FUSSI Newsletter

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STRETCHERS ON PARADE

Recent ASF ACRC Search and Rescue Training Course.

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Front Cover Photo:
A selection of Stretchers with possible application in cave rescue.

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CARS, GETTING WET AND THE RETURN OF MAVIS

Deborah Callison

Lower South East trip August 13th-15th 2010

Members present: Clare Buswell, Thomas Varga, Nate Koch, Deborah Callison.
Photos in this report are kindly supplied by Clare and Nate.

Calcite Crystals in Sheather's Cave and One Rather Cold Caver.

Friday 13th August

Fussi's trip to the South East was scheduled to start Friday afternoon, but Nate tempted fate by attempting to drive to Mt Gambier on his own in a recently bought second hand car. Mavis had other plans and the engine overheated by the time he got to Murray Bridge (about lunchtime), so he limped back home. Fortunately Clare was able to contact me (Deborah), so I picked up Nate from his home and continued to Clare and Heiko's for the attempted gear stuffing of the Subaru about 4pm. Having to add ladders, ascending gear, ropes, etc proved to be beyond the spacious capacity of the Subaru boot, so we waited for Thomas to arrive in his larger 4WD and crammed us and all the gear in. Fortunately there appeared to be plenty of room, and we headed off for Mt Gambier about 5pm.

We stopped for tea at Tailem Bend – standard roadhouse fare - and arrived at Kalganyi Holiday Park about 10pm. We were rather glad we had pre-booked a cabin, and didn't have tents to put up!

Saturday 14th August

The first cave to locate was Sheather's cave, approximately 9-12 km outside Mt Gambier. After putting cave gear in the 4WD, Clare and Thomas picked up cave keys from Forestry SA office, whilst dropping Nate and Deb off at Umpherston Sinkhole and the Cave Gardens for some photos.

The four of us then drove to the pine forest area outside Mt Gambier and did some walking and checking of the cave coordinates. We eventually found Sheathers cave close to the published GPS coordinates, although Clare commented the cave was hard to locate after the felling of the pine trees nearby. What is it with trees in the landscape or should that be slash and burn forestry practice!

CARS, GETTING WET AND THE RETURN OF MAVIS

The cave entrance was a solution tube, so Nate and Thomas rigged the cave with Clare's supervision. Clare, Thomas and Nate entered the cave and found it opened up to a small lake with calcite crystals, which provided some great photos.

Thomas scored the Ice Berger award for stripping off his caving gear and then going for a swim to see how far the lake extended – the lake appeared to match the written description of approx 20 metres in length, but requires cave diving equipment to further explore its entire length.

I decided to wait at the cave entrance (on Mavis patrol) so I was able to pass down a barely adequate hand towel for Thomas to dry off with. They exited the cave about 1.30pm. Thomas then proceeded to run up and down the road a few times to warm up after his impromptu, cold dip! After 'de-rigging' the cave we headed back to the cabin for some lunch and for Thomas, some warmth and dry clothes.

A yet to be Identified Fossil.

Saturday Afternoon, 14th August

Thomas descending into L321

We left the cabin at 2.30pm headed for L321 cave near Millicent, which had been previously visited by FUSSI members a few years ago.

The cave was located fairly rapidly in the re-grown pine forest site, so we rigged up and entered the cave about 5pm. The entrance was a short abseil pitch of about 8 metres through a tight solution tube and side branch that would cause great fun (!) on exit later. We were fortunate to come across good formation fairly rapidly after a small amount of crawling. Some lovely photos for the album were taken, including those of columns, shawls, helictites and straws.

The cave was quite cold however - glad I was wearing my thermal underwear under my overalls! After about 1.5-2 hours of oohing and aahing at the formation and exploring most of the extent of the cave, we then

attempted to exit through the solution tube entrance using ascending gear.

Thomas discovered that wearing a daypack and trying to squeeze through the narrow solution tube was not conducive at all! He had to remove his boot loops and daypack to negotiate his way successfully through the solution entrance. He changed to the ladder in the tight section and then grunted his way out.

Nate exited second, showing his climbing muscles by attaching a cows tail safety line to the steel ladder and laddering most of the distance of the short pitch. All appeared to go well until he reached the tight section also, and then his grunts and cussing matched the outbursts of Thomas to make the final few metres out.

I was due to exit next, after I checked my SRT bag and realized Mavis had made me forget to put ascending devices in my SRT kit! After feeling like a prize chump and a short wait we communicated the situation to Thomas and Nate who located my ascending devices and lowered them down (carefully) by bag. Up I went to the solution tube entrance, encouraging myself with thoughts and chants of beer, pasta, red wine and apple crumble and cream for dinner. I reached the side branch and restriction in the entrance and after much grunting, cursing and swearing decided I was definitely going to enjoy a good feed back at the cabin.

Those pretty things that cavers photograph

Clare then exited the cave last and outclassed us all by swearometer when she reached the restriction also. We exited the cave to darkness and rain (so like caving in Tasmania!), quickly derigged the cave and drove back to the cabin for a great lash up meal and attempted to dry out our caving gear for Considine's cave tomorrow.

Sunday 15th August.

Sunday Morning, Mavis again had some fun with us all, hiding one of the chest ascenders before

it was found after turning the cabin upside down. We concluded she must have been attracted to the bright pink tape. We packed the car ready to drive home after caving in the morning. We paid the caravan park manager for the very nice, dry cabin. It had bucketed most of Saturday night, in true Lower South East style! We then returned the cave keys and headed for Considine's cave, near to Millicent.

The cave entrance was straightforward. We rigged a short handline at the entrance to assist with the short scramble down to the first rock pile. After a short and narrow vertical squeeze, we reached the first cavern and noticed signs of live activity in the cave and good formation. It became a bit of a challenge to negotiate around the cave avoiding the live bore holes and drips in the floor. We then headed back up to the first rock pile and headed down to the left to see the other side of the cave. We were rewarded with even more great formation, live activity, ponds of water and fossils in one side of the cave wall. We felt quite spoilt that we had so many opportunities for good photos and we didn't have to work too hard to get them. We exited the cave after approximately 1.5 hours underground, and drove back to Adelaide stopping for lunch at Kingston and touring the Coorong for Nate's benefit. We had a most enjoyable trip with some lovely formation and the odd fossil seen.

Nate's gloved hand, spare torch and bore holes in Considines cave.

BATS IN HIDING!

Clare Buswell

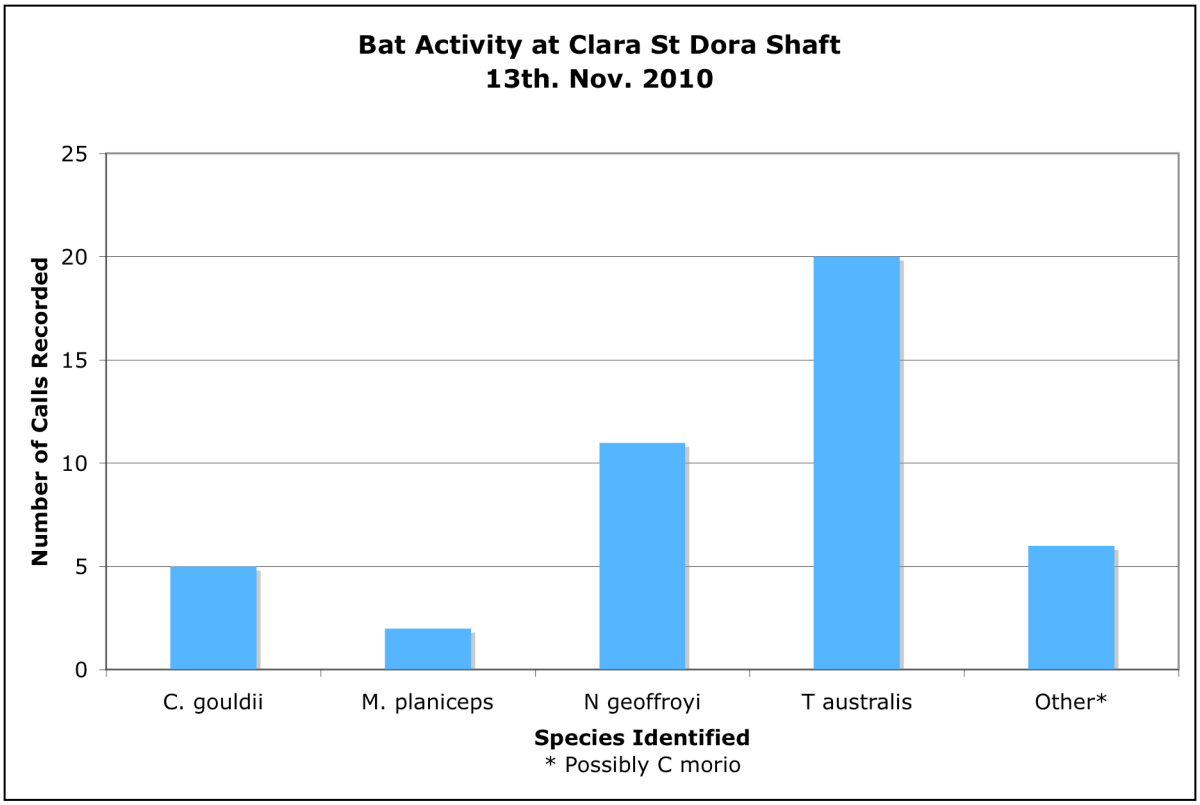
Thank you to Dr. Ken Sanderson, Department of Biology, Flinders University for the use of the Bat Detectors and for the identification of the calls.

Flinders Ranges, Nov 12-14th 2010.

The great bat count of 2010 was really a bit of a fizzer due to the fact that on both the weekends that we set up the counter it rained and the general temperature was a bit on the cold side. So most of the known bat population either stayed in bed for those nights or just plain could not be interested in being part of the census count! To top it off we also had some equipment problems. Even so, we succeeded in getting the below data.

The temperature on the Friday 12th November at 11.20pm was 16 degrees, with rain in the early morning. A total of 6 calls were recorded at the Shaft Entrance to Clara St Dora: five were from *Tadarida australis* (White striped free tailed bat), and 1 *Mormopterus sp 4 (planiceps)* (Southern free tailed bat).

The next night, Saturday the 13th, in the same position, we got a different story with 58 passes recorded. This is despite the lower overnight temperature of 13.7 degrees around midnight. The graph below illustrates the situation.



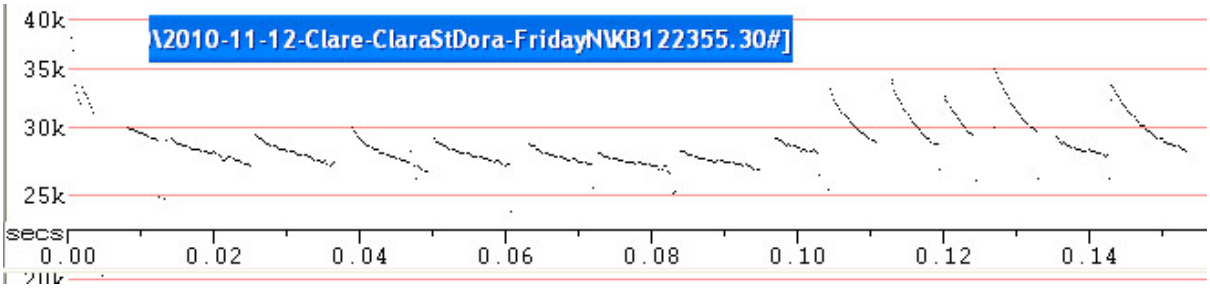
We recorded 43 passes, most of which, 20 passes, were *Tadarida australis* White-striped free tailed bat, then 11 passes of *Nyctophilus geoffroyi,* Lesser long eared bat. The other calls recorded were likely to be those of *Chalinolobus morio*, chocolate wattled bat. There was no recording of the known cave dwelling bat *Vespadelus finlaysoni*, this time round. This species we have recorded before at the same location in 2007 and 2009. The rest of the bat population we think tends to live in the trees lining the creeks. We did not sight any bats in either Clara St Dora or Maires caves. But that does not mean that they are not there, just

that we have not seen them (yet!). The recordings on Saturday the 13th at the Shaft of Clara St Dora also showed little activity for the hours the recorder operated, which was from 8.50 pm - 2 am on the morning of the 14th. Sometimes equipment and the weather conspire together!

In the meantime at the Bagalowie Hut site, on Saturday night the 13th we got 55 calls, mostly from *Tadarida australis*, 25 passes, 19 passes from *Mormopterus sp 4 (planiceps)* Southern free tailed bat, 11 passes that were not identified, and 2 passes from *Chalinolobus gouldii* Gould's wattle bat and then 1 pass from *Nyctophilus geoffroyi.*

This may suggest that the trees along the creek are providing most of the shelter and food. It should also be noted that this year, 2010, has been an exceptional year in the Flinders, with good rainfall and flooding. The trees that line the creeks, mostly *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* River Red gum, have begun to recover from the previous ten years of so of drought conditions. Importantly, the data that we have collected over the past 3 years gives us a small base of information to give to other bodies, such as DEH, and it could possibly influence decisions on where to or not to spray for locusts etc.

On our next trip up we would like to place recorders at Chimney Cleft to see if we record any activity further away from Bagalowie Ck. Anyone for a late February trip? You never know, we may record levels of activity similar to those of 2007 and 2009, 300 or so calls over the course of a night.



Above is the call of *Mormopterus sp 4 (planiceps),* the Southern free-tailed bat, recorded at 23.55pm on Friday the 12th of November at the Clara St Dora Shaft.

Just to let you know, we also checked out, Lizard, Chimney Cleft and False Wall caves as well on the weekend. Thanks to Heiko, Sam and Thomas for a great weekend of fun in the dust!

ASF CAVE RESCUE COMMISSION
CROP TRAINING WEEKEND

Michael Meynell-James.

Short exercise.

After lunch on Saturday we headed off to Corra Lynn cave entrance and got ourselves ready to go underground. Our instructions were to bring what we normally would take for a day's caving. This instruction was harder to follow than one might think, as generally we have 'at cave entrance' equipment, inside cave 'drag bag' that may only travel half way into the cave. Finally there is the 'always together' stuff in one's bum bag such as batteries spare globes and compact first aid kit.

Broken up into teams of five with one person being an exercise leader we entered the cave and went in our team directions. My team headed towards Grand Central. Not far past Grand Central in a passage above Woodside the exercise began.

The instructions were that one of our members, chosen by the exercise coordinator, had accidentally got dirt or dust in his eyes and was no longer able to see. After some discussion about the type of first aid that we could provide which included irrigation with saline solution or water and not placing a patch over his eye as this may potentially force any foreign matter harder against the casualty's eye, we began to plan a way of getting out.

Thankfully the casualty in this scenario was calm, collected and able to both take instructions as well as provide responses and feedback. With consultation with the casualty we agreed to attempt a self-rescue and stay together as a team.

Amongst us we had approximately 5 metres of 8mm rope. With this we created a handrail type of arrangement with one person leading out, another anchoring the back end and the casualty holding and sliding their hand along it until they reach the lead end. The third able person was in front of the rope leader offering navigation back to the entrance and suggesting ways of negotiating obstacles. This system seemed to work well for most circumstances. The casualty expressed that they liked to know that while they were holding the rope they could not deviate from the intended path and having it taut meant they could visualise the direction and angle of travel.

There was a minor constriction that did not suit this handrail technique so we changed to using an end loop to lead the casualty through. It worked well for the constriction but in general it was hard to keep tension on the rope to provide direction and security while not interfering with the casualty's movement by pulling too hard. The other limitation of this 'dog lead' technique was that, if for some reason the casualty had to reverse or change direction, there was no way other than audio instruction to guide them. If this happened to be when the casualty was out of visual range of the other members of the party it could have caused some problems, including increasing the casualty's anxiety levels.

Slowly but surely we cater-pillared our way to the entrance. To the credit of all involved the exercise did not conclude until the casualty was out of the cave and available for treatment at the surface. The de-brief highlighted some positive outcomes. We all noted that the caving experience of the team was invaluable in being able to give and receive complex instructions and descriptions that a 'non caver' may have had trouble understanding.

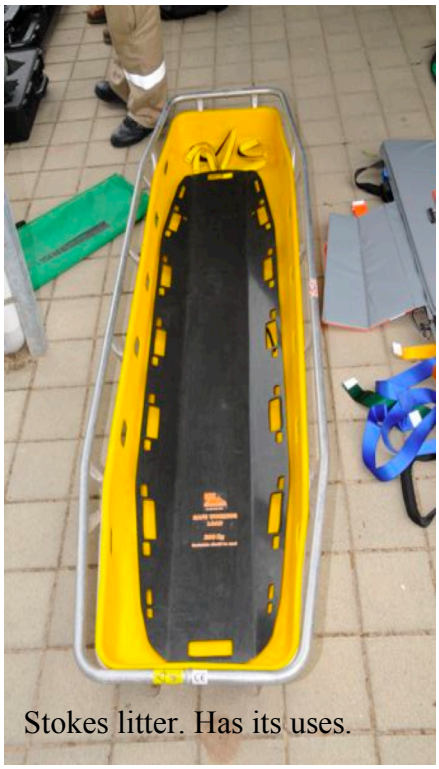
STRETCHERS EXAMINED FOR IN-CAVE RESCUE SUITABLILITY

All photos by Richard Harris, who organised the weekend

Ferno Res-o-Mate.
Folds in half, easy to take into a cave, an injured person can be sat up if needed.
Similar to the Paraguard stretcher shown on page 11.

SKED: half sized, patient drag stretcher.

Trevor Arnold talks about the Ferno Dyna. (Model 125)



Stokes litter. Has its uses.

WHAT IS ON

Jan	Sun 16th	The annual one day Murray River trip. Contact: Bronya for transport details. BYO Lunch, swimsuit and towel and normal caving gear.
Feb	Date TBA	Flinders Ranges. Bat detecting again?
Feb	Jan 29-Feb 13th	Tasi. Trip is full.
March Fair Day	Date TBA	On-campus caving display. Come along and help to promote the club. Contact: Bronya.
March	12-13th	Lower South East/Glenelg River. Beginners trip with paddling Contact: Bronya
April	22-25th	Middle Flinders, cave mapping and surface exploration. Contact: Clare.
April	22-25th	Australian Speleological Federation's Biennial Conference. Chillagoe, Far North QLD. JUST GO TO IT.
May	19-22nd	Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association's Conference. Ulverstone. Tasmania.

Paraguard Stretcher.