



FUSSI Newsletter

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IF YOU GO INTO THE WOODS TODAY ...

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**Front Cover Photo: FUSSI
Members at Mole Ck. Tasmania**

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LOWER FLINDERS? COME AND PLAY WITH ROPES

Present: Thomas V, Aimee Leong, Daniel Dingwall, Michael Meynell-James, Mark Sefton, FUSSI and Callum, Matt Smith, and 2 others from Scout Caving Group and Tom S from CEGSA.

Friday evening saw me even keener to leave work than normal; and due to a skipped lunch, I was able to get away an hour early, pointless in hindsight.

My trip was fairly uneventful, travelling from my home in Cleve by myself and stopping to enjoy a couple of pints in the rather busy Carrieton pub. From there I proceeded to the hut where we were staying, arriving at around 10pm and getting the fire going, with the rest of the FUSSI crew expected around an hour later.

Well after boredom had set in, (around 12:45 am) Thomas, Aimee, Mark and Michael arrived; having skilfully navigated around 16 kangaroos, a herd of horses and... a duck.

The night was cold, with Aimee complaining that she was freezing in spite of wearing a down jacket inside her sleeping bag.

Saturday morning started with bacon and eggs, (thanks to Aimee) and plenty of coffee.

We headed to Mairs cave at around 10:30 in beautiful weather, getting some rigging completed by the time the Scouts arrived sometime after 11.



With SRT being the main objective of the trip, we were soon lining up to use the rope. A belay was set up for my first descent, so I could demonstrate my skills to Thomas, until he was happy that I understood that we weren't base jumping or something. Thanks to my large shed at home and regular rope practice, transferring the skills to a cave environment was fairly straight forward.

After giving me some helpful advice as I made my first climb out of the cave, Aimee was the next to ascend. She climbed about 2/3 of the way up the rope, and then appeared to have some technical problems with

the rope getting caught in the ascenders. Thomas rigged another rope and went down to offer some help...

It seems that the only way she got that far up the rope was by using lighter than air tactics or black magic, because the footloops were attached directly to the harness rather than the hand ascender, rendering them just slightly worse than useless! After some heavy grunting and rope ballet, the problem was sorted and the mid-pitch traffic jam was cleared.

Tom S from CEGSA arrived by himself soon after lunch, although he didn't join us on the pitch it was good to see him.

The rest of the day was spent with the scouts using a couple of their own ropes, and practicing hauling with both 3:1 and 5:1 systems near the top of the pitch; the rest of us practicing changeovers and passing knots on the lower section of rope. Both Aimee and I found Thomas's style of teaching – getting

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us to talk through a scenario and discover for ourselves if our train of thought wasn't going to work out – was very helpful in understanding why something is done in a certain way.

Tea was a done in typical FUSSI style, with plenty of food supplied by all, but the credit really once again goes to Aimee, who prepared a delicious roast veggie dish in the camp oven, as well as a tasty salad, to go with chops and sausages cooked by the scouts on their BBQ. This was finished off with an interesting dessert of oranges with chocolate cakes inside them! I understand that this was a once in a lifetime experience, due to the fact that it nearly took a lifetime to prepare – thanks Aimee, and Thomas for helping (for the rest of the weekend the word “oranges” caused Thomas to display some rather strange behaviour...) There was a plentiful supply of red wine; with a couple of FUSSI members (who shall remain anonymous) drinking a few more glasses than what was good for them.

After a much warmer night, some of the Scout blokes, Tom Szarbo, and I went caving in the nearby Clara St Dora cave. Callum and myself pushed through a tight squeeze in the last chamber, Callum, getting further than I, found another small chamber. The humidity was intense in another chamber containing coral type formations, and when I tried to take a photo the camera lens instantly fogged up.

On our way back to camp, we found a nearby geocache and logged our find. Breakfast was cooked by the folk that had stayed for a sleep in, and after a feed of bacon and toad in the hole, it was back to Mairs' cave.

The scouts wanted to practice hauling an injured person from the cave, so we set Aimee up to experiment with a new style of harness that had just been ordered. No injuries resulted, so I was hooked into their hauling rope while I was minding my own business half way up the pitch... and 'rescued'. Thanks guys.

Shortly afterwards the scouts and Tom departed, and Thomas set up a rebelay which under the direction of Mark and Thomas (one on the surface and one on the bottom) Aimee, Michael, and myself were able to get in and out of the cave safely.

Once we had de-rigged and marvelled at a random black jeep that drove up the river bed and then hastily retreated after seeing us staring down the hill at them..., we returned to camp and packed for the trip home. With Thomas feeling rather unwell at departure, we took our separate ways, arriving home late evening.

It was agreed upon that an SRT focused trip is very beneficial especially to those that don't have the luxury of being able to practice at home, and I think most of us were keen to make it a regular event. In any case, it was another very enjoyable FUSSI weekend. See ya next time!

CORRECTION:

The map of Rendelsham Cave, L38, that appeared in the last issue of the FUSSI Newsletter, Vol 26. No. 4. 2015 was wrongly attributed to the Cave Exploration Group of South Australia. The map was by Peter Horne and is published in: Horne P., *Lower South East Cave Reference Book*. Self published by Horne in cooperation with the CEGSA in 1994. We thank Peter for bringing this to our attention. C. Buswell. Editor. FUSSI Newsletter.

The Naracoorte Caves

World Heritage Protection of Fossil Values and Caves

Deborah Craven-Carden

Manager, Naracoorte and Tantanoola

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources

The Naracoorte Caves National Park and World Heritage Area protects 26 caves (Appendix 1) in south-eastern South Australia. 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of World Heritage listing of the Naracoorte Caves, with Riversleigh in Queensland, in recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value of the fossils preserved at the two sites.

Outstanding Universal Values

World Heritage protects and recognizes sites with Outstanding Universal Value; these are natural and/or cultural values that are remarkable and of importance from a global perspective.

At Naracoorte the caves preserve a rich fossil record of mammals, reptiles, birds, frogs and plants spanning the last 500,000 years of the Quaternary ice-ages. Research into fossil deposits across the site has provided insights into ecological responses to climate change and the arrival of humans to Australia (both Indigenous and European) over this time period.

Management Context and Obligations

Under the World Heritage Convention listed properties are to be managed to ensure the protection, conservation and presentation of Outstanding Universal Values. At the Naracoorte Caves management arrangements and legislation serve to protect the site at Federal and State levels by providing for permitting and assessment processes for research and other activities that may affect the World Heritage or other natural and cultural values such as the Critically Endangered Southern Bent-wing Bat, regular reporting on the conservation status of the fossil values to the World Heritage Committee, controlling public access to caves and providing visitor information and services to engage the public in the site.¹

Cave Conservation

a. Protection of the caves within the National Park and World Heritage Area is achieved through careful management of visitation. The caves contain and preserve the fossil values and provide for a wide range of other services including community education and recreation, the protection of geological and speleological values and shelter and breeding sites for the Southern Bent-wing bat and other cave faunas.

To manage visitation the caves within the National Park and World Heritage Area have been classified under the following categories:

1. Public Access Caves: actively presented and interpreted to the public on guided or self-guided tours.
 - a. Show Caves
 - b. Adventure Caves
2. Special Purpose Caves: require specific management to protect the cave's values.
 - a. Reference Caves – strict protection of undisturbed areas.
 - b. Special Natural and/or Cultural Value Caves – protection of sites of outstanding scientific, nature conservation, educational or aesthetic significance.
 - c. Dangerous Caves – hazardous to human life (no caves at Naracoorte are currently classified under this category).
3. Wild and Unclassified Caves
 - a. Wild Caves – caves not classified as Public Access or Special Purpose.

¹ Bat Cave within the Naracoorte Caves National Park is one of only two breeding sites for the Southern Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii basanii*). The other breeding site is located in Starlight Cave, near Warrnambool on the Victorian Coast.

The Naracoorte Caves

World Heritage Protection of Fossil Values and Caves

b. Unclassified Caves – awaiting classification (managed as if they were of Special Natural and/or Cultural Value).

The classification of the caves at Naracoorte was informed through discussions with members of the Australian Speleological Federation and the Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association. In many cases a single cave has multiple classifications. For example, Victoria Fossil Cave has Show, Reference, Special Natural Value and Adventure sections.

Implications for Recreational Cavers

All cave access is managed following the guidelines of the management plan. Cavers wishing to visit a cave must submit a permit application to the Manager, Naracoorte and Tantanoola regarding their proposed visit. When considering an application to visit a cave, the Manager takes into account the cave classification, the purpose of the proposed trip and the skills and experience of the group.

Partnerships for cave conservation

Caves are complex environments and are far from static. Visitation impacts on cave condition and can disturb cave faunas. Changes in environmental conditions on the surface either through natural processes (e.g., fire) or management actions (e.g., removal of exotic trees, re-establishment of native vegetation, watering of gardens) can also affect cave condition.

Monitoring of the caves, management of visitation through limiting the number of visits per year and controls on group sizes are some of the strategies applied at the site to ensure that cave conditions are maintained or where possible, improved. Partnerships with cavers are an important part of these strategies, particularly with regards to supporting cave monitoring through reporting on and responding to issues or changed conditions within caves and developing search and rescue capacity and capability.

The recent Flinders University Speleological Society Inc. visit to the Naracoorte Caves National Park and World Heritage Area on the October long weekend 2014 provided further opportunity to discuss these management issues and challenges. A major outcome of the weekend was the affirmation of the strong partnership between cavers and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources to achieve the best conservation and protection outcomes for the site.

The track marking and cave protection work undertaken by cavers over the weekend is greatly appreciated and we look forward to working together on future projects.



Photo Monitoring in Blackberry Cave. Oct 2014
Photo: Aimee Leong

The Naracoorte Caves

World Heritage Protection of Fossil Values and Caves

Appendix 1

Caves of the Naracoorte Caves National Park and World Heritage Area

Cave Name	Cave Number	Cave Management Classification
Victoria Fossil Cave	5U1	Part- Show, Reference, Special Natural Value, Adventure
Bat Cave	5U2	Special Natural Value
Alexandra Cave	5U3, 5U90	Part- Show, Reference
Blanche Cave	5U4, 5U5, 5U6	Show
Appledoor Cave	5U7	Wild
Blackberry Cave	5U8, 5U9	Part- Wild, Adventure, Special Natural Value
Wet Cave	5U10, 5U11	Part- Show, Adventure
Cathedral Cave	5U12, 5U13	Part- Wild, Adventure, Special Natural Value
Sand Cave	5U16	Unclassified (managed as Special Natural Value)
Robertson Cave	5U17, 5U18, 5U19	Part- Wild, Special Natural Value
Fox Cave	5U22	Part- Adventure, Special Natural Value
Little Victoria Cave	5U44	Wild
Un-named Cave	5U49	Wild
Un-named Cave	5U50	Wild
Un-named Cave	5U51	Wild
Wombat Cave	5U58	Unclassified (managed as Special Natural Value)
Saddle Cave	5U62	Reference
Sand Funnel Cave	5U72	Reference
Peppertree Hole	5U89	Wild
Pavy's Plunge	5U94	Wild
Little Cathedral	5U98	Wild
Frog Hole	5U119	Wild
Un-named Cave	5U122	Wild
Un-named Cave	5U127	Wild
Un-named Cave	5U128	Wild
Un-named Cave	5U129	Wild

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
9. Oct 2014

THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE FLY-IN, FLY-OUT TRIP

Maurer, Leong, Skinner, Buswell and Varga.

Preamble: There were six of us booked for the flying FUSSI visit to Mole Creek Karst in Tasmania, but Michael Meynell-James got himself a job as a foster parent for his niece's two small children. This definitively ruled him out of any leisure activities, let alone caving in Tasmania.

Trip did not get off to a good start: we got a text message (a UK mobile number!!) telling us our MEL-LST flight had been pushed back to depart MEL at 11:45, which meant a long wait at Tullamarine. As well as advising the car rental company of the change of schedule (they were happy to take our money) and National Parks that there would be a delay in picking up keys – putting the first day's caving at risk. Clare got onto the Qantas customer service (131313) and pulled the DR trick, resulting on a later flight out of ADL: 7:25.

Arrived at airport at 6:30 after good nights rest at Chateau St Main, Lee Coshell, an ex FUSSI President, kindly gave us a lift so we saved Taxi fare. Clare got hold of a customer service person, yes they still exist, and she efficiently checked in our luggage, avoiding the long queue that looked daunting. Just as we'd finished and were looking for a suitable coffee shop, Thomas, Aimee & Neville arrived. We left them to it and got into the coffees at Cocolat, but were interrupted by another message saying our MEL-LST flight had been further delayed! Soon A,N&T had cleared check-in and joined us in moaning about the imminent demise of a national treasure by a bloke named Joyce....

Soon enough we were underway and off the plane in Melbourne by 9:35 (local time) where there was nothing to but moan about the imminent demise of a national treasure and be bemused by information screens telling that our flight departed at 9:00 and was boarding at 11:35. We made our way to the departure gate, gate 29 – which was about as far away from civilization as you could get (and not a traveller within cooee). Another ten minutes past the advertised time, we were finally allowed to board our Dash 8-400, the biggest of the Qantas deHavilland Dash-8 fleet at 76 seats. The weather was mostly cloudy (as it had been on the previous leg) and we had a bit of a hard-ish landing at Launceston, but otherwise the flight was unremarkable. Although, I did score a second pen from the cabin staff.

Launceston was mild and cloudy and the plane stopped as far away from the baggage claim area as possible without crossing over the perimeter fence and finally brought us to our first destination at 1:35pm, only three hours late. The baggage handlers were very efficient and we lumped our gear over to the hirecar, a Kia Thermometer 7-seater, which Thomas had organized for \$100/day with Europcar. An appropriate choice, as it was roomy and fitted all our gear fairly easily.

So onto Deloraine and shopping (\$210 for food, \$120 for booze) by H, A&N at the local Woolworths while C&T charmed the local National Parks people into surrendering precious keys that granted access to caves. Alas, the Deloraine delicatessen is no more, or at best being renovated. Much wringing of hands, by those suffering from its loss.

By 4pm we departed for Mole Creek and our cabin at the Mole Creek Caravan Park - \$315 for three nights. Here we unloaded and quickly dressed for Genghis Khan to use as a try-out for the gear. That is, C,A,N&T went (braving the rain), leaving H to rest and make tea.

Gengis Khan trip report by Aimee.

It was a late entry into the cave; after a few delayed flights from Adelaide and a slightly stressful morning. There was a brief stopover at Deloraine Woolies; where we picked up supplies for the next 3 days and then it was onwards bound to Mole Creek. After offloading all our crap (sorry, read: gear) to our home for the next few nights; there was a slight sway in decision as to whether or not to go check out caves that evening. The bottles of wine were quietly calling out to us in the distance 'drink me! Drink me!'; however we all ignored the insistent callings and decided to go caving!!

THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE FLY – IN, FLY- OUT TRIP

Leaving home base about 6pm, we found the turn off in Mole Creek National Park; whereby the first gate was open, and Clare did the honours to open the 2nd gate. When we parked; there was a slight drizzle and stupidly enough I had left my rain jacket back at home base, so it was bush bashing in the light drizzle. It was slightly cool; so in went a spare woollen thermal into the caving bag; as well as a beanie on and 2 layers of thermals under the heavy duty cotton overalls. Gaiters were a godsend; so deeply in debt to Clare for suggesting to bring them along- a last minute decision for me! There was small talk of leeches; so on went RID onto the shoes. Alas, in about 5 minutes; our group was attacked by the bloodsuckers. Eek!!

So it was a slight meander up the hill; and we ended up at a fork in the bush. To go up the hill or not to go up the hill? We then decided to not go up the hill; where we found an entrance to a cave; however both Thomas and Clare had a bit of a look around and decided that it was not Ghengis Khan. So up the hill we all trundled to the next cave entrance; where we thought that was Ghengis Khan; however after trying the key to the cave; it was then figured out it was Kubla Khan; and the first cave we had dropped into was Ghengis Khan. Sigh. So back we trundled through the beautiful damp mossy bushland; which was also slippery as buggery.

After (finally!) entering Ghengis Khan, there was a slippery steep drop whereby Clare put up a hand line so we had something to hold onto. There was then also a ‘ummmmm I need someone with a longer set of legs down here’- whereby Thomas went down and helped sort out the hand line and a safe way of getting down into the bowels of the cave. After making our way a bit deeper into the cave; we were again at slight loss as to where to go; however use of another makeshift hand line (from Thomas’s caving bag rope); we were all able to make our way safely down, down, down. It opened up into a big chamber; with a large stalactite structure in the distance. Clare made her way down deeper into the bowels; with the rest of us following and very gingerly stepping around delicate structures and formations.

There was a short: ‘hey guys, I’ve found the aragonites!’ by Clare, so the rest of us followed. Lo and behold, it was love at first sight for me. I was awestruck by the cluster of amazing formations!! Near the aragonites were a long stream of thin, delicate straw stalactites; however it was the aragonite that really took my fancy. Quite a bit of time was spent by all of us taking lots of photos; of just about every angles of just about every aragonite speleothem that was there (there were many, hehe). After about 2 hours (?) in the cave, we were starting to get cold, so we all decided dinner and the wine were calling, and decided to make our way out of Ghengis Khan.



Aragonite in Genghis Khan.
Photo: C. Buswell

Upon leaving Ghengis Khan, it was still daylight and the exit was quite slippery as it was drizzling quite a bit more. Down and around the hill we went; with Thomas discovering the leech had decided to firmly attach itself to his wrist. There were desperate attempts to look for salt (which was back at home base), matches (back at the car) and RID (also thought to be back at the car). After a quick discussion, we decided to make haste for the car where it held leech killing implements. Neville and I were charging through the bush when Clare suddenly exclaimed that there she indeed had RID on her, so she stopped

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to infect the leech on Thomas in layers of RID. It was also later noted that a leech had decided to latch onto Clare's lip around the same time.

After arriving at the car, there was a frantic check on everything for leeches. There were leeches of every size and shape imaginable. After taking off my beanie, I discovered I had blood dripping down my forehead; and came to the conclusion that a small leech had decided to latch onto me at some point; however it was only a small 'bite'. It began to drizzle a bit more, so we all jumped into the car; leaving Clare out in her waterproof trog suit to close the gate after us.

It was then time to head back; with us arriving for home base about 9.30pm where Heiko had kindly started to make spaghetti for dinner. It was a beer or two, followed by some wine. A great first cave in Tassie- thanks team!! ☺

Heiko Continues

By the time the troops returned, suffused with joy, at 8:30, dinner was ready, except the spaghetti. So to speed things up we boiled the water in the kettle, cranked up the big hotplate to full blast and waited expectantly. Well, to cut a long story short, at 10pm Thomas had the bright idea of purloining the camp kitchen hotplates and using them. Welcome relief! A packet (500gms) of spaghetti, 2x750ml of tomato sauce, as well as vegie bits, went in and half was eaten, leaving 200gms plus a vat of sauce for leftovers. But the salad was finished with some relish. And so, nearing the witching hour, to bed, perchance to dream.

Next day dawned somewhat brighter with no rain evident. And by 9:30 we had donned wet suits, gloves, thermals, Sharkskins and beanies and were ready to tackle Croesus cave. But wait! Did Thomas remember the key? Of course! What about the lock? No problem! This was not on the plan! With fear and trepidation we surrendered to our fate and plunged into the icy waters of the entrance pool where several of the males found their inner Sopranos and the females practiced levitation techniques. Alas to no avail: gravity sucks!



The Golden Stream way. Photo Neville Skinner.

The overnight rain had not led to high water volumes and the level seemed fairly average; your hands and knees got wet, but the rest not.

And so we suffered from a surplus of uuuhss, ahss, and 'Fuck this camera crap' – the latter from the poor sods who provided illumination, standing in freezing water, while the budding SpeleoProjects photographers barked more and more outlandishly and impossible instructions: "hold it" (for 5 minutes), "more to the

left" (which left – you're hanging upside down, back-to-front, from your elbows), "less spot, more wide beam" (when you only have your right ear to work the muddy light switch) - you get the picture (pun intended).

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By the time we by-passed the Masterlock, we were mostly sub-hypothermic, so we covered the rest of the cave and trip out, more rapidly to re-warm, and without incident. A better way to go would be to get to the Golden Staircase reasonably quickly and return more slowly, to enjoy the more extensive decoration further into the cave.

We had planned to meet Cathie Plowman and David Butler from the Northern Caverneers, at 3:00pm for a trip into the back of Maracoopa Cave. We had just enough time to get a take-away Latte at the Maracoopa Café before we drove to the Maracoopa Cave car park and had some lunch while chatting with Cathie and David. By four, CANT, CP & DB (sorry no acronym: not enough vowels) were away, while H went in search for a National Parks permit. These have always been expensive and 2014 proved no exception at \$60 for a two-month pass. There was no 3-day pass and the \$60 was the cheapest option.

To the Back of Marakoopa. Photos and story by Neville Skinner

After leaving Croesus Cave at around 2:30pm, we had to hurry to be at Marakoopa Cave by 3pm, as that was the time we had arranged to meet our local guides Cathie Plowman & David Butler. Although they still had not arrived when we got there, we appreciated this as we still had to gulp some lunch down, and sort out our SRT gear before they arrived. When they did arrive a short time later, very pleased to see us, we were in the middle of having lunch while at the same time getting changed into our caving gear (again).

After a quick run-down of the cave, they explained that we would not require SRT gear, as they normally accessed the back of Marakoopa Cave using a handline to assist in climbing down a rock wall. Once everyone was geared up, we headed off to the Marakoopa show cave, where David let us in, but we had to be quiet while David established a tour was underway. Having confirmed this was the case we hurriedly retreated to a small area just off the main path and waited quietly in the dark until the tour group passed us on their way out.

The time was now just after 3:30pm, and we wandered down the tourist path until we hit the end, marked by a steel piping fence. At that point David climbed over the fence and connected a long tape to a fixed anchor plate in the rock, and then climbed down mid-way to assist any others requiring help.

After that, David returned to rig a climbing rope to a couple of fixed anchor plates in the roof above the tourist path so that Clare, who had indicated her preference to SRT over wall climbing, could abseil into the lower section. Looking at the stream below, I was pleased I had committed to the 8m wall climb, rather than getting my boots wet.

Once we had all regrouped on the bottom, we headed off through a flood zone area where we encountered a restriction blocked by sand and pebbles. After David had cleared the restriction we all squeezed through and reassembled in a large chamber on the other side.



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We then headed off to an area where we encountered straws, a large area of shelfstone, pool spars and helictites.



By now it was about 4:30pm and we had to move on, but David had said he had something special to show us, if only he could remember where it was. We didn't have to wait long though, as we soon heard some excited calling coming from an adjacent area. Except for Heiko, who had already started to head back, we headed off to investigate, and there it was...

Try to imagine a very thin (think 0.5mm) Helictite growing sideways, parallel to the floor and perfectly straight, like a ruler, defying gravity and from what I could see at least 30cm long. This certainly played with my mind. My fellow cavers were happy to move their helmet lights around until I got the reflection off the helictite that I needed to capture the moment, only to find the decoration was too miniscule for my Lumix camera to focus on! The auto-focus could only see the objects behind it, and without my glasses I was struggling to see it as well. I needed my Nikon and extra lights, neither of which I had brought on the trip as I did not want to lug them through all the caves, because of the water expected in the caves. After 5 minutes of trying it was time to move on, but in the knowledge that I have a reason to return to Marakoopa.

We then walked around the back of a rock-pile that led us into a small tunnel that led to another tunnel containing long straws hanging from the ceiling. To avoid risk of damage to these straws, an alternate parallel route through a rockpile allowed us to bypass the straws and arrive at the other end of the tunnel they were in. Here we found an area containing a fine example of flowstone, with more straws for added affect.



Very Pretty Things in the Beginning of the Streamway in Marakoopa Cave.

THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE FLY – IN, FLY- OUT TRIP

Directly behind and adjacent to the flowstone was a wonderful display of curtains, in a semi-circular shape that closed off a small alcove of straws. You can get an idea how big the curtain display was from the picture.



Aimee & Clare inspect the curtain



Looking up from underneath the curtain

At 5:40pm we started the journey back, climbing back up the rock wall to get back on the pathway, before stopping off in the tourist section for some 30 minutes or thereabouts, to view the glowworms. With legendary Cathie Plowman, who wrote the book “Living Lights - The glowworms of Australia and New Zealand”, leading us out... we had no choice. Of course it was a wonderful experience, standing in the darkness waiting for our eyes to adjust and then watching the ceiling as it transformed itself into a Nullarbor night sky.

Anyone interested in the book can borrow it from the FUSSI library. I also recommend you listen to a 15 minute interview with Cathie by the ABC, about her interest in glowworms at <http://blogs.abc.net.au/tasmania/2014/01/living-lights-itty-bitty-lights-fascinate-cathy-plowman.html>



We arrived back to the carpark around 6:30pm.

Cathie & David kindly offered to go straight to the pub, and let them know we were coming and to expect us just before 8pm. Of course we were running a little late, and arrived at the pub at 8:10pm to find Cathie & David had already ordered meals for us, and were just starting to consider how they could eat 7 meals between the two of them when we arrived at 8:10pm. We were grateful to them for ordering the meals otherwise we would have missed out, as there was a strict 8pm deadline on ordering meals. Even more importantly, we would not have gotten any desserts (or coffee), if it were not for being in the company of Cathie & David, who are well-known to the establishment, having stayed there on many occasions.

After dinner we were given a tour of the upstairs accommodation floor, which was like a museum... quaint little bedrooms that were just like I used to remember when I was a child. All furnished and some even had an ensuite. (I recommend this as a very comfortable alternative

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to camping, should you prefer something a little warmer or when the Mole Creek caravan park closes to allow water from the local swollen creek to flow through the park. Their website can be found at <http://www.molecreekhotel.com/accommodation.htm>)

At right.

The Crew:

L to R: David Butler,
Cathie Plowman, Thomas
Varga, Heiko Maurer,
Neville Skinner, Aimee
Leong, Clare Buswell



Heiko continues:

We talked and talked,
with the IUS conference in
Sydney in 2017 top of
the agenda and a quick
bondage session with the
MTDE, Ferno and ??
harnesses..

We then transferred the
drinking venue to our digs
and continued with the chat, concentrating of conference field trips. Suggestions centered on the Nullarbor and the Kimberleys as this would have novelty appeal to the visitors from the North, whereas Kubla Khan would not. (??). Many thanks to our wonderful hosts Cathie & David, who enriched the experience with their company and knowledge.

By 11:30pm some more responsible members of the group had/needed a shower and everyone welcomed the well-earned rest, vowing Sunday would be a leisurely start, as the weather forecast was good and we could use the opportunity to dry we gear.

Never let it be said the FUSSI isn't true to its word: It was after 11 before we left for our first stop, the Marakooa Café. Cups of coffee and chocolate for all, nibbles for some and the purchase of trinkets, including Cathie's book: "Living Lights" for others. Thence to the Caver's Hut to re-live past glories for some and scare the living daylights out of others. The latter failed miserably and, instead, resulted in queries regarding the purchase of same.

We returned to our digs and prepared for the trip into Tailender. By 1:30 CANT were off and running, leaving H to write this report.

Imagine his somewhat resigned surprise when the car returned after only 2 hours away. Apparently there was no Tailender key to be found. A quick check with NP to ensure we did have all necessary keys could have picked up the mistake. Aimee was feeling a little carsick so she decided to stay behind while the remnant, ever-diminishing FUSSI party went for Haile Selasse. Meanwhile A&H rested and saved their energy for the psychological onslaught of packing to leave the next day, as well as the preparation of a hearty and nutritious meal to the real cavers. After all, we had significant quantities of alcohol still to be 'processed'.

Haile Selasse - report by Clare.

Leaving HA to rest and help out with the consumptions of victuals, CNT trundled off to Haile Selassie. We found the gate by the side of the paved walkway up to the tourist cave, opened the gate, rigged the line down the slope, and slowly worked our way around bits of the cave. For some strange reason

THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE FLY – IN, FLY- OUT TRIP

we left the map of the cave safely in the car so Clare rummaged around in her memory of the last time she had been in the cave, 10 years before hand, and tried to remember where the upper level was or the lower bit or the bit around the corner. The Three of us had a grand ol' time slithering around the place, taking photos and exploring nooks and crannies. On reflection a hand line would be useful for a



Pretty things in Haile Selasse. Photo. C Buswell

climb-down to the lower section, but the usual caving extender legs and arm trick worked reasonably well for this section.

The cave itself, though small, is well decorated and if you are looking for an easy trip after a grueling cave or two then Haile Selasse certainly meets that criteria. We returned to camp to find that AH had prepared the usual FUSSI evening meal Feast. Much thanks to them!

Thomas writes:
Sunday 7 December.

For our final cave visit for this trip we planned to have a look at Sassafras Cave. We got up at a sensible hour, had breakfast and packed everything up ready to go. After a short drive on the sealed road we headed down an unsealed road along a pleasant little gully. After encountering a closed gate we changed attires and had a photographic session as all other serious expeditions do.

Our plan was to follow the waterway and look for the cave entrance along the creek line. We followed what used to be an access road and proved to be a nice walk among trees and then open grassland till we hit Sassafras Creek. A bit of debating about where we were on the map was followed by some more walking in parallel with the creek until we opted to actually go down to the creek and start walking back, looking for entrances along the way. As it turns out we spotted the



THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE FLY – IN, FLY- OUT TRIP

cave entrance sooner than the creek bed itself - we were expecting hours of Tasmanian bush-bashing in the name of looking for the entrance.

Once at the entrance we noted that the creek flows out the cave and is reasonably large. After negotiating some puddles (being early summer, no flowing water) we were walking in a sizable passage on a creek bed. This opened into a flat but wide chamber indicating that we were in a reasonable cave. The path onwards was along a passage that allowed us to comfortably walk upright and only occasionally having to resort to negotiate a lower ceiling level by getting down on hands and knees.

Along the way we found many areas with glow-worms that prompted us to take a seat and turn our lights off to indulge in the visual spectacle. We indulged multiple times despite time slowly ticking away.

Around 2/3s of our way in the rocky creek bed gave way to soil and dirt with traces of mud. Further in the passage started to narrow and there was a smell of wet forest in the air. We assumed that we were close to the other entrance of the cave but were running low on time to make it a through-trip. As a result we turned around and started making our way out, stopping for some more serious photos every now and then.



Three lay about rock 'shelves'.

After reaching daylight again we headed back to our vehicle along a slightly different - but even more pleasant way - than on our way in. As we were changing clothes we all agreed that it was a very pleasant experience. One I am sure we will be repeating on future trips.

The FUSSI BBQ Fund raiser at Bunnings in November saw the following occur!

Ian, Aimee, Neville, and Thomas never want to see a sausage again!
Photo: Peter Horne.



WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

Text and photos, Neville Skinner

Participants: Neville Skinner (Trip Leader), Daniel Dingwall, Tim Featonby & Nicole Baillie
1st-5th Jan 2015

After several calls from Daniel, asking when would I come over and check out a few caves on the Eyre Peninsula, I finally gave in and promised I would do so sometime after Christmas and before I went back to work, depending on when my good friends Tim & Nicole would be in town. Tim had left his previous job and was looking for another interest in his life, so had decided to take up geology. He also shared an interest in caving, so I asked him if he was interested in doing some caving on the Eyre Peninsula, followed by a trip to the Gawler Ranges National Park, something I had wanted to do for several years. We also discussed the possibility of a trip to visit the caves in the lower Flinders Ranges on the way back from the Gawler Ranges, and so the trip started to fall into place.

We were aware there was some 40 degree weather on the way, but we figured that was unlikely to be a problem, as we had both survived summer trips to the Nullarbor in the past and I had survived a one week trip to Yarrongabilly in a constant 40-degree heat wave some 12 months earlier.

The plan was to travel to Cleve, check out a few old mines, possibly a couple in the Whyalla area, then head down to Whalers Way, the other side of Pt Lincoln, during the peak of the heat wave to investigate some sea caves, then travel up the West Coast to the Sheringa area when it was cooler to explore caves there, before continuing up to Elliston to explore more sea caves/features. This plan conformed to minimising our exposure to the heat of the day, in accordance with the official forecasted temperatures for all the areas we were to visit.

Tim & Nicole left Adelaide on Monday for Clare, where they spent a couple of days checking out wineries before heading off to meet me at Pt Augusta on Wed afternoon. I was supposed to meet them at around 3pm, but did not leave Adelaide until lunchtime, as I had to do a few things before I departed, including picking up a 15m wire ladder from Mark's place. I met up with Tim at 4pm and then went shopping for supplies, knowing the shops would not be open the next day (New Years Day). We arrived in Cleve at approx. 7:10pm, and went straight to Dan's place, where we had been invited to put up camp in his garage. Further to this Dan had offered to fire up the BBQ on our arrival, so we spent the evening enjoying good country hospitality.

The next morning (New Year's Day) the five of us (Dan, Tim, Nicole, myself and our new mascot Will der Beast) arrived at around 9am at a farm on the East coast, where we had arranged access to enter an old mine. This mine was supposedly a BHP owned Dolomite mine, with a 30m vertical shaft dug by hand.



Entering the property on which the mine sits.



Will (der Beast) testing caving helmet for suitability.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

Before entering the mine we had to remove old timbers and corrugated iron from on top of it, and were surprised to find a large colony of Passalid beetles had taken ownership of the entrance. These beetles were in the order of 40mm in length and about 20mm wide, and very strong. I had not seen them before and at first I thought they were Christmas beetles (after all, it was just after Christmas). Then one climbed up the inside leg of my overalls, determined to head for higher, darker ground. I fought back to protect my jewels, but it was not easy to dislodge the creature that clung on tight, had engaged low-ratio 6-leg drive and powered on, digging in, while I looked for any method to stop it that did not involve cutting my overalls off. After a fight that lasted a minute, I emerged the victor and got to keep my overalls on and intact.

It was not until I returned to Adelaide and Googled these beetles that I was able to identify them as Passalid beetles, and even then I did not find a photo of the identical form as that found at the mine.



Passalid beetles at mine shaft entrance.



Dolomite mine entrance, showing air pipe.

We then put a notice on the dash of the vehicle advising we were members of the FUSSI, the number in our group, the time we entered and the time we expected to return to the surface.

I planned to abseil in first to check the timber formwork for safety, and for live snakes on the bottom. But as I started to descend I noted the top row of timbers surrounding the entrance were rotted and close to collapse, so I aborted and we placed a solid piece of timber right across the top, just to the left of the air pipe (as shown in the picture), and then re-routed the climbing rope and rope protector over the top of this timber (not shown).

On the way down I noted the ladder was not continuous to the bottom, but stopped halfway down before continuing on the opposite side of the shaft. I immediately advised those on the surface, in case it impacted anyone's exit plans.



Nicole entering shaft - note use of split ladder.



Bottom of entrance shaft (pile of dirt is from the surface)

Air

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

pipe laying silent



Old rail-cart still works



One of the two mine faces



Nicole was next to abseil in, followed by Tim, and then Dan. It ended up taking about an hour to rig and for the four of us to get down into the mine. The mine tunnel on the bottom headed off horizontally in one direction for about 40-50m, and in the other direction for about 80-100m. Both of these passages contained a very narrow gauge railway line (about 50cm), and on one side, near the end of the passage, there was a small flatbed rail-car, still in good working order.

The entrance shaft also had an air-pipe from the surface to the passages, and then on to the end of one of the passages. This was used to blow clean air from the surface to the mine face, where it then pushed the 'old' air back up the entrance shaft to the surface. I imagine this might have been because of the resultant fumes from the use of explosives, or possibly because of excessive dust, as we found the air to be fresh. Dan said he knew of an old miner who worked in that mine, who had told him it was not uncommon to have young boys visit and turn off the air-pump for a laugh. This meant the miners had to down tools and return to the surface to restart the air supply.

The passages had several dead snakes, lizards, birds and even a dead sheep present, but in all cases had been dead for a long time so were not unpleasant. We spent some time examining the rock walls of the mine, and playing with rail car, before we headed out.

This time Nicole was the first to leave, climbing up the ladder, but when she reached the top of the ladder it broke away from that top timber it was attached to and a one metre length of it crashed down onto the floor of the mine. This was not a problem for Tim, Dan & I, as we had been well clear of the entrance shaft waiting for the "Clear" signal. I was thankful then that we had relocated the rope at the top before entering, as we were to SRT out. We had spent about an hour in the mine, which I thought was an extremely interesting piece of history.

We left the mine site at 12:30am and headed for the local wind farm, where Dan had accepted an apprenticeship as an electrician. I have always wanted to see wind turbines up close, as I could not believe they are as big as we are told... They are!

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Dan shows us where he will soon be working.



Semi-trailer next to wind turbine.

We spent about 30 mins there just watching them spin, and I was quite surprised at how quiet they were, after all the press we have heard about them keeping people awake at night. The only sounds we heard were the occasional control motor whirring as the blade pitch was corrected for optimal efficiency. Dan explained to us that there was an emergency exit on the floor of the wind turbine tower, and a rope, harness and associated climbing gear provided for a quick abseil exit, 85m to the ground below.

As we were leaving I noticed that a wind turbine about 300m away had a semi-trailer parked at its base, so I took the opportunity to capture the photo that shows the difference in size between the two.

After lunch we headed off to a local farm, not far out of Cleve, to check out a few old hand-dug copper mines on the property. I had read in a relatively recent mining company letter to the local council that there had been “numerous small copper-lead-silver mines mined in period 1850-1920”. Today there are still about a dozen iron-ore mines and a couple of uranium mines on the Eyre Peninsula.

We arrived at the Copper mine at 2:15pm and went straight to the house to let the farmer know we had arrived. Finding the house was easy... you drive past the front door shortly after you enter the property. The owner, Warren, and he asked us to follow him to the mines, to show the way as we would not have found them easily, perched up on top of a hill that overlooked much of the surrounding area.

When we arrived at the mines, Warren gave us a history of the mines and described what to expect when we entered. There were four mines, all in a row about 10m apart. Warren explained the first one went to about “130 feet”, while the next two were only about 10-15m deep, with a side tunnel connecting the two, and the fourth mine went to about 25m. The last mine (shown in the picture with Nicole & Tim talking to Warren) was clearly unstable, with a large quantity of gravel having slipped down the hill into the mine.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Abandoned Copper/Uranium.Iron ore mine.



Tim & Nicole talking to landowner about the local geology

Warren spoke for about an hour, but after the first half an hour I was forced to take refuge under the trees about 5m away, to avoid baking in the sun. By now it was about 33-34 degrees in the shade, and standing in the hot sun was for mad dogs and Englishmen. But that did not seem to bother Tim & Nicole, who respectfully stood in the full sun listening intently to all the farmer had to say about the geology of the area. Hints about the temperature in the sun seemed to go unnoticed.

Daniel & I decided we would tackle the deep mine first, as this looked the most interesting, and we could get started on it while Tim & Nicole were talking to Warren. Furthermore, it would take the most time for the group to rig, explore & de-rig, so we needed to do it first and then we would know how much time we had to do the others, rather than leave it to last and end up not doing it because we were out of time.

We rigged the climbing rope off the back of the 4WD, which Daniel had reversed into a position that allowed the rope to come straight off the vehicle, such that the rope would not be pulled away under load from the one spot we had deemed to be most stable, to minimise risk of small stones dislodging and rolling down on top of people entering or exiting the shaft. A second safety rope was installed that would just allow us to get to the edge of the shaft, where we would start the descent.

This time Daniel went first and was soon on the bottom yelling "Off rope". I went next, while Tim & Nicole started to rig the other entrances. Once in the shaft it headed down at about 60 degrees to the horizontal. I wondered if the miners did this so they could exit by pulling themselves up the rope, or whether they would have used a harness connected to a surface rope, which could have hauled up to the surface using a horse or windlass.

From about 10-15m depth the temperature dropped and on the bottom it was very comfortable. Daniel was waiting on the bottom to show me a small 2-3m dig directly adjacent to the direction of the shaft. It did not make sense that they would have dug such a short tunnel that seemingly went nowhere, unless it was a test tunnel to check for an ore body, or perhaps a tunnel for miners to escape into should the surface collapse into the main shaft. In fact, the latter seemed quite reasonable, since over time the surface had collapsed into the main tunnel, and the short tunnel was barely 2m above the new floor of the shaft. This also explains why the deep shaft does not go anywhere, because the entrance to the lower tunnels would now be around 10m below the existing floor, based on the amount of entrance gravel that has slipped into the main shaft.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Rigging up for the 40m mine shaft.



Neville looking cool, wearing his Uranium PPE.

The walls around the lower section of the main shaft were multi-coloured, as seen in the pictures, suggesting this mine would have been rich in Copper and Iron, but the yellow ore was new to me. I recalled Warren saying he thought they also mined for Uranium here at one stage, and it occurred to me that this might be the yellow rock we could see.



The blue/green is Copper, the yellow I suspect is Uranium ore, the red is Iron ore.

So, after possibly exposing ourselves to uranium, we left the bottom to check out two side tunnels about 15m from the surface, that ran north and south. Perhaps there would be more Uranium? We had to know. The return trip up the slope was quite slow, and it made me realise that SRT is not ideal for ascending angled slopes, because you cannot just push down on your feet to go up, as you have to walk forward at the same time. The north tunnel was somewhat interesting, with the remains of a few

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

mining tools such as barely-recognizable shovels and the remains of a pick, while the south side had nothing of interest except for a swallow's nest.

Once back on the surface, and following Tim's advice, we skipped looking at the middle two mines as Tim reported he had found they had suffered a sand collapse that blocked them entirely, so we just checked out the northern-most mine instead. This was the mine that had suffered the biggest entrance collapse, and once inside the top-level side tunnels we then found more sand collapses that prevented further access. One even had to be careful when exiting, as the sides were easily disturbed and lack of care meant even more rubble sliding down into the mine. It was time to pack up and leave.

We left the mine around 6pm and headed back to the homestead to thank Warren for allowing us on his property, and ended up chatting with him for another 30 minutes or so. He was pleased to talk with us and said we could come back anytime, but in my mind I could only think of one mine worth entering... It had been a great day, but it was not finished - we had promised to take Daniel, his wife Lasma and their two children out to dinner at the local Cleve Hotel. So we raced home, cleaned ourselves up and presented to the Hotel just before 8pm, and just before the food stopped being served, much to the disgust of the proprietor. The next morning we got up early and departed Cleve at 7:15am, heading for Pt Lincoln, about 2 hrs drive away. Today was forecast to be 41 degrees; we needed to be carrying plenty of fluids.

Then we went to speak to the owner of Whalers Way, to introduce ourselves and to seek permission to enter a sinkhole in the area. Whalers Way is like a National Park, except it is on private land. Some say this is the reason it is in pristine condition. The owner was happy for us to enter the sinkhole and said he knew of other caves in the area but was not sure that he could remember how to find them. In my mind I thought of ways I might be able to help him remember, but then dismissed them, as torture is no longer legal in this country. We spoke for about an hour, then headed off to Whalers Way entrance office, where all visitors are required to register and pay a \$30 per vehicle entrance fee. There is a small carpark here should people wish to leave any cars behind. The roads are gravel, sign-posted and well maintained. You do not need a 4WD to enter this area.



Seal Colony at Cape Wiles, Whalers Way.



We found a freak waving at us,
on our way to observing the sea

Initially we stopped just before Cape Wiles and went bush walking for almost an hour to see if we could find a cave that the owner said was in this area (after arriving home, I thought perhaps he meant Calsons Cave, shown on the RAA map, but another very crude CEGSA map shows E12 in the area where we had been looking). Of course we never found anything, but it gave us a chance to spend more time in the baking sun. Daniel had told me there were Death Adder snakes in the area. After leaving this area we drove to the sea caves car park, where we left the car and headed off with lunch and cameras in hand.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Time for lunch, in the entrance to a small cave. another.



Stunning coastal scenery, with one cave after another.

The sea caves were magnificent. The temperature inside the caves was around 25 degrees; had we have taken our bathers with us we could have spent the whole day swimming in the fresh water pools found therein. What better place to spend a hot day, and we basically had it all to ourselves. Many contained pools of water inside, up to 5-8m long in some cases and possibly up to 1m deep, large enough to bathe in with a bottle of bubbly on the rocks.

One sea cave had a small cavern running off it and inside this was a Southern Old Lady Moth (pictured). If you turn the image upside down you will see the body of the moth forms the nose that complements the two eyes on the it's wings. I'll let the pictures speak for them selves...

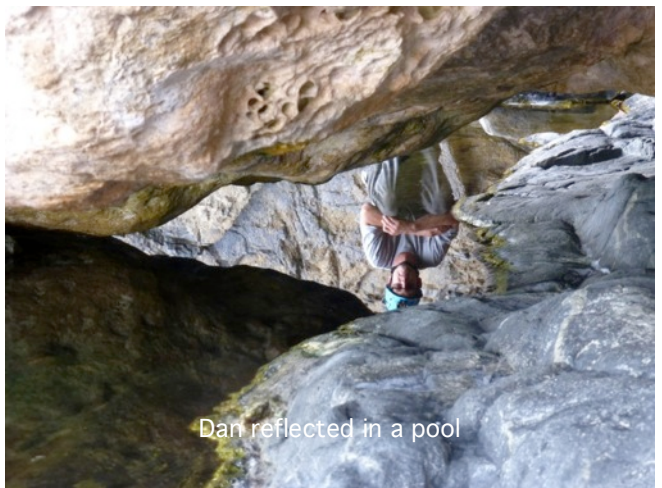


Small Stalactites forming.



Layers of flowstone shown in this rock.

e



Dan reflected in a pool

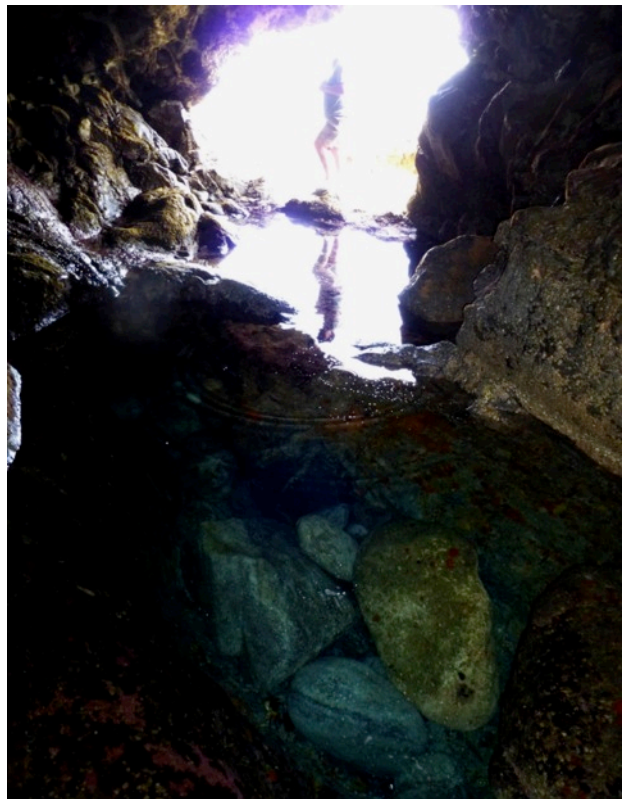
WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Southern Old Lady moths inside the sea caves

Flowstone ledge with picturesque rock pool behind

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Dan inspects cave features while Nicole waits for us at the cave exit, and right, some speleothems.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

After we left the sea caves at around 2:30pm, we headed off to check out the nearby Blowhole and Baleen Rockpool. I was surprised when we arrived, as the name gave no indication of what to expect and it reminded me of Remarkable Rocks on Kangaroo Island, but quite different.

It was essentially a large Granite Rock connected to the mainland by a narrow strip of sharp pointy rocks that had formed a narrow causeway leading out onto the granite, on which the Baleen Rockpool was located. Either side of the rocky causeway were long narrow crevasses, coming in from both sides, which gave the impression of the granite rock being separated from the mainland, but it was here that the water coming up one of the crevasses and hitting the end with a thundering boom, gave the appearance of a blowhole. That's not to say it wasn't a blowhole, I just wasn't able to identify the hole from my vantage points, and various signs in the area warning people of prior deaths that had occurred here was sufficient reason to avoid looking any closer.



After that we headed about 1.5kms further north to Theakstone's Crevasse, another of the seemingly many crevasses in the area, and named after a local pioneering family who settled in the area in 1889. This crevasse is about 100m long from the sea to where it disappears under the viewing area, and about 1.5m wide. It's about 9m from the surface to the water, which is about 13m deep.

We stood and watched in awe as the water formed small Eddy currents as it moved back & forth. This time I could get as close as I wanted to take that special photo, but I was satisfied just to stand on the edge and lean out with arm stretched and camera in hand. There was no point in taking risks, I told myself. Apparently, some time ago two surfboard riders went in to have a look and found the crevasse went back under about 30m. They got out okay on the boards, but I'm guessing they didn't find a spot to turn their boards around.

After that we headed back to a turnoff to the Sinkhole that formed when the road was being constructed in 1970, arriving there at 3pm. The sinkhole is situated right in the middle of the road, enclosed by scrub on one side and fence around the rest of the perimeter. A sign warns that under no circumstances was anyone to enter. Of course we had permission, besides we were not ordinary people, we were cavers.

With the temperature at 40 degrees in the shade, it took extra focus to get motivated. To enter we had to bypass the fence where it met the scrub, wrestle our way through dense scrub for 3m, then drop 1.5m over the edge of the sinkhole onto a small rock, taking care not to fall backwards onto the rock-pile below! Tim & Daniel headed off first in record time, while Nicole & myself were still putting our overalls on. We had been told there was a small lake at the bottom, so I put my mask and fins in, just

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

in case. As I was putting my helmet on, I realized that Tim had left his helmet behind. Better take that with me, I thought... As I reached for mask & fins, I noticed Tim had also left his mask behind. Blast, they'll be waiting for us inside the entrance... we better hurry, I thought.

With Tim's helmet in hand, and camera and masks contained therein, we raced off... over the fence, through the scrub, fell over the lip of the sinkhole, then corkscrewed down through the entrance restriction onto the sand below. They were nowhere to be seen. We visually checked the entrance area for stability, and the way on. I was surprised that we could not even hear Tim & Dan. They must be well ahead of us, I thought.



The fenced off Sink hole in the Road.



Nicole having a look around.

We negotiated the rockpile in a clockwise direction, following the trail left by flowing water marks in the sand from previous downpours. Once on the other side of the rockpile, the water trail disappeared and was replaced by a wall. At this point I could hear the muffled sounds of rocks being moved ahead of us and thought Tim & Dan must be about 20m in front of us. We could have continued to follow the rockpile around but that would have brought us back to the entrance, so I climbed up the wall, located the lead that continued, and called back to Nicole to follow. Another 5m and we came to another junction. I asked Nicole to wait and followed each lead until I met the end of the false leads, so we continued down the remaining lead until we came to the next junction, when we repeated the process. At one stage I stuck my head into an original section of decorated cave and decided we would check that out on the way back. We continued thus until we eventually pushed through a hole and saw the end in front of us, with a small lake on each side. I then realised there was an easier way to enter this last section if we went a bit to the right, so I put that into my memory bank. There was no sign of the other two.

I thought they must have taken the wrong route and are probably waiting for us back at the car. Then Nicole suggested they may have found an alternate route that went to another, possibly larger, lake in the other side of the rockpile that we had missed. B@#%^\$s, I thought, that'd be right!

Well, we're here now so we might as well enjoy. "Look the other way Nicole" I exclaimed, as the overalls and jocks came off and the bathers went on. I carefully picked my way in so I would not disturb the silt too much and went for a swim and look around. The floor of the lake was covered with a heavy layer of black clay, so this was best left alone. After a cool down swim and a few pictures, I put my overalls back on and we headed back to the old section of cave I had seen on the way in.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



The decorations reminded me of Mairs and Clara St Dora caves in the Lower Flinders Ranges. There was a cluster of stalactites, straws, popcorn and a wonderful small section of shelfstone. We gazed on this for 10-15 minutes before heading out.

When we reached the surface it was still 40 degrees, so I headed for the vehicle to rehydrate. And there was Tim & Dan, both looking lonely and bored. They looked at us and asked “Where have you been?” What sort of question was that, I wondered.

I explained we had been caving, found a pool, I took a swim, looked at some cave decorations and generally enjoyed ourselves. They both laughed in disbelief and repeated the question. Despite our best efforts, they would not believe either of us, so I pulled the camera out and flicked through a few recent photos.

I have never seen such a rapid change in attitude from anyone before, and it quickly became evident that I was going back into the cave for another trip, or I was going to die. I opted for another trip in, while Nicole opted to stay behind with Will (der beast). To my surprise I found I still had some difficulty in finding the way back in, probably because of all the zig-zagging I did on the first trip in. Once in the lake area, Tim & Dan wasted no time in hitting the water and cooling down.



On the way out we stopped in at the old decorated section, where Tim spent some time studying the different types of formations.

It was after 6pm when we left Whalers Way after letting the access staff know, who lived in a caravan adjacent to the gate, that everything went well and we were heading home. In fact, we still had two hours driving to do before we arrived at our accommodation, and we had not eaten. So we headed back to Pt Lincoln, where we grabbed some fish & chips from “King Neptunes Seafood &

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

Pasta”, then hit the road. En-route we rang ahead and informed the Sheringa caravan park that we were behind schedule and would not be arriving until after 8:30pm.

We arrived at Sheridan Caravan Park about 9pm, and that was when we realised it was also the Sheridan General Store, the Sheridan pub & bottle shop and the Sheridan Inn restaurant. A few young locals were drinking at the bar, and one was overcome with awe when he saw my FUSSI tee-shirt bearing the words “Flinders University”, preceding the words Speleological Society; this had him thinking I must be a professor. He sat and watched me in awe for some minutes before getting the courage to ask me how long I had taught at the University. It took me some time to explain to him that I didn’t work there and that we were just cavers, but I think he smelled a rat and sensed we were working under cover.

A sign adjacent to the bar said “Trespassers will be shot; Survivors will be shot again”. We got the point. Once we had introduced ourselves to the bar manager, proprietor, security officer, caretaker and grounds-keeper, had a quick visual security check run over us and passed a 10-minute interview, we were directed to drive back down the road about 25m, through a farm gate and down a dirt driveway, where we would find a van with its lights on, near the trees.

It was a little unsettling when we turned the last corner to be confronted with a yard full of unused rusting car wrecks. Were these the vehicles of those poor souls who never escaped? An image of John Jarratt flashed before my eyes, just as I heard Tim mutter those prophetic words... “Wolf Creek.” Surely this must be... No Where Else.



The rear of the Sheringa Caravan Park.



The front of the Sheringa bar and entrance to the Sheringa Inn.

Dan had arranged our accommodation here, and had warned me it was really cheap and not to expect 5-star, but nothing had prepared us for this. Had Dan inadvertently led us into a trap? I decided with Tim sleeping between myself and the door, Dan & I would be okay. Tim was probably thinking “Who dares, Wins”.

Our van had torn flyscreens and could not have been cleaned for some years. So we set to work sweeping the floors and cleaning the kitchenette. I took the dead mouse out from under Dan’s bed, and worried what might slither into my sleeping bag overnight. The next morning we awoke early, but relieved; we had survived. I pulled the curtain aside on my window and found myself looking at a burial plot at the base of the tree outside.

After having breakfast and settling our account (\$30) for the van, we departed quickly, but discretely. Best not to draw attention to ourselves, I thought, just put some distance between us.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



The view out my window, with place of rest at base of tree.



Sheringa Caravan Park – caretakers residence.

Our next stop was the Lake Hamilton Station homestead just down the road, where we sought permission from owner to enter Homestead cave. Daniel had already done the initial legwork on this, but nevertheless we waited patiently for 40 mins in the vehicle while final negotiations took place; such important things cannot be rushed. Dan reported that the owner was pleased to see us, and remembered CEGSA members Ian Lewis & Graham Pilkington from previous trips.

The entrance was a 1.5m hole in the ground, dropping down into the first low chamber, but when I looked for a cave number/tag, I could not find one. After entering we checked out other possible leads before heading down the tunnel with air flowing out of it, which took us into a low restriction for about 4m, where we entered a second chamber. This would have once been a stunning chamber, but sadly over the years has had all its stalactites broken off at ceiling level, presumably by souvenir hunters.



Entrance to Homestead cave E1



First chamber in Homestead cave

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Second chamber in Homestead Cave



Noting a secondary route against the right hand wall, we took the main route down the left side of the second chamber that took us into another area a bit lower down that then led into a third area. This last area was where we met water, albeit shallow water, but the area had short active stalactites that had extended to meet the water, and the reflections were quite pretty. Sadly I didn't have sufficient light on me to light this area up for good photos,



Third area in Homestead Cave E1 – the lake section

I immediately regretted not having donned wetsuit & bathers, but did not feel like crawling back out to change. Tim was keen to head off for a look around the corner, so I gave approval as long as he kept to the right-hand wall away from the lake area, which already had footprints all through the mud from previous visitors, possibly the same people that broke the stalactites off in the previous chamber. So Tim stripped off to his boxers, donned a mask and slithered through the mud, like a US marine in a Hollywood movie. We watched as he slowly disappeared behind the stalactite curtain, until no light could be seen. While he was gone we talked and I played with trying to get some good photos of reflections on the water, but the headlamps were not enough to capture the moment. Some 40-50 minutes later Tim returned, and reported there was much more to see, most of it undamaged because it was not easily accessible to the public. He said this was some of the best caving he had ever done, but it would have been better if we had a map. Sadly I had no idea if a map existed for the cave, so I undertook to find out if there was and to obtain a copy, if possible.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Left: The lake section, Homestead Cave. Right: Tim with camera, returning from a reconnaissance mission

After we exited and put our gear away, we did a quick check of the surrounding area by foot, looking for any other possible cave entrances, before heading back to the homestead to thank the owner for allowing us to explore his cave. He told us there was another “about 2-3 kms” down the road, close to the fence, and a few others that he could not remember where, but we were welcome to look.



So we headed south for a few kilometres and after some 30 mins or so, Tim spotted the said entrance about 10m in from the road. Tim keenly jumped in and checked it out, but it wasn't very deep and didn't have any obvious leads. (I now believe this is cave E78.) Tim then suggested that since this was clearly a good area for caves, we should separate and walk across the paddock looking for more caves, while Dan drove the vehicle to keep pace with us.

After 50m of walking I decided we were probably too close to each other so I moved another 100m away from the road when an adjacent hill caught my attention. I wandered over to it and literally within a minute spotted a cave entrance, which looked very promising. I called to the others and as they were approaching I looked over the other side of the hill and spotted a doline about 30 m away with another cave entrance.



Entrance to cave E6



Entrance to cave E7

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

Neither of these caves had been identified with cave markers near their entrances, so we were excited at finding two new caves. (On returning to Adelaide I learnt from CEGSA that these were probably two known caves, E6 and E7.) By now it was 2:45pm and we had not eaten, so we decided the exploration of these two caves could wait until Easter time.

After a short discussion, we decided to drive the 20kms or so to Elliston for lunch, as we were not keen to try the Sheringa Inn restaurant - no point pushing our luck... So we headed off to Elliston, where we found facilities to be a little more basic than expected - clearly we wouldn't get a pub meal at 3pm, so it had to be the local service station. From the outside that wasn't even appealing, but we were surprised to find the food & service was good. A young couple with two small children ran the place and they looked after us.

After lunch and an ice-cream each, we went to the Elliston Caravan Park to see if they had any cabins available, but found they had no remaining accommodation at all, so we opted for a patch of green grass on the hill instead, to throw our sleeping bags on. For this we paid \$45. Talk about highway robbery!



Point Wellington cliffs



Remnants of old cave at top of the cliffs

About 4pm we went for a drive to the local Point Wellington, to check out the scenery. We then decided to follow the scenic drive to the end, coming back the same way. By sheer luck, I noticed a "lantern" hanging off the top edge of the cliffs, but only for a few seconds as we drove past at 30kph. However, on the way back I asked Tim to pull over so I could check this strange object out that I had seen on the way in. It did not take long to find it, and I quickly grabbed a snapshot as the doubters were making suggestions about what it might have been that I imagined I had seen.

In fact it was the remains of a large "lantern", surrounded by what appears to be many large helictites, evidence of a decorated cave at the top of what are now cliffs. I could not but wonder how deep the cave had been below the ground level when it was formed; now it is on the surface, 50m above the ocean.

We then headed back to Sheringa area, where we had heard there was another cave near the side of the road. In fact we found it 30mins after we had left Pt Wellington. It looked quite deep, with an oblong shaped entrance, partially blocked by rocks, and dropping down about 8m into a chamber. We were all excited, out came the wire ladder and Tim could not be restrained. We secured the ladder to the rocks using the trace and down he went to check it out. Okay, I exaggerate, we were tired and I was too lazy to climb down; besides, someone had to remain on the surface in case of an accident!

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

Tim reported back that the floor of the cave was about 8m across, with about a 0.5m solution tube going down about 1.5m in the corner, too small for Tim to enter and did not appear to go anywhere. I have since identified it from the map that Tim drew on the day, as cave E58.



Left: Entrance to cave E58. Right: Impressive roadside ravine in the Bramfield area

After leaving E58, we continued south looking for more caves until we came across a large ravine next to the road that had caught my eye when we drove past it on the way to Elliston. This was an impressive ravine caused by water erosion, about 300m long, something like 40-50m wide and about 30-40m deep in the middle, with 2 or 3 smaller tributaries entering from the sides. In it we found huge boulders had been worn smooth while other boulders had been washed down the hill... but where had the water gone when it hit the flats? We searched but never found the answer. Nevertheless it was a very enjoyable walk. The ravine was quite pretty and had several kangaroos within its area, sheltering under trees from the hot sun. I did, however, technically find one small cave, but at 25mm across, it was not possible to enter it.

We walked through most of the ravine, with Tim continuing down the hill into the flats below, to find out where the water runs to. When the others were ready to leave, I went for a walk from the car to a vantage point where I would be able to see where Tim was below me. On the way I crossed an old section of road that had several rocks along the inside edge of it, and it was on one of these rocks that I discovered an old piece of steel that resembled part of a brake off an old bullock wagon or horse carriage. After inspecting it, I put it back where I found it.



World's smallest cave; 25mm wide entrance

Once we had picked Tim up, we headed back toward Elliston, stopping at the "Nationdale Bush Camping" site, about 2 kms up a dirt track on private property. This turned out to be an old limestone quarry and crushing plant. The sign on the gate says "camping by Donation" and there is a phone number to call Darren if you want to stay there. Presumably this is so he can arrange water. Facilities were basic – a portable toilet in the bottom of the quarry, an empty concrete-lined stone tank built in about the 1930's (I guess), and an old windmill straddling a hand-dug well. The well caught my attention – it was beautifully lined with bricks and had water in the bottom. It did cross my mind that it might be worth checking out with SCUBA at some stage.

By now it was late and we headed back to Elliston, arriving there around 7pm. As none of us wished to miss out on dinner, we drove straight to the hotel as we were, including Will der Beast. After

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

dinner we returned to the caravan park to set up our salubrious lodgings, had showers and went to bed under the moon.



Sunset over Elliston caravan park.



Our salubrious lodgings, with safety gear close at hand.

The next morning we departed Elliston at around 7am, and headed off to see Talia Caves, about 40km north of Elliston. On the way we swung by Walkers Rocks, a great beach that you can drive onto (4WD only). At the end of the gravel road there is a small camping ground with a council sign that says free camping. There were 2-3 caravans there at the time availing themselves of the offer.

The turnoff to Talia Caves is after Talia, where you turn left and head toward the sea along Talia Caves Road. We arrived at the coast at 10am, and went straight to Woolshed Cave, which “represents a weakened joint in the sandstone along which the destructive action of the waves has been most effective”, according to the sign.

One walks down a wonderful flight of stained timber steps, to a large rock slab below. At one end of this slab the waves break over the rock, and the resultant eddy currents have formed deep holes in the rock, with various aquatic plants growing therein. Adjacent to this is a crevasse, which leads from the sea straight into Woolshed cave.



Tim on the Entrance stairs into the Woolshed cave area



Walking Towards Woolshed Cave

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



Dan against the rear wall of Woolshed Cave



Dan returning from the cave via the alternate route

Leaving Woolshed Cave just after 10:30am, we arrived at the Tub some 6 minutes later. According to its sign, "In the case of the Tub, the thin layer of much younger limestone composing the roof has been eroded to such an extent that the roof has collapsed. The caves original entrance is still covered and the collapsed ceiling has formed a rough bowl, 60 to 70 feet deep."



Tim Investigating the Tub



The Cave's Sea Entrance is about 2m high



At Left: The access ladder and handrails, into and out of the Tub.

On leaving the Tub, we searched for another feature shown on Tim's GPS map, which was about 100m south, but it appeared to have suffered a collapse. However, I did find a rock nearby containing a good example of fossilised roots.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW



The scenery 150m south of the Tub Fossilised tree roots 100m south of the Tub

When we left the Talia caves area, we headed about 14km further north to Venus Bay, where we stopped for lunch. This is a lovely quiet place to visit and frequented primarily by grey nomads and fisherpersons. We then went a further 30-35km north to Murphys Haystacks, which is a paddock full of unusual granite rock formations called Inselbergs. We arrived there at 1:30pm, and left at 2pm. Briefly we then returned to Cleve via Port Kenny, Wudinna, Kyancutta and Lock, arriving back after dark.

The next morning, after saying farewell to Dan and his family, Tim, Nicole & I headed for Cowell to check out the Jade Factory before heading up to Kimba, where I left my car while we took a very busy half-day trip to the Gawler Ranges. Sadly we arrived back at Kimba at 9pm to find the pub closing, so the hot meal we had been dreaming of the last 4 hours was not to be.

What I would like to say, for the benefit of all those cavers, both wet and dry, that head through this area en-route to the Nullarbor, is that Kimba hosts a magnificent FREE camping ground, adjacent to their showgrounds. They do, however, have a secure money box for donations mounted conspicuously on the toilet block wall, to cover the cost of maintenance of the facilities. And they ask campers to clean the shower room after use. I was happy to donate \$5 for this magnificent gesture from the Kimba council.



Donation-only campground at Kimba



With modern showers and toilet block

The next day we had a very hot trip back to Adelaide, arriving tired & thirsty. Given that during the time we were away Adelaide had suffered a severe heat wave and the worst bushfires recorded for some years, we were pleased we had chosen to be on Eyre Peninsula, doing what we love.

WHAT JOHN EDWARD EYRE DIDN'T KNOW

Many thanks to Dan for organising the sites, for landowner liaison, for using his vehicle for most of the trip, for allowing us to camp in his cave, AKA Shed, for several nights, and for making the trip possible. We also thank his Lasma and his children for their hospitality. Thanks also to Tim & Nicole for coming, and for their input and help in locating and exploring these caves.

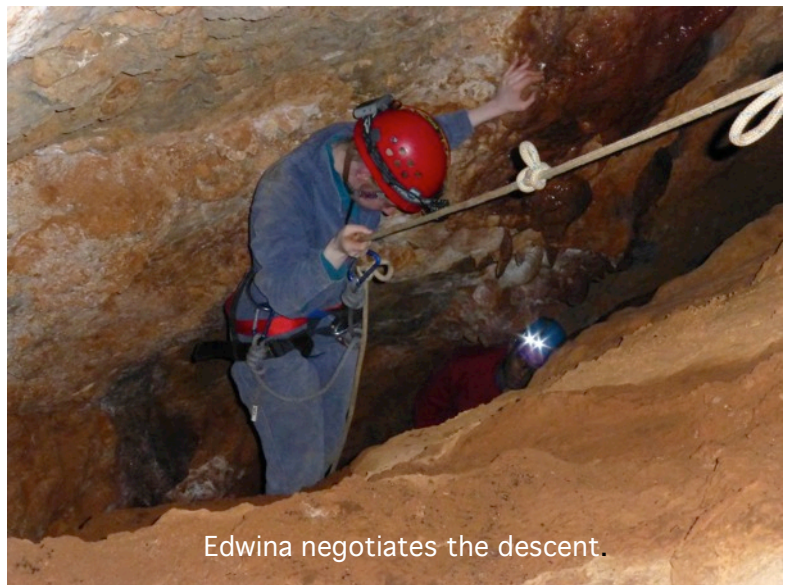
And finally, a BIG thanks to those landowners who allowed us to enter their properties and enjoy their facilities.

A QUICK TRIP TO THE SELICKS HILL AREA

Sometime back in late October an intrepid group trundled off to check out some known and unknown caves south of Adelaide. They found A2, rigged it and slithered downwards. Slithering upwards was another matter.



Ken looking down the entrance



Edwina negotiates the descent.

The cave is vertical, and requires a climb down at the entrance via a short ladder and then a rope as a safety handline to help you walk along a sloping ledge and then to hold onto to descend to the lower level.

The trip involved a lot of walking to and from the cave, as we were searching for new stuff and checking out the cliff line along the way.

We all had an enjoyable time and the day was finished off with wonderful BBQ at Ken's home nearby. Thank you Ken!

We will return over the course of this year as there is more to investigate.



Huan walking along the ledge

WHAT is ON

23-27 Feb O-Week

- 25th Feb: Fairday on Campus. Club Stall, **all help needed**.
- 1st March.** Sunday. Murray River caves by Boat. 9.30 – 6pm. Thomas coordinating

2nd March Term Starts

- 7-9 March: SRT competent ONLY to Wooltana. Contact: Clare
- 14-15 March: Wet and Wild trip. Contact: Heiko/Thomas/Clare
- 19th March: General Meeting. Talk on the Caves of Sellicks and Rapid Bay. Steve Milner, guest speaker. 6pm - 8pm. On Campus
- 3-6 April: Easter Caves on the Eyre Peninsula. Clare, Dan, Neville coordinating.

MID SEMESTER BREAK April 13- 27

- 9th April General Meeting. TBC. The Caves of France. Ken Smith, Guest speaker. 6pm - 8pm. On Campus
- 25-26 April: Naracoorte. Sand Cave. etc
- 3rd May Corra Lynn. A one day trip. Thomas coordinating.
- 7th May AGM. On campus.
- 10-15 May ACKMA Conference Naracoorte, Cavers needed to run trips.
- 16-17 May SAREX Naracoorte.

GLOOM, Depression etc,

EXAMS 22 June – July 4

Mid Year Break 6 July – 28 July

- 21-26th June Ningaloo Reef WA. ASF Conference. GO TO IT.
- July 11-19th Nullarbor. Tentative date only.

'CHANT' AT THE AIRPORT AT 5.30AM EN-ROUTE TO TASMANIA

