



# FUSSI Newsletter

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**FUSSI CAVERS ATTEND THE OLYMPICS**

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# NATURE IS WEIRD: CROESUS

Janice Chan

Janice, Clare, (FUSSI) Dirk, Lilly (CSS) and Toby Wools-Cobb (NCC) our trip leader.

My story in Tasmania first began to unravel in a trip with FUSSI on a hot summer day, when I was unwittingly placed in a cave I had never intended to visit on that day.

What was *supposed* to be a dry caving trip quickly escalated into an extremely refreshing experience. It was definitely the best blessing from Tasmanian caves I never hoped to receive as you readers shall soon be enlightened about.

The short bushwalk to the cave entrance was unconventionally boring. That was by no means the shortcomings of Tasmanian forests but the high expectations I was harbouring because of the horror stories people told me prior to the trip. Where the heck were the bloodsuckers (*leeches*) and stalker ants (*jack jumper ants aka Myrmecia pilosula*) everyone was raving about?! My kilogram of salt and copious amounts of Bushman insect repellent were thus rendered redundant for the remainder of the trip. No egg-laying mammals (platypus) nor winged bloodsuckers (march fly) sightings at all, for me at least.

Below: Missing the Middle Bit Shawl, Croesus Cave. Photo: C. Buswell



And, that was how we arrived at an unremarkable looking hole with water gently flowing down the stream. As unremarkable as it may seem, it was remarkably cold as well. But only if you decide to enter the cave where the water level rises up to your chest almost immediately upon entry. For some of us, it was a *'oh my (...expletives) I am going to pass out and drown, I cannot breathe'*, for others, *'thank you water for saving me from becoming cooked bacon in my wet suited trog suit, I love you'*.

The passage quickly opened up to spacious passageways where the history of time has been carefully carved into every rock for all to behold. For a price. From the beginning to the end of Croesus, it ensured you would be well familiar with the feeling of coldness seeping into your bones, losing the sensation of your

extremities, and violent chills if you were particularly ill-equipped or stopped moving for a prolonged period of time.

# NATURE IS WEIRD: CROESUS

Janice Chan

The journey upstream could have been treacherous if not for our kind trip leader who offered himself up as sacrificial meat to the gods of caves, making sure he was leading the front and falling with every misstep he made. That definitely saved us a lot of grief and misery. The road was filled with cave version potholes and water obscuring the true depth of the ground you would be stepping onto next. On a journey like this, caution is key. For first-timers, take my advice and follow the steps of your predecessors, unless your predecessors fell into the depths. You will thank me later, you're welcome.

I find cave formations can be cute, at times. There was one particular speleothem Clare pointed it out for me where the formation grew horizontally in mid-air from the cave wall before growing upright. The tip of the formation exploded in a brilliant spectacle of, well, frozen fireworks. Now imagine the fireworks were crystal white and as small as a dandelion. I only had one word for it: *weird*.

That spectacle was soon followed by another *weird* conception of nature. An upside-down bell-shaped rock formation. Your hand could go into the formation itself through the bottom which was submerged in water.

Another note of interest was the stairway made from old gold. The Golden Stairway was a succession of golden gour pools going upwards which quite literally looked like a golden stairway with the added benefit of crystal-clear water flowing past it. We were encouraged to only step on the ledge of the pools to minimise damage done to these beautiful formations. The stairway itself was roughly 15m high and beyond that the cave slightly narrowed. We stopped for a bit and each claimed a rock as our personal in-cave picnic spot, complete with snakes in a Ziploc bag.



Flooded showerhead. Croesus Cave. Photo: Clare Buswell

Once everyone started to get the chills from idling in our little rock havens, we started to head back out the cave via the same way we came in. There were quite a few people eager to get back to the land of sunshine like a bat out of hell. Unfortunately for them, it was also a photography trip on the way back. But alas, all that was well ended well, except for the one unfortunate soul who started heating up in his trog suit again once he was out of the water.



# REFLECTING ON THE COLOUR YELLOW. LYNDS CAVE.

Matt Timms. Photos Garry Smith.

Leader: Steve Jacobs. Participants: Nicole, Alan, Emily, Yvonne, myself.

It is a lot hotter here in Tasmania than I thought it would be, sleeping is weirdly and annoying hard. It is 10:45pm and I am writing because I couldn't get to sleep and remembered that Lauren (my better half) wanted me to write nightly, with the colour yellow as an element of each entry. Today's yellow thing was the set of reflectors that guided the way through the Rock Pool in Lynds cave. It was the deepest part of the cave we reached. To get to the entrance of the cave we parked and semi-trogged up in a beautiful forest, walked across a bridge, through a field, all in thermals, half done-up wetsuits and wetsuit boots (or gumboots – it is Tasmania after all!). It was very warm and quite unreal. We got to the riverbank and fully geared up. For me this was sharkskin top over thermal top, wetsuit zipped up, sharkskin gloves and helmet. We crossed the river, christening my wetsuit attire. It was an interesting feeling having the coldwater seep in and still feel comfortable.



Main passage Lynds Cave: Photographer: Garry Smith

The entrance was gated with an arm cannon such that it could be opened from the inside without a key but not from the outside. Good thing that Steve had the key. I could feel the cold air blowing out and hear gushing water. Crawling into the cave I felt the harsh cold of the water coming through my gloves. The wetsuit material stopped me from really feeling it ... but I could still feel that it was cold. A small (roughly 1/1.5m) waterfall was the source of the gushing sound, we had to climb up it, which was surprisingly easy. We followed the river, which ranged from a few cm to waist deep. Beautiful decorations of stalagmites, stalactites, helictites, flowstone, shawls and other pretties lined the waterway. It was such an alien environment to be in, and the life-supporting gear enforced this feeling. We saw a mini mini 'Uluru', with some



## REFLECTING ON THE COLOUR YELLOW. LYNDS CAVE.

sections of tightly clustered thick formations that seemed solid but had little gaps on closer inspection.

A bat skeleton that was turning yellow was cool, and interesting as Tasmanian caves are too cold for them. This fella missed the memo apparently. After lunch we stepped out of the water, up and over a huge flowstone, then washed each other's boots before traversing boulders, our path following the string lines and helpful slip mats. It was good to see cave conservation practices in action, as I could easily imagine these pristine caves turning not-so-pristine very quickly without them. A gap between the boulders was our passage downwards back into the water. This time we had to stay low as the roof was low and decorated. By now the cold was starting to get to me, especially in the fingers and legs. We got to an apparent dead-end, where Steve told us about the next stage – Rock Pool. He explained the nature of it being a wet, cold and tight navigational struggle. He and Nicole went ahead on a scouting mission to ensure the water level wasn't too high. They came back and I was the only one that wanted to go ahead with them.

Yellow reflectors guided the way through my Mum's nightmare. The start required that I lay on a sloped rock and lower myself through a gap in the wall into the water to the point that I floated forwards before contorting up awkward rocks. Then back down into the water on my back, ready to dunk under low hanging rocks. At this point the full submersion, tightness and cold got to me and I lost control of my breathing – gasping, almost choking on my own breath and going into mild shock as my entire Being went a bit ... weird. I managed to speak and told Nicole that I couldn't go any further. We didn't get far and despite the stress I put my body through I'm glad I



Teeth anyone? Lynnds Cave. Photographer: Garry Smith

tried. I plan to return and get through the Rock Pool one day, perhaps with a thicker wetsuit, or to keep moving (the wait for the scouting mission cooled me down a lot) before attempting it.



# REFLECTING ON THE COLOUR YELLOW. LYNDS CAVE.

Steve gave me another thermal top and a head cap. The return trip was still colder than the entry, but well worth the experience. From sweaty sleeps to shivering cave ventures, Tasmania has it all. I will return to see more.

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## A GLOW-IN-THE-DARK EXPERIENCE

Janice Chan

When people mention Tassie, they think picturesque landscape, poppy fields, a fertile land with its famous honey and beers, and then maybe, caves. At least, that is the impression my international friends and acquaintances have for Tasmania, a place to *explore the possibilities*.

In the central north of Tasmania lies a quaint town known as Mole Creek, a place famous for its honey and caves. FUSSI was fortunate to having a member of its own successfully infiltrate the Marakoopa 1 & 2 caving team and lived to tell the tale.

I have been forewarned that cavers have to stay out-of-sight from tourists, hiding between rocks in the dark like the infamous cave spiders waiting for its unsuspecting prey. The rationale is that we cavers could potentially interrupt commercial caving tours and rob the limelight off our jolly and experienced cave tour guides. For even yours truly would agree, sometimes a group of hunkering shadowy figures with their colourful helmets and artistic overall designs can be more attractive than a bunch of static, glittering rocks larger than the size of your bedroom.



Aragonite on the walls in Marakoopa Cave; Photo Janice Chan

We dash past sections of the show cave to a stream passage on the left before the next unsuspecting tour group walks in. To our delight, not even five minutes into our venture and we have witnessed our first display of glow worms. Lights lit up in the direction of our travel as if



# A GLOW-IN-THE-DARK EXPERIENCE

Janice Chan

to lead the way into this dark, wet, silk-infested hole. Sometimes the lights dim and vanish, at times it is there to stay. Our glee and delight are short-lived, not to our dismay, because what we will experience shortly shall overwhelm that by a mile. The passage quickly opens up to an enormous chamber on our right, featuring a cascade of colossal rockfalls. We journey up and over swiftly like sure-footed mountain goats. But then someone must have made a mistake of looking up, because no one dares to move a muscle after the first deep intake of breath is heard.

The Milky Way lit up the night sky, stars clustering together and yet manage to form a continuous streak across the deep dark expanse of the cave. Everywhere, left, right, and above, are twinkling stars the likes of which I have never seen before. That is, in my humble opinion, mother nature's first great gift to all who dare to venture past the darkness beneath. Even as the lights beckon us to move onwards, to explore the possibility for more, we stood in reverent silence and in stunned awe. A ghostly whisper urges us to continue, to somehow tear our eyes away from the hypnotizing beauty. In silence we stand and see in our sparkling eyes a mirror to the stars in the sky. Spellbound. Seconds stretches languishingly to a minute, a minute into two. A slight breeze caresses my left cheek, breaking the magic that has carved its way into my soul.

We trudge upwards, eager for more. A few rockfalls and a couple grunts later, we come to an abrupt stop, again. Much like the glowworms from the stream, the Tasmanian cave spiders make their introduction, weaving webs and leading us to the next set of footholds as we climb. A sense of Déjà vu permeates the air, filling our lungs with an air of anticipation of what is to come. This time, a distant light and flowing water, so small, so light, makes its way into our consciousness and almost manage to distract us from the immediate threat. For lo and behold, here lies the fortress of the cave spiders. More and more cave spiders appear out of its crevices, its many eyes twinkle and wink in welcome, albeit with promises of pain and guilt that whosoever destroys their snares shall receive.



*Hickmania troglodytes*. Photo Janice Chan.

The spiders lead us to a streamway, the streamway leads us to a waterfall. The climb past the waterfall leads us to the royal palace of *Hickmania troglodytes*. The journey turning from being wary of a misstep to death to downright treacherous. For the horizontal silk traps, some as long



# A GLOW-IN-THE-DARK EXPERIENCE

Janice Chan

as a metre and half a metre-wide line every crevice imaginable and almost every handsome rock you may want to trample your wet and dirty soles upon.

As some wary wayfarers pause to gaze at this horrific display, some stragglers struggle to climb past the waterfall. I take the liberty of exploring deeper into the palace ground. Every shallow breath made in tandem with every step made in cautious trepidation. The 'palace ground' is truly a sight to behold, the spiders weave webs in celebration. Some even go as far as weaving a web across the stream, which in itself is about a metre wide. Failing to avoid the webs, you would have caused insurmountable damage to the webs guarding the gate to the outside world. That world so dense in green foliage, moss-covered trees, and evergreen tree ferns awaits us.

## MARAKOOPA TWO

The second cave is located right beside the cave exit. You find the stream, you find a cave entrance. Due to time constraints, we could only explore part of the cave. What I find



Janice in My Cave.

interesting in this cave is the many cave fauna we could easily spot. Two species of spiders, one flatworm, one moth, and an entire wall of cave crickets. As if that is not impressive enough, the whole streamway is littered with fossils. Not just ancient plant life and shellfish, but scales that looks like a giant snake has conveniently shed its skin where the stream now lies.

Much to my disappointment, our trip leader rings the bell of exodus once the passage narrows. Armed with a new sense of familiarity, we backtrack to the show cave.

We made it back to the cave entrance without a hitch, well, almost. Murphy's law dictates the sound of footsteps above us, creeping closer and closer to where we are. *Tourists! Quick, Hide!* The uniform line of thought echoes in our head as we scramble back to hide under a rocky 'cliff', the arching rock a haven for the hiding cavers. Everyone cowers under the rock except the sole

# A GLOW-IN-THE-DARK EXPERIENCE

Janice Chan

caver at the forefront of the team, who hesitates with her choice of rock cover which the window of opportunity then slams closed in her face. She tries to melt into the rock wall, to disappear, to vanish into thin air. But she forgets, the bright blue helmet perching on the top of her head is akin to glow worms in the dark. A stark contrast to its dark surroundings. An exclaim here and there, murmurs of a strange dark creature lying parallel to the ground begin to spread among the crowd.

“Are you okay?” yelled a feminine voice from above. Silence. The creature wiggles a little closer to the rock wall. “ARE YOU OKAY ?!” this time the sound echoes louder throughout the cavern above. “YA...!” the wiggly creature reluctantly replied. “JUST CHECKING!”. A multitude of eyes stare at me like I am a national monument with neon lights shining upon me.

Now I know what a glow worm feels like when it is not prey that it attracts but humans. It must have been terrified, feeling naked and vulnerable like never before the more we humans intrude upon them. Mayhap that is why our lights and voices cause their lights to dim and vanish the closer we are. Mayhap we should leave them alone in their cold and dingy homes. But we are like magpies, we just have to love shiny things. The shinier and the more extraordinary, the more we gather around, starving for more.

The glow worms might as well be a beacon to remind all those who treasure the hypnotising beauty of the wonders of nature, to be involved in conserving cave environments and the creatures that dwell within.

The Entrance to Sassafras Cave. Photo: Janice Chan



## CAVING WITH SPIDERMAN - My Cave and Sassafras

Nicole Schiller

As part of the pre-conference caving trips I went to My Cave and Sassafras in the Mole Creek caving area of Tasmania. My trip leader was Henry Shannon and at the age of 78 he was considerably limber and quick around the cave. He was like a Spider-Man who could find the driest of spots within the cave so that his feet would stay dry in his gumboots. Douglas from Sydney previously of the Chillagoe Caving Club joined us.

The entrance of My Cave is about 12-15 metres on the hand line. The first part is reasonably easy with medium sized rocks and various logs that serves as good foot holds. There is a rock shoulder and is a slightly difficult to manoeuvre around but not as difficult as it is on the way out! More about this later.



# CAVING WITH SPIDERMAN - My Cave and Sassafras

Nicole Schiller

Once you are past the rocky shoulder, there is a muddy steep slope to make your way down using the hand line. Once down you almost immediately come to a streamway which is about ankle deep most of the way. The cave presented with what I call shelves that you can clearly see where water has been. Inside the cave we walked alongside a shelf to a sump which was considerably filled with water. That a week later had drained and people could pass through. My Cave is interesting geographically, but this is not my area of expertise. Both Henry and Doug were knowledgeable in this area.

After this we then went into Sassafras. We walked through the Tasmanian bush for about an hour to find an easy entrance. Near the entrance there were many cave crickets. We stooped down a passage and did a few crawls into an area. Here we spotted some glow worm threads and tried to see the glow worms, but they were not shining there. We continued down a bit further and spotted some more threads. Here we saw a few hundred glow worms. Bring my first experience of glow worms I was considerably happy. However, Henry quickly let me know there are many more impressive displays. Both in My Cave and Sassafras there were many Tasmanian Cave Spiders. The glistening of the web and the egg sacs was what first caught my attention. It was amazing to hear more about these creatures at the ASF conference. Sassafras also has some interesting geographical markers. It was great to listen to the wisdom and knowledge of Doug and Henry. I would like to go back and visit both these caves. While they do not have the spectacular decorations of some of Tasmania's more well-known caves, they were still quite interesting to see.

## TAILENDER

Sarah Gilbert

5-January

Andrew Baker (NHVSS), David Burt (NHVSS), Sarah Gilbert (FUSSI), Steve Kennedy (SUSS), Stefan Eberhard (STC).

We moved camp from Devonport to the paddock behind the Mole Creek Pub in time for a half day's caving. We parked at the Mersey River campground and walked up river to the gated entrance nestled in amongst the ferns. We were expecting to endure a tight rifty, possibly wet, crawl in the entrance series of the cave, but once it got a little too tight we realised we'd missed the turnoff. We backtracked out through the nasty bits then found the small up climb and the way on. This 'official' tight section wasn't nearly as bad as the way we initially went, it was almost pleasant in comparison although pack passing did help in places. We found the base of the permanently rigged 8m pitch and up we went into the pretty section. A well decorated cave with several flowstone filled chambers, pure white stals, impressively intricate helictites, aragonite clusters and uncountable boot wash stations. Although a relatively small cave for Mole Creek, we spent plenty of time appreciating the formations while sitting around waiting for tripod wielding photographers. The highlight of the cave is definitely the small pool in the last main

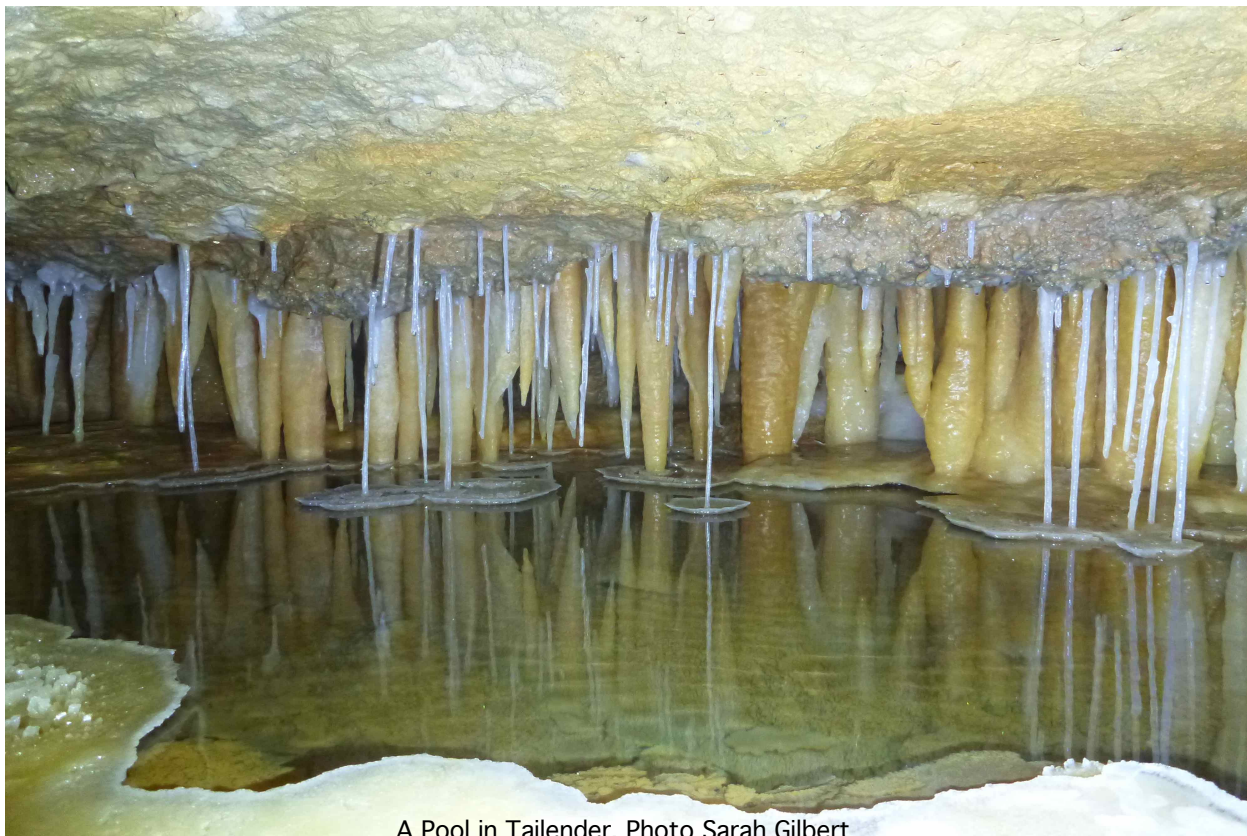


Aragonite Crystals Tailender. Photo: Sarah Gilbert

# TAILENDER

Sarah Gilbert

chamber with its calcite rafts growing around the edge and at the base of several straws.



A Pool in Tailender. Photo Sarah Gilbert

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## DEVILS POT, CANYON ROUTE

Sarah Gilbert

7-January

Andrew Baker (NHVSS), Alan Caton (RCC), Sarah Gilbert (FUSI), Alan Green (NHVSS), Melissa Hadley (NHVSS), Cathi Humphry-Hood (MSS), Eleanor March (NC), Janine McKinnon (STC), David Stuckey (MSS), Ric Tunney (STC), Thomas Varga (FUSI)

I've been to Devils Pot cave at least twice before by the two other routes, but this was my first time via the Canyon Route. It was well worth the return trip and was the highlight of the week. Although the walk straight up the hill from the Marakoopa Show Cave track was as unenjoyable as always, the cave is well worth the slog. The large party stopped at the creek at the top of the hill and split into two groups. One group down the Traditional Route (2 straight-forward pitches) and those with more SRT confidence, down the Canyon Route (3 technical pitches).

The first pitch, with one rebelay a couple of meters down, drops off the righthand side of a spur into the sculpted canyon, with a waterfall on one side and the doline opening on the other. The bottom of the pitch was dimly lit but still open to the sky and filled with splashes from the cascading water. With some long-legged bridging it was possible to remain relatively dry getting onto the top of the second pitch. Let the fun begin! The top of the second pitch opens up into the main doline, where the other party could sit and watch on a ledge at the bottom of their first pitch, looking out over the 20m waterfall. The route traverses out across the side of the doline, keeping away from the waterfall (that would have been a bit too much 'fun' otherwise), with a series of 3 hanging rebelays. Nice, technical rigging with elegantly placed bolts (thanks to Alan Jackson & Janine McKinnon), and a spectacular view across to the waterfall.



# DEVILS POT, CANYON ROUTE

Sarah Gilbert

Once all safely down the second pitch we finally headed into the dark zone. The way on splits from the main water channel and follows the narrow canyon passage down through a series of short climbs. The height of the flood debris on the walls was impressive. One more short pitch to the bottom of the cave and a lunch rendezvous with the other team. This is not the end of the cave but the point where all three routes down intersect. Lots of potential for cross over trips, and something for everyone – one easy, one technical and one tight (and not rigged for this trip).



After fuelling up, the groups mixed and matched for the trip out. Many switched over for variety, and others retraced their steps. I took the latter option because I couldn't get enough - up, up, climb, climb, rebelay, rebelay, ooh ah waterfall, rebelay, up, up and out. A short, fun, spectacular cave.

# EXECUTION POT's MUD, MERSEY HILL FAILS AND QUAMBY BLUFF SUCCEEDS!

Sarah Gilbert.

David Butler (NC), Alan Caton (RSS), Sarah Gilbert (FUSSI), Melissa Hadley (NHVSS)

My aim for the post-conference caving was to take the opportunity to visit some caves that I hadn't been to before, and to leave space on the classic Mole Creek Spectaculars for others to enjoy. So, I signed up for Execution Pot before Serena told me I'd been there in 2010 ... (Speleo Spiel #381). I didn't quite believe her but did remember the access track. I definitely recommend travelling along it *inside* a 4WD, rather than bouncing on the flat tray of a ute being covered in leaf debris and accompanying creepy crawlies. The drive this time was probably less memorable, but definitely more comfortable.

The walk to the cave was the reverse style of Devils Pot – steep down to the cave and a slog back up at the end of the day. Two pitches down (P1 30m with a rebelay on a ledge at ~15m, P2 30m) to a slightly decorated and muddy rift, with another short pitch/scramble climb to the very bottom of the cave (P3 ~15m). The bottom looked vaguely familiar but I swear the rest of



On the Second Pitch in Execution Pot. Photo Clare Buswell

the cave way new to me ... A bit of water, lots of dark crumbly limestone and classic Mole Creek mud. The cave was worth the visit for some SRT practice, but I wouldn't be surprised if it fades from my memory again.

## MERSEY HILL FAIL, QUAMBY BLUFF SUCCESS

David Butler (NC), Sarah Gilbert (FUSSI) 9-January

The number of cavers was steadily dropping in the Mole Creek Pub campsite towards the end of the week, until there were only two planning a trip to Mersey Hill Cave. David had high hopes of checking out some leads at the far end of the cave, so off we went. I'd been to the cave before many years ago on a survey trip, but never down the pitch half way in. We parked at the top and down we went into the valley to the rather inconspicuous opening in the hill. We trogged up, then calamity struck! My faithful Scurion was on the blink with a dicky cable connection. I reluctantly pulled the pin on the trip since my main light was on strobe setting and I didn't want to rely on just my backup light for the long trip we had planned. Ho hum, after 10 years trouble free usage I can't complain too much. David shrugged and took the change of plans in his signature un-fazeable style. The passage at the back of the cave will be waiting for him next time.

The slog back up the hill just wasn't enough for me (crazy?) so I took the opportunity to climb Quamby Bluff instead. A nice little dolerite mountain on the edge of the Central Plateau with views both along the Great Wester Tiers and out over the farmland. A pleasant spot to sit and contemplate the end of the Tassie trip.



## MUD VS GUMBOOTS - MY CAVE

Neville Skinner

Participants: Brett, Hannah, Neville & Allison.

On the last evening of pre-conference caving at Mole Creek, I was given the opportunity to visit "My Cave" cave. This came about because Brett Wiltshire wanted to see it but was lacking the numbers to do so. So, Hannah & I agreed to go along despite having just finished cleaning & packing our caving gear ready for our departure to Davenport, where the conference was being held.

We were met shortly after 9am the next morning by Brett in his car and headed off to My Cave, with a third car containing Douglas and his daughter Allison. It did not take long to get to the cave car-park, located about 5kms south-west of the Mole Creek town-ship, in the same area as Sassafras Cave. Douglas did not cave with us, but instead stayed behind with the cars, while Brett, Hannah, Allison and I headed off to the cave.

During the 45min walk to the cave we encountered a one metre long Tiger Snake on the path and waited for it to slowly (that's a good sign that it was relaxed and not bothered) move away before proceeding. Very young Tiger Snakes are dark grey to black without any markings, but this one was old enough to have the distinctive yellow bands that clearly identified it. After arriving at the cave, we changed into our caving gear and dropped down between two large rocks into the cave entrance. Hannah & Allison located the entrance to the cave and entered first while Brett and I were looking in a separate area.

Entering the cave meant negotiating a slippery slope some 2-3m long that led to a small restriction. After sliding almost uncontrollably down that slope, I called out to Brett to tie a tape off onto a nearby tree root and drop it down, because I was worried that we would have trouble getting back out. After Brett did so, we moved through the restriction to meet up with Hannah & Allison at a small stream-way.



## MUD VS GUMBOOTS - MY CAVE

The streamway was bounded on both sides by relatively flat dolerite walls, sloping upwards to the ceiling. This was fine at first with very little water in the stream-way, but it did not take long for the water to get progressively deeper. I was concerned that I would get dirty water in the gumboots that I had just cleaned and dried, ready for the trip back to Davenport for the conference.

Moving along, we came to a formation that resembled the shape of a hand, albeit it only had three fingers, which appeared to be reaching out to us from the depths. After this we came to a deeper section of water, which I was able to get around by placing feet against one wall and hands against the other, but it was more luck than anything that allowed me to negotiate this without falling in. Until now I was able to walk on the lower section of wall, astride the stream.

However, it was not long before it got harder and the challenge was really on. I encountered one small section where the water was up to my knees and there was nowhere to go. I struggled to stay on the walls until ... splash! My gumboots were full of muddy water and I was cursing whoever it was who said My Cave was a pretty little cave.

With the pressure now off, I emptied the water from my boots and we trogged down the stream-way until it appeared the stream-way could be bypassed by a higher section of cave, some 2m above the stream. We followed this for about 100m, when our forward scout reported back that the cave had ended with the stream-way dropping into a sump. Surely not. Brett, who was next in line, went ahead and confirmed this to be the case, so we turned and headed out.



Hannah, Myself and Alison. Photo: Brett Wiltshire

This time I focussed on the higher sections. One such section, consisting of a number of very slippery clay covered rocks, took me up at a steep angle for about 20m before petering out. There was little of interest here, so I carefully retreated back to the others and we moved on



## MUD VS GUMBOOTS - MY CAVE

until I came to another small section just up and beyond a ledge to my left. This contained a few old stalts but nothing to justify calling the others back to look at.

Then we arrived at a somewhat pretty section of stalactites, and also flowstone above the streamway, which we had travelled past on the way in. We stopped here and waited as Brett set up his slave flashes and took a few photos of these while we posed. After that we exited the cave, with everyone thankful for the assistance provided by the tape. I was happy to have visited the cave at that time, as I had nominated it for one of my post-conference cave trips and that now meant I had gained a day.

Upon leaving we headed for Deloraine, where we had agreed to meet for lunch and coffee/chocolate. When we got there, I realised I did not have my wallet on me and could not remember where I might have lost it. Panic set in and off we went back to the cave to see if it had dropped from my jeans when I geared up/down for caving. It was not there. Brett had kindly offered to help look for my wallet, but upon not finding it at the cave, I thanked him and he left for Davenport where the pre-conference registration and BBQ was due to commence at 6pm.

I then left for the Mole Creek Caravan Park with Hannah to see if it had been left in the room. It had not, but this provided the best opportunity to unload everything out of the back of the car and onto a flat clean lawn in the shade, and to search thoroughly and methodically. After 15 minutes I found the wallet in the bottom of my SRT backpack, underneath the SRT gear, and realised I had dropped it there whilst sorting & packing the previous evening.

I was so thankful that I decided not to blame the SRT gear for the inconvenience, on this occasion. With the car repacked, we were on our way again, and arrived at the BBQ shortly after it had started. All was well in the world again.

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## CRAWLING AND SLIDING, MERSEY HILL CAVE

Andrew Stempel



The author hanging around. Photo: Neville Skinner

Tasmania!!!! Wow what a place. I had been looking forward to this trip for an entire year after I learned that the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) conference was to be held in Tasmania over the Christmas holidays boasting lots of pre- and post-conference caving adventures. Tassie did not disappoint!

This was my first trip to Tasmania and my first attendance of an ASF conference. Mersey Hill Cave marked my virgin visit to a Tasmanian cave to kick off an

## CRAWLING AND SLIDING, MERSEY HILL CAVE

Andrew Stempel

incredible 3 weeks on the Island State. Clare had properly scared us into preparation for what she described as “bloody cold caves that will suck the life out of you.”

Well she was right, the caves are cold (~8°C), but Tasmania had delivered unseasonably warm and wonderful weather for the duration of the conference and conference activities, so those “bloody cold” holes in the ground were welcome relief from the heat and the absence of ozone above.

Our trip started with the gathering of all the cavers heading out for the day at the quaint little hut that is home to the Northern Caverneers, conveniently located in the Mole Creek Karst area that boasts several well decorated caves. We separated into our groups and met our trip leaders for the day. We had a relatively large group heading into Mersey Hill and we were lucky to pick up fellow FUSSI member Hannah, as the trip leader for her designated cave was unable to attend. Briefed by our trip leader, we divided gear and split up into a few cars to begin the day’s adventure. After a short drive to the top of a hill we got all trogged up and began the descent down the hill to the entrance of the cave. We were also well informed by Clare of the delights of Tasmanian bush walking, and the trip to the entrance of Mersey Hill cave was a welcomed introduction to dense, thick, leech-infested Tasmanian bushwalking. It was a warm day and despite the fact we were walking downhill, I was sweating like a pig and ready for that cool 8-degree hole in the ground.

We began our journey underground and I was pleasantly surprised to find out that we would spend lots of time crawling in between a few larger caverns. This was a mostly horizontal cave with one 20m pitch towards the end. The trip went relatively smoothly and there was much excitement in the group as it was the first adventure for the 2019 ASF conference. It was great to meet people from other clubs that were just as excited to be underground in Tassie. Lots of chatter and laughter was shared and there were only two “small” events that I can recall.

We were nearing the end of the cave in a larger chamber close to the 20m pitch where we had a bit of excitement. There was a muddy traverse across the side of a hill that dropped into a rocky hole. The footing was not the best in the mud, and it did feel slightly exposed. About two thirds of the group had successfully crossed the traverse, most of which used a medium-sized rock lodged in the mud as an aide in the crossing. I was able to use the same rock, but I did feel it move slightly as I hopped to the next logical footing. The next member of our group, crossed using the same rock and it gave way, resulting in an exciting slide down the muddy slope. Time seemed to freeze as the group watched this slow-motion tumble, and I had thoughts of how far we were into the side of Mersey Hill and how much crawling was involved to get here. Luckily, he was able to self-arrest before a larger drop and reported no injuries.

After the group collected itself and digested the fall, we proceeded towards the top of the pitch. This was quite a treat. There was a short crawl through a tunnel to the anchor and after clipping in, you swung out into a wide-open chamber, with an amazing snow-white flow stone “waterfall” emerging from the hole you just crawled through, spilling into the large chamber below. This was extremely rewarding for me and a beautiful abseil, but it felt so wrong to be descending down this decoration and using it as footing. There was no way to avoid it. At the bottom of the pitch there was a slightly “sporty” down climb to reach an underground stream. Some of the group decided not to venture down, including myself and opted to head back up the pitch. Having the fresh memory of our teammates tumble in my mind and a golden ticket to visit Kubla Khan the following day, I decided not to risk the down climb.

Not everyone was SRT qualified, so we made the decision to leave one member of the group behind at the top of the pitch while the rest of the group quickly explored the chamber at the bottom of the pitch. But Tasmanian caves are “bloody cold” and we returned to a slightly chilled and shivering teammate. After the group had climbed back up the rope we followed our



## CRAWLING AND SLIDING, MERSEY HILL CAVE

Andrew Stempel

tracks out of the cave into some wonderful Tasmanian sunshine. There was a nice warm slog up the hill to the car park. I was delighted to find out that one of the members had an esky full of ice-cold beer awaiting our arrival! Well-deserved after our adventure underground and the warm hike up the hill.

For the most part this cave was fairly dry, slightly muddy, and moderately decorated with a pinch of SRT and some fun free climbing. There was also lots of grovelling, mostly on your hands and knees, that lead to a few large caverns with some nice decorations. This cave was the perfect transition for me from the dry, dusty, belly-crawling caves of South Australia to the wet, wide-open and well decorated Tasmanian caverns.

I did learn a few lessons from this cave. Caving is dangerous and even the most experienced caver can have an accident. I now am more aware of the risks I am willing to take underground, keeping in mind the length and difficulty of a rescue. I will also never leave a fellow caver behind, even for a short while. It's dark in there.

Much thanks to all those in the FUSSI crew (you know who you are) that ensured that we were organized, well-caved, well-fed and happy! Also, a huge thanks to all those that made this ASF conference a success. It was an exciting and informative program accompanied by an assortment of pre- and post-conference activities. I had a great visit to Tassie and look forward to seeing everyone at the next ASF gathering in South Australia!

## WAITING FOR THE LIGHT SHOW - MYSTERY CK CAVE

Kelsey Newell

*On 10 January 2019, a group of seven FUSSI members explored the Mystery Creek Cave system, near the township of Ida Bay, in south-eastern Tasmania. Group 1 (Clare Buswell, Thomas Varga, Neville Skinner, Andrew Stempel) entered Mystery Creek via Midnight Hole and exited through Mystery Ck. Group 2 (Nicole Schiller, Hannah Stempke, Kelsey Newell) conducted a return trip, entering and exiting the system via the main cavern. This trip report is for Group 2.*

It's a leisurely 2km walk to Mystery Creek Cave. The trail is flat, wide and relatively well-maintained and signposted. It is hard to believe that the area was once a thriving community, where limestone was mined and transported by rail to market. Today, with the quarry closed and the industrial area reclaimed by nature, the trail looks like it could be in a forest anywhere, save for remnants of dilapidated tracks and tools and the odd vintage shoe and glass bottle.



History Shoes: Photo Clare Buswell

We follow the tramway to the quarry and make our way to the cave. The trail terminates at the top of a hill, before making a steep – but brief – descent to the cave's main entrance. Our group cautiously down-climbs the last few meters of the path using boulders, slick with vegetation, as support. We are greeted by a large stream passage that has high ceilings and a rocky, sandy floor. It is easy to see why the cave is often compared to a rail tunnel – it's massive, both in height and width.

The cave is quiet, damp and surprisingly cool, maintaining a constant 9 degrees Celsius temperature year-round. We switch on our headlamps and enter the cavern slowly to let our

## WAITING FOR THE LIGHT SHOW - MYSTERY CK CAVE

eyes adjust to the change in light. We are surrounded by rock formations of varying shapes and sizes. While this section of the cave doesn't require a high level of physical fitness, I'm surprised by the agility, focus and balance required to climb and scramble over (under, down and around) boulders in and around the creek bed – a poor foot placement could easily lead to an accidental wet shoe, swim or worse, a sprained ankle.

Mystery Creek Cave is known for its glowworms, and I am pleased to report they don't disappoint. We stop to take a break at the second chamber. We sit, turn off our torches, and wait for the lightshow to begin. Within minutes, the ceiling and walls begin to glow, and the cave lights up like the night sky. Glowworms can be seen everywhere: this chamber, the first chamber behind us, and ahead, deeper into the cave. The longer we sit, the brighter and more vibrant the colour. Hannah pulls out her camera, keen to capture the moment and snap a photo or two before continuing the trip.

We weave our way around the rock formations, crossing the creek, as needed. We fall into a single file line, with Nicole in the lead, Kelsey in the middle and Hannah bringing up the rear. We stop to chat, discuss the route, take photos and use our torches to point out interesting formations and cave life. Highlights include: beautiful flowstone formations; glowworms and cave shrimp; and a huge stalagmite – large enough to walk on – and that could have reached from the floor to the ceiling had it not broke at the top.

We estimate that we have trekked approximately 300 meters into the cave. The system has three primary sections that are suitable for beginner, intermediate and experienced cavers. We



Signage to be found at the Mystery Ck/Midnight Hole System.  
Large, Conspicuous and just so you know!

decide to turn around a short way past the start of the intermediate section, where the terrain changes and the cavern narrows. The walk back is equally enjoyable, and offers a new perspective of the cave, as sunlight begins to trickle in, highlighting rock formations and pools of water.

We exit the cave and walk up the hill to have a snack, before heading back to the car. Sections of Mystery Creek Cave are open to the general public, and as we sit and eat, and we are greeted by a steady stream of families marching down the hill. The children's excitement is charming and continuous, and I can't help but smile – it has been a good trip.

*A special thanks to Clare for the excellent pre-trip briefing, and to Nicole and Hannah for helping me – an apprehensive & cautious novice – get to experience how fun and rewarding caving can be. Thanks!*



# INTO the ABYSS

Andrew Stempel

After just having my mind blown a week earlier in Khubla Khan, I was more than excited for the next cave on the agenda, a Midnight Hole-Mystery Creek through trip. This would be a “canyon” style trip, entering Midnight Hole and exiting Mystery Creek via Matchbox Squeeze, taking the ropes with us as we descend. I was stoked.



Thomas and Clare Double Checking, Midnight Hole. Photo: Neville Skinner

There was a nice, well maintained track toward Mystery Creek cave before we bailed uphill to access the entrance of Midnight Hole. For some background, this was my first caving trip in Tasmania, and there was lots of discussion at the conference about a recent accident in this cavern involving a broken femur on one of the pitches. To put it lightly, there were a few butterflies in my stomach as I clipped in

for the first abseil.

This vertical system was spectacular. Sheer, clean walls that dropped into the abyss that, on certain descents, your light could barely touch. Amazing. All 6 pitches down were a delight. At the bottom was the Matchbox Squeeze (the only way out) and this was my first attempt at dragging myself and a pack full of 50m rope and gear through a small hole. Let’s just say I was happy that there were some people ahead of me to help me raise my pack over an obstacle that my arms physically wouldn’t allow me to pass in such a constricted space.

After successfully navigating the squeeze, there were a few more challenges before entering the Confusing chamber. Yes, the chamber was confusing. You enter an extremely large cavern and are searching for a small “chute” to get you back to daylight. The only other alternative was back through Matchbox Squeeze followed by a long rest (and a lot of



Andrew on the way to the Match Box Squeeze. Photo T. Varga



# INTO THE ABYSS

upset people) before rescue arrived. A bit of exploring mixed with some lunch and we had found it. We were a bit behind schedule, so we could only gawk at those pretty shit-filled glowworms for a short while, before our return to the surface. This day was a treat. Tasmania is amazing.

## BEASTS

Clare Buswell

A trip into Tassie's most dangerous cave. Ho Hum, here we go again. Walk up the hill, this time staying well out of the creek, but still hauling 115 metres of rope. I think it was that, well something like it as this was a pull-down trip and not a bounce gig.

Neville, (in charge of photos), Thomas, Clare and Andrew all dealing with ropes and rigging was to be the order of the day. All went well, with the emphasis on safety and double checking everything as this was the first time all, bar myself, had done any pull through trips. Yes, all went well till the last pitch! It is always the last pitch in this cave that causes the problem! What is the depth and where is that depth measured from? The bolt placement, the edge of the pitch or some other place? Well it didn't really matter, as we sent Neville over on what turned out to be the wrong rope in that it did not reach the floor by 4 m. (It was a 51m rope). Much mumbling followed by re-rigging, with Neville still hanging on the rope getting dripped on. Mmm! We then sent Andrew down because the acoustics prevented any real clear understanding of what was yelled up and down the pitch, Neville and



Thomas on the Fifth Pitch, Midnight Hole  
Photo: Neville Skinner



Bronya nearing the Leap of Fear. Midnight Hole.  
Photo T. Varga 2012.

Andrew sorted themselves out, leaving Clare to come down, tie in the 65-metre rope to the bottom of the 50-metre rope and then continue on. Thomas came down last. Neville, with true photographer's dedication continued to flash away.

We packed up the ropes and then hurled ourselves at the Match Box squeeze. (So named as a matchbox was placed there when the first lot of cavers exploring the link between Mystery Ck and Midnight Hole found this grotty little crawl.) Now South Australians are used to grotty crawls, we sort of



# BEASTS

think them fun and give them names like Beard Squeeze or Bandicoots bypass. But the beast that is Matchbox squeeze I rate up there as one of the ugliest, due to the bag hauling that has to go on it. OK, you are on your side, and at the most inopportune spots the bags jam up against rocks that protrude from the walls of the squeeze. You need inspector gadget arms



Clare Emerging from the Matchbox Squeeze.  
Photo. T Varga.

with fingers that can lift a bag full of wet heavy ropes up all of a few of centimetres so as to clear the rocks. Mostly you can't reach the bag because of your compromised body position.

Thus, we struggled, cajoled, shoved, pushed, pulled, and cursed each bag, but finally we managed to tame the beast. Onwards we caved, over the Crack of Fear, and into the Confusing Chamber. Here, after suitably confusing ourselves and covering ourselves in mud etc, we found the Laundry Chute and slithered our way down to the stream. Yes, memories of this area are fun, with the last time I did this as a through trip being about 14 years previous, where on finding the creek, we caught the unmistakable smell of perfume! It was not ours I can assure you, but that of a French film crew, filming glowworms. We thought they were mad, and they thought us equally so! But I digress.

On we trundled and eventually sat down to admire in the last chamber the lights of the glowworms. It was, despite of or maybe due to the delays of the last pitch, a great day of fun in the underground world that we all love. A pox on those who fail to understand us.

## EXIT CAVE – RIVER ENTRANCE

Hannah Stampke

Hannah, Neville, Thomas, Clare, Andrew



Such an Easy Pathway, on Route to Exit Cave. Photo: Clare Buswell

Exit Cave, connected to the bottom of the rope swallowing Mini Martin, hides stunning caverns and pebbled streams. Not for the faint of heart (or lazy legs) as one of the entrances to Exit resides at the bottom of what Tasmanians would describe as a "hill". After several hours of zig-zagging from the car to the cave, lunch beco-mes a priority, and then it's time to do the



## EXIT CAVE RIVER ENTRANCE

Hannah Stample

trog shuffle. On approach to the entrance, excitement is forced to wait as the muddy slopes leading in become the first tricky obstacle, if you don't count the walk down the hill.

After locating the gate and sending someone else in to open it, trying to copy their method is well advised. This became a standard procedure for the climbs and crawls to come. Once through, the short, tunnelled walk is something of a show cave: low roof, pretty things. This leads deeper into an enormous cavern that stretches along a shallow stream, accompanying it into the hillside. The mere sight of the vast space is enough to leave anyone in awe, let alone the glimmering white decorations which hang like chandeliers from the roof in a regal fashion. Moving through this space is breezy, as long as you like large scale and slippery challenges.



The rock pile then begins to loom in the streamway, as the end of the cavern scrabbles to a halt. This daunting collection of boulders is tough to navigate, but luckily the Perthians had left green tape markers to assist. The hunt for the path begins and quickly turns from a clamber to a crawl, then vice versa. The stream passage is a confusing mess of a junction. Searching for tape which isn't visible is a frustrating task, especially with several pathways which could be taken. After the consumption of many minutes, the tape was discovered in the low-lying stream space. Joy turned to determination, as the following traverse threatens to tip climbers into waist high chilled water. After not getting drenched, the labyrinth twists and squeezes. A personal favourite is the long, slender rock that hangs above an impressive rift, forcing travellers to straddle their way across.

Once down and out of the rock pile, a slight squeeze pops out to another vast and glorious stream passage. This is a good point to stop and laugh at the obstacles that tried to hold you back. A wide slope leads to the water's edge, also allowing access to the stream-side beauties that are tucked neatly away as if on shelves. Another personal favourite was the black stalactites and mites that glimmered at eye height, further upstream and to the right. As well



## EXIT CAVE RIVER ENTRANCE

Hannah Stample

as these smaller jewels, the cavern boasted shawls and decorations similar to the prior cavern. Unanimously this became a good picnic spot before the splitting.

Well-deserved snacks out of the way, we began with what some call the 'tearful goodbyes'. After internal tears were shed, half of the group wandered further up the slope to be greeted by the beginnings of the terror that is Mini Martin. For others who are not proficient in single rope technique (SRT) this is the spot where the laughing stops, as realisation that the obstacles passed must be traversed again and this time, backwards. Good luck with the inverted straddles, crawls and tricky climbs. Also, do not forget to collect the tape-green only. The rock pile covers the minority of worries, as it is the navigation of that original, vast cavern that will test the memory most. And don't forget, that lovely walk down to the cave is inverted to an uphill trek. A lovely end to a tough day of caving.

## EXIT CAVE - MINI MARTIN THROUGH TRIP

Andrew Stempel

At first, I thought we drew the short end of the straw. We had coordinated with some cavers from WA to do a through trip of the Exit Cave-Mini Martin connection. They were to rig the 3 pitches of Mini Martin from the top down and flag the rock pile so that we could enter from the bottom, quickly navigate the rock pile and haul ourselves and all the rope back up. In my mind, going down the rope seemed like the best option. Not the case.

To get to Exit Cave, there is a long slog through dense Tasmanian bush to the entrance. Exit Cave is a spectacular large stream passage with a significant boulder field in the middle. Navigating this rock pile is difficult and muddy, yet on the other side there is another impressive stream passage. It took considerable time to get from the car park, to navigate Exit Cave and reach the bottom pitch of Mini Martin. I was more than happy to go up the rope, skip the rock pile and cut out half of the bushwalking, than exit back out the way we came.

This would be my first significant climb out of a hole. There were three pitches in total, 2 short and one long 110m pitch. I was nervous, but insanely excited. The first two pitches went great





## EXIT CAVE - MINI MARTIN THROUGH TRIP

and led us to the bottom of the beast. 110m to the surface of free-hanging fun. Clare was nice enough to keep me company as we climbed in tandem up our life line to the surface. Words can't describe how incredible this experience was, slowly emerging to the surface. After being underground all day, every move brought you closer to daylight and the light seemed so intense that every colour blasted your retinas. Safely at the surface, we started the rather large task of hauling ~210m worth of rope out of the abyss. After the obligatory photo, we donned our large packs and headed through the bush to the cars. We reached the car park well past dark, completely knackered after an enjoyable day of caving.

This trip was THE highlight of my visit to Tasmania. Some epic bush walking, large stream passage caving, bouldering and slowly twirling on a rope for a good hour. No other trip had packed in so many elements of caving. My hat goes off to those Tasmanian cavers that routinely head out in this dense bush to explore Australia's deepest caves.

### MINI MARTIN

Clare Buswell.

There we three where, at three pm, sorting out our gear and our minds for the mental and physical challenge that is the ascent of MM: 165m of it over three rebelay followed by hauling the rope up the pitch and bush bashing our way back to the main track. Thus we set out, Andrew followed by Clare, followed by Thomas, then Thomas followed by Clare, followed by Andrew, followed by a rest, fruitcake and double prussiking on the 110 metre pitch.

We took a bit of a refreshment stop at the bottom of the 110m pitch to consume the last of the brandy soaked Xmas cake before entering the ground hog day experience of this pitch. Clare in the lead with Andrew hopping on the rope so we could tandem prussik most of the pitch. We worked in cycles of 10 or something and in about 50 mins of: 'are we there yet; I want an ice cream, haven't we been here before', type moments, I reached the rebelay 10 meters below the pitch head. Andrew took a quick rest whilst I crossed it and we then continued on our merry ways.



The Crew at the Top of Mini Martin: L-R Thomas, Clare and Andrew. Photo: T. Varga

Mini Martin is a breeze technically, clean pitches, no rain of water or small bits of rock to fall on you. We used whistle calls to let Thomas know when we had crossed the top rebelay so he



## EXIT CAVE - MINI MARTIN THROUGH TRIP

could begin the ascent. We were all at the top by 5.30/6pm. Then began the pack up and walk, crawl, scrub bash back to the main Benders Quarry/Exit cave track. We reached the cars just on dark and managed to get back home by 9.30/10pm. It had been, as per usual around this caving area, a long and enjoyable day of fabulous caving.

*I thank Alan Jackson and Chris Sharples for setting up the permits to Exit Cave. Many thanks to the WA cavers for rigging the pitch and for the bit of taping in the rock pile. My thanks also to Andrew and Thomas for being caving mules and hauling the ropes back to the car. Let's all do it again, soonish.*

## A LITTLE SOMETHING FROM THE JUNEE FLORENTINE

Sarah Gilbert

### Growling Swallet

28-December

Abhi Anand (VSA), Stephanie Blake (STC), Sarah Gilbert (FUSSI), Gregory Tsaplin (WASG)

I had a little time in Hobart pre-conference without family/social commitments and was keen to get underground. A few other visiting Mainlanders were also keen, so I arranged a little trip to Growling for those who weren't up for the hard-core trip to Ice Tube (including myself). We arrived slightly behind schedule due to Steph & Abhi picking up a stray dog on the highway and taking a detour through New Norfolk to drop it off at a vet ... Silver lining was Gregory and I got to indulge in fresh berries at the Westerway raspberry farm while we waited.



The Spectacular Entrance to Growling Swallet.  
Photo: Sarah Gilbert

We finally arrived and parked the car at the top of the 8 Road, behind the car whose occupants had long disappeared into Ice Tube. While we trogged up, two more cars arrived packed full of Irish cavers who were in the state for a couple of weeks exploring a list of likely caves in the area. A very busy day in the Florentine! Off we went on the nice stroll through the beautiful, green, fern-filled rainforest to the impressive cave entrance with its large stream flowing onto its depths. The river was no-where near flood levels in the middle of such a dry summer and the marker rock was well above water, so in we went.

We headed down the Dry Bypass and rigged the three short climbs before reconnecting with the main stream way. We picked our way down-stream and although splashed wet from the waist down, I managed to keep my socks dry for a surprisingly long way. Somethings are inevitable though. We stuck our heads into the start of the New Feeling Extension, but the feelings from some of the group were decidedly negative about

the crawl and subsequent down-climb. Instead we keep on heading down-stream to the Glow Worm Chamber where we lay and admired the glowing fauna and generally poked around amongst the rock pile before heading out. A nice little caving trip and walk in the rainforest.

# 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.*

March 23/24	Naracoorte.	RSVP by 14 Feb. Permits have to be submitted a month in advance. Clare coordinating.
Thurs 21 <sup>st</sup> March	Social Meeting	How to use a map and compass. In the Uni Forest. 6.30 pm sharp. Tania coordinating.
Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> April	Exec Meeting.	Club Rm. Flinders Uni Hub Building. 6.30pm
April 7 <sup>th</sup>	One day Trip	Yorke Peninsula. Dee coordinating.

## Mid Semester Break 13<sup>th</sup> April – 29<sup>th</sup> April

April 19-22 Easter	Northern Flinders.	Expect lots of walking. David and Dee coordinating.
Sat April 27 <sup>th</sup> 8am-5pm		Fund Raiser. BBQ Bunnings Marion. Dee coordinating.
*May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Annual General Meeting 6.30pm Sharp	Win the lottery of your dreams. Noel Stockdale Meeting Rm. Central Library.
May 11/12	Flinders Ranges	Great trip suitable for all. Clare Coordinating
Thurs 16 <sup>th</sup> May	General Meeting	Guest Speaker: Dr. Mark Sefton. <i>Bullita &amp; other tales of caving in the Northern Territory.</i> Noel Stockdale Meeting Rm. Central Library.
June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	One day Trip	Yorke Peninsula. Dee coordinating.
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	General Meeting	Guest Speaker. Dr. Rian Dutch. Geological Survey of SA. <i>The Geology of the Nullarbor.</i> Noel Stockdale Meeting Rm. Central Library.

## EXAMS 22<sup>nd</sup> June – 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

General feeling of Gloom Descends

\*Note date change

For the long term.

ASF National Rescue *training* weekend to be held in SA. Weekend of 14-15 Flinders Ranges Sept 2019. This is a hands-on rescue exercise weekend with all SA caving club members involved. More later.

Nullarbor Research Trip, Friday eve 27<sup>th</sup> Sept – Monday eve 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019. Dates are set in stone!



# NEWS and TIDBITS

From the web, with thanks from ACKMA.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-19/ghost-bat-motels-built-near-pilbara-mines/10481728>

An Interlude:

<https://vimeo.com/270908056>

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/tourist-s-20-minute-cave-visit-becomes-two-night-ordeal-on-christmas-island-20181212-p50lwi.html>

[https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2019/03/exploring-a-massive-cave-labyrinth-hidden-under-borneo/?cmpid=org=ngp::mc=crm-email::src=ngp::cmp=editorial::add=sunstills\\_20190310::rid=17960163715](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2019/03/exploring-a-massive-cave-labyrinth-hidden-under-borneo/?cmpid=org=ngp::mc=crm-email::src=ngp::cmp=editorial::add=sunstills_20190310::rid=17960163715)

## A NOTE ON TRIP ORGANISATION

- 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, in cases only of emergency, given to the police. It is the responsibility of trip leaders 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, e.g., 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 before-hand.
- Minimum caving group size is 4 people.