



# FUSSI Newsletter

Vol. 30 | No. 3 | 2018



CRYSTAL STREAMWAY – YARRANGOBILLY

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### Front Cover Photo:

Crystal streamway, Y1-3  
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# WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

Author: Heather Duff

My first caving trip! Not the first in my whole life, but the first where I watch other members rig up my life ropes to trees and cars, instead of study ladders and rails. I'd also forgotten what it was like to be swaddled up in a dry cosy cave, so the whole weekend was a welcome escape from the cold, pouring weather of the surface world.

We all headed up late Friday afternoon, having no idea where I was going and never having met anyone in the group before. I was very glad for the company of Sarah and Janice! Once at Naracoorte, short and very welcoming introductions made me immediately comfortable with all the new people, and more excited about the upcoming adventure. I'm not sure how everyone is so nocturnal, but most of us were still awake for the last safe arrival just before midnight. It was cold, rainy and late but lucky for us, this trip had warm and comfy (but squeaky) bunk beds for us to curl up in.



As we set up: KNOT FASTER, EVERYONE!!  
Photo: Heather Duff

## S102 Cave

Adventure #1! Everyone eased into the morning at their own pace, slowly making themselves delicious breakfast and getting ready for the coming day. There was sorting, and planning, and packing, and sorting, and checking, and finally after a few hours of welcoming the day we were in a state to ...get to a coffee shop. Here we met Barb Lobban, our Naracoorte counterpart who climbed and clambered the day away with us. Then we underwent some more planning.



Ewwwwwwww! A Lizard that was.  
Photo: Heather Duff

Split into two teams, my first caving adventure for the weekend was S102. I chose it because everyone was boasting the amazing fossil specimens and a couple of cool rock formations and I wanted first dibbs on seeing the best things! I certainly wasn't lied to. The hard scramble down the trusty ladder and squeeze through the small entrance was worth it and landed us onto the top of a graveyard for the poor creatures who found themselves trapped in the dark. One wee lizard had curled up on a near-by rock, and decomposed completely in-tact.

There were a couple of tight squeezes, a slippery slide and a lot of backtracking as we figured out the way to the main cave. Along the way we saw coral, shells and all types of fossils lining the walls. Everyone kept motivating each other along, because these were nothing compared to those in the

# WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

the main cave! In the main section was a beautiful white stone and freshly forming calcite structures. The roof, walls and floor were covered in fossils of coral, bivalves and curly shells.

Luckily the way out was easier to find having come in. The second group had caught up to us and were heading into the dark for their own fossil adventure, which left us to firstly explore and escape. That night we were lucky enough to be treated to the delicious cooking of Dee & David, Clare also left us feeling more than full with delicious pancakes!



Clare, surveying the cavern. Photo: Heather Duff

## Sand Cave

This second day the weather had given us a break and warm sunshine treated our early morning set up. The descent into the Sand Cave was much easier than the last, although an awful lot longer. I became more concerned about getting back out the farther down I slid... but a problem for later in the day! This cave was also great because the soft sands are much more forgiving on poor bruised knees, and great for sliding in.



Fossilized ceiling! This was pretty cool to crawl under. Photo: Heather Duff

# WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



A Section of the Roof in Sand Cave. Photo: Heather Duff

The most fun bit was one very squeezey belly-crawling section, that left everyone and everything caked in sand (I'd still swap an underwear load of sand for no bruised knees, happily). To prevent further damage to the remarkable structures, there were many quarantine stops to brush and decontaminate between coloured sands. The main chamber, marked up by visitors through history and gifted by bats was incredibly undisturbed. It made me think about if a marked sediment can lay undisturbed for a couple hundred years, and completely unburied, what's the breadth of time it really take to bury, consolidate and create fossilised layers of sand? Even more to reach the point it amalgamates to a sandstone.

And what's holding it all up??

I checked every single above bat-dropping spots but no, no bats to be sighted for me. Others tell me there were was a little one hanging out at the entrance of the cave, but I could not find that either! I did spot a couple of cave crickets. Goes to show no matter how deep, dark or remote an area is, there are still little creepies to find if you have the patience.

Carefully squeezing under the stalactites and over boulders eventually led us back to the entrance, sitting quietly in pitch black waiting for the ascent back to the surface. Negative to what I thought, climbing this tunnel up was a lot easier than the first one, simply so small you can just wriggle up it without using that ladder!

I did pay for my shortcut, though. My legs will boast the two big red scars (from barely a scratch!!) and the tale of my first caving trip for the rest of my life. Top tip: Please always clean your caving wounds.

Thank you everyone who came with us on this trip, for teaching me the beginners ropes (hah) and welcoming me so easily to the cave family!

# A DELIGHTFULLY SHITTY WEEKEND, IN THE FLINDERS

Andrew Stempel

*Participants: Clare, Thomas, Nicole, Neville, Dan, Lasma, Chris, Elise, Hannah, Will, Dee, David, Sarah & Andrew*

May 11-13, 2018

After joining FUSSI, I am finding it incredibly difficult to have a normal Monday morning conversation with my co-workers after a weekend with the club. The typical chat over a cup of tea starts with the “how was your weekend” question, yet after caving, this generally leads to a larger discussion around “are you crazy?!”

Most people’s weekends consist of family and friend gatherings, over a meal or a drop of wine, whilst the caving “family” spends their weekends crawling around on their bellies through small holes covered in bat droppings in complete darkness. Okay, now that I see that description in writing, I do question my own sanity, but I can’t begin to describe how AMAZING it is to explore those dark, squeezey, bat-infested holes in the ground surrounded by a great group people. The weekend in the Flinders Ranges did not disappoint.

The trip started out with the largest hurdle, Friday. For some reason, Friday’s at work before a long weekend seem to take FOREVER. The club was divided into two groups that night, one that headed straight for the Ranges, and a larger group that stopped to watch Dee and her band, the Fiddle Chicks, strum the roof off a Clare Valley establishment. I was part of the group that headed straight to the Ranges, with my French companions, Chris and Elise. They were fresh off a trip to Hawaii, where they were dodging earthquakes and lava flows during the recent eruption of the Kilauea Volcano and were ready for a good night’s sleep before a weekend of caving.

After sitting in the wonderful Adelaide traffic, we were off to the Ranges. The trip was rather uneventful, with a stop for petrol and a meal, until we hit the dirt road to the hut. Due to the late start (I really do hate Friday!) we didn’t hit the dirt until well after dark and dodging roos became a real-life video game. It took us nearly 2 hours to cover 40kms, swerving to avoid what felt like a thousand kangaroos. Clare was nice enough to leave us “something shiny” to help find our accommodation for the night. After a late arrival, we were treated to a well-deserved sleep, filled with dreams about the darkness below.

We awoke Saturday to early morning coffee as we eagerly awaited the arrival of the Fiddle Chicks “groupies” to begin our day of caving. As soon as the first cars pulled into the camp, we began the process of organizing gear and getting ready for the day. The crew packed into all of the 4WD vehicles and travelled as a convoy across the dusty outback landscape. The destination was Mt Simms Cave.

Upon arrival, we split into two groups: those that would explore Mt Simms, and another party that would head further up the track to get real dirty in Good Friday Cave. I stuck with the first option and geared up for a poke inside Mt Simms. Our leader, Thomas, accompanied by Sarah, started the process of unlocking the gate. They ascended the ladder to access the shelf and then performed the crawl into the space to unlock the obstruction. This was accompanied by lots of expletives, grunts, moans and laughter. As a listener in the dark, it was hard to discern what was actually going on, although I can verify that the gate was actually opened.

## A DELIGHTFULLY SHITTY WEEKEND, IN THE FLINDERS

Our tour of Mt Simms Cave began with Thomas describing how this particular cave made him question his fondness of the sport. We were about to experience a downward sloping squeeze that we would eventually have to squirm back out. Thanks Thomas, if I didn't already have too much adrenaline pumping through my veins, I now just over-dosed. I shakily ascended the ladder and slithered through the gate and into the space before the squeeze. Going down the narrow "chute" was a blast. Gravity on your side, silky smooth, bat dropping floor and positive thoughts that your shoulders would fit, made for an exhilarating and delightful entry into the cavern. This cave was great fun; including some crawling and even the presence of water, if those damn boulders got out of the way it might be a SCUBA project. The exit did not disappoint, one toe push up the narrow shoot, followed by a slip down. This WAS caving. Calm the mind and rely on the person behind you to secure your forward progress. Being a masochist at heart, I found this incredibly enjoyable.

As we emerged into daylight, we used the radio to check in on the team in Good Friday. No answer. The original plan was to swap caves at mid-day and for us at Mt Simms to head to explore Good Friday. Succumbed to boredom, our group decided to scale the adjacent hill to get a view of what we hoped would be an approaching vehicle. Nothing. We then decided to cram into Thomas' rig in an attempt to find the entrance to the cave and the rest of the FUSSI



Some pretty things you find underground.  
Photo: C. Buswell

team. In the midst of our drive, we established radio contact from an enthusiastic party that had a good caving adventure, and an even longer hike along the creek bed. With daylight fading, we decided to head back to camp before the wildlife tried to smash our vehicles. For the official record, this was the first time that Thomas was "on time" for his caving exit.

Saturday night was filled with great food around the campfire. We gorged on meat curry by Lasma, veggie curry by Dee and et al, and rice by Neville. Unfortunately, the roasted garlic (courtesy of Will) was sacrificed to the fire gods.

Sunday brought good weather and even better caving. The group was up surprisingly early, with the rigging team out the door around 8:30am to ensure our safety on the 17m descent into Mairs Cave. Sunday's caving agenda focused on two

## A DELIGHTFULLY SHITTY WEEKEND, IN THE FLINDERS

locations all along the same creek bed next to camp. Again we split into two groups, one headed to Mairs Cave and the other to the old mine entrance of the Clara St Dora Cave.

After a nice walk in the bush, we arrived at the entrance to Mairs Cave. There were two options for entry: the belayed ladder drop, or an abseil for the SRT-qualified. Hesitantly, I was the first on the ladder to accompany Neville in the cave after his abseil. 17m below we landed in a wide cavern. Neville took the lead on this trip and guided us to the end of the large cavern that culminated in a maze of boulders to find “a hole” into the next section of cave. This portion was a highlight for me. Some really fun “corkscrew and Swiss



Decorations in Clara St Dora.  
Photo: T. Varga

cheese” crawls led us to beautiful formations reminiscent of miniature Christmas trees. After lots of “oohs and aahs” it was time to return to the surface, but not without the exploration of an side chamber that involved some high stemming along an old fault line. We emerged from the surface either via the ladder on belay, or some good frogging up the line for the SRT-qualified.

Once on the surface we had a nice nibble for lunch and prepared for the next adventure, Clara St Dora. This particular cavern was an old mine and the entrance did not disappoint. The overhead beams looked like they would collapse with the slightest breath, so we proceeded with caution until we entered the main chamber. It was a treat to have our resident geologist (Sarah) along to tell us how the beautiful crystal formations were formed and at the same time ensure me they aren’t worth anything. This little jaunt through the cavern lead us to a few decorated rooms and even a small “circuit” to crawl around and explore.

A nice walk out the creek bed led us back to our camp. This marked the end of a great caving weekend. The next order of business was to pack up for the return home before the “wildlife” could make the drive more difficult. Goodbyes were said as the desire for flush toilets loomed in the back of our heads. The long drive to Adelaide was broken up by a nice pub meal in Clare, marking the end of a delightfully shitty weekend caving in the Flinders ranges.

I would like to give special thanks to the trip organizers, chefs and all those who shared their knowledge of the area and the caverns below. A very special weekend.



## A LONG OVERDUE TRIP TO A5

Clare Buswell

There we all were at ten on a Sunday morning, Grant, Frank, Sarah, Neville, Thomas, Tania and I standing around with a pile of ladders and ropes at the top of the A5 gated entrance, seriously contemplating a long and further procrastinating coffee down the road, rather than visit what I remember as a dangerous, rock spitting, unstable hole in the hill. Grant showed us the map of the joint, and Frank knew which pitch was what, but that still did not ease my memories of the last time I had visited A5, 20 years ago. It is a narrow, mostly vertical, mostly dug and blasted out cave system, which gives the concept of close encounters with rocks a whole new meaning. Read, rocks that fall on you, sharp, painful ladder pitches and generally nasty stuff. All 70 metres or so of it.



Sarah and Grant and a dead ladder at the top of A5.

Photo: Thomas Varga

Ok, so I stood around thinking that it could only get better after all these years. Mmm. Thomas rigged the first ladder pitch which starts after a short 3 metre climb down, after the narrow entrance gate. It has a hand line in place, which is useful on exiting. The ladder needed here was 8m in length, we rigged a rope with the intention of using it as a belay line, but as all of us are SRT skilled we abseiled the pitch, coming out near the top of the next pitch. The first 8m pitch is a narrow, vertical for the first 5 metres and then it becomes a sloping tube affair rather than a nice open, clean walled, vertical, enjoy the view type of event. The pitch is now stable and well-worn given that time and visitation have mellowed it. The ladder came in handy so one could stand on it about 3m from the top and haul bags of gear up and down it.

After a short scramble, you are soon at the next pitch, which is similar to the first as you are essentially continuing in the same rift. At the top of the second pitch we ditched all the ladders and

## A LONG OVERDUE TRIP TO A5



Sarah on the Bottom Pitch. Photo : T. Varga

continued on via abseiling and SRT. Thomas and Sarah rigged, continuing with the same rope from the first pitch. Grant and Frank had told us that lots of digging gear, rotting ladders and buckets remained in the cave and these we found at the start of the second pitch. Previous diggers had carried in bags of quick-set cement to stabilize sections of the dig. They were following breezes that came from further down.

At the top of the third pitch, Neville and I caught up with Sarah and Thomas with the much needed second rope. This third pitch requires a redirection to get the rope off a nasty overhang. The rope is rigged, back onto some boulders about 3 metres from the pitch edge, and a safety line is needed here to reduce the risk of problems on the redirection

over the overhang. The redirection was set using the rope coming down from the second pitch. After a lot of rope wrangling, lunch and general chatter we continued on. The third pitch is a true pitch, in that it is a clear drop of about 10 metres. It ends with a 3-4 metre scramble down a narrow tube to the top of the last pitch.

This pitch has a ladder bolted into the wall. The top of the ladder, well at the first half a dozen rungs, seem to be in good order but trusting it is open to question. We tied the rope into the bolt, setting a rebelay back up the narrow tube. Rigging here is not easy due to the unknown ages of the bolt and ladders. There is no second bolt here to set a true Y anchor as would be normal practice at pitch head, so tying back is important. Thomas moved on down the last pitch which is a wide but narrow rift. It requires one to think about placement of your body or you will jam. About half way down, are some unstable rocks that block part of the rift. You need to keep right, (as you descend), make sure you don't get stuck and not put your feet on any of these rocks. Thomas got most of the way down, past the rocks and then ran out of rope. This put him about five metres from the floor of the rift. At this point, the walkie talkies got a workout and we were all able to decide that with the narrowness of the rife, we could chimney down it to reach the floor.

## A LONG OVERDUE TRIP TO A5

By around 4pm we had all reached the bottom of the rift. Neville started disconnecting the bottom ladder that went down a few meters to the end of the dig. This bottom section of the cave is well decorated and moving around here required care. At 4.30 we started back up, with Sarah leading the way. The bottom pitch was just as bad going up as it was going down it. Keeping away from the rocks that partially block the rift means going gently and with caution, once past them you have to make sure you don't jam up your chest ascender as you are hard up against the rock and there is not much space between your back and 'wall' of the rift.

We hauled up the rotting ladder that Neville had disconnected and then at the top of the bottom pitch rolled up the ladder that was in place. We would have taken it out, but had nothing to get the maillons

undone that attached it to the bolt. The ladder must be removed as it is rotten at its bottom end.

From then on it was the grunt of derigging and bag hauling. We finally reached the surface at 7pm to find Grant, Frank and Tania waiting for us. They helped us carry gear back to the cars, and after a bit of a debrief and gear sort we all turned for home.

It was a long arduous day, nine hours, of hauling gear, rigging, avoiding bits of cave that like you a bit too much and trying hard not to think about bolts and rust encrusted attachment points. There remains a lot of work to be done and whether you want to take on a couple of months of weekly trips, leaving it rigged, at least the bottom sections, and seriously move stuff is something you may want to ask someone else.

Many thanks to Neville, Frank and Grant for organising the day. Huge thanks to Tania being our on-site safety person and big thanks to all the rest of us for the work out. Not sure that we have managed to delete the memories of some of the worst parts of it yet. Spent many hours digging, cementing, moving rocks and dirt around, I will keep you all in mind as for all those who have when I build my next mud brick house.



Clare, about to run out of rope, on the Bottom Pitch.  
Photo : T. Varga

## A LONG OVERDUE TRIP TO A5

Rigging details: 2 x 50m ropes will just do it if you rig sparingly. Better if you have 1 x 50m and another at say 60m. Numerous tapes to set up anchors, and redirections. An 8m ladder for the first pitch is useful to help stand on whilst hauling gear up and down. If you are going to haul out dead gear, rotting ladders and old ropes then you are going to need some extra ropes to haul stuff up pitches. Each gear bag could use a tail rope to help keep it from getting jammed on things. This will make life a bit easier.

Note: this cave is no place for a beginner as real care is needed on body placement, particularly on the bottom pitch. You can't afford to stuff up any SRT, as getting to another on any of the ropes is high impossible.

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## CORRA LYNN: SERIOUS STICKS AND PUZZLING PASSAGES

Hannah Stampke

I have always been one to stay out of social loops, preferring a bed and dressing gown rather than going out in glamour and, when asked, I have no doubt that my friends would describe me as 'living under a rock'. Well the joke is on them because now it is not only metaphorically, but (occasionally) literally!

One of our many expeditions led us up the Yorke Peninsula to Corra Lynn, an underground multi-levelled labyrinth that boasts having one of the most confusing maps in Australia. Our pack of energetic travelers split into three groups to traverse several sections of the cave. Our group, led by Neville, began with the most concerning obstacle: the stick. At first when Neville turned to us with his magnificently serious gaze, we thought he was joking about clambering up the forked branch which acted as an extremely smooth ladder. Then, without warning, he clung like a koala and scurried up the branch and perched at the entrance to the second level of tunnels. With this deceptively easy display, we puffed our chests, ignored the perturbing hole below and gave it a good old crack.

Somehow, we all managed to scramble up to the second section. After receiving plenty of praise, we made our way down a maze of passages and to a small crevice possessing another dreaded stick. Luckily it was not the stick we had to worry about, as there was a thick rope dangling down into the darkness. Neville turned to us again with that face, and this time we all knew he wasn't joking. So, with bags falling like Mufasa or tied around ankles we began a very squishy descent down into the depths. The cavity was so narrow that you could shimmy through it in a snake-like dance, although you'd look less like a snake and more like an idiot wriggling around in a hole.

Miraculously, we hadn't lost any of the group members to supernatural fiends or injury, so we continued to crawl through the warren in hopes of dwindling numbers, so we could re-surface as survivors and have a segment on Sixty Minutes. Just joking around, but there were times when the map had everyone bug-eyed and hopeless.

Aside from a sneaky surfacing for lunch, we spent more than four enthusiastic hours underground, enjoying the naturally formed puzzle and the knee-destroying rocky crawls. Even with the bruises and the dusty lungs, I still had an absolute ball. No matter how bizarre this hobby seems to others, I will always say yes to a trip underground; especially to Corra Lynn and its eternally sprawling passages that always lead to adventure and fresh surprises.

# THE BLACKBERRY EMPIRE BITES BACK

Garry K. Smith

Yarrangobilly Caves 3rd – 11th Feb. 2018

Participants: Clare Buswell (T/L), Heiko Maurer, Neville Skinner, David Mansueto, Tim Featonby, Garry Sanders and Garry K. Smith (NHVSS).

Sunday. 4th February.

We packed up and drove to the main street for a bit of grocery shopping and breakfast. We met Garry Sanders in the main street, then proceeded to drive in convoy up the mountains toward Cotterills Cottage. Upon arrival everyone settled into the cottage and set up sleeping and cooking gear. I chose the little room on the veranda as I had stayed there on previous occasions. By late afternoon, Tim had arrived with his large caravan in tow. By 7pm we were all settled into our caving home for the next week.

*Monday. 5th February Y2. Eagles Nest System.*



Caption: Bunch of Fools, at the Y2 Entrance.  
Photo Garry Smith.

Neville, Tim and myself.

The thing about the Eagles Nest System at Yarrangobilly is that it is large and complex. A place you can easily get lost in and gets colder the deeper you go, with the Y1 entrance, during winter, containing ice decorations. The cave has fossil steam passages, huge sediment banks, large break down chambers and is very beautiful. Simply, it is the deepest cave at Yarrangobilly and a through trip will take you all day.

C. Buswell. Trip Leader

For today, Clare set a leaving time of 7.30 am, so everyone was up early and ready to go. Well not quite everyone, however we managed to get going by 8am. A little way up the road, Neville discovered he had left his helmet behind, so it was back to the cottage for a second attempt at getting away. Finally on our way again, the five participants for the day easily fitted into Tim's troopy. Participants were; Clare, David,

## THE BLACKBERRY EMPIRE BITES BACK

The first track we drove down about 1km, ended up being the wrong track. This sorted out, we then found the right track (the one that starts in the middle of the cutting on the main road). Just 100 metres past the NP locked gate, we came to a large tree right across the track. Not having a chain saw available meant that we had an extra long walk of several kilometres down the track and then a 200m bush bash to reach the Y2 lower entrance to Eagles Nest Cave. The entrance is in the bottom of a large doline with large cliffs on the Northern side. The locked gate is located above ground, so much easier to open than those below ground.

We entered the cave at 11.30am. Clare and Tim led the way down through the rockpile. As there are many possible routes through the rockpile (not all easy), Tim laid out a dive line to make it easy to retrace our steps on the way out. After a bit of stuffing around we found our way to the now heavily track marked route that comes off the Y2 entrance. White cord and signs all over the place. A number of photos were taken along the way: of formations hidden in corners, at the Pendants, and at the Golden Streamway. We had lunch near the chamber with the large pendants. Multi-flash photos were taken of the pure white crystal pools before retracing our steps back out the cave, taking a few extra photos on the way. We exited the cave at 5.30pm and walked back up the hill to Tim's troopy.

Back at the cottage, Heiko had cooked up a beautiful meal of beans with nachos, tomato, cheese, lettuce and hummus. After the great meal, everyone was in bed by 10pm, however I stayed up about an hour looking at the day's photos on my camera.

*Tuesday. 6th February Y12. Coppermine Cave.*

Coppermine Cave is a very pretty little river stream cave where the cold will make bits of you go numb! Today's participants were Neville, David and myself. After several attempts at finding the correct track to take, we found that none of the keys fitted the NP gate. Then a drive back to the



David in Coppermine Cave. Photo: Garry Smith

## THE BLACKBERRY EMPIRE BITES BACK

cottage to check that we had all the keys, revealed that there weren't any other keys and we had to do an extra long walk to the cave.

Eventually we were back at the locked gate just on 12 noon. We geared up and walked the 2.25 km to the cave, to arrive at 12.35pm. After a quick change into wetsuits, we started on our way up the active stream passage. A number of photos were taken along the way. Soon we came to a very low duck under which required getting pretty wet (over waist height). With a little effort it was possible to keep the packs above the water and dry. More photos were taken of the pristine decorations before climbing to an upper level and the beginning of the detrog area. We didn't venture into this area because we had had a very late start and it would have taken some time to set up a tape to climb.

Our group exited the cave at 4.30pm and a GPS reading was taken for the entrance. Then it was back up the track to arrive at Neville's car just on 5.15pm

*Wednesday. 7th February Y222. Mut Mut Cave.*

Participants today were, Tim, Clare, Neville, David and myself.

Everyone was up early and attempting to be ready by 8.30am. However as usual time gets away and we managed to get away from camp at 9am. As the normal track into Eagles Nest cave was



Climbing up to Mut Mut. Photo: G. Smith

blocked by the huge tree, we had opted to start from another access point. Tim's troopy was parked at the end of the track where one would normally leave to visit Restoration Cave. We all set off through the thick bush at 10am. Bush bashing our way across the side of the hill south, then through thick prickly bush, blackberries, raspberries and wild roses to the saddle, past the Tombs area, then the steep climb down to the Yarrangobilly River. Tim was blazing the way with secateurs in hand. The huge descent to the river averaged between 45° to 50° slope through plenty of prickly bush.

Some time was spent at the river cooling off and having lunch (11.45am) next to the river on the upstream side of the Natural Bridge. On the other side of the river, it was again a bush bash through over head height blackberry vines as we worked our way up the hill. Only trouble was that we were still several hundred metres too far north. Tim was out in

## THE BLACKBERRY EMPIRE BITES BACK

front doing a difficult climb along rock ledges and through thick scrub. He called out to get us to look for another way, so Neville suggested that we climb up higher, then go along the top of the ridge and drop back down on the cave, which was located high on the hill. I followed Neville and the others agreed after we yelled back and forth to Tim. Tim was still fighting his way through the thick scrub on what looked like a difficult traverse.

It wasn't long before I was leading the way as the climb straight up became steeper and steeper and steeper. The climb then turned into a rather dubious and exposed vertical cliff climb over unstable rocks, but by now I could see the top ahead. Everyone decided to push on and it came to the point where tapes were lowered down to haul up packs and use as a climbing aid. The rocks on this cliff were all fragmented and very loose. There were real concerns about dislodging large rocks onto those climbing below.

This turned out to be just the start of our difficulties as the thorny scrub soon became extremely thick and there were more steep slopes to climb near the top. Eventually at the top we rested for a bite to eat, before heading along the top of the ridge, fighting through the horrendous and unforgiving scrub. The GPS which David had, was telling us we were on track, but by the time we had broken out of the scrub and had a view down the valley, it was obvious that the GPS was providing a totally false reading. In fact we had passed the cave by probably 300 metres.



Neville, David and Garry in Mut Mut entrance chamber.  
Photo Garry Smith

After yelling out from the top of a small saddle, we could hear Tim, who was sitting at the entrance of Mut Mut cave. Tim had been worried and had been running all over the place yelling out to guide us to the entrance. Eventually we all made it to the entrance and had a snack. It was now 4.15pm and we were just at the entrance of the cave. Clare pointed out that if we left now, we would be making it back to the car well after dark. This was a wise call as the horrible bush isn't fun in the



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daylight, let alone fighting our way through it at night. I took a few photos in the entrance chamber before we all packed up and headed down to the river. Bit of a pity as our group had carted in lots of rope, rigging and abseiling equipment.

Water bottles were filled up at the river, in readiness for the huge climb back up the steep mountain. The going was hot as we were in the full blaze of the afternoon sun. By the time we reached to top of the mountain, the sun was slipping beneath the horizon and there was only about 45 minutes of twilight left. We weren't able to locate our hacked track in, so once again it turned into an epic journey through lots of prickly bush (Blackberries up to 3 metres high).

Tim was again navigating and clearing a path with secateurs in hand. I nicknamed him the "Arborist" as he was doing such a fantastic job of cutting a path through the prickly vegetation. Later on David took over the navigation and we eventually reached the car at 10 pm. It had been an epic 12 hour journey through some extraordinary country. Heiko and Garry were waiting for us near the start of the track as they were concerned at the length of time we were away. Back at the cottage, everyone was quite exhausted, so we only had a snack and headed off to bed.

*Thursday. 8th February Y61, Easter Cave. Y28. Castle Cave.*

I rose early today at 7.30am and had breakfast, as we were scheduled to visit an old tourist cave called Castle Cave (Y28) and the restricted access Easter Cave (Y61), so I didn't want to be late. Well I think I had my wires crossed as everyone else appeared very casual getting up and it was then discussed that the head ranger "George" was going to join us in Easter Cave and he couldn't make it till 3 pm.



Neville and Moon milk Easter Cave. Photos Garry Smith.

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Anyway, after lunch we set off from the cottage at 2.30pm and drove down to the Yarrangobilly rangers office, arriving just before 3pm. George was quite busy and indicated that he couldn't go this time, so we geared up and set off down the track past the Glory Hole to meet up with Heiko and David who had set out an hour or more earlier to re-locate the cave.

We caught up with them at 3.50pm. Thankfully they had located the cave and cleared a path through the blackberries and wild roses, right to the entrance. Our group entered the first chamber to get out of the heat which was stifling above ground. The underground party consisted of Clare, Neville, David and myself. Several photos were taken in the entrance chamber while Clare looked around for the passage to the lower level where all the really pretty speleothems are. In the upper level there is a fantastic little area with copious quantities of pristine moon milk, probably the best I have seen at Yarrangobilly. David and Clare set up the hand line tape down the 7m pitch and we all lowered ourselves to the old stream passage below. Here we had to de-trog into clean gear because the decorations were so pristine. Clare left the cave and went up to visit Castle Cave with Heiko.

Many photos were taken with multiple flashes and after a couple of hours we packed up and headed out. The climb back up the squeezey 7m chimney was a bit of a challenge, but didn't take that long for everyone to get out. We exited the cave at 8pm and were back at the camp by 9pm.

*Friday, 9th February A rest day, Cooleman Plains, Clarke Gorge, Murray Cave.*

Participants for this day of caving were; Tim, Neville, David and myself.

About 10.15am we set out from the cottage in two cars, heading down along the Long Plain road. There was a brief stop on the way to Cooinbil Hut, in order to check out the small karst area nearby, which is Australia's highest altitude karst. There are no caves here, just a few solution holes and undercuts in the creek bed. It only took 15 minutes to look over this karst area and then we had a quick look at Cooinbil Hut, which is heritage listed. The hut was recently rebuilt after a tree fell on it, causing substantial damage. Then it was on to Cooleman Homestead where we wandered around



Tim, Murray Cave. Photo: Garry Smith

and inside the many historic buildings, taking photos of the beautifully restored buildings.

We then continued on to the carpark before Blue Water Holes and set off on the 1.5km walk to Murray Cave. This cave is located right next to the creek so one can't miss the entrance. was very hot and steamy

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above ground, so we were very pleased to get into the cave at 12.45pm and have lunch in the coolness of the entrance chamber. Once fed and watered, we continued along the river passage to the sump. The sump was quite full, so none of us were keen to enter the water as it would have been a roof sniff or possibly a full Immersion (hold your breath) to continue. On the way in, I had been checking out possible photo locations to stop on the way out. So, we then set about taking numerous multi-flash photos on the way out. Many thanks to the models who patiently posed for the photos.

We exited the cave at 2.40pm to find the sky was full of very black clouds and there was thunder rumbling all around. It was a brisk walk back to the cars, thinking that we were going to be drenched at any moment. The rain held off and appeared to skirt right around us. It was now 3.03pm, so we drove to the Blue Water Holes car park, and took some more photos of the beautiful reflections of limestone cliffs in the waterholes.

Tim wasn't feeling the best so he set off back to Cotterills Cottage while the three of us walked down stream through the gorge. Neville showed us a small cave (CP30) on the North side of the Gorge. Some distance into the gorge we decided to call it quits as the next crossing was looking rather dodgy with the stepping stones almost non-existent. That would mean stripping off shoes and wading across, besides the time was now around 4.30pm.



Helictites. Y 61. Photo: Garry Smith

On the way back up the gorge a Blue Tongue Lizard was spotted and photographed. We jumped in Neville's car around 4.45pm and were back at Cotterills by 5.30 pm, a nice time to wash up and get ready for dinner.

*Saturday 10th February. Y58. Janus. Participants for today's trip. Clare, Neville, David and myself.*

Today Clare asked that we be ready by 8am to go to Janus Cave (Y58). We finally got away from Cotterills Cottage by 8.45am and drove up the highway to park at the large cutting, then began walking down the spur. Janus Cave is located about 1.5km from the highway. The GPS which David was carrying, kept giving weird locations for the cave, which did not correspond to the map,

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even though the reference systems were double checked.

We found a number of large dolines and after bashing away at thick blackberry vines, we located Y281 and Y109. It was very hot walking weather and the scrub was often thick and prickly. A few of us spread out and did a circuit from where the packs were left, but we only found more dolines with blind creeks and blackberries leading into them.

Eventually we decided to walk further North and Clare found the entrance to Helictite Cave (Y16). We had lunch at the top in the shade, then decided to set up an abseil rope for the short pitch (12m). Neville and I entered the cave at 12.45pm, then set about taking many multi-flash photos of the beautiful decorations. The well decorated cave consists of just 2 small chambers.

It was noted that vandals had at one time attempted to saw some helictites from the wall and there were at least two definite saw cuts through helictites, which had multiple attachment points. There could easily have been some non obvious helictites removed, however certainly two remain with saw cuts at one end. Picture here: Helictites: Photo Garry Smith.

We were almost finished photographing when David and Clare abseiled down, to get out of the heat on the surface. A few more photos were taken of them on rope, before we all prusiked out of this small but very pretty cave. Everyone was out by 3pm.

We could hear the road traffic just half a kilometre to the East, so did the shortest walk through more thick scrub to the road. By 4.20pm we were back at Cotterills Cottage. Another enjoyable communal meal was had, thanks to Clare this time. It was followed up by pancakes cooked by David. Everyone called it quits and went to bed around 9.30pm.

*Sunday. 11th February*

This morning was a hive of activity as everyone packed up, cleaned out the cottage and locked up. For me it was a pretty uneventful trip home except for a couple of slow sections on the highway past road construction areas.

A special thanks to Clare for inviting me on and organising this very enjoyable caving trip with a fantastic group of friendly people who made me feel so welcome into their group.

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**Treat yourself, go and see:**

JOHN MAWURNDJUL: I AM THE OLD AND THE NEW  
Now showing until 28 January 2019  
Art Gallery of South Australia.  
Entry is Free

[https://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Exhibitions/NowShowing/John\\_Mawurndjul](https://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Exhibitions/NowShowing/John_Mawurndjul)

John Mawurndjul is a specialist in rarrk, (cross hatching) on bark. His work celebrates the Kuniñjku culture from Western Arnhem land. John Mawurndjul is one of Australia's internationally renowned and major living artists.

# FUSSI PROGRAMME Oct 2018- March 2019

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

Sept 29-Oct 1st		Volcanic Caves of Western Victoria Thomas Coordinating.
*Oct 4th	6.30 pm	Library and pizza night. At the club store. On Campus, under the Union Hub.
Immi Coordinating.		
Oct 18th Thurs	6.30 pm	Rigging in the Forest (of Uni) Deans Ladders, Belays, ropes!
Oct 21st Sunday.		Walking the Sellicks Hills. Clare Coordinating.

Exams 3 Nov -17 Nov, Gnashing of Teeth, Gloom Descends!

END OF YEAR BREAK  
18 Nov -25 Feb 2019

Nov 22 Thurs	6.30pm	Post exam snakes and ladders. Pine forest session
30 Dec- Jan 6th		Australian Speleological Federation Conference. Devonport, Tassie.
Jan 27th Sunday	11am-6pm	New Year's gathering, FUSSI T-Shirt making Discussion of world take over plans etc.
Thurs Feb 14th	General Meeting, 6pm,	Morialta Cliffs, at the second climbing area, followed by a beer in the Scenic Hotel.

O Week 25th – 29 Feb 2019

Mon Feb 25 and Tue 26	Fair Days	FUSSI Stalls on campus. Help is needed. Put your hand up and help your club get new members. Contact: Dee via <a href="mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au">fussi@fussi.org.au</a>
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FIRST SEMESTER STARTS

Sunday March 3rd		Murray River trip. A trip for everyone. Thomas coordinating
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For the long term. Nullarbor, WA side, Easter 2019 or Oct 2019. Both tentative at this stage.  
July 2019. Bullita. NT By invitation from the organizers.

## KEEPING SAFE MEANS PLANNING AHEAD AND PAPERWORK, DARN IT!

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>