

Calcite

Journal of the Highland Caving Group



Issue 46-December 2011

Caves for sale

Colong Caves, NSW

Next Cave Surveying Course

Wyanbene Caves and Big Hole

Bungonia Caves

Tuglow Caves

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 www.hcg.org.au
HCG1 eGroup for members groups.yahoo.com/group/HCG1

HCG Committee 2011/2012

President	Ian Lutherborrow	president@hcg.org.au
Vice President	Joe Sydney	vice.pres@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 46 - December 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

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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

Graeme Smith, and

Bruce Waddington.

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Cover photo

Luke Gannon, Ian Luthorborrow, Jason Moule and Greg Ray discussing the way on in Colong Cave. See page 16.

Photo by: Greg Ray (HCG)

ASF, HCG, Projects and News

Be a mug, and get a HCG Mug! Only 1 left!



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

Trogalong

*HARDEN-up and
escape the colony!*

6-11 January 2013



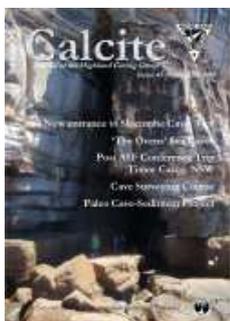
Organization for the 29th bi-ennial ASF conference is well under way. Trogalong will be held at St Clements retreat-Galong, NSW. The venue suits all of ASF's needs including being central to many karst areas such as Wee Jasper, Yarrangobilly, Bungonia and more.

St Clements Retreat

<http://www.stclement.com.au/>

Put this event and date into your diary now!

Calcite 45, a journal worth reading!



Calcite 45 can be downloaded for 'free' from the HCG website.

For your 'free' copy of Calcite visit:

www.hcg.org.au/publications

We've finally added a counter to our website and to our surprise; we're getting over 2000 hits per month!

If you like Calcite we'd like to hear from you. Please contact us.

Calcite mentioned in cave management journal

The journal of the Australian Caves and Karst Management Association's (ACKMA) September 2011 issue contained a lot of interesting articles.

- Caves Australia magazine,
- NHVSS Timor court challenge
- Managing access to caves in the digital age,
- Canterbury earthquake causes damage to local caves (NZ),
- Infectious diseases associated with caves, an Australian perspective,
- A visit to Smoo Cave, the only show cave in Scotland,
- Borenore (NSW) re-visited,
- Wee Jasper Caves book review,
- Cape Range inscribed on the world heritage list,

And two books reviews.

It also mentioned that Calcite was...worth a look! If you're interested in knowing more, contact Joe.

HCG project picked up internationally!

The B4-5 Cave paleo-sediment project is now making world news! Parks NSW drafted a press release about the HCG/CSS B4-5 paleo sediment bridge project (*see Calcite 45*) which was picked up by the international Bridge Design and Engineering journal, and, local Windellema news.

The journal is a quarterly publication about all aspects of bridge construction and management worldwide. So, in essence, our cave bridge now sits beside some of the world's most interesting bridges such as the world's tallest suspension bridge in Mallau, France which is a MUST to see even on the net. Read all about the HCG/CSS bridge in the news section at www.bridgeweb.com

On a more local level, it hit the Windellema News:
www.windellema.com.au

Brother caver, can you spare me a cool million! Mt Sebastopol for sale!

By Joe Sydney



View from Mt Sebastopol
One Agency-Kempsey

David Collett, owner of the Mt Sebastopol property (NSW) and Kempsey Speleological Society member has decided to part with a little known piece of unique karst area. If you have a spare \$850,000, then the property can be yours! Rising from the floor of the McLeay valley, Mt Sebastopol is in the outcrop of Yessabah limestone about 48kms west of Kempsey-NSW. It is the mid-section of a large arc of limestone which stretches from Yessabah in the east to Kunderang Brook in the west and adjoins Willi Willi National Park and caves reserve.

Mt Sebastopol demonstrates outstanding geodiversity and biodiversity (particularly for its surface solution features and cave habitats) and has been the subject of past studies by geomorphologists and biologists.

Cavers also frequently visit the property yet little has been recorded owing to its isolation and distance. More than 20 caves on the 462Ha property have been recorded. This exhibits a complex process of evolution shown by features such as false floors, sediment remnants, rising tubes, and corroded flowstone juts and pendants. Ancient phosphate deposits indicate large pre-existing bat populations; biotic and abiotic cave contents and have considerable potential to further the knowledge of ecological and landform evolution in the area. It also has significant crystal deposition, and the only aragonite speleothems in the Macleay karst.

The area is well and truly worth a visit and further exploration with the possibility of excellent finds. Whilst your there, why not go caving with Kempsey Speleological Society and also visit Yessabah and Moparrabah Caves in the too.

Google Map: The property is 'mountain' with the 'dark green' patch to the left (west) of the house.
<http://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-30.943311,152.486286&hl=en&ll=-30.942243,152.489419&spn=0.03125,0.055747&num=1&t=h&vpsrc=6&z=15>

Real Estate webpage:

<http://www.realestate.com.au/property-lifestyle-nsw-moparrabah-7360806>

Reference: Preliminary Summary Values: Mt Sebastopol Karst Values by Karst and Geodiversity Unit Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Scrubby Creek Buchan-Vic for sale!



The family owners of Scrubby Creek-Buchan have put their 105 acres up for sale. With undulating land nestled in the hills just north of the township of Buchan and its spring fed dams, you can enjoy the uninterrupted views of the adjacent National Park. This property has been tightly held in the family for many generations.

A well kept secret lies beneath, of a significant surveyed cave discovered close to the turn of the last century by the "Moon" family. The Scrubby Creek cave is formed in Buchan Limestone. It has a classic active stream passage with a surveyed length of 1.5km. Situated along the western edge of the Buchan basin where the Snowy River Volcanic and the gentle slopes of the Buchan Caves Limestone meet. A once in a lifetime lifestyle property.

For more info, contact King & Heath of Bairnsdale-Vic

03 5152 3311

www.kingheath.com.au



Jan 2012: The ASF Karst Conservation Fund has approved the Rimstone Cooperative Ltd (Vic) proposal to support the purchase of the Scrubby Creek Cave property. Rimstone has now agreed a price, paid a deposit and will sign a Contract of Sale soon.

Floyd Collins recital hits Sydney!

By Joe Sydney



Scott Melton/Jenolan Guide

Ten cavers and Jenolan Caves guides attended Australia's first performance of the tragic US cavers tale of Floyd Collins at City Recital Hall, Sydney on Monday 3 May 2010. Floyd died in winter (Feb) 1925 as a result of being pinned by a small 8kg 'leg of

lamb' shaped rock in a small passage whilst exploring in Sand Cave, Kentucky USA.

It was a dream of Floyd's to find that alluring 'big cave' that would create instant wealth through a recent surge in cave tourism. The farcical rescue attempt failed to rescue Floyd but not before thousands of on lookers descended on the area with many hawking their Floyd Collins souvenirs.

The concert was more a recital of music performed by a cast of actors singers with an interesting improvised performance portraying the entrapment of Floyd. The 10 cavers enjoyed the performance overall considering the unusual topic of a trapped caver. Only the Americans can turn such a tragedy into a ...musical.

Attendees:

Joe Sydney-HCG, David Rothery-HCG, Cathy Brown-HCG, Jennifer McCandliss-David's partner, Scott Melton-Jenolan Caves guide, Michael Collins-SUSS and Jenolan Caves Guide, Rod Smith-Jenolan Caves guide, Ted Mathews-Jenolan Caves guide, Cindy Mann-BMSC, Phil Niciak-BMSC and Mandy ?-BMSC guest

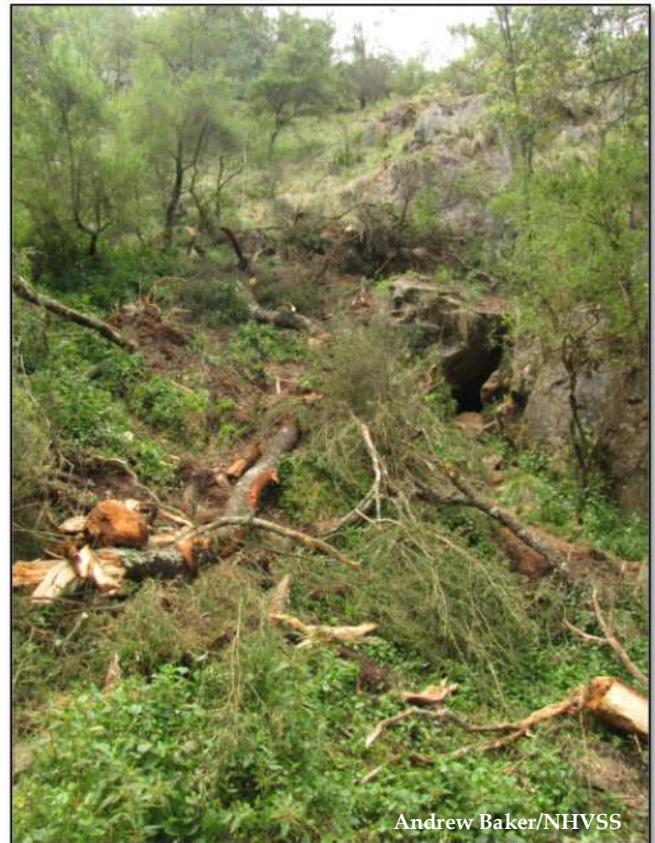
Crash, bang! Mammoth Cave entrance- Jenolan, nearly wiped out!

Whilst on a UTSSS caving trip to Jenolan on October 2011, Andrew Baker to his surprise found that a very large tree above the Mammoth Cave entrance had collapsed and taken out everything in its path and nearly the entrance too. Thanks for sharing Andrew!



Andrew Baker/NHVSS

The culprit! Big isn't it!



Andrew Baker/NHVSS

The devastating path of the fallen tree.

HCG and SUSS members awarded with Parks recognition

HCG member Joe Sydney along with Jill Rowling of SUSS were invited by NSW Parks southern region to attend a morning tea celebrating national volunteer day at the Fitzroy Falls Parks centre on Dec 5th. Both cavers sit on the Bungonia Recreation Advisory Group (BRAG) and have input into the management of the Park. They were recognized for their contribution and awarded a small National Parks pin as thanks.

NSWSC BBQ

HCG once again catered for the October 2011 NSW Speleological Council meeting with a gourmet BBQ. Joe fired up his BBQ and made a tasty salad with a delicious apple crumble and this time with ice-cream. SUSS members Mike Lake and Jill Rowling hosted this event with some 15 cavers attending. Cathy Brown represented HCG at this meeting.

Tricketts Arch Bio-banking Declaration

By Joe Sydney



Owners of Tricketts Arch, Peter and Sharon Dykes invited ASF and cavers to attend a bio-banking declaration ceremony on their property on 12-13 November 2011. Tricketts Arch is a small property close to Oberon, NSW and the World Heritage listed Jenolan Caves. It is part of the same belt of limestone as Tuglow Caves and there are other close karst areas such as Colong, Murruin Creek and Wombeyan.

It's a unique property discovered by Oliver Trickett then geologist to the NSW Colonial Government. The property is named in honor of Oliver Trickett. Tricketts Arch lists some 53 caves and features along with remnant stands of old growth forest and rare plants. Conserving Tricketts Arch and these values was a passion for the Dykes family which has now been achieved.

Tricketts Arch is also rich in history dating back thousands of years of indigenous use with examples of important sites still in use today. In fact, the Dykes dream for the property is an Aboriginal cultural centre for all to use.

More recent times during the late 1880s saw the Tuglow Copper mine exploit the area for its resources until its ore ran out. These are the days when ore was transported by pack horse from mine to Sydney for export processing.

During the declaration, Peter Dykes provided an insight into the values of bio-banking, the property and its history. Mr Tom Grosskopf from the Dept of Environment, Climate Change and Water also spoke of the value and importance of the property and the need to preserve the flora and fauna.



Peter Dykes talks about the Bio-banking project.

Joe Sydney, Senior Vice-President of ASF and member of Highland Caving Group (HCG) attended the declaration and provided a few words on the values of the karst on Tricketts Arch. Other HCG members also attended: Cathy Brown, Ian Lutherborrow, Joan Crabb and John Dunkley.



The Flat, site of the declaration.

Yeehaw! Did John Wayne ever visit Capertee Valley

During the clean up of dolines on the newly acquired NSW Parks Port Macquarie property in December 2010, cavers found the remains of a rusty old rifle. From photos, Joe Sydney of HCG was recently able to have the rifle identified as a Winchester Model 92, or, 1892. It's a common rifle model manufactured from the 1890s to 1940s. It was easily identified because of its hexagonal shaped barrel and classic handle.



Unknown photographer

It's similar to the one John Wayne use in Hollywood western movies. More details can be found at the following link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester_Model_1892

HCG Xmas BBQ

By Bruce Waddington

The HCG 2011 Xmas BBQ was held at the Ray's home at Loftus on Sunday 4 December 2011. It turned out to be a very cold summer's afternoon that got even colder and wetter later on. Joe and John were the first to arrive at around 11am.

Fiona had taken Tahlia and Willow to Sunday school as it may have been the last before Christmas so was not there until closer to noon. In the meantime Lindsay, Bruce and Ebony (Bruce's grand-daughter) turned up followed later by Joan.

After consuming a few munchies and nibbles we summoned up the courage to go outside to check out the backyard and have a look at the bush over the back fence. Alas no one braved the fantastic (cold) weather to take a dip in the pool, not even the kids. So much for a summer BBQ.

Greg fired up the BBQ on the back deck just as it started raining whilst Fiona whipped up a salad with Joan's help. As the meat was put on the rain got really heavy and was blowing in from the south straight onto the BBQ which made cooking very uncomfortable.

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Joe Sydney/HCG

The temperature also plummeted so there was a hasty retreat into the house once everything was cooked. Cheerful conversation was made mostly around caving with the odd question asked, when's our next caving trip?



Joe Sydney/HCG

Everyone then had lunch inside, out of the rain and soon found it was time for dessert. Fiona had made a traditional Aussie Pavlova and fruit salad and Joe had brought along a chocolate cake with chocolate icing and the HCG logo on top (but was this the accepted logo???, haha). Plus, there was ice cream to top all of this off.

Everything was washed down with copious cups of hot coffee, tea and to our surprise, a bottle of bubbly Xmas cheer provided by John Dunkley and just as we thought we'd consumed a bit of everything, Joan produced a large bowl of M&Ms to complete the day.

A good afternoon was had by all even though it was pretty cold. There was no SRT practice due to the weather so this will have to wait for another time.

Smartphones finally access satellite networks with SPOT Connect



Media release October 12, 2011

Pivotal has launched SPOT Connect, the revolutionary device that allows Australians to use their Smartphone to access satellite phone networks for the first time ever, to ensure that they can always stay in touch, even when venturing 'off the grid'.

The device allows users to update social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter, send emails and texts as well as issue SOS emergency beacons with GPS coordinates and a personal message, to allow for a coordinated and efficient rescue operation.

The device is set to provide Australians who regularly travel off the beaten track with the simplest and most cost effective way yet, of staying safe and in touch. "It doesn't matter whether you are in Uluru or hiking the Inca Trail, you will now be able to tell your friends all about it, as it happens."

When activated in a critical or life threatening emergency, SPOT Connect's SOS function continues to notify the GEOS International Response Coordination Centre of your location every 5 minutes as well as inform local emergency response agencies and private rescue contractors, anywhere in the world.

"Many people don't realise that regular cellular networks only cover less than a quarter of Australia's landmass, so it's extremely important to be prepared while outside metropolitan areas in case something goes wrong."

SPOT Connect is small, lightweight and simply connects to a user's Smartphone via Bluetooth and an App which can be downloaded for Android and Apple Smartphones. It can also integrate with Google Maps to provide regular location updates to loved ones, who can be grouped to ensure that the right people are being notified of your whereabouts at all times.

The SPOT Connect module is available for \$279 plus an additional subscription to utilise the satellite tracking and messaging services.

For more information on SPOT Connect and where you can buy the unit, please visit au.findmespot.com/en

ACKMA's 25th Birthday AGM 2012 4-6 MAY 2012

Careys Cave and the Wee Jasper Valley will host the next ACKMA AGM. We cannot offer multiple caves, amazing adventures and the latest in cave lighting developments. What we can offer is a no-frills and inexpensive AGM in Australia's loveliest valley – coupled with great hospitality.

Any queries should be directed to:

Suzanne: suzanne.newnham@skymesh.com.au
(02) 62277247 a/h

Geoff: geoff@weejaspercaves.com
(02) 62277247 a/h

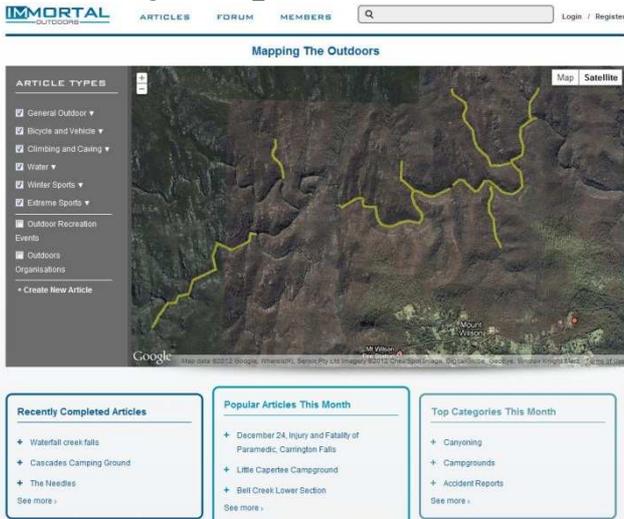
Andy: aspate1@bigpond.com
+ 61 (0) 407 293 301

Vale Barbara Schomer



HCG members were recently saddened to hear of the passing of Barbara Schomer. Barbara recently lost her battle with cancer back home in the US. Barbara and partner Bru Randall are past members of HCG when they were living, working and caving in Australia. Many Australian cavers met Barbara and Bru as both are keen cavers who travel the world working and teaching in many countries including Australia. HCG extends its condolences to Bru and both families.

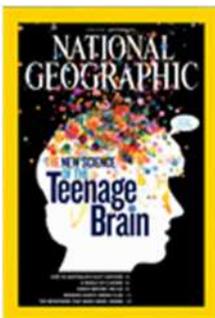
Immortal Blue Mountains canyons plotted on-line



Have you ever wanted to see all of the Sydney Canyons marked out on one large map, so you can see them in relation to one another? How close they are to one another, how long or short some are etc? Well now you can!

It isn't really the purpose of the website, but it is one of the cool consequences of it! The purpose of Immortal Outdoors is to enable a community of people to add articles and map data for any type of outdoor activity that they want, and then allow visitors to browse through all of those activities through an intuitive map interface (as well as the usual search options etc).

Rather than trying to explain it all, it is easiest to just look at the site - it pretty much explains itself I think:
<http://immortaloutdoors.com/>



National Geographic October 2011 issue Australia's SlotCanyons



With no ropes and no GPS, Aussies plunge into the hidden canyons of the Blue Mountains (NSW).

Read it all in the
National Geographic
October issue.

The search for a good canyon boots continues

Not on Ozcanyons! Then you're missing out on conversation about Volleys being discontinued! So, what can we replace our canyoning shoes with? Here are a couple of suggestions.



OTB SAR Amphib Boot

2 pairs for AU\$120!

Looks like a hot price.

<http://www.legear.com.au/OTB-SAR-Amphib-Boot-p/otb-sar2.htm>



Marine Boot- Abyss II

Designed and
engineered at the
request of the US Navy
Seals.

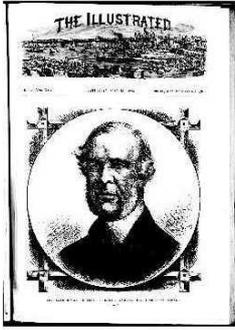
US\$220.00

http://www.scubaonline.com.au/military-amphibious-boots-c-87_112/abyss-ii-6-boots-p-4754

Knit one, pearl one..cute bat knitting design.



My work colleague (Ed) found this on the net and knitted me this bat! If you're good with needles, the cute knittable bat design can be purchased from www.knittables.co.uk



Illustrated Sydney News,
13 May 1882, p.18

The Apple Tree Flat Caves

Although this area is known as Queens Pinch within ASF, the caves have been known about for some time.

These caves, which are comparatively unknown outside the district in which they are situated, have recently been described by a visitor, who, writing to a Mudgee paper, says: "In company with a couple of companions, we started on a lovely morning, the clearness of the air after the recent rains showing the outlines of the hills passing down the Sydney road with a distinctness we have never before observed, and after a pleasant drive of about twelve miles we reached the farm of Mr. Bates, at Appletree Flat. We found that worthy keeping holiday also, and he at once became our guide, philosopher, and friend for the occasion. Arming himself with a tomahawk and some 60 or 70 feet of strong greenhide rope he led us up a steep and craggy ridge to the westward of his residence, near to the summit of which the entrance of one of the caves is situated. There are two entrances, one of which involves a sheer descent of about 35 feet, the other being more circuitous but safer and easier of return. Having cut a couple of saplings some 14 feet in length, we let them down the entrance till the ends rested on a ledge of rock, and fastening the rope to a rock above, with its aid we passed ourselves down to the first landing. The next descent was more difficult as the passage in one place will barely admit the body of a medium-sized man.

On passing this aperture we again found standing room, and rested to admire a stalactite pillar, some six feet in circumference, and about seven feet in height, which appeared to be placed in its position for the purpose of supporting the rock overhead. Passing down another stage, various ramifications were to be seen extending in all directions, the sides and roof in many places presenting a beautiful appearance in consequence of the stalactites which adorn them. Some points of rock looked like an enormous cauliflower, and others looked like coral rock, being, as a matter of fact, composed of the same material. In one of the branches we found a small

supply of beautifully clear and cold water which was very acceptable after our exertion. It is said that in another portion of the cave there is a larger pond containing fish, but we did not find it. There were other shafts which we did not descend, as it was our desire to visit the other caves, but on coming to the surface again it was found that time would not permit, so we turned our attention to the wallabies abounding in the ridges around, and the result of our attention was a considerable diminution in their number.

We were informed that a more extensive cave than the one we visited exists in the vicinity, containing, amongst other curiosities, a petrified tree, but the entrance is said to be rather a tight squeeze. Mr. Bates told us that he put his dog down on one occasion, and that the animal found his way out at some distance down the mountain."

Provided by John Dunkley

Ye old inn for sale

*Important to lately-arrived Emigrants, &c. &c. —
A highly productive four hundred acre Farm
with an excellent Store, and a first-rate
Inn now in full trade at Bungonia.*

TO be Let on a Lease, for three or five years, that commodious and substantially built House and Premises known as the *Hit or Miss*, now in full trade, and situated within half a mile of the Township of Bungonia, on the high road to Argyll and the Southern District with an excellent Store, where an extensive and lucrative business is now being carried on; and also the Farm, consisting of four hundred acres of fine alluvial soil, well watered, and producing all kinds of herbage with the greatest luxuriance.

The Inn contains five Bed rooms and Parlour, neatly fitted up and furnished, with a Tan-room, Bar, Kitchen, and every necessary Household Utensil. Upon the premises are erected an eight stall Stable and Coach house, a large and substantial Stock-yard, and Men's Huts, with several secure Paddocks.

The Store is immediately opposite the Inn, is substantially built, and perfectly secured, possessing every convenience for carrying on an extensive country business.

Forty acres of the Land are now in cultivation, ten acres of which is wheat, and thirty acres hay, which can also be had with the premises at a fair valuation, at the option of the Lessee.

Further particulars and terms can be ascertained by applying at the *Land Office*

The Sydney Herald.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1883.

NUMBER 71.

VOLUME VII.

Found by Joe Sydney whilst searching for information on his Depression Village/Bungonia project.

Next ASF Cave Surveying Course

Hosted by:
Hills Speleological Club, and Highland Caving Group

*Supported by the
Australian Speleological Federation*



Rod Burton/HSC

Both Hills and Highland clubs wish to advise ASF clubs and cavers that they will be conducting a basic cave-surveying course in early 2012.

(See Calcite 45 for details of the 2010 course!
www.hcg.org.au/publications)

Venue: Bungonia National Park, NSW:
Conference room next to campground community kitchen.

Date: 11/12/13 February 2012 (cancelled!)

Cost: TBA (approx. \$70 per person)

The basic cave surveying course is suited to a caver with little, no cave surveying knowledge or a refresher for experienced cavers. It will outline what you need to get started with cave surveying from:

- Cave surveying equipment
- Use of cave surveying equipment
- Working with cave surveying data,
- Map drawing, and
- Cave surveying software.

Part of the course will include a visit to Grill (B44) and one other cave to put to use your newly learnt skills, and draw a cave map! There is a prize for best cave map produced!

The course will be held at the fully catered Bungonia conference room with all course material provided.

Included in the course fee is a Saturday and Sunday evening social BBQ, three lunches and

morning/afternoon teas. This allows maximum use of your time during the course.

Details of what to expect, what to bring, camping details, course notes and payment will be provided at time of applicant enquiry.

Places are limited to allow a good instructor/pupil ratio so don't be disappointed and make your booking enquiry early!

Placing are open to all ASF cavers including interstate members. Please contact me anytime if you require any further information.

Safe caving!

Joe

Joe Sydney
Highland Caving Group
W: 02 9577 3361, M: 0405 039 398
W: jsydney@choice.com.au

Update!

Feb course cancelled!

Next course

October 13/14 2012

Wild winds damage Cotterill's cottage.



John Brush/CSS

Unusually fierce November winds in the Yarrangobilly region proved devastating for Cotterill's cottage. Much of the roof was blown away with damage also done to the verandah. Parks are in the process of repairing the cottage using builders. Thanks for the info John (CSS).

International News & Events



Irish invade PNG's 'Lost land of the volcano!'

With reminence of Arthur Conan Doyles 1912 novel The Lost Word, an Irish caving expedition has just arrived in PNG's 'Lost land of the volcano'.

This expedition will be based in a small village called Fogoma'iu, a short yet difficult walk to massive karst systems. Their aim is to find dolines and entrances so that a second expedition will follow up potential deeper leads.

Wearing his UIS-Oceania Cave Rescue hat, Joe has been involved providing data and maps of the region as well as helping with co-ordinating the region in the event of an incident.

In 2008, the BBC filmed an earlier cave expedition that ventured deep into the heart of this remote tropical region. The film included the giant extinct volcano - Mount Bosavi, and surrounding karst.

See the location on internet video...for free!
http://www.ovguide.com/tv/lost_land_of_the_volcano.htm

Google Maps: Type this to visit the location:
[Fogoma'iu, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea](#)

The Natural History Museum MAHN-84



www.mahn-84.org

The Natural History Museum MAHN-84 is pleased to announce the opening of its Digital Library. Our Digital Library includes today more than '23,000' digitized documents. Old and rare books, new books, reprints and plates on:
Zoology, Botany, Entomology, Caving, Biospeleology...

- Digital Library 23,000 digitized documents ([free online](#))
- Museum website
- Gallery 1, Gallery 2
- R.T.R. Real Time Reprints
- Laboratory website LEFHE (*Cave beetles studies - Entomological Fauna*)

Natural History Museum MAHN-84
France – Vaucluse

**Check this out,
daily international caving news
by cavers for cavers!**

www.cavingnews.com



A great site for up to date international news and events. It keeps cavers informed of daily news and articles on caves, caving, speleology, karst and other information for cavers by cavers including information about Australian caving and discoveries. Whatever your interest, this site has it all!, discoveries, events, expeditions, excavations, conservation, bio-speleology, search and rescue, and incidents.

Interplanetary caving?

AbSciCon - the Astrobiology Conference held every 2 years - will be held April 16-20, 2012, in Atlanta, GA. I want to point out that there is a planetary cave session for those interested. The cave session is topic #5 under Extreme Environments.

Session Title: **Planetary Caves - Implications for Astrobiology, Climate, Detection and Exploration.**
Short title (for abstract submission): **Planetary Caves**

Description: The focus of this session is to promote the exchange of knowledge and ideas between planetary and terrestrial scientists interested in cave exploration and research across the solar system. Extraterrestrial caves provide access to the subsurface without the need for drilling and are potential habitats for previous or present life. In recognition of the broad scope, interdisciplinary nature, and strong international interest in this topic, the participation of any interested scientist with relevant theoretical, experimental, or field experience is strongly encouraged.

Information can be found at:

<http://abscicon2012.arc.nasa.gov/meeting-information/>

2nd EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium

Dear caving friends,
(VERSION FRANCAISE CI-DESSOUS)

On behalf of the Organizing Committee we kindly invite all speleologists and scientists related to cave and karst protection, to participate at the **2nd Euro Speleo Protection Symposium** organized jointly by the Swiss Speleological Society and the European Cave Protection Commission/European Speleological Federation and supported by the Commission for Scientific Speleology (SSS and SCNAT) (please find the first circular at the following link: www.eurospeleo.eu/images/2esps_1circ.pdf <http://www.eurospeleo.eu/images/2esps_1circ.pdf>).

The 2nd EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium, having the main topic Best Practices for Cave and Karst Protection in Europe will be held in Muotathal (Switzerland) from the 29th to the 30th of September 2012. The aims of this symposium are to provide a platform for scientists and speleologists, active in the
Page 14- Calcite 46 - December 2011

area of cave and karst protection, to share the state of the art and overview of their current work, to exchange views from both perspectives on best practices' progress and applications in Europe.

We are looking forward to meet you in Muotathal in 2012!

European Cave Protection Commission wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Ioana Meleg
ECPC President

International Workshop on Speleology in Artificial Caves

"Classification of the typologies of artificial cavities in the world"
18-20 May 2012

Organized by: Commissione Nazionale Cavità Artificiali SSI, UIS Artificial Cavities Commission

As an example of existing Cadastre of Artificial Cavities, link to the Italian website: <http://catastoartificiali.speleo.it/applications/1.0/>

For any further information, and for being included in the mailing list with the second circular of the workshop, please contact:
[Mario Parisem.parise@ba.irpi.cnr.it](mailto:Mario.Parisem.parise@ba.irpi.cnr.it)

Hot news!

Boards for Disto A3 CREG news: journal 76

David Gibson of British Cave Research Electronic Group advises that CREG member Kevin Dixon writes to say that he is thinking of producing some DistoX1 boards for the A3, which will be the same as produced by Beat Heeb. He needs to know how many people are interested before spending a large sum of money and lots of time on the project. Kevin writes ... Components have been found to make 100 boards. Final price will hopefully be GBP 160/board plus shipping but will depend on the cost of the obsolete parts, which have now been obtained. You will need to find your own Disto A3 to upgrade. This will be a big financial risk so I need to know interest from the cave surveying community. **If you are interested or know anyone interested, please contact me, [kdxn at yahoo dot com](mailto:kdxn@yahoo.com).** (This is not a commitment to anything). The more interest there is, the more likely they are to get produced. I aim to ship boards in March/April. <http://bcra.org.uk/creg/jnl/>



Ghost-Rock Karst Symposium

Different points of view on karstogenesis
Fundamental and applied aspects

Han-sur-Lesse, Belgium

From 7 to 11 October 2012

<http://sites.google.com/site/ghostrockkarstsymposium/>

In the paleokarsts from Hainaut (Belgium), you can find weathering features similar to soil features: an "in situ" limestone weathering with residual weathered-rock ("ghost-rock") that keeps its initial volume. Geological features like chert beds, stratification, and joints filled with calcite veins, remain although they present higher porosity. The weathering follows the joints and moves laterally by weathering fronts which can isolate intact blocks. We have given the name of "ghost-rock" to those features. The morphological expressions of ghost-rocks consist in corridors situated on vertical joints which have conducted aggressive water in a quiet phreatic zone and pseudoendokarstic features totally inserted in the unweathered bedrock.

18th International Cave Bear Symposium

The 18th International Cave Bear Symposium and the International Workshop "Fossil remains in karst deposits and their role in reconstructing Quaternary paleoclimate and paleoenvironments," Baile Herculane, Romania, 20-23 September 2012. Details and first circular: <http://sites.google.com/site/cavebears18>

12th International Symposium on Pseudokarst

11-14 September 2012 - TUI, GALICIA, SPAIN

How old is pseudokarst: dating pseudokarst caves and forms

We would like to remind you the most important pseudokarst event in near future and before the 16th International Congress of Speleology. So, all speleologists and cavers interested in recent advances in non-karst caves' exploration and research as well as who want to contribute to the preparation of the pseudokarst part of the Congress should attend this Symposium.

Symposium main themes:

- What is pseudokarst? – new and old definitions, classifications.
- Pseudokarst caves and their speleothems.
- Genesis and development of pseudokarst forms and caves.
- Dating pseudokarst caves and events.

Scientific values and heritage related to pseudokarst.

Pseudokarst: in magmatic rocks, in quartzitic sandstones and quartzites, in quartz.

Other topic in the field of pseudokarst may also be considered.

Venue

The Symposium will be held in the village of Tui located 35 km south of Vigo. The place of Symposium is situated in the Miño river valley, at the south part of the Galirreiro Sierra, a granite and riebeckite-gneiss mountains.

Organizers:

Pseudokarst Commission UIS

Clube Espeleológico Mauxo

Instituto Universitario de Xeoloxía "Isidro Parga Pondal", University of A Coruña

Data and contact

All data on Symposium are at the webpage: <http://www.mauxo.com/isp2012g.html>

First circular:

<http://www.mauxo.com/isp2012/FirstCircular.pdf>

Contact: mauxo@mauxo.com,

juan.vidal.romani@udc.es

Fax: (0034) 981167172

International news continued on page 27

Caving Suits, Packs, Rope bags etc

Whilst trawling for caving stuff on eBay I came across the Landjoff brand of caving trog suits and caving gear at reasonable prices from Bulgaria. They also have a variety of caving bags and packs...Joe

Check out their range of gear at:

Landjoff.com





Colong's secrets, remain secret!

But much more is revealed through its history!

By Joe Sydney

12 – 13 February 2011

Attendance: Joe Sydney, Luke Gannon, Lyndon Ray, Greg Ray, Jason Moule, Andrew Nosworthy, Ian Lutherborrow and Matt Church.

After much reminiscing by the clubs of cavers about the good ol' days of caving and its hardships, eight HCG cavers including some of the old fat cavers decided to once again relive the experience of Colong Caves and, the infamous Acetylene Spur, a 400m very steep incline from top of hill to valley floor. This also rekindled interest in the mysterious Colong/Red Cave so members took up the challenge from the keepers of secret cave knowledge and had a go at searching for the cave. Did HCG finally reach Woofs Cavern and did they find the mysterious Red Cave?

Colong, believe it or not!

We begin with Colong's regional history, past and present. Colong has a fascinating history dating from more recent times and going back thousands of years with indigenous occupation. Dig deeper into its geological history and it will reveal its hidden secrets of wealth from precious metals to diamonds produced by long ago volcanic upheavals.

My research into Colong Caves has revealed some interesting snippets of local information. Did you know that during the early part of the last century, a very large diamond was found near Mt Werong, not

that far from Colong? It was the only one ever claimed to have been found in the area increasing known the mineral diversity of the region. But, it was during the early days of exploration, gold fever, bushranging and need for red cedar timber that the caves, were re-discovered.

Traditional owners

Little is known of the relationship between our original occupants and local caves, but evidence suggests that Aboriginal occupation of the region dates back to approximately 20000 years BP. There are many recorded sites and places of indigenous cultural significance within the region, primarily in the form of art and grinding groove sites, and there are likely to be hundreds of places as yet unrecorded. But little is known of any connection between Colong and long ago inhabitants. No doubt more evidence will be found in future years and more work will hopefully give us an understanding of such relationships.

Early explorers

European explorers such as Francis Barrallier first reached the Kanangra (Colong) area in 1802 with a number of attempts to cross the Blue Mountains. Sadly, Barrallier, an early region explorer, did not fully cross the Blue Mountains as he was blocked by the high canyoned walls of Wheengu Whungee leaving the path open to Lawson, Wentworth and Blaxland (1812) via another route. By the 1850s, the area began to be used as a resting place for the movement of cattle between the pastures of the Burraborang Valley and the higher tablelands which also saw and extensive harvesting of native

hardwood timbers and softer red cedar. Old aboriginal tracks that Barrallier followed now became roads which today follow the Old Oberon Stock Route, the main access from Oberon, Colong (Batsh Camp), and on to Yerranderrie. Further on the road led to Camden and finally Sydney but today, the original road through Burragorang Valley is blocked by Warragamba Dam, Sydney's water supply.

But who actually re-discovered Colong Caves?

Cattle duffing was rife in the region which led to new areas being explored, opened up and eventually settled. Edward Lannigan, a convict, arrived at Mt Werong in 1838 and is attributed with the re-discovery of the caves. Lannigans Creek that runs alongside Colong Caves is named after him. Around 1868 Colong Station was first settled with information indicating that stockmen visited the caves.

The development of the Old Oberon Stock Route saw other interests build, shale oil and coal mining sites were exploited, as well as phosphates from the bat droppings at Colong Caves. Colong Caves were mined during the 1930s as part of a Government initiative to promote jobs during the Depression years. Little is known of the guano mining and I feel that it would be an interesting historical project for someone to take on.

Holy guano, batman!

During the 30s when guano mining was at its peak, the miners named the camp 'Bat Shit Camp', after dragging the guano from the caves, to the camp site, possibly via the older, less steep Carbide Spur track. However in later years the mapping authority could not describe the location as 'Bat Shit Camp' so they shortened it to, Batsh Camp. Believe it, or not!

Mining boom

Close by is the (now) ghost mining town of Yerranderrie that mainly produced silver and lead. Production was at its peak between the periods of 1898 to 1930s until its decline in 1958 as a result of the flooding of the Burragorang Valley by the newly built Warragamba Dam, Sydney's water supply. With the road cut and replaced by the Old Oberon Stock route, this made travel, longer so residents began to leave. Today, Yerranderrie is a ghost town visited by tourists but only after a long 6 hours' drive along a good dirt road via Oberon.

The speleologists and environmentalists.

Speleological activity commenced in the late 1940s with many trips conducted by Sydney Speleological Society, Sydney University Speleological Society and other small clubs.

During the 40s and 50s, Miles Dunphy's love of bushwalking and the environment led him to produce a series of excellent hand drawn maps of the region. This was the bible of maps as topographical maps were not very accurate then. In the mid 60s the mining industry took great interest in Colong Caves, so environmentalists of the day took their action to the Courts, and bush. A fierce environmental battle took place on the ground as well as in the courts with many environmentalists and caving clubs being involved, including the Australian Speleological Federation. The good news is that the case was eventually won by environmentalists in the early 70s with a reserve set aside to protect Colong Caves. Later on in 1996, the region was declared a National Park.

Railway Proposal

Next stop, Colong station, railway station that is! An excerpt from Info Blue Mountains:

"Early this century, it was proposed to build a railway via the Warragamba Slot, Cocks River and Scotts Main Range, meeting up with Barrallier's route and proceeding west. It was intended to exploit the cedar forests of the Cocks valley, and a gold discovery near the Great Divide. The gold was a non-event, and the cedar not economically viable. Instead, the existing railway line was duplicated."

Other caves, karst and features.

There are also many interesting other karst features within the region that would be of interest cavers. Close to Colong Caves are other karst systems of Jenolan Caves, Billys Creek, Church Creek, Tuglow and Wombeyan Caves. If you don't mind the long walk, both Billys and Church Creek Caves are also well worth a visit whilst Jenolan and Wombeyan are world renown for their beauty. The Kanangra region with its magnificent valley view and canyons with waterfalls is a must to do on the what to see list. This area also includes one of the Australia's top canyoning areas with Kanangra Main, Danae Brook and Kalang canyons being the best and hardest to do.

We now see that for cavers, the Colong Caves area holds a rich and fascinating history along with the allure of remote area exploration and excitement.

Could this be why HCG visited Colong Caves recently?

Colong's geology

Colong Caves are one of the most extensive and complex caves system in the State with over 6000m of current surveyed passages. The caves are of Silurian Period of the Paleozoic Era: 444 to 416 Mya. Colong Caves are divided into two bluffs by Caves Creek, but this was not the case long ago when it was one large plateau. The eastern bluff contains a large arch with a series of entrances and passages. The main entrance CG1, has a large long passage leading to tapering and sportier sections closer to the large caverns at the end of the system. Caves are known on the western bluff and it is reputed to contain Red Cave, a long held secret with many old cavers. Knowing that the creek today cuts through the center of the plateau poses interesting questions relating to possible undiscovered caves on the west bluff that were possibly joined at one time to the east bluff. Who know and with more time we may find out. Currently, there are 20 tagged entrances at Colong.

HCG's trip to Colong Caves Walk from Batsh Camp to cave By Lyndon Ray



Batsh camp, start of the long walk to Colong Caves.

We all departed from Batsh Camp at about 8:30 on the Saturday and made our way across Back Swamps Creek and to the start of the walking track. A Parks sign gave us estimated time and warned us that we are entering wilderness and we should be prepared. Soon along the track, we found an old fence line at Bent Hook Swamp where the track turned towards Grimshaw Hill. The track was an old 4wd track and at times cut corners forming a walking track. The 4wd track continued uphill whilst the

track led around the hill and soon we were in the saddle below Moogan Spur. It's a short walk up the Spur and to the top of Acetylene Spur. As we started down the spur it started to rain lightly. The climb was steep and we had some difficulty getting down the slope as some areas were slippery with leaf matter. It was very slow going at the steepest section closer to the bottom. At the bottom of the ridge, we moved along the creek to the creek junction and found a marker that indicated turning up Caves Creek. We followed Caves Creek to the arch, at which point, the rain was getting heavier and so we took cover in Lower Grand Arch to rest until it stopped.



It's so steep that Jason walks backwards down Acetylene Spur.

After lunch, let's see Colong Cave.

After a good rest and early bite to eat around 12noon, it was time to go caving. The track to CG1 (Colong main cave) was easily found at the east side of the main arch. We followed the track up the side gully up the slope and soon found the CG1 entrance and tag about 30m from the arch.



Jason enters Colong Main cave (CG!) Note entrance tag.

The entrance passage is quite large and well-trodden so it was easy to follow it down to the first obstacle, a

7m pitch. It was around here that Lyndon and Andrew slipped off to the side to have a look whilst we rigged a hand line. Whilst looking, they found what seemed to be a pig carcass in one of the side passages so we all had a look. Luckily, it had been there for a while so all the unpleasantness of nasty decomposing smells had already dissipated.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Feral pig carcass in Colong Cave.

Using a hand line for safety, we skirted the 7m pitch and meandered through the cave. This section of cave around the 7m pitch is quite large with many walk through passages.

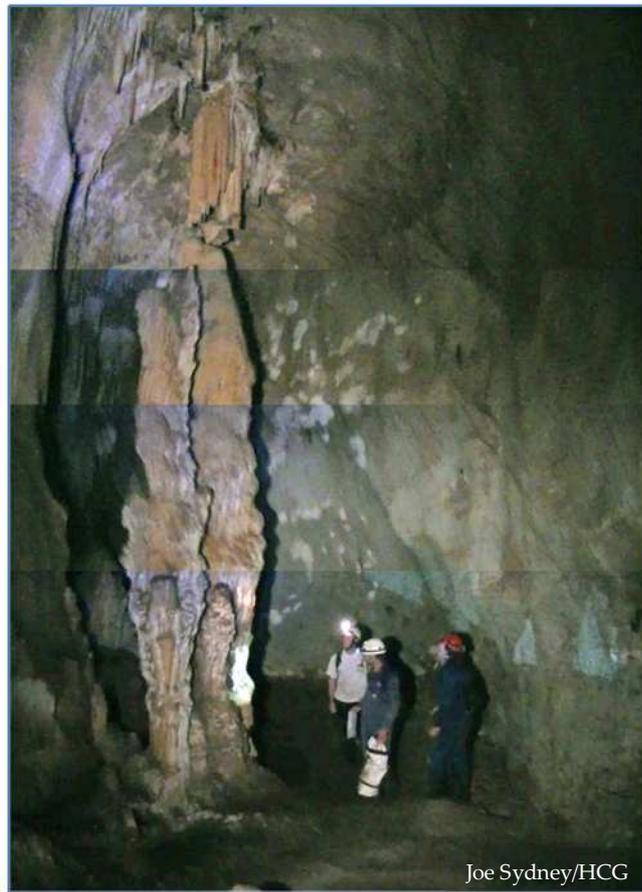


Joe Sydney/HCG

Luke, Ian, Jason and Greg working out the way on.

King Solomon Chamber

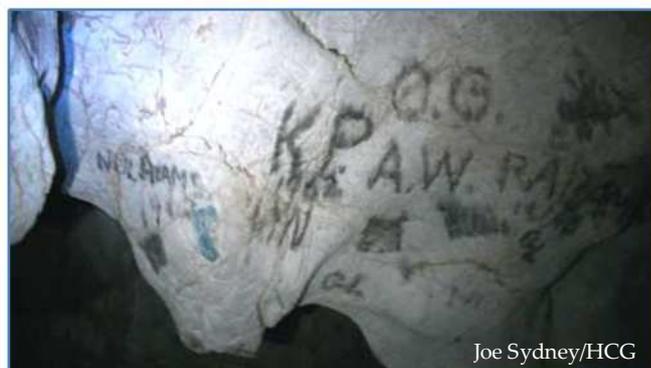
Jason was the first to find and enter King Solomon's Temple Chamber with its two impressive very large stalagmites and smaller speleothems. We took a few photos, along with some great video of this main chamber and then moved on.



Joe Sydney/HCG

King Solomon chamber

A short distance on we soon found 'Kings Cross', a short section with a meandering maze and dangerous 10m pitch. We stayed away from the pitch and hung around the main chamber with signature book. We all signed the book and had a good look around before Jason soon found the way on to The Maze. It must be noted that all along this section from entrance to The Maze, vandalism by visitors using candles, pencils and scraper have left their mark with lots of signatures. Many were fake script writing with old dates so it would be good to one day audit all signatures and remove the fake ones. Maybe a combined task for all caving clubs?



Joe Sydney/HCG

Cave vandalism near The Maze.

The Terraces

The Maze was easier than we thought and before long, we were at The Terraces. This is a very impressive section of small gour pool terraces with active speleothems. Luke, our newest club member, was awed by the formations and commented that these are the best he'd seen outside of tourist caves. A few members hinted that if he stuck around with the club, there will be more great trips with even better sights to see and experience.



The Terraces chamber with column.



Gours at The Terraces

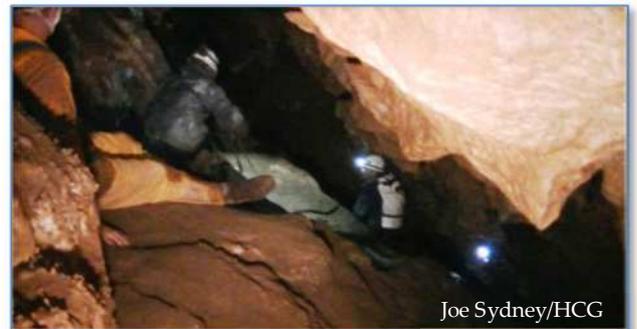
The Cleft/Sharks Mouth

Passing The Terraces we hit the junction of The Cleft/Sharks Mouth and The Landslide. Some of the team wanted to see the Landslide so they moved on whilst Greg and Joe remained behind for a rest. ([See landslide report below](#)). A rest indeed as Joe had a 30 minute nap and according to Greg, it sounded like there was a chainsaw in the chamber too. It wasn't long before the team returned and found the way on. It was here that Ian found another way on via the Sharks Mouth whilst Jason found the Cleft. A hand line was set up at the Cleft but by then Lyndon found an easier way squeezing through a keyhole popping around the corner and with a short free climb into Amber Chamber. By the time some of the guys lowered themselves down the hand line through the

Cleft, Ian popped up at a higher section so Joe went to help tossing them a hand line. Ian commented that it was worth looking at the Sharks Mouth so a few of us did. It was a small gour with a lovely pool of clear water with some active formation, well worth a visit.



Lyndon negotiating The Sharks Mouth section.



The Cleft to Amber Chamber, lowering the handline.

The Landslide Chamber

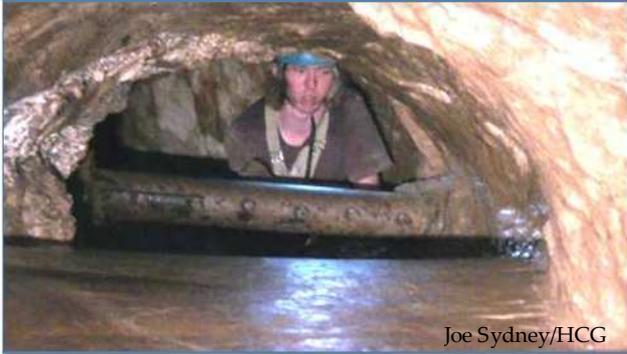
By Lyndon Ray

Luke, Jason, Andrew and Ian all followed a dry walkable passage into landslide while Greg and Joe stayed behind. I took a different route through a dusty smaller hole and came out slightly higher in the cavern from them.

Whilst there, Luke, Jason, Andrew and I navigated our way to the top of the landslide and considered throwing me down the hole for a look around. I then went back down to wait with Ian for about 10 minutes before we all headed back to the others.

Amber Chamber

At the far side of Amber Chamber, we found the way on through some clefts and then to the Flattener. Just the other side of the Flattener was the old gate and then a series of tight clefts.



Lyndon at the old gate.



Luke squeezing through the old gate.

By now it was getting sporty with some tight sections that made Greg uncomfortable as he is a bit larger than most of us. We all managed to squeeze through a very tight section, including Greg, and we climbed up to the next level. We had no idea of how far Woofs Cavern was so Matt, Ian and Greg decided to return to camp as Ian and Matt still had to walk back to Batsh Camp and return home. (*See early exit of three cavers by Greg Ray*). The rest of the team pressed on, soon passing through some very decorative chambers well worth a rest stop and look. There were lots of active stalagmites and aragonite in a nicely decorated chamber. It was also interesting to see the scalloping on the ceiling and conglomerate false floors.

Moving on and into another section we passed some wondrous shawl formations with a small pool and broke into a large chamber, Woofs Cavern! If only

the others had hung around as it was only another 45m on.



Jason in the decorative chamber.



Decorative chamber with scalloped ceiling, stals and conglomerate false floor.

Finally, Woofs Cavern!

The guys were all excited with the fact that we had made it to Woofs Cavern. Joe commented that it was back in 1974 when he last attempted to find Woofs unsuccessfully. We all explored as much as we could whilst Joe videoed the formations and passages. Lyndon and Luke separated and started looking at the lower section whilst Joe went off to look at the back of the passage finding the second large 'Lofty' chamber. Jason with Andrew caught up with Lyndon and Luke and also had a look at the lower sections along with the second large chamber. We all signed the book noting that RSS, SUSS and the Oberon Mole Patrol were the last to visit. We also noted that the top of Woofs Cavern must be fairly close to the surface as the rock pile and formation clearly indicates an older upper entrance. But where? It would be great to do some RDF work to actually see where on the surface Woofs Cavern in relates to. I guess that the current SUSS survey will also indicate this.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Woofs Cavern: Jason signing the book with Luke looking on..



Joe Sydney/HCG

Woofs Cavern formation



Joe Sydney/HCG

Woofs Cavern formation



Joe Sydney/HCG

Woofs Cavern formation



Joe Sydney/HCG

Woofs Cavern formation



Joe Sydney/HCG

Woofs Cavern formation with Luke and Jason.

Return from Woofs to entrance.

It was about 7pm when we departed Woofs Cavern. Jason led the way and we all followed with a very fast trip back to the entrance! It took about 2hrs of fast caving to return to Grand Arch moving quickly yet as safely as possible. Exiting the entrance around 9pm we found it to be pouring with rain and a slower trip down the wet and muddy track. It was here that we found Greg half asleep in the lower Arch and having a brew ready for us! We picked off our fat leeches that had a feast on us from the time we entered to our exit whilst having a brew and quick dinner with a glass of red wine courtesy of

Luke. It wasn't long before we started to feel tired so we set up camp below.

FYI, Woofs cavern was discovered by Bill Woof of Sydney University Bushwalking Club in late 1946 or early 1947.

Early exit of three cavers

By Greg Ray

Two of the party had decided not to continue on to Wolf's Cavern as they were not going to camp at Colong that night. They were unsure of the distance left to traverse to the cavern.

The 3rd person was feeling pretty tired at this point and was unsure how much longer it was going to be before Wolf's so decided to exit with the other two cavers. Later on he was to find out that they were only 45 meters from Wolf's Cavern.

The small party commenced their exit, having some problems in the tight areas due to weariness. However once past the gate the party travelled quite quickly towards the exit.

Originally the party were to take the lower chamber, but took the upper chamber as we were familiar with the route. Once out the two got their gear together and headed off to Batsh Camp in the rain with the remaining dim daylight. I stayed near the entrance while it continued raining. I closed my eyes for a brief time and woke 3 hours later when the rest of the party returned.

Sunday AM search for Red Cave



Taken from top of Colong Arch, HCG cavers search for Red Cave.

We woke on Sunday morning with the anticipation of looking for and finding the elusive Red Cave in the bluff opposite the Main Arch. Many clubs were contacted for clues on its whereabouts yet no club could offer any insight to its exact location. We had allocated 3 hours of search time so Jason, Andrew & Luke headed for the bluff. In the meantime, Joe walked to the top of the Main Arch and with a portable UHF radio, directed the search team to likely locations

On walking to the opposite bluff, HCGers found a track leading from the creek and up the bluff. Later research and looking at the map suggested that this track followed a major ridgeline leading to Billy's Creek about 4-6 kilometers away.

The cavers searched high and low directly opposite the Grand Arch and started to make their way around to the Green Gully roughly in line and opposite the main Colong Cave entrance when time ran out. So, for this trip, we had no luck in finding the elusive Red Cave

The walk from Grand Arch, up Acetylene Spur and back to car.

After an unsuccessful search for Red Cave, we all had a bite to eat for lunch before heading back to the cars.. The weather had changed again and had started to drizzle which cooled the air for a cooler yet muggy and damp walk back to camp. We left the Arch at 12 noon and followed Caves Creek to Lannigans Creek junction but not before filling up our water bottles at the Resurgence, which had a pool of cool fresh water. We found Jason waiting for us at the junction so we all proceeded up to Acetylene Spur but not before Joe pulled out his secret weapon, a can of Red Bull energy drink!

The walk up the initial very steep slope was tedious with all cavers taking their time. A few of us met up at the first rest point and then moved on up the incline before stopping for another rest at the top.



Having a rest at top of Acetylene Spur.

From here it is an easy-ish meander along a contoured track back to Batsh Camp. By the time we got to the swamp, Lyndon ran ahead and brought back the car to the track start which helped those poor tired souls, or soles, with the last 200m of track arriving at the camp around 3pm.

Back at the cars we all congratulated ourselves on a great trip with a soft drink, munchies and a beer for those that liked a beer. Jason set up a large tarp and fired up the BBQ putting on a treat of full fat lunch for Andrew. At this stage Lyndon and Greg decided to depart for an early return home. It wasn't long before Joe and Luke also decided leave around 3:30pm.



Luke at the end of the walk.

The 3km walk from Arch, up Acetylene Spur and back to the cars took 3hrs and 5min, but it was a little less in time getting to the cave. This trip left us with an inspiration to one day return to take up the challenge set by ol cavers who are the keepers of the

secret knowledge with a hope to maybe find Red Cave.

The 1985 ASF Karst Index shows that there are 9 tagged caves however since then another 11 features have been tagged in the Colong area bringing the known features in total to 20.

Title photo credit: Andrew Bosman Photography

<http://namsob.redbubble.com/>



Although the Colong Bluff title photo was not taken on this trip, it demonstrates the ruggedness of the terrain club members had to endure.

If you enjoyed the title photo of Colong Bluff, more photos can be found of many other areas and topics by visiting Andrew's website. HCG thanks Andrew for the use of this magnificent photo.

References

Thematic history of Oberon Shire by Philippa Gemmell-Smith (16 March 2004)

<http://www.oberonaustralia.com.au/OberonHist.pdf>

Info Blue Mountains

www.infoblueMountains.net.au

A banner for HostPossum.com featuring a green possum on a branch on the left. The phone number 4622-4507 is displayed in large blue text. Below the phone number is the HostPossum.com logo. To the right of the logo are icons for Twitter, Facebook, and RSS.

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

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

Underground cave system links Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumbria-UK

It has long been viewed as the holy grail of British potholing but now the legendary Three Counties System of caves has finally been linked.

Last Sunday, 300ft below the surface, 83 years of exploration came to an end as it became possible to enter into Cumbria, travel below Lancashire and emerge in Yorkshire. Due to the brave work of individuals such as Geoff Yeadon, Tim Allen and Mick Nunwick, the separate cave systems of Boxhead Pot and Notts Pot now make up a continuous 70 mile route under the heartland of Britain.

For some of the cavers this puts to an end almost 26 years of planning, using modern techniques in efforts to link the Three Counties Harnessing the power of natural underground water sources to blast away the mud and rock that was hiding a linking passage between Boxhead and Notts Pot, the team have joined a network of 30 entrances underneath the M62 and A66. In the difficult conditions 300ft below, the team experienced ten bars of atmospheric pressure as they channelled water through with a simple hose with great force, blasting their way through.

After they achieved their momentous cave connection, they travelled to the pub on Sunday to celebrate. "Water formed these caves and now we are using water to try to re-excavate these passages," said heating engineer and veteran caver Geoff Yeadon, 60. Geoff is part of the 10 man team who self-funded the exploration of the Three Counties System. Also in the team are British caving stalwarts like Tim Allen and pioneer Mick Nunwick, who single handedly uncovered 1000 metres of the cave in the mid-eighties which eventually led to this moment. "It's a caver's dream," said Geoff.

Speaking over a year ago, Geoff explained the dream driving the team. "In our mind we knew it could take four years to finish this, or it could happen next weekend. Everything can change very quickly when you make a breakthrough and all of a sudden you are dealing with uncharted territory. We might uncover the entrance to a new network and you are looking at something never seen by any human before. A pint of beer never tasted better than when you return to surface after a spell down there digging. You are doing something real. Thousands of years ago - possibly millions - the cave was formed through water erosion and at some point later the roof fell in, filling the sumps and fissures with mud and rock.

Since the theory was first proposed in the 1920s, that the three counties were in fact linked, the notion has caught on and teams exploring different parts of the system have been trying to make the breakthrough. Other methods used by Tim and Geoff over the years include using hand-powered drills to try and punch a way through. Exploration of the Three Counties System began in 1928 and continues today with passionate cavers like Tim Allen, who also spoke a year ago about the mission. "We're all just mates with a common goal," said Geoff. "At times in the past we have received sponsorship and funding from institutions, but in this part of the project we are doing it all off our own backs. "But we do it because we love it.

Source:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/howaboutthat/8876356/Underground-cave-system-links-Yorkshire-Lancashire-and-Cumbria.html>



2005 catch up Part 1!

HCGis still catching up with old trip reports and news. These are some of the club activities for 2005. Issue 47 will contain part 2.

Annual Cavers dinner



HCG hosted the NSW cavers dinner at Bankstown Sports Bowling Club on October 15th with 25 cavers from several state clubs attending. David Stuckey from RSS thrilled us with images of his caving and world travel exploits, all in 3D. Our thanks to David and all the cavers that attended.

HCG Xmas BBQ

HCG's annual xmas BBQ was held at Ian Lutherborrow's home at Appin. There was a great turn up of members and club friends. As it was David R's birthday, Joe brought along a cake to help celebrate the event and birthday. Joe also prepared a presentation of the club's past year of activities using a digital projector. This was followed by Ian's usual Xmas bonfire.



The BBQ.



David's cake with effigy!



Members watching Joe's video presentation of club's past yearly activities.



Flash (the albino womnbat) watches over the Xmas bonfire.

Club social BBQ at Stephen McCabe's home

Stephen held a social BBQ at his home in March 2005 with a good turn up of old and current members and guests. Al Caton of RSS popped in as he lives a short distance away however new member John Dunkley drove all the way from Canberra. Past member Eddie Powell was invited so we all heard of the many tales from the early days of HCG, quite exciting stuff. Our thanks to Stephen and family for hosting this event.



A traditional pose of members having a beer whilst the BBQ cooks the food.



Host Stephen McCabe with new member John Dunkley and past member, Eddie Powell.

Al Warild introduces MTDE caving gear to cavers

HCG invited Al Warild to introduce and show cavers a range of MTDE caving products on June 14th. Clubs and cavers were invited with a good turn up and many placed orders for a wide range of gear.



Cavers looking at the range of MTDE products.

International News & Events-cont'd

Google Street View, in a cave!



We've all used Google Maps street view but have you used one in a cave! Check this one out in a Japanese cave! Keep an eye out for the ladder climb!

http://maps.google.co.jp/maps?l=34.229208,131.30324&spn=0.006227,0.009538&ll=34.227037,131.304442&layer=c&cid=1491558911054486340&panoid=SjDR5_E3PhoV-b5oFTAyaw&cbp=13,199.78,,0.9,17&brcurrent=3,0x35449,d000e197630xb6d10976a55d3e,0&t=m&cbi=34,229744,131,302593&z=17

Google Street view, through Jenolan Caves

Whilst your Google street view is open, check out the street view through the main arch.

Tuglow Caves Trip Report

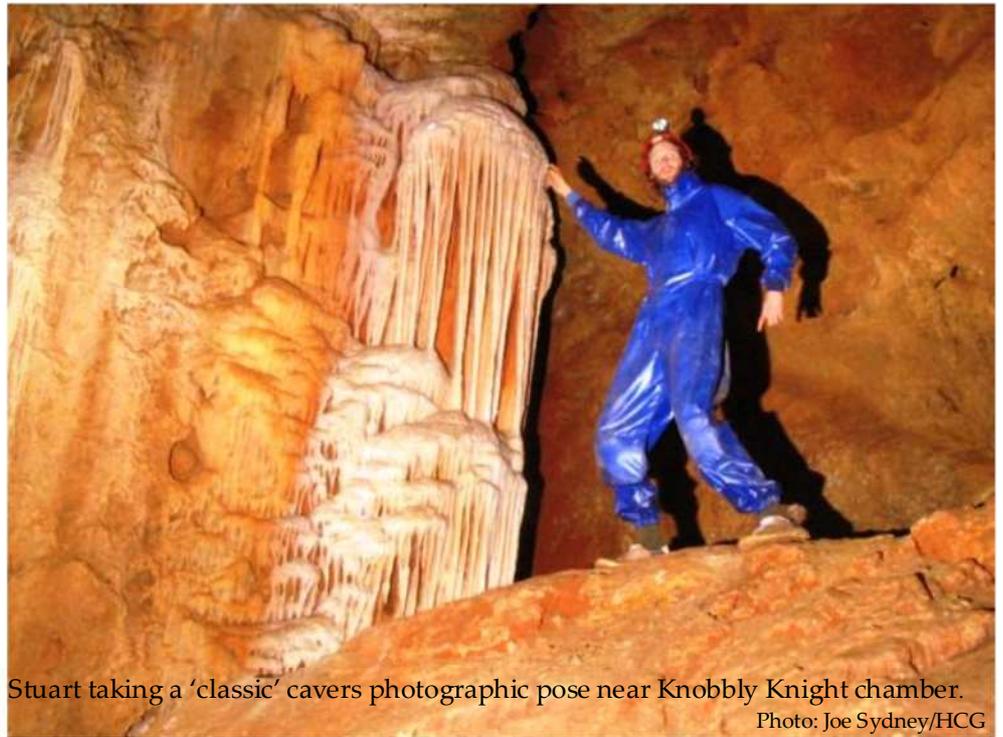
By Andrew Baker of UTSSS.

Reprinted with kind permission from Andrew Baker and UTSSS.

Attendance

Andrew Baker-UTSSS
Chris Goslich-UTSSS
Peter Brady-UTSSS
Stuart Young-UTSSS
Joe Sydney-HCG
Dave Lemke-NHVSS
David Rothery-HCG

9/10 April 2005



Stuart taking a 'classic' cavers photographic pose near Knobbly Knight chamber.

Photo: Joe Sydney/HCG

Tuglow Caves Trip Report

This was a combined trip with Highland Caving group, with Dave Lemke from Newcastle Hunter Valley Speleological Society also attending. Pete, Joe, Chris and Dave camped at Gillespies Lookout Friday night, while Andrew, Stuart and Dave drove up early Saturday morning. After the others finished breakfast, we started sorting out gear and generally trying to get organised to go caving. As there were too many of us too fit in Joe's Subi, Pete and I walked (Stuart walked the first bit then got a lift when the others drove past). There were no repeats of last year's trip when Pete 'waded' (sat down) in the Kowmung River and fooled Joe into thinking the river was flooded... Unfortunately this kind of joke only works once.

This was my third trip to Tuglow in the previous half year, so I got the job of rigging the cave, (except the first pitch, which Dave L rigged). We entered the cave about 11:30 and chose the direct route to the river; 3 pitches one after another to the river, the 3rd pitch being the longest (~ 40m). Once at the river we proceeded upstream past some beautiful rimstone pools, to a chamber where we had a bite to eat and left our vertical gear.

Dave L. and I had been to Knights Knobbly Knob Chamber on a NHVSS trip the previous year, and were keen to see what lay beyond. The others were keen to follow and see Knights Chamber. There are some 'interesting' traverses high above the streamway, but they didn't seem nearly as bad as the

last trip (caving in Tasmania helps redefine what an exposed climb is ...).



Joe Sydney/HCG

Dave Rothery, Stuart and Pete at the bottom of the first pitch.

We signed the logbook in Knights Chamber. This chamber contains some nice formations, especially flowstone. There are also some nice shawls just around the corner. We then dropped back into the stream (above the waterfall). There is some beautiful stream passage along this section, although there are also a few wades.

Dave L. only had cotton overalls, so we carried him across the pools...almost at the expense of a dunking. Stuart and I came back from exploring some passage and noting everyone present except Joe enquired where he was. We learnt that Joe had to do a No.2 and was in the previous chamber, which we were told contained high concentrations of foul air. After considerable time waiting, a somewhat relieved Joe appeared with his 'bag'...everything that goes into a cave must come out...contact Joe for more details!

Pete and Dave were keen to head out, so they started making there way back to start ascending out. The rest of were keen to find the upstream sump 'Ultimate Sump' Unfortunately Stuart's 'shortcut' took us to into 'Nogozone' instead. On the way back out Stuart and I had a quick look back up the streamway, but didn't have much time and weren't too keen on a low wet passage. We have since found out that the sump was less than 50m away.

On the way back downstream Stuart and I climbed down to look at the waterfall abseil – there's two new bolts for anchors, so we'll have to do that next trip to. Back at the rope, Chris then Joe started ascending back out. Stuart and I did a quick trip down to the downstream sump and to have quick look at Anvil Chamber. The 'fun' bit of rigging pitches on the way in, is de-rigging them on the way out. We were all out of the cave about 8:40pm. Joe took the Dave's

back to camp, and then met Pete, Stuart and I at the Kowmung River.



Joe Sydney/HCG

Stuart climbing in the streamway passage, upstream of the 9m waterfall.

After an icy swim it was good to know that the Subi's heating works. Joe had already dropped Chris and the Dave's back at camp, and there was a nice fire going when we got back to camp. It was a beautiful clear night, so Pete, Stuart and I slept under the stars.

After a big day Saturday we took Sunday pretty easy. Stuart and I went cross country mountain bike riding, while the others did a short walk to a lookout we'd found on the way to doing Kanangra Main Canyon earlier in the year. A very enjoyable weekend. Thanks to Joe for organising the permits for us.

A few more unpublished photos of the trip by Joe Sydney



View of Tuglow valley from Boss Hill



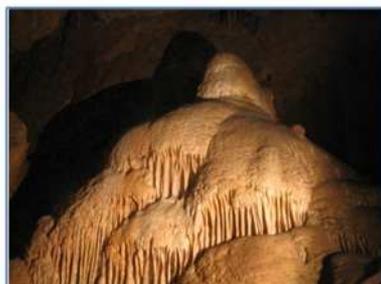
Caving always starts with a walk, Tuglow is no different.



Andrew in narrow passageway close to Knobbly Knight chamber.



Chris at far end of Tuglow cave.



The Knobbly Knight.



The possums are stirring!.

Caving at Bungonia

By Christian Goslich
of UTSSS.

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permission from UTSSS.

Attendance

Chris Goslich, Bruce (B1)
Waddington, Bruce (B2)
Stewart, David Rothery,
Dorothy (Dot) Stewart, Jennifer
McCandliss, Joe Sydney,
Lindsay
Matheson, Sunniva Stewart

28th–29th May



Photo: Joe Sydney/HCG

Caving at Bungonia

UTSSS and Highland Caving Club (HCG) held a combined caving weekend on the 28th–29th of May at Bungonia Caves. Andrew kindly picked me up early Saturday morning, for the short drive south to Bungonia, during which (amongst other things), we talked a lot about Andrew's caving experiences at the recent ASF conference in Tasmania.

We arrived to find everyone still having breakfast, and unfortunately, this took a while! Consequently we did not enter Grill Cave (B44) until 11.00 am. On our way in, we passed many Scouts. Near "Crystal Palace" our group split into two. Joe, the female members and Sunniva (who is only 4!) had a look at Crystal Palace before heading back out. The rest of us proceeded down to 'Safe from the Russians' and down towards the 'Right Hand Sump'. As we went beyond 'Safe from the Russians' the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) increased, and our speed decreased. Andrew, Dave, Bruce (2) and I pressed on towards the sump while Bruce and Lindsey, turned around just after 'Safe from the Russians.' Surprisingly there are some nice formations that haven't been destroyed near the sump (most people don't bother going past 'Safe from the Russians'). We turned around just before reaching the sump, and I begun arguing that I could not feel any influence of CO₂. I was surprised when I suddenly started noticed I was breathing quickly and heavily. After about three hours in Grill Cave we headed back to camp for lunch.

After lunch no one was very keen to go caving, but after much persuasion, we convinced Joe to take us through 'Hogans Hole' (B5). Not far from the cave entrance is a 25m abseil, followed by a tight squeeze at the bottom. Continuing on a loop, we head back up to the B4 turnoff, up the 'Hairy Traverse' and through the 'Cement Bag' which is a passage containing 10 cm very fine dust. This then brought us back to the entrance and our rope where we had started. Back on the surface after 2 hours, and we had a fantastic clear sky, full of stars.

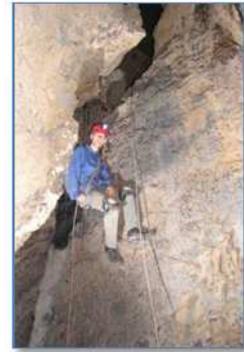
The hot shower on the camp site was absolute luxury compared to other trips and very refreshing. The dinner showed lots of variety from everybody with of course hot tea, beer and wine. Tired and cold we were all asleep by about 9.00 pm. Sunday was also a relaxed day. When we arrived at 'Blowfly Cave' arrived another group had jumped our booking and occupied the cave. Due to limited space in the cave, we decided to abseil 'Canberra Hole – Steampipe' (B 7- B14) instead. We set up each one rope in the 15 m apart located entrances, and are about 40 m deep. David abseiled down one pitch and Andrew and I the other. We all met at the bottom, crossed over and then prussiked out the other entrance. The cave had lots of flowstone in reasonably good condition. After de-rigging the cave we headed back to camp to pack up, before driving home. The traffic was quite good and the journey took again about 2.5 hours. I had a great weekend.



Saturday: Sorting the caving gear.



Saturday: Andrew at Hogans Cave doline.



Saturday: Chris on abseiling into the B5 Devils Kitchen.



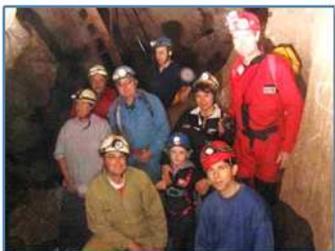
Saturday: Andrew squeezing into the Junction Chamber (B5).



Saturday: Joe squeezing into the Junction Chamber (B5)..



Saturday: Chris at Hairy Traverse.



Saturday: The team in Grill Cave (B44)



Saturday: Sunniava at the Grill Cave mud slide.



Saturday: The Stewarts in Grill Cave.



Saturday: The campsite with 'gas campfire'.



Saturday: The boys and their BBQ.



Sunday: David setting up his SRT system at B7 Canberra Hole



Sunday: David abseiling into B7 Canberra Hole.



Sunday: Andrew prussicking up B14 Steampipe Cave.



Sunday: Andrew exiting B14 Steampipe Cave.

Wyanbene and Big Hole

By Peter Brady/UTSS

Reprinted with kind permission
from UTSSS.

Attendance

Peter Brady (UTSS),
Andrew Baker (UTSS)
Christian Goslich (UTSS),
Joe Sydney (HCG) and
David Rothery (HCG)

28th–29th May 2005



Photo: Joe Sydney/HCG

Wyanbene and Big Hole

Saturday: Wyanbene

We entered the cave at approximately 10:30 am and headed towards the Blow Hole. Although we had the combination with us there was no lock at the Blow Hole to be removed. We rigged a ladder and safety line at the far hole and climbed back down to the water level. The plan for the rest of the day was to head towards Frustration Lake via Gunbarrel Aven. We moved along the stream way towards the Rockpile Chamber. We did note that the water level was the lowest that we had seen in many years. At Rockpile Chamber we moved off to the lower section of Gunbarrel Aven where we used our 12 volt halogen lights to photograph the lower, visible, section of the aven. After a pause at Gunbarrel we returned to Rockpile Chamber and on to Caesar Hall. We crossed Ceasars Hall and continued on towards the Chamber Pot and Frustration Lake. We rigged a handline for the descent into Diarrhoea Pit and the climb up before the Chamber Pot. As the hemp rope into Chamber Pot was rotten we rigged a ladder for the down climb. After the Chamber Pot we were able to take the low route to the bottom of Andersons Wall. Two members of our party free climbed Andersons Wall but after reaching the top we decided that it was getting late in the afternoon and that we were not going to reach Frustration Lake

today. We turned around and the two members at the top of Andersons Wall abseiled back to the rest of the group. We proceeded back towards the entrance, with a stop for photographs on the way out at Caesar's Hall and the climb near the Blow Hole. We exited that cave at approximately 7pm.

Sunday: Big Hole

We arrived at Big Hole at approximately noon and began to rig the pitch from two trees just to the left of the uphill side of the hole (i.e. opposite the viewing platform and slightly to the left when viewed from the platform). We rigged twin ropes, each with a knot in the middle to be passed. Joe and Chris starting the long prussic back up to the surface of Big Hole We proceeded down the ropes, with David remaining on the surface. After signing the log book at the bottom we had a short explore before beginning the long prussic back up the rope. While at the base we found no sign of the brown snake mentioned in the logbook. However, there was a dead, and tending towards preserved, echidna and water pooling at the lowest point under the rock. We all exited the Big Hole at approximately 6pm. The happy abseilers at the bottom of Big Hole from l-r: Pete, Chris, Joe, Andrew and Peter Brady.

Wyanbene Cave Saturday 28 May 2005



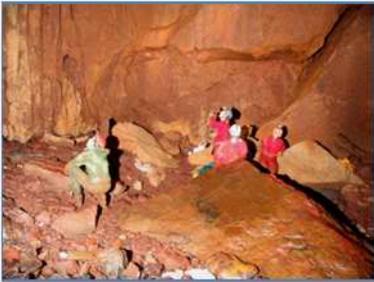
Wyanbene Cave entrance.



Chris at the gate.



Joe at the Triangular Squeeze.



The team in the Gunbarrel Aven.

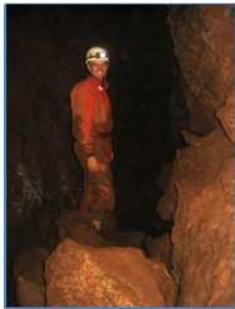


David looking up the Gunbarrel Aven.



Looking back at Caesar's Hall from Far Caesar's hall.

It's 100m to the far end!



Pete on top of Anderson's Wall.



Andrew sliding into Diarrhea Pitt.



David in the Infinite Crawl.

Sunday 29 May 2005: Big hole...It's just that...a Big Hole 100m wide x 100m deep!



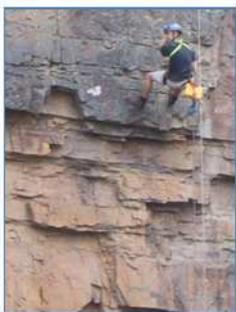
Viewing platform into the Big Hole.



Looking across the Big Hole.



The team getting ready to abseil the Big Hole.



Chris abseiling into the Big Hole.



Joe abseiling into the Big Hole.



The prussick out of...the Big Hole!



Tasmanian cave fauna paper in 2001 issue of Subterranean Biology journal

Source: <http://www.pensoft.net/journals/subtbiol/issue/9/>

ABSTRACT

This paper provides taxonomic, distributional and ecological data for 59 species in 17 genera of Trechinae and Psydrinae from Tasmania, and describes 18 new species in six existing genera (*Pterocyrtus*, *Tasmanorites*, *Sloanella*, *Trechistus*, *Goedetrechus*, *Tasmanotrechus*) collected from caves, forest and montane habitats: *Pterocyrtus grayi* sp. nov., *P. meridionalis* sp. nov., *Tasmanorites beatricis* sp. nov., *T. daccordii* sp. nov., *T. lynceorum* sp. nov., *T. microphthalmus* sp. nov., *Sloanella gordonii* sp. nov., *Trechistus gordonii* sp. nov., *Goedetrechus minutus* sp. nov., *G. rolani* sp. nov., *G. florentinus* sp. nov., *G. damper* sp. nov., *Tasmanotrechus gordonii* sp. nov., *T. alticola* sp. nov., *T. montisfieldi* sp. nov., *T. osbornianus* sp. nov., *T. moorei* sp. nov., *T. rolani* sp. nov.

Forty-one (41) previously described species have been re-examined and illustrated with supplementary descriptions. New collection records combined with the published literature revealed 196 records of 83 species in 21 genera, collected from 41 localities (including 11 karst areas). Regional-scale survey coverage has been patchy and three biogeographic regions stand out as poorly surveyed: Flinders, South East, and Northern Midlands. Local-scale survey efforts have been intensive at just a few localities, the richest being 18 species recorded at Cradle Mountain. Seventeen (17) described species of Zolini and Trechini are troglobites with distribution ranges restricted to individual karst areas. Some karst areas and caves harbour multiple congeneric species which differ in their degree of troglomorphic specialization suggesting heterochronic colonisations, possibly linked to multiple Quaternary glacial / inter-glacial cycles. Palaeo-climatic and palaeo-vegetation evidence is examined to test the 'Climatic Relict Hypothesis' as a mechanism driving evolution of the subterranean fauna. It is proposed that present-day troglobitic Trechinae in Tasmania are derived from troglophilic progenitors that colonised subterranean habitats from adjacent forest ground litter habitats during Pleistocene inter-glacial periods, while retreat of forests during glacial periods isolated subterranean populations from surface populations facilitating troglogenesis. It is predicted that future collecting efforts will reveal many additional new subterranean species, including in non-karstic Shallow Subterranean Habitats (SSH).

[Download PDF](#)

<http://www.pensoft.net/journals/subtbiol/article/2516/abstract/tasmanian-trechinae-and-psydrinae-coleoptera-carabidae-a-taxonomic-and-biogeographic-synthesis-with-description-of-new-s>

Regards,

Stefan Eberhard

Director

Subterranean Ecology Pty. Ltd

Ph +61 08 9349 7695 Fax +61 08 9349 5926

Email: stefan@subterraneanecology.com.au

www.subterraneanecology.com.au

Suite 8, 37 Cedric Street, Stirling, WA 6021