



# FUSSI Newsletter

Vol. 26 | No. 2 | 2014

# THE COMMITTEE

**PRESIDENT**

Heiko Maurer  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**TREASURER**

Thomas Varga  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**ASF REPS**

Bronya Alexander  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**SECRETARY & fundraising**

Bronya Alexander  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**EQUIPMENT OFFICERS**

Aimee Leong &  
Mark Sefton  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

Thomas Varga  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**FOR ALL TRIP ENQUIRIES**

Bronya Alexander  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**LIBRARIAN**

Edwina Virgo  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Clare Buswell  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

**SAFETY OFFICER**

Clare Buswell  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

Public Officer

Clare Buswell

**WEBists**

Thomas Varga  
Heiko Maurer  
*fussi@fussi.org.au*

## C O N T E N T S

Coolleman Plains, Yarrangobilly and Other Carryings On	p. 3
Meandering Around the Nullarbor	p. 7
Executive's Annual Reports for 2013	p. 16
Don't Forget the Eggs!	p. 20
What Is On	p. 23

**Front Cover Photo: The Clark Gorge, Coolleman Plains. NSW**

**Front Cover Photo Credit:**  
Clare Buswell. Copyright.

Copyright 2014. © Flinders University Speleological Society Incorporated.

Articles and photos are copyright to FUSSI and the authors and photographers.

Articles may be reproduced for purposes of study, fair dealings, research and review.

For other purposes, no part may be reproduced without the written consent of FUSSI.

**Web address:** [www.FUSSI.org.au](http://www.FUSSI.org.au)

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/149385231791386>

**All correspondence to:**

Flinders Uni Speleological Society Inc.,  
C/- Flinders One  
Alan Mitchell Sports Building  
Flinders University  
GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide, SA 5001.

**Email address:** *fussi@fussi.org.au*

*FUSSI is a Corporate Member of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.*

*Views and opinions are not necessarily that of the Editor, FUSSI or the Federation.*



# COOLEMAN PLAINS YARRANGOBILLY & OTHER CARRYINGS ON

Text and Photos by Neville Skinner

(continued from Vol. 26, No. 1) As this was Mark and Heiko's last day with us, and Mark needed to be back in Adelaide on the Saturday for the CEGSA AGM, we started the day with a group photo, before heading off for a drive down the Long Plain Road to Coolerman Plains, where we started with an exploration of the old Coolerman Homestead and out-buildings, arriving there about 2:30pm.

Some interesting war-era headlines



Thomas mentioned to me that there was supposed to be a sinkhole somewhere just north



The Southwell House (built c1882)

the campground. The "Blue Waterholes" were just deeper sections in the mountain stream, which had a blue-green colour due to the high mineral content of calcium carbonates dissolved in the water from the surrounding limestone.



The Cheese Hut (built 1889)



Newspapers used to stop draughts date back to 1883



Campbell House (built c1892)

of the house, so I set off and located the runaway hole about 150m north of the cottage. It was full of old kerosene and other fuel drums.

We left the old Coolerman Homestead around 3:25pm, and arrived at the "Blue Waterholes" some 10 minutes later seeing a large mob of Brumbies on the plain just before the



The Coolerman sinkhole (or 'runaway hole'), or rubbish tip!



## COOLEMAN PLAINS, YARRANGOBILLY AND OTHER CARRYINGS ON!



A "blue waterhole" with cave 2CP-90 on left.



Inside view of 2CP-90 cave, with exit at other end



Looking back down the Gorge.



Clare, Heiko, Thomas and myself walked down through the Gorge, while Mark walked to the top of the gorge to check out the view from up top and to check out the Karst. On the way back from the Gorge walk, I checked and photographed cave number **2CP-90** (as I recall), adjacent to one of the blue waterholes. It was a simple straight tunnel about 20m long, with entrances at both ends, but I thought it was photogenic. I did not bother to see if it had a second cave number for the second entrance.



Beginning of the track to Castle Cave.

We arrived back at camp at around 6:40pm, and after having a quick bite to eat we headed off to the main Parks area where we went for a 1.6km walk down the "Castle Walk" track to Castle Cave.

This was once a show cave and still contained the remains of the original balustrade designed to keep tourists on the designated pathway. This cave contained some beautiful formations with a lovely little rim pool surrounded by

stalactites and a beautiful little crystal ball hanging on the end of a lone stalactite right above the centre of the pool.



## COOLEMAN PLAINS, YARRANGOBILLY AND OTHER CARRYINGS ON!

On the way back from the cave, as we walked down “Castle Walk” at 8:30pm in the dark, we turned a corner and encountered a wombat right in front of us scratching himself! I quickly stepped back a couple of paces and alerted the others in the group, before we crept up to the corner to spy on the



wombat. It was not at all fazed and put on a 5-minute show for us while scratching himself all over. Despite having difficulty focusing the camera in the dark, I managed to grab a few good shots. We told the Park Rangers the next day and they said that wombat was probably one of two in the park that were hand-reared.

We arrived back at camp around 9.30pm, exhausted as usual but happy with the days events.

On the one evening we had a couple of hours to spare before dinner, Clare, Thomas & myself decided to head off to the Thermal Pool for a dip, and to see if it was as good as the brochure said it was. As it came into view



Rim-pool with crystal ball on end of stalactite.

in the distance, I was surprised to see it nestled in a steep valley some, you guessed it, 800m or so from the carpark down a steep winding path. Oh, well, that's life in them thar hills.

On arrival at a point almost above the pool, I was surprised at how large the pool was (20m long, and about 8m wide), and the serenity of the area; we were the only people around and we shared the pool area



with the lizards & kangaroos. There are also change-rooms and toilet blocks provided, and use of the pools is free.

We shared the area with two large bucks and a Lizard about 2ft long near the change-rooms



## COOLEMAN PLAINS, YARRANGOBILLY AND OTHER CARRYINGS ON!

After we walked from the Pool back to the carpark, both Clare & Thomas partook of a shower (with soap) in the carpark, where a shower is provided free of charge. It all made sense to me, if you can have a Symphony Orchestra in the Botanical Gardens, why wouldn't you have a shower in a public carpark? Grand Stuff indeed!



Thermal Pool as viewed from the path above.  
Lizard near the change rooms.  
One of the large male kangaroo pool attendants!



Heiko admiring the pretties in Coppermine Cave.



## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

In order to, perhaps, escape the Easter peak hour exit from Adelaide, the group of us organised 300 litres of rainwater, food for 10 days, caving gear and the 8 of us into 3 vehicles and ran away from Adelaide by 5pm on Easter Thursday. We then drove till the horses stopped at Wudinna and fell into bed by 1am. Good Friday saw us end the day at Mundrabilla Road House and Easter Saturday we pulled into Old Homestead Hut and set up camp.

### Those on the Trip:

Clare Buswell, Heiko Maurer, Thomas Varga, Mark Sefton, Jan Schmorte, Sarah Phillips, Bronya Alexander and Aimee Leong

### Day 1: Easter Sunday 2014.

Old Homestead Cave was only about a 400 metre walk from our campsite and Day 1 brought all of us down to Old Homestead Cave. Jan was unfortunately unable to come as his back was sore; so the rest of us trooped to Old Homestead Cave, with Thomas and Clare leaving about ½ an hour earlier than the rest of us to set up the rigging in the well. We started the day with breakfast - breakfast #1 was coffee and cereal; and breakfast #2 was bacon and eggs, with Jan doing his own breakfast cooking show outside of Old Homestead hut.

After our two breakfasts, we decided to head onto Old Homestead Cave about 11.30am, carrying a tub of fresh veggies and fruit which we wanted to keep cool and out of the sun. It was an impressive entrance: grand and wide, and many photos were taken to show the scale of the entrance in relations to people. After the initial drop in into the cave via an old wooden ladder, we met Clare and Thomas at the top of the well with everything rigged up. We all then proceeded to SRT or climb the ladder down into the well. Whilst most of the group had made their way in, Thomas and Clare were the last two to come in, and they had 7 4WDs in convoy with a few random people interested and peering into the cave, where Thomas kindly told them they were able to come to the top of the well and have a look.



Ok, On Which of These 5 Pages Are We?

As we all made our way down into the well (about a 7 metre drop) it was onwards into Frigidaire (named appropriately as there was an icy blast of cold air as you crawled through it), and where we arrived at 'the beach', just in time for lunch. It was then the Easter Bunny came, and dropped off a couple of Easter eggs for us in the cave! The mission was to look for the Officer's Mess,

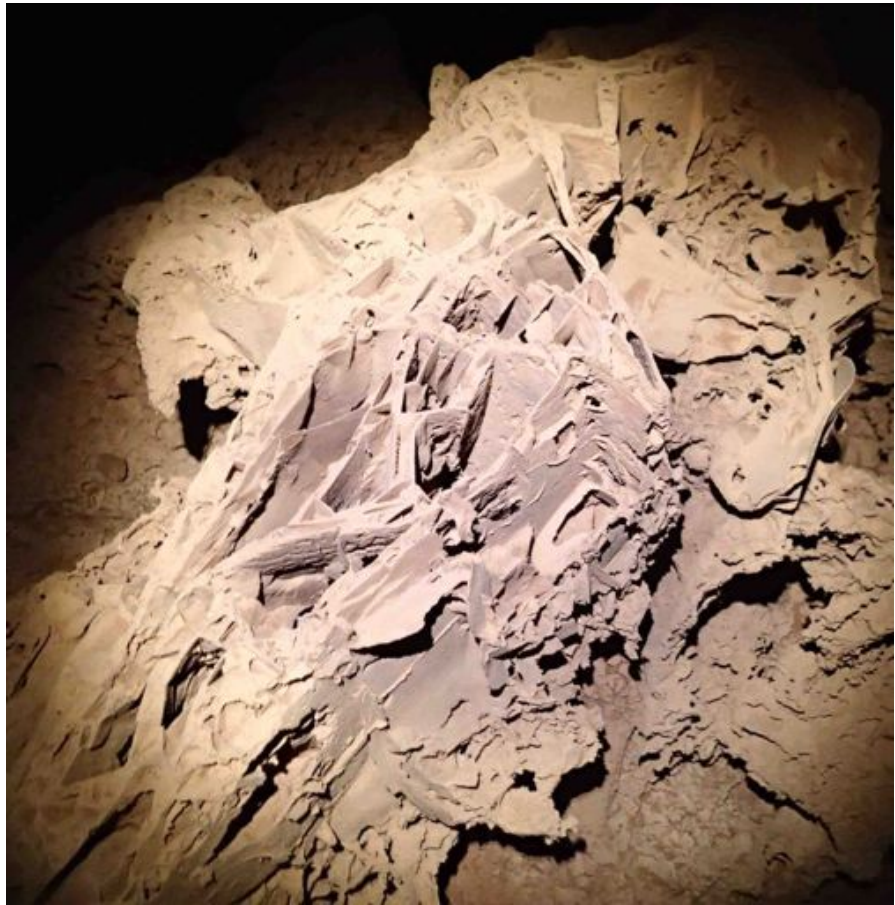
which no one had been to before; and it had been a year since Clare, Thomas

and Heiko had been in Old homestead, with Mark's last trip being about 16 years ago. Most of the day was spent around the main passages, as we tried to figure out whereabouts we were on the only map we had that dated back to 1996. After a day of caving, we figured out that we had been as far as RFD"NC" and down towards Gypsum Rain tunnel, which was through the Milky Way, and through the Oesophagus Tunnel.

## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

What was amazing to me was the incredible cracked mud work which resembled hot cross buns and chocolate, which would have dated back to years and years ago. There was also interesting features such as 'box works' which were also incredible, and were dotted throughout the Milky Way. The Milky Way was named after it was marked out with reflector lights, and when you shone a light on it, the reflector lights resembled the Milky Way.

On the way back, we went up and through Yikes and Away, as well as the White Room and having a quick look for the Officer's Mess before leaving the cave for the day. Mark left all his survey gear in the White Room for the next day, and with us not having any luck with finding the Officer's Mess. We passed the cracked pottery formations on the way out, which were spectacular to see. Frigidaire, oddly enough, was not blowing on the way out, and we were relatively warm as we crawled out. Sarah, Bronya and myself then proceeded to exit the cave - astonished to find that it was quite dark, and were able to find Old Homestead by the cosy light of a fire in the distance. Back to camp it was, with Sarah's homemade stew, supplied with rice and Naan bread, and then it was time for bed to catch some sleep for the next day of caving.



Box Work, Main passage Old Homestead  
Photo: Aimee Leong

### Day 2: Easter Monday

We all awoke, had our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> breakfasts and then all trooped back to the cave. Clare decided that she was not going to come caving as she had things to work on, and that Old Homestead was the best campsite to get things done. So back into Old Homestead we trooped about 12.30pm, and into the White Room and further in, hoping to find the Officer's Mess. Thomas led the way further in, into a chamber that he remembered from last visit and that he remembered that they had looked around and could not see any way on. Mark remembered that there was a left hand side passage, and a 'slot', but was not able to remember whereabouts exactly it was.

There was a side passage that I had crawled through; and noted that it kept going; and it was quite a horrible rocky crawl and after a while (with Jan, Sarah, Bronya and Thomas following), we decided to come back out into the chamber we knew and debated where to look next. After much crawling and ferretting around with lunch, and sitting around trying to decide where to look next, it was pretty late when we decided to explore the same passageway that I had initially looked down, with everyone following this time. It opened up into a bigger space, with the rock pile on the right hand side, and the cave wall on the left hand side. We again weren't really sure what to do next.



## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR



The Officer's Mess:  
Photo: Aimee Leong

But Heiko came from behind and decided to climb up over some precarious dodgy looking rocks and go for a ferret. He then discovered a bigger chamber, whereby Jan decided to follow him up and have a look. Thomas came around, and there was a small hole that kept going and he went for a ferret and that didn't end up going anywhere - according to him it was 'tight and rocky and horrible'. There was then a shout from Heiko, saying that he thought he had found our way back to the main passage (the Milky Way), and that we should all come have a look. Mark was extremely wary about the two boulders which looked like they could dislodge any time soon, so as each of us cautiously made our way up and over the rock pile, the rest of us hid behind other rocks/boulders in the event one of us accidentally dislodged something.

After we all made our way into the big chamber, we then noticed a big cairn (about 2 foot tall) which was something Clare mentioned she had seen on a previous visit to Old homestead when shown the entrance of Officer's Mess. We all then cautiously made our way down where Heiko had seen marked reflector spots and quickly then realised that it was not the Milky Way (the main passage) but indeed the Officer's Mess.

The Officer's Mess is a fantastic area, covered in lots of caked chocolate-like hot cross bun formations. Most of the tracks were marked, however there were sections where we did have to step across on the formations and it was difficult to do so without wincing as they were quite pristine. There was also lots of box work formations; and dry, sandy banks. As it was so tucked away, a lot of it was beautifully pristine. We also found some larger gypsum needles, which had fallen down off the ceiling at some stage, and there was much large, deep cracked mud features. After about an hour of walking through the Mess (it was also quite warm and still, not much airflow), we headed back the way we came, exhilarated at our find for the last 2 days. We finally exited the cave at 6.50pm, after derigging everything, and headed back to camp where Clare had started a cosy fire and we enjoyed Jan's homemade curry.

The next morning, we had decided that Thomas and Clare should go back into the Officer's Mess whilst the rest of us packed up camp before moving on to Webb's cave to set up camp for the

## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

night. They both had a good look around, familiarising themselves with the route and land marks. Aimee.

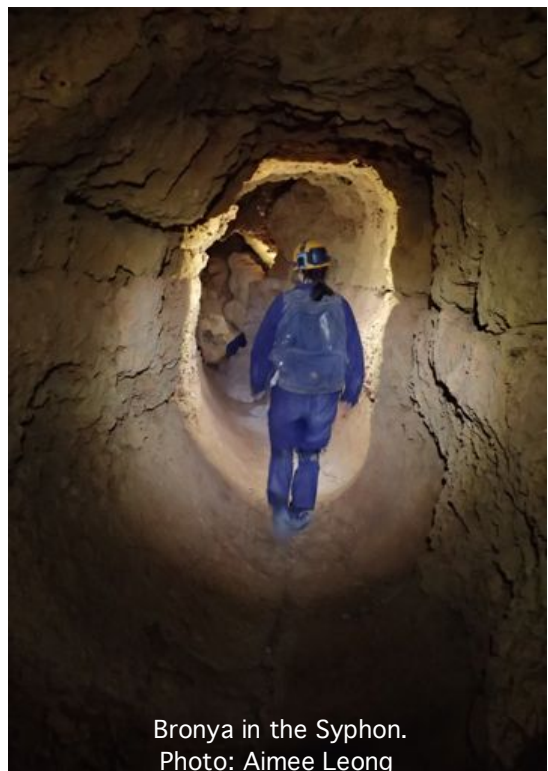


Sediment Cobbles, Officer's Mess. Photo: Aimee Leong

### Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April

After a leisurely start to the day, which included two breakfasts(!), we piled into two of the vehicles and drove to Thampanna Cave. Clare and Thomas began rigging the entrance for both SRT and laddering while Heiko demonstrated the strength of the outward draft by throwing his hat across the top of the three metre wide blowhole and watching it immediately disappear downwards to be tossed around and around by the draft half way down. Fortunately, the draft strengthened over the next half hour and eventually the cave spat his hat back out again. One by one we descended the 11m pitch and finally we were all at the bottom – just in time for lunch!

Because of the lateness of the start, and because no-one in our group, except me, had seen it before, we decided to go and look at the area beyond The Tube, which was a shorter trip than trying to find our way through the Drain and the main part of the cave beyond. It was 16 years since my last trip here and I was pleasantly surprised (and relieved!) to be able to find the way through without any difficulty, a task that was made easy by the strong draft which made it obvious where to go, once the way out of the entrance chamber had been located.



Bronya in the Syphon.  
Photo: Aimee Leong



## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

Soon we were through The Tube and into what is effectively one end of a huge collapsed chamber that is seemingly divided into various subsections by rockpiles and large boulders that reach the roof in many places. The main way on had been track-marked with reflective discs which led us through extensive deposits of 'Coffee and Cream' (formed when grains of limestone are flaked off the roof by crystal wedging). The marked route took us around and back over the top into what is named as The Enigma Chamber, where numerous pristine gypsum chandeliers kept the photographers in the group busy for the next half hour or more.



Gypsum Chandelier, Enigma Chamber.  
Photo: C Buswell

Meanwhile, I spent some productive time checking and annotating the bits of map drawings that I had brought with me and making a few more measurements for the survey that I hope to get around to drawing up some day. After pointing the rest of the group in the direction of the Mudmen Chamber, which is in the opposite direction to the Enigma Chamber, I continued with this exercise until the group returned. Unfortunately, they had not been able to find the way on. On rechecking this area, it became apparent that the last two track markers led into a bit of squalid rockpile and small dead-end chambers that I had surveyed many years ago. Why these last reflectors were placed here I do not know, unless it was a mistaken assumption by whoever placed them that they were marking the main way on (it isn't!). As time was marching on and we still had to get eight people up the entrance pitch, seeing the Mudmen Chamber with its unusual corroded speleothems had to wait for another day.

Everyone enjoyed the day. For some, experiencing a gale-force wind up an entrance shaft was a 'first', and the gypsum speleothems in the Enigma Chamber (and elsewhere in Thampanna) are an unusual feature of caves anywhere. Finally, there is no more surveying still needed in this part of the cave and I now have no excuse for not drawing up the map!

Mark Sefton

After visiting Thampanna, the next day we covered two caves, Witches and Purple Gorange. Visiting two somewhat similar caves in one day has left some of us with some confusion about what happened in each cave! We were still camped at Webb's Cave and drove to Witches Cave in the morning (by FUSSI time standards). There was no additional gear required – just the usual sturdy clothing and elbow and knee pads preferred.

The doline of Witches Cave was quite small and covered over with vegetation, so Heiko did some on the spot pruning and we noted that there were issues with Horehound weeds which got stuck in our clothing. A quick look on the CRC for Weed Management says that it appears it may have been introduced by Joseph Banks and was intended for use as a garden herb and for beer brewing. I am not sure it is used for either purpose these days and instead it is a noxious weed across southern Australia.

The cave entry was a bit of a squeeze through, but what lay beyond was very well worth it! The floors were pristine, washed clean by recent rainfall, most likely that of 2011. We had to be very careful where we walked. Witches is a very old cave with an incredible amount of decoration – huge numbers of straws and stalactites, and evidence of many of them falling off the ceiling and onto the floor. 'Helictites on steroids' was one of the comments made. There was evidence of bats around the place (what does one expect in a Witches cave) and Aimee saw at least one flying

## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

bat. Some of the decorations were very thick and of black calcite and gave a sense of the immense age of the cave. While it is sometimes difficult to work out where cave names come from, it is easy to see in this case. The place looked very much like a place a witch may well have enjoyed to live in, and even create.

There was a range of colours – a few were pure white but most were striated or marbled with reds, oranges and deep brown colours. It was only the call of lunch and the promise of another cave in the afternoon that took us back out of the cave. Jan and Aimee commenced their modelling careers with Mark and we hope that some of the photos have worked out (I quite liked the look of Aimee sitting in lotus position in front of the decorations!). It will give a much better impression of the considerable size of some of the beautiful structures and decorations. Great place to see and to return to!

(Jan's ghost writer). Sarah



Bronya being the model in Witches Cave.

Photo: Aimee Leong

Purple Gorange is only a short drive (in Nullarbor terms) from Witches Cave followed by a cca 500 meter walk. Some scarce shade can be found by driving an extra 2-300 meters further away from the entrance along the road. As opposed to Witches Cave it has not been fenced off, nor are there any signs informing the general public of 'cave risk'.

The cave has a unique double-doline entrance. The one closest to the road is a daylight hole with some vegetation cover. Entry is via the second doline which only requires a short clamber to the adjoining doline and from there into the cave proper.

Once underground what stands out is the dark, aged tone of the formations. There are already a large number of stalagmites and stalactites near the entrance but further inwards the density keeps on increasing with areas richly packed with various formations. All of these formations appear to be quite old and mostly dark in colour.

Track marking within the cave guides the visitors through the main chamber area providing good vantage points as well as protecting the formations from getting trampled on. Caution should be exercised when crossing soft floor areas to try and minimize disturbance. Be very careful of sediment banks. Red markers placed side by side signify no-go areas that house the more fragile or densely packed formations. It is worthwhile having a look at the seemingly 'bare' rock walls as some areas have very delicate, strand-like, gypsum formations.

The cave is relatively small but still spacious enough to allow a small group to spread out and meander. Allow cca an hour for a scouting visit. No special equipment is required. Purple Gorange is ideal for cave photography as access is easy and relocating within the cave is also simple, no need to pack up and negotiate a squeeze to get to another chamber.

Thomas.

On Friday 25 April, we drove from Webb's Cave to Abracurrie via the old Coach Road, and on the



## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

way visited a related cave, the Chowilla Doline. Abracurrie essentially is a walk-in cave – we had a bit of a scramble down the side of the cave but did not require any harnesses or even a handline. The entrance to the Abracurrie looks very similar to Weebubbie with the entrance at one end at the bottom of a cliff and the drainage of the landscape creating an oval shaped base that was well vegetated and quite grassy.

As we approached the cave entrance, there was a bit of a squeeze and clambering over rocks to head down and into the cave, which appears to be the rockfall. There were swifts and bats and their associated chatter and excreta! The cave is a very impressive large internal space with a large chamber off to the left, a large chamber off to the right and then an amazing long tunnel branching from the right chamber. The cave definitely ate up our lights – it was impossible to see the rear wall from the beginning of that tunnel – but with some strategic lighting, we are hopeful that Aimee may have been able to get some interesting photographs.



Abracurrie Cave. Photo: Aimee Leong

The group pottered about exploring the cave – Clare was looking for flint in the cave walls and also showed us two handprints from Aboriginal people. The height of the handprints suggests that the cave floor has dropped since they were made. The cave abruptly stops at the end of each chamber and tunnel – it looks like silt has just accumulated and sealed off any further extensions of the cave. The walls were very interesting too with the base looking like it had been washed with mud from flood waters and then an abrupt line above which the walls are a very white colour

with some visible fossils. The ground was largely silty and soft with a few rocks which made

walking easy and very quiet. There were numerous germinating plants that had unfortunately been blown into a most unfortunate spot – with no light, they were very pale and doomed to a spindly and, I would assume, brief existence.

We probably spent over an hour wandering about in the cave which really is just magnificent in size and proportions. We left earlier than we might have because we were heading next to Weebubbie and were conscious we did not want to run out of daylight for setting up camp.

Sarah

Weebubbie was our second cave for the day, and in true style we were running later than planned and only headed to the entrance at 7pm after a quick camp setup. Clare opted not to go in and instead cooked us all dinner for the night!

After Thomas set up a short handline to get down the first little drop, as well as a rope for support over the next section, we scrambled down to the cave entrance while trying to dodge the snails that were active now the sun was down.

## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

As usual we had been briefed on the cave so we knew to pack our bathers, and the thought of a quick “wash” after a week of no showers outweighed the notion of very cold water (about 19 degrees according to Thomas’ intelligent watch). So we all went in for a dip except Mark: upon remembering that it was time for the Sat phone call from Karen he used that as an excuse to stay high and dry and return to camp before the rest of us.

Jan and Sarah both had mask and snorkels and swam right up the end of the lake and back. Thomas and Bronya, sans snorkel, also headed to the end of the lake and gleefully stumbled (splashed) upon a rubber ring which Thomas had mentioned was in the cave the last time he visited a couple of years ago. So they happily paddled back on top of the ring and out of the cold water, and left the ring at the sensible end of the lake. Aimee took lots of photos as expected, and Heiko mumbled expletives about the water temperature. On the way out we were all just that little bit cleaner, and very thankful to have dinner already prepared for us on the surface.

Bronya



Inside Weebubbie: Photo: Aimee Leong

Dinner consisted of: moth surprise, moth loaf with moth sauce followed by poached moth in a rainwater coulis! The chef was very stressed, catching moths to feed 8 hungry cavers is intensive to say the least! The fact that the moths - body size as large as your middle finger, wing span as wide as your open hand - flew into every cooking pot, gas light or gas burner did not give the cook any advantage. Neither did the rain.

The following morning, Saturday, we packed up, travelled via Koonalda Homestead and Koonalda Cave, back to Kimba for a shower and nights rest. We managed to get to Adelaide by late afternoon on the Sunday.



Koonalda Cave. Photo: Clare Buswell.



## MEANDERING AROUND THE NULLARBOR

### Notes.

We carried 300 litres of water for 8 people for 9 days.

Fruit and Veg was purchased from Perth and delivered to Mundarbilla Road House.

Diesel was most expensive at Nullarbor, \$2.08/litre, and about \$1.98 elsewhere.

Accommodation at Wudinna hotel, was basic but very economical. Kimba was basic but not so cheap - expect normal hotel rates.

We hired a Satellite Phone for contact with the outside world.

Permits have to be obtained for Old Homestead, Weebubbie and Abracurrie caves from the Dept of Lands in Perth and from the Dept of Aboriginal Heritage also in Perth. Eucla Police have to be notified of your plans and also on returning home through Eucla that all is well. Weebubbie cave is closed to the general public.

The trip cost those going around \$56.00 a day for 10 days, all inclusive, bar 2 meals on the road.



The crew at the Bunda Cliffs: L-R: Jan, Sarah, Aimee, Mark, Thomas, Bronya, Heiko, Photo: C. Buswell

# FUSSI EXECUTIVE REPORTS 2013

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2013 turned out to be a comparatively quiet year, (compared to 2012 and 2014 – already 2 major interstate trips at time of writing, May 5) with no major interstate trips. Mainly visits to the South East (the ever popular Wet 'n Wild trip), Naracoorte, where the rangers have become decidedly caver-friendly, and the cave closest to Adelaide, Corra-Lynn on Yorke Peninsula.

The financial situation continues to please (see separate Treasurer's report) despite not having a barbeque fund-raiser and your president making the unilateral decision to purchase two 'cheap', Scurions for club use (thank you Ralf!), so our equipment levels are coming up to near the best in the country. Thank you also to the Gear Officer.

We continue to attract caving enquiries (our 'interested' mailing list goes to 149 people) but few want to go caving after a visit to the 1-star Corra-Lynn cave. In fact, since the absolute top-notch caving trips (eg Yarrangobilly and Nullarbor this year) can be expensive at about \$50/person/day we are seeing members of other clubs joining FUSSI, just so they can go on these 5-star trips, rather than catering to our core constituency, the students of Flinders University.

I therefore wish to open a debate on reducing the financial dis-incentive for the average destitute student, by: 1) abolishing membership fees for them and instead replacing these by a commitment to help with our BBQ fundraisers and 2) look to subsidise trips away from our ample club funds. Let the punfight begin.

**Heiko Maurer**

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

In 2013 we had 18 paid up members, of which 10 were on the 3 month ASF memberships. FUSSI Membership lasts 1 year. Of those ten, 1 has come back this year. At this point, May 2014, we now have 13 members in FUSSI, with 3 members being on the 3-month ASF Intro membership. Most demand is for 1 day trips. That means we need to run more Corra Lynn trips and trips to Swan Reach.

It's been a whole year now since our last Bunnings BBQ fundraiser – feels like just the other week ... All I can say is, get out there, go caving and damn the sausages!

Bronya Alexander.

## LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Edwina has taken on the task of converting all the FUSSI library catalogue files from Word docs to Excel. This means that we will then be able to do something useful with it, like perhaps run it up on Endnote.

We are in need of a library clean up and chuck out day. A caver who is a past member of both Orange Speleos and SSS has offered us his speleo library. I believe it runs to one 3 drawer filing cabinet. Unless we have a clean up, and soon, we will miss the opportunity of gaining and housing this collection.

So, how about a pizza and fire sale evening in June. At least it is winter and the fire will keep us warm!



# FUSSI EXECUTIVE REPORTS 2013

## TREASURER'S REPORT

for the period  
1 May 2013 – 31 December 2013

Overall Summary:

Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Closing balance
\$8,321.77	\$1,731.93	\$1,907.14	\$8,146.56
		Difference	-\$175.21

FUSSI monies were stored in four locations: two bank accounts with ANZ, a Term Deposit and petty cash. \$5,000.00 has been allocated to a term deposit that matures every 3 months at a rate of 3-3.75% per annum.

	Main bank account	Debit card account	Petty cash	Term Deposit	Total
Opening balance	\$5,723.49	\$1734.28	\$864.00	\$0.00	\$8,321.77
Closing balance	\$428.73	\$1,410.75	\$1,123.15	\$5,183.93	\$8,146.56
Difference	-\$5,294.76	-\$323.53	\$259.15	\$5,183.93	-\$175.21

Breakdown of income

Term Deposit	\$183.00
FUSA Grant	\$900.00
Member contributions:	
Membership fees	\$408.00
Gear hire	\$240.00
Total	\$1,731.00

Breakdown of expenditure

ASF Fees	\$549.00
Gear purchase (SRT equipment, ropes, storage crates)	\$1,238.74
Operational (Catering, photocopying,)	\$118.90
Total	\$1,907.14

Thomas Varga.

## GEAR OFFICER'S REPORT

OK: this year, 2013, El Presidente went mad in Switzerland and purchased 2 Scurions for the Club. He refuses to reveal the cost, but has been seen hanging out at various community BBQs trying to repay the dosh. This could take him some time!

# FUSSI EXECUTIVE REPORTS 2013

On a more mundane level, other purchases for the club consisted of:

Two Edelrid Ultralight Helmets: \$146.00,

Two Black Diamond Icon lights : \$136.00

One 51 metres of Bluewater 2++ Super static Rope: \$202.00

2 Steel Screw gate Karabiners: \$43.20

2 Steel Mailons: \$20.50

Total: 547.70

We lost a couple of things, one of which is probably sitting at the top of Mt Remarkable Blow Hole and a trip to find it will no doubt occur in the near or distant future. The other, a piece of tube tape, was eaten by Velcro in the washing machine, and has been duly dismissed to the rubbish bin.

Harnesses.

Groan. After a year of trying to get Ferno to make us a pre-threaded caving harness with a seat strap, they have said no. Early in the year I sent them two club harnesses that they make and numerous photos of what we wanted. In June the Perth side of them said yes 'we'll make them'. I said go for it. After which this side went on holidays or left the building. By October I again took up the issue and the other side of the company, which resides in Brisbane, got back to me in December and said 'No'.

Personally, I do not understand the problem of merely changing a buckling system, on a harness they already make, to get rid of having to back thread waist, bum and leg straps. Most climbing harness come with a pre-back-threaded waist and leg straps buckle system. The problem with using a climbing harness for caving is two fold. The centre of gravity in a climbing harness is set too high for caving, which results in all the SRT gear that is attached to it sitting too high on one's body. You end up with your chest ascender up around your nose!

Secondly hanging around crossing rebelayes or just hanging around on a pitch for a while drilling bolt holes, or fixing your windmill, without a bum strap puts great weight and stress on your legs and waist, a bum strap helps spread the load making things far more comfortable. Finally, but importantly, a bum strap sits you up closer to the rope, making SRT work more efficient. The saga continues and maybe Aspiring in NZ can come up with something. Harnesses are a top priority for 2014.

A Problem.

The club gear store and library is situated in the basement of the Union building on campus. To access the ½ tonne of gear you want out for a trip, you need to get your car onto an internal Uni road, which runs around the Uni lake. The powers that run the joint, have decided that you may NOT access this road during the hours of 11am - 2 pm Monday to Friday, in case you run over some stoned students lying in the middle of the road. (Insert discourse on state of current student movement ... I digress). This adds to the already difficult problems brought about by changing the access to the two doors you have to get through, to get into the store. This changed from being via a key to a card access system. You now find that sometimes the card works and sometimes it doesn't. Mostly it doesn't.

On the whole accessing the gear for a trip will take up to an hour and a half, by the time you have negotiated access to the internal road, if you get there before lock down time, get the door key access sorted, sort the gear you want and then lug it up 2 flights of stairs and put it in the back of the car. After which you may well feel like joining the stoned students lying in the middle of the road!

A Bigger Problem?



# FUSSI EXECUTIVE REPORTS 2013

Anyone feel like a new job, as the Gear Officer Position is up for grabs?

Clare Buswell.  
Retiring Gear Officer.

## SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

No children, pets or large animals were injured in the course of the year's caving activities. As for cavers, no bee stings, or fire fighting burns occurred. Any other problems are therefore your own.

Training in the shed with the ladder as back up continued throughout the year and will continue in 2014.

Clare Buswell

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

In my last report, I stated that I had ample supplies of a certain chemical to bribe people to write for the FUSSI Newsletter. Well, that must have worked as the last 3 issues have run to 18 pages or more. My thanks go in particular to Aimee and Neville for their great reports, which have provided us with some great reads.

All I can say is more, more, more ... is needed. That is both publishable material and I guess a supply of  $C_7H_8N_4O_2$ .

Clare Buswell

---

## Ningaloo Underground 30<sup>th</sup> ASF Conference Exmouth, Western Australia 21-26 June 2015

- Learn why Ningaloo Reef and Cape Range were declared a World Heritage Area
- Snorkel straight off the beach and see coral on the land
- See blind gudgeon fish less than 50m from a road or encounter a *Draculoides brooksii*
- Swim and dive with a whale shark
- Camp on the top of the range for pre- and post-conference caving and have a real chance of finding a new cave
- Improve your SRT skills in the multi-pitch caves

Get *Underground* and *Underwater* with us in 2015.

Save the dates and spread the word.

*Organizing Committee for the ASF Conference - Ningaloo Underground*

# DON'T FORGET THE EGGS

Aimee Leong

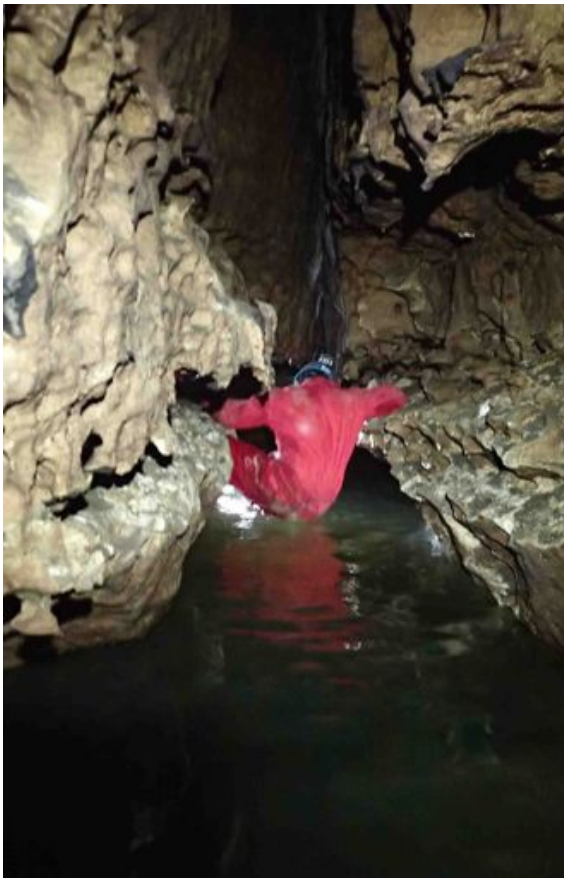
Wet and wild weekend; FUSSI trip March long weekend 7-10<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Attendees: Thomas Varga; Clare Buswell, Neville Skinner; George Voustinos, Huan Wang, Edwina Virgo, Aimee Leong.

So the trip began (as it usually does) heading out of Adelaide late Friday afternoon. Sadly; Heiko Maurer was a last minute pullout for the trip; as there was housework that needed to be done (literally, to the side of the house). After much deliberation about transport and carpooling; pizzas and coffee with the others; Neville and I headed out of Adelaide around about 6.30pm. It was a nice (and relatively uneventful) drive, with Neville's eclectic CD collection - a mixture of opera/jazz piano/Diana Krall/Missy Higgins/Angus and Julius Stone. It was fantastic!! The only thing we really noted was a deer's behind, which we spotted on the side of the road after passing through Kingston and were very lucky that it didn't decide to turn around and run onto the road.

We arrived at Millicent Caravan Park (Hilltop caravan park) at 10:30pm, where we were greeted by one of the caravan park's staff members, who had kindly stayed up to wait for us. We were greeted by two decent sized cabins; each identical and each having sound cooking facilities and ensuite toilets (LUXURY!!). Neville and I unpacked most of the stuff from the car; and pottered around our cabin whilst waiting for others to turn up. We were greeted by the others about 11.30pm. All 7 of us shared two cabins, with Edwina deciding that she was going to camp outside. It was well past 12pm before any of us got to bed, excited about what the next few days' exploration was going to bring. There was discussion as to when to pick up the keys needed for Saturday's caves. Unbeknown to most of us, Thomas kindly drove the 100km round trip into Mt Gambier to pick up the keys and ended up getting back to camp about 1.30am. Thank you Thomas once again!

Saturday morning - we all arose relatively early with Edwina doing the door knock - and we ended up



leaving the campsite by about 9am (Clare, do you remember what time we actually left??). There was a quick stop in Millicent to pick up some lunch stuff/nibbles. It was there when Neville discovered he'd forgotten the eggs needed for breakfast Sunday or Monday morning. Knowing that he had 2 dozen sitting in his fridge at home ready to be eaten buying more was a pained process! Well ok, the stop was not all that quick - coffee, cake etc had to be had!

It was then all systems go Gran Gran cave, with me questioning why the cave was named as such. Some theories included something involving a grandmother, but no one seemed to know why it was named as such. The beautiful bright, sunny morning began with us gearing up at the entrance to Gran Gran, with Thomas running back to the campsite after discovering he had left the keys of the cave behind. It was all about checking each other's cave 'bling', as we all pulled on all our gear - with many discussions about shoes, kneepads, overalls, and head torches. Huan won the contest hands down, with his bright red overalls. He had bought from China, (at apparently a ridiculously low cost comparatively to prices in Australia), and looking like they were glowing from just being freshly out of a packet. After gearing up,

Huan Trying not to get wet!



## DON'T FORGET THE EGGS

Thomas arrived back with the key and we were all ready to troop into the cave.

Huan, Neville, Edwina and myself ventured in first, leaving our gear near the cave entrance and went for a bit of a poke around. Neville was explaining to us whereabouts he thought there was a section of the cave with bats in it. So Edwina and myself decided to check out a few entrances, which led us to nothing of particular interest, anyway no bats. After wriggling around in a whole lot of mud/dirt (as one does when one goes caving), we made our way back to where Neville and the rest of the crew were. We then all trooped into the main chambers of Gran Gran, with Thomas leading the way.

We were met by water just inside the cave. It was fun and games, as most of us had decided to try and keep ourselves dry as much as we could. However, for me personally that lasted a whole 3 minutes before I decided to try and wade in up to my knees. It was cold! I didn't get very far through the water, as it was quite silty at the bottom, very much of the consistency of quicksand - gloopy and muddy and tending to suck my shoes in. It took a while for all of us to eventually make our way through. George was earning some serious brownie points by being of support (for Clare and Edwina, and allowing them to step on his shoulders to get to the higher parts of the ledges out of the water). Thomas commented that the water levels had definitely risen since the last visit about a year ago.

We then all ventured deeper into the cave and just after the first water spot we discovered basalt. I have never seen basalt, so for me it was absolutely fascinating for it to be sandwiched in between layers of limestone. To me it looked like chocolate. Mmmm!! Clare made the comment that basalt was as hard as ... rocks. Literally. Hehe. Here we also discovered some old, blackened fossilised bones, some fascinating delicate structures (halite with water droplets on them?) and 'caveman' graffiti on the wall, left from a previous explorer.

This is where Edwina, Clare and Neville decided not to explore the next water section, with Huan, George, Thomas and myself venturing in onwards through the water section. Again, Thomas led the way and, unbeknown by the rest of us following him, he was capturing every moment on a Go Pro. HE managed to keep dry. Huan made it safely through the deepish water part first - with myself following. After holding onto what I thought was a decent hand hold, it broke off leaving me going for an unexpected swim, and a few swear words were captured on the Go Pro, with Huan laughing hysterically in the background. George also managed to get through unscathed. Then we went exploring the deeper section of the cave. Since I was completely soaked through, I decided to turn around after a few steps in, and then I made my way out.



A Basalt Neckless for a Limestone Boulder

Finally we met up with Clare, Edwina and Neville and we were slowly making our way back. George also caught up with us, and was helping Edwina make her way down off the ledge and being very careful to stay dry when we heard someone come crashing through the water followed by a loud voice "I NEED TO GO TO THE TOILET!!" it was Huan, obviously in great need and not giving the cold water a second thought in order to exit the cave. It was one of those moments you just had to be

## DON'T FORGET THE EGGS

there - it was hilarious. After all of us exited Gran Gran, it was time to try and dry off in the warm sunshine and head back for a spot of lunch back at the cabins.

Saturday afternoon brought about us going into Tindales Cave. It was a short abseil into the cave (about 7-8 metres). We were rewarded handsomely by a beautifully decorated cave. There was one steep uphill, whereby Neville was scoring some brownie points by offering a leg as a 'foot up'. We all marvelled at the amazing tall columns of flowstone. Sadly, there was also quite a bit of graffiti - a lot of it was written in pencil too - dating back to about 1945. Tindales cave is mainly two long, parallel passages, which were supported by a middle section. You were able to look underneath and see someone else in the other passage.



Wall detail, Tindales Cave

After taking some photographs and spending a bit of time in the cave, we all trooped back to where the entrance was with Edwina discovering there was a brown snake (?3 ft long?) that had made its way in. It was just sleepily napping behind a rock. Needless to say, there were photographs taken and a wary eye was kept on it at all times as we all hurriedly exited the cave. By the time we got back to camp, it was late-ish and we all sat down to a wonderfully home cooked meal by Clare and a few beers and wine.



Sunday morning brought about a trip to Hells Hole. Clare and Thomas left to rig it whilst Neville, Huan, George, Edwina and myself went down to Allendale General Store to hire wetsuits, masks and snorkels. We arrived back at Hells Hole to meet up with Matt Smith with some younger scouts who were also down in Mount Gambier to do some caving that weekend. Neville and I abseiled down first, spending a bit of time exploring the ledges of Hells Hole. Neville found many primitive sponges that looked remarkably like dessert - big creamy puffs decorated by a red ring. They were plentiful.



## DON'T FORGET THE EGGS

Neville also managed to find some bottles of water, along with a few pens, which had evidently been thrown down into the hole and with the rise and fall of the waterline had become trapped in small caves in the ledges of Hells Hole. It was a long SRT session back up for me - and it was sunny and hot, 34 degrees celcius. SRTing in a wetsuit and being waterlogged was quite difficult. After emerging from Hells Hole, it was time for George and Huan to head down into the hole. It was decided on the edge of the platform that George had overheated in his wetsuit and was not safe to go



Neville at the bottom of Ewens Ponds

down. Some of us made a trip to the nearest pub for water and then onto Mount Gambier to purchase more water for everyone else back in Hells Hole as we had realised that we were very low on water, given the hot weather and the sunshine. We arrived back at Hells Hole, whereby we dropped off the water, and then it was decided that Neville, George, Huan, Edwina and myself would

## DON'T FORGET THE EGGS

head onto Ewens Ponds to go snorkelling/diving; whilst Clare and Thomas would head into Hells Hole.

Ewens Ponds was magical as usual. Neville commented that the ponds' vegetation was the best he had seen in 10 years. Neville and myself went for a dive, Huan and George went for a snorkel, with Edwina dipping her toes in and deciding that it was indeed too cold for her likes to jump in. In pond #2, Neville caught two divers who had intentionally decided to go for a bounce and roll around in the lush moss at the bottom of the pond whilst Go Pro-ing it. He promptly pulled them to the surface and told them off. We were then making our way through the channel to the 3<sup>rd</sup> pond when one of the divers tugged on his fin, and told Neville that they had lost the Go Pro! We then made our way back, where Neville found the Go Pro, and was waving it from side to side for a good 30 seconds before one of the other divers noticed that he had it. He rushed back and shook Nevilles hand. We made our way back to the last pond and exited after 50 minutes of being in the cold water.

Back at the cars, we bumped into Clare and Thomas. Clare mentioned that she had also developed heat exhaustion at the top of Hells Hole, and decided that she did not want to risk descending in if she did not have the energy to SRT back up 30-odd metres. We decided to leave Clare and Thomas to enjoy Ewens Ponds, whilst the rest of us decided to head back to our cabins and start getting dinner ready. Dinner was pasta, with a beautiful greek salad made by George, and dessert - an apple crumble and lemon merangue pie brought by Neville. All accompanied with a few glasses of wine.

Monday morning it was a trip to Considine's cave, whereby we rigged a hand line down into the cave. Considine's is a wet-ish cave, and pretty active. What struck me were the amazing formations, lots of grand structures and flowstones. However, the cave had collapsed sometime in the past and a lot of the formations were damaged having fallen off the roof. Since it was an active cave, lots of



A Yabbie for Dinner Anyone?

water was dripping 'plink plonks'. It was pretty amazing to see the limestone holes which were bored away by the drips of the water. We also found two troglobitic? (they were white) yabbies in a pool of water. Neville and Clare mentioned that they were indeed much bigger than they were a few years ago, when they last visited the cave. There also seemed to be a potential opening in the pool of water. Neville mentioned that he wanted to remove some rocks at some stage and have a look. We all then sat in silence and listened to the 'plink plonks'- it was very musical!

After exiting Considine's cave, it was mid afternoon and time to head home back to Adelaide. There was a stop in Millicent at the pub to work out expenses, and after that Neville and I were on our way back home. There was a stop in Kingston, where we (again) caught up with Clare, Thomas and Huan who had also stopped off. It was all the way back to Adelaide, to clean up and get ready for another week of working. It was an enjoyable trip, with many memories and thank

you to everyone who was part of it. Thank you Thomas and Clare for organising everything. Neville, don't forget the eggs next time (heh). Looking forward to the next time.



## WHAT IS ON

May 8 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	FUSSI AGM. 6pm. Rm 113 Humanities. <b>A night of bribery, blackmail, chocolate, and bondage.</b> Bronya co-ordinating. <a href="mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au">fussi@fussi.org.au</a>
May 24 <sup>th</sup>	FUSSI committee Meeting. Sheaoak café Belair. 10.30.
30 May – 1 June	Lower Flinders Ranges. Great fun weekend in beautiful caves. Bring your camera. All welcome, trip suitable for all levels of experience. Clare and Thomas co-ordinating. <b>RSVP</b> by 27 May 12 noon if you want to go. <a href="mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au">fussi@fussi.org.au</a>
June     Date TBA Sunday	One Day trip. Corra Lynn. Yorke Peninsula. Bronya and Thomas co-ordinating. <a href="mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au">fussi@fussi.org.au</a>
14 - 27 <sup>th</sup> July Mid Semester Break	
July 25-26 <sup>th</sup> TB Confirmed	Naracoorte Weekend of Caving.
Aug TBA	Corra Lynn. A one day trip to SA's longest cave.
14 - 15 Sept	Lower Flinders Ranges. Joint clubs come and play SRT weekend Clare and Thomas co-ordinating. <b>SRT competency needed.</b> <a href="mailto:fussi@fussi.org.au">fussi@fussi.org.au</a>

## FUSSI 40th Birthday Celebrations

Be there or you'll miss the party of the year!  
Go on, don't be afraid, get down, get dirty and sell your soul to the devil.

October Long Weekend, Friday eve 3- 6<sup>th</sup>.  
Naracoorte caves