



FUSSI Newsletter

Vol. 30 | No. 2 | 2018



DAVID EXAMINES FORMATIONS IN COPPERMINE CAVE

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Editor, FUSSI or the Federation.*

A message from your Editor:

Greetings fellow cave-dwellers,

2018 is my introductory year to caving. My first experience was on the Murray river trip in March, and since that first venture underground I've been hooked. I've attended as many FUSSI events as I can, and for some reason someone thought it'd be a good idea to give me reins over the newsletter. Unfortunately my poor time-management skills haven't coped well with this responsibility, and so I apologize for the late release of this issue. I am keen to receive trip reports, photographs and anything caving related you want to share! All due credit will be given I assure you, and others will be interested in your material so please don't hesitate to send in stuff for future issues, including questions or comments.

I have enjoyed putting this collection of FUSSI records together, and I hope you get as much out of reading it. Now that I've got the hang of this editor thing, I look forward to the next issue's release!

Cheers, Matt

PAST TRIPS

Feb 3-14.2018.

Yarrangobilly NSW

Murray River: March 4th 2018

Sat 24th - Sun 25th March 2018

Naracoorte trip – Victoria Fossil, Sand & Fox caves

Sun 15th April 2018

Yorke Peninsula day trip – Corra Lynn cave

Sat 12th - Sun 13th May 2018

Flinders Ranges trip

Sun 15th July 2018

Yorke Peninsula day trip – Corra Lynn cave



Group Shots from 15/4/18 Corra-Lyn trip.
The camera really shows how dusty
it is in the Cave!

FUSSI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018

MINUTES

26th April 2018 6.30pm,
Noel Stockdale Rm, Central Library, Flinders University

Meeting Opened: 18:41pm

Members Present: Tania Wilson, Thomas Varga, Clare Buswell, DeeTrewartha, David Mansueto, Sarah Gilbert, Andrew Stempel, Matt Timms, Imogen Marshall, Daniel Dingwall, Ian Lewis, Neville Skinner

Apologies: Ken Smith, Mark Sefton, Hannah Stampke, Heiko Maurer

Election of Chair - David Mansueto

1) Minutes from AGM 2017

Minutes accepted. Clare Moved, Sarah Seconded,

2) Reports for 2017

- **President's report:** Janice Chan

President absent

- **Treasurer's Report:** Thomas Varga

Verbal and Written report given. We made a loss of \$145.00 last year

- **Safety Officer's Report:** Clare Buswell

Verbal and written report given.

Some particular incidents highlighted: Knot slippage on Nullarbor trip. Hauling issues on Nullarbor trip. Basic belaying and rigging sessions proposed for 2018, along with search and rescue practice in Corra Lynn. All trip leaders must have first aid certificate. This is an ASF insurance requirement.

Thomas: If any people are deemed not safe to cave (eg. Under the influence of alcohol) trip leaders have the authority to ask them to sit out. Clare: This issue is addressed in the Standing Orders of the club. Trip leaders have this power:

Standing Order: Point 4:

"The trip leader has the right to refuse permission for any person on a trip to enter a cave:"

- **Secretary Report:** Dee Trewartha

Verbal and written report given

Thomas: What percentage of students are required to affiliate with FUSA? Dee: 66% (not including alumni), also 66% of the executive must be students.

- **Equipment Officer's Report:** Tania Wilson

Verbal and written report given

Thomas: In terms of the current FUSSI gear availability, how many people can we accommodate to take caving at one time? Tania: 14 Helmets and lights total therefore 14 people. This is for non-vertical caves.

- **Library Officer's Report:** Clare Buswell

Verbal and written report given

David: Is there a plan to digitalize library? Clare: Need someone with time who is willing to put in the effort then the library can be digitized.

- **Newsletter editor's Report:** Neville Skinner

Verbal and written report given.

Particularly - more articles required from club members. Ian suggests write the stories around the photos taken as photos are a strength of the FUSSI newsletter.

- **ASF Rep report:** Tania Wilson

Verbal and written report given

Sarah now an ASF exec member, can take our questions to exec meetings

- **Public Officer.** Dan Dingwall.

Verbal report given

Nothing to report from the Public Officer's position.

Motion that all reports be accepted.

Sarah moved, Tania seconds. All reports accepted

3) Nominations for 2018:

- President: Clare nominates David Mansueto, Thomas seconds, Motion carried
- Secretary: Sarah nominates Dee Trewartha, Matt seconds, Motion carried
- Treasurer: David nominates Thomas Varga, Neville seconds. Clare nominates Tania Wilson, Sarah seconds, put to vote, Tania elected
- Safety Officer: David nominates Clare Buswell, Dee seconds. Motion carried. Clare happy to be safety officer for 2018, but this will be her final year.
- Equipment officer: Clare nominates David Mansueto, Tania seconds, Motion carried
- ASF representative: Tania nominates Sarah, Dan seconds, Motion carried
- Librarian: Dee nominates Immi Marshall, David seconds, Motion carried
- Newsletter: Clare nominates David Mansueto, (position rejected). Thomas nominates Neville Skinner, Tania seconds. Dee nominates Matt Timms, David seconds. Put to vote Matt elected.
- Public Officer: Sarah nominates Dan Dingwell, Clare seconds. David nominates Thomas Varga, Dee seconds, put to vote Thomas elected.

4) Bank Signatories:

Motion put: That Thomas Varga is removed as a signatory from the FUSSI Term Deposit, the FUSSI Blackwood and Hutt Street Accounts. Further, that David Mansueto is added as a signatory to the FUSSI Term Deposit, the FUSSI Blackwood and Hutt Street accounts and that Tania Wilson is added as signatory to Term deposit. Tania Wilson is already a signatory to the FUSSI Blackwood and Hutt St Accounts. Motion put by Clare Buswell and Sarah Gilbert seconds it, Motion carried.

End Of AGM
19:43 AGM closed

OFFICE BEARER REPORTS for 2017

Treasurer's Report for the period

1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017

Overall Summary

Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Closing balance
\$14,566.93	\$6,601.34	\$6,742.63	\$14,425.64
		Difference	-\$141.29

	Main Bank account	Debit card account	Petty cash	Term deposits	Total
Opening balance	\$6,763.48	\$348.22	\$1,890.94	\$5,564.29	\$14,566.93
Closing balance	\$7,551.76	\$1,113.59	\$97.05	\$5,663.24	\$14,425.64
Difference	\$765.37	\$765.37	-\$1,793.89	\$98.95	-\$141.29

Breakdown of income

Term deposits	\$98.95
FUSA Grants	\$3,026.00
Member Contributions	
Membership fee	\$1,767.00
Gear Hire	\$780.00
BBQ	\$1,427.29
Total	\$7,099.24

Breakdown of expenditure

ASF fees	-\$1,587.95
Gear Purchase (DistoX, SRT gear, etc)	-\$3,029.53
Operational (Catering, photocopying, Nullarbor trip associated costs, SRT rescue weekends)	-\$2,623.05
Total	-\$7,240.53

Comments:

1. FUSSI monies were stored in four location: two bank accounts with ANZ, a term deposit and petty cash. \$5,000.00 has been allocated to the term deposit that matures every 3 months at a rate between 2-2.5% per annum.
2. The club bought some long term gear with high initial outlay.
3. As opposed to the previous year, FUSSI had one BBQ event in 2017.

Thomas Varga. FUSSI Treasurer 2017

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

What a year 2017 was, people trying to learn the dark arts of caver rescue, training like mad, attending courses about such, and then practicing in the shed like a bunch of demented beetles. We perservere...

In all seriousness, no accidents, nor injuries occurred in 2017. Well done team.

However, we did have an incident on the Nullarbor Research trip involving a knot slip in a rope, due to a knot being improperly set, in either the tape used to anchor the rope or in the rope itself. The rope was loaded and the person on the rope fell approximately half a metre, whilst still attached to a safety tail. The incident occurred at the lip of the pitch.

We also practised our hauling skill set, which was found lacking in the rigging department having set it up with the hauling team having to haul towards the dotline rather than away from it. Hilarious! Yeah, well, won't do that again! We thank the person awaiting the haul out for their patience, whilst we pulled it all apart and started again!

These incidents showed the need to increase the depth within the club of rigging, belaying and coms skills. In 2018, alongside the monthly meetings and trips, I will be running one day practice and skill development days. These will occur mostly on the uni campus. There will also be, later in the year, a real-time search and rescue weekend at Corra Lynn. Dates for these events will be set up by the FUSSI executive. It is expected that those wishing to participate commit a fair amount of time, as these training days aim at developing a serious set of skills that require lots of practice. It is also expected that those learning such skills get involved in the running of the club. FUSSI is after all a club, and not a training organisation.

Finally, it is a requirement of the ASF insurance that trip leaders are qualified in first aid. Can we all check and if necessary, update our First Aid Certifications. If you do not have a first aid certificate, do a course. They are great fun and you will learn a lot.

Clare Buswell. FUSSI Safety Officer. 2017.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Overall 2017 saw the club have a very active year, running monthly meetings with guest speakers, including a talk on 3D Mapping by Graham Walker, a talk on Bats by Terry Rearden, and running a practical GPS and navigational exercise amongst others. Apart from our monthly trips to caves within the state, members ran a vertical rescue training weekend in the Flinders, a 2 week trip to northern and southern Tasmania in early February and a successful ten day research trip to the Nullarbor. Members also flipped a zillion snags as a fundraiser in October, bringing in some hard earned for the club.

Four club members attended four days of rescue training, held in Sydney and Bungonia and hosted by the NSW Cave Rescue Squad. Those who attended from FUSSI have spent

considerable time training up other SRT skilled FUSI members in vertical rescue techniques. FUSI thanks FUSA for the funding that allowed FUSI members to attend these workshops in NSW.

FUSI also developed a public Facebook page to assist with networking to Flinders Uni Students.

As FUSI secretary I designed Desktop banners and giveaway postcards for the club. These were used for Fair Day and other promotional events. I also designed a promotional club image which was used on the TV displays on Campus in 2017.

One of my main tasks in 2017 was to help complete FUSI's re-affiliation with FUSA. After a considerable effort from all the FUSI exec we were once again re-affiliated with FUSA. The club had 33 members last year, with a good mix of student and non-student members all making the club and its activities safe and enjoyable.

I am happy to nominate for the position of FUSI secretary for 2018.

Dee Trewartha. FUSI Secretary 2017

EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

During 2017 FUSI purchased the following equipment:

Bluewater II Rope 65m	\$240.00
DistoX2	\$728.32
Deep Cycle Battery and cables	\$726.67
Battery Box	\$28.45
Walkie Talkie set x2	\$1027.60 (1 pair paid for by FUSA)
Bivvy Bag	\$100.00
Seat Belt Tape 50m	\$147.50
Petzl Ascenders x2	\$198.00

Total: \$3196.54

\$513.80 of this was funded by FUSA.

So far in 2018 FUSI purchased the following equipment:

Helmets x4	Awaiting Invoice
Black Diamond Lights x2	Awaiting Invoice
25mm Tube Tape 90m	Awaiting Invoice

During 2017 FUSI retired the following equipment: Multiple 25mm Tube Tapes of Various Lengths.

NOTE: Club Equipment Usage

Leading up to the ASF IUS Nullarbor field trip FUSI was approached by the trip leader for the loan of club equipment. FUSI club members discussed this request at great length. The decision was made to lend some equipment as a once-off agreement. However, it was re-iterated that the club's policy is that FUSI gear only goes on FUSI trips. This approach ensures that FUSI is able to uphold its responsibility regarding personal protection equipment and all of its associated equipment lent to club's members.

Tania Wilson. FUSI Equipment Officer 2017

LIBRARY OFFICER'S REPORT

The FUSSI library is full of very useful stuff, both electronic and paper. Want to run a trip to Tasmania, or the Nullarbor? Then the FUSSI library is the place to go. You will find previous trip reports, maps, contact details, permit requirements, info on where to stay, what to bring and what to expect re the caves you will visit.

The Library holds books on caving techniques, histories of caving areas, journals from overseas and local caving clubs, and of course FUSSI's own history. The library is part of the club store, and is found in the FUSA Club's Store Room. Contact anyone on the FUSSI executive if you want anything in the library and we will help you find it.

A number of previously printed journals are now moving over to being published in electronic form only, in particular the Journal of the Sydney Speleological Society and Caves Australia. We also renewed contact with our New Zealand caving friends, the NZSS and we are now back in their newsletter exchange loop.

The Sydney Uni Speleo Society a couple of years ago put their library material on-line. This has been a brilliant move, as it is very hard to locate speleo related publications in public libraries. The national caving organisation, the Australian Speleological Federation, also has its own library to which all cavers have access and to which FUSSI contributes. Libraries are wonderful places, not only do they now allow coffee, but they smell of books. Use them.

Clare Buswell. FUSSI Librarian. 2017.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

The last year has seen four newsletters published. These were: Vol 29 No1 (Apr 2017), Vol 29 No 2 (Jul 2017), Vol 29 No 3 (Sep 2017) and Vol 30 No 1 (Mar 2018). All newsletters can be viewed on the FUSSI website.

We aim for 4 newsletters per year, but a shortage of articles during the second half of the year impacted on the newsletters.

Contributors for 2017-18 in chronological order of articles included Trudy Field (Naracoorte), Dee Trewartha & Tania Wilson (Cave Rescue training, NSW), Ken Smith (in-cave P-bags), Ken Smith, Tania Wilson & Clare Buswell (Tasmania), Neville Skinner (Sealing Tents), Clare Buswell (Knots), Sarah Gilbert (Southern Flinders Ranges), Teagan Cross (Corra Lynn) and Neville Skinner (exploding batteries).

A BIG thankyou to all those who contributed articles – you make the newsletter what it is.

We are always looking for articles that tell us if you enjoyed the trip (or anything that you did not enjoy), if it was your first trip what did it feel like, did we provide a safe and enjoyable experience for you, if you previously had fears of entering caves how did you feel once in the cave, what were your emotions, what were the highlights for you, etc?

It is very rewarding for authors of articles when they see their article in print, and especially when people come up to compliment you on the article you wrote. Yes, people do notice and do appreciate.

Articles only need to be one or two pages – this is easily pushed out to 6-7 pages once images are added. If you have images, we need them too – I have found a good file size is around 150-200KB, with around 350KB for the front cover and full-page images.

It is the job of the editor to support the author and to ensure the article is well presented. Where required, pictures will be sourced from others to support and enhance your article, with credit being given to all contributors of articles and images.

Remember: the Newsletter is the public record of the club's activities for the year, and the face of the club that is seen worldwide on the web. So keep the articles coming and let's make 2018 the best year for the newsletter.

Neville Skinner. FUSSI Newsletter Editor, 2017

ASF REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

FUSSI is a long-standing member of the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF). Each FUSSI member pays ASF membership for a calendar year which ensures each member is covered by ASF insurance on caving trips. This is of significant importance as many private landowners require this insurance prior to giving access to their land. Currently active members of FUSSI are financial members of the ASF.

Each year the ASF committee has an AGM. This year it was held in Sydney and was ably attended by Sarah Gilbert on behalf of FUSSI. Sarah is now a member of the ASF Committee. FUSSI has a long history of its members being involved with the ASF Committee and Sarah continues that tradition. Well done Sarah!

Tania Wilson. FUSSI ASF Representative 2017

31st ASF Conference Devonport, Tasmania

Sunday 30 December 2018 - Friday 4 January 2019



Like us on Facebook and check out our
website: www.asfconference2019.com
Enquiries: asftasmania2019@gmail.com

Photo credits: David Wools-Cobb

WHICH BAG IS THE BEST TO TAKE CAVING?

Clare Buswell

Caving bags, AKA dogs, ya bastard and many other expletives, get everything thrown in them and at them. They are dragged, rolled, kicked, sometimes thrown, taken for swims in underground rivers, get covered in mud, clay, sand and get hauled over sharp rocks. But they carry your lifeline to safety, your precious bottle of Moët err... Rather, the gear needed for the caving you are doing: SRT gear, warm clothes, Port, first aid kit, rope, spare lights and batteries, piece of mono-cellular foam rubber, lunch and chocolate. Thus, with all this in it you are going to need something with a bit of size to it.



The Aldi Special

Op shop cheapie priced somewhere between \$2.00-\$10.00, the Aldi waterproof single shoulder strap daypack, about \$20.00 or the Aspiring Cave pack.

The K-Mart or Op shop cheapie.

If you buy one of these, you may need to make some modifications. Cut off all the crap that is on the outside that will get caught on stuff. This will leave you with the shoulder straps, an outside pocket that zips up, and a handle or loop at the top so you can pass it on to people or place a karabiner on which to tie a rope.

Any outside pockets made of mesh type material, which in the bag's non-cave-life held such items as drink bottles, should be cut off. In the cave environment anything in them will undoubtedly fall out, hit any below caver or perhaps as it falls break the straws that you have just meticulously negotiated your way around trying not to damage them. The latter is never a good look. The former will forgive you after suitable bribes have been paid.

Sometimes these bags are water-proof, but I wouldn't stake my life on it. Lifespan of such a bag depends on how you treat it, the way in which it is made and from what material. These bags can be glued and/or stitched together, made of nylon with a PVC coating that usually flakes or is scraped

Further, the in-cave pack should be foldable so it can be packed away. This is useful if you are going to be hauling 20kg of ropes, rigging gear and all the just-mentioned items up and down ruddy great hills, through blackberries or the impenetrable biomass known as the Tasmanian forest. For this fun game your bushwalking backpack is recommended as it has a comfortable harness, something caving packs don't have. If your caving pack rolls/folds up you can stuff it, along with all the rest of the gear into the bushwalking pack and then hand the lot to some passing mule or truck or innocent caver.

So here are some choices: The K-Mart or the



The K Mart Special

WHICH BAG IS THE BEST TO TAKE CAVING?

off during use. They are cheap, practical and good for non-rope work trips where space can be at a premium.

The Aldi Special

I have not much experience with this pack, except to note my bias against single shoulder strap type packs. I simply find them uncomfortable to wear. Having got that out of the way, many cavers use them. They are relatively cheap, around the \$20.00 mark, seams are heat sealed, and the PVC is a reasonably heavy weight, but not as heavy as that used in the Aspiring bags. Like most day packs they are narrow and thus can fit through things easily. As for space to carry all your stuff, well ... these cope OK. Buying them is the issue as Aldi seems only to stock them when the moon rises in the west.

Aspiring Cave Bags

These come from Aspiring Equipment in NZ. They are made specifically with caving as the primary use. They come in a couple of sizes, 35 litres and 15 litres.

The specifications blurb on their website states the construction details as follows:

- 680 g/m2 white PVC with colour contrast
- Butynol base reinforced with webbing
- Reinforced eyelets in the base for drainage
- Double loop daisy chain hauling straps
- Heavy-duty enclosed draw cords for closing the pack
- Double closure provides for pack extension
- Simple adjustable shoulder straps
- Supplied with a high-density 10 mm foam pad
- Available in Red, Yellow, Blue or Dark Green contrast trim

The shoulder straps are made from seatbelt tape and some women find that they are set too far apart for a woman's build. This causes the straps to sit on the edge of the shoulders and not comfortably in the centre.

They are however well made, very durable and can take the beating cavers put them through.

They have no zippers that, over time, clog up with grit, break apart, thus becoming useless. They have good grab points and the designers have thought about where to place them, putting them on the same side as the shoulder straps so you can grab the bag with all the snaggy bits on that side.

You can get them direct from Aspiring Equipment in NZ, if you spend more than \$100.00 postage is free.

What do I use? Well, I have this old daypack, it's about 16 years old, which I got on special from a Kathmandu store. From memory, it cost me \$15.00 at the time. It has been on every caving trip since, about 12 per year, many of which are ten-day affairs. It has been dragged



Above: Aspiring Caving Bag
Below: Bottom of Aspiring Bag



WHICH BAG IS THE BEST TO TAKE CAVING?

through airports as a functioning day pack, hauled around caves in Europe, and back home to most caving areas in the country. I have been trying to put it out of its misery for the past couple of years, but it just doesn't want to die. What do I like about it? The shoulder straps are padded, it has a compartment which contains a piece of mono or high density foam rubber, which I can take out and sit on. This keeps the cold at bay and saves my skinny arse from the discomfort that comes from sitting on lumpy rocks. It fits all my gear, folds up and now has the odd drainage hole in the bottom to let the water out! Importantly it is a straight sack, so the top of it is not curved and closed with a zip. It is closed with a draw string.

I will let you know when I bury it and have to buy another. In the meantime enjoy hunting for a cave bag.

GOD WAS A MADONNA, DISCUSS

Matthew Timms, Lewis Rosenberg, Imogen Marshall

On March 24 and 25th of this year a bunch of FUSSI cavers converged on Naracoorte Caves, to catch up with some of the staff at the caves who are known to venture underground with us, and to go caving of course. It was the first serious trip of the year and below are some thoughts on caves, caving and cavers from those members who are new to this crazy activity. I thank them for writing these down for us all to enjoy. Clare Buswell Trip leader.

People on the trip: Buswell C, Dee T, David D, Neville S, Thomas V, William C, Elise R, Matt T, Christophe L-R, Lewis R, Imogen M, Teagan C, Hannah S, Andrew S.

SAND CAVE

Matt Timms

As we pulled up to the gate, I saw Clare's car which was being used as an anchor point for the ropes. It was the only indicator of the cave entry visible from a distance. There was no messing around when it came to Sand cave, no warm up or walk-in entry. To get in required a 10m or so climb down a solution tube, barely wider in diameter than an arm's length.

I watched Will descend down the hole with Thomas belaying, while I waited for my turn to climb down the tiny-rung caving ladder. When it came time I attached myself to the rope, slowly lowered myself in the hole and onto the ladder. It was a difficult descent due to the width of solution tube, width of the rungs and the movement of ladder. I eventually got to the opening of the entrance chamber, welcomed by Will, a decomposing kangaroo, loud flies, some old rubbish and a surprising lack of bad smells.

Once I had my harness off and relaxed myself I realised how sore my hands were from gripping the ladder so tight. It didn't take long to understand the namesake of the cave, standing on a sand cone and seeing sand across the floor of the chamber. We made our way deeper in the cave once Hannah joined us, whilst Thomas rappelled down the tube. We met him further in the cave at the Giant sand cones. It was an uncommon experience having a snack whilst enjoying the underground view.

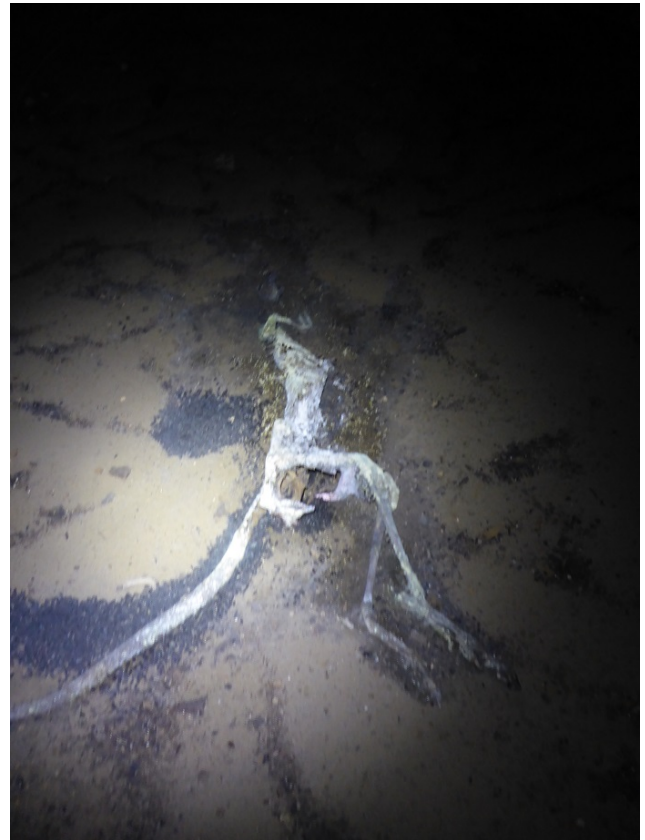
Continuing along, we clambered over boulders in a large chamber. It was a weird feeling being underground in such a large space. It was an escape to a surreal, hidden world. We came to a cleaning point, to keep the light coloured sandstone dust and sand separate from the dark coloured sand, preserving the natural state as much as possible.

GOD WAS A MADONNA, DISCUSS

This led into the signature chamber, where the sandy floor was decorated with names and dates spanning the last century. Here we sat and enjoyed the dark silence, and contemplated the previous visits of the cave.



Left: Entering Sand cave feet-first



Right: Greeted by a dead Kangaroo

Next came the Sand crawl, 10-15m of belly-crawling fun, with some parts so tight you could only have your head on its side. A fun squeeze. That's when you don't want to think about some things like seismic movement. The squeeze led into Crystal Chamber, where we saw a giant mound stalagmite, looking similar to clear flowstone. Moving on past the incomprehensibly old formations, we carefully navigated the delicate straw-like structures covering the roof. There were such clear, free of impurities formations everywhere.



We then headed along more boulders, coming around in a loop we re-joined our previous path, passed the sand cones and came back to the solution tube exit. I was the first to climb out after Thomas, finding it easier than climbing down. It was still a bit of a workout, but fun. Once back out in the fresh air the first thing I noticed was the change in cloud cover. Rain started whilst Will was on his way up, but luckily didn't set in.

Overall, it was an awesome experience. Overalls were dirty and full of sand, the sign of a good time. I enjoyed the variety

GOD WAS A MADONNA, DISCUSS

sand cave offered; sand cones, sand crawls, sand signatures, boulders, beautiful formations and a ladder climb.

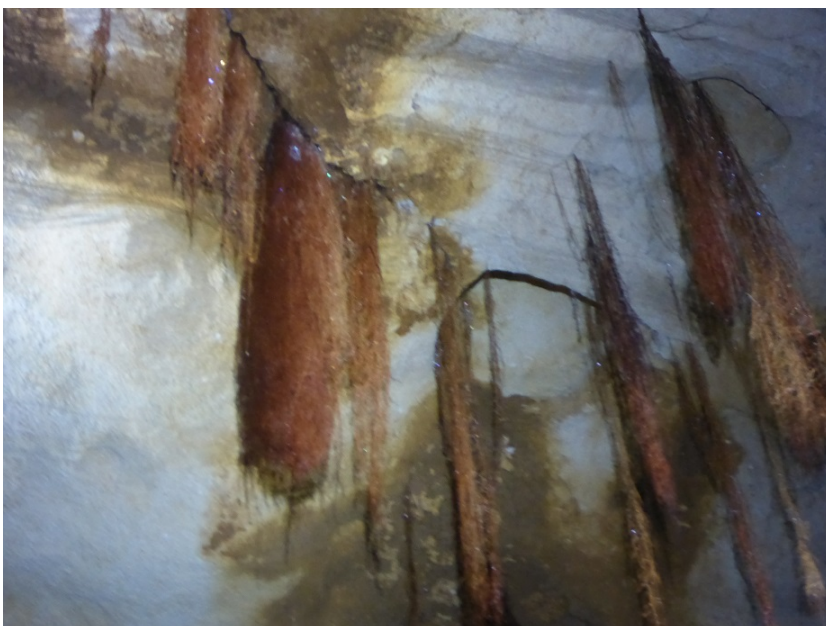
Sand Cave. Imogen Marshall

Sand Cave in Naracoorte Caves National Park was a truly incredible experience for a beginner caver like myself. Climbing down a wire ladder into the dark is a surreal experience and the entrance cavern was a welcome rest after the rather wobbly decent. The cave itself was a maze of stunning columns, sand cones and rock piles. The Sand Cones, for which the cave is named, are immense and the artefacts that can be seen strewn throughout them, let alone the ones that must be hidden under the sand, are fascinating. There was everything from bones to old glass medicine bottles and tires. The timeline representation of the cones must be a dream come true for archaeologists and palaeontologists alike.



Sand Cone with Will for Scale.
Photo Matt Timms

Whilst exploring the cave we navigated some tight squeezes, clambered up enormous rock piles and quickstepped up the side of Sand Cones. In many parts of the cave long tree roots, looking like horse's tails, draped from the ceiling creating an eerie scene in the faded light. The squeezes are an exhilarating experience and the feeling of scrabbling on your belly through a tiny opening, digging the sand out from in front of you, gives the feeling of true exploration.



Tree roots in Sand Cave.
Photo: Matt Timms

GOD WAS A MADONNA, DISCUSS

The accomplishment felt when finally emerging at the end of a squeeze is also fantastic and after many of these squeezes we found incredible caverns of sparkling stalagmites, stalactites, columns and Sand Cones. The Crystal Palace was a personal favourite as the floor and ceiling glitter with mineral deposits and water droplets in the light of our headtorches.

Further caverns also showed more human influences in the form of signatures written in the sand. There were many from the years 1968-1969 all perfectly preserved and even a signature from the original FUSS society. [A Signature of the FUSS secretary of 1975, John Marshall. Ed]

The careful preservation of the caves was also wonderful to see as many of the features were taped off and there were areas in which to dust off in order to prevent the red dirt mixing with the white dust. These precautions will ensure that many more cavers in years to come can also enjoy and learn from the features we saw this trip.

Overall sand cave was a wonderful and educational experience.

FOX CAVE

Lewis Rosenberg

“We need to go left when we get to the big rock,” Andrew said uncertainly.

The four of us peered around, and then looked back at Andrew, nonplussed. To be fair, big rocks were not quite all we could see. There were also a few medium rocks, as well as some small ones. But still, we found Andrew’s directive a little inadequate. Dee tore the map from his hands.

“We left Clare back in that direction...”

“Is that a path that way...?”

“It looks like there are boot marks over here... Or are they mine...”

“Are we on top of the big rocks right now!? Or maybe we’re under them...”

In a way Andrew was right. We were under about a zillion tonnes of rock and soil, inside Naracoorte’s Fox Cave. Clinging on to a rope from a tree, we had lowered ourselves in to a maw in the earth concealed by a border of tall grass. After squirming through Fox’s infamous ‘letterbox’ entrance, so tight and twisty in some places that the air was driven from our lungs, we found ourselves in a long, straight tunnel. Dust and foggy breath swirled in the light of our headlamps.



Through the ‘letterbox’
Photo: Mathews Timms

Andrew, Dee, Tegan and I were on a mission to find something called ‘the Edelweiss’. Our experienced leader Clare had stayed behind in the main chamber.

“You guys can find that yourselves. Practice your navigation skills.” The smirk on her face had left me very, very worried.

So now, while Tegan, Andrew and Dee puzzled over the map, I was clambering around amongst the tight rocks, squeezing into anything that vaguely looked like a path onwards. For some reason I had decided that maps are lame, and that if I squirreled around enough the Edelweiss would simply reveal itself to me. (Plus I was loving climbing around like a child in a play fort). Thankfully, Dee had a more definite idea.

GOD WAS A MADONNA, DISCUSS

“Guys. We left Clare over that way.” Dee pointed. “If we head this way,” she turned 180 degrees, “we can just follow the right wall and we’ll find the passage.”

We took Dee’s lead and found our way to the prize. The Edelweiss was a bizarre and twisted form of molten-like limestone. The crystals, each of which probably represented about a million years of the formation’s development, glittered cheerfully. We had to hurry back to Clare’s chamber, embarrassingly close to the half-hour time limit she had allowed us for what ended up being a journey of at the most 100 metres.

“Get lost?” she asked. The smirk was back.

Slumped in the dirt, we snacked. Tegan’s backpack, which had for the whole weekend held the chaste promise of heavy, rattley bags of sweets and chocolate, was violated, and we noisily sucked down a bag of killer pythons.

Clare told us a little about her experiences surveying caves in the Northern Territory and the Nullarbor. Hard-core enthusiasts like her spend weeks camping in remote places, underground for 15 hours a day, mapping Australia’s vast underground world, the majority of which is still unexplored and untouched. The passion in her voice was inspiring.

Back on our feet, we followed the main passage to the next chamber. Aside from its squeezey entry, Fox cave is quite spacious. This chamber was no exception. Tree roots hung metres down from the vaulted ceilings, bearing hundreds of water droplets. When lit up in a certain way, they shone like stars. “They’re crying,” someone said.

Our next goal was a formation called ‘the Madonna’. Dee snickered when she heard the name. “Every cave has a Madonna,” she explained. “It’s silly.”



Fox Cave’s ‘Madonna’
Photo: MathewTimms

We puzzled about why people feel the need to offer up so many homages to the divine. Clare noted that ‘this God fellow’ seemed to hand out harsh punishments for minor misdemeanours. “What about Lot’s wife? They were fleeing the city of Sodom and God said ‘don’t look back’. She took one little look over her shoulder and God turned her into a pillar of salt.”

Meanwhile Tegan and I were squirming down some pointless squeeze-way. Dee had announced that after her and Andrew’s efforts with the Edelweiss, it was up to Tegan and me to find the Madonna. My scorn for the

map led us into trouble, despite Dee’s best efforts to give me subtle guiding hints. After extracting Tegan from a particularly tight spot, Clare took us back to where we had turned wrongly and we found the Madonna.

GOD WAS A MADONNA, DISCUSS

It was another spectacular array of spines, stalag-gear, and nameless alien limbs of limestone. We marvelled, but between tiredness and the blasphemy of earlier we were soon ready to go. I attempted to lead the way out, and again was soon uncertain of my way. Once more I had neglected to read the map, and my frustration with myself, as Dee again came to the rescue, showed that I had finally learnt my lesson.

Going back up the letterbox was even harder than coming down. Hauling myself up the final ledge, I sprawled on my back, sweetly exhausted. I could hear Andrew and Clare cursing and struggling below me. The soft earth was cool against my sweaty face.

The ceiling, at arm's length above me, was studded with shell fossils. No Madonna ever gave me a sense of the divine as strong as that which I received from the ammonite above my eyes.

NEWS & TITBITS

FUSSI has had the pleasure of having a couple of talks this year. One from Ian Moffat on Ground Penetrating Radar and Karst Exploration that I found extremely interesting, and another from Ken Smith about a special place to dive that I unfortunately couldn't make, but I'm sure it was great if it came from Ken. He also gave up his Sunday along with Richard Harris on the 27th May to show us a variety of communication technologies that was lots of fun to play with in the University's forest. I encourage everyone to attend these events, as they are as much fun you can have without getting dirty!

BIG thank you for all involved with the Bunnings BBQ held in July. Without all that effort we would be a lot poorer. Hope that all the grease has well and truly faded from memory or at least by the time we get another BBQ gig we will have all recovered from the trauma.

FOUND ON THE WEB

With thanks from the ACKMA email notices.

- [Extreme weather 'potentially catastrophic' for bats](#)
- [Desert Research Institute Uncovers New Facts About Pup Fish](#)
- ['Biggest Ever' Sinkhole Has Ripped Open in New Zealand, And It's Unearthing History](#)
- [Cave Found in Kenya in Which People Lived for 78,000 Years](#)
- [China's Last Cave Dwellers Fight to Keep Their Underground Homes](#)
- [The Green-Feathered Terror That Slaughtered Bats in Spain](#)
- [Sinkhole forms on White House lawn; snark ensues...](#)
- [Study bolsters bats' reputation as mosquito devourers](#)
- [Nipah Virus Outbreak: Death Toll Rises In India](#)

After all of this, there came Thailand.

WHAT IS A *FUSSI* TRIP?

Sometimes you need to know a bit about what goes on behind the scenes in FUSSI land. Below is a bit about what constitutes a FUSSI trip. This was put together by FUSSI members to make things clear for us all. Some of these decisions are influenced by ASF insurance policies, by Flinders Uni Students Association requirements, Flinders University Public Liability insurance policy and by the ASF Safety, and its Ethics guidelines. Yep, red tape loves to be tied up in a very fancy knot!

- A trip can only be a FUSSI trip when the FUSSI Committee decides that it is.
- A FUSSI member who is not on the FUSSI Committee can propose a trip but they need to do this to and through the Committee, and
- A trip can only be a FUSSI trip if it is advertised on the FUSSI website at least one month in advance. (It takes time to organize permits, get permission from land owners)
- Further, FUSA must be informed of all and any trips the club runs so we are covered by the Uni's Public Liability insurance. This is done by a member of the Committee filling out the FUSA Events form on: <http://fusa.edu.au/clubs/events/event-stall-activity-registration-form/> We can put up to 10 events on the one form.
- Members going on FUSSI trips must supply their emergency contact details to the trip leader. This is done via the FUSSI membership form. These details are for use in cases only of emergency, were they could be given to the police. It is the trip leaders responsibility to maintain members privacy details.
- These details are to be kept next to the FUSSI first Aid kit which goes on all trips or in a prominent place in a car, eg, dash board or front seat.
- A club member who is not on the trip is to be informed of the trip's programme and contacted (where possible) at the end of each day's caving so as to inform them that all members are out of the cave and safe.
- All access permissions must be completed and approved beforehand. If they are not, then all insurances become invalid.
- Minimum caving group size is 4 people.

The Club has a set of standing orders as well as a Constitution. The Standing Orders give club members and its Executive the right to paint your car lime green against your will. Well not quite, but they do state amongst other things, that the:

- Trip leader has the right to refuse permission for any person on a trip to enter a cave.

See the links to:

ASF Safety Guildlines, ASF Codes of Ethics: <http://www.caves.org.au/administration/codes-and-standards>

FUSSI Constitution and Standing Orders:

<https://fussi.caves.org.au/handbook/about.php#Constitution>

KANGAROOS DO SWIM, YOU KNOW

Kendall Whittaker

On Sunday, March 4th, I went on my first caving adventure. As an adventure lover, I was instantly drawn to the idea when it was shared with me, however, as a beginner and not a lover of small spaces, I was a little nervous. Expectations were beaten and beyond, as we arrived at the lovely hidden gem of a destination, Swan Reach, after a fun carpool meeting new people. The caving tested some flexibility, but was lots of fun to explore the underground and what it beholds.

Thanks to FUSSI for supplying us with a boat allowing us to take in the river and become kids again as we played in the riverside 'Gloop' cave of wet clay. A special shout out to Dee providing us with an absolute feast of a Vegan lunch, far, far exceeding any snag on the Barbie one might be satisfied with in hunger after a morning of activities. While one group had the wildlife encounter of an echidna, we got to witness a kangaroo take a splash and attempt the swim across the Murray River... Why? Is up for debate.



(Right to left): Kendall, Paris and Captain Thomas

All in all it was a great day, the activities were all optional as relaxing in the sun was a treat in itself. Was a great introduction to caving and lovely to meet some of the FUSSI crew, definitely look forward to some more adventures.

(There were 16 people on this trip, ed)

Photo Credits: Kendall Whittaker



WHAT IS ON

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

JULY 2-23 MID-YEAR BREAK

Winter Solstice, bonfires, book burnings, much drinking etc.

Thur July 19 th	Film Night	7pm – Multimedia Room, Flinders University Hub “Descent” screening, Dee Coordinating
Sat & Sun Aug 11 th – 12 th	Naracoorte Trip	A trip for everyonem RSVP 19th July 12 Noon Don’t miss out put your name down, Clare Coordinating
Thur Aug 16 th	Search, Rescue & Comms Seminar	6pm – Noel Stockdale Room, Flinders University Library
Sun Aug 19 th	A5	SRT Highly competent only. Clare Coordinating.
Sat & Sun Sep 8 th – 9 th	Real Time Rescue	Yorke Peninsula. FUSSI Executive coordinating Camping overnight on the Saturday

MID-SEMESTER BREAK

17 Sep – 1 Oct

Thu 20 th Sep:	Library & pizza Night	Club Store – On Campus, under the Union Hub.
Sat, Sun & Mon Sep 29 th – Oct 1 st	Victoria Trip	Volcanic Caves of Western Victoria Thomas Coordinating.
Thur Oct 18 th	Navigation Night	6:30pm – Flinders University Campus Navigating the Forest (of Uni) Deans Compass and paper maps only!
Sun 21 st Oct	Sellicks Hills	Walking the Sellicks Hills, Clare Coordinating

Exams 3 Nov – 17 Nov, Much Gloom Descends!

END OF YEAR BREAK

18 Nov - 25 Feb 2019

Thur 22 nd Nov	Post-Exam Snakes & Ladders	In the Uni Pine Forest.
Sun 30 th Dec 2018 – Fri 4 th Jan 2019	31 st ASF Conference	Australian Speleological Federation Conference, Devonport, Tasmania Post conference caving trips to Mole Creek, Mt Cripps and Southern Tasmania.
Sun 27 th Jan	New year’s gathering	11am-6pm. FUSSI T-Shirt making, Discussion of world takeover plans etc,