

SOUTHERN



C A V E R

■ VOL.5 NO.3 ■

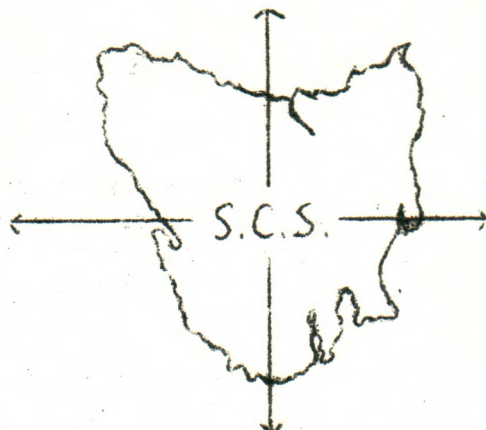
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THE EXPLORATION OF "THREE FALLS CAVE" : J.F. 225

by Steve Harris

Don't prepare yourself for any fiery epic of another Khazad-Dûm descent. What follows is but a sober chronicle of the exploration of a moderately good hole! The story begins on the 4th of May 1969.

It was a dull and overcast day, nevertheless, sweat flowed under the trog suits and gear as seven members of the Society, led by Barry James, were searching the Florentine scrub for caves reported by Don Francombe of A.N.M. The caves were eventually found - in two dolines in a gully which is followed from the F9 road.

The caves reside beneath a series of very spectacular waterfalls. Two of the holes were found and pushed but neither was of any length or depth. A third hole, however, was located 150 m. away in a second doline by Kevin. The entrance to this cave is probably one of the more magnificent in the Florentine Valley. This seems a claim made of many caves in this area but such claims strengthen the reputation for high class cave entrance scenery in the Valley. Anyway, the entrance was found to consist of a 26 m. slope which drops into a small talus section at the top of an old creek passage which was found to continue for 40 m. and then abruptly stop at the top of a drop of approx. 30 m. (I'm tempted to say ninety feet - sounds much better, eh?). Because of numerous loose boulders at the top of this ladder pitch, no further progress could be made that day.

A couple of weekends later, the pitch was laddered down to an old dry talus section and creek passage. The cave then seemed to stop, and after "extensive" exploration in this large talus chamber, the party decided to call it a day. After only four hours underground the seeming finality of this attempt was to discourage any further trips until November 1973.

Some depth was expected of caves in this vicinity, the locale of the dreaded Tassy Pot. So, scrub bashing continued in the same surface region at haphazard intervals and in late 1970, Three Falls Cave was numbered J.F. 225...

Finally, someone decided to have another crack at it (November 1973). A tantalizing trip report states:

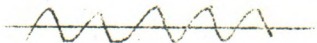
".....decided to take a look at Three Falls Cave. Visitors were impressed with the magnificent entrance.

Enthusiastic talus bashing came up with new extension. Followed for several hundred feet and team was halted by what appeared to be a ladder pitch. A stream can be clearly heard below. Will investigate more thoroughly next week".

Sure enough the team kept their word and the following weekend exploration continued down the new ladder pitch (shared with a waterfall) and halted at a squeeze in a stream passage. Estimated depth from entrance to this point is 120m. Steve Street reached the bottom of the waterfall first and saw that it ended. He shouted up "It goes!". Chris Harris hurriedly climbed the ladder down through the waterfall with great alacrity and enthusiasm, the latter subsequently channelled into wringing Steve's neck.

The cave is described thus: Entrance is made down a narrow rift which is on the left after entering the cave. A squeeze through broken flowstone is negotiated which leads into a dry tributary passage heading roughly in a westerly direction. The passage then turns and falls steeply in steps to a ladder pitch : 13 m. This ends up on a wide ledge near the top of a hefty rift which slopes about 20 m. down into a stream. The stream enters from the ceiling at this point and disappears over a 17 m. waterfall pitch at the bottom of which the stream exits in a narrow squeeze.

I hope the description conveys a picture as the cave remains unsurveyed. Chris Harris reports that there are minor possibilities for extension and recommends another attempt on the squeeze, preferably with a wet suit.



Tasmanian Council of Speleology

The first meeting of the Council was held at the Northern Caverneer's Mayberry Hut on Saturday 15th December at 12.00 noon.

Those attending were Bob Cockerill, Dave Elliott and Ron Mann (S.C.S.), Andrew and Ros Skinner (T.C.C.), Richard Schmidt, Peter Dowde, Bill Hardman and Tim Daniel (Northern Caverneers), Des Robertson and John Boden (Latrobe High School Caving Club).

Minutes of the inaugural meeting were read and confirmed and apologies were received.

BUSINESS DISCUSSED

A resolution was passed to gate Kubla Khan at a suitable point in the cave and to leave the back entrance gated.

The merits of cave numbering and documentation were discussed and it was agreed that club co-operation was most desirable.

Further resolutions that Genghis Khan be gated and the existing gate at Croesus be repaired were also carried. The position of the Latrobe group was discussed and agreement was reached that they would affiliate with Northern Caverneers.

A suggestion was put forward that the next Council meeting be held at Campbell Town to enable delegates with limited time to attend.

The meeting was followed by an excellent dinner at the Mole Creek Hotel. The news of Frank Brown's transfer to Hobart was announced and will be of interest to his many caving friends in the South. He will become an honorary Life Member of Northern Caverneers.

A toast to the Council was proposed by the Chairman, Bob Cockerill.

On Sunday, to round off an enjoyable weekend, delegates inspected the gate at Croesus and made a leisurely tour of the cave in what was probably the first trip to involve members of the three major Tasmanian groups.

WHICH CAVE?

Following is an extract from the diaries of George Augustus Robinson, taken from: Friendly Mission Ed. N.J.B. Plomley (1966)

24 July

Fine day. Visited the cave and explored it. This singular excavation is situate at the east end of a small plain (Den Plain) on the south side of the Mersey River. The plain is bounded on the north side by the Mersey and is surrounded by a chain of hills. It contains an area of two or three hundred acres and would be an excellent grant for a poor man. It is naturally fenced in. The plain is at the fishing rocks where Mr. Vaughans nephew goes to fish and about six miles from Mr. Vaughans residence. I discovered this cavern in the course of my perambulation whilst walking under the cliffs accompanied by the aborigines. I returned to the encampment, when the whole of the aborigines went with me for the purpose of exploring it. Having prepared ourselves with torches made of bark I proceeded accompanied by my servant to explore, but all the arguments I could adduce were insufficient to prevail on the natives to follow. They would proceed about a yard or two and then rush out in greatest terror shouting vociferously and crying out that the devil was coming, that it was the devils ~~LEE~~BRUINIER. I however perservered and succeeded in exploring it. It measured two hundred and sixty-six paces (the cave at Albatross Island is one hundred yards). A rill of water runs through it for the first sixty or seventy paces and measures about nine feet. At this part the water runs through a hole underneath and which a pig might get through. You then climb up about four feet and pass through an aperture which brings you into the large chamber. This part is from twenty to forty feet in altitude and twenty in width in the widest part, with galleries and singular cavities. When about two hundred paces you turn an angle which leads you to the end. The sides at this part are perpendicular, in others overhanging. The water rushes from under the rocks and rolls down a gentle acclivity over a stony bottom and which when you first enter the cavern about half way you hear roaring as though some mighty torrent or fall of water were before you threatening you with instant destruction. This is occasioned by the sound of reverberating. The stream is not more than ankle deep at the end. I tied a piece of canvas on which I had written my name - G.A. Robinson July 24 1834. The first two hundred paces is nearly level.

Eds. Note: The above was brought to our attention by Steve Harris and is reprinted for the benefit of any caver who might recognize the cave from the original description. Would it be too much to hope that a scrap of the canvas tag still remains?

TASMANIAN CAVE FAUNA. PART 3. OUR MORE IMPORTANT

REPRESENTATIVES.

By Aleks Terauds

Subsequent to the publication of Parts I and 2 of 'Tasmanian Cave Fauna' in this magazine the author was inundated by requests for more detailed descriptions of the more common Tasmanian cave inhabitants. There are, of course, a lot of very common members of this group that could be discussed to advantage but the author has felt, quite rightly, I feel, that to restrict this discourse to them would not be prudent. Hence this carefully researched collection of not necessarily new but hopefully hitherto as yet undescribed cave inhabitants:

I. Cavus insectus sp. n.



crawled or jumped.

Recognizeable by squashed appearance surrounded by outline of caving boot print; usually found in depressions made by said boot. Has also been found in collecting bottles into which unbeknown to caver the specimen has

2. Cavus caverus sp. n.



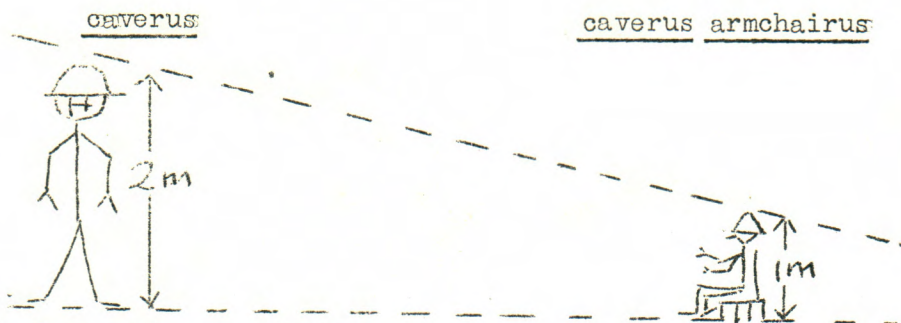
or on head resembling the three letters 'S.C.S.'

Many different types, shapes and sizes but all have muddy external coverings and facial pallidness from lack of sun. Species has gregarious habits and tends to band into discrete groups. One of the more notable and important types (vertebrate, i.e., with backbone) bears characteristic markings on back of body

3. Cavus caverus sub. species nov. armchairus

More prevalent than most other types, easily recognizeable, however, by different number of appendages when compared to caverus sens. strictu. This subspecies has, also, smaller sized individuals:

(see next page)



4. Cavus pieceus dirtus sp. nov.



all Australian caves.

Very common type submitted by amateur collectors for description as new subspecies of insectus. Varied appearance, in most colours and present in

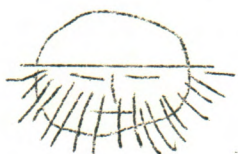
5. Cavus nudus femaleus sp. n.



is recognizable by several distinguishing features, as in figure.

Very rare type, especially in Tasmania because of our relatively cool climate, but always greatly sought by collectors. Type needs further study and finders are requested to notify author immediately of any sightings. The species

6. Cavus beardedus sp. nov.



enclosed in helmet.

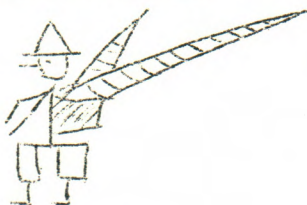
Hirstute type easily recognizable by :

black,
brown,
red or
yellow fuzz

covering section of head not

7. Cavus scoutus sp. nov.

8. Cavus amateurus sp. nov.



These two species are dealt with together because they have a common habit. Their appearance may be different and the former species is more gregarious than the latter. Both, however, have attained pest status because of activities

of some individual members. The true pest species are recognizable by haversacks bulging with souveneered stalactites and stalagmites and by the fact that they are more likely to carry axe underground than wear a helmet.

9. Cavus whichwritusformagazinus sp. nov.

Extremely rare species, no illustration available. The subspecies magazinecommitteus which I have encountered is recognized by the four letter expletives and late hours they keep, the number and frequency of the former increasing with the forced necessity of the latter.

.....

A Short from Our Live Wire

Readers may remember the article entitled "Landslide at Liena" in Vol. 2 No. 3 of this publication, which noted that the Hydro-Electric Commission had constructed its main road from Liena (near Mole Ck.) to Gowrie Park right over an active resurgence, which the Commission had filled in.

Interestingly enough, the following reflectorised sign in white on a red background has appeared at that very spot:

Hydro-Electric Commission
WARNING DANGER

Deep holes may occur in the
road surface over the next
500 metres.

DRIVE WITH CAUTION

↓
KWK

Who dares tamper with mother karst?

KWK

THE EUGENANNA AREA

by Kevin Kiernan

The Eugenanna area is located 8 km S.S.W. of Devonport in the N.W. of Tasmania, within the valley of the Don River, which drains northwards to Bass Strait. It is some 12 km by road from Devonport and is also accessible by rail. It represents part of the Melrose-Paloona limestone belt. Most of the area has been cleared of its original vegetation for agricultural purposes.

The area consists of a fairly broad valley flanked by high hills with Gordon Limestone (Ordovician) occurring on the lower portions of hillsides and as isolated outcrops rising above the plain. The limestone is synclinal in occurrence. It is obscured on the valley floor by thick soil deposits resulting from limestone breakdown. The rock is compact to wavy and of bluish grey colour, weathering to a pale blue. It conformably overlies lower ordovician conglomerates, sandstones and shales (Hughes 1957).

The limestone of the area has long been utilised for industrial purposes, the major exploiter being B.H.P. which used it for flux in iron smelting processes at Newcastle, N.S.W. Production reached a peak of 300,000 tons in 1939 but ceased in 1947. All that now remains is an enormous hole and some rusted plant. Smaller quarrying concerns still use the limestone for the production of agricultural lime.

The area is perhaps best known for the discovery of the Eugenanna Beds during quarrying activities. This is a deposit of sandstone, carbonaceous sandstone and cave breccias with a spore content indicating Middle Devonian age. Although the beds occur within a cavern developed in folded Gordon Limestone (Ordovician), they are not themselves displaced as a result of that movement, demonstrating their origins as being more recent than the folding. Together with other information this permitted the dating of the major period of crustal deformation and mountain building activity in Tasmania's geological history, responsible for many of the State's western mountains. The beds have been given Geological Monument status.

The only known negotiable cave in the region lies about 0.5 km south of the old B.H.P. works. It is known as Sherrills Cave, and lies within an elongate limestone ridge 200 m long, 30 m wide, and rising 7 m above the surrounding pasture, with the limestone dipping steeply south westerly. The cave consists of a straight strike-oriented passage roughly 70 m long with one side passage, and is centrally located within the ridge. It contains deposits of inactive and dirtied flowstone of fair extent. The passages are comfortable crawling - stooping sized.

Little potential exists for other negotiable caves in the area as most development exists beneath the water table or has been infilled with soil deposits.

- Bibliography: Anon. Only the Sounds of Silence The Advocate (Burnie).
Banks, M.R. & Burns, K.L. (1962) Eugenanna Beds.
In Spry, A. & Banks, Maxwell R. (Eds.) (1962)
The Geology of Tasmania Journ. Geol. Soc. Aust.
2 (2) : 185-187.
Hughes, T.D. (Ed.) (1957) Limestones in Tasmania
Geol. Surv. Min. Res. 10 : 142-148.

DID YOU KNOW?

For the information of members who may not have read the original proclamations, we mention that Croesus Cave was declared a State reserve on July 4th, 1972, and that a proclamation dated June 6th, 1972 declares an extension of the Hastings Cave State Reserve. Details may be found in the Tasmanian Government Gazette of July 12th and June 14th 1972, respectively.

Members who met John Catter on the Precipitous Bluff expedition will be saddened at the news of his death.

E201 SHERRILLS CAVE

Eugenanna, NW Tasmania.

Scale 1:300 0 3 6 9 12 15 18 metres.

~ surface formline

⌈ vertical face

↑ height of ceiling (m)

∴# cave earth/vegetable debris

↘ direction of floor slope

⌋⌋ flowstone

Typical Section:
(X2)



SOUTHERN CAVERS IN DEPTH

by Aleks Terauds
Dave Elliott
Ron Mann

With the Society in its ninth year it was thought appropriate to publish a little biographical data on some of the personalities who, in their various ways, have contributed to the formation and moulding of the club.

We hope that this series will prove of particular interest to our newer members.

Two well-known and contrasting personalities, John McCormack and Bob Cockerill, have been chosen to commence this series.

(The following statement was included in this introduction without the consent of the person mentioned).

The idea was the brain child of Aleks Terauds to whom any writ for libel and defamation of character should be addressed.

(All such writs will be consigned to the waste-paper basket. A.T.).

JOHN MCCORMACK

A foundation member of the Society, John McCormack spent much of his time exploring the Mole Creek System, both before and after the formation of S.C.S. in which event he played a major role. In his job as a bank officer he was for some years in Sydney. On being transferred back to Hobart he resumed Club activities with his usual vigour.

Readers of our magazine will know that John was Editor in 1970/71 and 1971/72. In 1972 he was elected President of the Society and after a successful year was re-elected for a second term. Among his more noteworthy achievements while in office were the minor miracle he worked in acquiring a centrally located Club room at a reasonable rental and the organization of the Richmond well cleaning operation that netted the Society a substantial donation.

John also holds the office of President of the South West Committee and is one of our delegates to the Tasmanian Council of Speleology and the delegate to the Federation of Tasmanian Bush-walking Clubs.

John McCormack has a wife, Janine, who has caved with him and two young sons.

BOB COCKERILL

R.J. Cockerill - Bob to his friends - likes caving (used to caverneer before he found out the difference), likes fishing, has been seen to drink the amber stuff and is normal in most other ways, too. His wife, Angela, used to cave and his youngster, Richard, will. Bob is a Foundation Member of the Society and his keen interest in the Society's affairs, together with his popularity, are well illustrated by the many elected positions he has occupied: President, 1967/68 and 1968/69; vice-president, 1970/71 and 1973/74; secretary, 1965/66; treasurer, 1971/72; magazine editor, 1968/69 and co-editor 1972/73; search and rescue officer, 1973/74. Bob was S.C.S.'s rep. (and co-editor of the subsequent "Proceedings") for the 8th Biennial Conference of ASF in Hobart in 1970 and is, at the moment, our delegate to the Tasmanian Council of Speleology.

Bob's caving exploits and achievements are literally to multitudinous to list. Let's just say that until about three years ago Bob had been to all known caving areas in Tasmania and probably in every cave known to us. He justly earned the Royal Humane Society Silver Medal for his efforts in the cave rescue at Mt. Faulkner.

PROSPECTIVE COLLECTORS BEWARE

It has been pointed out to this Society by Mr. P. Murrell, Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service that a permit is required for the collection of animals from caves in this State. Mr. Murrell has informed us that insects, spiders and the like are considered as wildlife within the meaning of the 1970 National Parks & Wildlife Act. Further, no specimens of wildlife (cave fauna, as far as we are concerned) may be taken out of the State without the express permission of Mr. Murrell's Service. S.C.S. has applied for a collecting permit.

Seeking the Thylacine

While searching Trowutta for an inhabitant with knowledge of the caves a party was fortunate enough to meet one James Malley, who has spent several years seeking to prove that the Thylacine or Tasmanian Tiger Thylacinus cynocephalus still exists.

His search for this strange marsupial, which has been listed by some as the worlds rarest animal is not the quest of an idle glory hunter. Those present were quickly impressed by his sincerity and dedication. He offered to accompany us to the caves, which were discovered by his uncle and lie half a mile from where the last Thylacine was captured for the Hobart zoo in the 1920's.

We spent the afternoon discussing the animal and his search, interest in which was increased for the S.C.S. members present by the discovery of a skeleton in Zulu Pot at Juneee. From the accounts James gave of recent credible sightings those present were greatly encouraged that this species still exists in sufficient numbers to allow capture and rehabilitation in areas free of the ravages of the habitat destruction for pasture which seems to be perhaps the biggest threat facing the animal.

S.C.S. members and speleos in general seem to frequent little visited and remote areas. Recent reports have come from areas as widely scattered as Southport, Mt. Arrowsmith, the Gordon River Road, Trowutta and the North-East. While some S.W. areas are probably too harsh and the best prospects appear to lie in the N.E. and N.W., you never know, by chance you may even stumble upon the opportunity to provide a valuable contribution to this most worthwhile search.

Eds. Note.. This article was originally submitted by Kevin Kiernan; at the magazine committee meeting where this issue was being printed K.K. requested that his name be deleted since the information in the article was not as up to date as he would want. A.T.

Area Reports

1st June 1973 to 31st December 1973

MOLE CREEK

3 TRIPS 18 MEMBERS

Kelly's Pot was fluoresceined but because of high water levels the fluorescein was not observed. After the meeting of the Tasmanian Council of Speleology at Mole Creek, members of T.C.C., S.C.S. and Northern Caverneers inspected the gates at Croesus and took measurements for a new gate and then explored the cave as far as the Golden Stairs.

A dinner was held at the Mole Creek Hotel after the T.C.S. meeting and was attended by representatives of S.C.S., T.C.C., Northern Caverneers and the Latrobe High School Caving Club.

JUNEE/FLORENTINE

11 TRIPS 46 MEMBERS

Activities included exploration and tourist trips to Grot Grovel, Frankcombes, Tassie Pot, J.F.211, J.F.228 and Welcome Stranger.

Three Falls Cave was explored on two consecutive weekends and the exploration ceased at a squeeze estimated to be about - 350'. There are minor possible extensions. Scrub bashes were carried out on Chrisps Road and several small holes were found which bear investigation.

Grot Grovel was pushed past the previous limit of exploration (200' from entrance) and it was found that the water continued down an 80' shaft which was descended without gear and reached a 30' ladder pitch. The cave then went into a 30' high fissure where it choked off.

HASTINGS

2 TRIPS 8 MEMBERS

Wolfe Hole was visited as a tourist trip and King George V Cave was explored resulting in an extension of one of the major side passages by about 100'. A vertical shaft was pushed for about 80' but petered out before reaching the surface.

IDA BAY

3 TRIPS 10 MEMBERS

Bradley Chesterman Cave and Entrance Cave were visited and photographed. No traces of pollution were found in Bradley Chestermans Cave.

It seems that this area of Tasmania is popular for quite easy trips especially for the caverneers among us.

NELSON RIVER

A party of four investigated limestone deposits at the Nelson River and found several Pots giving access to a stream however the water level was too high for any progress. Several caves were found and numbered at Bubbs Hill by the same party.

MARGATE

Another party of four went to Margate, south of Hobart, to check on a report of limestone in the area. Unfortunately it turned out to be fill on a bush track and not a new caving area.

VANISHING FALLS

A trip was organised to investigate the access potential of the upper Salisbury River tributaries as a route for reaching Vanishing Falls. After pushing for five days through dense scrub they concluded that they were at least two miles from the falls and probably two days away in travelling time because of the almost impenetrable scrub.

Due to a lack of time the party had to retrace its steps after coming so close to the objective.

S.R.T. PRACTICE

The S.R.T. exponents have had plenty of practice trips, mainly to Sphinx Rock and Blackmans Bay with one trip to the Tasman Peninsula.

With the large number of practice trips the Society should have some expert S.R.T. men to push all the deep holes that will be found in the near future.

RON MANN.

SOCIETY NOTES

by Dave Elliott
Ron Mann

Gray Wilson's familiar face has been seen in Hobart over Christmas and Gray is off to Precipitous Bluff for about 10 days.

Gray was married to Helen Scriven at Swan Hill (Vic.) on the 15th December 1973. He picked a spot far enough away to escape the usual caving wedding. Congratulations and the best of luck to Gray and Helen.

The S.C.S. Christmas Party was held at Bob Cockerill's brothers property at Cygnet a few weeks before the festive season.

A reasonable roll up of 15 or so enjoyed the warm sunshine and soon demolished the refreshments and food. It was generally agreed that the event should be repeated next year at the same venue.

Our congratulations to Neil James (the Wolf Hole Kid to his friends) who was married in December.

Chris Harris celebrated his 21st birthday on Saturday 19th January. The occasion was marked by a party given by Mieke Vermeulen which we believe is still the talk of the district.

We have it on excellent authority that the Society's membership will shortly be boosted by two. Aleks and Joane Terauds and Bob and Angela Cockerill are scheduled for a visit from the stork. If this is armchair caving we're all for it.

Rumour has it that Michael Cole and Delia Maloney will be married soon.

Suggestions for a suitable send off are invited.



RECOGNISE THIS LOT ?

ARMCHAIR CAVER



Our thanks to Barry James for the donation of equipment.

Graeme Watt celebrated his 21st birthday on the 21st January and is putting on a barrel at Aleks Teraud's house on the 2nd February.

If previous occasions at Alek's are any guide then Graeme should remember it for some time.

Leigh Gleeson will soon return from a caving trip to New Zealand. Leigh has done some (or is it all?) of the big holes in N.Z. and no doubt will be raring to go when he gets back.

Congratulations to Andrew and Ros Skinner who were married recently. Best wishes for the future.

The Editors and members of the Magazine Committee would like to thank Carol Throssen for coming to their rescue and typing most of this issue.

Southern Caving Society

MEMBERSHIP LIST 1973/74

Executive

President: John McCormack

Secretary: Michael Cole

Treasurer: Ron Mann

Life Member

Barry James

Members

Graham Bailey
Bob Cockerill
Terry Corcoran
Dave Elliott
Leigh Gleeson
Chris Harris
Steve Harris
Rod Hughes
Kevin Kiernan
Fred Koolhof
Delia Maloney
Greg Middleton

Dave Mitchell
Dave Nichols
Dave O'Brien
Margaret Russell
Andrew Skinner
Ros Skinner
Leonie Smith
Anthony Sprent
Steve Street
Aleks Terauds
Mieke Vermeulen
John Ward
Graeme Watt
Gray Wilson
Stuart Wilson

Prospectives

Miff Williams
Konrad Jamrozik

