

Calcite



Journal of the Highland Caving Group

Issue 45-September 2011

New entrance to Slocombe Cave, Vic?

'The Ovens' Sea Caves

Post ASF Conference Trip

Timor Caves, NSW

Cave Surveying Course

Paleo Cave-Sediment Project

A Corporate Member of the Australian Speleological Federation



Highland Caving Group

A Corporate Member of the Australian Speleological Federation

P.O. Box 54, Georges Hall, NSW, 2198



HCG meets every second Tuesday of the month at
NSW Cave Rescue HQ, Klemm St, Bankstown Airport, NSW-7:30pm.

HCG website <http://www.hcg.org.au/>
HCG1 eGroup for members <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HCG1/>

HCG Committee 2011/2012

President	Ian Lutherborrow	president@hcg.org.au
Vice President	Joe Sydney	vice.president@hcg.org.au M: 61-2-405 039 398
Secretary	Bruce Waddington	secretary@hcg.org.au
Treasurer	Lindsay Matheson	treasurer@hcg.org.au
Non committee positions		
Librarian	Ian Lutherborrow	librarian@hcg.org.au
Representatives		
ASF Councillor	Cathy Brown	asf.councillor@hcg.com.au
	Joe Sydney	asf.councillor@hcg.org.au M: 61-2-405 039 398
NSW Speleo Council	Cathy Brown	speleo.councillor@hcg.com.au
	Joe Sydney	speleo.councillor@hcg.org.au M: 61-2-405 039 398

Club fees for 2011/2012

- Member: \$83.00
- 3 month 'trial' membership: \$30 *
- Life Member: \$68.00
- Family Membership: \$136.50

* Trial membership does not include Caves Australia magazine.

What you get:

- HCG and ASF membership
- Caves Australia magazine
- Calcite journal
- Public liability insurance
- Skills training
- Caving information

Journal of the Highland Caving Group

Issue 45 - September 2011



Calcite

Calcite design:

Joe Sydney

Editor and Layout

By Joe Sydney

Layout in MS Word 2010

Ph (m): 0405 039 398

E: editor@hcg.org.au

Calcite publication dates:

When we can!

Contributions

Please send to Editor:

editor@hcg.org.au

Proofreaders

Cathy Brown,

John Dunkley,

Ian Lutherborrow,

Lindsay Matheson,

Stephen Mc Cabe,

David Rothery

Joe Sydney and

Bruce Waddington.

Copyright 2011 ©

Calcite articles are copyright to HCG and authors. Articles may be reproduced for purposes of study, fair dealings, research and review. No part may be reproduced without written consent of HCG. Contact the Editor for consent

Views and expressions are not necessarily that of the Editor, HCG or the Federation.

HCG is a corporate member of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

Feature articles



Cave-Sediment Project 6



Cave surveying course 11



Slocombe Cave, Vic 14



Ovens sea caves, NSW 17



Timor Caves, NSW 25



Life's Hard School 44

Contents

ASF, HCG projects and news	4
2004 catch up	33
HCG SRT day	34
North Durras sea caves trip	35
Abercombie Caves trip	36
SSS 50 th and book launch	37
Tuglow Caves trip	37
Burma/Nowra sandstone caves	39
	44

Cover photo

Over 100m deep, the smaller sea cave is still quite impressive. See page 17

Photo by: Joe Sydney/HCG

ASF, HCG Projects and News

Be a mug, and get a HCG Mug!



A small batch of ceramic mugs have been made with the HCG logo. They are white with a black HCG logo.

The mugs are available for purchase at \$18 each with \$3 going to HCG, postage extra. Don't be seen without YOUR mug!

Contact Joe for your mug: joes@hcg.org.au

HCG website update!

By Joe Sydney, HCG



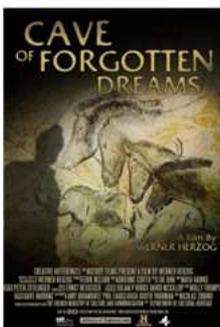
Thanks to HCG member Jim McGregor who owns Hostpossum.com, Jim created a new easy to use website for HCG.

The new look website was presented to HCG members on Jun 14th 2011. It looks much snazzier than the old site and with its Wiki style rather than old HTML format, any authorised member with little web skills can now update this easy and simple to use website. Members liked the new look website and voted in favour of it. Now the fun starts with writing the headers text and uploading new and exciting information and pics. Stay tuned! Thx Jim! (*See page 24 – Host Possum*)

Cave of Forgotten Dreams-3D

By Ian Binnie/HCG

<http://sff.org.au/films-container/cave-of-forgotten-dreams/>



A group of cavers went to see "Cave of Forgotten Dreams" by Werner Herzog at the Sydney Film Festival.

The highlight of the film is the presentation of the paintings in the Chauvet cave.

These are the oldest cave paintings in the world at between 25,000 and 35,000 years old. You will almost certainly have seen these pictures of galloping

horses, rhinos and lions imbued with a sense of life and motion, but the artists utilised the curves of the cave to make these more lifelike. The 2D representations fail to capture this and results in distortions. The 3D representation makes the most of these, even peering around the back of paintings which are "off limits". Indeed the Chauvet cave is "off limits" with only limited access to researchers once a year, so this is the only chance we will ever get to see these images. To a caver the "track marking" is as fascinating as the paintings. There is a raised metal walkway through the protected part of the cave to preserve the floor deposits which include the skulls of extinct cave lions and cave bears. Even the researchers are restricted to this path, meaning some parts are inaccessible. (I could not help wondering how the trackway was constructed.)

The film starts with the approach through a vineyard and through a gorge and an explanation of how Jean-Marie Chauvet followed a draft of air coming from a small opening in the side of a cliff to find the cave, which was protected behind a collapsed cliff. The preliminary expedition was fascinating in itself, because it explained the planned filming, and more interestingly showed a 3D view of people moving through the cave and the formations. If (when?) this technology becomes available I can see a new trend in cave photography. The equipment seemed quite compact - not the usual paraphernalia of a film crew, and the panel lighting low intensity.

Initially I was disappointed by the paintings which were pointed out with hand held torches, but the final presentation of the paintings actually came at the conclusion of the film were magnificent, taken when a larger crew re-entered the cave.

The paintings alone only occupy about 15 minutes of the film. Herzog interviews some frankly eccentric characters. An archaeologist in animal furs, playing a reconstruction of a prehistoric pentatonic flute made from a radius bone, and a parfumer sniffing the hillside for an undiscovered cave. A scientist attempts to demonstrate ancient spear-throwing techniques and another former circus performer waxes mystically about his dreams.

Any archaeologists will need to take this film with a grain of salt, and many of the comments are at variance with current theories, but the images make up for it all.



The 28th ASF conference was held at Chillagoe in April 2011. 9 HCG members will be attended. Read all about

our members exploits in the next issue of Calcite!

Check on updates and pics on the Chillicon website at <http://www.chillagoecavingclub.org.au/>

NSW Speleo Council May 2011..in brief!

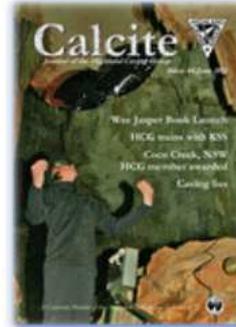
- Congratulations to HCG member Cathy Brown on being elected as a NSWSC Executive.
- DECCW is now called Office of Environment & Heritage.
- 2013 ASF Biennial Conference to be held at Galang, NSW.
- Karst Atlas will be published before Christmas.

Contact Cathy Brown for more details!

New Jenolan fees – *See page 27*

Calcite 44, a journal worth reading!

By Joe Sydney, Editor of Calcite



Owing to our website not being 100% functional, we've placed Calcite 44 on Joe's picture home page. So far 131 covers have downloaded it with some cavers contacting us to say how much they enjoyed it!

For your 'free' copy of Calcite, visit:

<http://imageevent.com/kvrsq1/joescavingpics/2011calcite/calcite44june2011>

Magnetron Technology™: The reinvention of the auto-locking carabiner, coming July 2012

Source: www.blackdiamond.com



New!

Never satisfied with the status quo, we're always striving to develop the next great carabiner design innovation, which has led us to our latest game-changing advancement: Magnetron Technology™.

What's so special about Magnetron Technology? One word: magnets. Yes, that's right—locking carabiners that utilize magnets and not twistlocks or screwlocks on the gates. Available on select locking carabiners in July 2012, our patent-pending Magnetron Technology is so revolutionary we decided to share a sneak preview with you now to get you stoked.

Here's the basics: using the power of magnetic fields to reinvent the locking carabiner, the Magnetron GridLock and the Magnetron RockLock locking carabiners combine maximum security and ease of use like never before.

Magnetic attraction to a steel insert in the carabiner nose keeps two independent arms securely locked.

- Locking arms must be individually depressed before the gate can be opened.
- Once open, opposing magnetic fields repel the arms to ensure smooth and reliable gate operation.
- Symmetrical design allows for easy one-handed operation (right or left).

For an in-depth look at the concept and development of Magnetron Technology, watch the video link, and then look for the Magnetron GridLock and the Magnetron RockLock to be in (USA?:Ed) stores by July 2012. If you are a member of the outdoor industry, be sure to check out the Magnetron GridLock and the Magnetron RockLock in person at Black Diamond Equipment's booth during the Summer 2011 OutDoor Europe and Outdoor Retailer tradeshows.

B4 Paleo Cave-Sediment Preservation Project

By Joe Sydney of HCG, and Dirk Stoffels of CSS

Attendance

HCG
CSS
HSC
UTSSS
CASM
SUSS

27-28-29 May 2011



Bungonia Gorge with quarry-Joe Sydney/HCG

B4 Paleo Cave-Sediment Preservation Project Finished! Bungonia National Park NSW

Bungonia National Park has one of most significant karst regions in NSW. With over 300 known caves and deepest mainland cave, it is regarded as one of the sporting mecca's in Australia. Not only do cavers regularly visit, but it is also visited by families and adventurous outdoor sports people. Bungonia offers more than just caving with activities such as canyoning, bushwalking, bird watching and more.

But with all this activity, there is a price to pay. In the early 90's when Julie Bauer, author of the book *Under Bungonia*, was researching the park's geology as part of her university studies, she recognised that some cave sediments were worth future research. It was some years later that the Highland Caving Group (HCG) began noting the degradation of cave sediment by recreationalists in the Kings Cross area of B4 Fossil Cave. When recreationalists were crossing the Kings' Cross void and climbed up the embankment, cave sediment was being kicked away from the wall and floor. Some HCG members who also use the cave noted that the sediment was being eroded at an alarming rate so informed the parks advisory group, B.R.A.G.

In discussion with BRAG they asked for caver advice on what would be the best way of preserving the cave sediment. HCG needed to consult with the New South Wales Speleological Council clubs for further advice with the Canberra Speleological Society (CSS)



Joe Sydney/HCG

B4 Fossil cave/Kings Cross void showing sediment and worn pathway.

showing interest and offering advice. The discussion between HCG and CSS brought up many ideas with the most suitable being some type of bridge. The idea was floated with parks and they too consulted their internal experts. Soon after it was agreed that some type of bridge would be the most appropriate for this location.

Bridge design

During 2008, CSS took on the challenge of designing a bridge and came up with an initial design. The draft plan was submitted to parks who in turn gave it to their engineers.

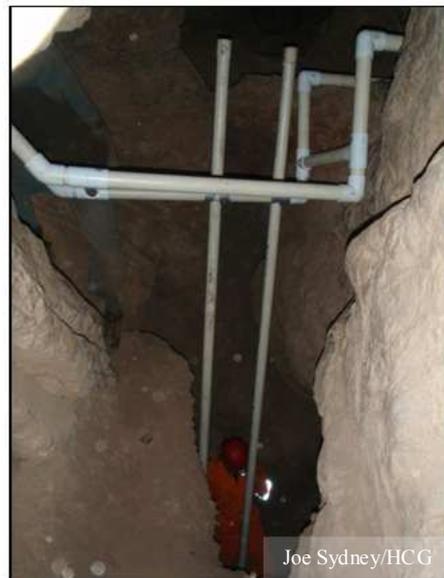
The engineers accepted the design with few changes. The design is based on a number of horizontal laminations being bolted together, and a vertical ladder. Not only would this aid in keeping cavers to a path, but would also assist those with limited climbing skills needing to cross a wide void.

With plans approved it was time to think about how to implement the concept. CSS decided that a pre-construction mock bridge would aid in seeing where the bridge fitted, but also if the long lamination sections could be taken into the cave. Sections of 50mm PVC pipe with joints were ordered and a date of Feb 2008 set aside to build the mock bridge. ASF clubs were contacted for 'experienced' caver assistance with 12 cavers turning up.



Joe Sydney/HCG

PVC joints used to make mock bridge.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Mock PVC bridge with ladder.



Joe Sydney/HCG

New HCG member Fiona Ray marks PVC pipe for cutting.

The pipes, joints and tools were taken into the cave with key people given tasks to do and it wasn't long

before the first side lamination/pipe were constructed. The bridge started to take form and we could see where the two bridge base plates needed to be installed. After a couple of hours, the PVC pipe bridge was complete. Most of the bridge was then dismantled except for one 5 metre side section so that we could see if we could get it through the cave. If you know B4 Fossil Cave there are some tricky sections in the cave that required some negotiations but with lots of cavers spaced throughout the tight sections, the process was quite easy.

With the PVC side lamination mock up now sitting in Dirk Stoffels (CSS) garage, it was time to work on final specifications and metal requirements which took some time. Consulting with Parks and their engineers, the most suitable material was selected based on carting of the lamination sections into the cave, cave environment, cost, and ease of fabrication.

In the end, mild steel was selected with Parks experts agreeing. During early 2010 Parks with approval from the Karst Geodiversity Unit, Parks approved the funding of \$3300.00 to purchase the steel required by CSS to fabricate the bridge. In late 2010 with funding now available the steel was purchased and fabrication of two base plates and one side lamination could commence

In February 2011 the two base plates and single side lamination were fabricated and ready for a test fitting. Clubs were contacted again for experienced cavers for a trial installation date of Saturday 19 February 2011. Thirteen cavers were selected based on their experience in various fields such as cave rigging, SRT etc. Three pitches were rigged for lowering and raising if needed and the 4.5metre long

bridge component was wrapped to ensure cave protection.

With so many cavers present throughout the cave it was easy to pass the lamination from cavers to caver. The trickiest section was at the southern end of The Canyon where we noted that a couple of well placed bolts to aid lowering would not go astray. Later on the bolt placement was discussed by BRAG and in the interest of caving safety; it was thought that the bolts could also aid a rescue from the popular cave if needed so they were placed.



Cavers setting up rigging at B4 entrance.



Cavers lowering lamination section into B4 entrance.

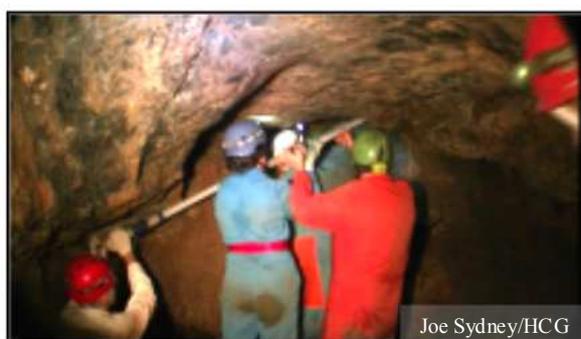
At the Kings Cross void the two base plates were fitted with lamination and we could see what rock required re-engineering. With a bit of tweaking it looked as though the bridge had sufficient room and fitted nicely so we exited the cave taking all bridge parts with us. Knowing that the bridge would fit with little trouble eased our minds so it was not into the next stage, fabricating the entire bridge.

Fabrication of the bridge and ladder was finished in April as it took some months to cut and weld 11 mild steel laminations for the bridge, and fabricate a ladder. However with the coming of the ASF Conference at Chillagoe in Queensland meant that key players and cavers will not be available for

installation of the bridge. On return from the Conference HCG immediately sent an email to clubs calling for assistance with installation on May 27, 28th and 29th. Twenty four cavers turned up on the weekend!



Lowering the lamination through B4 entrance pitch.



Maneuvering the lamination up into the Letterbox Squeeze.



Luke Gannon/HCG measuring the level.



Blackish Blind Snake found at 2nd pitch.



Dirk Stoffels/CSS

Fabricated bridge siting in Dirk's garage.

A few cavers took the Friday 27th off and assisted with the pre-rigging of the cave, installing the electrical lead for power tools, setting up the generator in a suitable location, and, setting up a Michie phone communication line. A UHF radio mast was also set up to communicate with cavers throughout the Parks, and, Ranger station. Installation of all this took half a day so here was sufficient time left over for all the bridge laminations to be lowered into the entrance chamber.



John Brush/CSS

Caver drilling the anchor holes.

With all cavers meeting at the B4 car park they were briefed for safety, their tasks and with a tool box discussion. That way everyone knew of the overall plan and where things were. By the time everyone was organized the first cavers started to enter the cave around 9am. It didn't take long before the bridge components and tools arrived at the work scene and work commenced. First was the leveling for base plates and then fitting of the side lamination. Once fitted, the M20 x 200mm deep base plate bolt holes were drilled with bolts temporarily placed. When all the laminations were in place, the side bolts pulling the bridge together were placed and this now meant that the bridge is one solid piece of metal.



John Brush/CSS

Cavers carrying a bridge section through B4 Fossil cave.

With the bridge constructed by 6pm it was time for cavers to exit the cave for a hot meal. As many caving clubs were involved, an application was submitted and granted by the Australian Speleological Federation Karst Conservation Fund for equipment/bridge component transport petrol cost, and, hot meal for cavers! HCG members cooked up a fine meal ready for exiting cavers with minestrone soup, marinated chicken and steak with hot potatoes and pasta salad followed by apple crumble with custard! The cavers were very appreciative that after a hard day's work and feeling exhausted, that hot food was ready for them on exiting a cave.



John Brush/CSS

Cavers leveling the bridge frame.

Later that night after dinner, a few key cavers had to return into the cave to glue in the bolts. By doing this it meant that in the morning, the glue would be set and the bridge ready for its final stage of construction, the ladder.

Cavers rose early on Sunday morning in anticipation of getting the job done and returning home early.

The ladder did not take long to install and in the meantime, cavers started to take out what gear was not needed. By 12 noon the ladder was installed and cave totally de-rigged!



Joe Sydney/HCG

Vertical ladder section protecting cave sediment.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Bridge and ladder installed over B4 Kings Cross void.

The weekend of installation was a total success which is a testament to the experience and the hard working nature of all cavers involved.

It is estimated that the cost of caver time for this project between 1992 and May 2011, is around \$47,300.00.

The Highland Caving Group and Canberra Speleological Society would like to thank Bungonia National Park and Bungonia Recreation Advisory Group (BRAG) in allowing them to undertake this project.

We also thank the Australian Speleological Federation Karst Conservation Fund in granting a small allowance to recoup equipment transportation fuel costs and feed the hungry masses.

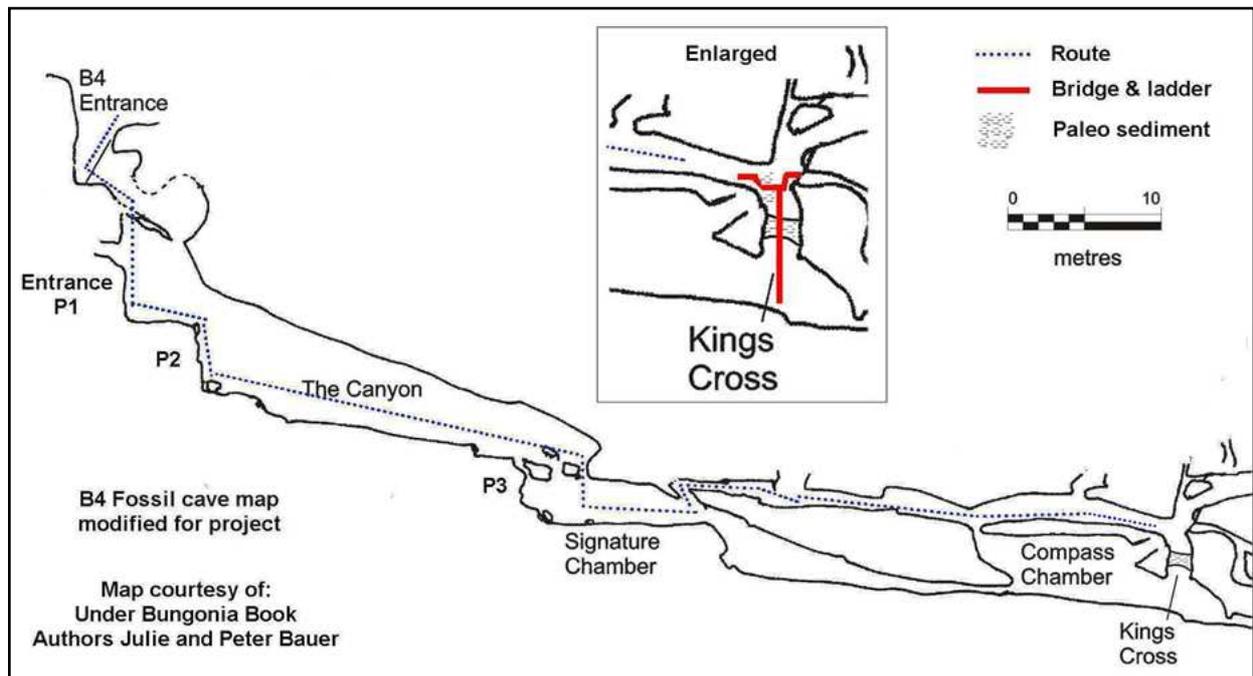
A final thank you must go to all the hard working cavers from the following clubs:

CASM, CSS, HSC, HCG, SUSS and UTSS.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Photo showing slot where cavers climbed and damaged paleo cave sediment on wall. The bridge encourages cavers to by-pass this section.



Map of B4 Fossil cave showing the location of paleo-sediment with proposed laminated bridge.

ASF Clubs Basic
Cave Surveying Course

By Joe Sydney of HCG

Attendance

HCG
HSC
MSS
NHVSS
CSS
RSS
BMSC



Danielle Letwin of MSS using the forestry compass. Joe Sydney/HCG



13-14 November 2010

ASF Clubs Basic Cave Surveying Course Bungonia National Park-NSW

Earlier this year, cavers were casually asked by Joe Sydney of HCG, what courses would they be interested in if they could be organized. Cavers indicated that they would like to learn about cave surveying and possibly assist with some of the club surveying projects.

With this in mind, Joe approached Hills Speleological Club as they were considered the leaders in cave surveying and asked if they would be interested in holding a course. Their answer was, yes.

Over the coming months Hills members drafted a course outline whilst HCG contacted clubs advising of a possible course date of around November.

A venue was needed and it was soon decided that Bungonia National Park would be most suitable owing to its distance from Sydney (200km), easy highway access, a suitable course room and a BIG easy cave close by. Bungonia Park was co-operative and delighted to assist us with the course.

With a final date set in place, 13-14 November, invitations were sent to all NSW ASF clubs advising of the course. Registrations were slow at first but as

cavers are known to be slow in showing any interest, interest picked up during the final weeks of registration.

Friday 12 November

Some organizers and cavers arrived on the Friday evening to get a good night's sleep. Tents were pitched with one caver/using his luxurious 4WD roof top canopy whilst two tough RSS cavers slumped it in their swags.

Saturday 13 November

The course started at 9am sharp! The venue was the conference room attached to the community kitchen which was perfect for the number of students and lecturers.

Rick Pinnock and David Doughty commenced the course with an outline about the course and its objectives. This was followed by a Powerpoint introduction on each of the topics: cave surveying equipment, data collection, use of clinometers with compass and electronic surveying gadgets.

Students were then taken outside to familiarize themselves with the surveying tools and given a series of surveying tasks to gain skills.



Rick Pinnock (HSC) outlining the course to cavers.

The weekend's course was catered for so there were regular breaks for minds to be revitalized. Lunch was prepared in advance so that cavers had the maximum amount of time to spend on the course without fussing around trying to organize themselves



Students practice with cave survey tools.

Now that the skills necessary to obtain data accuracy were acquired, it was time to pop into a cave to put the newly found skills to practice. Cavers were assigned into four teams with one or two instructors helping when needed. The four teams were given a section of Grill Cave (B44) each to survey. On return with the survey data in hand, it was now time to crunch the numbers and learn about data corrections.

Moving on to the next topic, Rod Burton discussed and demonstrated the use of GPS in cave surveying. Moving outside again, cavers got to use a GPS and be familiar with its use. Software such as Ozexplorer which is suitable for GPS data storage and map usage was overviewed.

It was getting late so cavers broke for a BBQ dinner catered by David Rothery and Joe Sydney which left cavers feeling lethargic after eating copious servings of salad, chicken, steak, and, apple crumble with custard!



Students practice skills in Grill Cave (B44).

Moving back into the room was difficult, and commencing the drawing of the cave map was even more so. The evening was finished off with Dirk Stoffels (CSS) showing slides of past expeditions to New Guinea and how they conducted surveys in harsh tropical conditions, in the 'good ol days'.

Sunday 14 November

Dave Tweed introduced both the plane table and forestry compass and its uses. This was followed by cavers moving outside and using both instruments. When cavers felt confident in the use of both instruments and data collection, it was time to do some surface surveying. Cavers were moved to two Park locations to experience ground survey work.



Dave Tweed (HSC) showing Kate Sinclair (HSC) how to use the plane table with cavers in background using a GPS.

With notes in hand, it was back to the conference room for a lunch break and to continue drawing the cave maps but not before being shown the Compass cave surveying program. The previous day's Grill Cave team entered their survey data into the Compass program and within a few minutes, Grant Elliott produced a 3 dimension model of Grill Cave.

This excited the masses and they now want real projects!

Late that afternoon, when the cave maps were finished, Hills judged the maps with a small prize going to MSS and NHVSS for the best produced map. HCG had arranged for a team prize, which will be sent to them in time for their next meeting.

All attending thought the course was a total success and students went away learning much about caves, cave surveying and new skills. They also took home a copy of the 50 page HSC cave surveying course notes.



Students correcting data and drawing their cave map.



3 dimension rendered image of surveyed section in Grill Cave (B44)

This course was organized by Highland Caving Group (HCG), conducted by Hills Speleological Club (HSC) and supported by the Australian Speleological Federation.

The organizers would like to thank the following who made this course possible:

Bungonia National park

Audrey Kutzner, Ranger
Bungonia Recreation Advisory Group (BRAG)

Highland Caving Group (HCG)

Joe Sydney, course organiser:
David Rothery, course assistant/cook

Hills Speleological Club (HSC)

Course organisers and instructors
Rick Pinnock, course co-ordinator and instructor
Dave Doughty, instructor
Rod Burton, instructor
Grant Elliott, instructor
Dave Tweed, instructor

Students

Canberra Speleological Society

Dirk Stoffels

Blue Mountains Speleological Society

Rick Webber and Natalie Etherton

Highland Caving Group

Lyndon Ray and Joe Sydney

Hills Speleological Society

Kate Sinclair

Metropolitan Speleological Society

Danielle Lewin and Jim Crockett

Newcastle & Hunter Valley Speleological Society

Roderick Smith and Brian Reeves

Rover Speleological Society

Jenny Celkys and Pam Bedford

Is your club
interested in
a course?
Contact HCG!
Interstate clubs
welcome.

Cave Surveying Reflectors

Need reflectors! Check out Yandina Plastics!
.50c each and in a variety of colours.

07 5446 8088

www.yandinaplastics.com.au



(Corner Cube Delineators)

**Buchan caves-Vic.
Could this be a connection
into Slocombe Cave?**

By Joe Sydney of HCG

Attendance

HCG

Joe Sydney

David Rothery

16 September 2010



The Basin area with dolines. Joe Sydney/HCG

Could this be a connection into Slocombe Cave?

For those who do not know Buchan, the small township is nestled in the lush green Gippsland region of east Victoria. HCG and many caving clubs regularly visit Buchan as its climate is moderate compared to NSW and its caves are easy to do, even the larger caves.

We had the opportunity to undertake a few hours caving after Joe visited his rental property in Bairnsdale. Staying at The Cabins on Saturday night and having a huge meal in the town pub, we retired early to get a good half-day's caving and then head off to Melbourne.

We decide to do Slocombe Cave as it was easy to do and Joe already knew that cave but David could not recall it as it has been many years since his last trip there. The drive is easy to 'The Basin' where Slocombe Cave is located. Along the way, we took GPS reading and noted the road features for future use.

The day was sunny yet cool which was perfect for a half days caving. Arriving at the cave entrance, we decided to have a walk around looking at the karst features and beautiful farming landscape. On our way back Joe spotted what he thought was a newly dug animal hole but on closer inspection found no

animal tracks. It was a hole approximately 300mm in diameter and perfectly...round. At that moment, David caught up and had a look exclaiming that...it's a cave!



Joe Sydney/HCG

David looking into the newly found hole. Does it connect?

Well, it's sort of a cave as it was a small bell shaped chamber approx 3m deep and 1m wide with fresh soil washed in because of the recent heavy rain period this part of the country has recently experienced. We dropped a few rocks into it with one or two snagging on the wall whilst a couple may have dropped a bit deeper, who knows!



Joe Sydney/HCG

Looking into the hole.

We took some photos and as it just so happened that we had surveying gear in the car so we surveyed the hole back to the entrance tag. Joe then decided that maybe we could quickly survey the cave and work out the relationship in distance to the newly found hole and upper passage within the cave.

We were able to survey the entrance and long passage to the entrance to Rockfall chamber. It later became evident when the survey line/map was drawn and compared to the VSA cave map that the hole was very close to an upper level passage. To prove this correct will require another full day's trip back to Slocombe to finish off the survey but this time looking at the upper level. By the time we finished the survey to just before the Rockfall Chamber, time was running out so we decide to have a look around. We took some photos in the Rockfall chamber and then popped thru the drop to the top of the '2P' pitch. It was here that Joe's camera fell out of his case and dropped down the 2P pitch. This committed us to drop to the next level to retrieve it so we did.

On retrieving the camera, we found it to be OK so continued to the 'Y' chamber. We looked at the high walls with numerous recessed alcoves, which suggest higher water levels long ago.



Joe Sydney/HCG

David in Rockfall Chamber.

Close by was the 'Y' chamber with dry compacted mud floor. It was here that Joe spotted a tiny moving critter on the floor and on closer inspection found it to be a harvestman! A few quick macro photos captured the creature whilst David looked around the side passages.

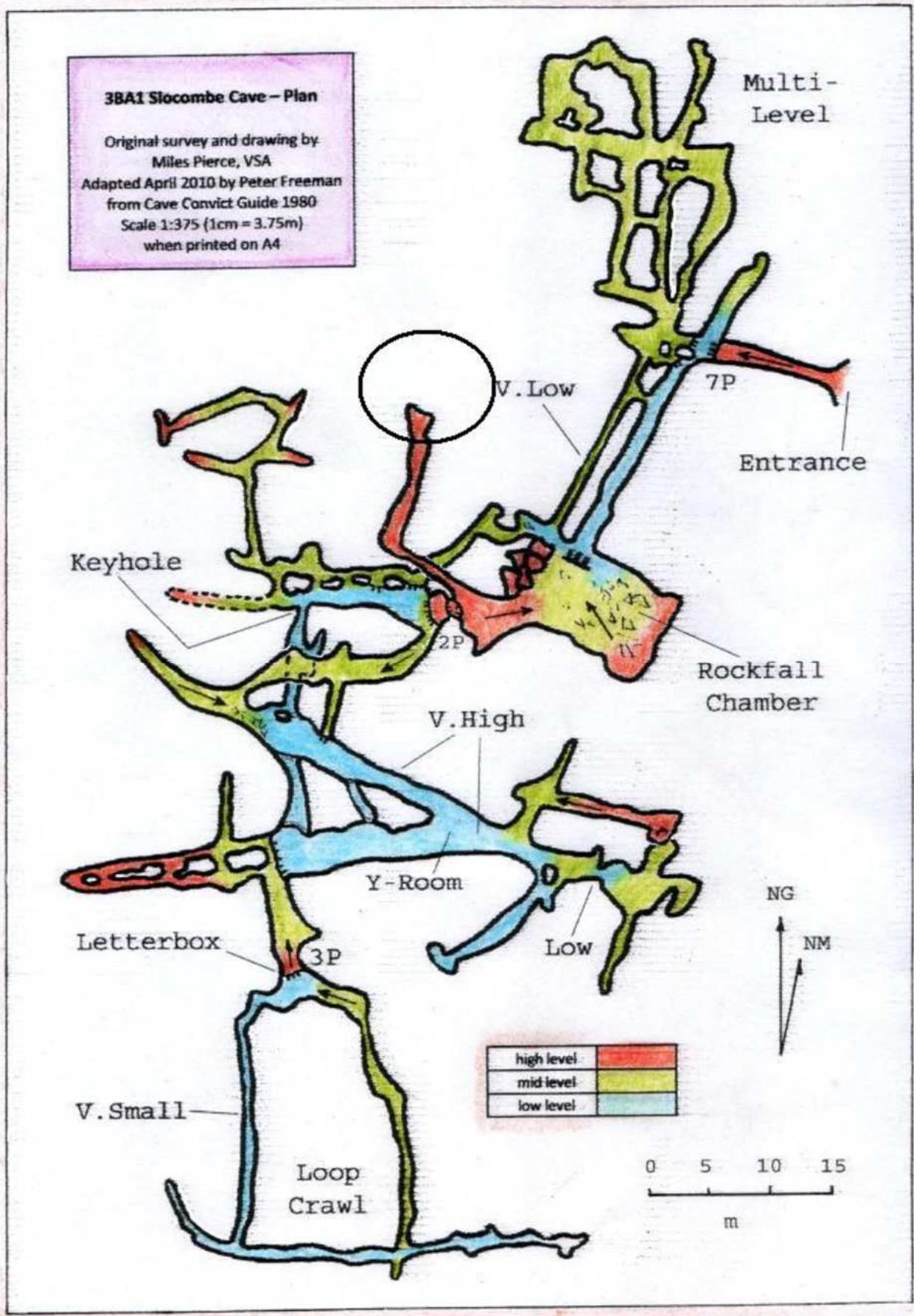


Joe Sydney/HCG

Harvestman found in 'Y' chamber.

It was already after lunch and very late, so we decide to head back out. Squeezing up thru the very tight hole at the top of the 2P pitch into the Rockfall is where Joe with his longer legs and body needed a helping hand from David. He got stuck! David helped him out with a smirk and it was a quick exit back up that main pitch. Back at the car, we had a quick bite to eat and headed off to Melbourne to visit Joe's family!

In all about 4 hours caving was done discovering a new cave entrance and a top half day's easy caving with some survey work! Stay tuned for the next trip that should connect the hole with the upper passage.



3BA1 Slocombe Cave (2)- Cave showing rough proximity of surface hole (circle area) to entrance. Will it connect?
Map credit: Adapted map by Peter Freeman of VSA-2010 from original by Miles Pierce.

NSW cavers visit
'The Ovens' and
'St Michaels' sea caves

By Joe Sydney of HCG

Attendance

HCG
Lindsay Matheson
Luke Gannon

Clubs

BMSC
CWCG
HSC
MSS
NHVSS
RSS
SUSS

22 October 2010



The small 'Ovens' sea cave – Joe Sydney/HCG

NSW cavers visit

'The Ovens' and 'St Michaels' sea caves

Thousands of years ago when the sea levels were much higher, a patch of large sea caves were formed in sandstone cliffs along the Avalon/Whale Beach area of Sydney, NSW. Today with lower sea levels, these sea caves are accessible.

Sydney is blessed with a majestic coastline surrounded by magnificent high cliffs with spectacular vantage points and views. Often one can see many natural and man made features along the coastline such as the WW2 concrete constructed gun and observer emplacements, aboriginal sites and wondrous geological features. Two such geological features are 'The Ovens' and St Michaels sea caves along Sydney's northern beaches.

In place of a NSW cavers dinner this year, the Highland Caving Group decided to organize an exciting visit to these sea caves. A date was set (23 Oct 2010) with invitations extended to all ASF clubs.

Club members met early at a small Whale Beach café to take advantage of an early outgoing tide and their last fix of caffeine before the day's trip. Earlier that morning, the trip organizer Joe Sydney visited the proposed cliff top entry point to see how difficult it was to access. To his surprise, Council had blocked the pathway with 'no entry' signs whilst vigilant

neighbours questioned him as to his intentions. Some asked if he was a fisherman as locals were often upset at the fishermen's disregard to limited street parking and Council no entry signs. Whilst standing and chatting to locals, Joe received a text from a caver who had arrived early, informing him that whales could be seen frolicking off the coast. Being higher up on the cliff line, Joe had a magnificent view of four whales bellowing sea spray off in the distance.



David Tabener/HSC

Getting ready at the car park.

Pumped with coffee and ready to go

By 9:30am, all of the cavers had arrived and were eager to get going as they were pumped with caffeine. Joe informed cavers that the original cliff top access was now not possible and that we had to revert to Plan B, a longer coastal walk of about 1.2km. After a quick gear check at around 10am to ensure that we had paddles for our flotilla of small boats, and wetsuits, ropes, krabs, pulleys, first aid kit etc, we were off. Joe stopped off at the Surf Life Saving station to let them know of our intentions and they were pleased with the contact. They were so interested in this trip, they arranged for a jet ski and boat to sail past us from time to time to keep an eye on us, just in case.

Whilst all this was happening, Megan and Michael of SUSS had brought along their sea kayaks and decided to head off around to the other side of the spit at Careel Bay to launch their boats and paddle around Barrenjoey Heads a distance of about 9kms one way!

Dead mutton-birds

A few of us started the walk along the sandy beach and noted the many Mutton-birds washed up dead all along the shore. Very strange indeed! The walk along the cliff line was mostly easy and with an outgoing tide, which made the tricky bits easier.

About half way along the rock shelves, we hit our first obstacle, a small cleft that needed either a long jump or scramble at the back of the cleft over some boulders. Moving along another hundred metres we hit a daunting, a 4-5 metre sea channel/cleft! We stood there for some time looking at each other quite stunned and thought to ourselves that, well, this is the end of the trip as there was no way around. When the panic settled, we started looking at the higher platforms but no safe passage was found.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Dean mutton-bird, one of many found on the beach.

Kayaking cavers arrive

At this time the kayakers had arrived and using mobile phones to communicate, they indicated that there was no visible access unless we went back a way and looked up high, but the problem would then be getting down the cliff face. It was only when Roslyn and David from Hills had a go at climbing the rock face up and over the sea channel that they managed to cross it with applause from the rest of the cavers. This now meant that we could set up a tyrolean to ferry cavers across. During the set up, a lifesaver arrived on a jet ski and chatted to our intrepid kayakers who briefed him advising that we are proceeding to the sea caves.



Megan Pryke/SUSS

Surf lifesaver checking up on us.



Megan Pryke/SUSS

Our first obstacle as seen by the kayakers.



David Tabener/HSC

Our sea kayakers trying to find an overhead route for us.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Once across, David Tabener set up the tyrolean.

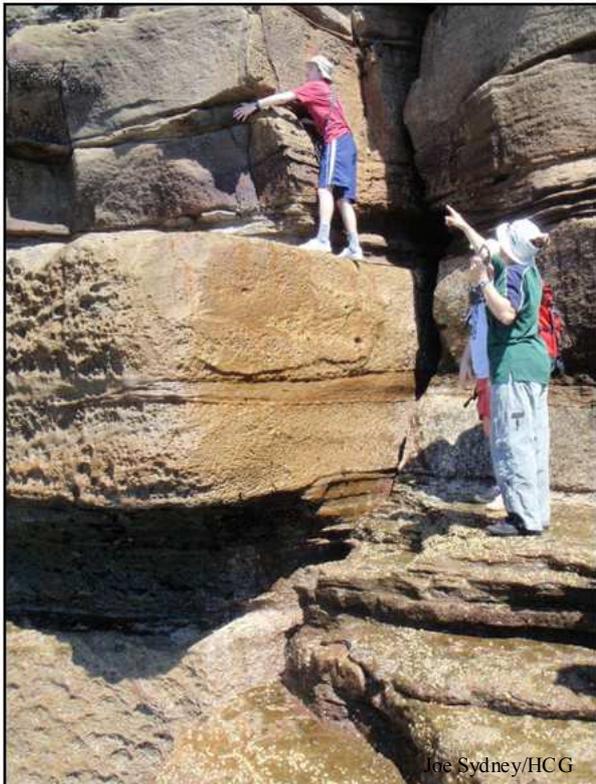
How do we cross this sea channel?

It was not long before the tyrolean system was in place and the third caver was across, then the second, third and ninth. The process was made even more exciting with the odd BIG wave washing up and occasionally soaking us. When those who chose to cross were safely across, we moved on to find the sea caves. The others made their way slowly back to the main beach area or stayed to guard the tyrolean.



David Tabener/HSC

The tyrolean across the sea channel.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Ros instructs David in how to climb over the sea channel.



Joe Sydney/HCG

A caver crossing on the tyrolean.

Is this the big sea cave?

Moving on a little further over the boulders and just around the corner, we found our first HUGE sea cave, which is part of a series of sea caves, called 'The Ovens'. By now, the tide was well out and this cave had large boulders protecting the entrance from the wave wash so it was quite safe to enter. Entering the cave was easy as there are many rock shelves to walk along and enter deep into the cave. The more intrepid cavers donned their wetsuits and took lights to venture further into this strange geological feature.



The small sea cave.



Swimming at the back of the sea cave.

The cave itself is quite large and we questioned if this was the huge cave as seen on Google Maps. The cave is about 10m across at entrance, 2m across in the wet section, 10m high and approx 100m deep. We spent about a 45 minutes looking and swimming around this cave before deciding to have a look, around the corner.



Joe Sydney/HCG

View from small sea cave to south with big sea cave just around the corner of first headland.

OMG!! This is the big one!

Walking along the rock shelves for another 100m, we could hear the roar of surf. A little further on and up a rock shelf scramble we stood in awe of what we had found. What we originally thought was the main sea cave was in fact, the baby! This one is...HUGE! The dimensions dwarfed the first sea cave being about 30m across at entrance, 30-40m high and who knows how deep as we could not see any further than 50-80m into the cave.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Looking out of the big sea cave.



Google map of sea caves.



Joe Sydney/HCG

**Looking inside the big sea cave.
We're not going into that with a plastic boat!**



Joe Sydney/HCG

**Using polypropylene rope, rock fishermen climb down
using hand holds cut into rock..**

We looked at each other and said, there is no way that we are going in there with small plastic boats! Even with the tide being out and relative calm seas, the wave and wash was fiercely funneling up and making big waves. I am sure that the waves were so big that they could be surfed if they were anywhere else; however, any attempt would be suicidal so we backtracked and hightailed it back to the tyrolean point after taking a few photos.

By now, the tide was well and truly out and this brought out a few adventurous rock fishermen who

disregarded the signs at the original higher entry point and used the handholds cut into the rock face to descend to the rock platform. What was even more astounding was their faith in their blue and white polypropylene rope as a safety hand line!

Once we were all safely across, we moseyed back to the cars to find the other cavers and pack the gear. By now, we were all pumped, yet, there was still time to visit, St Michaels Cave.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Local beach sandstone rock art sandwiched between two shale beds.

St Michaels Cave and its local inhabitants



St Michael sea cave with Careel headland.

Conducting a bit of research into The Ovens and St Michaels sea caves proved fruitful, offering insight into its naming, geology and habitation.

Three locations in the Bangalley Head Reserve demonstrate prior use of the area by aboriginal people. It is known that there is at least one shelter site, one art site and at least one midden. These show that the area played an important part in the lives of the local Guringai people. Aboriginal people of the Guringai group lived in the area for several thousand years prior to 1788. Govett, an employee of the Survey-General Mitchell, recorded local aborigines fishing successfully for snapper using starfish for bait from rock platforms along the northern beaches coastline as explained in S&G Champion, 1997.

How did St Michaels Cave get its name?

The Pittwater Council Plan of Management document for the reserves, explains that during the 19th century what is now Bangalley Reserve and North Avalon Headland Reserve was part of a 1400 acre (560 hectare) grant made in 1833 to Father John Therry, an early Catholic chaplain. Father Therry had plans at one time to deliver lectures in the St Michaels Cave and even build a church above it. A number of early accounts describe excursions to the cave and the nearby "Hole in the Wall", a natural arch, which collapsed in 1867. The adjacent land was subdivided in 1914 as part of "Careel Ocean Beach Estate". It is presumed that the three large blocks of land that comprise the bulk of the reserve's bushland were dedicated as open space during this subdivision.

The geology of

The Ovens and St Michaels sea caves

The escarpment has vertical cliffs and the foreshore has slopes of varying degrees. Within the escarpment are a number of vertical doleritic dykes including St Michaels Cave. These were probably intruded during the Jurassic era. St Michaels Cave is a significant geological feature that extends approximately 110 meters into the cliff face. The dolerite is evident in a band approximately one meter in width at the roof of the cave. The cave has a maximum height and width of 15 meters and 10 meters respectively. The ridge crest geology is Hawkesbury Sandstone, a medium to coarse-grained quartz sandstone, with very minor shale and laminite lenses. A short distance down slope, the Narrabeen shales and sandstones of the Newport Formation outcrop. These sediments underlie most of the Reserves.

St Michaels Cave trip

The weather forecast for the rest of the afternoon was for a thunderstorm and we could see the weather change on its way. A few decided on other pursuits whilst a few drove to St Michaels cave a short distance away at now Bangalley Head Reserve-Avalon.

Dropping down from Bangalley Head to the rock shelf, we headed south to St Michaels Cave. All along the route, rock fisherman were trying their luck with quite a few succeeding. One family of fishermen seemed to have caught half a dozen good-sized blackfish, which they started to cook. The smell of freshly fried fish wafted up the coast, which started to make us feel quite peckish as most of us had missed lunch in all the excitement.



Cavers looking south towards St Michaels Cave.

All along the way, we noted evidence of fossils, mostly small ferns and interestingly, many ripples from slow flowing streambeds. The cave is a short distance from the lookout but higher up the cliff face, which suggests that this cave was formed much longer ago than 'The Ovens' sea caves. This cave is gated with razor wire for the protection of two species of bats resident to this cave: Common Bentwing Bats (*Miniopterus schreibersii*) and some Large-eared Pied Bats (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*) according to a Council report. It was sadly evident from the amount of vandalism that the cave can still be entered, so we had a look around, took our photos and soon departed.

Passing the fishermen who were now seriously cooking their catch, started to make us feel...very hungry. Back at the lookout, we said our farewells with a few of us heading to Avalon beach for a tasty fish and chip dinner!

The day's event was a total success with 21 cavers attending from seven clubs! HCG thanks those that chose to share this unusual outing in place of the annual caver's dinner.

HCG would like to thank the following for the use of their photos:

David Tabener/HSC and Megan Pryke/SUSS

References

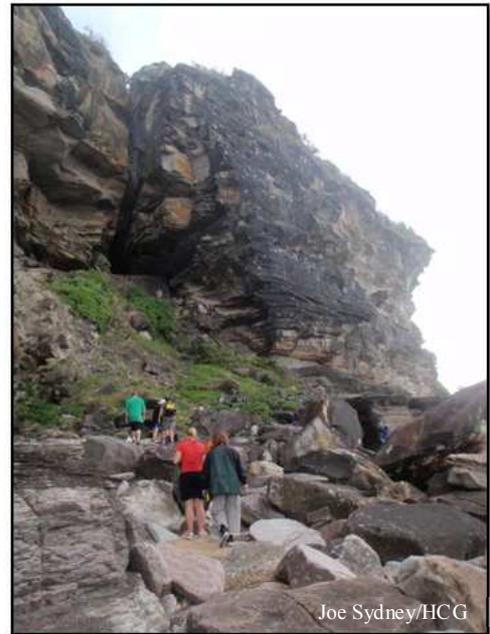
Pittwater Council, 2002. Bangalley Head Reserve and Avalon Headland Plan of Management 21 October 2002.

S&G Champion, 1997.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Triassic period fossilized creek ripples.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Whoops! Cavers overshoot the cave and walk back to the entrance.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Entrance silhouette.



Joe Sydney/HCG

St Michaels Cave is gated with razor wire!



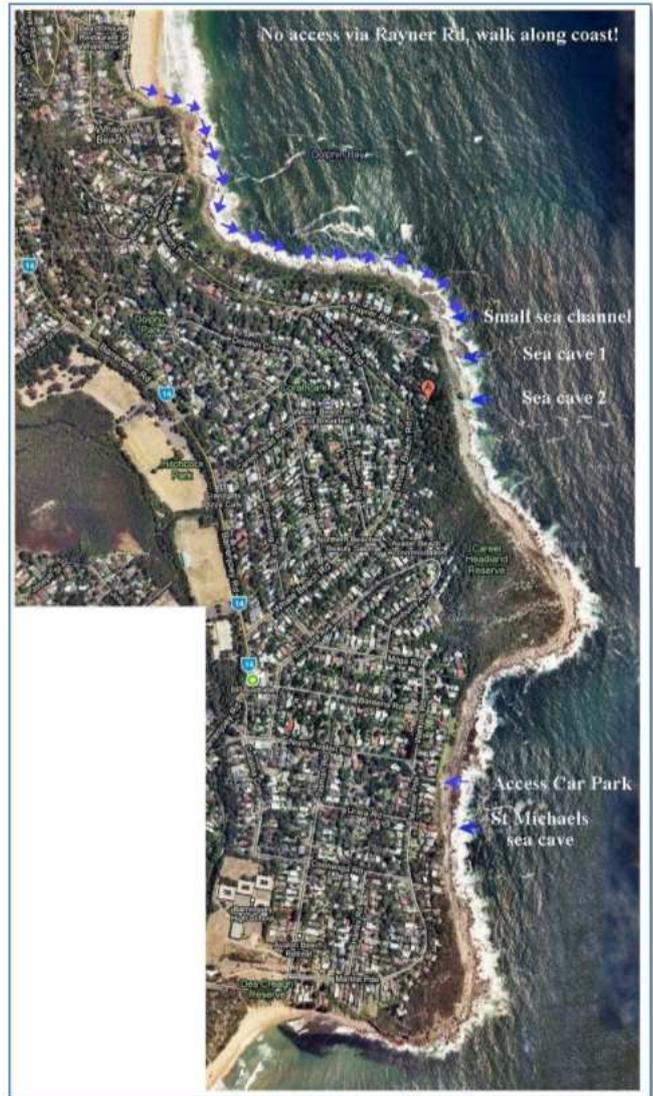
Joe Sydney/HCG

Looking into the cave from the entrance.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Zoom of the rear of the cave.



Google map of the area showing out route.



4622-4507

HostPossum.com



Do you need Domain registrations, website hosting, website design, SEO, Social Network Integration? Search no further!

Why not try HCGs web host, HostPossum.com!

Talk to Jim for a friendly chat or visit their website.

**Meetings, weddings, caves
and illnesses.**

**By Rick Webber of BMSC,
and Joe Sydney of HCG**

Attendance

Joe Sydney HCG

Nicholas & Sue White (VSA)

Deb Hunter (MCC)

Tom Porritt (CCC)

Grant Elliott (HSC)

Rick Webber (BMSC)

Jodie Rutledge (HVSS)

21 August 2010



Glen Dhu hut/Joe Sydney

Meetings, weddings, illnesses and caves Timor caves-NSW

1 Jan 2010: ASF Executive meeting

The week of the ASF Council meeting was especially busy for me. The ASF Executive meeting was on the Friday (1 Jan), cavers from interstate were arriving at my home in the afternoon and I had to leave early as David's daughter was getting married that afternoon. The difficult part was working out how to get cavers access to my home whilst I was at the wedding. Lucky for me, I have good neighbors.

2 Jan 2010: ASF Council meeting

The next day (Sat 2 Jan) members of HCG and I attended the ASF Council meeting at Bankstown. Notes on the meeting will be circulated in the next email.

Later in the afternoon during the final stages of the Council meeting, Lyndon arrived as prearranged. He was to crash at my home so we could leave early on Sunday for Timor Caves. A few cavers also crashed at my home, some attending the meeting whilst a few were going to Timor.

That night Lyndon did not feel well so in the morning I rang Fiona and arranged for him to be picked up by Greg. Lyndon was disappointed that he

could not go to Timor and so were we. Mike of CEGWA was also staying at my home & Greg was kind enough to drop him off at the railway station as he had business to attend to in Sydney on the Monday. This now only left Rick Webber of BMSC and me travelling in my car.

3 Jan 2020: Finally on the road and Glen Dhu cave.

Rick and I hit the road quite late departing around 10am as we waited for Greg. We were in no hurry as most cavers were arriving by late afternoon. We made a quick stop over at Singleton Woolies to buy the supplies needed for the next few days and continued the drive to Murrurundi where we refueled.

We arrived around 3pm to find Jodie Rutledge (NHVSS), Nicholas & Sue White (VSA) with Deb Hunter (MCC) lazing about the shearers quarters. Soon after, Tom Porritt (CCC) and Grant Elliott (HSC) arrived and this made 8 cavers attending. As Jodie had limited time at Timor, she took us into Glen Dhu cave (TR15) which is located directly behind the shearers' cottage.



Glen Dhu entrance.

The cave is located on private property with a small shearers' quarters surrounded by huge grass trees higher up the hill. Upon entering the cave via a short steel ladder, we were all quite surprised to find a large chamber with small to medium sized passages leading further into the cave. A short way in Jodie opened a 2nd gate leading to a pretty section. Jodie saw a frog which was later identified as a giant banjo frog.



Giant banjo frog found in Glen Dhu cave.

The locked gate led to a small wet chamber with lots of flowstone and helictite decoration. The main features were decorations higher in the chamber and two small pockets of magnificent helictites. With the cave being some 300m in total length, we took our time in exploring.

Further in the cave we all negotiated a small wet, squeazy and very muddy section, we then found the cave opened up into large chambers. We meandered around until we found the 'tongue'. The 'tongue' looked more like a huge platypus hanging from the ceiling and on closer inspection we noted it was old flowstone with the underneath worn away. We also estimated that the hanging rock was about 3-4 tones

in weight so it was not wise to stand under it for any length of time.



The tongue!, or is it a platypus?

There was also a significant amount of vandalism from a past trip with blobs of mud spoiling the pristine formation around the main chamber. This could be an interesting restoration project for HCG!

We moved onto another section squeezing through a few holes into the next chamber which led to a small bridge featured formation. A little further on we reached the final chamber with a large hole in the floor. This is was the lowest part of this section and you could see that past water flows drained into this hole. Tom tried to pop into the hole but it was filled with loamy soil, possibly a good dig site! It was getting late so we headed back to the shearers' quarters to relax, have dinner and talk about the area.



Is this a promising dig in Glen Dhu cave?

4 Jan 2010: Quarry, Belfry and Main caves.

After breakfast, we packed up the cars with caving gear & headed off to Timor caves. Along the way we stopped off to the location of the proposed quarry site. We spent a bit of time by the side of the road discussing the location and court details before heading off to the caves.



A visit to the quarry site.

Along the way Joe noticed something wriggling on the road, it seems that one of the cars had run over a small black snake so he took a few pics.

At the Caves Reserve Jodie showed us around the creek section identifying key features and the tracks to the three main caves, Belfry: TR2, Helictite: TR4 and Main (TR1) caves. By now it was late and Jodie had to leave as she was working a late shift that night. The rest of us had a bite to eat and headed off to Belfry cave.



Issacs creek at the foot of the main limestone ridge.

The track was close by and the entrance easy to find about 50 meters up the hill. It has a sloping entrance leading to a large chamber with a few sides passages. The way on was through the 'rat hole' which is a very tight squeeze. This led to a narrow chamber and

along a narrow rift. At that rear of the rift the CO2 level was higher with the cave air feeling very muggy. Small piles of guano indicated that bats were present and it wasn't long until we sighted them.



Joe in Belfry Cave.

It was now time to head out and have lunch back at the cars & creek. Whilst having lunch a load crack was heard, a large branch snapped off a casuarinas pine tree not far from the cars which set our hearts racing a bit.

Soon after lunch it was time to look at Main Cave. We all walked along the river, past a very smelly dead roo and onto the track. The climb up the hill was steep and with the recent fires, evidence of the track petered out half way up the hill. Searching the hill side was easy after the fire as most of the blackberries were burnt, but their regrowth had started. TR22 was soon found quite high up the hill. As we could not find Main Cave, Joe headed back to the car to get a surface area map. By the time he returned, the main group had found the cave much higher up the hill.

Main Cave is quite large with BIG chambers so meandering was easy. Joe squeezed through a small opening and found a nice section with spar but the best was yet to come. On his return he caught up with the main group at the back of the cave.

Jenolan Cottage!

New fees from 1st August 2011

New fees!!

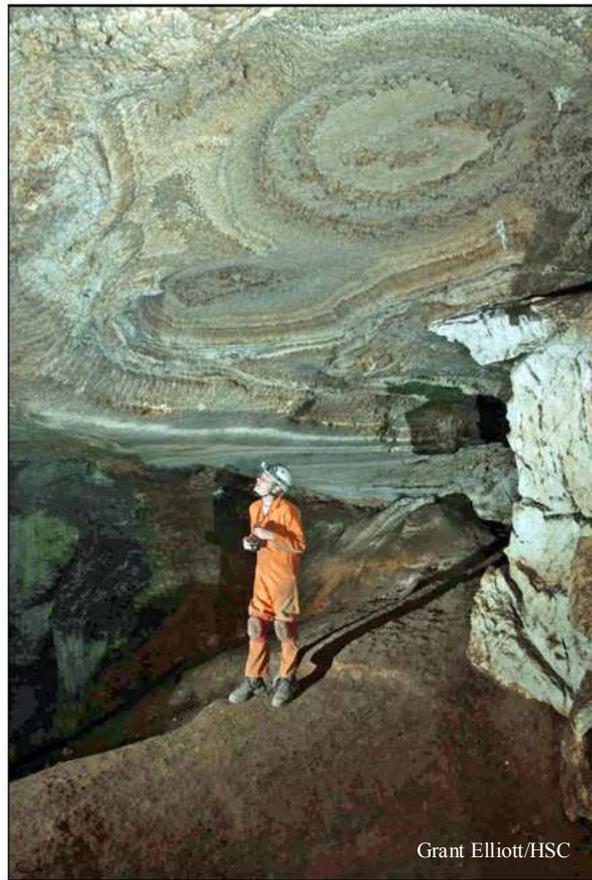
Subscriber clubs will pay \$160 in deposit and \$40 per weekend and \$15 per additional day.

Casual clubs/users will pay \$50 per weekend and \$20 per additional day.

He climbed up into the higher balcony sections where we all saw two ceiling domes covered in spar. One could see the water level bands and the differing sized spar depending on water level. This section was almost at the ceiling so the amount of water must have been considerable

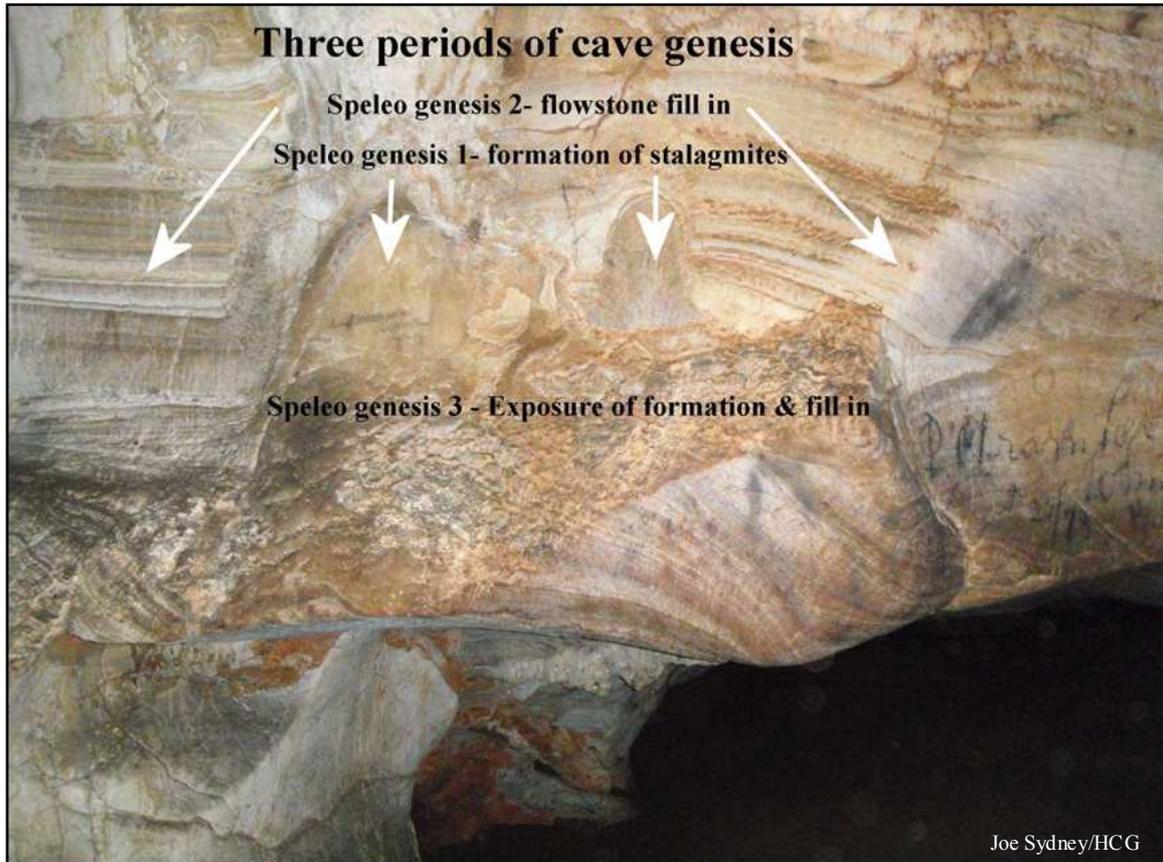
Walking back to the main entrance Sue yelled with delight so we all rushed to her location. She had found evidence of three differing periods of cave genesis. The first being the formation of two stalagmites and then covered over with flowstone at a later period.

During the third period both the stalagmite and flowstone was eroded to expose both as a cross section. This find excited all of us!



Grant Elliott/HSC

Deb Hunter of MCCC looking at roof crystals in Main cave.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Three differing periods of cave genesis.



Rugose corals found with close up on main limestone ridge top.

Back outside that cave Joe suggested that we may as well walk back to the car following the ridge top as it was only meters away. The ridge top was also burnt with interesting features clearly visible. It wasn't long until two cave entrances on the top were easily found. The reserve fence line was just over the ridge top so we followed it until another entrance was seen on the opposite side. Joe checked it out thinking a new cave had been found but it had a tag, TR 71. Jumping back over the fence Joe found an interesting coral fossil deposit and soon after found a second. By now the ridge was heading downhill and it was a short walk back to the cars. Joe cooked dinner that night with a few of us having spag bol, cake with custard and ice cream!



New found Cave? No, there was a tag!

5 Jan 2010: Return to Glen Dhu cave, Helictite and Hill caves.

Nicholas and Sue both departed in the morning as they were needed in Melbourne the following day.

As Grant missed Glen Dhu cave on Sunday, we decided to do this cave again. Grant is an exceptional photographer so his photos of this cave and the others are magnificent. On this trip he managed to photograph the higher section past the second gate whilst Joe found the frog and took its portrait. During this trip Rick photographed a tape worm that was identified as Flatworm - Geoplanidae - Caenoplaninae - Australopacifica. Joe also found the frog and managed to get some macro photos which helped identify the frog.

On the way to the caves, Joe pulled over to show Tom the quarry site. Just as he did the other cars continued so it looked like the others weren't interested in seeing the site.



Glen Dhu cave entrance.



Rick Webber/BMSC

Whilst reversing, the car must have run over a sharp stone as it punctured the rear passenger tyre. After a quick dumping of everything from the car and onto the side, Rick and I changed the tyre.

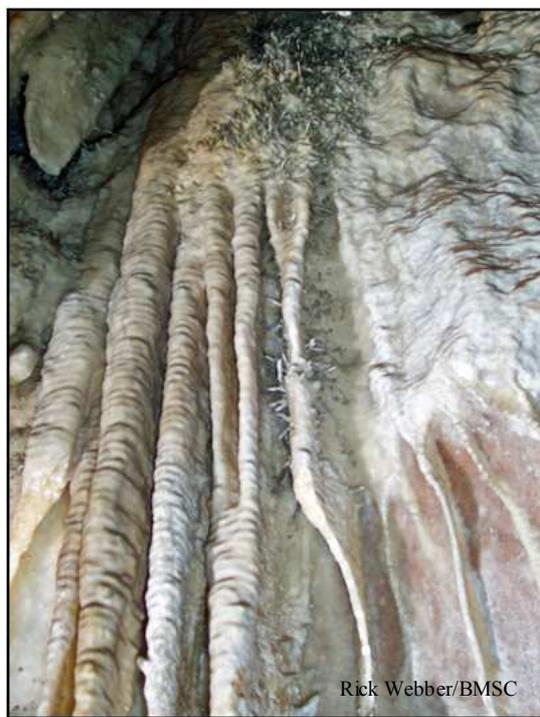
Lunch was at the caves reserve creek followed by a trip into Helictite Cave. The main chamber is quite large with the way on being on the right and over a boulder then squeeze. Following a tight rift it opened up into a lovely crystal decorated section. The thing to note here is the amount of damage done by past

visitors. Masses of shawls, straws, flowstone have been 'excavated' using hammer and chisel which shocked us all to see. We took lots of photos as what was left is still worth photographing.

The last cave to see was Hill Cave: TR7. This cave is found opposite the main reserve ridge. The walk to the entrance from the creek to Hill Cave flushed a large banded tree goanna sunning in a side creek bed. The goanna seemed startled & it decided to run up a tree.



Rick Webber (BMSC) in main Helictite Cave chamber with Tom Porritt (CCC) climbing into a side passage.



Helictite Cave: Shawls, some damaged, with Helictites higher in the cave.



Much of Helictite Cave is damaged.



Helictite Cave: More damage, Tom Porritt (CCC) shows foot holds cut into the crystal wall.



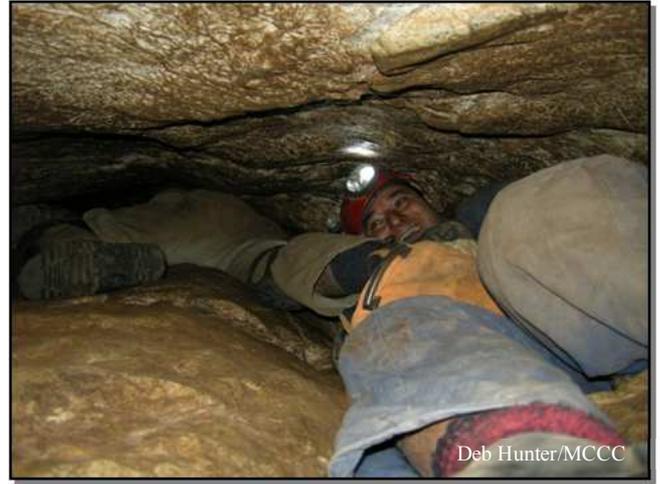
Goanna near Hill Cave.

Joe had a rough idea of the entrance location & we soon found TR 25. Walking higher up the hill we found TR7 in amongst some bushes. Close inside the entrance Joe found an interesting spider which is of the Heteropoda sp, otherwise known as a cave huntsman.

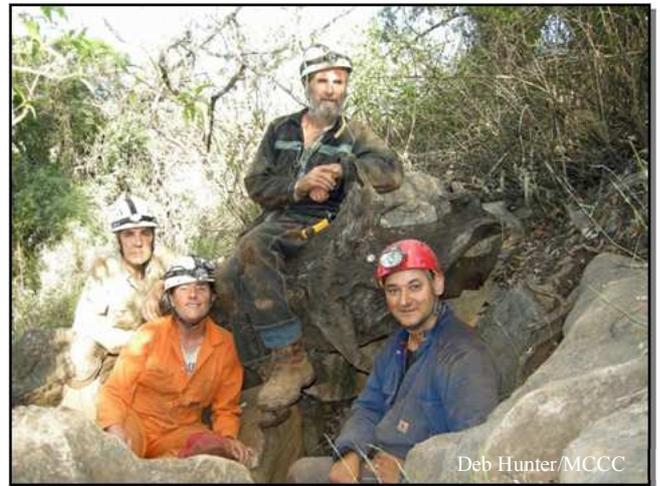


Heteropodaor sp cave huntsman spider in Hill Cave.

Hill Cave is a sporty cave with a tight section in the middle & Joe was concerned that he may not fit through the squeeze but after a bit of wriggling, pushing and shoving with the guidance of Deb and Rick, he managed to get through. The exit is through TR8 which is lower on the hillside.



Hill Cave has some sporty tight sections.



Hill Cave exit: Deb Hunter (MCCC), Rick Webber (BMSC), Tom Porritt (CCC) and Joe Sydney (HCG)

Back at the car Joe was interested in locating Hill Cave from the main creek so he went back up the hill with a CD in hand. He was able to reflect the location of both TR25 and Hill Cave.



Using a CD, Joe shows the location of Hill Cave

The sun was slowly setting so we drove back to camp. Joe & Rick decided to pack up the tent and sleep in the spare bunks as Nicholas and Sue were now well on their way to Melbourne. Dinner was left over spag bol with sausages, not bad!

6 Jan 2010: Going home.

We all rose earlyish with Tom departed mid morning as he was on his way to Valhalla, Victoria to play steam train driving. Grant left soon after with us trailing not far behind. We still had to lock up the shearers' quarters and return the key to the owner which we did. It was 10am by the time we left the Timor area.

On the way home, we stopped in Scone to fix the car tyre so whilst we waited, we headed into town for a cuppa. Sitting in the coffee lounge under the air conditioner Joe's mobile beeped with a text message, it was sent by Lyndon on Monday (4th). The message said that Lyndon had undergone surgery to remove a ruptured appendix on Sunday night! Joe immediately rang Lyndon to see if he was OK which he was and also to say that he had missed out on an exciting helicopter ride from Timor to Tamworth base hospital. We both agreed that he was very fortunate that it happened in Sydney & not at remote Timor Caves. ■

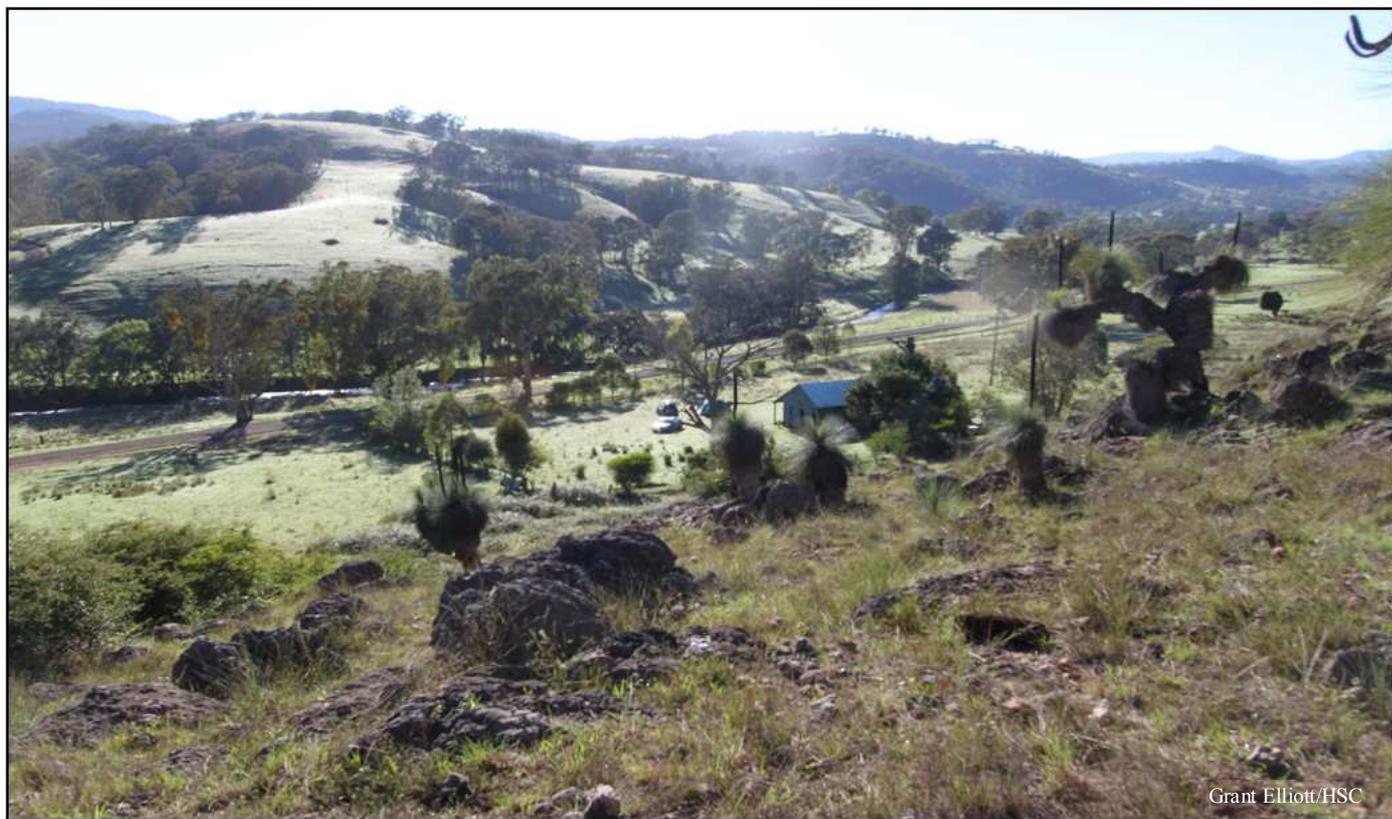


Grant Elliott/HSC

Xanthorrhoea (grasstree) behind the hut.



Grant Elliott/HSC



Grant Elliott/HSC

Glen Dhu valley with hut.

2004 catch up!

HCG is still catching up with old trip reports and news. These are the clubs activities for 2004.

HCG BBQ

By Joe Sydney

Steve McCabe hosted a HCG BBQ at his home on March 8 2004. Alan Caton of RSS and John Dunkley of CSS dropped in for a few snags and...beer!



Joe Sydney/HCG

NSW Cavers Dinner Mexican caves come to Bankstown!

By Joe Sydney

25 September 2004

Nearly 50 cavers attended this year's annual cavers dinner held at the Bankstown Sports Club. Al Warild presented an excellent talk on his exploits and attendance with a international team of cavers pushing Mexico's deepest caves

With lots of door prizes donated by outdoor stores and CHOICE Magazine everybody went home with something!



Joe Sydney/HCG

Al talks about Mexican Caves

Cave Art 'formations' for sale!

By Joe Sydney

Whilst driving along Parramatta Rd, Auburn to my surprise I found these Chinese cave formations sitting inside a sales yard, for sale. I immediately reported this to ASF but not long soon after, the company went bust! Who knows where these magnificent formations went too.



Joe Sydney/HCG



Joe Sydney/HCG

HCG SRT Day

By Bruce Waddington

There was a SRT training day at Mt Portal near Glenbrook on Sunday 3 Oct 2004. It was to be held on the Saturday but the weather was a bit wet. There was from Joe, Bruce, Lindsay and Steve and Mirko and Anke. Joe and Bruce met up at Glenbrook and drove to the park entrance to find it closed with a Park/causeway closed sign! Luckily this was from the Saturday and the Ranger said the causeway was alright. The drive from the Park gate to Mt Portal is much shorter than anticipated – only about 20 minutes! Mt Portal has a great view of Penrith city, Nepean River and Sydney. The Mt Portal cliffs are bolted (two sizes) and luckily Joe had bolt plates suitable for small bolts. 4 ropes were rigged for abseiling / SRT. Our hardware was laid out for all to review and comment. We talked about our gear and advantages/disadvantages of different set ups. SRT rigs were either built from scratch or rebuilt/tweaked - this took a great deal of time. All members abseiled with two practising SRT. Lunch was great - sandwiches! Morning & arvo teas was also great - junk teacake! Left park at 5:15pm in time for a 6pm close. Headed back to Glenbrook for a coffee but all shops were closed EXCEPT Go-Wild outdoor shop - in total we spent over \$500 buying hardware! Then a cold front hit with heavy rain so we headed back to Sydney.



Anke on one of the big overhang



Bruce and Steven looking at our rescourses.



Members sorting out the gear.



Lindsay prussicking up the main pitch.



The Mt Portal lookout showing bolt placements and magnificent view.

North Durras Sea Cave trip

By Bruce Waddington



North Durras sea cave

There was a trip to North Durras on Easter Saturday 10 April 2004 by Evalt, Lindsay, Bruce, Steve & Megan & family. Lindsay and Bruce drove down to Evalt's on Friday afternoon and helped consume some red wine and seafood on Friday night. Steve and family arrived at Evalt's North Nowra home early on Saturday morning and after greetings and cups of tea and coffee they got ready to drive down the coast. They all headed off and drove through Milton (markets on in main street), Ulladulla (very busy), Burril Lake etc and eventually found the turn off to North Durras via the Mt Agony Road. They found the track leading down to the beach through the national park just before you get into North Durras and parked the vehicles and got ready to walk to the beach. On getting to the beach they started looking north of the track along the edge of the rock face. There was one large cave entrance that only went in about 20 meters but it closed right down and there was no dark zone. So they kept walking north and Lindsay and Bruce walked right around the northern headland but found no caves in this area. They walked back then looked at the rock face south of where the track came down to the beach and found the cave they were looking for about 100 meters from the track. It had a low wide entrance on the sand with a slight incline and low crawl for about 20 metres then it opened up into a large chamber you could stand up in and walk around about 30 metres across. There was a passage heading off to the left that lead to another entrance in a small rockpile further along and around and a bit higher up the rock face. There may be a need for a return trip to survey and map the cave. North Durras would be a good place to camp overnight for a weekend trip. After having a good look at the cave and taking some photos they walked back up to the cars and drove into North Durras to get something to eat only to find that it was only a small holiday village with no

shops. So they drove back to the highway and headed north to Termeil and stopped at the roadhouse to get some late lunch. On the way back Steve wanted to stop and look at a fossil site near a rock platform at north Ulladulla. This was a good spot to look for fossils and would be of interest to Joe. After having a good look along the rocks and collecting a few fossil rocks they headed back to Nowra. Steve and family went straight back to Sydney and Lindsay and Bruce went back to Evalt's and had a cup of tea before heading back home.

Eddie Powell returns!

By Bruce Waddington

We were privileged to have Eddie Powell at the June meeting as a guest visitor from HCG's distant past. Eddie is an old friend of Evalt's and was a former HCG member back in the 1960's caving mostly in the Bungonia area. Evalt was best man at both of Eddie's marriages. He was involved in an accident with a truck out the front of Evalt's home at Liverpool in 1964 and was not expected to live so a new find at Bungonia was dedicated to his name – Powell's Pot. He has recently given his entire slide collection to HCG. It was good to see Eddie after all these years.



Photos: Eddie Powell Collection

Can you help and shed light on where these photos were taken and who are in them? Please contact HCG!

HCG Long Weekend BBQ

Ian Lutherborrow held his usual June long weekend club BBQ at his home at Appin on Sunday 13 June 2004. It was the usual BYO everything with the usual bonfire, no fireworks.

Abercrombie Caves Trip

By Bruce Waddington

There was a trip to Abercrombie on 27/28 March 2004 by Joe, Dave, Lindsay, Steve & Megan & family. They stayed in the cottage which was quite comfortable and only a short walk to the arch and caves. The manager Barry Cubitt and ex member of HCG was glad to see them and gave them the master key to the caves and told them where not to go. It was a fairly lay back weekend and they all had a good time. Lots of photos were taken. Some GPS readings were taken at some cave entrances. Barry was impressed by this and would like more done. Perhaps this could be taken on as a possible club project if members are interested. Steve has written a detailed report of the trip and will send this to Barry.



South Arch

All photos by Joe Sydney



The cottage.



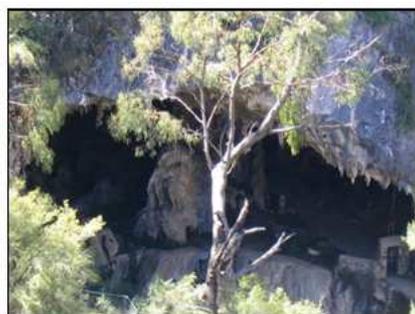
North Arch entrance.



Crayback formation in North Arch.



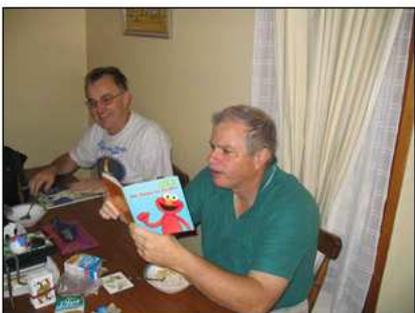
Visit to Bushrangers cave.



South Arch entrance.



Valley view of South Arch.



David and Lindsay with some tough reading!



Blowing entrance at top of main archway.



David looking into blowing entrance.

SSS 50th Anniversary and Wombeyan Caves Book launch

By Joe Sydney



All photos by Joe Sydney

As past members of SSS, both David Rothery and I attended the SSS 50th anniversary and Wombeyan Caves book launch held at Wombeyan Caves on 6-7 November 2004. Many cavers have been members of SSS so it was not unusual to see other cavers there over the weekend. Stephen McCabe (HCG) also attended with family as well as cavers from many other clubs also paying their respects.

Saturday commenced with catching up with SSS friends, long forgotten cavers and visits to the show caves. Later in the afternoon we all headed to the SSS tent to look at the display of SSS 50 year achievements and to buy a few books. We were soon herded down to the main arch area where Ben Nurse long standing President welcomed guests and invited officials to speak about SSS's caving history. After the speeches we were invited back to the tent area to watch the official book launch, cake cutting and enjoy a slice of 50 year cake. Later that evening the official party commenced in the big marquee with more speeches followed by a fine meal.

Sunday was spent resting and a visit to the No.4 marble quarry. It was a fascinating visit to a recent Park acquisition. Much of the quarry was left in situ so we could all see how they cut and mined the marble. We managed to spend a good half day there but not before a short visit to the operational quarry too. It is amazing how quickly the weekend went just talking and ambling around on of the most beautiful caving areas we have. Out thanks to SSS for the invitation to share this auspicious occasion.



Visitors mingle.



Official welcome and speeches.



David Rothery (HCG) and John Bonwick (SSS) looking at the SSS publications.



SSS's 50th anniversary cake!



The formal dinner!



Silhouette of the SSS bat!



Quarry entrance.



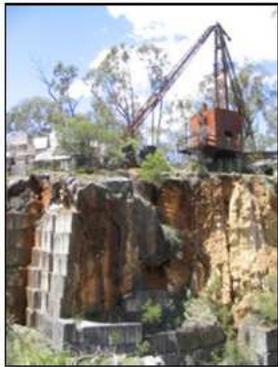
Visitors in the quarry.



Old quarry machinery.



The old boiler.



Quarry with machinery.



The road home via tunnel cutting.



The visit to the operational quarry.

Hail Tuglow!

By Joe Sydney of HCG

Attendance

Joe Sydney
David Rothery
Bruce Waddington
Lindsay Matheson
Chris Ross/Germany
Michael Wasmund/Germany
Peter Brady/UTSS
Andrew Baker/UTSS

23-24 October 2004



Tuglow track/Joe Sydney-HCG

Underground river, pounding waterfall, Tarzan swing, what better way of introducing Australian caving to our international guests.

Tuglow Caves are located in wild limestone country between the world heritage listed Jenolan and Wombeyan Caves some 200 kilometres west of Sydney. Reportedly found by the Wilcox brothers who had property in the area during the early 1800s. In those early days access was originally with packhorse, but in 1965 a fire trail was blazed close to the main cave entrance from the western side. Later on the road continued and crossed the Kowmung River creating a short cut to Jenolan Caves and onto the convict township of Hartley and Lithgow. The road is still open today but can only be accessed by 4wd, especially the crossing of the Kowmung River. It wasn't until the mid-1900s that Tuglow Caves were seriously explored and yet again by SUSS in 1998.

Leyland Brothers

Many cavers and adventures were inspired by two members of the Newcastle Speleological Association, Mike and Mal Leyland who in 1965 went on to make a television documentary of Tuglow Caves for their series *The Leyland Brothers*. Who can forget the catchy tune at the start of the program and the highlight of seeing Mike climbing into the cave depths using only a piece of manila rope. Intrepid stuff! Today, with high technology rope, descenders

and ascenders the job of getting in and out of the cave is much easier and safer.

It has been some time since HCG visited Tuglow Caves so at a recent meeting we decided it was time for a visit. This trip co-incided with two new members Chris and Ross of Germany who are both keen and very experienced cavers. In chatting with UTSSS, they too were invited on the trip to boost numbers so Peter Brady and Andrew Baker tagged along. Tuglow Caves is a cave system controlled by NPWS so a permit was applied for and granted.

Friday, the drive to Boss Hill

Joe drove our international guests Chris and Michael to Tuglow whilst all the others made their own way. The meeting point was Boss Hill on the edge of the escarpment overlooking the Kowmung River. Along the way Joe stopped off at Jenolan Caves to show our international guests that the caves are so big we drive through them! This impressed them! The drive is long and the road good and to keep the driver going we played some great music, well' Chris thought it was good. We arrived late at Boss Hill and pitched camp for the night.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Chris and Michael awed by Jenolan's Grand Arch

at the entrance looking in but he did not look like that he was going to enter.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Pete standing in the Kowmung River.

Saturday, Tuglow time

In the morning most of us had arrived and rested well. Joe pulled out the hot plate and started cooking breakfast and with a long hard day ahead, shared the copious amount of the full fat breakfast of sausages, eggs, bacon, tomato and mushrooms.

Whilst cooking we sorted out the gear that was needed and straight after breakfast, we hopped into the 4wds and drove down the steep hill to the Kowmung River crossing.



Joe's camera/HCG

The Subi crossing the Kowmung River.



Lindsay Matheson/HCG

Sorting the caving gear.

Crossing the Kowmung River

Pete arrived first so checked out the water level and by the time Joe arrived, Pete was up to his chest in water. This dismayed Joe who said, "I'm not taking the Subi Forester across that and sinking it a second time!" At that point Pete stood up showing that the water level was only thigh deep and we all laughed. Joe drove the Subi across with no problems.

The caves car park was only a few hundred metres on and the walk to the caves short. There was a guy

At the entrance we rigged the first pitch to abseil into the cave. The descent was easy and could have probably been done free climbing, almost like Mike Leyland! The second pitch was through a small hole that led to a small earthed landing platform. There was enough room here for 4-5 of us. Joe rigged the third and final pitch to the river and whilst waiting for others lay on the ground for a rest. On looking up he found a pocket of breccia bone deposit wall containing thousands of tiny bones, possible the remains of small bats. Soon the others arrived and we all abseiled down to the river level.

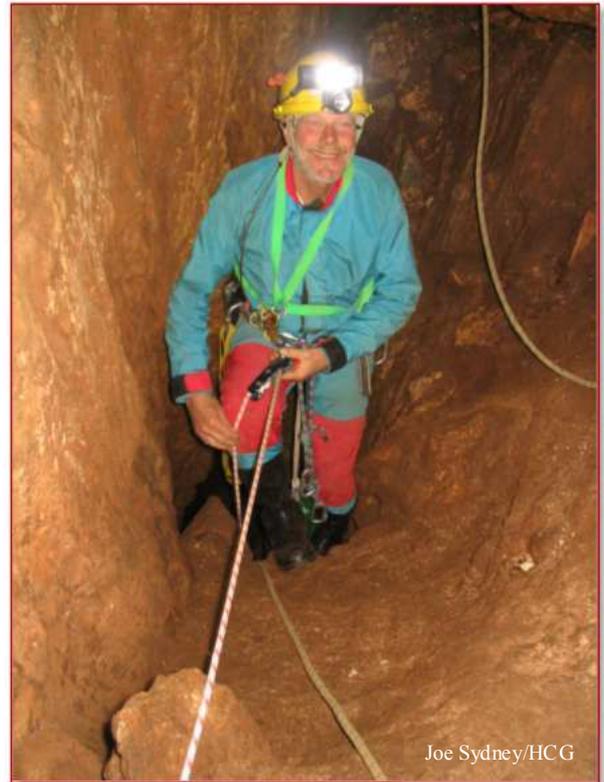
Knobbly Knights Knob Chamber

On hitting the river level we all headed upstream passing two lovely water filled gour pools that looked like roman bathtubs. Pushing on we climbed above the river to higher levels finding a Tarzan rope so we swung across. At the other side a little further on was another handline leading into a small tight squeazy passageway. A little further on we hit Knobbly Knights Knob chamber with its sentinel, the Knobbly Knight!



Joe Sydney/HCG

Michael on the 3rd pitch.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Chris on the 3rd pitch.



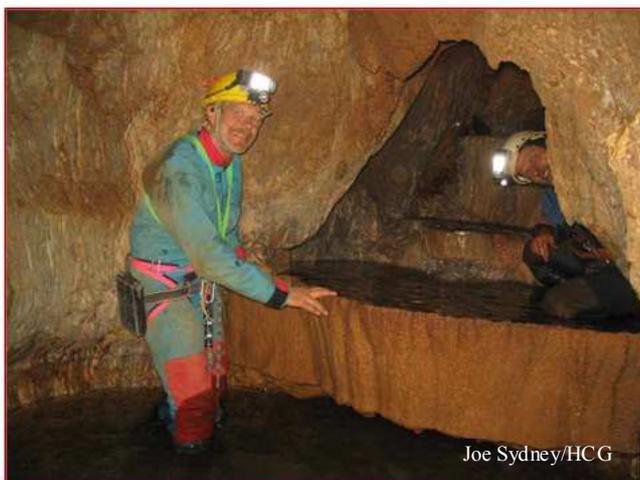
Joe Sydney/HCG

Breccia at 3rd pitch.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Upper section near Tarzan swing.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Chris and Michael at the gour pools.

Underground River and Abseil

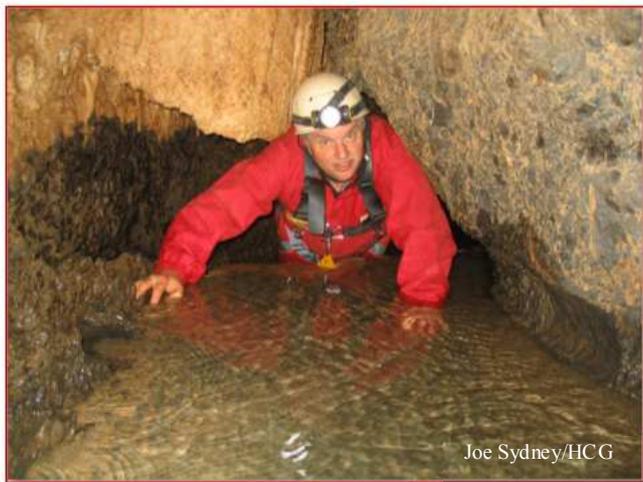
Moving on up to the back of the chamber this led to a lower level where we could now make out the low rumblings of the underground river. We soon found the river and followed it to the top of the 15 meter abseil finding two conveniently placed ring bolts. At this point we could look over the edge into the depths below but could not see a thing so we set up the abseil. One by one we descended into the darkness and spray of the waterfall. At the bottom we found a large deep pool with the river moving through a narrow slot.



Joe Sydney/HCG

15 metre waterfall

The slot was deep in places with the odd duck under making us swim the short sections. At times the water diverted allowing us to either walk the narrow passage or crawl on our hands and knees. It wasn't long before we reached the location of where we started so we decided to have a look further downstream.



Joe Sydney/HCG

David is streamway.

Anvil Room and exit

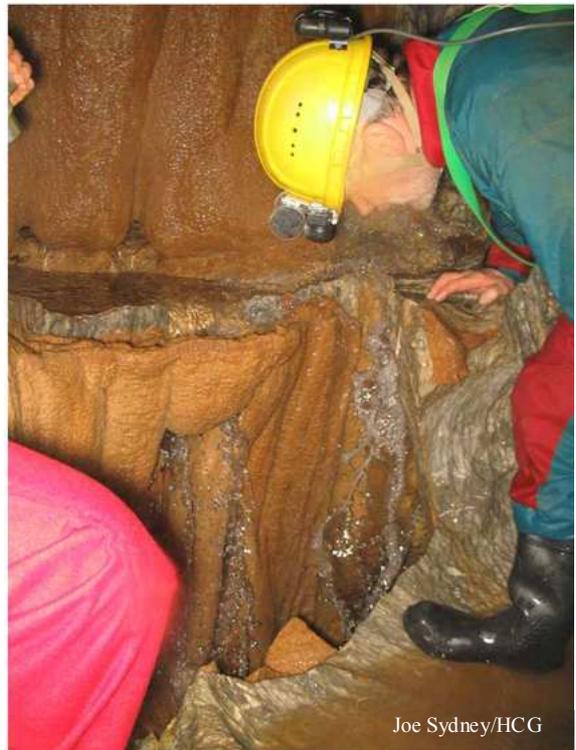
A short distance on we found the climb up to the 'Anvil Room' where we took a few photos and signed the book. A few of us had a good look around and found that at the back of the chamber and a bit higher up, it poked out about mid way between the third abseil. Later on we found out that this is one way down avoiding an abseil.



Joe Sydney/HCG

David in the 'Anvil Room'.

Following the stream passage it wasn't long before it choked off with the water flowing into a small hole too tight for us to attempt so we headed back to the entry point.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Chris looks into the end of the river.

Where are the headlights?

Crossing the Kowmung River was very interesting at night. With headlights and spotlights on full, it made driving the narrow dirt road that much better especially when descending the steep river entry point into the river, but, the lights soon blacked out when the nose of the car dipped into the river. Without lights made the initial dip that much more hair raising not knowing where the rough causeway sides were. Now that we were committed the car plunged forward, levelled with the headlights beaming underwater almost all the way to the other side. Then we all heard an almighty sigh of relief coming from driver and passengers.

The drive up the hill was steep with the fully laden Subi managing it well. On reaching camp a cooking fire was lit with Joe cooking a feast chicken Thai stir fry with Ceasar Salad. What a great end to the day!

Sunday at Jenolan Caves

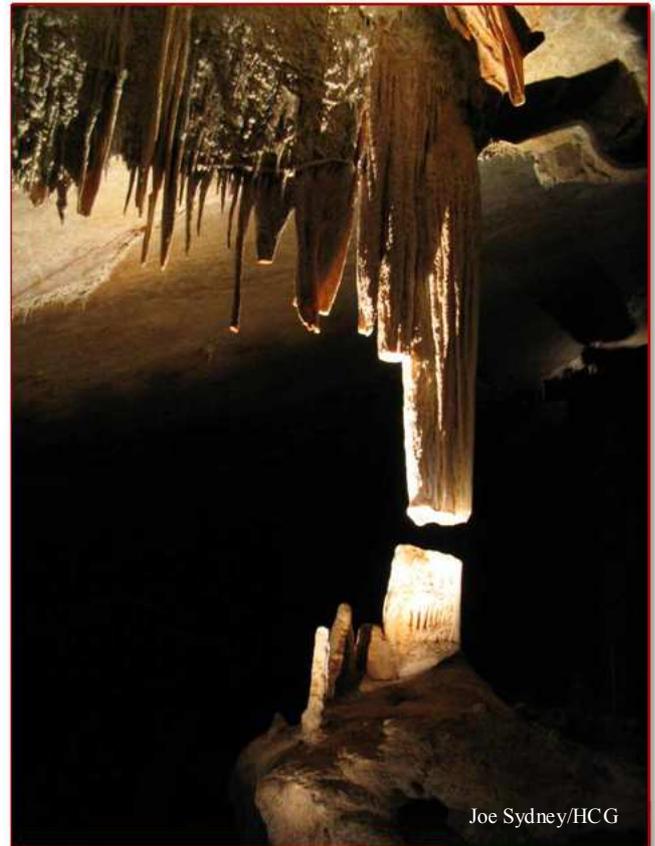
Sunday morning was spent resting and packing up slowly but as were doing this, the sky to the west looked awfully black. This gave us the incentive to pack a little faster and make our way to Jenolan Caves. Joe popped into see the guides and asked if we could tag onto a tour with our international guests. The guides were very hospitable and allowed us to tag onto the Lucas tour which impressed our guests. We were very privileged as the caves were now using new corrected colour fluoro lighting making the cave formations that much more brilliant.

On exiting the cave tour and saying our farewells we suddenly felt a cold snap in the air which felt very strange. We noted that the road sign changed allowing tourists to drive out of Jenolan so we hopped into the car and headed up the Five Mile Hill. At the top the chill set in and to our surprise we found the countryside covered in a sea of hail. Now we knew the reason why it felt so cold. ■



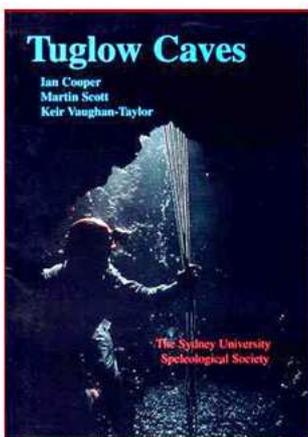
Joe Sydney/HCG

Hail by the side of the road.



Joe Sydney/HCG

New lighting lights up the Broken Column, Lucas Cave.



Tuglow Caves Book

Published 1998

Description, history, route guides, maps for Tuglow Cave and surrounds

\$16 inc GST plus postage

Contact SUSS for your bopok order!

<http://suss.caves.org.au/publications.html>

Buy me!

Burma fire trail, rock glide trip.

By Bruce Waddington

Sat 4 Dec 2004

After the HCG meeting at the Crabbs home, and after lunch and a few ales, a few intrepid soles (Ian, Brice, Joan, Joe, David, Lindsay, Steve and Flash) decided to go for a drive west along Illaroo Road to the Burma Fire Trail to look for some sandstone block gliding and sandstone caves in the Morton National Park on the northern side of the Shoalhaven River. The area is more accessible than Nangwarry on the southern side of the Shoalhaven River. The area was very impressive with a few big holes where the sandstone was breaking away with some of them being quite deep. We checked out these along the top whilst Ian walked around the bottom. Sadly, we didn't have enough gear to get in to explore the many entrances. There is a small cutting in the escarpment that leads down to a track that we followed a little way and it looked like it continued down to the river. Apparently this area has not been documented. There will be another trip in the future to have a proper look in the caves.



Rock glide.



David looking into one of the many fissures.

Life's Hard School

Author Phil Leighton-Daly

Book review by Joe Sydney

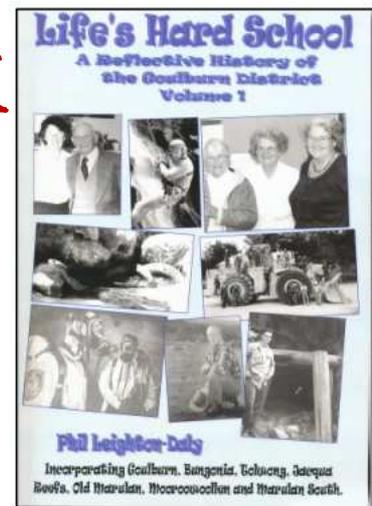
Many cavers think of Bungonia as a place just to go caving. The book explains the fascinating relationship between the Bungonia and the Goulburn district from the early days of settlement until modern times. Stories are told by people who lived and still live in the area with research from archival material.

Read about Bungonia's Underworld with insight into Bungonia National Park's early history with old tourist cave brochures and explanation as to how some of the caves were named and why.

If you've ever done Spring Creek canyon within the Park you would have come across many mining artifacts and walked the paths of long gone gold miners who worked the 1880s Jacqua Goldfield and lived close by at Depression Village. The book contains much information about such places including photographs of Tolwong mines, its operation, and the flying fox that crossed the Shoalhaven River. Who would have expected so much activity within the Park!

In more recent times locals who worked the Marulan limestone quarry tell of their tales with photographs of their workings. The book is not just about the area but of people and the stories they tell.

There is much in this book that will interest cavers!



A4 size soft cover with 250 B&W pages packed with photos, maps, old letters, State Records, clippings, and more.

\$30 per book

Book available from:

Bungonia Park Office
838 Lookdown Road
Bungonia NSW 2580

bungonia@environment.nsw.gov.au