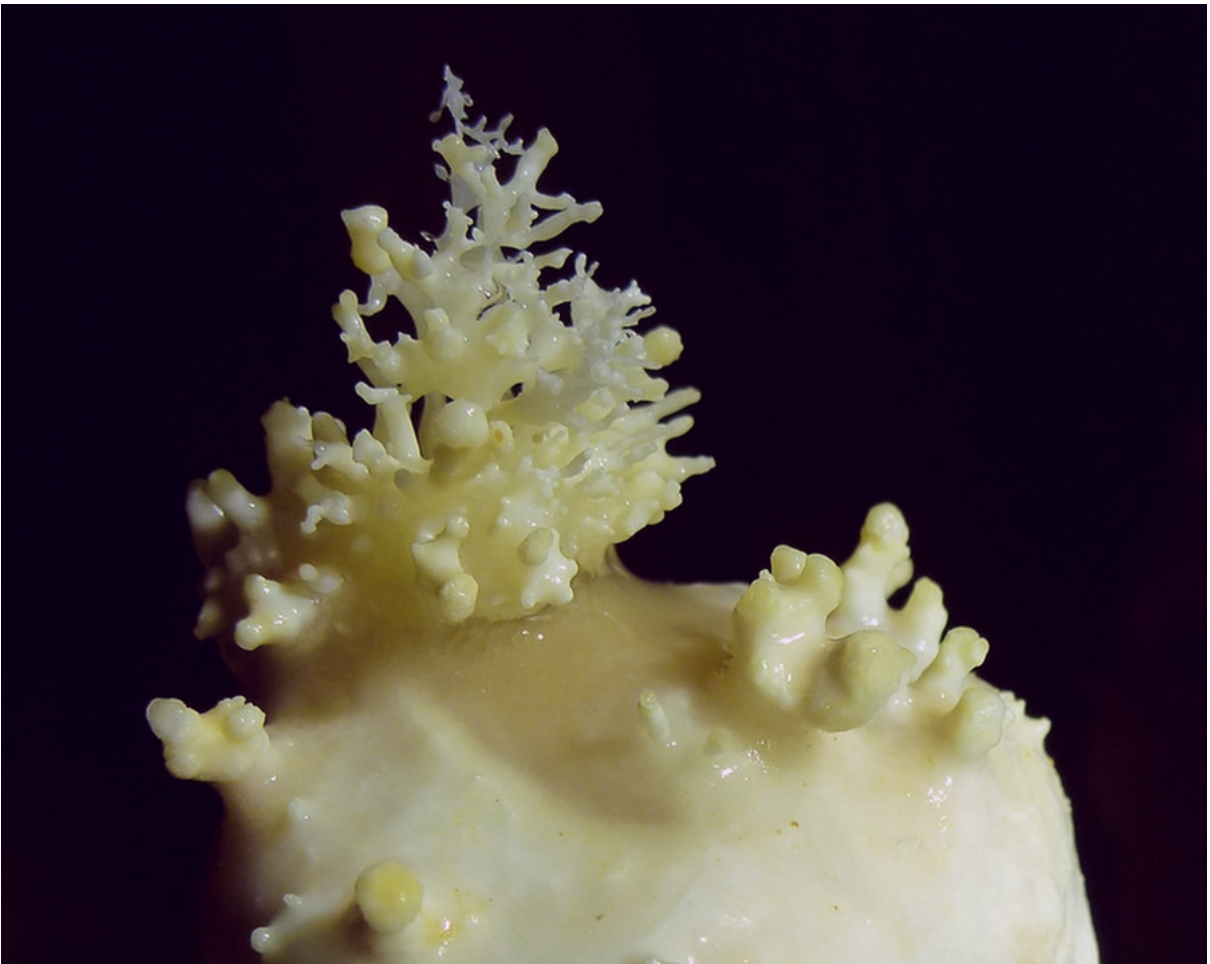




# FUSSI

## Newsletter

Vol. 29 | No. 3 | 2017



TINY DENDRITIC CALCITE FORMATIONS SIT ON TOP OF A STALAGMITE

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**Front Cover Photo:**

Mairs Cave, Southern Flinders Ranges.

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Editor, FUSSI or the Federation.*

## **A message from your Editor:**

Thanks so much to those who contributed to yet another successful newsletter, in particular to Sarah Gilbert for a great article, including some outstanding images, one of which made it onto the covered front cover. (This article was prepared some months ago and in good time by Sarah, but omitted from the previous edition of the newsletter because of the AGM reporting that required the space.)

It has been another busy period, with considerable effort being put into rescue training by Clare, Dee and Tania.

Neville.

## **PAST TRIPS**

**Sat 13th - Sun 14th May 2017**

**Southern Flinders Ranges – Clara St. Dora, Mairs Cave, Mt Simms Cave**

Participants: Thomas Varga (trip leader), Nicole Schiller, Dan Dingwall, Janice Chan, Sarah Gilbert, Margaret Ting and Neville Skinner.

**Sat 10th - Mon 12th June 2017**

**Eyre Peninsula – Homestead Cave, Chinaman's Cave & Honeycomb Cave**

Participants: Dan Dingwall (trip leader), Jade White, Roshan Vasani, Supriya Lath and Neville Skinner.

**Sat 19th - Sun 20th Aug 2017**

**Southern Flinders Ranges – Rescue training at Mairs Cave**

Participants: Clare Buswell (trip leader), Tania Wison, Dan Dingwall, Dee Trewartha, William Cooper and Neville Skinner.

**Sun 2nd Sep 2017**

**Yorke Peninsula - Corra-Lynn cave**

Participants: Thomas Varga (trip leader), Ian Lewis, Dee Trewartha, Sarah Gilbert, Teagan Cross, William Cooper and Nicola Quarta.

**Sun 5th Nov 2017**

**Yorke Peninsula - Corra-Lynn cave (Dreamland section)**

Participants: Thomas Varga (trip leader), Sarah Gilbert and Neville Skinner. Also present on a separate CEGSA trip were Ian Lewis, Graham Pilkington and two State Heritage photographers.

# SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES TRIP

Sat 12th - Sun 13th May 2017

Text & Photos by Sarah Gilbert

## Trip participants:

Thomas Varga (Trip Leader), Dan Dingwall, Sarah Gilbert, Neville Skinner, Margaret Ting, Janice Chan and Nicole Schiller.

We all drove north on Friday evening, converging from different parts of the state. There were a few last minute drop outs for the trip but the rest of us made it up to the homestead in one piece despite a few close encounters with the local wildlife. I jumped in Neville's car with Janice and Margaret, and Thomas' Troopie wasn't far behind. Dan was already setup and dozing by the fire by the time we arrived. There was time for brief introductions before we all headed for our respective beds/tents/swags.

We had a relaxed morning on Saturday with time for a bike ride or a walk before caving. It was great to see some reassuring topography on my morning wander to the top of a hill and satisfy my 'what's on the other side' urges that have been suppressed living in the unusually flat city of Adelaide (unusual for a Tasmanian anyway). For those who're wondering, on the other side there were more rolling slate ridged hills with the occasional gum tree and scrubby bushes.



**Trogging up at Mt Simms**

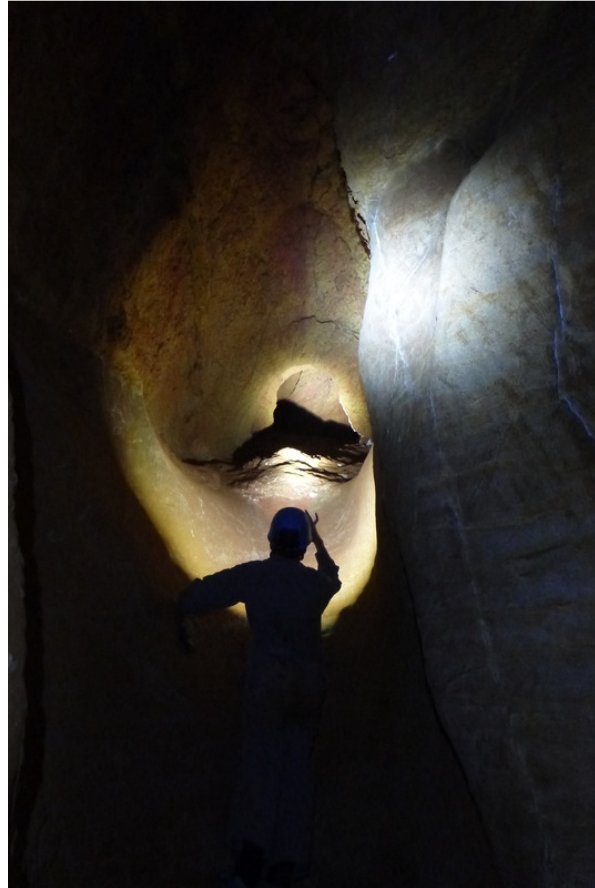
We piled in the cars and drove up to Mt Simms for our first cave of the weekend. Dan installed the borrowed ladder up to the gated entrance and we all climbed up and squeezed through. There was plenty of guano in the entrance passages although no signs of recent bats. I'm still getting used to the concept that not all cave mud is benign, bacteria free clay.



We spent most of the day following Dan down lots of crawly muddy passages. Good fun though. There was plenty of decoration too with crystalline calcite, coral and helictites in many of the chambers. One of the larger chambers had a quite dense collection of scratch marks on part of the wall, and there were also some further in at the base of a small aven further in. We debated their origins round and round in circles, very intriguing.



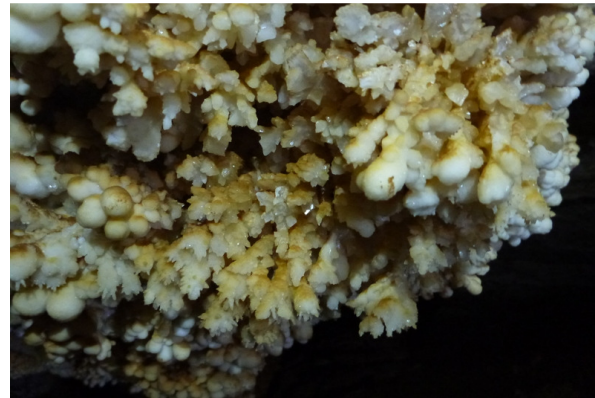
**Rest stop with Dan, Janice, Margaret & Neville**



**Margaret contemplates a climb**



**Relic calcite rafts above the sump**



**Calcite formations**

Lastly we headed to the lowest point in the cave with two very small sumps. They both had delicate calcite rafts on the surface of the still water. There were also thick relic rafts on the floor and walls around the pools and thinner layers left behind surprisingly high in the now dry chamber.

After that we headed out of the cave to the warm sunshine, and packed up our gear.





**Lunch stop amongst the River Red Gums**

On the way back we stopped for a picnic lunch by a large, dry creek bed under majestic river red gums. A very picturesque spot. This area is a new and different landscape for me despite being a very classically Australian – dramatic spreading gum trees, large roos, flocks of sheep and absurd looking emus. I enjoyed the scenery as I bounced along in the back of Thomas’ Troopie.



**The beginnings of a roaring camp fire**



**The mine entrance to Clara St. Dora cave**



We stopped back at the house for some nibbles, blow torching a bonfire into existence and general faffing around before walking over to the scary looking old mine entrance of Clara St Dora. Not a place to hang around for long or sneeze loudly. It always amuses me when fellow geologists ask “don’t you get claustrophobic in a cave” when they are seeming happy going into highly unstable man-made mine workings.



**Super amazing massive calcite spar in Clara St. Dora**



**Roof decorations in Clara St. Dora**



Inside the entrance I was impressed by the large hydrothermal veins of massive calcite crystals with dog tooth spars and rows of mineral inclusions. Further into the caves these early veins are eroded and rounded by the phreatic karst processes that formed the cave. This mineralogist wet dream was counterpointed with an even scarier looking falling down wooden mine passage and plenty of bat shit. At least the piles are now smaller than they once were thanks to the guano miners.



**Hanging stalactites in Clara St. Dora**



This was a cave of phreatic passages, dry dusty crawl ways and little climbs in squeezezy rifts. Good fun, body contorting caving. It was also another well decorated cave. Neville brought along his UV torch and we had great fun looking at the fluorescing calcite. Trace amounts of iron-oxide and other impurities created colour contrast and there were multiple generations of seemingly similar looking calcite fluorescing in different colours – yellows to greens and purples. This was the first time I'd seen this in cave and could have spent hours exploring by UV. Stunning! We were all impressed except for Dan who stubbornly refused to be amazed (but I'm sure he secretly was).

The sun was down by the time we exited the cave and we wandered back in the dark to the house. If only all caves were this conveniently located. We spent the evening toasting ourselves around a roaring campfire with a hot camp oven dinner. The meal was complete with a cake and an off key rendition of happy birthday for Nicole, one day early.



**Margaret & Dan turning back time**

The sun rose on day two for cave number three. Thomas, Dan and Nicole went off down the valley to rig Mairs Cave while the rest of us tidied up the house and then walked along the creek bed to the cave. Mairs has some very impressive iron work over a large open 17m pitch. There's access for everyone with two gates leading to a fixed steel ladder and free hanging abseil. I enjoyed the novelty of being able to stand safely above the middle of the pitch and look down the drop between my feet.





**Margaret descending the ladder**



**Shawls with helictites**



**Gravity defying helictites and calcite blades**



**More blades & straws**





**Neville negotiating the phreatic tubes**



**Stalagmite glows under helmet light**

Neville and I were there first ones down and we went off into a side passage from the main chamber to check out some decorations and look for faults in the cave - two parallel fault systems control the rifting and collapse of the main chambers. We followed one of the fault rifts as far as it went then headed back to find the others. After several false starts we found the passage through the rock pile at the back of the cave to the Christmas Tree Chamber. We knew we were on the right track once we found Thomas napping and the others weren't far away.

This first chamber was well decorated with straws, crazy helicities and calcite blades. These were very different formations to the finely crystalline Christmas Tree and Snow Ball chambers beyond. All very impressive along with beautiful convoluted phreatic sculpting in the side passages.

While Neville and I were checking out the festive decorations the others disappeared again, this time into the Catacombs. We checked out a side aven, then started heading back up as the others remerged, laddering and SRT'ing ourselves to the surface. We derigged and packed up, then on the road again back to Adelaide with a couple of compulsory coffee and food stops along the way.

Overall it was a very enjoyable weekend away with good company and a chance to explore some new territory.

# NESTY UNWRAPPED

Thurs 27th July 2017

Images by Janice Chan







**Patient Dee is rapt with the efficiency of Sarah, Clare and Edwina**

At the General Meeting in July, a group of intrepid rescuers-in-training unwrapped the new FUSSI Nesty rescue stretcher, and proceeded to wrap one of their own in it.



# RESCUE TRAINING AT MAIRS CAVE

Sat 19th –Sun 20th Aug 2017

Images by Neville Skinner



Clare conducting the pre-training briefing



Clare & Tania set up while Dee & Dan gear up



# AN ADVENTURE AT CORRA LYNN

Sun 2nd Sept 2017

Text by Teagan Cross

## Trip participants:

Thomas Varga (Trip Leader), Ian Lewis, Dee Trewartha, Sarah Gilbert, Teagan Cross, Willam Cooper and Nicola Quarta.

This trip was a first for me. I've been caving before, but never at this level or excitement! On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September at 7am, Dee, Thomas, William and I were on the road and heading for the Corra Lynn caves on the Yorke Peninsula. Halfway through our road trip we met up with Sarah, Ian and Nicola at Pt Wakefield to enjoy breakfast and coffee. The trip was great and we made a stop at Ardrossan to check out the view and the quarry, both of which were spectacular sights.

The destination for Corra Lynn caves is a secret, so I'm afraid I cannot tell their whereabouts, but if you ever get a chance to go to these caves, take it! Set on a hill and surrounded by beautiful Aussie wildlife, the entrance to the cave made you feel like you were about to disappear into another world. We had very good maps to ensure we would not get lost, and took in turns leading the way back to the entrance. We made three loops throughout varying levels of twisting and turning rock, around and over crevasses and past crystals that glittered against our lights. After our first loop we had to stop and re-fuel our stomachs. The amount of crawling we did demanded plenty of energy, but was still fun nevertheless!

The second loop involved some tricky tactics, namely placing your feet against one wall and your rear end on another, and using your body and a rope to help climb down a 5metre drop that took you into a lower cavern that connects to many other tunnels. The third loop was the most challenging (but that's what makes it fun!) and involved worming your way through small tunnels and over small crystals that had recently started to form on the cave floors. A treat on this trip was seeing the entrance to what is known as 'Dreamland,' a part of the cavern that was only recently discovered, very large and with only one known access point.

Ian, Nicola and myself stayed behind in the second loop in a little area to explore a gap that fascinated Ian. After squeezing ourselves through the small gap, we soon came into an area that was discovered and lost, then discovered again and were the first people to have been in it for many years. Unfortunately we did not find the exit that Ian was looking for, but it was thrilling all the same and even had a large growth of crystals along its walls and a fun slide for us to ride down!

All in all this trip was well worth the early start (and the bruises on my elbows and knees!) and allows cavers to see how magnificent the Earth really is. The formations were incredible and the geology certainly had many stories to tell. This cave isn't like others, such as the Naracoorte Caves. It is full of passages and levels that lead you all over the place, and allows you to challenge yourself and your caving abilities. Its stalactites were small and intricate and there were places where you could watch water droplets land onto the ground in areas that would soon form stalagmites. And laying down staring at the ceiling of the cavern, watching the salt crystals sparkle away and the mosaic of different rocks, you really do feel like you are in another world when you are in Corra Lynn Caves.

## NEWS & TITBITS

The SRT training has been a great success, with several members having gone to Sydney to undergo SRT Rescue training with Al Warild. This involves taking people off the rope that have suffered collapse or some other issue which renders them unable to get themselves off the rope.

The members who have completed this training are now passing that knowledge onto other SRT trained members, so that eventually all SRT competent members will have knowledge of rope rescue techniques. Hence the ongoing training sessions at Clare & Heiko's place.

.....

Membership fees are now overdue, but gladly accepted anytime:

Student: \$65.00

Introductory: \$40.00

Single: \$88.00

Family: \$119 plus \$20 per family member

Payments may be made directly into FUSSI Bank Account:

Flinders University Speleo Soc.

BSB No: 015-210

Blackwood Branch

Account No: 615000795

Membership is valid for one calendar year and includes \$68.00 membership (less for student and introductory memberships) of the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF), who provide us with important services such as liability insurance, news about what's happening nationally, and a powerful organisation that can lobby governments on our behalf.

Please contact the FUSSI Treasurer if you require additional information.

.....

If you would like to join in on some of the advanced trips involving SRT (Single Rope Techniques), then speak to Clare or Tania.

What it's about?

It's all about Abseiling down into a cave and Prussiking out of the cave, where there generally are no ladders to climb. Often these caves are in isolated locations (for example, Flinders Ranges, Tasmania, and Nullarbor Plains).

What is involved?

Learning the correct techniques in a safe environment, and gradually building up on the skills learnt, so that you become competent in safely negotiating difficult cave access and are able to recognise dangers specific to each cave, and your own limits.

It will take a lot of practice, perseverance and discipline, but it will empower you and increase your confidence in yourselves.

This does not happen overnight – it will require a big commitment from you, but you will be rewarded with the skills to enable you to tackle any cave, cliff or other obstacle at any time, for the rest of your lives.

And you will be fitter and healthier.

.....



# FUSSI PROGRAMME 1st July – 19th Oct 2017

**Note:** FUSSI holds a general get together/meeting on the Third Thursday of each month, except where notified otherwise. Programme subject to change.

## ***MID-SEMESTER BREAK: Sept 18th – Oct 3rd***

- |                                  |                        |   |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Sept:</b> | <b>BBQ Fund Raiser</b> | <b>8:15am – 4:30pm Bunnings, Marion.</b><br>Setup starts at 8:15am, selling starts at 9am.<br>At 4pm we are free to stop selling; we start the clean up.<br>From 9am until 2:30pm we will need your help. |
| <b>Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Oct:</b>  | <b>Heading South</b>   | Day trip down Second Valley/Rapid Bay way, exploring the coast. A nice easy day of walking around. Bring the dog. Thomas coordinating. RSVP Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct.                                     |
| <b>Thu 19<sup>th</sup> Oct:</b>  | <b>General meeting</b> | <b>7pm – Guest Speaker – Dr Rick Daniels.</b><br>Nullarbor Subsurface water migration, and the 1967 exploration focus.. Noel Stockdale Rm<br>Main Library. Flinders Uni.                                  |

## ***Gloom, Doom - EXAMS Nov 6th –20th***

- |                                 |                             |   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Nov:</b>  | <b>Yorke Peninsula</b>      | <b>Explore Dreamland, Corra Lynn cave.</b><br>BYO lunch and knee pads for a fun day.<br>Suitable for all mad idiots. Thomas Coordinating. |
| <b>Thu 16<sup>th</sup> Nov:</b> | <b>Forest of Uni Dreams</b> | <b>6:30pm dark. Meet at Uni Foot Bridge.</b><br>Navigational exercise, in lieu of GM.<br>Tania will get you lost & found.                 |

## ***END OF SEMESTER – SUMMER BREAK: Nov 20th – Feb 23<sup>d</sup> 2018***

- |                                 |                                |  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Thu 19<sup>th</sup> Oct:</b> | <b>Library and pizza night</b> | <b>7pm - Clean up the Library &amp; the Pizzas.</b><br>On campus; at the Club Store, under the Union Hub. A social activity of a sort.<br><b>6:30pm Executive Meeting.</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|

Looking ahead...

- |                            |                                   |   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Sat 3rd - 11th Feb:</b> | <b>Yarrangobilly (Yagby) trip</b> | Wet, cool, sparkling caves in semi-alpine country.<br>Best place to beat the heat of an Adelaide summer.<br>Suitable for all. Bring your caving thermals.<br>Clare coordinating. <b>RSVP 30<sup>th</sup> Nov</b> – permits have to go in! |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|

## **CONFERENCES:**

**31st ASF Conference, Devonport, Tasmania: Sunday 30 Dec 2018 – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019**

Post conference caving trips to Mole Creek, Mt Cripps and Southern Tasmania.

See: <https://prezi.com/view/KavyRw5tX1ExvDqCr7aY/>

## **To be finalised:**

Pick offs, counter balance rescue practice and cliff work at Morialta.

Also Brown Hill Creek quarry Stretcher Lifts.