Dyk based at Buchan and Thomas Aberdeen based in Melbourne. From them all we learned that Buchan caves, in particular, the Pot Holes area, are slippery vertical mazes. Those in the East Buchan area, (EB10) are horizontal systems which contain lots of sumps. (Quite different from the dusty, dry stuff you find in the Flinders ranges!) Buchan contains five quite separate caving areas. There is the tourist infested Buchan Caves Reserve in the township itself. The Pot Holes Reserve, Wyatts Reserve, the East Buchan area, and New Guinea ridge area. The caves in the Pot Holes Reserve are given the Prefix M as are those on Wyatts reserve which is opposite the Pot Holes area. There are two sorts of limestone here, Murrindal and McClarty Limestone, the later is shitty rock and is known for falling apart. *Some Wyatts reserve caves contain foul air.*



Our homework saw a list of a dozen caves emerge. New Guinea Ridge Cave, Scrubbie Creek and Exponential Pot were high on this list, but our trusty intelligence sources informed us of access problems, so these three caves were reluctantly removed from the list (but put on the next time we visit list.) We ended up with a great mix of vertical and muddy, wet, and horizontal caves. Wonderful stuff.

Homeleigh was our base.



This old renovated pub was bought in 1973 by far-sighted VSA cavers. It has been modernized, providing all that a discerning caver could wish for, including comfy beds, a large well-equipped kitchen, amenities block, club rooms and large dining area.

Cave rescues (the Hades Cave rescue of some time ago), are staged from here, and it will be the focus of the 2009 ASF conference. (Make sure you GO TO IT).

Homeleigh offers relaxing views from wide verandahs and is a short walk to the current pub, (a counter meal is very welcome after a long days caving, and it goes down well with the

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locals), caves reserve and swimming hole. Food scraps are composted and rubbish is recycled, so be prepared for a trip to the rubbish transfer station 3kms down the Buchan- Bairnsdale road.

Homeleigh has a rope-washing tub, and the back verandah comes in handy for drying out the wet caving gear. There are plenty of signs about stating the consequences of bringing any 'dirty, filthy, mud ridden, wet, rotting, etc' caving gear inside. Booking the accommodation was done on-line and all our questions about it answered quickly by the person in charge of it. Many thanks to Lou Williams from the Rimstone Co-operative, which runs Homeleigh.



**The soon to be covered in gear,  
Homeleigh Back Verandah**

Day one of activities saw us surface trogging for a few hours around the area, with the wonderful Kim Van Dyke. She showed us many entrances of caves on the Pot Holes Reserve, took us out to East Buchan to meet the farmer whose land we must cross to access EB10, Trog Dip, and showed us Wilson's Cave which would be good for the kids who were to join us later on. Wilson's cave is used as a beginners abseiling training area and has a cliff face fitted with some bolts for the purpose. It was also used in the making of the film, 'Hostage' and there are still remnants of the filming - fiberglass Stals etc, around. It basically runs under the Buchan Orbost road.

We decided to spend a couple of hours acclimatizing ourselves to the Pot Holes reserve caves by going into M124 Razor Cave, as it required no vertical gear and would be a good intro to the slipperiness of these caves. We trogged around, checking our location with the cave map and getting a feel for things. Came back to the Homeleigh Hilton in time for G&T on the verandah. Life is so good sometimes ...

M41 Homecomb, was the cave of the next day. So we sorted out the vertical gear, and trundled off to rig it. Honeycomb has a large tree from which to rig a rope. There is also a concreted area around the entrance with 2 hangers for rigging a ladder or whatever down the first pitch. This pitch is also climbable, but ladder is the easiest. We took ladder and rope. One 21 foot ladder is ample. The entrance pitch ends in an S bend, the final part of which leaves you a couple of inches from the floor. You can't see where your feet will land, but it is even ground when you get there. From this you then bend down and go through a "letterbox" coming out into a chamber.

At this point, it is important to turn around and look back from where you came. Bend down, twist around and look back up the S bend. The exit/entrance is on the top of the left hand side of the S bend. Once though the S bend, letter box and in the adjoining chamber, you can't see any daylight. This is where people get lost as it looks like the chamber doesn't lead out. So make sure you check out this section carefully.

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From this point you scramble down a fissure until you reach a more open area of the main chamber, which is basically a vertical maze with many deep fissures. Up to the left leads via a squeeze, to a well-decorated, big chamber with flowstone and a taped off area. Camera time. Camera time and did I say camera time. Well you know ...

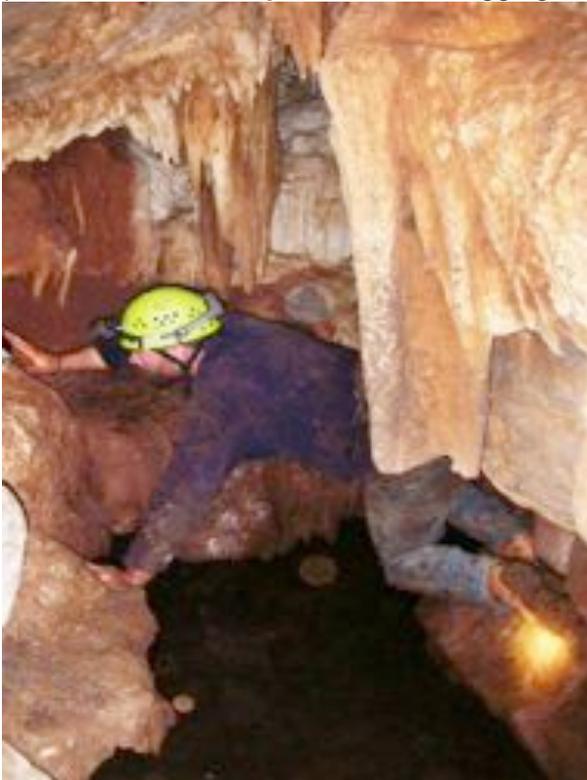
Honeycomb has a couple of pitches in it, one of 18 and 50, (the entrance pitch is 10m). For all sorts of reasons we did not do these two pitches and limited the trip to the horizontal only. We spent around 4 and a half hours exploring and taking lots of photos. A very satisfying day of caving.

EB10 Trog Dip, says the Karst index is an intermittently active out flow cave connecting to intermittent standing water, development is extensive joint controlled stream passage with siphons. Some excellent decoration length 1200m: Hazards: extensive crawling, ducking, sumps, MUD and we would add very noisy bats! Further, when the cave map has such lovely names on it as: the Sewers, Grovel Gravel, Hip Crusher you know that a better PR company is needed ...



Caving protocol demands that the farmer on whose land you walk/drive across and/or cave on, is talked to and permission gained from, before you turn up on his or her doorstep. This was done before we left Adelaide and again when we met up with Kim for a day of surface trogging. So we had no problem meeting up with him and being driven down one of his steep paddocks to the River. (A 4WD is needed here, grass and gravel type will do.)

## Formation in M41 Honeycomb



After a bit of a scramble around the place, we found the entrance, trogged up and followed the stream passage up to a climb around some gour pools (see photo left). After this climb, follow the right hand wall through a bat chamber, avoiding the flying bats and wishing for the bat detector to identify them. After this, the first sump is found. This sump at the time had good air space and only required a 'hands and knees' crawl through it. Hint, bring a dry sack to put gear in to keep it from getting wet and muddy.

Soon the cave divides into two: take the right hand side, and avoid the Sewers. Keep following the ever decreasing crawl to the Hip crusher and second sump. The hip crusher leads up and over this second sump and into the Grovel Gravel. As we had an appointment to be collected at a certain time and we wanted a wash off in the Murrindal River we had to unfortunately turn around at this point. But we

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were happy, muddy, wet trogs who considered themselves to be trog dipped in good Buchan mud! The trip will take all day, by the time you talk to the farmer, get down the hill etc. We left Homeleigh at 9 and got back at 6 after arranging to be collected from the bottom of the hill at 5.30pm.

## Children's Cave

This cave is in the Buchan Caves Reserve. Follow the road to the end and then the dried streamway for about 100m. Up on the left is the small (Buchan entrances are all small) entrance to Children's cave. We took 4 kids and 4 adults. Fairly roomy, a little stooping involved for the adults. Essentially, the cave is one chamber with plenty of side passages, and nooks and crannies to explore for the kids. The kids went hell for leather, round and round in circles, often saying to each other, 'we have not been here.' The knowing adults watched and smiled at their excitement and exploration methods. Thanks to Kim for arranging access. All the kids had a ball.



L- R: Jordan, (Kim and John Van Dyk's grand daughter) Bella, Ruby and Eric Schulz. In Children's Cave.

## M29, Gyorgidig.

There are 3 pitches. The Entrance pitch is 7 metres, which is climbable. The second pitch is off a small chamber, just down from the entrance chamber. It is 5m and can be climbed or abseiled. The main pitch is 45m rigged from naturals just above the pitch head itself. The rope will free hang once you are on it, but some rope protection is useful about 2-3 metres down. The pitch ends on a mud boulder pile, so most people stop just after a false floor. This abseil is one of the longest at Buchan and is enjoyable and clean. The day we caved in

Gyorgidig was one of those 38 degree days, so it was a late afternoon trip taking 3 hours. Route finding was easy and the cave itself

has some nice decoration in it. Pity about the muddy rock pile at the bottom of the pitch and the flies that follow you all the way down and back up again.

## M14 Baby Berger with link to Elk River Cave

Baby Berger has another one of the great pitches at Buchan, being 40 metres in depth. It has some nice decorations around the entrance chambers and some good squeeze bits as well. There is a bit of pack hauling, but nothing significant. The four of us, Bronya, Eric, Michael and I had a good time manipulating ourselves through the squeeze just before the pitch head itself. The squeeze goes through some stals, so you need to watch where feet are going whilst you lie on your side and contort other body bits around things. You end up in a small chamber from which you rig the pitch from 2 big rocks on the floor. The pitch head is a little difficult to negotiate. There is a chock stone over which you climb and then you are in space. Under the chock stone there is a ledge a good knee length back in underneath it. You will have to feel for it and this does allow you to sort out anything abnormal. Bring rope protection to go over the chock stone, stick a caving pack or whatever over it. The pitch is a free hang to a wide ledge. This ledge is wide and comfortably holds 6 people. There is no placement available for a re-belay at the ledge. The very bottom of the pitch is a mud heap. So most people stop at the ledge. Great caving. Entered cave at 5.30 pm out at 9pm. For a description of Elk River Cave and its connection to Baby Berger, see *Caves Australia* No. 172.

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## Rigging details.

Entrance: Rig from grate over the entrance. Short tape and rope protection needed at entrance. Pitch is 7 meters.

Second pitch is 40m. Take 2 or 3 long tapes, 6m each, rope protectors needed. If you do the remainder of the pitch, past the ledge, you will need a 50m rope and rope protection at the top of this ledge.

## Shades of Death

The first section of this extensive cave is an old tourist cave with handrails, walkways and electrical cables. We went in with Kim, John and their grandkids. The kids particularly liked the 'Cats Bum' - a curtain of stalts that was broken on the left hand side and which led to a small chamber with cones, tree like cave coral, reminiscent of those in Maires Cave in the Flinders. The kids stayed in the tourist section, whilst the main party went down to the stream-way, via a short roped climb-down to a three-way intersection. One leads downstream, another to a tight hole (clothes off and horrible belly slide) and the last up to a slippery slope with a knotted rope on a flowstone floor, followed by a weird squeeze at its top. The small part of the cave we looked at was roomy, sporty and rewarding.

M4 is an extensive cave, but has three sumps in it, the first of which is usually full and when so is not negotiable. The first hundred metres from the entrance is a well decorated, low stream-way. By low, I mean on hands and knees to a belly crawl. The water is not all that cold, 10 degrees, out flowing. I imagine that a bit of thermal underwear would come in handy if you were to do the entire cave. It was a rewarding bit of caving despite no access past the full first sump.



**Michael in M4**

The whole weeks trip was great fun, being a mix of vertical, wet muddy and horizontal caves. Lots of swimming in creek, due to the hot weather. There were kids along ranging from 18 months to 8yrs, and crazy adults dressed up in black ties and caving gear.

Yummy food, and even some that took on a life of its own (ask Matt about that), lots of yarns with local and visiting cavers and time for sitting around and doing not much at all.

Our thanks go to Kim and John Van Dyk who gave so much of their time in showing us around and telling us of the tales of exploration around Buchan. We also thank Thomas Aberdeen whose advice and directions proved to be invaluable. Go to the ASF Conference at Buchan in 2009 and be rewarded. Thanks to those that attended: Matt, Michael, Bronya, Heiko, Clare, Eric, Kylea and their three children Ruby, Bella and Jack who slept through most of it.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2007

Michael Meynell-James

This year has passed quickly and has been book marked by many successful caving expeditions that have seen us travel from Flinders Rangers to the South East and culminating with our end of year trip to Buchan, Victoria. Some club members have ventured further to appease their caving needs with individual members undertaking, or should I say 'taken under' adventures in Tasmania and Malaysia.

We have welcomed a number of new members this year, but at the same time we have bid farewell to some previously active members who have left, including our past President and Librarian. Thankfully the level of enthusiasm and willingness to take part in club activities saw all the executive positions filled and the duties of running the club conducted appropriately to ensue the longevity of FUSSI.

This has been the first year that FUSSI has not had the support of Flinders Clubs and Societies. This has meant we have had to adapt to change and in many ways ensure that we are self-sufficient. One of the more physical results of this has been the loss of the storage space in the compactus room. The shift to a much smaller room was facilitated by club members over a weekend and required us to rationalise all of the equipment in order to make it fit. We have also made changes to our constitution to reflect the transition and to ensure FUSSI is a modern organisation that maintains the same values and dedication to speleology.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the FUSSI members and in particular the committee. Without the collective efforts of the members, which often extends well above the call of duty, this society would certainly not be as productive as it is, and without a doubt, would not be positioned as positively as we are to face the years to come in the post Clubs and Society's era. Without the ongoing support and devotion from members, a combination of new membership and the retention of skilled and valued existing members FUSSI would soon fade to become nothing more than a dark hole in the ground. Many thanks to those who have supported us in the past and especially to the member and non-members including land owners, equipment stores and other Speleo clubs. We hope they will continue to support us to fulfil our goal of continuing, to get down, get dirty and go caving.

# SECRETARY'S REPORT 2007

Bronya Alexander

Since the AGM in May 2007, FUSSI executive committee have held 3 meetings, appeared at the Flinders University fair day, and shared a wonderful lunch put on by Paul and Debbie. Certainly the highlight of the year was the week-long trip to Buchan Caves in Victoria where all those involved got to experience some real mud! In addition to Buchan there were two trips to the lower Flinders Ranges held in June and October last year, as well as some SRT rescue training in Clare and Heiko's shed and a bridge jump. Also thanks to some group brainstorming and Clare's actions we now have some car bumper stickers with pretty catchy slogans to promote FUSSI, so don't miss out on these! And there is a fresh look to the FUSSI website thanks to Heiko's efforts - see <http://www.fussi.org.au/>.

# SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT 2007

Clare Buswell

In 2007 I seem to remember FUSSI members doing lots of SRT practice in my shed. This has some perks. Namely, you can sit in a deck chair and watch someone SRTing his or her way up 50 metres of rope! The rope work practice was for a trip to Buchan Caves in Victoria for early 2008. To get further practice in we also spent a weekend in the Flinders, at Maires Cave going up and down and crossing hanging re-belays. All the practice helped with negotiating the slippery, vertical mazes of Buchan's caves.

FUSSI training follows the ASF Caving Leadership Standards. These standards provide a way of gaining experience and expertise. They are broken into numerous levels:

- Horizontal caving Leader.
- Laddering Caving leader and
- Vertical caving leader.

Each leader level consists of five streams:

- Personal caving Skills,
- Leadership for caving with dependent parties.
- Emergency and rescue responses,
- Supervised Caving leadership,
- Assessment of the Candidates Leadership Ability Leading a Dependent Party.

There are three levels of caving instructor:

- Horizontal Caving Instructor,
- Laddering Caving Instructor.
- Vertical Caving Instructor.

Although the scheme is not a set of skills required of every member in ASF clubs, it is important that all club members take advantage of training days so that we remain a skilled club, educating each other and training together. So if you want to cave safely, attend every training day that the club offers and practice lots before attempting any vertical cave. Always carry with you and ensure that all your three light sources work and that they are all backed up, that your first aid kit is complete and water proof. Carry a space blanket; thermal underwear, and pocket-knife on a lanyard and in cave food. Do a first aid course.

Finally the library has just received the latest copy of American Caving Accidents for 2007. It is illustrative reading. There were 32 caving incidents last year, of which 13 involved, caver falls. The report states:

Falls remain the leading type of safety incident or accident in caving. Many of the incidents could have been prevented by the use of a belay. Cavers should use a belay whenever the exposure of a climb or traverse is greater than a body length and a belay must always be used when climbing ladders.

For more information on the ASF Caving Leadership Standards and the American Caving Accidents check out the FUSSI library.

Below is the ASF Accident/Incident report Form. The ASF keeps records of ASF club accidents and incidents. These records are used to gain an idea of what types of accidents are occurring and to better prepare cavers so that accidents are kept to minimum. Take a copy of it and put it in with your caving gear.

Clare Buswell  
FUSSI Safety Officer. 2007.

# ASF CAVE ACCIDENT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your ASF affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Today's date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date of incident: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mob)  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark with an 'X' as many boxes as required for the following questions:

Source of information: \_\_\_\_\_

Contributing factors: \_\_\_\_\_

I am the:	victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	gear failure	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Witness	<input type="checkbox"/>	unsafe practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Rescuer	<input type="checkbox"/>	bad luck	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Uninvolved	<input type="checkbox"/>	inexperience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injuries sustained:	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	hospitalisation required	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Minor	<input type="checkbox"/>	very serious	<input type="checkbox"/>
	First Aid Required	<input type="checkbox"/>	fatal	<input type="checkbox"/>

Number of persons injured

If known please supply a brief description of the injuries.

\_\_\_\_\_

If rescue was required how was it undertaken?

Self-rescue:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistance req. (unofficial)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistance required (Police/Official Rescue Group etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## Cave Description

Name and tag number (if known) or physical location (if known):

\_\_\_\_\_

Wet (deep standing pool or running stream)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dry (no water or slight seepage and shallow water only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horizontal: under 200m	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horizontal: over 200m	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vertical: pitches less than 30m	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vertical: pitches longer than 30m	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Party description:

Size of group:	1 – 4:	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 – 10:	<input type="checkbox"/>	11 plus:	<input type="checkbox"/>
ASF affiliated group		<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-ASF group			<input type="checkbox"/>

\* Please supply details of rescue, here (if known):

\_\_\_\_\_

Has the incident been written up in a journal/circular/letter etc? \_\_\_\_\_

If so please supply references here:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please supply any further details that you consider relevant. Also if available please mail copies of referenced articles.

When completed please email to: National Cave Rescue Commission Convenor: Ross Anderson.

email: [rossjay@inet.net.au](mailto:rossjay@inet.net.au)

Or print out and mail to: Australian Speleological Federation Inc., PO BOX 388, BROADWAY, NSW 2007

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation.

# EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT 2007

Clare Buswell

A curse upon John Howard, the Liberal Party and Family First Senator, Stephen Fielding! If any of you ever go caving there will be no gear supplied to you by Uni clubs. We can no longer afford to buy it since you abolished Student Union fees!

The only thing we managed to buy last year was a battery charger!  
We need to replace some harnesses and tapes this year, 2008. So anyone with a way of making money, without betting on the Melbourne Cup, please let us know!

On another note. The Club keeps a record of all purchasers, borrowing and usage of gear. These records are invaluable in determining when to retire gear, checking on age/purchase/cost and or any damage. To illustrate why this process is important, early in 2007 I was given a climbing rope, which once belonged to the now defunct Wilderness Club at Flinders. I asked for any *written* history of it. None was found. The rope looked new for a climbing rope, in that it was not furry. (Dynamic climbing ropes tend to go furry after some use. Static caving ropes don't). I checked for any obvious signs of damage and could not find any. I knew that the Wilderness Club folded around 2001. So that placed the age of the rope at least at 6 years old. OK, but I did not know how much use the rope had in climbing situations. For all I knew the rope could have been used to tow broken down cars. The rope now sits in my shed in a couple of bits and is used to hold down things on the trailer. I considered my life to be too valuable to put my trust in a piece of equipment of which I did not know the history. If you are ever offered any gear that falls off the back of a truck, find out its history and follow the principle; no history, then leave it alone.

Thus, when borrowing gear from the club storage, fill out the Gear Hire Form, including **all** details asked for. When returning gear, make sure it is clean and checked for any damage. Record all rope usage. That is, how many people did what on it. E.g., 2 people abseiled into S102, 3 were belayed: 2 SRTed out and 3 were belayed out. Record if rope was washed and how this was done. That is, in the front loading washing machine or by hand in the creek!

Other important bureaucratic bits:

- Gear hire fees remain unchanged: They are \$10.00 for the weekend and \$25.00 for a week long (any trip including and over four days) caving trips.
- Gear damaged and/or lost on a caving trip, must be paid for by the members on that trip. NO exceptions.
- Club gear is only available for hire for FUSSI trips.
- Do not leave any gear in direct sunlight as this reduces its life and strength.
- All gear must be returned to the store clean and any damage must be immediately reported to the equipment officer

Clare Buswell  
FUSSI Equipment Officer 2008.

## COMING UP!

**April 28<sup>th</sup> – May 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Library display.**

For more info, contact Michael.

**May 14<sup>th</sup> 6.00pm**

**Annual General Meeting.**

On campus, Union Building. Kelly Morris Rm (next to Flinders One).  
Wine, cheese and other exiting things happening.

**May 24<sup>th</sup> /25<sup>th</sup>**

**Lower South East.**

For more info, contact Bronya.

**June long weekend**

**Flinders Ranges.**

For more info, contact Bronya.

**Aug 23-30 Vercoors.**

**International Union of Speleology Conference. France.**

**September/Oct (Date TBA)**

**Week long interstate trip: Nullarbor.**

For more info, contact Bronya.