



FUSSI Newsletter

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Some Pretty Things in Clara St Dora, Cave.

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Speleothems: Clara St Dora,
Flinders Ranges

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HOW SAFE IS YOUR SRT RIG?

Clare Buswell

Whilst Heiko and I were traveling around Europe and walking over massive karst areas in Switzerland and Slovenia, we heard about a fatal caving accident in Switzerland that occurred in late 2012. I have included here links to an analysis in French and German, (there is none in English), and comments from a UK cavers cave chat web site concerning the Cowstails and SRT rig that was used. The aim here is to get some discussion going re the design of cows tails and foot ascender safety lines that we use as distinct from the ways in which to cross traverses. The web links are very illustrative.

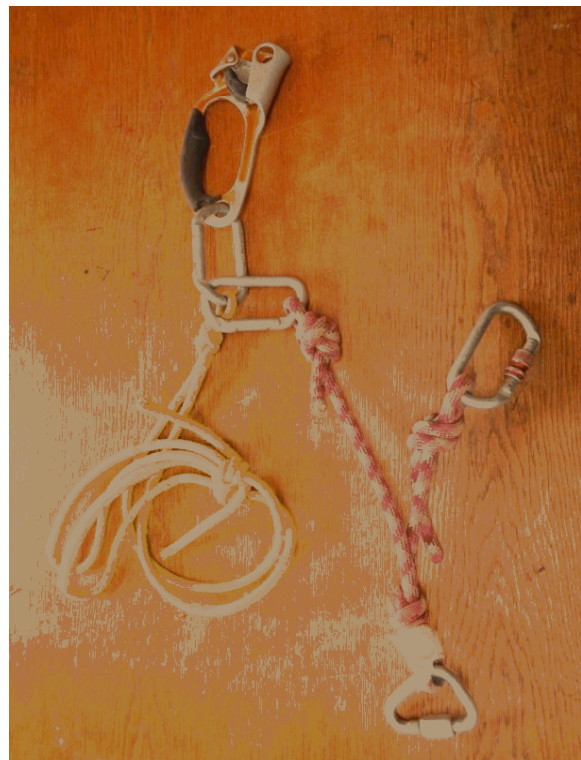
The photos below illustrate the SRT rig used and are from the French translation of the Swiss analysis. These are found at:

http://www.speleo.ch/~site/images/stories/documents/unfall_dokumentation_de.pdf
(German)

http://www.speleo.ch/~site/images/stories/documents/documentation_accident_fr.pdf
(French)

See also: <http://speleo.ch/> and look for links to [Accident au F1: analyse et enseignements](#)

The latter contains an illustrative clip of how, connecting 2 snap links together in the way in which this rig was constructed, are very easily undone.



Above: a photo of the rig set up that was used.

At left: a photo of the traverse where the accident happened.

In the discussion that occurs below, I have used different fonts to differentiate the

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different writers. Incidentally the term 'handjammer' is what I call a 'foot or top ascender', as it is the ascender attached to the foot loop cords and sits above your chest ascender. The below discussion is from:

<http://ukcaving.com/board/index.php?topic=15351.0>

"If you speak neither German nor French, the pictures are still very instructive. The accident happened on the traverse shown in Fig 1, (photo on left above) which is obviously done using handjammer and footloop. Incidentally, they happened to have a photo of the SRT kit in question which was taken on the way into the cave at the very same spot where the accident happened later on. They've hence reconstructed the SRT kit setup as shown in Fig 3 (photo above): The handjammer was attached to the long cowstails using two snapgates! In the [report], they remind and recommend everyone to use maillons or at least screw gates for the job. The danger should be quite obvious, and in the UK most people use a separate safety cord with maillon anyway, but just keep it in mind if you are experimenting with alternative setups.

PS: And the casualty was just passing one of the knots on the traverse, when she noticed that she was no longer attached to her handjammer, so she didn't have a second point of attachment at the time."

"Isn't it still a widespread practice to use snaplinks for cowstails?

Her rig closely matched the ones shown in Marbach & Tourte's bible "Alpine Caving Techniques" (still the most up-to-date manual on SRT) and progression on a traverse with a single cowstail is still considered acceptable practice, including reiteration of this in the FSS's own 2013 Caving Technical Guide."

"What she did incorrectly was deploy her hand jammer in a particular way while traversing and/or to be connecting two snaplinks in combination.

According to a cursory check of the book, her rig set up appears at first glance to be AOK for prusiking."

"Agreed. I would never dream of using snap gates on anything I might fall onto. (Eg:- cows tails.) Screw gates all round for me. And always 2 points of attachment!"

"Interesting, I think you'll find many a climber who frequently fall onto snap links and are all still kicking about.

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Personally I have no problem with snap links on cows-tails and having seen many a person fumble with a screw gate that's inadvertently locked up at a critical point feel there are pros and cons to screw gates or snap links.

Sadly what this incident does highlight is one of the downsides to what is a very common continental SRT rig (you just have to look at not just Alpine Caving Techniques but also the Petzl website).

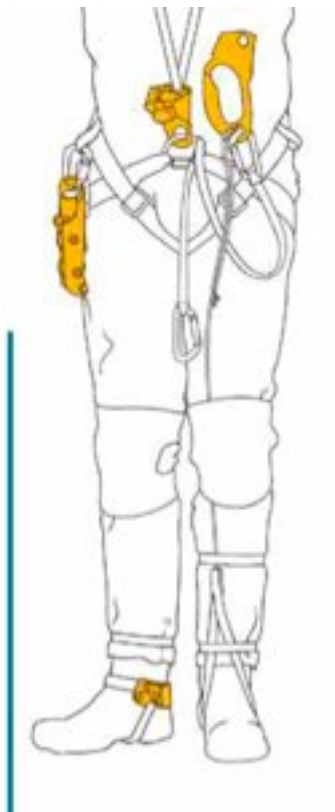


Left: My own SRT Rig: footloops, footloop safety and cows tails. Chest roll not pictured.

Both the cows tails and foot loop safety tether are made from 11mm dynamic rope.

The foot loop karabiners are Petzel oval screw gates, which have a red colour under the gate so you can see if it is done up all the way.

The Cowstails karabiners are clip gates.



At left: Image from the Petzel technical section:

http://www.petzl.com/files/all/en/activities/sport/tech-tips-caving_Catalog-2010.pdf.

It clearly shows the long cowstails being used as the safety tether for the foot ascender. Karabiners are clip gates. However, there are two separate karabiners attached to the ascender. One is for the foot loops the other for the safety tether.

What does your SRT rig look like? Is the foot ascender attached to a separate safety line that goes to your harness maillon? Or do you use your long cows tail as your foot ascender safety? Do you use all clip gates on your safety systems?

Think about it. Ask yourself when was the last time you changed your safety ropes or checked your harness for wear and tear?

Do you double check your karabiners when on redirections and rebelayes?

NOTES AND NEWS

There was a collapse of some stanchions in Clara St Dora cave last weekend when one of our party lent on one of them. Some discussions are occurring between FUSSI and CEGSA as to what to do about it. The collapse has partly obstructed the track into the cave near the gate. Further, the gate itself has been actively bypassed by some enterprising bodies. FUSSI members will be returning to the area with a couple of bags of cement to plug the bypass and no doubt move a few of the rocks out of the way from the collapse! The entrance to Clara St



The Rock and Stanchion Collapse in Clara St Dora

Dora Cave is through the old guano mine adit. Caution is always needed as the stanchions have been there a while.

NULLARBOR WILDERNESS PROTECTION AREA GOOD FOR TOURISTS BUT CAVERS AND SCIENTISTS CAN'T VISIT

In June this year the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Mr Ian Hunt, proclaimed:

“The iconic Nullarbor Plain has received South Australia’s highest level of conservation protection.

The State Government has proclaimed the region a Wilderness Protection Area, Doubling to 1.8 million hectares the amount of land now protected under the Wilderness Protection Act.

NOTES AND NEWS

Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Minister, Ian Hunter, says, the “new Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area has been created using 900,000 ha of land from the former Nullarbor National Park, and a portion of the Nullarbor Regional Reserve.”

.....

“The Nullarbor has long been a popular tourist destination, and this proclamation guarantees that future generations of South Australians and visitors will be able to continue to enjoy it.”

The South Australian Museum in combination with the University of Adelaide’s Archaeology Department had received funding for and had organised a week long trip to Koonalda cave for September this year. They were to investigate the possibility of long term Aboriginal use of the cave and try out some new survey equipment developed by CSIRO. FUSI members were invited on the trip. A week before the trip was due to leave, permission to access the cave was denied. The reason given, was that the legislation that proclaimed the area as a Wilderness Protection Zone had made no provisions for granting access permits!

South Australia has 6 other wilderness protection zones. On the relevant government website it is clearly stated that you can walk, drive and camp in these Zones. So in terms of access for scientific work, does the same stuff=up apply to those other 6 zones, or does one has to ask, in good conspiracy fashion, is there something else going on? It appears at this stage that it will take months to fix as the wheels of legislation take some time to move. Letters to the Minister would move things along.

His address:

Mr Ian Hunt
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation.
Parliament House,
North Tce,
Adelaide.
South Australia.

Relevant websites for information.

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/Park_management/Wilderness_protection_in_South_Australia

Read the 1992 Wilderness Protection Act Version, 16/5/2013:

<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/WILDERNESS%20PROTECTION%20ACT%201992/CURRENT/1992.28.UN.PDF>

FUSI EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES

12th Oct 2013, Mylor Café

Present: Bronya Alexander (BA; recorded the minutes). No, Heiko took the minutes. Clare Buswell (CB), Thomas Varga (TV), Edwina Virgo (EV), Neville Skinner (NS), Heiko Maurer (HM), Mark Sefton (MS).

Apologies: Aimee Leong, Richard Boyle

Meeting opened at 12:30 pm

1) Future Trips

NOTES AND NEWS

Han Soon Dong: Left to individuals to organise. Probably too expensive at \$4000.00 per head including airfares ex Adelaide. The short timeline given to us by Oxalis was impossible to meet. Though it was thought to be worthwhile to discuss the group discount possibility, maybe move the whole thing to 2014.

Corra Lynn. Sarah B. keen. Sun 27th, is the date of the trip. Leave Adelaide at 7 in the morning.

Thomas to coordinate.

Cuba. Neville to organise for 2014. All going to go if we win the lottery. Bronya commissioned to purchase a ticket if she thinks about it. Mavis, at this point, suggested Speleo Terrorism could work.

Flinders: Trip Oct 17-19. Clare to accost farmer for Mt Sims cave access. Bagalowie hut organised. Reason for trip is to fix hole at side of CsD gate – cement up. – chicken wire as formwork and re-inforcing. Expect 2 newies to come (med & Geo) plus Lily, Neville, Clare. CsD & Mairs. Discussion on logistics. Who is Adolf here? Much discussion about transport options. We could all end up walking.

Naracoorte Trip: Weekend of November 15/17. To look at Zebedee the hand-held 3D Survey device developed by CSIRO . Lots of caving will be done as well.

Tasmania. Two possibilities: A) Fly Friday, back Monday – mostly horizontal. To Mole Ck. B) Extended trip of two weeks. Mainly vertical, including IB, J-F, with people coming and going.

Decided on Friday Dec 13th to Mon 16th. Try for Herberts Pot, Croesus. Back of Maracoopa, Lynns, Tailender. Balldocks. Clare co-ordinating.

Extended trip to IB and JF last week of Feb. first week of March. Dates to be confirmed real soon!

Nullarbor: Around Easter 2014 for 10 days.

Wet 'n Wild. To SE (Mt Gambier). Late January.

Hells Hole, Pics, and maybe a trip down the Lower Glenelg River.

Morialta. SRT practice. Perhaps combine with Flinders Wilderness Club. Probably late November. Decided NOT to combine due to the different nature of what cavers do on ropes. SRT practice to begin the last week of November. Thursdays. 6pm-8pm. This is open only to FUSSI members at the moment.

Tantanoola Lake Cave. As compensation for Vietnam – Neville to organise. Suggests he contacts, DCC at Naracoorte.

2) Fundraising.

There was much groaning, thoughts of washing hair, mowing the lawn etc.



The Streamway Passage of Croesus Cave.
Mole Ck, Tasmania.
Photo: Ivan Riley

NOTES AND NEWS

Bunnings BBQ at Marion again. CB has written the letter. BA to send. Needs to go in now, if we are to have any luck at all for next year.

Grants From F Uni Students Association, (FUSA) now questionable as the Student Services Fee again to be abolished by Herr Abbott's Government. (Despite the fact that when He was a student polly in the days when education was FREE, he was paid by the taxpayer to run Sydney Uni Union. Hang on, he is still being paid by the taxpayer, but now he goes to weddings and Iron Man thingies ...) Meandering discussion mainly cursing Il Duce. Voodoo dolls were discussed.

Federal grants mentioned by Neville and associated buckets of money received by the Dive Club at uni from these grants. Those of us who have applied for such grants from State: Sport&Recreation pointed out that caving does not involve balls, and further Sport and Rec don't know what to do with it, caving that is. However, we will need to buy more lottery tickets ... or apply for Fed grants to do something about membership numbers. Voodoo dolls in relation to balls were discussed ... again.

ASF. Bat research grant money, should be about to come our way. Article on the research we carried out on the Nullarbor in 2011 and 2012 will be published in AC, probably March 2014.

3)

AWOL. Despite the absence of a properly constituted enabling motion, Heiko and Neville left the building for cake and coffee – chaos ensues.

4)

FUSSI Ruby Anniversary. What to do!

a) FUSSI turns 40 next year. NOT being Organised by Clare as celebratory trip to Naracoorte with bat shaped cake and candles. But general mutterings about long weekends in June or Oct



The latest known version of the FUSSI Voodoo Doll.

Last seen making its way, at the tax payers expense, to an Iron Man Contest.

to make it accessible to other cavers and caving clubs to come along and make voodoo dolls...

b) Issue CD with FUSSI newsletters, etc with graphic label. Edwina to look into artistic aspect. The newsletter files have been digitised, just need a bunch of people to index it all.....:))

c) June Long Weekend – or the October Long weekend (would be warmer) were both suggested as dates for this event. Notice needs to go out soon so those from interstate can get themselves organised.

NOTES AND NEWS

5. **Library clean** up on the first Thursday in November, 4.30 pm onwards, Club to provide pizza. Geoff Harrison room. At least it is underground!

Meeting closed, 3:30pm

QUICK GEAR LIST FOR TASMANIA - NON VERTICAL TRIP

For the wet caves. You will mostly be in water up to your knees, but expect full body emersion. Water temperature 4-6 degrees.

Full body wet suit, 4ml is thick enough. Wet suit gloves.

Wet suit boots, not slippers as you need to have a thick soled shoe.

Thermal underwear, and or "shark skin".

Beanie to be worn under your helmet.

For the dry caves:

Overalls, with thermals and a jumper underneath.

Boots, fingerless gloves, rubber gloves.

Camera.

Drysack to put gear in.

COSTINGS FOR THE PROPOSED 4 DAY TRIP IN DEC

Airfares Tasmania: Qantas.

Leaving Adelaide at 6.05 AM Friday, arriving Launceston 10.30 AM via Melbourne: \$211.00

Returning: Launceston: 6.30 PM Monday arriving Adelaide 10 PM via Melbourne \$211.00.

This trip is a non SRT, (in that we do not bring ropes) caving trip. Suggested Caves: Lynnds, Croesus, Baldocks,

Trip is limited to 5 people.

Add Accommodation at Caravan Pk

plus Hire car.

FUSSI gear hire for the weekend \$15.00

Food you eat anyway.

Last year this same trip cost the 5 who attended approximately:

For 3 nights @ \$105.00 per night for 5 people.

Car hire for the 4 days was \$175. per person. Add petrol for cca 300 km.

Airfares were \$404.00 return, same flight details as above.

Food you eat anyway.

PLEASE NOTE: that to attend this trip, you must have been caving with FUSSI and have at least 4-5 hours of caving experience. *Please talk* with the FUSSI executive about this trip and the requirements. Some gear can be borrowed from other FUSSI members, or your friends.

We do not wish for your to come to Tasmania and discover that cold, wet, caving is not for you.

The deadline for getting a place on this trip is the Monday the 28th of Oct, as we have to put permits in ASAP. First in gets a place.

WHAT'S ON

- Oct: 18th - 20th Lower Flinders: Leave Friday night, return Sunday.
Contact: fussi@fussi.org.au
- Oct 27th Sunth One Day trip, Corra Lynn, Yorke Peninsula. Contact: fussi@fussi.org.au
(Date to be confirmed.)
- November 7th **Library clean up.** 4.30–8.30 pm
Contact Edwina. Come along and look through the rather splendid FUSSI library collection, help us catalogue the latest additions and socialize over pizza. On campus.
- Nov: 15/17th Naracoorte. Leave Friday night, Return Sunday late afternoon early evening.

16-30th Nov. EXAMS, general gloom...
END of YEAR BREAK: 1st Dec to 24th of Feb 2014

- Dec. 12/16th Tasmania. Fly in Fly out. Leave 6am Friday, return 6pm flight from Launceston on the Monday.
Limited to 5 people. Caves are Cold & Wet. Wet suits mandatory.
Contact: fussi@fussi.org.au

2014 FUSSI turns 40

- Jan 4/5 ASF Council Meeting. Bankstown Sydney
Someone from FUSSI has to go to this!
Contact: fussi@fussi.org.au
- Jan 18-19th Mt Gambier. Contact: fussi@fussi.org.au
- March 1–9th Tasmania. SRT competent only.
Limited to 6 people.
Contact: fussi@fussi.org.au
- March: 14/16th Wet and Wild trip Mt Gambier
- April 18th – 27th Nullarbor 10 days. Includes Easter and Anzac Day holidays.
- June Long weekend FUSSI 40th celebrations Naracoorte. Possible bat count as well. This is a tentative date.