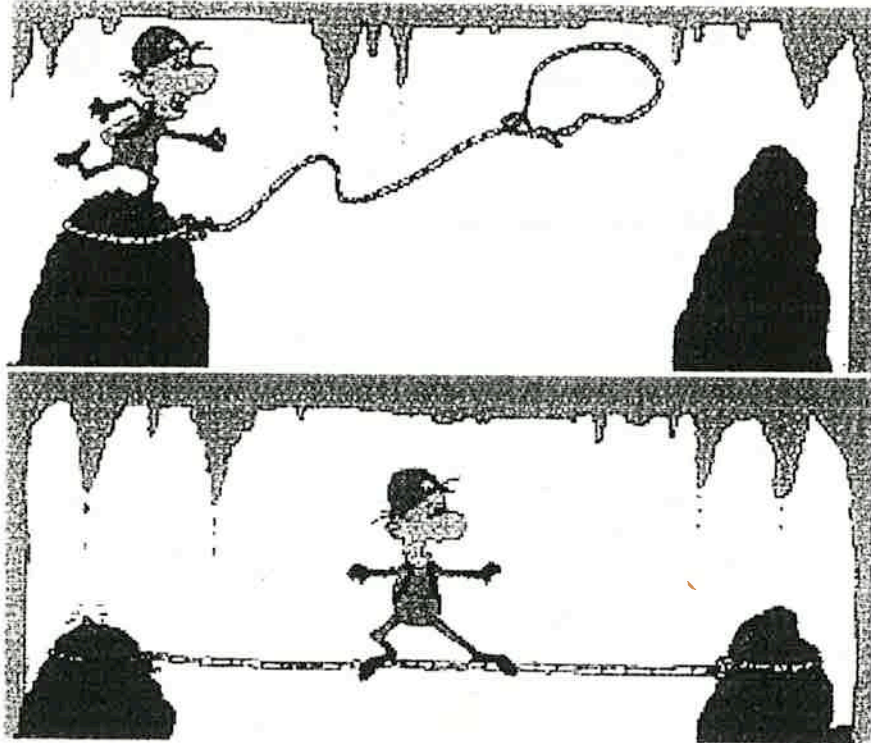


F U S S I



Volume 12 No. 1

**The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Flinders University Speleological Society Incorporated**

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Meeting Time and Place
Tuesday before arranged trips.
Contact office bearer or trip
organiser for details.

Geoff Harrison Room,
Union Building,
Flinders University.

Cover
"Caving in Italy"
c/o Caving in Italy web site

WHAT'S ON FOR FUSSI

Wed March 8	11-2pm	Fair Day. Plaza.
Tue March 14	1pm	Slide show and information on what gear you need to go caving. Trip organisation for the next trip. Clubs and Societies Meeting Room.
March 18/19		Trip to Naracoorte area.
Tue April 4th		Annual General meeting. Planning for the Flinders Trip.
Sat /Sun 15/16th April		Flinders Ranges trip. (Tentative dates)

Sat 8 April to Wed 26 April Mid Semester Break

Tue May 2	General Meeting. First Aid. Intro Search and Rescue techniques. Bring any that you can use as a first aid. Shovels are not allowed!
May 13 /14th	Search and Rescue weekend. Corra Lynn.
June 6	General meeting. Planning for the Nullarbor Trip.

June 17 Exams and Mid year break to July 24

July 7 -July 15	Nullarbor trip
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Membership is \$20.00 for students and is now due.

Looking for New Bits in the Gorge

Clare Buswell

Place: **Wilkawillina Gorge.**
Flinders Ranges.

July 14-18 and Sept 24-27
99.

Members Present:

July: Clare Buswell, Glenys Crane, Kirsty Kitto, Debbie Callison, joined later by Heiko Maurer and Peter Wallis.

September: Heiko Maurer, Paul Gardener Stephens, Kirsty Kitto, Alasdair McLellan and Brendan White.

These two trips were follow up trips to the Easter trip in which a number of new caves were found on a very fast walk through parts of the Wilkawillina Gorge. On that trip lots of searching was done with the binoculars on the cliff faces both at the Wilkawillina Car park and in the gorge proper. The July trip saw two days of searching: the first at the junctions of the two creeks just past the first major bend of the creek that flows into the Gorge proper. The second day put the search seven kilometres down the gorge.

Glenys, Kirsty, Debbie and I scrambled like goats up and down steep slopes, looked at what were promising dark bits via the binoc's and discussed numerous times the possibilities of "looking at that bit over there.....". What we found was eroded calcite on the surface. Lots of cauliflower formation, the odd stal ranging from a foot to two foot high and lots of small hollows with straws in them. In other words, evidence that a long time ago something bigger was here, and maybe something may also lie hidden that we just haven't seen any type of draft or hole that may indicate its continued existence or entrance into.

The second day we moved into the gorge proper and had more success. We found five caves all in the tradition of the Moro gorge type systems: small, but definitely caves. The September trip aimed to map these finds and to continue searching.

The first cave **Don't' Forget Your Overalls** is an arch way 1.5 m wide, 1m high and 4 metres in length and is home to kangaroos.

Paul's Rift is another four kms into the gorge, on the northern side and is in Wilkawillina limestone. The rift, a little above creek level, is a metre wide, goes back into the cliff for four metres at creek level and nine metres at its height. It is twelve to fourteen metres high with its roof containing some stals. The slope of the rift is 75 degrees. Its the biggest cave we've found in the area.

Just past check point one on the walking track three more finds were made. Debbie decided that slipping and sliding was the only way to cave so she could get into what became known as **The Sisyphean Slip**. Deb later joined by Kirsty slithered their way up some well polished flow stone to a chamber with a sloping roof, 3 meters wide and 1.5 high and 10 metres in depth. The chamber has some small off shoots one of which may be worth a dig.

At creek level and 10 metres from The Sisyphean Slip, Glenys found the **Purple Zinc Cave**. A brief look by Glenys with her sun glasses on, required that the September group don the overalls and have a better look. Clare found the Purple Zinc Cave to be a small

chamber, highly decorated on the northern wall with broken speleothems. The chamber is three metres in depth, two and half in width and a metre in height. The floor is river silt as the cave is obviously subject to flooding.

Kirsty on the July trip managed to get herself up through a climb into a chamber 2.5 metres wide 3.5 metres in depth with another chamber, (dark zone), going off this with broken stals and "black polished weird shit" on the floor. The weird shit reminded her of similar stuff found in Eyrie Cave. **Chokes and Slopes** as this cave is now known as, seems to have numerous exits on the cliff face itself. Numerous small solution tubes are to be found between Chokes and Slopes and the Sisyphean Slip, most do not go on and range in depth of a 30 cm to a Heiko body length, i.e, 186 cm.

There was more to be found in this area but time was against us. What has been found has to be tagged and numbered so yet another trip into the gorge will occur this year. Camp will have to be set up in the creek bed so a bit of full pack carrying will have to be done. Gad very unlike FUSSI!

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION CONSERVATION ACTIONS IN 1999

Queensland

Mt Etna

After 37 years, Australia's longest running conservation campaign is finally at an end. Australia's caving movement has, for the entirety, carried the issue on its back.

Certainly there were other groups involved, but it always came back to the speleos to carry on. Along the way there have been many highs and lows and a number of caves destroyed but the achievements have been great in terms of highlighting the importance of caves and their associated fauna and flora.

We have seen the establishment of National Parks and protective areas covering karst and the rewriting of the Nature Conservation Act in Queensland, to protect endangered species, sites and nests. Previously, only the species was protected and not the site.

The legal action has set precedents and given us experience for other court action involving caves, and in particular at Yessabah in northern New South Wales. There was an issue developing at Christmas Creek, west of Townsville, by the same company that mined Yessabah. All that was required was a number of phone calls and a letter threatening legal action. The issue was resolved amicably.

History has shown that ASF is serious about protecting the caves of Australia.

I have circulated a brief outline of the re-conciliation and I will prepare a detailed report hopefully before the Council meeting.

Mitchell-Palmer

In August, CQSS completed its 10th expedition to the area. This was the last under funding from the Australian Heritage Commission's grant of 1995. I will now prepare a report from all of the information gathered and this will also include a conservation plan for the area.

CQSS have applied for funding to the Cape York Natural Heritage Trust to continue its work. Unfortunately, the funding was refused because of the problems with the indigenous groups of the area. Palmerville Station, which covers the Northern one third of the limestone, has been offered for sale.

Both the State and Federal Environment Departments are interested in the area and there is money available for the purchase. However, after investigations and lobbying, I was told by the State department to leave it alone because again the indigenous groups refused to have anything to do with us. I have spent many months preparing grant applications and the indigenous groups just say **NO**. I am considering following through and requesting a meeting with them to discuss the issue. This was suggested by one of the Grant panel members.

Peter Berrill

**Co-convenor. ASF
Conservation Com-mission
Queensland**

area, improving signage and pedestrian oriented design of the roadway. This has been done in consultation with 'stakeholders' at a meeting with the Moore Park Trust which I attended. I made written a submission on behalf of ASF, all of which was ignored, and no reply was received in relation to the submission (copy to be included).

Nevertheless the overall changes to the precinct, I consider to be positive.

The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust has announced the construction of an aerial skyway and a plan to close the Grand Arch to traffic. As yet there is no decision on whether the skyway will approach from the east side or the west. The eastern approach appears to the Trust financially attractive, but this route encompasses many difficult logistics. This includes a Kurandra style pylon construction, using helicopters to lower materials to platforms on steep escarpments. Assuming this problem is surmountable, there is a question of which space might be used to drop passengers along the river or how a cable station can be constructed in such an environmentally sensitive area.

One suggestion proposes dropping people at the river next to the old hydro station but this is a long way from the caves area and has scenic and environmental values in its present state.

Jenolan will always need a road access for service and emergency vehicles and, once the road is closed, the Roads and Traffic Authority may cease maintaining the road

New South Wales

Jenolan

The Jenolan Caves precinct area is undergoing renovations, tiling the road and expanding the pedestrian

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION CONSERVATION ACTIONS IN 1999

after which it will soon be unusable. Jenolan may in these circumstances have to carry the cost of road maintenance. Having said this, the approach from the west would also have many difficulties. This development is problematical but in time the eastern road will collapse and the issue will be forced.

Borenore

Borenore Caves, now under the management of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust has a prior history of vandalism and insufficient management. Mike Chalker is presently in charge of the area and, although some resources are available, the problems are considerable.

The fundamental goal for managing Borenore is to get a permanent on the ground presence to help protect the area. Chris Dunne, Chris Norton and myself representing the NSWSC and ASF, obtained an interview with Bob Debus, Minister for the Environment, to lobby for extra funding to be applied to this area. The Minister indicated that the Government was considering an overall management plan that would address a number of problem areas.

He is hoping to utilise community involvement at Borenore with some likelihood that the Wirrageri tribe involving their members in the protection and running of Borenore. Further liaison with the Minister's research officer will follow.

Wellington

The Caves Advisory Panel is still active and apparently enjoying a good reputation at present with caves visitation increasing while other tourist areas are in decline. This is,

in part, because of public interest in the recently restored Phosphate Mine.

A Plan of Management has been prepared using the resources of the Council and researchers that have contributed to investigation of the area over the years. The Plan is presently on display.

One issue identified for immediate action is development of Cathedral Cave. There are plans to replant appropriate eucalyptus along the hill with the caves and a program to re-establish Grassy White Box Woodland between the caves and the highway.

Wellington's sister city in Japan, Nagoya, has made a gift of a Japanese garden which includes a small waterway and lake. Native Australian plants will be used. The gardens are presently under construction.

Keir Vaughan-Taylor
Co-convenor

Western Australia

Executive Summary

Numerous high profile conservation issues currently exist within Western Australia:

- Cape Range – Rauleigh Webb and Ric Brown have initiated legal objections to 10 proposed limestone mining leases within the Cape Range area. These matters will be the subject of a Wardens Court hearing later in the year.
- A Cave Manager has been appointed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) for WA and it is anticipated that, with this, CALM-ASF relations will improve.
- CALM have been asked to explain to the Environmental Protection

Authority what planning went into the tourism development of Giants and Calgardup Caves in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

- Cave monitoring continues in the LNNP with several unauthorised entries detected.
- Public Environmental Reviews have been published for the Two Rocks area, north of Perth. Low density housing is planned for the area overlying areas of karst. Appropriate submissions on behalf of the ASF have been made.

The Commission requests that the ASF budget for a sum of money (up to a specified value eg. \$1000) for use at the Conservation Co-Convenor's discretion on the Cape Range mining lease court case.

Cape Range

Finesky Holdings Pty Ltd has applied to the Carnarvon Wardens Court to convert 10 Exploration Licences into 10 Mining Lease applications. The 10 leases are all located in high conservation value karst areas that contain many known caves and aquifers.

ASF Conservation Officers Rauleigh Webb and Ric Brown have lodged objections to the leases with the Carnarvon Wardens Court. The applications were heard on 9th July 1999. WASG and SRGWA submitted similar objections to add weight to the outcry. The matter was listed for mention only on 16th August 1999. Copies of the objections have been served on the Mining Company pursuant to the Mining Act. A hearing date was expected in November or December 1999.

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION **CONSERVATION ACTIONS IN 1999**

We have applied to have the hearing of these matters transferred to the Perth Wardens Court to enable us to call witnesses to support our case. This transfer to Perth has occurred at a date to be set. Legal representation has been obtained for the hearing from the Environmental Defenders Office in Perth.

We cannot emphasise the importance of this issue and cannot let the mining company obtain a large mining lease, as occurred some 30 years ago, resulting in the current limestone mine and quarry on Cape Range. We are talking about an area that is proposed for World Heritage Listing.

Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park (LNNP)

Caver and Cave Manager relations within the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge are improving with the appointment of Anne Wood to the position of Cave Manager. It is hoped that a more co-operative and consultative relationship will exist in the future and the conservation of the caves will benefit.

Development of Calgardup and Giants Cave

The Environmental Protection Authority is now looking into the development by CALM in 1997 of Calgardup and Giants Cave as 'tourist caves'. Very limited planning by CALM was prepared prior to the development commencing.

No management plan, development plan or site working plan was developed for either site. No environmental assessment of the impact of the development on the caves was undertaken. Roads, car parks, buildings, toilets, cave gates, walkways, staircases, track marking etc.

were all put in place without any assessment or consideration for the caves.

CALM have now been asked to justify and explain this. CALM have responded to the EPA request with a letter and a personal attack on one of the ASF Conservation Co-Convenors. The EPA are now seeking other opinions from the Western Australian caving groups.

CaveWorks Research

CaveWorks, based at Lake Cave, has recently commenced its study into the hydro-biology of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste karst. This project will run for at least three years and will attempt to determine the catchments for the major stream caves and water table of the phreatic systems at Augusta. It will then attempt to ensure that these catchments are not being over-exploited and that the cave life dependant on the water is conserved. Renowned cave biologist Stefan Eberhard has arrived in Western Australia and commenced his research. Other educational and research aspects of the work will assist *CaveWorks* with material for public and caver education. This project should be given every support by ASF cavers.

Caver Monitoring

Passive infrared and vibration detectors are in widespread use in caves of the LNNP. They collect event data, date and time of each event, allowing the determination of party size on the day of the visit. This data is used to determine non-compliance with the Permit System and management will be able to better monitor non-compliant sites.

Non-compliance by a number of commercial tour operators has already been identified with them exceeding group numbers and accessing restricted areas within caves. They have been suitably warned. This work is being continued by members of WASG, following a grant from the Gordon Reid Conservation Fund.

Cave Gating

The cave gating policy developed by Heather Jefferies in conjunction with other cavers does not appear to have been implemented in the LNNP with a number of caves gated with no or little consideration given to the caves meteorology. This issue will be raised with the new Caves Manager.

Road Construction

A new road and car park was recently constructed within sight of Quinninup Lake Cave. This car park will almost certainly result in increased un-permitted visitation to the cave. Consultation with cavers prior to the construction of the road and car park may have avoided this problem. The matter will be raised with the new Caves Manager.

Track and Route Marking

The controversy over the poor route marking in Dingo and Nannup Cave's by CALM employees may be resolved soon with the new Caves Manager, Anne Wood, giving an undertaking that the marking will be reviewed and inappropriate markers removed from speleo-themes. As at the date of this report, only partial removal of the inappropriate markers had been made.

Nullarbor World Heritage Listing

The election of the Liberal government placed the

AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION CONSERVATION ACTIONS IN 1999

proposed listing in limbo. No new developments have occurred since the WA Liberal government was elected. Same status as 1994.

Yanchep National Park Management Committee

A Cave Management Committee has been formed for the Yanchep National Park. Comprised of representatives from WASG, SRGWA and CALM, the committee will work together, assessing the conservation / protection status of each cave and establishing management plans and access guidelines. The CALM Ranger, Rod Hillman, is keen for input from cavers into the management of the caves of this park.

South Coast Management Plan

As at November 1998 none of the proposed National Parks or reserves in the Nullarbor region have been declared. The required legislation is STILL LOST in government mumbo jumbo! This has now worsened as a result of the Mabo and Wik decisions.

We can now only describe the situation on the Nullarbor as a case of gross neglect by the WA Government and its agencies. The Management Plan for the area is almost due for renewal and NONE of the proposed National Parks or reserves to protect caves have been declared. The manager for the region has given an undertaking to examine the man made bund around the Murra-el-Eleven entrance with a view to restoring appropriate water flow into the cave.

Carabooda Caves

Lex Bastian of WASG has been exploring and surveying a large number of small caves

on a privately owned block of land in Carabooda and an associated plot of Crown land. The land owner is very forward thinking and hopes to preserve most of the caves on his block from any future residential development which he is planning. Lex is liaising closely with the owner and authorities and hopefully an agreement that benefits the caves will be achieved.

Two Rocks and Wanneroo

Two separate developments are proposed in this area by the Tokyu Corporation. These developments are for semi rural housing (2 hectare lots) over a karst area that is the northern extension of the Yanchep National Park. Environmental Reviews have been distributed for public comment.

Submissions on behalf of the ASF have been made to each development. SRGWA and WASG have also commented. The land owner is refusing cavers entry to the property, presumably due to the significant karst features likely to be located there.

Point Grey – Mandurah

This area is to be developed as a future housing and marina site. A small area of karst is located within the area, the most significant feature being Avalon Cave. Extensive work by SRGWA members led to this cave being saved from destruction by the developers. Through a consultative approach with the land developer, Plunkett Homes, they managed to obtain and agreement to create a reserve around the cave itself. Discussions over gating the cave to prevent access from the nearby residents are continuing.

Drovers Cave National Park

The proposed land clearance adjacent to the National Park was finally given ministerial approval despite the EPA recommending against it. The land clearance is either proceeding or is now complete. The impact on Old River Cave will require examination in the near future.

A meeting has been arranged between the ASF Co-Convenors and CALM to discuss the removal of large quantities of concrete which are blocking the solution pipe cave entrances and the construction of a new gate for Drovers Cave. It is hoped that both of these acts will restore airflow to the cave and possibly attract back the bats that once resided there.

**Ric Brown
Rauleigh Webb
Co-Convenors**

This report was taken from the ASF's Annual Report 1999 which was presented at the January 2000 Council Meeting in Canberra.