

SUSS Bull 59(1)

July – December 2020



Bulletin of the Sydney University Speleological Society



PROVIDED BY
UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY UNION

SUSS Bulletin published by the Sydney University Speleological Society, A23 Manning House, Level 1, Manning Road, Camperdown, NSW 2050

W: <http://suss.caves.org.au/>

Edited by Phil Maynard

Articles, news, gossip to philm8544177@gmail.com

© SUSS 2021

Officeholders

President

Phillippa Byrnes pmbyrnes96@gmail.com

Vice President

Lara Munahe lmun8721@uni.sydney.edu.au

Secretary

Simon Murphy Simon.Murphy@sydney.edu.au

Treasurer

Lily Guo zgao4653@uni.sydney.edu.au

Safety Officer

Jordan Fenech jordypfenech@gmail.com

Equipment Officer

Rowena Larkins rowena1234@hotmail.com

Minutes Secretary

Quinn Cooney quinncooney@gmail.com

ASF Councillor

Emily Butcher emilyrbutcher@outlook.com

Social Media

Lara Munahe lmun8721@uni.sydney.edu.au

Library

Rod O'Brien constructiondiver@bigpond.com

Front Cover: Understorey cave,
Pio Pio, New Zealand

Photo Alan Pryke

SUSS Bulletin 59(1)



Contents

News and Gossip	1
<i>The Red Book is Here</i>	1
<i>World's oldest known cave painting</i>	1
<i>Wombeyan makeover</i>	2
<i>Brian OBrien OAM</i>	2
Timor	3
Moparrabah	5
Waterfall of Moss	8
Mt Fairy MF-1 Main Cave	12
Obscure Caves Part 1; XK-120 Euglah Cave	15
Photogallery	17
Things to buy	21

The Red Book is Here

Time to do some armchair caving

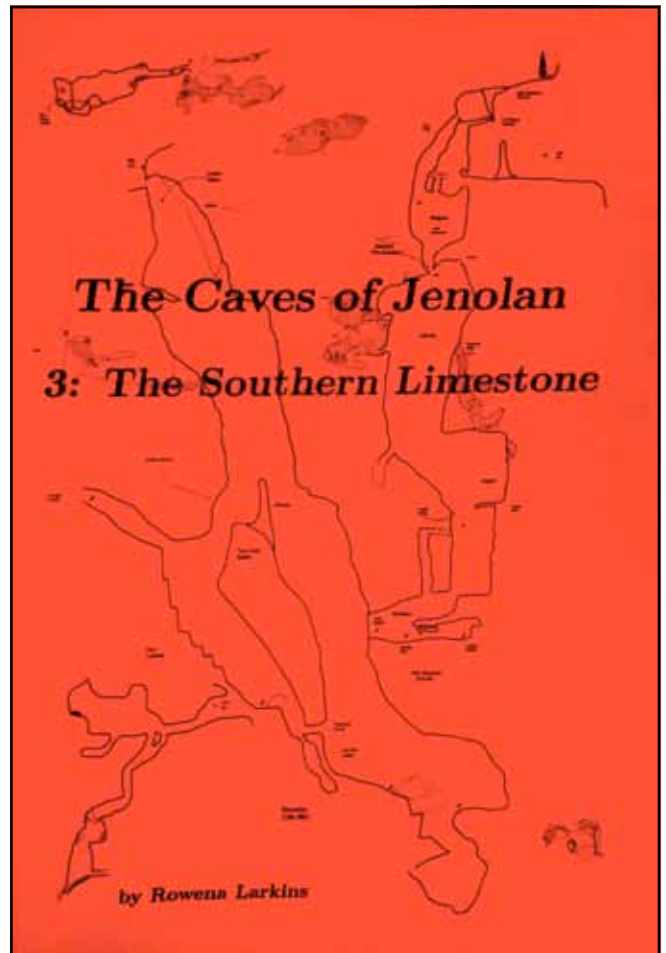
Back in the 1970s, SUSS planned to put together books on Jenolan; A yellow one for Mammoth Cave, a blue one for the North Jenolan Caves and a red one for the south Jenolan caves. The Blue and Yellow books were produced in the 1970s and now, over 40 years later, with input from SUSS, SSS, BMSC and other clubs, the Red Book: "The Caves of Jenolan 3: The Southern Limestone" is in print. This book includes maps, photos and descriptions of over 75 caves including several great and challenging abseils, Crystal Crown and Bridge formations, sinks and resurgences, and, dare we say, enigmatic cave dives.

With the book containing details of a 2019 discovery of a well decorated walk-through cave within sight of the Guides' office, there is good prospect of many hundreds of metres of new cave just waiting to be found.

Before you go caving for real, do some armchair caving in Jenolan South in preparation for your big discovery.

For price and availability of your next must-purchase book, please visit the SUSS web site:

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



World's oldest known cave painting

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/jan/13/worlds-oldest-known-cave-painting-found-in-indonesia>

A team of Griffith University archaeologists has been awarded a coveted place in Science magazine's top-ten scientific breakthroughs of the year for their work on the discovery of the world's oldest known rock art.

The team, led by Professors Maxime Aubert and Adam Brumm from the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research (GCSCR) and the Australian Research Centre for Human Evolution (ARCHE) discovered and dated a cave painting at least 45,000 years old in Sulawesi, Indonesia which depicts a local subspecies of wild boar. Aubert, a dating specialist, identified a calcite deposit that had formed on top of the painting, then used uranium-series isotope dating to confidently say the deposit was 45,500 years old. The painting is of course older than the calcite deposited on top of it.

The Leang Tedongnge cave is located in a remote valley enclosed by sheer limestone cliffs, about an hour's walk from the nearest road. It is only accessible during the dry season because of flooding during the wet season – and members of the isolated Bugis community told the team it had never before been seen by westerners.

Measuring 136cm by 54cm, the Sulawesi warty pig was painted using dark red ochre pigment and has a short crest of upright hair, as well as a pair of horn-like facial warts characteristic of adult males of the species. The spectacular size and sophistication of this artwork suggests that it is the product of an advanced cultural tradition, ie that cave paintings much older than this existed in Indonesian caves, whether or not any such paintings survive to the present age.

The team at Griffith University have been searching for ancient art in both Indonesia and Australia for many years, and continue to do so. Ancient cave art discoveries are likely in future and can answer major questions about the spread of modern humans in SE Asia.

Wombeyan makeover

The NSW government has announced a \$9 million grant to upgrade and restore Wombeyan Caves tourist area. The caves were heavily impacted by the fires in 2019 – 2020 and by the subsequent flood in February 2020.

The money is earmarked for new cabins in the campground, upgraded roads and paths in the reserve, and (sadly) a bookable corporate function facility.

Brian OBrien OAM

Congratulations to Brian J. O'Brien, who was posthumously made an Officer of the Order of Australia in January 2021 for his career-long contributions to physics and space science. He was president of SUSS in 1955, and instrumental in the early exploration at Yarrangobilly.

billy. He was also the first ASF President (1956-1958), pioneered pre-scuba underwater exploration techniques and contributed to research into the physiological effects of foul air. Sadly, Brian passed away in August last year at the age of 86 before he was able to receive his award in person.

His most notorious caving exploit was discovering the upper half of East Deep Creek Cave at Yarrangobilly at age 19 through the simple technique of missing the entrance on the way back up from the lower cave, and eventually being stuck in the cave alone without light for three days.

He was also (less important to cavers of course) principle investigator on one of the most important science experiments to fly on the NASA Apollo moon missions.

THE SUN



No. 13,682. SYDNEY: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1953. (Tele. Editorial B0333) Price 4
Registered at the GPO, Sydney, for transmission by post as a newspaper. BW8724, Advertising: BW6015, Circulation

STUDENT MAY BE IN HOLE 200 FEET DEEP

Torch hunt in huge cave for youth

Police and others today are slowly searching the vast Yarrangobilly cave system for a missing Sydney University student, aged 19.



STUDENT Brian O'Brien.

Timor

18th – 20th September 2020

Rod Obrien

Timor is located in the Upper Hunter Valley. The trip was organised by NHVSS with members of MSS and SUSS also tagging along. We stayed at the Glen Dhu hut which NHVSS use as a cavers hut. Due to COVID protocol some of us piled into the hut and others pitched tents or parked caravans around it.

Most of us arrived on Friday and settled in. Several dead trees were around the hut and supplied us with ample firewood for the weekend. It was great to finally get out in the country and sit around a campfire every night.

NHVSS are collecting GPS data on all of the Timor caves. So Saturday morning started out as a 4wd rally as we roamed the hills, relocating some of the more remote caves which are on private property, to GPS them. We stopped to look at the 6m high Tufa Waterfalls and the three nearby caves TR-80 Fox's Lookout, TR-41 Waterfall Cave and TR-42 Fox Den Cave. There are some nice marine fossils in the surface rock around this area.



Glen Dhu cave

Photo Rod Obrien

Travelling to the next area of interest in the 4wd's involved some steep up and down climbs. At one stage Rod Smith's Rav4 reached its limits so he parked it in the bush and jumped into the Land Cruiser ably driven by Cathi Humphry-Hood. We parked the vehicles on top of a hill next to TR-51. This is a small slot cave and



Photo Rod Obrien

Alan Green did some videoing here for his latest Caving Squeezes film.

Walking down one side of the hill into the valley is TR-23. This small cave is described as a karst spring or outflow cave. It has permanent water and continues underwater but is too tight to fit in. Walking back over the hill and down the other side is TR-20 Prickly Pear Cave. This cave was entered by everyone one at a time and Alan did more filming of people squeezing out of the entrance hole.

We then drove around some hills and parked on top of a ridge. Walking west along the ridge line we looked at a newly discovered hole called Little Cave (number to be confirmed) which we took a waypoint of. A short walk down the hill from this cave is TR-1 Main Cave. Most of the afternoon was spent in here looking around and taking photos. Alan found some small holes to film people squeezing into and out of.

By late afternoon we were back driving through the bush and stopped to look at TR-52 Rock-me Cave. This cave has some nice formation and calcified tree roots. A tight squeeze close to the entrance restricts this cave to smaller cavers only.

A short drive down the track to a separate gully is an interesting area. At the bottom of the hill is a resurgence area consisting of multiple holes covered in Tufa. Some of the holes have been tagged TR-64 Dipstick Cave, TR-66 Sore Finger Cave and TR-62 Chain Ladder Cave. This is a resurgence/drain area for the reasonably sized limestone area on top of the hill where presently no cave has been found.

We then beat a hasty retreat back to the Glen Dhu hut for drinks and a BBQ around a great campfire.

Sunday morning brought the occasional light shower. We spent most of the morning in TR-15 Glen Dhu Cave filming and photographing. Glen Dhu cave is the deepest and fourth largest cave at Timor, larger than TR-1 Main Cave, and is conveniently located 25m away from the Glen Dhu hut. It has interesting historical graffiti, marine fossils and some nice formations. It is on private land so has not been so heavily trogged as other caves at Timor.

To round off the weekend a group visited TR-26 Moores Cave. This also is on private property and is in easy walking distance from the Glen Dhu hut. This cave contains marine fossils and some good formations. Moores Cave contains elevated levels of carbon dioxide and care should be taken.



Photo Rod O'Brien

Moparrabah

3 - 5th October 2020

By Rod Obrien

Kempsey is a comfortable 4-5-hour drive north of Sydney. The local club is the Kempsey Speleological Society (KSS) which was formed in 1958. They enjoy hosting trips for visiting caving clubs.

Most of the caving is conducted along the Macleay River Valley which runs for 75km west of Kempsey. Pockets of exposed limestone appear all along its length. The ground cover is mostly classified as rainforest which has some marvelous stinging plants and stinging trees. Several cavers over the weekend were lucky enough to experience these wonders of nature.

A multi-club trip over the October long weekend was organised by the Metropolitan Speleological Society (MSS). They were joined by members from Sydney University Speleological Society (SUSS) and the National University Caving Club (NUCC). Our guides for the weekend were KSS members Phillip Lardner and John Taylor. The main aim of the Kempsey trip was to set up a project to resurvey Moparrabah Main Cave and to relocate some lost tagged cave entrances.



*MP6 entrance. Simon shows how to get stung by a stinging tree.
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood*



*Bone breccia in MP6
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood*

Following a late start on Saturday, we travelled to the limestone outcrop at Moparrabah and split into two groups. We began with group one doing a familiarization trip through Moparrabah Main Cave led by Phillip Lardner from KSS and group two, led by John Taylor, doing some surface trogging to relocate some of the tagged cave entrances.

Moparrabah Main is a large multi-entrance, multi-level cave and group one started the through trip from the resurgence (MP-6). The character of the cave changes as you progress through it, ranging from squeezes, rifts, chambers and mazes. Side passages run off seemingly everywhere, sometimes joining back onto the main passage deeper into the cave. There are some nice areas of formation, tons of marine fossils along with some interesting bone breccia deposits. The oldest signature



*Phillip Lardner, Rod, and John Taylor look for entrances
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood*

found so far is J.P 1/6/1910. The cave is also home to large colonies of Bent Wing and Horseshoe bats. After a lengthy underground trip, group one emerged at the top entrance MP-1 where they found group two waiting for them. Phillip Lardner then led group two back through the cave and John Taylor took group one surface trogging.

An earlier start on Sunday was the beginning of a long day. Back at Moparrabah we organised ourselves into three groups. Phil Maynard (SUSS) would lead a survey team starting at the resurgence MP-6. Lachlan Bailey (NUCC) led the other survey team and started at the top entrance MP-1. The remaining cavers would finish the surface trogging, look at some of the other caves on the hill and try to relocate a long-lost untagged cave.

By 1pm we had relocated all entrances except for MP-3. KSS members had also found what they believed to be the long-lost cave. As the Kempsey cavers disappeared down the hole I was struggling with the MP-3 location. John Taylor pulled out all of his maps and worked out MP-3 was 25m away from MP-2. I had a GPS reading on MP-2 and the 'long-lost cave' fitted this exact distance. Cathi started digging all of the leaf litter and branches out of the small doline and found a patch of epoxy on the rock. Urged on by John, Cathi continued digging in the overburden and eventually found the tag that had fallen off. This confirmed

the lost cave (which is still lost) was actually MP-3. Tag mapping finished we headed down the hill to find the survey teams still hard at work.

It was 4pm, so a small team led by John Taylor drove to another limestone outcrop a bit further down the valley at Sebastopol, which is in the Willi Willi area (hence the WW numbers on the cave tags). We did a general surface trog to familiarize ourselves with the area, looking at Bottle Cave, Storm Pipe Cave and Two Frog Cave amongst several others. The limestone on top of the hill is heavily weathered (reminiscent of tropical karst) with razor-sharp rillenkarren flutes. This karst

can easily snap off when weight is placed on it and great care must be taken whilst traversing it.

We entered Daylight Cave and helped John do some repair work to the Atmospheric Monitoring equipment that is placed there. The sun had nearly disappeared so we called it a day arriving back at the caravan park at 7pm to find everyone else safely back.

On Monday morning Phil Maynard gathered all of the data that had been collected. The tagged entrances were plotted and some survey data inputted before the NUCC cavers left us for the long drive back to Canberra in holiday traffic. The rest of us were joined by Phillip Lardner



*John Taylor with the climate change experimental equipment in Daylight Cave
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood*

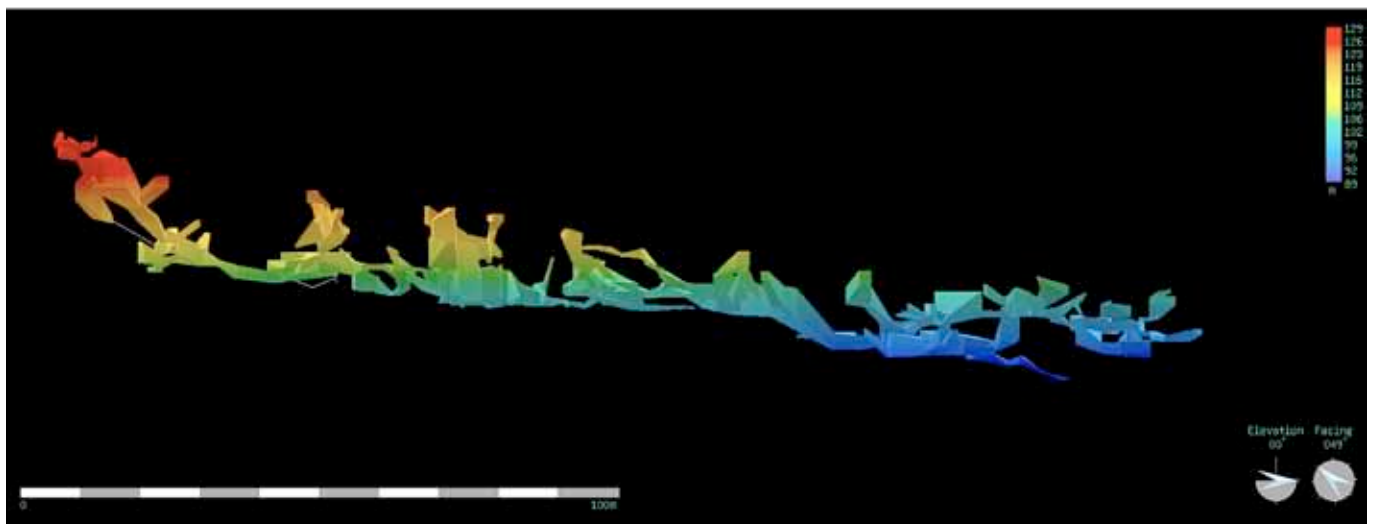
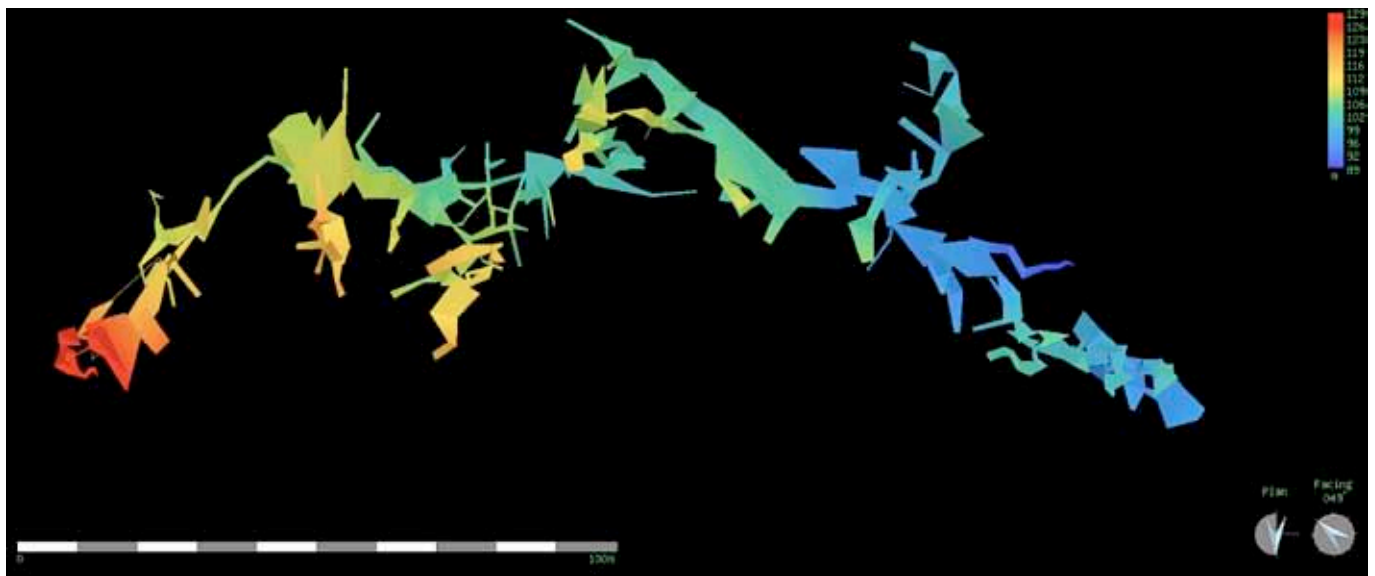
and we spent half a day roaming around the limestone hill of Yessabah.

In the early 1990's Yessabah was the site of a historic legal battle between the limestone miners and cavers from KSS and SUSS. In 1992 Keir Vaughan-Taylor won the legal battle and the mine was closed down. The old

limestone quarry cut into the front face of the hill still remains as a scar on the landscape. Cathi Humphrey-Hood spent most of the morning, in her element, wandering around the old quarry. Simon Murphy got up close and personal with a stinging tree. By 1pm we had all departed ending a great caving weekend.



*Stinging trees like Simon, but Simon does not necessarily like stinging trees.
Stem of Dendrocnide excelsa, from DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.abb8828*



Current plan and elevation render of MP6. Draft by Phil Maynard.

Waterfall of Moss

15 November 2020

Keir Vaughan-Taylor

Present: Glen Ellis, Paul Coulter, Antonella Wilby, Sarah Brown, Joanne McGregor, Max Merhand, Rafid Morshedi, Phil Maynard (Trip Leader), Alan Green, Keir Vaughan-Taylor.

The Cathedral of Ferns at Mount Wilson is a tranquil campground to gather a group of SUSS canyoneers. We organised our ropes into packs, checked our abseiling kit and jelly snakes.

We had a few new members with us and this canyon was an opportunity to expose everyone to varied abseils and the methodology of leap frogging each rope carrier to the next pitch in order to make the journey smooth and efficient. Phil gave a summary of where we were heading, soon after striding up a road in the direction of the Wollangambe river some 320 meters vertically below.

The Waterfall of Moss gets bad reviews in some canyoning guides. They are critical that there is a trek down to the Wollangambe, a swim across the river, and an ascent to gain the top of a ridge on the other side.

From the ridge top is a gully that feeds back into the Wollangambe. Starting as a creek tangled with bracken, thicket and fallen logs it soon transforms into a canyon with a series of eight abseils dropping back to the river. Canyon reviews also don't like the canyon because most abseils begin with overhung lips presenting an uncomfortable challenge to transition from a firm footing to a free hang.

I carried a 65 meter rope. It is advantageous to use a single rope rather than two joined by a knot because the pull down is less likely to jam on the knot but 65m

is longer and heavier than required. Nevertheless it is a useful extension on one of the 20m pitches with a subsequent slippery water slide. I was also pioneering for myself the use of a new design of descender called a Hydro-bot. It does both single and double rope descents and promises flexibility but there is always a "getting used to" phase with new equipment and what better opportunity than to experiment in the field. I also thought to wear Tiva brand shoes. I found they have good grip and work well with kayaks so why not ravines. Best to wear socks for extra warmth though.



*Crossing the Wollangambe
Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor*

The trek down to the Wollangambe ambles through

dried and burned out bush throbbing to the sound of cicadas shrieking their song of survival following the bushfires. Maybe there are fewer birds to feed on their number. The track steepens into a scramble down an eroded narrow cut that finishes with a climb down over boulders to the waters of the Wollangambe. Swimming to the other side is a welcome cooling from the hot day and effort of the descent. The warmth of the day is dis-



Rafid
Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor

pelled because the water is sooo cold. Right at the start a vertical climb on the other side is traced by a hanging rope with many knots snaking up the guts of a mossy cleft trickling with a half hearted spring.

Our bold trip leaders scaled the cleft lowering a belay rope for our new members. One of the girls, grunting somewhat, pulled herself resolutely to the top of the pitch where she declared her fitness watch was informing her that she had high stress levels. Someone suggested that she should get rid of her watch and enjoy a stress free journey. Packs and people hoicked themselves atop the climb to scramble a little further up a rift valley to sit in the sun. The ridge top is not as high as the vertical relief between the Wollangambe and the Cathedral of Ferns camping area but this ascent is the same vertical relief to be descended through the Waterfall of Moss canyon back to the Wollangambe. My rope-filled pack was weighing me down and I was confronting my age as I neared the summit of the ridge. Max trotted up as though in need of exercise and we switched packs. Next time I take a shorter rope.

A friendly creek found over the ridge was our drop-in point. We sat down on the bracken changing into canyon clothes and struggling into our abseiling harnesses. Phil set off to find the first pitch and shortly yelled back not to follow the creek but instead traverse along the left

side, thereby avoiding a cascade of dead trees felled by last year's bushfires and swept into the ravine. A hundred meters downstream is an obvious tape tied off to a living tree. The tape was coupled to a nice shiny maillon in which to thread the pull down rope. With both rope ends down the pitch Phil tied an alpine butterfly near the maillon joining the two ends permitting both types of descender, a single rope or double rope. This was the standard rigging used on the whole trip. Sometimes two abseilers can descend at the same time and speed operations up..

We had ten people in our team and there were eight pitches ahead of us so we needed to concentrate on moving along efficiently. The character of the creek changes abruptly from a sun-shiny friendly place to have a picnic; to no direct sun, slippery surfaces covered in moss, pitches with dripping water and occasional tree trunks dropped into the way at random locations. Alan Green, like a mysterious apparition was at every pitch-head making videos of each person.

Our beginners showed a disturbing faith in SUSS expertise, listening carefully to instruction about how to commit to crossing one of those annoying overhang abseils without doing a dramatic swing into an abyss, one drop after another. Nearly every pitch had a lip. Phil



Alan filming on pitch 7
Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor



Joanne on pitch 8
Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor



Glen comtemplates another overhung pitch start
Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor

would somehow step down making it all seem too easy. Where no such step down exists one technique is to lean on the pitch head sideways bringing the rope down close to the lip and dropping into the free hang sideways. Easy! Say that confidently enough and beginners will always do fine.

Rafid had committed himself to an ice hockey game for the afternoon thinking we would have this canyon knocked off in time for him to zip back to Sydney. In a reference to the movie Italian Job (original) "Get your skates on mate". Rafid went up front rigging pitches while Phil and I hung back making sure everyone else was doing okay. In places the sun beamed from atop the narrow strip open to the sky, offering a chance to warm up standing in the orange glow like a member of Star Trek waiting to be beamed up instead waiting for a path ahead to be crafted by SUSS's finest riggers.

In a small window seen down the guts of the canyon you can discern our final destination and rippling body of water – the Wollangambe. From here there is a sequence of some of the best pitches in the canyon. A strong breeze develops sweeping across each pitch head stripping a person of precious body heat. We find a thermal top to wear but still shiver while making sure each person gets on rope and has a sense of being safe. In one pitch head, the hang position seems invisible. The step down is not between your feet but rather down a wall on the left with entry to the pitch a bit of a squeeze. Alan

materialised on the pitch, video cameras blazing in one hand giving considerable confidence to the girls simultaneously lock stopped on a parallel rope capturing their seemingly confident descents. "Don't worry about bottomless abysses beneath you. You are going to be a star in an Alan Green caving video!"

There was another giant log to shimmy down into a pool and then one last pitch delivering us to the rippling lakes of the "Gambe". Rafid wanting to help with cave packs was ordered to get going with the gear he had already and win that ice hockey game. He took off down the gorge toward the track we came in on and that was the last we saw of him (That day – he made the game). The swim back to our initial entry point is perishingly cold and is a long swim. The sandy bottom doesn't offer itself until right up at the edge where you get out. It does no good to think of standing too quickly – the bottom is not there.

Nice to get out of our harnesses and wetsuits. There was some self-congratulations that our group of ten champions confronted with eight pitches had completed eighty abseils and it was only three in the afternoon. Looking up at the scramble ahead of us we engaged with the haul back up the fissure to the up-going track. The sun soon had us warmed. Crossing the hill's brow, the track turns into a road signalling we are close to our day's end at the Cathedral of Ferns....It is my recollection, the road is longer on the way back.



*Wollangambe River
Photo Keir Vaughan-Taylor*

Mt Fairy MF-1 Main Cave

Rod OBrien

Nov 2020

The National University Caving Club (NUCC) has been doing some project work at Mt Fairy and organised the weekend of the 28th – 29th November 2020 for me to dive three sumps in MF-1 Main Cave. Lachlan Bailey from NUCC was the Trip Leader and Keir Vaughan-Taylor Swas my support diver. Other cavers from NUCC and MSS joined the trip to lend a hand with the dive gear. Film maker extraordinaire Alan Green MSS was there to film it all.

The three sumps in MF-1 for me to explore were “sump 1”, “sump 2” and the “unnamed sump”. In an attempt to keep the water visibility as clear as possible we looked at sump 1 first as it was the furthest downstream and therefore, any silt I stirred up would not affect the other two sumps. It was also the best lead for the continuation of the cave towards the resurgences.

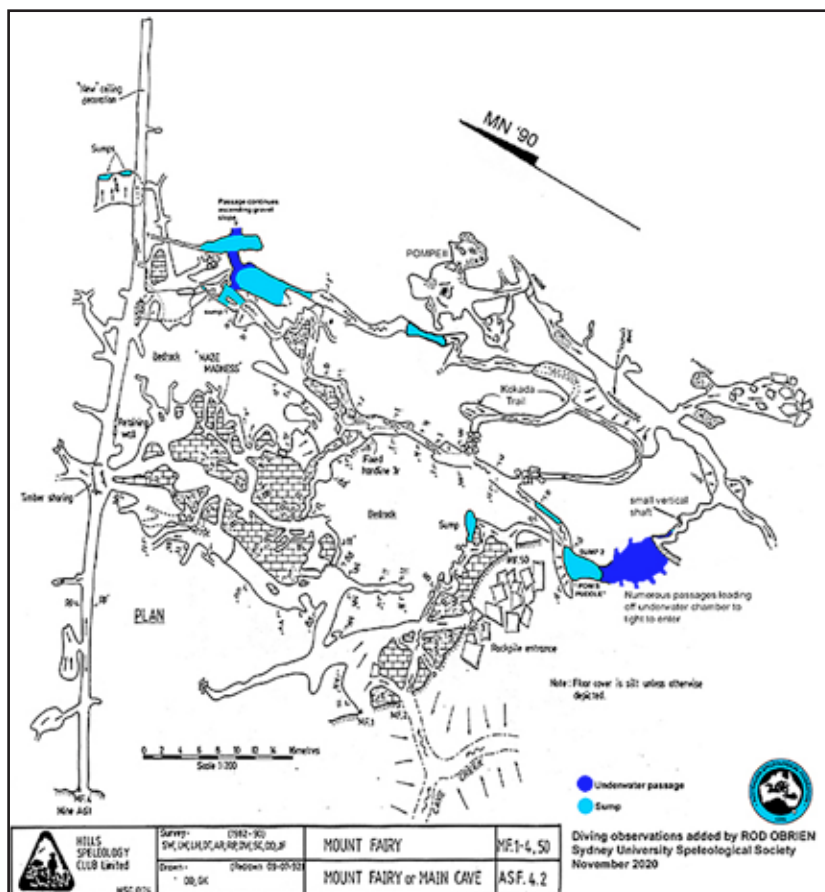
On reaching sump 1, I found the water very muddy probably due to the recent rain. So much for seeing where I was going. It was going to be one of those dives where I crawl along the bottom feeling my way around the walls with my hands and feet “oh Joy”. As such, I

didn't worry about wearing any dive fins or BCD, just a harness to clip my tanks onto.

Discovering a submerged passage in the right-hand wall of the sump I dived through and surfaced in a reasonable sized chamber with a 300mm air space. A 500mm wide passage ran off this heading back towards known cave passage that had a sump marked at its end. Diving back through to the main sump I organised some cavers to go to this sump and light it up. Returning to the chamber I first made a voice connection with the cavers then sighted their lights. This connected the passage leading off the new chamber to a sump marked on the old HILLS cave map.

Continuing my exploration of this new chamber with my feet, I discovered the main streamway passage which I followed until it surfaced in a second new medium-sized chamber.

This had a passage leading off at water level but it was too small for me to enter. There was no water flow so thinking this was the way on I began surveying my dive line back to the main sump. I also took some measure-





*Rod diving Sump 1
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood*

ments of several small side passages to add to the existing cave map.

Back at sump 1, I reviewed my survey notes and noticed an area in the second chamber that I had not explored. Returning, I felt my way around the walls and discovered what appears to be the main streamway passage heading downstream at a depth of 2.4m.

The passage was wide but low, making for a very tight fit. I was stopped by an ascending loose, unstable gravel slope that threatened to collapse and block my way back. At this point the distance to the resurgence on the other side of the hill is approximately 200m.

I believe that the gravel could be naturally carried away by the next rain event so it is definitely worth another dive after such an occurrence.

I was very cold by the time I exited sump 1 but everyone was keen to carry my gear, so we made our way upstream to sump 2 to find the water clarity there was just as bad as sump 1.

The cave passage leading into sump 2 is basically low and wide. This low passage continued underwater with the

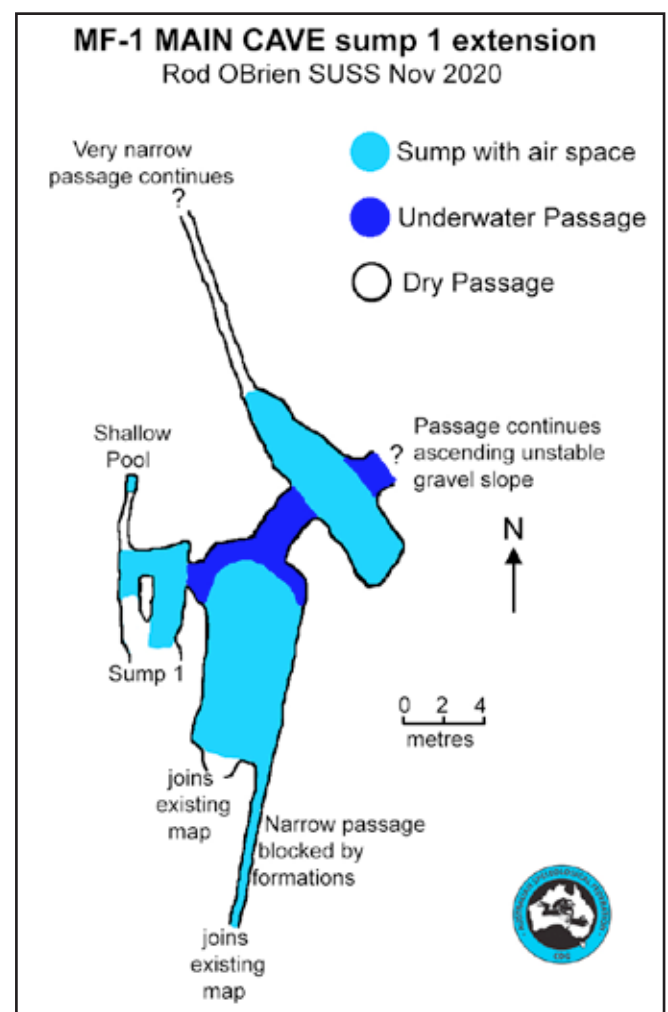
floor made up of loose cobblestones. Again, I decided not to wear any dive fins or BCD as I would be crawling around the bottom.

I backed into the small low sump feet first. By feeling around with my feet, I discovered what felt like numerous passageways. Each time I entered one they became too small for me to enter.

Continuing my way around the walls I found and entered a small solution tube, just larger than body size, that after a short distance surfaced in a small dry passage about 4m long. After 4m the passage took a 90 degree turn to the left for 2m. At the end of this passage is a small vertical shaft that appears from the survey data to join onto a passage in the Kokoda Extension. This dry passage contained several flying insects that seemed to be fixated with my dive light. The discovery of these insects could be proof of a surface connection somewhere.

After taking some brief survey notes I followed my dive line back to sump 2.

By the end of this dive my hands were so cold I was having trouble using them, so we decided to exit the



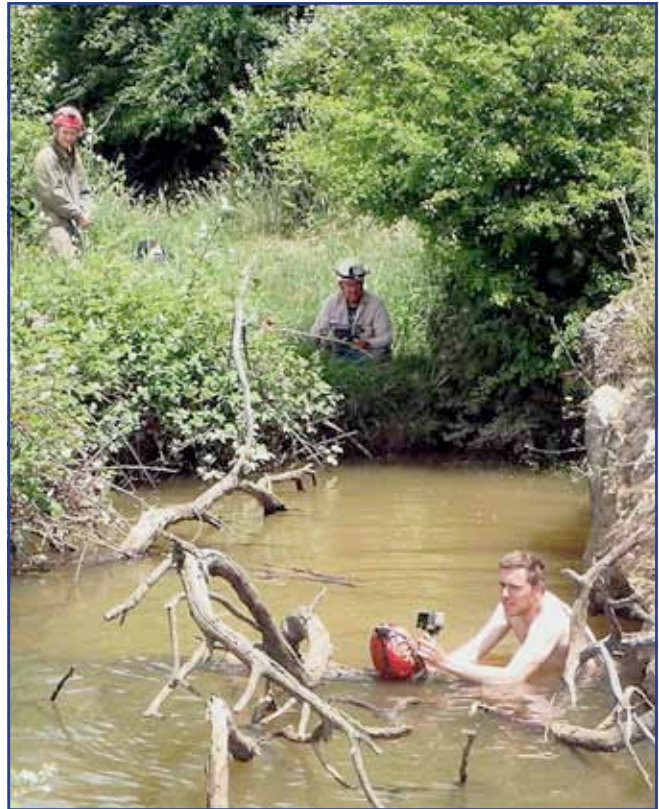
cave for some sunlight. I needed to warm up and the cavers needed to have lunch.

We left the exploration of the 'unnamed sump' for another day.

We spent the following day scouring the valley for caves. There was an undercut section of karst in a bend of the creek near MF-10 that looked promising. Spying a promising lead Andy Waddell detrogged and waded into the creek. Andy had to spend some time cutting his way through the lantana to reach his prize but alas a silted up dead end. Working his way around the undercut cliff face Andy found several underwater passages leading off that he had a good go at. These will need to be dived on the next trip.

Sincere thanks to Hills Speleological Club for Mt Fairy information and the permission to use their maps.

The dive support team consisted of Lachlan Bailey, Adrianna Stoddart, Andy Waddell, Bradley Hearn, Claudia Tomkins (NUCC), Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Alan Green and Diana da Silva Paiva (MSS) and Keir Vaughan-Taylor (SUSS).



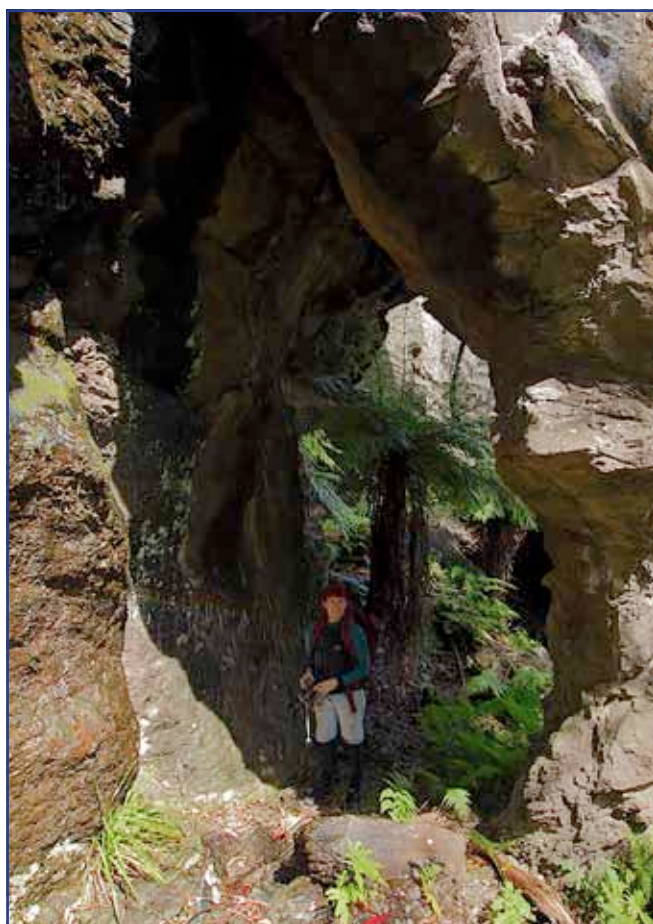
*Andy pokes around in the creek for cave entrances
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood*



*Rod in Sump 2
Photo Cathi Humphrey-Hood*

Obscure Caves Part 1; XK-120 Euglah Cave

By Rod OBrien



Cathi in the rock formations
Photo Rod OBrien

In December 2020 Cathi and I took some time off to locate a cave I had come across while doing some research. It was supposed to be located in the basalt of Mt Kaputar.

The 51,000 ha Mt Kaputar NP is a leisurely 5hr drive west of Newcastle. Its formation was a result of volcanic activity around 20 million years ago and the park contains some impressive basalt features. Mt Kaputar rises 1510m above sea level.

We arrived at the proposed search area on the southern slope mid-morning to a misty, rainy day. Loading everything into packs we donned rain coats and set off for a 2km hike under our umbrellas. On nearing the area I believed the cave to be, my GPS decided to swing wildly by 180 degrees. As a result, some time was spent bashing through the thick under growth up the wrong gully. I recalibrated the compass which seemed to settle the GPS down and found the gully I had targeted. We found Euglah Cave near the end of the gully in the left side granite cliff face.

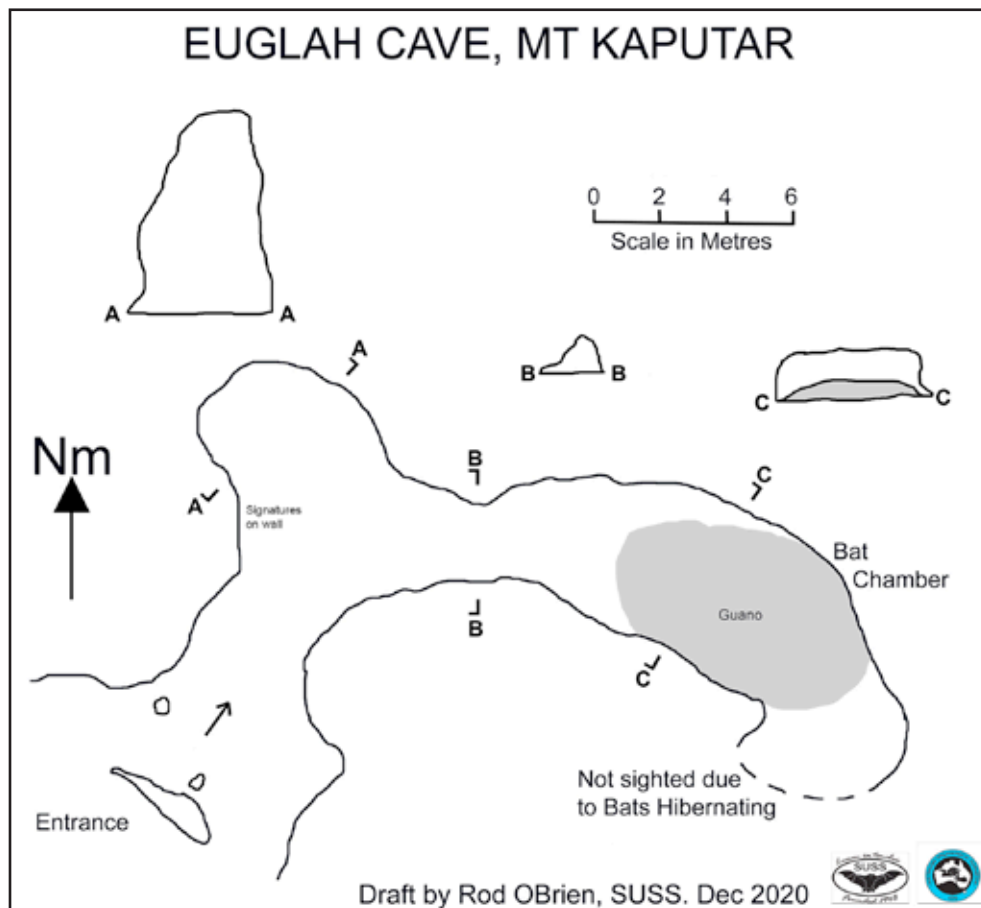
The cave has a fairly large overhang entrance that slopes gently down narrowing and then entering the first chamber. This chamber is 8m long, 5m wide and 6m high. On the left-hand wall just as you enter the chamber are some signatures N BUSBY 4-11-51, N TASKER D LAMB 16-1-52 and A.V. TASKER 19-1-52. Also written is the number XK 120 which I believe to be the old cave number.

Leading off the right-hand wall is a passage that leads into the second chamber. This chamber is 13m long, 5m wide and 2.5m high. Two species of bats, Eastern Bent-Wing Bat and Little Bent-Wing Bat, use this cave as a roosting and hibernating chamber. The floor is thickly covered with guano. One section of this chamber went unsighted as I did not want to disturb the bats and crawl through the guano. A very large spider hole was noticed in the floor near the edge of the guano deposit.

We spent some time taking photos and then surveyed the cave. We were fortunate that by now the rain had stopped and the sun had made an appearance making the trek back to the car a bit more pleasant. We filled in the rest of the day sight-seeing around the park.



Inside the first chamber
Photo Rod OBrien



*Kaputar landscape.
Photo Rod O'Brien*

Photogallery



*Glen Ellis in Wotta Canyon
Photo Max Merhand*



*Phil Maynard on the wet pitch, Wotta
Photo Max Merhand*

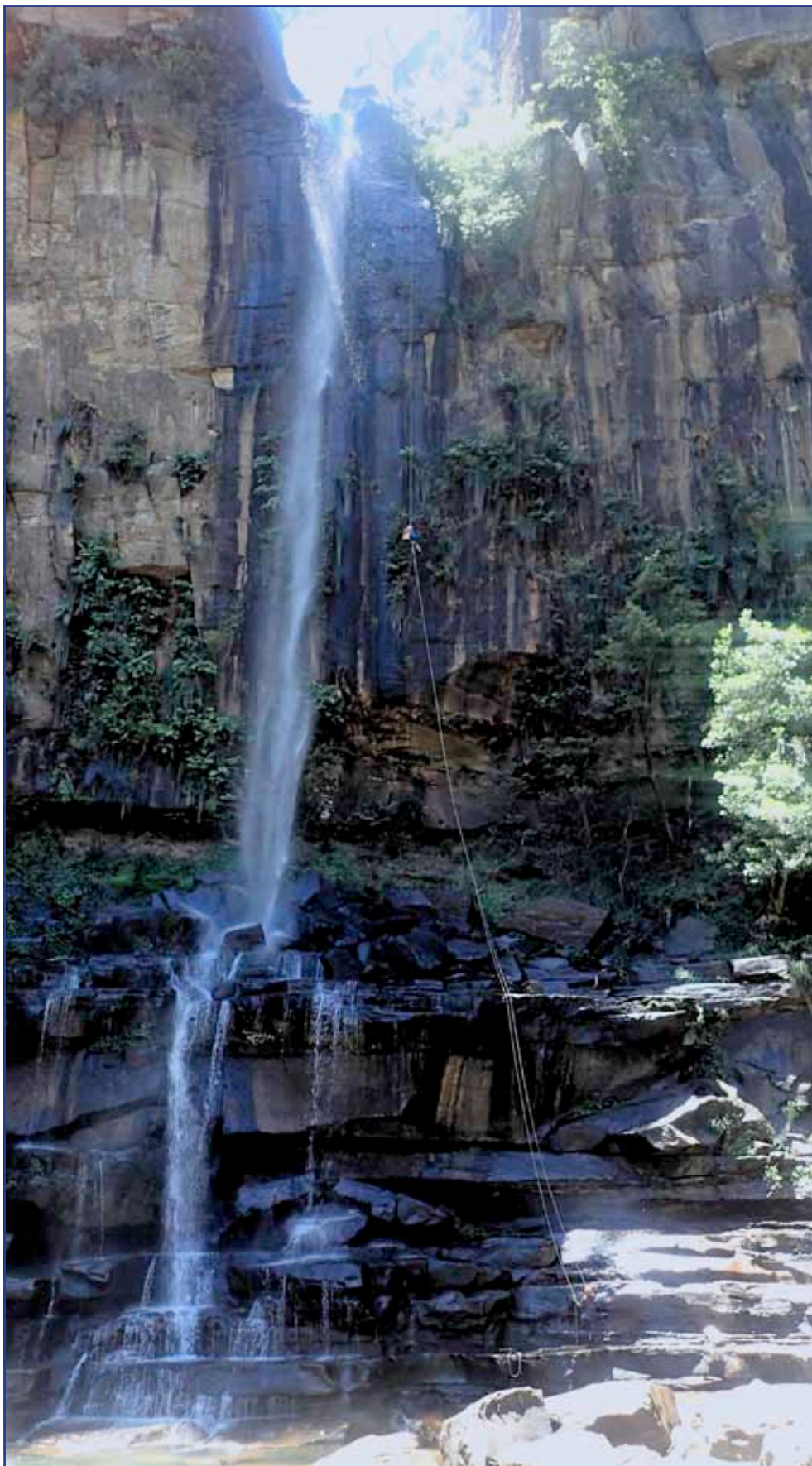
Photogallery



*Emily Butcher, wet pitch, Wotta
Photo Max Merhand*



*Rafid Morshedi on the edge of the main pitch, Wotta
Photo Max Merhand*



*Main pitch, Wotta
Photo Rafid Morshedi*

Photogallery



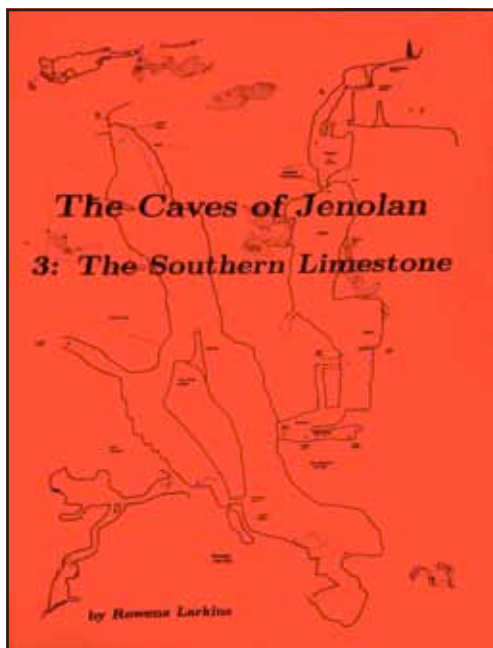
*Max Merhand in Waterfall of Moss
Photo Alan Green*



*Sarah Brown in Waterfall of Moss
Photo Alan Green*

Things to buy

For postage and handling costs and the details of how to order go to <http://suss.caves.org.au/publications>. There you will also find a range of must-have maps and other publications.



The Caves Of Jenolan 3: The Southern Limestone

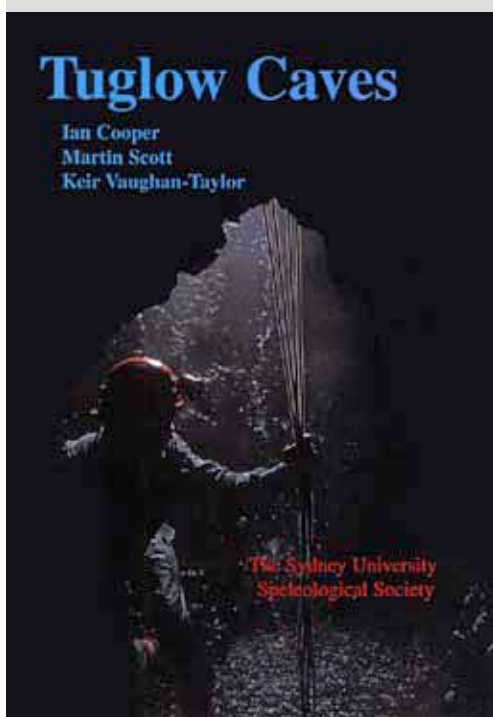
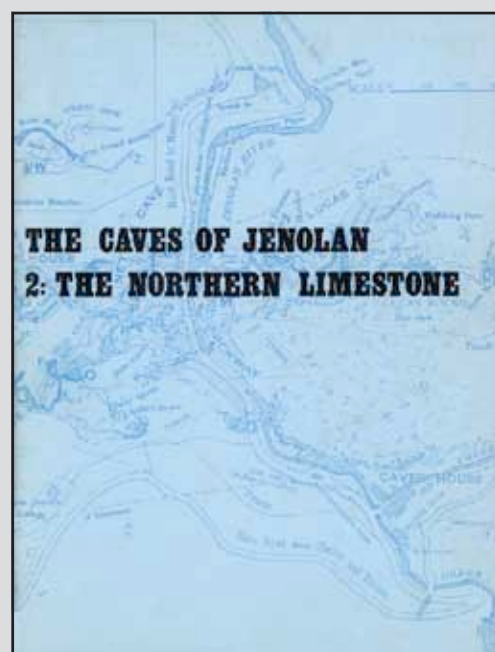
Just published!! By Rowena Larkins. 2020. Contains maps and descriptions of every known cave in the Southern Limestone of Jenolan plus notes on the geology and hydrology of the area.

Price is \$20.00 + PH.

The Caves Of Jenolan 2: The Northern Limestone

Edited by Bruce R. Welch. 1976, 140 pages. We still have some copies of these books left. Contains maps and descriptions of many caves in the Northern Limestone section of Jenolan plus notes on the history of Jenolan and its geology, geomorphology and hydrology.

Cost is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members + PH.



Tuglow Caves

By Ian Cooper, Martin Scott and Keir Vaughan-Taylor. 1998, 70 pages. Examines caving procedures, site descriptions, history, biology, surveying and maps, geology and hydrology of Tuglow Cave and others.

Cost is \$13 for members and \$16 for non-members + PH.

*Back Cover: Cave Hazard, Gloucester
Photo Felix Ossig-Bonnano*



PROVIDED BY
UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY UNION