



# FUSSI Newsletter

Vol. 27 | No. 2 | 2015



A SPELEOTHEM MADE OF LAYERS OF CALCITE FLAKES

E-1 HOMESTEAD CAVE

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**Front Cover Photo:** Speleothem in Honeycomb Cave, Eyre Peninsula.

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# WHY MESSING ABOUT WITH BOATS SOMETIMES BEATS CAVING

Mark Sefton

**Caves big and small on the Murray River 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

The longest cave by far on the banks of the River Murray is Punyelroo Cave near Swan Reach. Punyelroo Cave contains just over two kilometers of passages; the next longest ('Gloop' Cave) which is a few kilometers upstream is barely a tenth as long. After these two, no cave of any significance is known here. So we decided to take advantage of the availability of one of the boats from the Flinders University Underwater Club and do a bit of exploring of the river banks around Swan Reach while, at the same time, introducing some of our newer members to Punyelroo Cave. Our group comprised Clare Buswell, Heiko Maurer, Neville Skinner, Kerry Stark, Tom S, Thomas Varga, Mark and Karin Sefton, Jade Yapp, Amy Tshirn, Sam Arman, Jessica U, Gemma Bester and Dale Rawlinson from the Underwater Club.



On the Murray River, Mark, Karin, Dale, Kerry, Thomas. Heiko and Neville are hidden behind Thomas.

After meeting at Swan Reach, we split into two groups; one went into Punyelroo in the morning, led by Clare, while Karin and I went on the first boat trip upstream, with Thomas, Neville, Kerry and Dale, spending two very pleasant and exhilarating hours in perfect weather. Thomas had his wetsuit on and so bravely volunteered to jump in the river and check out the first entrance we came across, but the cave beyond only went a few meters into the cliff face.

The second entrance did likewise. A third entrance was easier to get to and so we all went for a look. A decrepit mattress and bits of old sofa indicated that this spot could also be reached from above. I crawled into the cave beyond the entrance for around 20 meters and, although, I didn't reach the end, it was very low. I had no helmet or light and sitting in a boat on the river on a perfect day seemed a better way to spend my time than grinding my nose into the muddy floor. Finally, we reached Gloop Cave where some of our group went for a quick look before we all headed back to Swan Reach. Apart from the sheer pleasure of bombing along the water on such a nice day, the highlights of the trip were the masses of Pelicans on the water and swirling overhead, and coming across a kangaroo swimming right across the river, then hopping up the bank on the east side.

After a splendid lunch, very generously provided by Tom Szabo and including some excellent salads, the morning Punyelroo group went on the boat, all the way to Blanchetown, and Neville took Kerry into Punyelroo. The rest of us decided to just sit by the banks or go for a bit of a paddle in the kayaks that Dale had also brought along. The little waterway on the other side of the river and the lagoon beyond were really tranquil, with lots of bird-life.

# WHY MESSING ABOUT WITH BOATS SOMETIMES BEATS CAVING



A stretch of the Murray showing the cliffs that line the River.

Postscript: Six weeks later, Karin, her sister and I took a houseboat further upstream from Blanchetown towards Morgan and had the opportunity to study the cliffs along the way from the water. In many places, these cliffs were just as tall as those at Swan Reach. Although we saw no entrances the size of those for Punyelroo and Gloop, there were quite literally many hundreds of body-sized (or bigger) solution holes that could be seen from the boat. Who knows whether any have significant caves beyond. But if any wet-

suited FUSSI members feel like jumping overboard to check them out, I can pretty much guarantee that failure to find 'caverns measureless to man' would be more than compensated for by the pleasure of 'messaging about in boats' along this fabulous stretch of the river.

## Story Continued Jade Yapp

Having not travelled around South Australia much I was excited to get the opportunity to travel to Swan Reach, along the Murray. It was here I met a great, friendly bunch of people from the caving and boating clubs of Flinders University.

We started the day going into the Punylaroo cave. I loved the walk towards the cave and inside was unlike anything I had seen before. It was beautiful and held so much peace. The cave walking itself was tough at times working our way around small spaces however totally worth it.



Part of the group about to enter Punylaroo Cave.

Photo: Tom S.

After the cave we re-joined the other half of the group for lunch before heading out onto the Murray on a boat. I was able to drive the boat, which is a first for me. Just enjoying the journey and searching for potential caves along the waters edge was a highlight of the day.

# WHY MESSING ABOUT WITH BOATS SOMETIMES BEATS CAVING

We journeyed all the way up to Blanchetown. On return we stopped at Gloop cave and here we went inside and experienced a completely different atmosphere from the Punylaroo cave. MUD. After a quick swim in the Murray we travelled back to end the day.

At right: typical cave entrance found in the cliff faces. Photo: Mark Sefton



The whole experience was incredible and I think very highly of the caving and boating clubs for giving me such an opportunity to explore.  
Jade Yapp.

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## A DAY BESIDE THE SEASIDE

Ian Lewis

Meanwhile, in early February, eight FUSSI and CEGSA cavers, supported by the Flinders Uni Underwater Club, went down south of Adelaide to the Second Valley coastline. They were expecting to find two known sea caves, with a possible total of six, between Second Valley and Rapid Bay.

Sea was flat, boat was fast, troops were keen – so we went all the way down to Cape Jervis.

Didn't find 6 sea caves – we spotted about 60!! Many at sea level but also many high up in the cliff tops.

Heiko had a mishap, and cut his hand. We returned to base, gave him shore leave and the crew disappeared into the blue mists again for the afternoon.



Some of the crew: L-R: Thomas, Aimee, Bronya, Trudy, Ian, Neville.

Photo: Steve Milner

# A DAY BESIDE THE SEASIDE

Explored about 10 caves – big enlarged near-vertical joints in steeply-dipping gneisses, shales



Examples of the caves found in the cliff lines: Both Photo: Steve Milner.

and some dense dolomite. Some caves 30-60m long, 20m high. Many remain unexplored as we ran out of time! We have named one of them “Big Angry Seal Cave”! A good trip and to be repeated later in the year!

Heiko required 6 stitches to the webbing between his thumb and

index finger. This was done at the Victor Harbour hospital. He would like to thank Trudy for doing the first aid thing and, being a nurse giving her advice on the best course of action!

*FUSSI would like to thank FUUC for the use of its boats and in particular, Damian, Megan, Dale for being skippers and giving their time to take FUSSI members on the waters, above ground!*

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

Easter 2015 saw 18 people travel over to the Eyre Peninsula for four days of caving and surface trogging. Dan, Neville, Tim and Nicole had done a preliminary trip there over New Year, and with the Easter trip showed other members of the club what the area has to offer. The Eyre Peninsula is a seven hour drive from Adelaide, so the four day break gave us some time to travel, explore and of course, have a grand ol' time. This report contains accounts of some of the things we did!

We started at Cleve, visiting a BHP owned Dolomite mine, with a 30m vertical shaft. We divided up into a couple of groups just to facilitate the ease of getting close to 15 people up and down. What is interesting about this shaft are the remains of mining equipment left in situ,



the entrance ladder, possibly an air vent, railway tracks and a hand cart. As the environment is very dry, the gear is in pretty good and relatively safe nick.

Over the course of the day, the shaft had more people visit than it has possibly had

when it was a working mine!

There was lots of belaying, with its associated calls, stops midway on the rope for photo opportunities and the mandatory rest!

By about 4.30 we collected our ropes, harnesses and selves setting off to visit a nearby windfarm. So instead of looking down, we looked to the sky. Gad these things are big!



One mill was not in working order so we were able to stand around to take it all in. Hard hats are mandatory as bolts tend to drop from them! The farm is running at 95 percent capacity as the local electricity infrastructure can't deal with any more! I just wanted to take a wind mill home, but what with all the caving junk, I just could not fit it all in!



Photos L-R: Jodie mid pitch. Photo by N Skinner.

Sarah, with Maddy and Mia, on the cart at the bottom of the pit:  
Photo: Dan Dingwall.

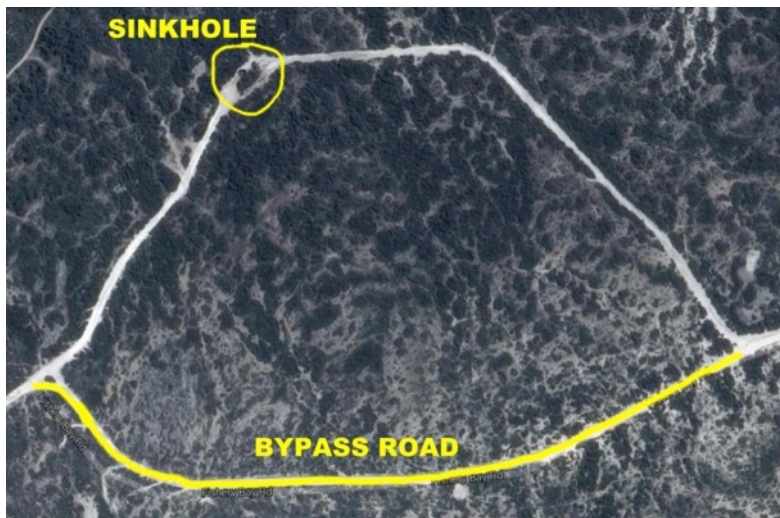
Chea Yee at the top of the pitch and at right a windmill vane awaiting its final resting place.  
Photo: by N Skinner.

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

**Deathtrap Cave (alias September Sinkhole) visited Saturday 11th April 2015.**  
Photos & story by Neville Skinner

At first, the name of this site didn't make sense; so what was the story behind the name "Deathtrap Cave"? It is marked on all the maps I've seen as "Sinkhole" and Dan told me the locals call it "September Sinkhole", because it formed in September 1970 when the road was being built.

When I asked Graham Pilkington about the name, he said as far as he could remember it wasn't discovered until c1973, after the formation of CEGSA, but he would search the records and get back to me. True to his word, Graham got back to me within a week or so and this is what he wrote:



**Satellite image courtesy of Google Earth**

"It first appeared as a small depression during road making in ?Sept 1970. This was ignored, covered over, and the road completed. Later, (Sept 1970) a tourist reported to the office that he almost drove into an estimated 6m diameter, 5m deep doline in the middle of the road. A bypass road 10m south was constructed.

In June 1973, Jerry DeGraaf of CEGSA visited the doline and managed to dig into the beginnings of a cave. In

September 1973, Jerry, Max Meth? and I dug all the way into the cave and explored it. A rainstorm stopped exploration and almost entombed us. As far as I know, no map has ever made. On CEGSA advice, a new bypass road was constructed further south."



Graham told me that after they entered the cave to explore it in Sept. 1973, the rainstorm was so severe that the entrance had become a waterfall, and when they tried to fight their way through, it started to collapse, forcing them to dig their way out. And so it was named ... E13 Deathtrap Cave! I'm sure that cave number 13 was a coincidence.

Today, 40 years later, the sinkhole is about 9-10m in diameter and 5-6m deep, although the topside is a bit shallower and allows awkward entry via the scrub and a steep drop. For

many years no-one was allowed to enter the cave, but these days permission can be obtained from the landowner. Indemnity insurance is necessary. The entrance appears to have stabilised, although the rains still pour in as is evident by the eroded stream-way that lies under the entrance. The cave is reported to be about 30m deep and about 91m long, and the

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

original bypass road that was constructed 10m to the south of the sinkhole still exists, although vehicles are prevented from entering it by large rocks placed at each end. This bypass road goes directly over the top of that section of cave that is relatively close to the surface, probably about 6-7m from it.

Since there were 15 of us set to enter the cave, Dan had brought a ladder with him that allowed people to climb straight down into the collapse, easier and safer.



Sam negotiating tree roots and rocks.

Photo: Aimee Leong

This time I had brought my dive gear with me to explore the lakes at the bottom, and had arranged for Dan to take the group down, while I geared up and lugged my dive gear into the cave with me. To help me I had two custom backpacks made, one for each SCUBA tank, as well as a third soft bag that would hold the dive regulators, mask, fins, lights, etc. Thomas Varga had kindly offered to help me carry my gear in, and we entered some 20 mins or so after the others. I should mention at this point that regrettably I did not take my camera with me on this occasion as I considered I would be sufficiently busy lugging gear over/through rock-piles. The photos I have

included are from a previous trip in Jan this year.

After entering through a 400mm diameter restriction that zig-zags through about 2 metres of rock-pile, you find yourself on the side of a 7-8m high pile of dirt and rocks. You then proceed to the bottom of the pile and follow the stream-way clockwise around the rock-pile, where you come to a 2-3m climb up several boulders. This is the point where you recognise this as a cave and you realise you are now about to enter the second chamber.

This chamber has also seen many large sections of roof collapse, but at this point heading off to the left between a couple of those fallen slabs, one may crawl into a small highly decorated room of the original cave, displaying some beautiful (non-active) stalactites, coral/popcorn and straws. (As seen in the photos below)



On this trip however, I did not enter this section as my goal was to explore the underwater section of the two small lakes – to see if they were connected and to see if they led off to any tunnels. After unpacking and configuring my dive gear, I then conducted the usual equipment checks to see if everything was okay. This is important because the air tanks that were full of air in Adelaide may now be empty, after being bumped and turned on slightly during the trip.

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

Perhaps the same has happened to the torches? And the regulators need to be checked for correct operation in case they were banged on a rock on the way in and are now damaged.

After 5 minutes of relaxation looking at the pools and at Neville donning his dive gear, the group was ready to leave the area, and head for the Sea Caves. I reminded them to look at the old decorated section on their way out. Thomas stayed behind; no doubt as keen as I was to find out if the water leads off down a tunnel, and how far.

When I was ready, I tied the guideline off on a large rock and entered the water. The guideline is the safety line that leads back to the surface – necessary because I know I will be returning in zero viz. That's part of the fun. I am used to it. This is what cave divers train for!

As I descended I swam into an area under the rock where everyone had just been sitting, which was about 1.5m high, 2m wide and 2-3m long. However, I was blocked at the end from going further by a large slab of rock. Despite this I was able to see for a further 2-3m where it appeared to peter out, just under or behind the second pool. I pushed one rock out of the way that might have allowed me to get around the slab, but this was not going to happen this day as there was now zero visibility in this area. So I moved back into the first pool and continued around the corner into another room under the rock pile. This area did not go anywhere either, but from the end of it I can see back into the second pool, and I believe it might even be possible for a small person to get from one pool to the other through this squeeze.



As I am about to exit this pool, I realized there is a small opening just under the point where I first entered the water. I wiggle in and find I am in the same silty room I left a few minutes earlier. So I head back out, where I exit the pool and enter the pool on the other side. Thomas points out that I have only been 9 minutes so far ... thanks Thomas ... I needed that! Perhaps the other lake will be the one that has the 500m long tunnel running off it?

I managed 3 minutes in the second pool before I am satisfied this cave holds no more secrets. My dive computer says I was in the water for 17 minutes, and reached a maximum depth of 3.8m; the water temperature was 19 degrees. After I have stripped my gear down and put everything back into the carry bags, we headed out. To do so we dropped down over the edge of a large rock into a narrow crevice, before we have to climb back up onto a small ledge, then corkscrew through another restriction, climb over another rock and then down into the entrance chamber. Each time we are passing the gear between us as we inch our way out. The final, near-vertical restriction exit into the sunlight was not as bad as I thought it might be, and we are out.

As I climbed the ladder out of the sinkhole, I find Graham Pilkington sitting in a chair under a tree, reading a book and waiting patiently for our return. It seems he is the appointed guardian of the ladder we had left in place for our return. Thank you, Graham.

Just before we finished stripping off and stowing all the gear back into the vehicle, the others had returned, beaming with smiles from ear to ear. It has been a good day.

Thank you Thomas for your help.

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

## Homestead Cave. E-1. Easter Saturday. Dan Dingwall.

Over a bit of breakfast and the mandatory coffee, we split into 2 groups, with Neville preparing to take one group to Honeycomb Cave, while I (Dan) was bound for Homestead Cave with the other group.

After around 30km travel from camp, we arrived at the cave, having announced our arrival to the landowner, who occupies the homestead only about 500m from the cave entrance. Wetsuits were donned, and saying goodbye once again to the earth's surface, we climbed down through the entrance, which is about a metre in diameter and a couple of metres deep. This landed us on the top of a rock pile, with plenty of room for us to regroup.

From there, we climbed down through a passage in the side of the rock pile, and through a small restriction into a decorated chamber. There was a lot of damage in this area, as a result of vandalism, and the ignorance of the general public concerning cave conservation and just how fragile the environment is down there and how long it takes for such decorations to form. Damage ranged from many broken stalactites, to candle-smoke graffiti, with this cave having been frequented by locals until a number of years ago when the land owner forbade access other than by prior arrangement.



Dan laying line in E-1 Homestead Cave. Photo: A. Leong

We moved on past this area, until we reached the water level. The ground stepped down, with the way forward being shallow



E-1. Underwater Stals. Photo: A. Leong

water with mostly a thick, gloopy mud bottom, and a very low decorated ceiling, with many large stals reaching the floor.

I went on ahead, laying a line for people to follow, as I had done some previous exploration here with Neville, and found the best way through this section, keeping out of the mud and avoiding unnecessary impact on this very active section of cave.

Having all negotiated this wet crawl, we came to another dry rockfall section, surrounded by

pools of water covered with a calcite raft. The other end of the rock pile led to some deeper water.

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

Leaving the rest of the group to explore the dry section, myself, Aimee, and Thomas put on our fins and snorkelling gear and set off to explore the underwater sights and look for possible leads below water level.

Underwater stals were seen, as well as some tunnels that may lead somewhere ... Some areas had such a low ceiling that our snorkels were hitting as we floated through ... for me it was a small taste of the allure of cave diving; it's so different to snorkelling in open water. The water is crystal clear, but the slightest touch on any of the rocks would cause a large area to silt up and drop visibility to a point where you can barely see your own hands.

It didn't take long for us to get a bit too cold, so we headed back to the dry section, while the others went in for a look around.

Cold water and full bladders are not such a good combination, so a few of us went on ahead for the return trip, and I detoured to explore the shallow muddy section on the way out. The mud got deeper, but the ceiling got higher, with the only way to move being lying on my stomach and sliding on the mud. I tried to stand up at one point, but instantly sank to above my knees.

Back on the surface, we regrouped and prepared to head south to the next cave.

## HONEYCOMB CAVE

By Aimee Leong

The second cave of the day was Honeycomb cave. By chance, we bumped into the other group as they were exiting the cave, and Dan mentioned that we were able to drive up to the cave entrance, so we did.

It was time to gear up again, after being wet and muddy from the previous cave. The entrance was a hole in flat ground; with Lake Hamilton in the background - a stunning aqua colour. It was a steep slippery slope in, however we all managed to troop in. Dan had been in the cave before and was able to tour guide lead us



around; mentioning there were two other chambers which had yet to be explored.

Along the way, there was a small pool of water to the left, which Neville had mentioned to us before we had gone in to have a look at - he was keen on seeing if there was a possibility of it going any further.

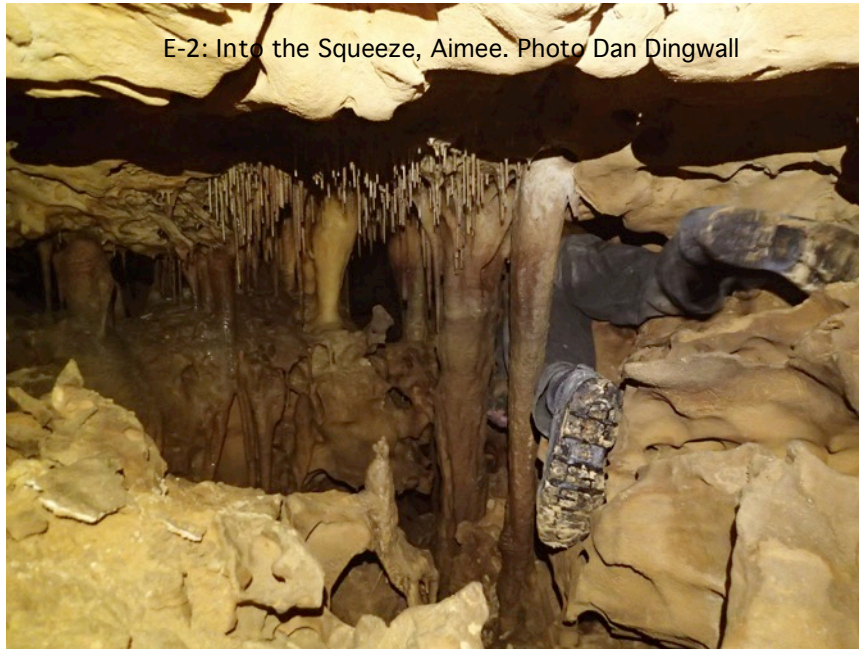
The main chamber was one which was labeled the clothesline - namely because there were clothes (inclusive of underwear - g strings??) littered around the place; and evidently have been

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

there for ages.

There were meant to be two chambers off to the left, labeled Honeycomb 1 and Honeycomb 2. There was a passage that led a steep way down, so under the suggestion of Dan, I ventured down and discovered a medium sized chamber with pools of water. The formations of the rocks were one of honeycomb (hence the name) - jagged all round. I had a bit of a poke around, however discovered that if there was meant to be any connecting points to the next chamber across it would be a very unforgiving crawl, and very, very tight.

Dan opted to join me in the first chamber, after giving everyone else directions to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Honeycomb chamber. After a lot of wriggling around, he managed to come down and together



E-2: Into the Squeeze, Aimee. Photo Dan Dingwall

we went for an explore down the back of the chamber, where we had discovered some stalagmites. There was a small space to the left of this feature, so Dan went ahead and crawled past it - the space was small; even I wasn't sure if I was able to fit in! Turns out he managed to contortion in, therefore I should be able to as well, so in I went. The passage only went a short way further - about 15 meters past the feature. Here we found 'Leonard' from Cleve had been there,

as well as someone else in 1980 as it was carved out in the rock. There was also an old beer bottle, which we left alone. Right down the end, there was a small window off to the left where we could see some pretty formations; however it was too small to crawl into, so some photos were taken instead.

Then it was back to crawl through the tight squeeze, to which there was much swearing on my behalf. It was also quite humid down in the chamber, and since it was a steep descent of course we both had to make our way back up - again with much swearing - 'whose fabulous idea was it to come down here in the first place??!'

We then decided to find the others in Honeycomb 2 chamber; and a short while later after yet another steep crawl, we found Thomas and Jenny, chilling out by small pools of water created by



Honeycomb and speleothems. Photo: A Leong.

# MEETING EYRE OVER EASTER

the honeycomb rock. We then proceeded to join them, by finding 'comfortable' spots on the rock. We could hear everyone else having a poke around in the distance; however decided that we all just wanted a rest in darkness.

After everyone had joined us, we did the all lights out exercise - where we sat in total silence in complete darkness for a while; something that FUSSI likes to show all new cavers. Silence is golden!! After our exercise, there was talk of checking to see how deep each of the honeycomb pools of water were - about 2 meters was the guess, with the suggestion that we got Thomas to stick his head in (we would help by holding onto his feet), and see how far it went. hehe

We then decided to troop out of the cave, as it was getting close to time to leave and to head back and make dinner. Up the slope, then past the 'clothesline'; whereby Clare mentioned she found another passage down. Jason was the first one down; Clare second, me third. And it was steep, with Clare down the bottom yelling 'keep to the left! LEFT!'.... annnnnd it was steep and a little scary. I opted to stay mid-way whilst Jenny, Jodie, Chea Yea and Yen Fong headed down; and both Clare and I were there as buffers should there be any problems. Team Female!! Thomas was last, and there was the question of whether or not Clare and myself would be there to catch him ... with the response that he would probably flatten us both. hehe

And then it was back up to the entrance - no dramas along the way - and back up into sunshine; lovely little cave, with a bit of potential for the future!

Those on the Trip.

C. Buswell, Dan Dingwall, H. Maurer, T. Varga, J. Dodswell, A. Leong, Chea Yee Ma, Yan Fong Chang, Jodie, Sarah Phillips, Mia Phillips, Maddy Phillips, Jan Schmorte, J. Hore, N. Skinner, S. Arman and Jessica and G. Pilkington from CEGSA.

A few weeks after this trip Dan went to find and sort out a bit about E-12 Proper Bay Cave

## E 12. Dan Dingwall, April 18th

The bag seen in the entrance doline is for scale, being 500mm long. Passages head both east and west from the entrance. The cave to the west is the most extensive, with unexplored leads. The eastern cave has a lower ceiling, with a low passage continuing after the 30 or so meters I



was able to explore, but too small to enter.

Above: The Western passage of E-58

There is a thick soft white coating on some of the roof, and in some areas very small formations in a harder white material (would it be calcite? or possibly salt?) In the entrance photos, the photo with a person in it is the western passage, and the other one is the eastern passage.

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2014

As indicated in my last report, 2014 started off with a bang and just kept getting better, reaching new highs for FUSSI's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. And, I'm pleased to report that 2015 has had an auspicious start, continuing the trend from 2014.

Major trips for the year included:

- Yarrangobilly (the bang alluded to above),
- the Nullarbor at Easter, where we finally found the "Officer's Mess" (thank you Mark!),
- a second, most fascinating, trip to the Nullarbor as part of a SA Museum scientific expedition to Koonalda cave,
- a long trip to the Bullita cave system in Judbarra-Gregory national park in the NT. Mark Sefton had given a talk on Bullita to the club and enticed three FUSSI members along in 2014 (cost is about \$1500). This is an annual surveying trip to, by far, the longest cave system in Oz (at 122+kms), located in the far North and I encourage you to see it for yourself,
- and the (by now normal) fly-in, fly-out long weekend trip to the caves of Mole Creek.

As well as the ever popular Wet-n-wild, along with other trips to the South East, Corra-Lynn and the Flinders Ranges – one of which resulted in another 'bang'. It's the trip to and from going caving that's the most dangerous part (fatalities included, though none of us were ever involved. Fingers crossed).

General meetings usually featured nibbles, wine and entertaining guest speakers and I thank Steve Milner, Ian Lewis, Mark Sefton and Trevor Arnold for inspiring talks.

Then there was the October long weekend at Naracoorte to celebrate 40 years of FUSS and FUSSI (splitters!!). Highlights for me included meeting many FUSSI members from the halcyon years (a large number of them have, eventually, got their PhDs – but that's another story), drinking a somewhat well-aged 'Caver's Lament' shiraz of about 1989 vintage, Mark's 'revelation' of Scottish Haute Couture and the helpfulness of the caves staff. A very big thank you to Clare Buswell for organizing, well, everything really, and to Guy Smith for MC-ing the night: you were born for the stage! (There's one leaving in five minutes. Boom, boom!)

The finances continue to be in good shape and the Newsletters have been filled to overflowing – in large part to Neville's efforts. I thank him for his many and interesting contributions.

My last request (see 2014 report) to cut the cost of membership has been completely ignored, so for 2015, I decree that we buy a 'Disto-X'. So there!

And last, but by no means least, a big thank you to the executive (whose reports follow) who contributed so much to keep the club vibrant and surviving.

Heiko Maurer,

President FUSSI 2014

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

FUSSI in 2014 had 18 members, and this has now, May 15, jumped to 27, which is largely due to the efforts of our safety officer and treasurer in running frequent trips, many of which have been suitable for beginners. Well done people!

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

Amongst all the underground mingling over the previous 12 months, a club highlight was FUSSI's 40<sup>th</sup> B'day bash held in Naracoorte in Oct last year. Both current and past FUSSI members experienced a host of activities over the few days, including: scrumptious BBQ cook-up, auction of anything cave-related, t-shirt printing, fantastic bat talk by Tara, bat watching and counting at dusk, presentation by Amy Macken on the World Heritage status of Naracoorte caves, drinking from fancy special edition FUSSI printed wine glasses, cool (hideous) fancy dress and caving (of course!). Congratulations to Clare for her drive in bringing this event together, and thanks to all those who helped out.

Once again we were successful in getting a Bunning BBQ spot and so we cooked up a zillion snags and managed to sell most of them. (Some of us are still recovering from this ...)

2014 was a year not to be forgotten!

Bronya Cooper, (nee Alexander!)

Secretary 2014

*Big congratulations to Bronya, yep, she and Nigel were married late 2014. (Ed)*

## GEAR OFFICERS REPORT

As one new member of the Equipment team, these are my recollections over the past year:

One Friday afternoon meeting up with Clare and discovering where the gear is stashed at Flinders Uni, I acquainted myself with the layout and the processes of how gear is checked in/out, and where keys, etc. were kept.

Some things I recall about gear:

Bluewater rope - have replaced? Old one to donate to another cause.

Few gear loops have gone missing from harnesses!! - after Mairs Cave SRT weekend - note to self: to check EVERYTHING when harnesses are returned. EVERYTHING!!

Talk of buying a new Scurion light and spare batteries - for Clare and Heiko to investigate whilst overseas.

Two FUSSI Walkie-Talkie radios have gone missing. Clare has sent out many emails asking people to check to see if they had misplaced the radios; however they remain missing. Cost: \$230.00 to replace.

Mark Sefton and myself were meant to have shared the role of Equipment Officer, however Clare Buswell has been a huge help in guiding us and helping us organize things, especially for trips.

Aimee Leong

Co-Gear Officer 2014

Report continued, Clare Buswell

Gear storage has been a considerable issue over 2014 due to the extensive building operations going on at the main campus at Flinders Uni. Access has been blocked to the store in terms of getting a vehicle anywhere near it, so we are now faced with storing some of the equipment off campus. The club's library, maps, cave information and infrequently used equipment, remain in the club store.

Gear purchases for 2014 consisted of:

- 1x Scurion Basic, with battery and charger

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

- 3 harnesses.
- 1 Black Diamond Icon light.
- Oh, and 102 wine glasses of which, 34 remain.

Retired gear:

- 8 Harnesses.

Please note that FUSSI gear only goes on FUSSI trips. All gear must be checked *in and out* before it goes on the next trip. Make the Gear Officers happy by cleaning the gear before retuning it, or they are liable to send Mavis around with some unsavoury friends.

## SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

Once again 2014, passed with no major or minor incidents, to FUSSI bods at least. Some of its members did, however, attend road accidents whilst on caving trips, but for the most part the club continues to cave with safety upper-most in its mind.

To this aim, SRT practice continued both in a shed and off cliffs near Adelaide. A joint clubs 'come and play with ropes' weekend was held in September, with both FUSSI, and Scout members tying each other up and attempting to work out who was actually meant to be rescued. It was a great exercise and will no doubt be repeated some time soon.

Caving safety is not just about ropes, SRT, ladders, etc. It is also about looking out for each other, helping out and making sure your first aid kit is up to date and useful. *So what's in your in-cave first aid kit and what condition is it in?*

Make sure that your in-cave first aid kit is up to date and tubes of stuff are not empty. I mean what is the use of carrying around a bunch of band aids, out of date painkillers, that have been dunked in some Tasmanian cave river, left to fester for ages, then dragged through some South Australian dust bowl of a cave, you pull them out to use one on your cut and bleeding finger only to find the glue is buggered and sterile it ain't.

In situations where someone is injured, *your small* first aid kit, when combined with those also in the group, makes for *one big* first aid kit. So, do yourself and your fellow caving friends a big favour, always have it caving with you and make sure it is up to date and usable.

Here is a list of what is in my 'in cave', first aid kit. By the way I have had cause to use every bit of it!

Triangular bandage, cotton buds, a compression bandage, Op-site post-op wound dressings, cloth band-aids, tweezers, some pain killers, Betadine swabs or equivalent, a note pad and pen and a small plastic bag to put any rubbish in. I carry saline solution, to get the dust out of my eyes and kill leeches, stingos, matches/cigarette lighter, pocket knife, space blanket and Fox Forty whistle, as you will spend less energy blowing a whistle than you do when yelling for help. Space blanket or a large orange garbo bag either will help keep you warm.



A photo of the rare Orange Bagged Troglodyte. Y3-Y2. 1998.

I ALWAYS carry a piece of insulating mono-cellular foam rubber. This is to sit on, to stop the cold seeping into your body if you are injured or just plain tired and want to rest for a bit. Remember: *Cold will kill you.*

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

The kit should also contain any personal medication that you are taking, dosage instructions and adverse drug reactions etc.

Do a first aid course and read the ASF Safety Guidelines! They are found at:

<http://www.caves.org.au/codes-and-standards/finish/7-codes-and-standards/15-safety-guidelines>

Clare Buswell

## TREASURER'S REPORT

*1 Jan 2014 – 31 December 2014*

Overall Summary:

Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Closing balance
\$8,146.56	\$4,128.92	\$1,385.19	\$10,890.29
		Difference	\$2,743.73

	Main bank account	Debit card account	Petty cash	Term Deposit	Total
Opening balance	\$428.73	\$1,410.75	\$1,123.15	\$5,183.93	\$8,146.56
Closing balance	\$3,760.41	\$1,109.55	\$711.58	\$5,308.75	\$10,890.29
Difference	\$3,331.68	-\$301.20	-\$411.57	\$124.82	\$2,743.73

Breakdown of income

Term Deposit	\$124.82
Bunnings BBQ	\$1,271.63
FUSA Grant	\$1,654.47
Member contributions:	
Membership fees	\$448.00
Gear hire	\$630.00
Total	\$4,128.92

Breakdown of expenditure

ASF Fees	\$375.00
Gear purchase (SRT equipment, ropes, storage crates)	\$230.97
Operational (Catering, photocopying,)	\$779.22
Total	\$1,385.19

Comments:

1. FUSSI monies were stored in four locations: two bank accounts with ANZ, a Term Deposit and petty cash. \$5,000.00 has been allocated to a term deposit that matures every 3 months at a rate of 3-3.75% per annum.

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

2. We had a successful fundraiser BBQ event as well as managed to secure some grant money from the Flinders University Student Association. Further, we managed to obtain the funds, \$500.00 for an ASF grant that was supporting a previous Nullarbor trip.
3. The club ran a larger number of entry level trips which attracted a larger amount of people who required gear – this resulted in a significant increase in gear hire related income compared to previous years.
4. Gear purchases were down – possibly a reflection on the types of trips that were conducted over the year.
5. Operational expenses included donations to guest speakers as well as costs for the FUSSI 40<sup>th</sup> celebrations and - to a large extent – catering costs for social events (read: wine and cheese).
6. FUSSI 40<sup>th</sup> breakdown (excluding anniversary glasses):  
Income: \$2,247.00  
Expenses: \$2,013.93  
Difference: \$233.07
7. Anniversary glasses breakdown: Cost: -\$705.41 Sold: \$520.00 Difference: -\$185.41 As of 11 May 2015. 34 glasses remain in stock @ \$8 each, representing a total value of \$272.00.

Thomas Varga.  
Treasurer 2014

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

Last year was a huge year for the FUSSI newsletter, with most issues going to around the 40 page mark!

Many thanks to all the writers and photographers: you have been most helpful. May your fame bring you, yet more reports to write and more FAME ...

Seriously, the FUSSI Newsletter is sent around the country to all ASF clubs and FUSSI in return receives those clubs' newsletters. Writing about the things we get up to as a caving club informs us all, about what the caves are like, what gear to take and what to leave behind. It also leaves a permanent record of the club's activities without which the club would have no histories to tell.

I take this opportunity to vacate the Editors chair as not only I will be out of the scene for the rest of the year but it is time for others to take on the mantle.

Please support your new editor. Remember the taller the story, the more fun it is to write!

*Clare Buswell,*

*Editor, FUSSI Newsletter, 2000-2014 or thereabouts!*

## LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

FUSSI has an extensive library which like most libraries is stuffed full of information. If you want to know how to organize a trip to Kangaroo Island or to Jenolan or the Nullarbor, the library is the first place to go. It holds information relating to caving areas and where you will find, previous permit applications, write-up of trips, gear requirements, maps, and contacts.

The library holds a collection of books on caving areas, training, and all things related to caving and karst in Australia and overseas. It is an invaluable resource for our club members.

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

We did hold one working bee this year and this saw five or six of us sort and file magazines, and other things that have come in over the past couple of years. Another is needed. Purchases and donations for the library this year included back issues of *Helictite*, back issues of *SUSS BULL*, the Sydney Uni Speleo Societies' Journal. Digital copies of journals from the Western Australian Speleological Group (WASG) Southern Tasmanian Caverneers, (STC), CEGSA Newsletter, and the Northern Caverneering Club (NCC) continue to come in.

As part of the FUSSI 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, I digitized all 26 years of the FUSSI Newsletter and distributed them to all caving clubs around the country and to overseas caving organizations with whom we have reciprocal exchanges.

I have also approached the Flinders Uni Library regarding the digital issues of the newsletter. They would like to have all FUSSI material relating to the organization of the Club, its minutes, financial stuff, etc. They have implied that they want this in hard copy, not digital form. Given the current building arrangements that have severely affected the library storage space, I have thought it best to let it be for a little while, and to wait and see what happens post 2016 when the place gets back to normal.

Clare Buswell.

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## MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FLINDERS UNI SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC. 6pm, MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> 2015. Held on Campus.

### 1) Reports presented:

- President's report
- Treasurer's report
- Secretary's report
- Safety Officer's report
- Equipment officer's report
- Library Officer's report
- Newsletter Editor's report

The above reports were discussed briefly at the meeting, but will appear in the next volume of the FUSSI newsletter.

### 2) All positions were up for election

- President: Heiko Maurer (Nominated TV, Seconded: MS)
- Secretary: Aimee Leong (TW, BA)
- Treasurer: Thomas Varga (CB, AL)
- Safety Officer: Clare Buswell (TV, AL)
- Equipment Officer: Tania Wilson (HM, BA)\*
- ASF rep: Aimee Leong (HM, TV)\*\*
- Librarian: Edwina Virgo (HM, CB)
- Newsletter editor: Neville Skinner (with assistance from Clare Buswell) (TV, CB)

Note: Public Officer remains unchanged: C Buswell.

All nominated were elected unopposed to the new Committee

\*It was raised (CB) that collecting gear from the club store on-campus is very difficult due to the building works that are blocking access at the moment. Storing gear off-campus can be a problem when more than one person holds the gear. After an estimate of storage size, Tania Wilson offered to store the gear at her place in Hectorville, and become the FUSSI gear officer for the next year.

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

\*\*It was suggested (CB) that Aimee Leong become the ASF officer as she will be attending the ASF conference in WA at the end of June 2015 and will be able to exercise FUSSI's vote/s. Further, that FUSSI pays the cost or contributes towards the cost of the registration of the conference for our Rep.

## 3). Life member nomination:

- Pre-meeting discussion between a few executive officers concluded that Heiko Maurer would be nominated as FUSSI life member. This is based on Heiko's involvement as follows:
- Equipment officer
- General stirrer
- President
- Website looker afterer
- FUSSI ASF Rep
- Newsletter proof reader
- Trip leader, and imparter of caving knowledge
- He joined FUSSI in 1984

Nomination: NS and Seconded BA. The nomination for the life membership was accepted. Heiko Maurer is now a life member of FUSSI.

## 4) Discussion:

### Caves Australia publication:

- BA mentioned to all that the ASF has introduced a new tick box on their data base for those that are happy to receive the Caves Australia magazine in electronic copy only (instead of hard copy). BA has taken names of those who still want the printed copy and will update database.

### FUSSI mail collection:

- Issue raised by CB – There's a problem with mail addressed to "FUSSI" at Flinders Uni, and that it often ends up in the wrong place and can take a while to get to our mailbox at the correct address, being the Allan Mitchell Sports Centre. CB currently collects mail from here every 3 weeks, but is about to go away for 5+ months and won't be able to collect. Aimee Leong has agreed to collect the mail instead. Need to do this every 3 weeks.

### Grants from FUSA:

- CB handed round an info sheet on club grants from FUSA. FUSSI has had about \$400 of successful grant money in this year (2015) used to purchase new rope and head torch. Last year 2014 CB obtained around \$1000 in grants from FUSA.

### Bunnings BBQ follow ups:

- CB has asked the new secretary AL to make a call to Bunnings to check how our BBQ application is going. CB sends letter to Bunnings (Marion) in November each year asking for the gig. CB to pass any further details of contacts to AL.

Naracoorte Management Plans (see below): FUSSI taking status as a Volunteer group at Naracoorte (see below)

### Applications for a scientific permit

- CB has passed around notes on the Naracoorte management plans and has asked to have a specific meeting with Exec (and interested members) to discuss this properly. CB to organise meeting date.

# FUSSI OFFICE BEARER REPORTS, 2014

## 5) Future trips:

- CB talked to Dave Smith in NZ Waitomo Caves area – he offered to take caving groups through. IL may be planning a trip later this year through CEGSA
- IL: July 2017 is planned for the International Union of Speleology international conference to be held in Sydney. All caving activities will happen immediately after the conference, with some people expected to go to NZ and others to the Nullarbor. Planning for the Nullarbor is to have different “locals” stationed at the various main caves who will then run trips through. Keep this in mind for future trip planning.
- MS: Idea of going to Mulu caves region in SE Asia - cheaper than Son Doong cave tours in Vietnam and they allow some challenging trips.
- Mt Sims – IL coordinating trip through CEGSA to Narrina area over June long weekend
- Beekeepers – IL planning trip mid-late June to follow up on claw mark sightings
- Wooltana – possible option for Oct long weekend. Limited to SRT with rebelay skills only.
- Corra Lynn – 3 possible future trips:  
FUSSI lead trip last week in July (TV to organise)  
TS mentioned CEGSA has a trip planned for 31-May  
IL stated that CEGSA wants to plan a locate and rescue trip around Sept
- Naracoorte – FUSSI run trip during August (TV to organise)
- Wet n wild – FUSSI annual trip to Mt Gambier next Jan
- Northern Tassie – possible FIFO trip (usual 4 days) in early Dec
- Week-long trip to either NZ or Tas for next Jan/Feb

## 6) Next Club Meeting date; General meeting: August 20th

7) CB to organise meeting specifically for Naracoorte management plan discussion. (Set for Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Sheoak Café, Belair.

Meeting closed 7:45pm.

Meeting followed by guest speaker Mark Sefton with excellent presentation on caves in South Africa.

### FOR SALE

DRINK YOUR BEST BOTTLE OF RED  
ON THE NULLARBOR  
*IN A FUSSI SPECIAL EDITION WINE GLASS.*

THEN HAVE A SMASHING TIME

SO YOU CAN BUY SOME MORE err  
FUSSI WINE GLASSES THAT IS!

THE LATEST INSTALMENT OF  
THE FUSSI WINE GLASSES

A HIGH QUALITY WINE GLASS.  
EMBOSSSED WITH THE FUSSI LOGO,  
MINTED FOR OUR  
40<sup>TH</sup> CELEBRATIONS

\$8.00 ea or \$46 for ½ dz  
or \$93 for 12.



# BLACKBERRIES, CAVES AND YARRANGOBILLY

Maurer, Buswell, Featonby, Varga

We picked up the caving gear we had left behind and collected Thomas who had flown into Wagga Airport (the nearest one to the Yarrangobilly caves) from Adelaide and was joining our caving trip. The caves are about 2 hours drive east of Wagga, but we needed to do a final food shop (there are no facilities where we were going, let alone a supermarket) for a week's worth of supplies for 5 people (we spent \$422+\$80 on beer), so we camped at Tumut for the night. This allowed us to partake in a fine Indian meal, to see a platypus in the Tumut River and watch the bats, *Pteropus scapulatus*, (little red flying fox), converge on the palm trees in the caravan park. The temperature was around high twenties in the evening!

In the morning we filled the car with supplies, charged the Esky with ice as we had one smallish portable refrigerator, and much cheese, cream, vegetables, not to mention beer to keep cool.

We drove past Yarrangobilly Village (it used to be a locale up till the 50s, but now there is just one deserted house - Cotterill's cottage, the former home of Leo Hoad and his family), to the actual Yarrangobilly Caves Reserve (which attracts a fair crowd of tourists), and picked up the keys to the caves we wanted to enter and, importantly, the keys to Cotterill's cottage.

We cleaned the cottage and moved our gear in. The cottage sits in an elevated position, beside the Snowy Mountains highway, overlooking the Yarrangobilly River and campground.

The campground can be full during the school holidays but this trip we only had a few campers, but they were curious as to why we had access to the house (derelict as it is) while they did not. They seemed happy with our explanation that we were doing work on the caves - namely, doing some cleaning in them - for National Parks. We invited interested campers in to look at the house and informed them about its heritage and importance.



The Front Door to the Hoad's Family home, now known as Cotterills Cottage

Soon two other cavers joined us from Sydney: Bob who had been on the expedition to Bullita Caves last year with Clare and I and Tim, accompanied by his 'Assistance Dog' - a lovely young Jack Russell, called Will(derbeest). Dogs are not allowed in National Parks, but Assistance animals are. This caused an awkward moment later. The Will(derbeest) is well trained in retrieving, and if you throw anything it will come back and you will be expected to play the game ALL DAY!

## Y3-Y2 EAGLES NEST SYSTEM

Ok, the deal went like this. Leave camp early. (We did, it was 9 AM.) Spend 2 hours clearing the track down to the locked gate, then walk for another hour or so. Bob, Thomas and Clare set a string line through the rock pile of the Y2 entrance, then exited and joined Heiko and Tim. By about 1pm we entered the Y3 entrance. Here we spent about an hour recounting the events of the trip last year and looking for the down chute. Much discussion was had but we did go down and kept going down, for something like 200m until we hit a bunch of meanders and then found Hughies Dig and the gate. Noting how bloody cold it is here and that the time was 4pm. From here on in lots of

# BLACKBERRIES, CAVES AND YARRANGOBILLY

pretties are to be seen in large caverns both measureless and confusing to all. We stopped to take photos and have lunch somewhere around the Pendants. The map came out and we all thought that it would be a good idea if we could find the aragonite crystals marked on it. Little did we know that Mavis was present amongst us and this decision was to cost us.

Lunch consumed, and now about 5pm, we negotiated our way to where the crystals should be, and yes we discovered that we can read the cave map and find our way through this large chamber to the desired point. FOOLS. After admiring this rare collection of crystals, for Yarrangobilly caves at least, we backtracked and continued on. Well, you could say we continued on and on, and around and around, and over and over and back to where we started to go and look for the aragonite. We could not find the way out of this chamber. In short, we were disorientated!



Cave Pearls or strange gold nuggets!

Now the first and major rule about being lost is to **STOP**, go back to where you know you were before you got lost! Then you sit down, have a cup of tea, or in this case something to eat. Get out the map, the compass and start again. We spent about an hour of *continuing* to disorient ourselves *before* we did this. Once we did go back to the pendant area, STOP, sit down, have something to eat, get the map and compass out, THEN follow it, we were on our way within a couple of minutes.

After this, about 6pm, we found the going most interesting and beautiful, but we did not really stop as we had a long way to go. About an hour and a half later we found the string line that we had set in place to negotiate the exit rock pile. Never were we so glad to have placed this, despite earlier discussions about it being necessary or not! Tim, Clare and Heiko, lead the way on, with Thomas and Bob de-rigging the string line as we went out. We reached the surface just on dusk at 8:30pm, reaching the cars at 9:15 or so. Camp and dinner were a welcome sight after such a long day!



Mut Mut Cave Entrance!  
Photo: T. Featonby

## Y-222 Mut Mut Cave

Thomas Varga

We knew from the previous trip that this was going to be a long day. Heiko and Thomas had previously located the entrance to the cave but that is the extent to which it was visited on that trip in February 2014. With the reassurance of knowing where to go to - and the time it would take to actually get there - we started the day early (well, in FUSSI terms).

We drove down to the Eagles Nest car park and geared up - it was already promising to be a warm day. Choosing a relatively direct route we headed down along

# BLACKBERRIES, CAVES AND YARRANGOBILLY

the gullies trying to avoid some of the vegetation and aimed for the river. We managed to avoid most of the prickly flora this time and only near the river line had to contend with leaving the odd pieces of clothing behind on thorns and branches.

By the time we crossed the river by carefully wading through the cold water it was lunchtime so we had a leisurely meal on the side of the river. With the temperature rising, sitting by a burbling river was a pleasant way to talk about caving instead of actually doing any. We tried to ignore the fact that, while the cave entrance was within cooee, it was all uphill and against a similar wall of vegetation that we came through on the other side. Eventually, we steeled ourselves and hauled

bodies and all vertical gear up to the cave entrance.

Looking down to the Yarrangobilly River from Mut Mut Cave. Photo: T Featonby



Once at the cave entrance Clare, Tim & Thomas went in and rigged off a 50m line from the large, wide stalagmites above the first pitch. Descending was mainly done against a sloping wall to a V-shaped landing. From here the bottom was another 15 meters but there was no really good anchor point. In the end we rigged the 2nd rope off some smaller stalagmites backed up onto the first line.

(It is debatable whether a single, longer rope would have worked better in this case as it would have allowed to have a single - robust - anchor point at the very top without having to spend time on the second anchor. The downside to this is that would require each person to fully descend all the way before the next person can make a move. Further, given that the second pitch is at a right angle to the first one, communication can be difficult from the very bottom all the way to the top.)

The descent of the second pitch goes over some nice, active flowstone which requires some level of care to minimize damage. The bottom has a small pool which did not appear to have any leads. The floor at the pool has a slope with not much room and made three people invade each other's private space. It was here that we realized we were without a map of the cave. (I am putting this down to the early morning rise.) We recalled that there was more to the cave but we were at a bottom of a funnel-like pitch with a sloping wall covered in flowstone leading to where we suspected the way went further on. Given that we were not sure exactly about the way on and that we wanted to avoid damaging the wall by trundling across it we decided to head out.

Going up the second pitch required the same amount of care as coming down. The first pitch required less attention as it has no decorations, but is muddy. We exited without mishap and gathering up the gear we headed back to the river again. After reuniting with everyone else we made the slow trek up the gullies back to the car and finally drove back to camp.

A long but rewarding day. Given that we did not get to see the entire cave we have an excuse to

Recovering from the bush bashing on route to Mut Mut. Photo: B. Kershaw



# BLACKBERRIES, CAVES AND YARRANGOBILLY

go back for a "proper" look next time. Just make sure to bring the map!

Rigging requirements: One times a 50 meter rope, and another rope of 20 meters. A couple of long tapes, 10 meters ea, and assorted hardware to hold it all together. Be aware of bringing down mud from the top half of the first pitch into the rest of the cave. (Ed)

There was also a trip into Y16, Helictite Hole. Now this cave sits in the middle of an open plain and is easy to miss with its overgrown entrance. But the intrepid bunch found it, rigged it and disappeared into it, to ooh and ah about the pretties found within. The whole thing took about 4



Speleothems, Helictite Cave. Photos: C. Buswell



hours. Here are some photos of what they found.

Rigging details: A couple of long tapes and a 50 metre rope. The anchor points are a couple of trees some distance from the cave entrance. It is quite scrubby so rope and tape protection is needed. The pitch itself is about 8 metres.

## JANUS CAVE, Y58

Tim Featonby

Janus cave has very restricted access and we were privileged to be allowed into it. Well done to the Canberra Speleos for all the work done in it. (Ed)

Once at the cave the entry is quite easy with the gate within only a few meters of the opening.

Directly after opening the gate there is a 15 foot, (4.5m) pitch. We used a ladder which was secured to the frame that held the gate in place. (So if you take a ladder for this you will need a 20 foot ladder as this rigging point is back about 1.5 m from the top of the pitch itself. There is nowhere else to rig from here.) This is a fairly tight turn and drop making lowering of gear a little troublesome. We managed to overcome this by having Bob lay on his back, feet over the edge and I



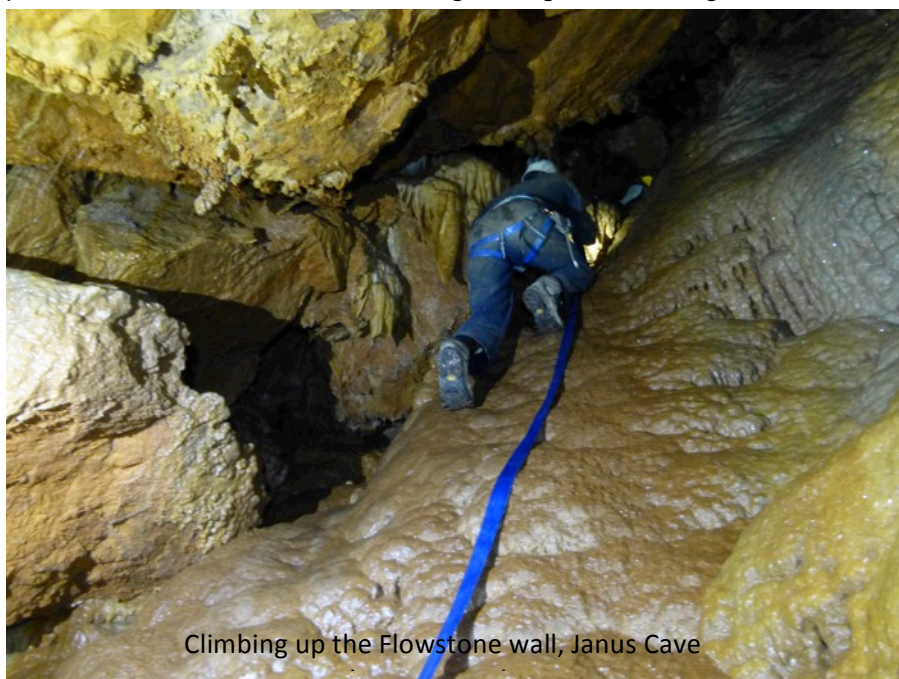
Gear and Thomas at the gate in Janus Cave

# BLACKBERRIES, CAVES AND YARRANGOBILLY

would simply drop a pack onto his face. He would then sit up and start to lower it over the edge. Worked well for me at least.

The first pitch dropped us into a low point requiring us to climb up the slope on the other side. The use of a 10m tape as a handline was helpful especially for raising the packs. Some distance in, a second, relatively easy slope consisting of a flowstone wall, was encountered. Either a second 10m handline or the same one used on the previous pitch is needed to assist in the climb. The top of this climb rewarded us with the discovery of a jaw bone. This gave us a good discussion point as to its identity and who may be interested in it.

The next step requires 22m of rope or a 50' ladder. We used a ladder and found that it was about 3m short of the bottom requiring it to be disconnected and reset part of the way down the pitch. This drop consists of a number of smaller steep pitches with the last 4-5m being a slight overhang. At the



Climbing up the Flowstone wall, Janus Cave

bottom of the pitch is the first glimpse of what is to come. There is a small stream with calcite dog tooth spar and a number of skeletons of small animals. One of which had calcite crystals precipitating on it. From here it is a gentle walk to a point where we had some confusion at the surface to what we would encounter.

There is a beautiful section of flowstone that covers the walls and the floor.

There have been a number

of stainless trays placed on the ground as footpads through this part of the passage to protect the floor. There are also some mats at either end of the path for changing. Up to this point the cave



was fairly muddy and all of us were dirty.

At the

mats you are required to nude up. Well, get your dirty clothes off so as not to get mud through the clean passage along with removing your dirty footwear. As

the passage is high but tight requiring you to place hands on walls and care needs to be taken not



Steps in place to prevent the spread of mud

# BLACKBERRIES, CAVES AND YARRANGOBILLY

to contaminate the area any further than it already is. Once on the other side there is another change mat. The cave is muddy again on the other side requiring you to have either another clean change for the way back or to get out of your clean gear back into dirty clothes.

Although there was quite a bit of mud, the cave from here on opened up to a very large chamber, which was highly decorated. The Rawlinson chamber is spectacular with a great variety of coloured speleothems ranging from stalactite, stalagmite and columns to shawls, curtains and flowstone.



Rawlinson Chamber, Janus Cave. Yarrangobilly

Photo: R Kershaw

Flowstone rivers and dogtooth spar cover the floor in many areas. Care needs to be taken to both stay inside the roped designated viewing area and to ensure that mud is not trampled throughout the cave. After not nearly long enough, everyone finished with taking photos and it was time to leave. Negotiating the clean passage requiring another change as we made our way back. The going was fairly easy, but either practice with ladders prior or use of a rope may have made the job easier.

We exited the cave at 1930hrs and made our way back to the car. Due to the distance from the road, an earlier start may have been warranted. We, however made it back safely in the dark to the car at about 2030hrs heading back for some well earned Gin and Tonics.

Gear requirements: 2 complete changes of shoes/wet suit boots, camera, rigging gear. 4 handlines 10 meters long used for gear hauling and when a hand line is needed, on the flowstone wall. One 50 meter rope, abseiling gear and SRT gear. One short ladder for the pitch just past the gate. This pitch is about five meters long.

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## Y-12 COPPERMINE

Clare Buswell

Coppermine cave is always an easy, lovely jaunt just down the road from Yarrangobilly village. It offers what cavers know as a 'great reward for little effort'. The four of us trundled off to the entrance, clad in wet suits and armed with a small pump and a garden hose to attempt to do some clean up work in the upper level, where, over the years, cavers have left mud on rocks and flowstone.

After the usual walk down the stream passage admiring the pretties and feeling the cold, the water is around 7 degrees, some of us decamped to the upper level and guided by Bob, we saw heaps of stuff that reminded us of one of the reasons we go caving, beautiful speleothems. Note: take a handline of 10 metres for a climb up and a traverse. If you don't then you will be either resorting to standing on a very tall person's shoulders to reach the top of an overhang or end up staying behind. For added safety, a handline is needed for a slippery exposed traverse a little further along.

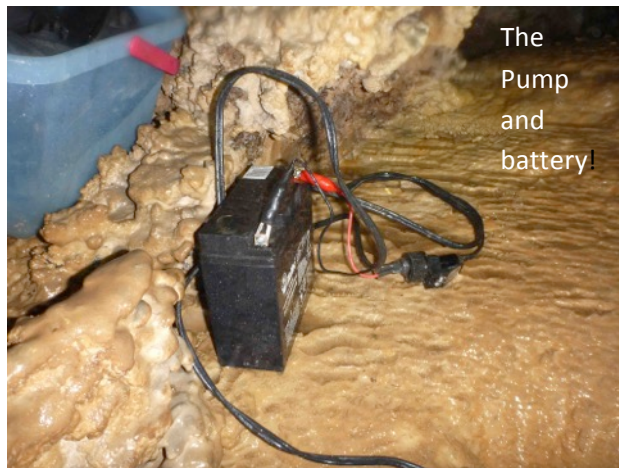
After about 20 minutes we reached the gated section of this cave, through which access is barred. We retraced our steps being very careful in placing our feet on things, as the area is full of white speleothems and delicate bits.

We returned to the stream passage and left Bob to work on cleaning off the mud from where the climb up into the area just described goes. The pump worked really well and heaps of muddy crap came down to the water level below.

Some of us then went back into the main stream way and noted that the shawls that hang around it in one section are completely black. The whole passage is noticeably dark. This is not from any natural mineral impurity, but from the effects of the 2008 bushfires. We poured a bit of water on a



Stream Passage in Coppermine Cave Y-12.  
Photo: C. Buswell



The  
Pump  
and  
battery!

small section of one of them and it came clean, with all the gunk coming off. The soot and fine deposits of burnt twigs simply cover every speleothem in this passage, if you go around the corner

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the speleothems are devoid of any of this material and of course show their true colours! A cleaning job in the blackened section of passage would yield tremendous results.



Pretty things in Castle Cave. Photo C. Buswell

We returned to camp, to drop off some gear, and then go and have a leisurely walk through Castle Cave as the final cave of our trip. This little cave is always full of new rewards with pretty things hidden away in corners or high on the roof. It is an old show cave and now takes some adventure cave tours. The first time I visited it, the cave still had all the old stanchions, chicken wire and concrete. Now all that is gone, for the better I might add, and you can wonder about and simply admire its aging beauty.

Thus ended yet another wonderful trip to Yarrangobilly. It is a caving area with great caves, wonderful mountains and scenery, cold rivers and lots to explore. Never miss the opportunity to go there!

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## WET AND WILD

Clare Buswell

In March a team of 10 of us trundled off to Mt Gambier for a weekend of wetness, mudness and caving. What more could one ask! Those present: C. Buswell, T. Varga, N. Skinner, A. Leong, J. Dodswell, Ma, Chea Yee, Yvette Sim, Jodie, Craig and Ashlee.

Snorkeling in Ewens Pond was the first order of the Saturday. For Chea Yee, Jodie and Evette, who had been in the country for about 4 weeks, this was to be a very memorable event. Under the watchful eye of myself, Aimee and in particular Thomas and Neville all 3 had a spiffing time looking at fish, plants and the bottom of the ponds as they floated around. Similarly for Jenny who had also never snorkled in Ewens.

From there we all moved over to Gran Gran cave. At which point Jenny became decidedly suspicious as Clare, Thomas, and Neville re-donned their wet suits.



Ewens Ponds, the view sometimes! Photo: T Varga

This cave is quite deceptive. It entices you with the normal dry South Australian cave entrance, offering you the choice of three ways on. All of these passages start with a dry entrance which continues for about 2 metres. However if you choose the closest passage to the entrance, the dry 2 metres gives way to standing water, mud and then deep, cold water.

# WET AND WILD

The wet suited lot decided that this was the passage to go down because: a) they belonged to bastard's anonymous, b) they always went this way, c) they belonged to bastard's anonymous, d)



A clean bunch of cavers! Photo: N. Skinner

not enough coffee was consumed with which to start the day! (A, C and D could be the correct answer but B is most likely, depending on how cold and wet you got.) The cave did not disappoint.

Lots of pretty things where to be found, but Thomas, being warm, enticed all bar Neville, Clare and Jodie into the section of deep and cold water, via a climbdown through a narrow rift over the water. The only issue is that the hand-holds tend to come apart and bingo, intimate

connections are made with the water! Jenny and Chea Yee enjoyed such breathtaking experiences and lots of cursing and laughter from Jenny and screams of delight from Chea Yee were heard.

Meanwhile, Neville, Jodie and Clare decided to trundle off into the second passage which goes off from the entrance chamber. Here one has to be quiet and calm as bats roost along this passage. The three of us made our way to the back section where lots of speleothems and a second large chamber are to be found. We took our time looking at the speleothems and trying not to disturb the bats. After a bit, we decided that the others would be on the way out and so should we. Retracing our steps, again being missed by flying bats, we caught up with the wet, muddy and cold crowd in the entrance chamber.

In this chamber flint is to be found and possible evidence of it being mined, or at least being eroded from the walls. Although the cave is locked it still contains bits of rubbish, broken glass, tin cans and other human detritus. I collected an ancient steel coke can and



Post Gran Gran cave! Photo: N. Skinner

thought about selling it on the web and giving the proceeds to the save Clieftdon caves fund, but somehow or other it ended up in the rubbish back at camp! Oh well, there is sure to be another around! Back at camp I noticed that a still thawing out Jenny talking to Aimee about wet suits and why didn't Aimee warn her. Polite words were uttered! ...

Tindales was the next cave to be visited so Sunday morning saw us all gearing up, rigging the pitch and heading down into this fissure type cave. The cave involves a short pitch which bells out about 2 meters from the ground, followed by a decorated narrow fissure like passage way, that leads to a high level passage continuing in the same direction. Though short, the cave has lots of nooks with decorations of all sorts just waiting for the passing photographer to err ... flash by. We spent about an hour looking around and then returned to the surface.

# WHAT'S ON

Mid Year Exams June 20 - July 4

Mid Year Break 6 - 26 July

July 26<sup>th</sup>: Corra Lynn. Great one day trip. Bring your knee pads!  
Thomas and Aimee coordinating.

## Second Semester Starts July 27<sup>th</sup>

Aug 15-16<sup>th</sup> Naracoorte Great caves and lots of fun.  
Thomas and Aimee coordinating.  
Email: [fussi@fussi.org.au](mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au)

August 20<sup>th</sup> General Meeting. The Caves of Mexico. A special talk by Steve Milner.  
Rm 240 Social Sciences North. Flinders Uni.  
Main Campus. 6pm.

12-13<sup>th</sup> September: Southern Flinders. Caving in the semi-arid Flinders. A not to be missed trip! Thomas and Aimee coordinating.  
Email: [fussi@fussi.org.au](mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au)

Sept 10<sup>th</sup> General Meeting: Trevor Arnold. State Emergency Service,  
Rigging workshop. *Venue to be confirmed*  
7-9pm.

## Mid Semester Break. Sept 21 – Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Oct: Caves South of Adelaide **One day** of surface exploration. Let's see what we find. Bring your walking boots. Meet Myponga Café.  
Thomas and Aimee coordinating.  
Email: [fussi@fussi.org.au](mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au)

22<sup>nd</sup> Oct: General Meeting. Heard Is and Antarctica. A special presentation by Tania Wilson.

## Gloom, Depression, General Hiding. EXAMS, Nov 7 - Nov 21

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov: Murray River. A day of boating and looking for caves south of Swan Reach. Thomas and Aimee coordinating.  
Email: [fussi@fussi.org.au](mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au)

26<sup>th</sup> Nov: General meeting. First Aid, Caves and You.

4-7 December: Mole Ck fly-in fly-out. Numbers limited to 6 only. Clare coordinating.  
RSVP JUNE 20<sup>th</sup>. If your name is not on the list then *you don't go* as Permits have to go in ASAP.

**For the Future:**  
2016, Easter:

Nullarbor