



FUSSI Newsletter

Vol. 32 | No. 1 | 2020



**FUSSI GOES 'ZOOM'.
MEMBERS TUNE IN ONLINE FOR THE
2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

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FUSSI has been a Corporate Member of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc since 1988.

FUSSI 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

May 5th 2020, via ZOOM

Meeting open: 6:45pm

Present: Dee Trewartha, David Mansueto, William Cooper, Andrew Stempel, Sarah Gilbert, Kendall Whittaker, Thomas Varga, Sil Iannello, Dan Dingwell, Tania Wilson, Neville Skinner, Edwina Virgo

Apologies: Clare Buswell, Immi Marshall

1) Minutes from 2019 AGM presented: and approved.

2) Reports for 2019. Presented by all on the 2019 FUSSI Committee.

- Verbal report presented by: ASF Liaison Officer Report: Sarah Gilbert

Various documents from the ASF accepted and updated; Incl. social media policy, publications, copyright policy, child protection policy and cave diving. Google groups for all clubs in Australia - useful for discussing policy throughout the year.

ASF library also actively becoming an online catalogue - where all clubs can input information potentially relieving pressure from FUSSI librarian to share all information.

Sarah Gilbert to step down as our ASF Liaison Officer due to other roles within ASF.

Newsletter editor's Report: Matt Timms (N/A)

Public Officer Report: Thomas Varga

3) Elections for Office Bearer positions for 2020-21 Chair: Tania Wilson.

- **President:** Dee Trewartha. Nominated by Thomas Varga, Seconded: Sarah Gilbert,
- Elected: Dee Trewartha
- **Secretary:** Kendall Whittaker. Nominated by Will Cooper, Seconded Dee Trewartha, Elected: Kendall Whittaker
- **Treasurer:** William Cooper nominated by Thomas Varga, Seconded Dan Dingwell, Elected: Willian Cooper
- **Safety Officer:** Andrew Stempel. Nominated by Dee Trewartha, Seconded Sil Iannello, Elected: Andrew Stempel.
- **Equipment Officer:** David Mansueto nominated by Dee Trewartha. Seconded by Thomas, Clare Buswell nominated by William Cooper, Seconded by Edwina. Elected: David Mansueto
- **Librarian:** Immi Marshall. Nominated by Dee Trewartha, seconded by Kendall Whittaker, Elected: Immi Marshall.
- **Newsletter:** Sil Iannello nominated by Dee Trewartha, Seconded Neville Skinner, Elected: Sil Iannello.
- **ASF representative:** Andrew Stempel. Nominated by Thomas Varga, Seconded Will Cooper. Elected: Andrew Stempel
- **Public Officer:** Thomas Varga. Nominated by Tania Wilson, seconded Dan Dingwell,

FUSSI 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Elected: Thomas Varga

Election of Ordinary Committee members

- Membership Officer: Sarah Gilbert. Nominated by Will Cooper, Seconded Thomas Varga, Elected: Sarah Gilbert
- Events Officer: Dee Trewartha. Nominated by David, Seconded, Dan Dingwell Elected: Dee Trewartha
- Committee Member: Edwina nominated by Will, Seconded by Dan, Elected: Edwina Virgo
- Committee Member: Dan Dingwell nominated by Will Cooper, Seconded by Kendall. Elected: Dan Dingwell
- Committee Member: Clare Buswell nominated by Sarah Gilbert, Seconded by Dan Dingwell, Elected: Clare Buswell
- Committee Member: Neville Skinner nominated by Sarah Gilbert, Seconded by Dee Trewartha. Elected: Neville Skinner
- Committee Member: Tania Wilson nominated by David, seconded by Thomas Vargo. Elected Tania Wilson

Bank Signatories:

- This AGM of Flinders University Speleological Society Inc. decided: That William Cooper and Sarah Gilbert are added as signatories to the Society's Hutt St, Blackwood and Term Deposit accounts. Moved Tania Wilson, Seconded by Dee Trewartha. Motion Carried.

Conclusion: Let's get caving again soon!

End of AGM 8:15pm

PRESIDENT REPORT FOR 2019

This year has been a disrupted one for FUSSI, with only one trip so far for 2020! Bushfires cancelled our summer trip to Victoria (twice!) as well as curtailing the plans of a few of us to crash SUSS's Christmas caving trip.

Members did enjoy some great trips up until the Four Horsemen started causing a stir, along with excellent training opportunities.

A number of our members have been instrumental in organising the next ASF Caving Conference, with our own Dee Trewartha taking the reigns as Convenor. Those of us involved have been enjoying working with cavers from the other SA clubs (Cave Exploration Group of SA and the Scout Caving Group), surely to all our benefit.

In the wake of the Thai Cave Rescue, SA has upped its rescue readiness, with the SA Speleological Council forming a Cave Rescue subcommittee, working on developing plans, forming connections and providing training. Again, we are proud that members of FUSSI have been heavily involved.

A big thank you to Matt Timms and Lauren Thompson for being the entirety of our O'Week team this year! A reminder of how important it is to encourage new student members, as without them we cannot encourage more (...and what is a student club without students?).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, 2019

COVID-19 has provided new challenges for all, with FUSSI's committee rising admirably to adopt online meetings and to keep the wheels turning despite physical distancing impositions. Thank you for the superb work!

As the Flinders University Student Association (FUSA) requires the position of 'President' is held by 'a current student', my time in the role must come to an end. FUSSI has a wonderful Management Committee that looks forward to welcoming a new student to this position, which doesn't really require you to do a lot. So, don't be shy, put your hand up!

David Mansueto

TREASURER'S REPORT for 2019

For the 2019 Financial Year (1/1/2019-31/12/2019) a summary of account balances and total income and expenditure for the operating FUSSI bank accounts has been provided below.

An individual breakdown and total of FUSA grant money received during 2019 is also provided. There has been no activity and subsequent expenditure associated with the Nullarbor Research Project.

FUSSI Bank Account Summary 2019

Account	Date	Opening Balance	Date	Closing Balance	Total Income	Total Expenditure
Hutt Street Cheque Account	1/01/2019	873.51	31/12/2019	1,379.14	6,350.53	5,844.90
Blackwood Cheque Account	1/01/2019	10,267.84	31/12/2019	9,286.34	6,291.45	7,272.95
Blackwood Term Deposit	1/01/2019	5,796.03	31/12/2019	5,831.10	35.07	0.00
Petty Cash		232.25	29/04/2020	539.65	307.40	0.00
	Total	17,169.63		17,036.23	12,984.45	13,117.85
					Loss	133.40

FUSA Grant Summary 2019

Grant	Date	Amount	Expenditure
1338811	7/11/2019	5,601.00	Cave Link
1344330	19/12/2019	275.00	Antennae extension for Cave Link
	21/11/2019	998.50	General Grant
	Total	6,874.50	

Tania Wilson

SECRETARY'S REPORT

I took over the role of club secretary for 2019-2020 as a new member interested in becoming more actively involved. Allowing our dedicated previous secretary to focus more exclusively on event

SECRETARY'S REPORT

management - dedicating resources to events organisation/coordination as well as planning/promotion.

The year began with handing over the administrative duties which primarily consisted of ensuring effective communication and archiving of important information.

Meeting agendas are distributed between committee members prior to each General Meeting for collaborative input. The application of Google Docs for all to edit and share ideas has revealed itself to be most useful for this function. This has reduced the use of printed paper as well as allowing the editing of the Minutes and making them more accessible and efficient to manage. Meeting minutes are then archived in Drop Box for further reference.

To inform and inspire the opportunities available within the caving world (from recreation to surveying new sites) guest speakers were invited to general meetings. This gathered more enthusiasm for general members to participate in our meetings. Although circumstances including busy exam periods towards the end of the year followed by the unforeseen COVID-19 safety regulations compromised these events, moving forward in 2020 are goals to expand networks and promote more interactive meetings.

Our first 'Speleo at the Pub' was one such success, providing food and an opportunity to socialise with a guest speaker, interactive activities as well as a short film. As the secretary, I facilitated the organisation of the club O'week stall for FUSSI promotion. Upon distribution of a roster huge thanks to two dedicated members who ran this stall over the days, gaining interest from new students and promoting new membership (outlined in the Membership Officer report).

The onset of isolating restrictions halted all interactive events from March 2020 and the club has moved into phases of initiating online activities to maintain enthusiasm and connectedness during these times. Emergent from these times is the importance of effective online communication, to keep everyone updated as well as informed of coming plans and goals.

As the secretary I have facilitated the application of grants to applicable activities during this time and hope to see the enthusiasm of members to persist and see the coming opportunities to get out and about again! I am happy to nominate for the position of FUSSI secretary for 2020, or to stepdown as club secretary and continue as an enthused general committee member.

Kendall Whittaker

EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

Other than being more stretched, dragged, scraped, hauled, washed, inspected and counted, our equipment hasn't changed greatly since the last AGM.

EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

Our new Safety Officer, Andrew Stempel, has been doing a terrific job of organising vertical training, with strong uptake showing where our club vertical gear wasn't quite up to the task. Andrew led an SRT sub-committee that recommended the purchase of new equipment, which has been approved-in-concept by Committee but not finalised yet (pending stock availability and grant applications). Note that this picks up on some equipment which is rapidly approaching the end of its 'manufacturer's recommended lifespan'.

The Committee agreed to add CaveLink to the list of equipment FUSSI makes available to national caving expeditions through the ASF Cave Rescue Commission, but the Committee has not settled on an access rate nor deposit. Equipment available includes the rescue stretcher and satellite phone. To date, no equipment has been accessed through the scheme.

I am happy to continue in this role for 2020-21 or helping someone else start in the role if they are keen. It boils down to ensuring our equipment is 'present and correct' (safe and in good order), making it available for events, and making sure it comes back again!

David Mansueto

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

Stepping into the role of Safety Officer, I had some rather large shoes to fill (and I normally don't wear shoes!). This was an extensive transition with many hours spent at the University and Clare's backyard learning "the ropes" literally and figuratively. There were lots of books to read and ASF documents to memorize.

During the transition, Clare initiated several rigging training events in the Uni Forest to skill up our members which culminated in a rigging weekend in Naracoorte. This weekend included skill building workshops, evening lectures, and practical rigging exercises at the entrance of actual caves. The event was well attended and included members of Naracoorte Caves National Parks. Moving forward, I think we should prioritize this skill set to our members. In recent trips and training, I have encouraged members to be involved with the rigging in a controlled environment (Lower Woodside & Onkaparinga cliffs).

A highlight of the year for many safety/rescue enthusiasts was the joint SASC Rescue Weekend in the Southern Flinders Ranges (September 2019). This was attended by members of FUSFI, CEGSA and the Scout Caving Group. I was very excited (as were many others) for this event, as it was my first experience under the tutelage of Al Warild, the author of THE book on all things vertical caving. The event started with a day of skill building, including patient packaging, rigging for rescue and counter-balances. The following day was a mock rescue exercise in Mairs Cave, involving the extraction of a patient out of the cave and up the 17m pitch. This was a great event and something similar will be organized for this year. Immediately after our schooling in the Flinders was an ASF National Cave Rescue Workshop organized by Brian Evans and the Australian Cave Rescue Commission (ACRC) of the ASF in Adelaide (September 2019).

The large-scale rescue event in Thailand prompted lots of questions amongst the caving community and an increase in cave rescue training. This was attended by members from each state as well as

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

some cave rescue experts from New Zealand, so I guess it was technically an International Cave Rescue Workshop? This was a wonderful opportunity to interact with members of other clubs and discuss how we, as cavers, would respond if there was a large-scale rescue in Australasia. Of course, it is always a treat to hear Richard Harris and Craig Challen talk. FUSSI was lucky that the venue was in Adelaide and therefore was attended by a number of our members. Lots of knowledge gained but there is more work to be done in South Australia.

The National Cave Rescue Workshop prompted the formation of a rescue sub-committee under the umbrella of the South Australian Speleological Council (SASC). This group of rescue enthusiasts is working to create call-out procedures, rescue guides for highly visited caves and organize joint rescue exercises to keep our clubs skilled up. The first rescue weekend scheduled for 2-3 May has been postponed due to COVID-19. There is also a tentative rescue event scheduled for 19-20 September. Planning will go ahead to ensure we are ready to run an event as soon as the national health crisis calms.

In the wake of the ACRC workshop, there was an offer by the Southern Tasmania Caverneers (STC) to attend their rescue exercise in November. Attendance by members of FUSSI was made possible by a generous grant from the ACRC and FUSSI to allow us to show off our fancy new CaveLink (cave to surface communication) system. This was an amazing event with about 50 attendees from all over Australia representing multiple clubs and agencies. There were 7 rigging teams that set out to rig the cave to extract a patient from the depths of Growling Swallet. A valiant effort that saw success in the early morning hours of the following day.

It was about 13 hours underground for most teams. CaveLink worked as advertised and the FUSSI crew came up with some ideas on how this system would work best in a rescue situation.

In addition to preparing for rescue, we have held a number of training days for our members to practice and learn SRT skills. This included multiple trips out to the Onkaparinga cliffs where we saw lots of happy caving monkeys swinging from trees and hanging off cliffs. I learned a lot and have ideas of how to improve these events in the future. I hope our members found these events informative and entertaining. I'm also grateful for those that were able to help with training. Much appreciated.

This year also saw the formation of two sub-committees. One to address how to standardize cave rigging practices amongst our members and the other to tackle how the club should teach SRT. These were both successful and a set of guidelines for both rigging and SRT have been established. And (finally) well done team! There was only one reported injury this year and, as usual, it was outside the cave and in the camp in the Southern Flinders. Minor scrapes due to a small tumble over some downed wire fencing. Everyone survived, and we have now updated our injury reporting to include "out of cave" incidents, largely for learning purposes and prevention/preparation.

COVID-19: These are trying times as the world struggles to handle the COVID-19 situation. Following advice from the University and health authorities, we have decided to postpone or cancel our upcoming events and move all our executive meetings online. As much as I would love to go crawl into a hole with you all and wait this thing out, we believe this is the best course of action for the club and the community. We will continue to plan events with the optimism that this will hopefully

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

be over soon. As a club we will monitor the situation and adhere to any advice from the University or other governing bodies. Stay safe and take care of each other.

The Thank Yous: I would like to personally thank Clare Buswell for all of her previous work as Safety Officer and her ongoing support in this new position. As always, she is a wealth of caving knowledge. She was also responsible for the organization of the rigging weekend and the rescue weekend in the Southern Flinders. I would also like to thank Brian Evans and the ACRC for their ongoing support in helping with the multiple rescue exercises this year and the financial contribution for some of our members to attend the Tasmanian rescue exercise in November.

I would also like to thank Al Warild for his infinite wisdom and willingness to skill us up. Finally, I would like to thank Alan Jackson and STC for welcoming us mainlanders to Tasmania for a cracker of a rescue exercise. An extremely well-organized event. There is lots of learning to be had down there.

I'll leave you with a quote from Clare's last report as Safety Officer:

"As this is my last Safety Officer's report I hope that FUSSI continues its long record of caving safely, looking out for each other on trips, training and providing an inclusive environment in which members feel safe, and not afraid to speak up or learn." I do hope that I have continued this tradition and all our members have felt super comfortable and safe on all of our caving and training ventures. As always do let me or a trip leader know if you have any comments/questions/concerns or would just like to learn something new. I'm always available for a chat or a quick tutorial and will continue to plan and provide training opportunities for our members.

Further Ramblings/Extra Credit: Time: Get a watch, wear a watch, use a watch. Time can stand still underground and it is important (especially for Uni trips) to keep on schedule. This should be something cheap that can also take a beating.

Back up lights: Carry them and hopefully you won't have to use them. Please carry spare batteries for these as well. There are many affordable (and expensive) options out there. Perhaps a review is in order for the next Newsletter.

First aid kits: Everyone should carry a small personal first aid kit. Keep them simple yet robust. After all of these rescue exercises, I can tell you that if you get hurt, you'll be stuck in a cave for a (super long) while. Your ability to self-rescue relies heavily on what is in your kit and everyone else's packs. Hope for the best, plan for the worst. Think of the most common injuries (cuts/scrapes, insect/other bites, rolled ankles, zombies). Do you have enough gear to last a full day in a cave? (extra water, food, warmth).

First aid course: Excellent to carry a first aid kit, but do you know how to use it in an emergency? Knowledge is where safety starts. A goal for 2020 will be to get our club skilled up in first aid and caving related emergencies.

As always, happy caving and I hope to see all of you underground!

Andrew Stempel

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT FOR 2019

This year has been slow and steady in the library. All physical journals received by the society have been processed and filed away in the FUSSI library which has been beautifully organised since our library night. It was my hope that such a night could be held again this year to showcase our resources to our lovely members. However, with the disruptions currently in place I will postpone this until a later date.

In the last year, much of the library has been filed away digitally on a FUSSI hard drive with backups held on my personal computer. This hard drive has not been updated since the COVID-19 disruptions began but will be updated as soon as I can return to university. The use of the hard drive should make it easier for FUSSI members to access journal articles, important documents and digital handbooks.

The FUSSI library also obtained the SUSS Map Library (2008) on DVD as well as the Tuglow Caves (1998) book this year.

These have been great additions to our collection on top of the regular digital copies of newsletters and journals from various national and international caving groups. Furthermore, I have been emailing societies to see if we can get access to digital copies of past journals to improve our own library database. If there are any resources people are particularly interested in obtaining for the library, which will benefit FUSSI, please feel free to get in touch and we'll see what can be done.

The main objective for this coming year is to determine if we can access some space in the Flinders University library to make it easier to access and organise our own library resources. Enquiries into this will begin once the Flinders library service returns to normal. A further objective is to create an updated inventory list of all resources in the library that can be accessed by members. Again, this will be done once access within the university has returned to normal.

All in all, a quiet but productive year in the library.

Imogen Marshall

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Not too surprisingly FUSSI membership numbers are down in 2020 compared to 2019. This is primarily due to lack of activities after O-week and the Murray River trip, because of COVID-19. Several Student & Adult members from last year haven't renewed, presumably for the same reasons.

The only Introductory members from 2019 who have renewed, are 2 Adult members. No Student Introductory members from 2019 renewed in 2020. Note to the table below: Non-Financial members are only included in the year they signed up, although they stay on the email distribution list for several years.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT FOR 2019

ASF membership	2019	2020
ASF via another club	6	3
Family (total adults)	8	6
Introductory	17	12
Single	10	9
Student	10	6
Total Financial	51	36
Non-Financial	28	11

FUSSI membership		
Student (\$)	21	14
Student (Non-F)	27	10
Adult (\$)	30	22
Adult (non-F)	1	1
Total % Student	61%	51%

The percentage of students has fallen for 2020 – the majority of renewing members are Adults and fewer Students have signed up their interest as Non-Financial members. Note the Student % is up to 65% for FUSA re-affiliation purposes, which includes all members since last re-affiliation (2019 + 2020 members).

The Membership Officer's duties have included updating the ASF database and maintaining the Google Groups: FUSSI-exec & FUSSI (all members). The compiled Google Sheet from the new online membership form, along with receiving email alerts for new signups, have improved the information collection process. The process of sending out renewal reminder emails from the database also worked smoothly in 2019, by reusing the email templates. Overall the data side of things has worked well, due to a continuation of the systems setup in 2018. Keeping track of who has paid fees has been more problematic due to not having easy access to the financial details.

I'm happy to continue in this role in 2020, but also happy to hand it over to someone else. One recommendation for the future of this role would be to have the Membership Officer responsible for the data entry and email lists and the Treasurer to be responsible for cross-checking with the bank accounts and chasing membership fees.

Sarah Gilbert

EVENTS COORDINATOR'S REPORT, 2019

The 2019-20 year was the first year for FUSSI having an events coordinator. As the inaugural events coordinator it has been a pretty good year. The tasks of publicising events, registering them with FUSA, ensuring they were added to the website and calendar (now one and the same operation), sending out registration form links and making sure there was a trip organiser and a trip leader for each trip, were separated from the secretary role. As we are mostly very busy people I think this was a successful idea and, while it had some teething problems, it seems to have worked well overall. FUSSI has had some great events with some large numbers of participants over this past year and some great training events that have kept us socially, physically and mentally engaged with the club.

EVENTS COORDINATOR'S REPORT, 2019

The onset of COVID-19 cautionary protocols has resulted in a sudden shift to online meetings and events which is also having its teething problems, however, if we persevere, I think we can keep a connection with our members until trips and training are back on the agenda.

The introduction of the post-event form by FUSA has been a thorn in the event coordinator's side as they send out repeated reminders to complete the form from the moment it is registered with FUSA until a month or so later when the event is actually 'post' and the form can be completed. Adding the trip organiser email to the registration spreads this FUSA spamming phenomena around and is a great idea!

Thank you for electing me as the inaugural events coordinator, it would have been a much harder task without the support and enthusiasm of all of you.

Dee Trewartha

MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PROJECT OF SIGNIFICANT NULLARBOR CAVES. REPORT, 2019

The project continued to trundle along in the background this year with data entry continuing at a snail's pace due to life's circumstances. The scientific permit issued by the Department of Environment and Water (DEW), came up for renewal in September 2019, and as such I applied for its renewal. This was granted and the permit is now valid until September 2020. I had anticipated running a trip in April 2020 as part of the current permit, but this will now be moved to sometime in 2021.

During the course of 2019 I met with representatives from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation in attempts to alleviate some of the onerous costs involved in undertaking archival searches from their database. These talks are ongoing.

I also had discussions with Robert O'Reilly, PhD candidate and Associate Professor Mike Gardner, Biological Sciences, Flinders University, concerning their research project on lizard populations, genetics and sample collection processes within the Nullarbor Wilderness Protection area and the Nullarbor National Park. They were particularly concerned about the Aboriginal Heritage Act and the possible disturbance to any known Aboriginal Heritage sites.

As FUSI allocated \$1800.00 towards this project in 2016, of which \$687.00 has been spent, I am happy to report that no costs were incurred this year. However, if all goes to plan in 2020/21 this could be a different matter. The money was allocated to pay the upfront costs involved in water sampling, and flint processing.

We seem to be missing some acid associated with the water sampling process, so if anyone knows where this is, please leave by my meter box and no questions will be asked!

Clare Buswell

Project Leader. April. 2020

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear FUSSI Newsletter Editor,

G'day FUSSI members, I'm really pleased with the improvement in cave rescue preparedness that has been happening in SA in the last few years, and I am especially impressed with the role of FUSSI - I've also met some lovely cavers :-). I was concerned when I read one paragraph in "Rescuing cavers in the dust and heat" *FUSSI Vol, 31, No 4, 2020*, - not the story, and certainly not an issue with the writer(s) - just a concern that those who don't know the circumstances might misread...

"In the interest of a short introduction for a long report, last September we somehow managed to get a large number of South Australian and interstate cavers out to the Flinders Ranges to skill up on vertical cave rescue under the tutelage of Al Warild. This was a joint effort between the Flinders University Speleological Society Inc (FUSSI) the Scout Caving Group (SCG) and CEGSA with generous support from Brian Evans and the Australian Cave Rescue Commission (ACRC)."

So, to clarify: The funds spent on bringing Al from NSW Cave Rescue Squad over for this training, and the national workshop on the following weekend came from your ASF membership. Nice guy though that Brian Evans feller is, he contributed only organisation and administration. Our ASF membership subscriptions go to many things: obviously the administration of ASF on members' behalf, and insurance, but also into a pool to be given back to clubs to promote things that the ASF Council feels will improve the experience for cavers in the Federation. I'm quite new to this, but ASF has been spending funds on rescue preparedness for decades.

One of the things they do is appoint a volunteer to promote the target area. The Australian Cave Rescue Commission is the ASF's body to promote cave rescue preparedness. My job, since May '18 has been to help the ASF leadership do that.

I'm enjoying getting cavers' subs back to them in ways that help promote caving, and in particular, preparedness for rescue, but it's **your** money I'm spending, not some amazing stash :-)

Keep up the good work, FUSSI and SA. Cavers are in a better position than they were a few years ago.

*Brian Evans
Co-ordinator, Australian Cave Rescue Commission*

THE FUSSI BUNCH

Sil Iannello

Things are a little unusual right now due to COVID-19, however this hasn't stopped the FUSSI bunch find creative ways to keep club members connected. The Annual General Meeting kicked off without a hitch, using the latest modern video and audio communications tool 'Zoom'.

THE FUSSI BUNCH

It certainly was a scene out of the Brady Bunch, where banter, humour and a funny looking hat was involved. All in all, a great evening where official business was attended to and new faces added to the FUSSI family.



FUSSI AGM on Zoom Photo: Sil Iannello

FUSSI has also kicked off a range of online social events including movie nights and the knotty hour - knot tying workshop. The first movie night thrusted off with an all-time caving horror-thriller 'The Descent': Six women, a dark Cave and some very scary monsters (nytimes.com 2006).

Movie review: Not that "The Descent" goes light on sensations of physical peril. Bodies are pushed, pulled, battered and stretched to the breaking point and beyond. The tight canals and cavernous cavities, sometimes illuminated by the light from pinkish-red flares, make it seem

almost like a "Fantastic Voyage" into inner space, corporeal and psychological. These women are straining the limits of their muscles and bones, their friendships, and their core beliefs about who they are (Ebert 2006, rogerebert.com).

The Knotty hour hosted by FUSSI's highly experienced and very dexterous Safety Officer Andrew Stempel, is a way for members to continue learning their knots skills, which were previously learned at FUSSI's vertical training sessions. The Knotty hour is part of an ongoing program in knot tying to ensure members come back to the caves with skills maintained.



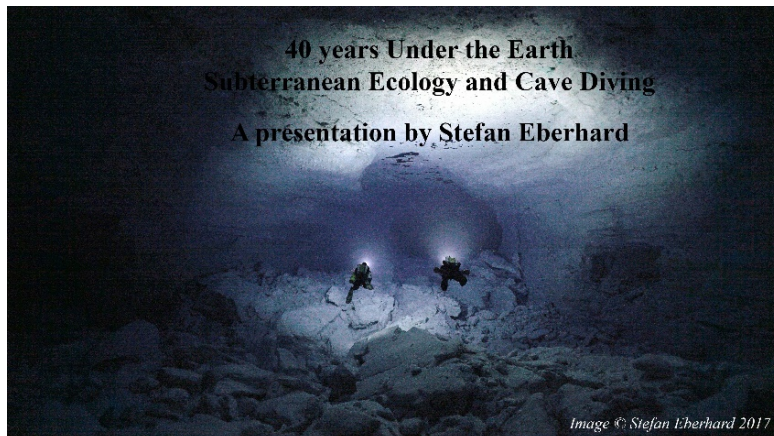
The Knotty Hour: top row Dee, Sil, Andrew. Bottom: Nicole, Thomas, Sarah and Heather.
Photo: Sil Iannello

FUSSI GENERAL MEETING

May 21st 2020 Via ZOOM

FUSSI had the pleasure of ASF long-time standing member and director of Subterranean Ecology Dr Stefan Eberhard presenting at a General Meeting. Not via traditional methods; in the flesh, however online via 'Zoom'. Dr Eberhard presented a 50-minute PowerPoint to an online audience, the presentation covered scientific research into subterranean ecosystems.

Dr Stefan Eberhard has been exploring and researching caves for almost 40 years. Stefan completed his BSc and MSc at University of Tasmania, and PhD at Murdoch University. He is a Research Associate with the Western Australian Museum and an adjunct affiliate with the University of New South Wales, Connected Waters Initiative Research Centre.



Subterranean Ecology and Cave Diving
Photo: Stefan Eberhard

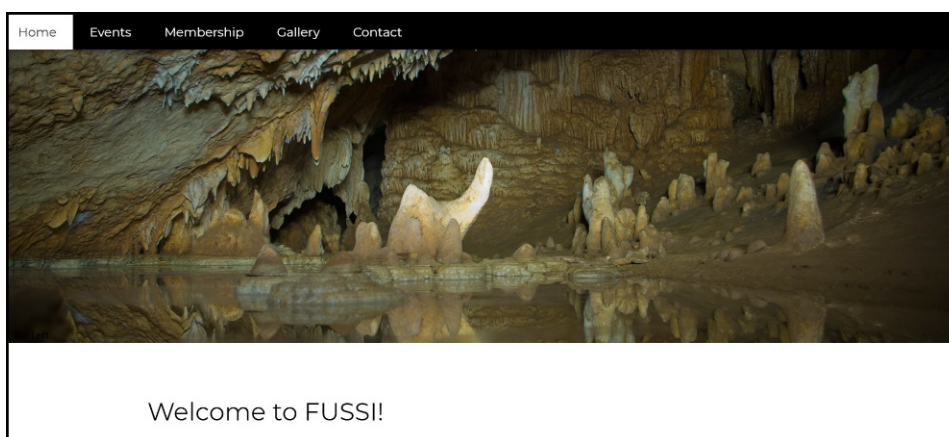
Stefan is the founding Director of Subterranean Ecology Pty Ltd, an environmental consultancy that specializes in scientific research and environmental management of caves and other subterranean ecosystems including aquifers, groundwater and the hyporheic zone. Currently down-scaling his consultancy work, Stefan is pursuing self-funded research and conservation initiatives in caves on the Nullarbor and in Tasmania, which also includes diving, photography and video projects.

In 2009, he received the Australian Speleological Federation Joe Jennings Cave Science Award of Distinction.

The presentation was informative and entertaining as Stefan shared a selection of slides and video spanning four decades of exploration and research experiences in caves and other deep dark habitats from around Australia.

FUSSI NEW WEBSITE

Launch of the new FUSSI website: <https://fussi.caves.org.au/>



FUSSI is pleased to unveil its fully re-designed website. The site has been crafted to reflect FUSSI's well-established art and science of safe, minimal-impact, maximum-fun caving. With 46 years of experience, running trips are always good fun as FUSSI have a

FUSSI NEW WEBSITE

tradition of doing things in style. FUSSI caving trips are characterised by good food, good wine, port, chocolate and witty conversation.

So far, the new website features include: events, membership, photo gallery, contacts page and a good-looking home page.

SAFETY STOP: A NEW COLUMN FOR ALL YOUR SAFETY NEEDS

Andrew Stempel



Andrew.
Photo Sil Iannello

Welcome to Safety Stop: a new column in the FUSSI newsletter (well until I run out of ideas or get booted out of office). I have learned heaps over the last 2 years and thought that our members could benefit from a short column that covers caving safety (e.g. equipment, protocols and rescue). And if you all don't care, well, I'll just use this column as motivation to create content for our handbook.

I have a few things in the pipe, but please reach out if there is something specific you would like to see here. I'm also hoping to get some guest contributions on some safety topics; so, let me know if you have something you would like to contribute. We already have our first guest lined up!

I was asked by the editor to write something about our recent SRT training for this newsletter. So why not make this the inaugural Safety Stop?

Safety Stop #1: 2020 Training: Knots, Rigging and SRT

Knots, rigging and SRT are the foundation for vertical caving. In FUSSI, we have little need for these skills, as most of our caves are horizontal or have a single entrance pitch. Yet there are many wonderful vertical caves in Australia. If you're committed to the sport, this is one of many skills to build over your career.

In the wake of the ASF conference in Tassie, we had a group of cavers, demanding more vertical work! So, the pre-conference training continued after Tassie. We had a successful 2019, with a focus on rigging training and rescue. Our members were eager to continue skilling up in 2020. Then a pandemic happened. Things have been - well - *WEIRD*.

2020 kicked off strong with two vertical (SRT) trainings in February; hanging off (or around) the Onkaparinga cliffs - a great venue: complete with picnic tables, SRT-worthy trees, rigging bollards and a nice cliff with a view of the gorge. It also has a nice campground with flushing toilets! Disappointingly, it is hard to teach getting on and off rope at the top of the pitch due to the need for multiple rope protectors. I guess you can't have everything :(.

The convenience of good trees adjacent to the cliff provided a community experience, enabling interaction with members of all skillsets. Splitting up based on experience, but always returning to a central location for: a chat, a meal, or a break. This also fostered learning through seeing, doing and

SAFETY STOP

teaching. Most of our members progressed from the trees to the cliff and hopefully enjoyed themselves. None of this could have been done without the help of our skilled cavers with eyeballs on at all times. While simultaneously creating an encouraging environment. I hope we can continue the rigging and SRT training later this year.

A cornerstone of rigging and SRT are knots: this bending and twisting of rope is crucial to vertical caving. COVID-19 was a blessing in disguise, as I have wanted to provide a knot tying course to our members for ages.

Out of the inconvenience of social distancing emerged Knotty Hour - a physically distant, yet social, knot tying workshop and 'happy hour.' It is gaining momentum and has forced me to create content for a future FUSSI knot reference document. Hope to see you there! And don't worry, we will incorporate knot tying into future training and weekend trips.

PUNYELROO CAVE, (5M-1) & GLOOP CAVE, MURRAY PLAINS

Alexander Smith

Members present: Alex Smith, Andrew Stempel, Edwina Virgo, Emma Batten, Hayun Jung, Lauren Thompson, Matt Timms, Neville Skinner, Nino Bartlovic, Thomas Batten, Thomas Varga, William Cooper (March 1, 2020)



Gloop Cave: Left Thomas, Alex, Emma & Edwina. Photograph: Alex Smith

For my first-time caving experience, we visited two locations: Gloop and Punyelroo Caves near Swan Reach, SA on the Murray River. It was fantastic! Along with the caving itself, there was some beautiful scenery along the way and a relaxing boat ride to Gloop cave.

For the first of the caves 'Punyelroo', I'd highly recommend knee pads! You don't need them as such,

PUNYELROO CAVE, (5M-1) & GLOOP CAVE, MURRAY PLAINS

however, it makes life a lot easier. There were two ways to go, an easy main passage-way and a tight side passage way. The group spent a lot longer on the challenging side passage than planned, but I'm glad that we did. The passage offered a good sense of challenge that wasn't too much for a first timer and more variety in how you had to manoeuvre through it.

The second cave, 'Gloop', was an entirely different situation... The cave was totally coated in mud and it got thicker the deeper you went, so you couldn't expect to look pretty when you got out. Unfortunately, the main passageway was flooded further in, but with exploring a few passages and after Punyelroo, it was enough caving for us for one day. I nearly lost my shoes a couple of times as well. Overall, Gloop cave was a great experience and something you must try! I would recommend these caves for anyone who hasn't been caving before, and even experienced cavers if you haven't done these as something different.



Punyelroo Cave (5M-1) entrance. Photo: Alex Smith

PUNYELROO CAVE, (5M-1) & GLOOP CAVE, MURRAY PLAINS

Matt Timms

Our FUSSI trip started at the McCues Bakery 'home of the famous Savoury Slice' in Murray Bridge, SA. It was good to see some first-time cavers who have recently joined the club and Will Cooper giving trip leading a go for the first time.

The group spilt up into two teams and had the opportunity to visit both caves throughout the day. Navigating to Gloop Cave was done by boat, which we hired from the Flinders University Underwater Club and Punyelroo Cave was accessed by car. My team took the boat for the first session of caving, which was piloted by Thomas Varga along the Murray River to Gloop cave.

Squelching through the mud in the cave was lots of fun, and after emerging from the muddy depths we rinsed off with a dip in the Murray River. Once we were clean, we headed off to Punyelroo Cave, which was a workout! Dusty and no mud to slow me down, we pushed through at a decent

pace before sitting in the dark talking about god knows what. Keen for local pub refreshments, we made our way out to regroup with the others. The day went quick, full of road trips, boat cruises, filthy fun, bakery feed and a pub happy hour. What more could you ask for?



Neville taking a boat ride to Gloop Cave.

Photo: Alex Smith

Lookout: Murray River and landscape on the way to Swan Reach.

Photo: Alex Smith



TASSIE 2020: PRE-COVID SHENANIGANS

Andrew Stempel

Background: Owl Pot, November 2019

Some might wonder how a group of seemingly intelligent cavers would end up dragging SCUBA gear down a 230 m deep Tasmanian hole to support the dive of a 'dry' sump. Well, this is roughly how it happened, plus accounts of some other great trips over a long weekend in Tasmania last February.

In November 2019, FUSSI members were invited by Stephen Fordyce to have a play in Owl Pot (Junee-Florentine, Tasmania) ahead of the STC rescue exercise. Owl pot is a great introduction to the Junee-Florentine (JF): home of the deepest caves in Australia. Steve, a mad-keen diver, wanted to have a look at the terminal sump as a potential dive. Thomas, David and I took the bait and committed to a trip down the pot.

The journey starts with a baptism by mud, with an abseil down a sloppy entrance pitch. The cave gets significantly better, boasting three more 'clean' pitches and terminates in a spectacular 40m waterfall drop into a large chamber.

At the bottom, we made our way to the sump: a small water-filled chamber that Steve reckoned: "probably needed a dive".

So, in February 2020, Thomas and I were back at the Adelaide airport - pint of Coopers in hand, Hobart bound - committed to haul SCUBA gear down Owl Pot.

Return to Owl Pot (JF-221); Tasmania, February 2020

Party: Karina, Nina, Stephanie, Stephen, Andrew, Thomas

The team included members of VSA, STC, and FUSSI. Thomas kindly committed us to sherpa the two SCUBA tanks for the day. After some 'faffing', we were off to the cave. Down we went, the same muddy entrance and spectacular waterfall as our last visit, but now we were here to explore!

At last we reached the terminal sump! The excitement turned to surprise, when we discovered that the sump was gone! The water-filled passage that was supposed to put us on the cover of *Australian Geographic* - after Steve's dive linked it into the Master Cave - was nothing but a trickle.

Not all was lost. Job done, box ticked. Steve was kind enough to treat us to a warm cuppa while he donned his wetsuit to have a solid poke in the 'sump'. No luck. The water seemed to just disappear (through a small horizontal crack) into solid rock.

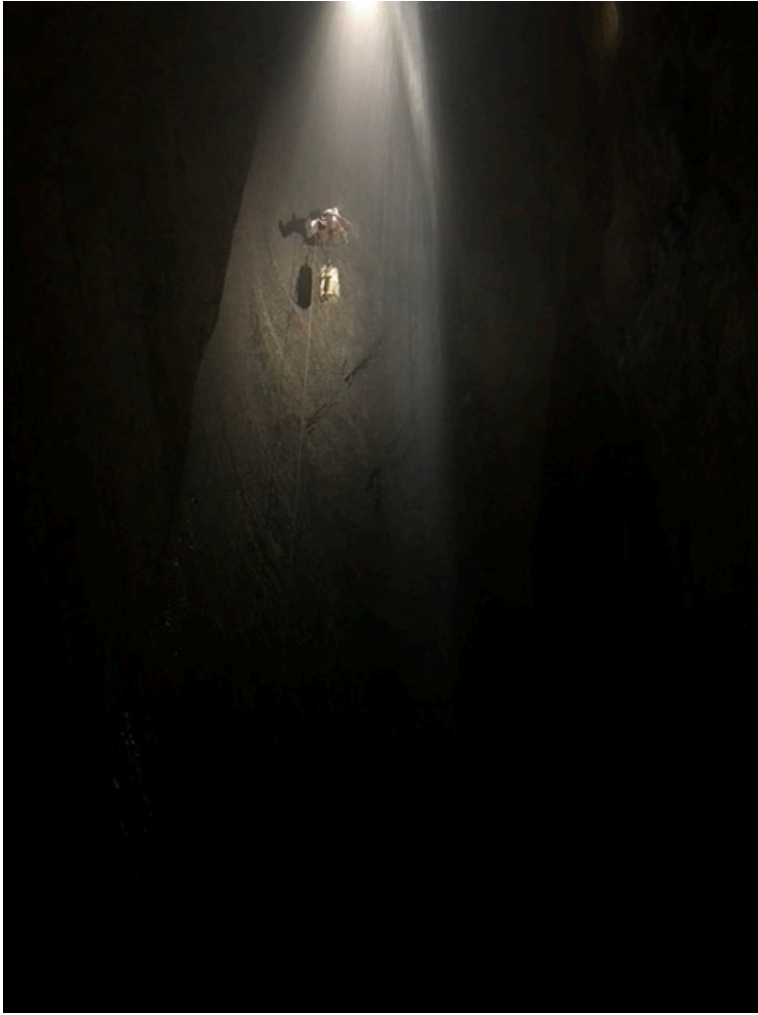
As I sipped my warm bevy, all I could think about was how much fun this was. I have heaps of respect for those that commit to the extremely difficult, multi-day expeditions in Tassie. Bloody hard work.

The haul out was as expected, lots of swearing at my pack (pretty sure it gained weight), and a muddy struggle up the last pitch and out of the cave; emerging into the dark of night.

For more information on these trips and photos from the sump, see Steve's contribution to STC's Speleo Spiel 436 & 437

TASSIE 2020: PRE-COVID SHENANIGANS

Andrew Stempel



At left:

Theatrical Owl Pot caving staring Andrew with a scuba tank in his pack.
Photo: Stephanie Blake

The team emerging muddy and happy from Owl Pot, from the left Andrew, Stephanie, Thomas and Stephen: Photo Stephanie Blake



TASSIE 2020: PRE-COVID SHENANIGANS

Andrew Stempel

Slaughterhouse Pot (JF-337), Tasmania, February 2020

Party: Karina, Nina, Stephen, Gabriel, Benoit, Andrew

After spending the previous day wrestling a SCUBA tank down Owl Pot, we decided to have a go at another JF classic. Those of us new to the Junee-Florentine were keen to tackle another cave in the 'The Beginners Guide to the JF.' Steve also had ulterior motives; with a plan to scope out some leads beyond the Black River in Growling Swallet: an area known as Living Fossils. To get there requires an ice cold 'roof sniff' in the Black River (that used to be a sump).

Growling Swallet is an impressive system. A massive river disappears underground at the entrance to Growling only to re-emerge down the hill at the Junee resurgence. I was excited to see a bit of cave deeper into Growling: beyond where the STC rescue exercise started in November 2019.

There are many holes that feed into Growling - including Slaughterhouse Pot - and the system continues to grow. Prone to flooding, Slaughterhouse Pot is permanently rigged as an escape route. This also makes for a nice Slaughterhouse-Growling through trip without the need to carry ropes on the way out. The last ASF conference brochure describes this trip as: "~200 m of abseiling, rockfall and un-belayed rope ladder descents, then free-climbing out GS."

Steve had different plans. We would enter Growling, down the Destiny Pitch, and toward the Black River 'roof sniff.' The descent was very enjoyable: a squeezy entrance (wait, I thought we were in Tassie, not SA!), some good pitches (yup we're in Tassie), a rock pile with some fun climbs, and finally the Black River.

We took a rest at the sump, to fuel up and make some decisions. The plan was to split at this point: those that didn't want to get wetter and colder would head out, while others pushed beyond the 'sniff' to chase leads in Living Fossils. This being a new cave and not sure how swift I would be on the climb out, I (mistakenly) decided to leave my wetsuit at the hut, committing myself to the early exit.

Nina, Ben and I headed back out Slaughterhouse Pot: without getting lost! Gabriel saved us by flagging the rock pile on the way in; that could have been interesting without the tape. The climb out was uneventful (despite a brief 'disappearing' rope); we moved faster than I had expected and reached the surface just after dark. The entrance squeeze seemed a bit smaller on the way out, but I'm sure that was due to spending most of the day in large passage (or bloating from the salty miso soup I had down at the Black River). We stumbled in the dark back to the car in the dense Tasmanian bush, feeling well-caved. We returned to the house and waited the arrival of the push team.

Gabriel, Stephen and Karina returned to the cabin sometime after 2am, surprisingly with smiles on their faces. They found about 150 meters of new passage beyond Living Fossils, an area they called "Middle Age." Their great effort marked the end of the weekend for most, with the Victorians headed out the following day.

For a full account of the discovery, check out Stephen's write up in STC's Speleo Spiel 437.

Welcome Stranger (JF-229), Tasmania, February 2020

Party: Andrew Stempel, Thomas Varga

Thomas and I had an extra day in Tasmania, and I wasn't leaving without seeing some pretties. We received great recommendations and settled on Welcome Stranger. After a slightly rough night on the gravel, in the middle of a logging forest buzzing with mosquitos, we awoke excited (yet covered in bites) to see a new cave.

TASSIE 2020: PRE-COVID SHENANIGANS

Andrew Stempel

Based on the brochure from the last ASF conference - "Welcome Stranger is a very easy, well decorated horizontal stream passage" - I knew we were in for a treat. Sounds like this cave belonged up in Mole Creek!

After a slight mainlander struggle, we found the entrance to the cave; only a short walk from the 'car park.' There was some excitement on the hike when we stumbled across a baited camera. Immediately my mind jumped to someone trying to snap a photo of the Tasmanian tiger (yup they're still out there, somewhere, probably with Bigfoot). It was later confirmed this was for a study on a sensitive Tasmanian devil population in proximity to logging operations.

The entrance was a bit of a duck and the first passage wasn't all that impressive. Then you connect to the stream way: New ball game! This was a glorious upright walk, through a highly decorated passage.

I took my time wandering through this spectacular tunnel, reflecting on the great trip and contemplating the next. The passage ends at a sump. We noticed the dive line and were curious on who explored this beautiful passage and if it continued. Turns out the sump was explored by members of STC (search YouTube for Welcome Stranger sump dive). Spoiler alert, it's a pretty short dive. We exited the cave, had a stroll in a neighboring park; then we were off to the airport. Can't wait to get back.



Thomas in Welcome Stranger decorated chamber. Photo: Andrew Stempel

Thanks! There are many people to thank: Stephen for the invite and exposing FUSSI members to the beauty of the JF, Nina for carrying my pack up towards the end after I accidentally stole hers, and the whole crew for lots of smiles and teamwork. I had a blast! As always, a shout to STC and Alan Jackson for the warm welcome, beta, and use of ropes.

VICTORIA – AN OVERLOOKED CAVING DESTINATION

Tom Aberdeen (VSA)

When you think of good caving areas in Australia, it isn't often anywhere in Victoria that comes to mind. Your thoughts naturally go to Tasmania, which is fair enough. Not many mainland systems can rival Kubla Khan, or Exit cave, or the deep stuff in Junee. I'm not going to try and compete with those caves. So, let's just move on.

The mainland areas that you'd probably consider might include the beautiful and extensive caves in Jenolan, or the super long and growing caves in Bullita, or maybe the great vertical caves at Bungonia, amongst others. Yes – good choices. But I'd like to point out that Buchan in East Gippsland, Victoria, also has some very worthwhile caves, if you have the time and means to get to them.



Honeycomb Cave, Buchan. Tom Aberdeen Photo: Sil Iannello.

Yeah, I'm probably biased because I live in Victoria, and I've caved mostly in and around Buchan, but I've caved in quite a few Aussie areas, and also spent two years caving in the United Kingdom, so I'd like to think I have a good point of reference.

So where are these 'good' Buchan caves? Most of them are on land controlled by Parks Victoria, and are subject to access guidelines, and under lock and key. But that's no different to many other good caves in Australia, especially in places like Mole Creek. Having said that, Parks Victoria are fair and equitable with their cave access, and as long as you play by the rules, there is usually no issue with access.

There're a few caves that deserve a special mention. 'Exponential Pot' is a profoundly beautiful cave which is on a Parks Victoria caving reserve aptly named 'The Potholes'. Exponential has an entrance pitch of roughly 20 metres, but after that it is essentially horizontal, and extremely beautiful. Careful access and a gate has kept the cave looking good, and it contains world class decoration everywhere you look. Trips into Exponential don't happen often, but they do happen regularly, so it is definitely a possibility.

VICTORIA – AN OVERLOOKED CAVING DESTINATION

Elk River Cave is the main drain below the Potholes and was only discovered relatively recently. Elk River has had 13 sumps dived and passed and is still going. It is long, and the water has been linked to the Dalley-Subaqua system, which in themselves are amazing caves. There has not been a physical connection made all the way in either direction, upstream or downstream of Elk River, and people have been diving in Elk River since 2008, and it is still going. If the cave was entirely passable, it would be the longest and deepest cave in Victoria. If you are a sump diver, have a think about giving it a crack. Elk River does not need a permit, but a guide is recommended.

Dalley's Cave itself, is mind blowing. If you didn't know better, you could think you were in one of the long, wet and technical potholes in Yorkshire, England. It is big, wet and pretty. Unfortunately, this is a hard one to access, as it is now on private land, but we are always hoping to change that.



Lilly Pilly Decorated Chamber, Buchan Photo: Sil Iannello

Lilly Pilly is one of my favourites. It is an ex-show cave and still hosts commercial trips, but to me it feels like a Tassie cave. It is big stomping passage and chambers, filled with good decoration. It just has that vibe of a Tasmanian system, due to being both spacious and pretty. Lilly Pilly is on Parks Victoria land and is accessed regularly via permit.

If you like big abseils and vertical, check out Baby Berger cave in Buchan,

which has a massive and truly spectacular free-hanging 30 metre pitch. Goanna Cave is similar, with 50 metres of continuous pitches separated by rebelayes. Both are open access. There are loads more vertical pots in Buchan, with some very pretty pitches and even some chances for technical SRT if that is your thing. Many people consider the vertical caves of Buchan to be a good training ground, to then be able to head to deeper and bigger stuff in Tasmania.

There is one more that is worth mentioning. The DD4 & DD31 system is over five kilometres long, making it currently the longest cave in Victoria. This is just a mind-blowing cave and thought by many as the best in Victoria. Interestingly it is nowhere near Buchan – it is actually in Drik Drik which is not far from Portland in Western Victoria. It has everything – sport and climbing, water, roof sniffs, incredible decoration, and it is a long and committing cave. This is on private property but relations with the landowners are good. This is an under-rated cave that can't be missed.

Other caves in Buchan that get a special mention are Shades of Death, Scrubby Creek, Duke's Cave, NG1 and Trog Dip, which are all also amazing caves. It's worth pointing out that if you include the entire Buchan area, and its surrounding pockets of karst, and include private property, there would

VICTORIA – AN OVERLOOKED CAVING DESTINATION

easily be over 70 extensive caves that are worth doing, and hundreds of other smaller caves and karst features.

Victoria has something truly special, unique, and also often overlooked. We have amazing lava tubes



Scrubby Creek Cave Waterfall, Buchan.
Photo: Sil Iannello

in Western Victoria, many of which have proper dark zones and real character. It's awesome fun to go and immerse yourself in such a different environment, and the cavers interested in geology will appreciate looking at the interesting way these volcanic caves were created.

The main areas for volcanic caves are around Byaduk and Budj Bim, but there are more volcanic caves in the general area too. If you like digging, spare a thought for Buchan. The Potholes reserve is swiss cheese, with so many blind dolines that are begging to be dug and pushed. There are many caves we know are hydrologically linked, but have not been physically connected, and the possibilities are endless.

Parks Victoria will let you dig if you get a permit and abide by the normal policies. As a rule, the Buchan and other Victorian caves aren't as spacious or long as some other caves in Australia, but they are just as pretty and diverse, and there is stuff to suit everyone – vertical, water, easy horizontal, sporty, pretty stuff for camera nerds, project work and digs, and just about everything else. Cavers can

usually stay at Homeleigh, which is our local accommodation, owned and run by the Rimstone Co-Operative, an organisation made up mostly by cavers or ex-cavers. Homeleigh is spacious and comfortable and is minutes' drive to the closest caves.

To those of you saying, 'But we are interstate, how do we get permits?'. Just link up with the Victorian Speleological Association or other local cavers. We are a friendly lot and always happy to give advice and guidance. Unfortunately, as of May 2020, currently the Caves Reserve and other parks in Buchan are closed due to the COVID-19 situation, but hopefully it will not be long until guidelines are softened, and we can go underground again safely.

If you come down regularly and stay connected with locals, you will have the chance to go in pretty much everything I have mentioned eventually. It just takes patience and communication. Feel free to contact me directly or VSA for more information.

All the best, and happy caving!

(Ed's Note: FUSSI last visited Buchan Caves in January 2008. See *FUSSI Newsletter* Vol. 20. No. 1. 08)

2020 CAVE ANIMAL OF THE YEAR

AUSTRALIAN CAVE CRICKET, SHORT FILM PROJECT

Sil Iannello

Late last year I was invited to work on the 2020 cave animal of the year project. I was thrilled by the invitation and delighted to contribute as much of my knowledge as I could. The cave animal of the year project is an international initiative, commencing in Germany in 2009 with the aim to raise awareness for subterranean ecosystems and animals, and point out the urgent need for research and conservation in this field.

The launch of the 2020 Australian cave animal of the year in January was exciting, and great to see so many cavers attend the event in Tasmania. Since the launch, things have quieted down and with COVID-19 taking the world by surprise, I got thinking what else could I do to raise awareness for the fascinating golden spotted leg creature the Australian cave cricket?

I thought back to the 2019 ASF conference 'The Darkness Beneath' and I recalled how well received the film 'Sixteen Legs' was by the caving community. Also, how captivated I was to see the Tasmanian Cave Spider *Hickmania troglodytes* on screen. The only other time that I've had the opportunity to see this creature up close and personal was in Croesus cave, Mole Creek, where it scared the bejeebees out of me in the entrance way. So, I got to thinking, why not make a film about the Australian cave cricket too! Not that I am a film maker by any means, however, a film is a great way to celebrate the Australian cave cricket with a broader audience and community.

Just prior to going into lockdown, I gathered a small team together to help kick start the process to make a short five-minute film. First task, writing the script. With support from entomologist Dr Perry Beasley-Hall, Cathie Plowman and Bec Cross the script came into fruition.

To quote a segment from the script:

Laying quiet and still in the middle of a world heritage site, the Victoria Fossil Cave in the Naracoorte Caves National Park is known as a site of exceptionally preserved fossil deposits. The limestone cave contains chambers with an array of magnificent stalactites and stalagmites. Palaeontological digs have revealed it was the last resting place for ancient Australian megafauna like the marsupial lion and Diprotodon. These large, charismatic vertebrates have received the majority of the public's attention, but what about the animals still living in these caves and calling them home? (Beasley- Hall, 2020)

At Right: Male
Novotettix
naracoortensis.
Victoria Fossil
Cave, SA



2020 CAVE ANIMAL OF THE YEAR

AUSTRALIAN CAVE CRICKET, SHORT FILM PROJECT

Sil Iannello

Secondly, lock in film maker Blue Starling Films and a sound recordist. And lastly, shoot the film.

The last weekend before lockdown in March, the Naracoorte Caves were still open to the public, as well as the lighting shop where I needed to get film lights from. With the last open window of opportunity to shoot the first part of the film, I and a small crew drove to South Australia and filmed in the Victorian Fossil Chamber.

I would like to give a big thanks to Barb Lobban, Senior Guide at Naracoorte Caves National Park and caver in making this happen.



In Victoria Fossil Cave, left Jan B., right Scott Lewis.
Photo: Sil Iannello



Fossil Cave film shoot left Sil Iannello, right Scott Lewis Photo: Sil Iannello

As Victorian restrictions are currently in place, we cannot shoot the second part of the film until mid-June/July. So, in the meantime I continue to fine tune the script, work with Blue Starling films on the footage from Naracoorte Caves and keeping my fingers crossed that the recording studios I would like to use opens up soon. The film is due to be released in September. There will be ample opportunity to see the film online and on the big screen at the 2022 ASF Cave Conference.



CAVING COMMUNITY ONLINE PAGES

Sil Iannello

Flinders University Speleological Society Inc

<https://fussi.caves.org.au/>

Facebook

@FlindersUniversitySpeleologicalSocietyInc

Australian Speleological Federation

<https://caves.org.au/>

Facebook @asfcavers

Cave Exploration Group South Australia Inc.

<https://cegsa.org.au/>

Victorian Speleological Association Inc.

<http://caving.org.au/>

Facebook @ Victorian Speleological Association

Sydney University Speleological Society

<https://suss.caves.org.au>

Facebook @suss.caves

Rover Speleological Society

<https://rss.caves.org.au>

Facebook @RoverSpeleos

Orange Speleological Society

<https://oss.caves.org.au>

Newcastle and Hunter Valley Speleological Society

<http://nhvss.org.au/>

Facebook @nhvss

Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc.

<http://mssadventure.org.au/>

Facebook @MSSAdventure-group

Kempsey Speleological Society

Facebook @www.kss.org.au

Illawarra Speleological Society Inc.

<https://iss.caves.org.au/>

Hills Speleology Club Ltd.

<https://hillsspeleos.org/>

Highland Caving Group

<https://hcg.org.au/>

Cavers & Adventurers of the Snowy

Mountains

Facebook @CASM - Cavers & Adventurers of the Snowy Mountains

Southern Tasmanian Caverneers

<https://southerntasmaniancaverneers.wordpress.com>

Facebook @SouthernTasmanianCaverneers

Under Victoria

<http://under-victoria.com/>

Northern Caverneers Inc.

<http://northerncaverneers.com/>

Mole Creek Caving Club

<http://molecreekcavingclub.org/>

Blue Mountains Speleological Club

<https://bmsc.caves.org.au/>

Chillagoe Caving Club Inc.

<https://chillagoecavingclub.org.au/>

Facebook @chillagoecavingclub

Canberra Speleological Society Inc.

<https://canberraspeleos.org.au/>

Facebook @Canberra Speleological Society

National University Caving Club

<https://nucc.caves.org.au>

Facebook @National University Caving Club

Cave Animal of the Year Australia

<https://caveanimaloftheyear.org.au/>

Facebook @caveanimaloftheyearaus

Australasian Cave and Karst Management

Association Inc.

<http://ackma.org/>

Facebook @ACKMA

NSW Cave Rescue Squad Inc.

<http://caverescue.org.au/>

Facebook @nswcaverescue

Cave Rescue Gippsland

Facebook @caverescuegippsland

ROC Cavers

<https://roc.org.au/>

Facebook @ROCCavers

International Union of Speleology

<https://www.uis-speleo.org/>

FFS - Fédération Française de Spéléologie

<http://www.ffa-speleo.fr/>

National Speleological Society

<https://caves.org/>

Facebook @NationalSpeleologicalSociety

Women Cavers: Extraordinary Women Leaders in Speleology

Facebook @WomenCavers

Derek Bristol: Gear reviews

https://youtube.com/channel/UC66bwyl1N0BVQ_gu3Zg-fnw

UC66bwyl1N0BVQ_gu3Zg-fnw

Cavers of Facebook @caversoffacebook

Vertical Cavers Facebook @Vertical Cavers

EDITOR'S CHOICE: LOCK DOWN CAVING - PODCASTS – BOOKS WEBINARS – VIDEOS.

Sil Iannello

The Caving Podcast: Sil Iannello (FUSSI)

Sil Iannello's recent interview on The Caving Podcast discusses Australian caves, conservation and her experiences underground. It is a great interview and for all of you passionate ecologists out there, an education in biosystems that we seldom consider.

Link: https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/cavingpodcast/episodes/2020-04-01T12_46_39-07_00

ABC Radio: ASF members Deb Hunter and Jessica Bertels (Wild Cave Tours) interviewed on how they started caving together. Recorded on the occasion of their International Women's Day 2020 event

Link: <http://www.wildcavetours.com/?fbclid=IwAR3MjkNTopU9H-sdHnY9C4kMI39KkRxmgbxnKbnQ-JsAsoba8wBK-rtlxqc>

Real Risk Podcast: Mountain Mamma - Katie Sarah is an Adelaide based mountaineer who is one of only eight climbers in the world to achieve the "7-7"; climbing the seven highest mountains and the seven highest volcanoes on seven continents.

<https://realrisk.buzzsprout.com/1091993/3911573-ep-2-mountain-mamma>

Nightlife ABC: The Hidden World of Caves: Richard Harris and Steve Fordyce discuss the wonderful world of cave diving.

Link: <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/nightlife/caves/12155726>

Books

10 Years Under the Earth: Author Norbert Casteret pioneer explorer of caves, potholes and underground rivers, tells a thrilling story of his amazing explorations in the mysterious world under the earth's surface. A must read for all cavers.

The Bat- Poet: By Randall Jarrell. The other bats were beginning to think him a bit of an oddball. Why didn't he sleep all day and fly around at night as they did? How dreadful to wake up in the daytime when the sun hurts your eyes. And the confusing poems he made! A pure story for all caving children to read while wearing their head torch and nodding off to sleep.

Beneath the Mountains: <http://.oucc.org.uk> an excellent introduction to caving.

Webinars

The NSS Webinar Series

Dr Hazel Barton: Catching up on the Coronavirus Part 1

A short introduction to viruses, virology, and what the coronavirus is, and a discussion about where we think the virus comes from, how it causes disease, and where we are in dealing with it.

Link: <https://caves.org/webinars/index.shtml>

Videos

Eat Sleep Cave Repeat: By Alan Green - To enjoy the outdoors, join a club

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwvaeezmX4w&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR08_nVTczdW5Rm2nCG1yTtJr_OSFHueNAbeU7yAZaWnLXcd3Vq9RIWPz6s

The Ario Dream – The Quest for Europe's Deepest Cave <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/ariodream>

Lechuguilla Cave 2020 Voids Expedition Part 1 & 2 - Lake Castrovalva and Aid Climbing

The 2020 Barton Voids expedition to Lechuguilla Cave in Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WecB_mR7ql0

NEWS

The next ASF Conference to be held in Ceduna SA has been postponed until April 2022 (new dates to be confirmed).

The ASF Executive supports the organising committee's recommendation to postpone due to the COVID-19 situation. Even though we are beginning to transition back to normal, there are still too many unknowns regarding future disruptions to travel and restrictions to group gatherings, until a vaccine can be developed. This is of especial consideration for the at-risk Indigenous community in Ceduna.

We apologise for any disruption to your travel plans that this may cause, and look forward to seeing you all safely in 2022



New palaeontology dig at World Heritage-listed Naracoorte Caves sees PhD student Tiah Bampton living her dream.

There are hopes that an excavation at Alexandra Cave will fill in a gap in the historical record. The World heritage-listed site at Naracoorte is famous for fossils.

<https://.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-03/tiah-bampton-living-dream-at-naracoorte-caves-palaeontology-dig/12209876>



Naracoorte Caves is now open for camping and accommodation, as well as self-guided tours of the Wonambi Visitor Centre and Stick Tomato Cave. The Naracoorte Café opened on Monday 18 May and guided tours have recommenced.

<https://www.naracoortecaves.sa.gov.au/Home>



ASF Karst Conservation Fund grants available for projects related to cave and karst Bushfire affected areas in Australia 2019/2020. ASF clubs apply online:

<https://caves.org.au/conservation/karst-conservation-fund>



Launch of the 2020 Australian Cave Animal of the Year: Australian Cave Crickets

<https://www.caveanimaloftheyear.org.au/>

NEWS



2021 International Year of Caves and Karst

The below is a quote from the IUS IYCK20 website:

International years are typically organized under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) or the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Their primary purpose is to educate the public and celebrate important aspects of life and the world around us. They are a series of events by international teams that include partners from non-governmental organizations,

government agencies, businesses, and interested individuals.

The International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) begins next year, but this year is when people around the world need to start planning events. Brazil is distributing thousands of leaflets and giving lectures. Costa Rica has created a plan for monthly events. France is hosting the International Congress of Speleology. Italy is organizing Speleo Karamaton. Germany and Morocco are developing plans with universities. The USA is coordinating a list of events across North America. Slovenia will dedicate its Classical Karst School to the IYCK and is planning the closing ceremonies for December 2021.

A lot of good work has begun, and even more is needed. The IYCK Planning Guide is critically important to help you understand the IYCK and create events to make the IYCK a success. You can find it and the information leaflet in multiple languages and with more information at www.iyck2021.org

The IYCK has incredible potential to advance speleology in many and great ways, but only if we all work together to make it possible. Please send me any questions and news on your IYCK planning.

See the IUS planning guide and associated pages at:

<http://iyck2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IYCK-Planning-Guide.pdf>

Rio Tinto blast destroys one of country's oldest known Aboriginal heritage sites

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/blast-destroys-one-of-country-s-oldest-known-aboriginal-heritage-sites-20200526-p54wmt.html>

New Cave Discovery: Understorey Cave ASF Clubs SUSS and MSS join forces and discover Understorey Cave during an expedition to Piopio in New Zealand.

https://.youtube.com/watch?v=uTnVn9WfMms&fbclid=IwAR3eUXB3hZACyPuwJJJeYFFShY6Pturmuxpfl2lhhexU1WptA3CTqH_hdlgE

Melbourne University work in 'wild caves' of Buchan could move mountains in earth sciences

Researchers developed a test that indicates Victoria's mountains are growing "quite a lot" The technique, used on stalactites and stalagmites, marks a shift in how mountains are dated.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-24/buchan-caves-not-as-old-as-previously-thought/12279612>

Climbing Pioneer Joe Brown dies aged 89

NEWS

British climbing legend Joe Brown had passed away peacefully at his home in Llanberis at the age of 89. Joe was a true pioneer of rock climbing and was most active in the 1950s and 1960s. His ascents were as varied in style as they were in location and ranged from the gritstone outcrops of the Peak District, to 8000m peaks in the Himalaya.

https://ukclimbing.com/news/2020/04/climbing_pioneer_joe_brown_dies_aged_89-72275?fbclid=IwAR3Uhntp-LiV6f



Some of the FUSSI bunch, pre-COVID days. Photo Heather Duff
