



FUSSI

Newsletter

Vol. 24 | No. 1 | 2012



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Croesus Cave. Mole Creek, Tasmania.

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Clare Buswell.

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FLYING DOWN TO MOLE CREEK*

Heiko Maurer

People on the Trip: Heiko, Clare, Thomas, Ivan, Robert and, in spirit, Bronya.

Preamble.

Following the euphoria of the last¹ Tasmanian adventure, some unstable, drug-addled brain decided that a 'cheap&quick'² long-weekend trip to Mole Creek was a 'good'³ idea. Well, that was the dream. Certainly \$99 airfares were available, but at 6am and one-way. Return? That'll be \$239 extra! And a quick web search revealed a rental⁴ car was the most practical option since it could be got from, and returned to, Launceston Aeroport.

We particularly wanted to re-do Croesus with better equipment (shark skin clothing) to ward off the cold. Which we bought the day before we eventually left (in fairness, it had been ordered long beforehand). It was also to be a photographic trip to add to those taken back in February.



Streamway Decoration in Croesus Cave

Friday Dec 2, 2011.

And so it was a dark, dank, cold, miserable December morning⁵ around 4:30, when the alarm went off in the Henley Beach airport hotel/motel and we three motley crew of jet-setting cavers, (Clare, Thomas, Heiko) piled into an airport taxi to try to garner some sleep before landing (via a coffee shop at Tullamarine) at Launceston airport at 10:00.

The hire car was a Toyota Ascent, was trouble-free

and fitted the three of us and all our gear comfortably. Onto Launceston to pick up key to the caver's hut from Paul van Nynanten), thence Deloraine for shopping and Coffee&Cake and finally to the caver's hut to set up camp.

* Or how three 'slightly' mad FUSSI people spent \$1200 in three days (plus airfares!).

¹ See Fussi Newsletter Vol. 23, No. 2. 2011.

² \$99 return airfare, borrow a car (or hire a rent-a-wreck). Stay in the Mole Creek caver's hut for nix. Food you consume anyway.

³ This was some unusual definition of 'good' I had previously been blissfully ignorant of.

⁴ A word of advice: thoroughly check the condition of your rental car before you drive it. Especially note any paint chips (they give you a form for precisely this purpose) because they will do a thorough inspection afterward and charge you to repair any 'new', that is, you didn't officially note it beforehand (which means you take the form, through the pouring rain, to the car, which is a good nine miles away, inspect the car, while the downpour continues, noting any problems and return the form, through the drenching thunderstorm, to the rental counter and trudge back to the car through, what has turned to hail and snow thanks to a sudden 'unexpected' cold front) damage. We had a tiny such bumper-bar ding and failed to record it and got a nasty shock upon car return. But, cross fingers, (insert brand name of large national car rental conglomerate) haven't yet sent us any bills – what nice people!

⁵ Actually, the weather was really good the entire trip.

FLYING DOWN TO MOLE CREEK

But the hut was occupied by about 6 others (there are two sets of keys, controlled by separate people) so we went looking for accommodation. Not entirely reluctantly, as we rather liked the sound of contented sighs coming from a hot shower cubicle. The Mole Creek caravan park would have been ideal, but due to an Open Gardens event in the town was booked, as was much else until we struck a bargain with the Mole Creek holiday park.

So much for 'doing' Ghengis as a warm-up! We picked up the Croesus and Lynds keys and Clare and Thomas went for a short walk to Anastomosis.⁶ After which we had a pub meal at Mole Creek where we ran into the caver's hut crowd – Janine McKinnon was leading them into Kubla⁷ the next day.

Ivan&Robert then arrived, having driven up from Hobart after work, and we retired to our digs to gain some much needed sleep after such an obscenely early start.

Saturday.

The day dawned as a fine Croesus day. Clare, Thomas and Heiko ventured in the direction of the Mersey river, having picked up the Croesus keys and fortified the body with Maracoopa Café coffees, while Ivan and Robert headed for a brisk walk to Mount Roland. We cavers parked in the usual spot by the river for the day.

The cave was easily found and the gate opened with only gentle persuasion required. We quickly made our way up the stream passage, stopping frequently for photographs and to view the pretties at river level. We did not attempt to get a closer look at the upper-level decorations. The master lock was passed without incident except the odd grateful prayer to the wet-suit goddess and her glove and booty acolytes. Thomas and Heiko left Clare to wrestle with the gods of Olympus at the Golden Staircase, while they explored upstream past the large rockfall chamber for 500m or so, until it was time to retrace our steps.

We exited rather quickly and more gentle persuasion got the lock and gate in their original place, but when we returned to the car we found a note from the NP people requesting that we buy a NP permit.⁸ And so home by 6pm to eat a yummy curry provided by Ivan and Robert and to spend the evening swapping tall tales and true about our adventures, wandering above and below ground.

Sunday.

Another excellent day dawned, this time Lynds cave being the destination for Ivan, Clare and Thomas, while Robert and Heiko investigated the cause of our accommodation crisis. Which turned out to be a very nice property of about two acres of gardens filled with people, art and plants of all sorts. Robert was in his element! He knew (almost) every plant, herb, flower, shrub, tree, etc. by its Latin, common, English, Australian, Sanskrit, etc. name! Not to mention the appropriate mulching, soil, feeding, shade, pruning, etc. it required. He even bought a couple.⁹ I settled for a cuppa and a nice sit down. Upon leaving they even recycled our maps of the garden. Grand stuff!

Thence a short walk to the Alum Cliffs. On previous visits to the area I'd always been intrigued by the sign but had never checked. Well, it's an easy walk along a we-formed track to a lookout over the Alum Cliffs gorge. A pleasant little walk, well worth the effort. I also

⁶ This seemed to set the template for our daily activities: Some went bushwalking, while others went underground.

⁷ Baaastards!

⁸ Cost was \$48 for a month.

⁹ Well, he could have. If they were up to standard.

FLYING DOWN TO MOLE CREEK

took a moment to visit the Mole Creek cemetery and pay my respects to an old friend who had died too young.

Meanwhile, in an underground tributary to the Mersey river, Clare, Thomas and Ivan negotiated the small waterfall to gain the main streamway and begin the sauntering photographic trip that Lynds Cave requires. Ivan had purchased a new macro lens and was eager to try it out so he found himself a nice straw to practice on. Clare decided that standing in freezing water, wrangling tripod and camera was the best way to spend half an hour or so. Thomas, being oddly camera-less, (something seriously wrong there,) waited around and eventually wandered off to look for more pretty things to look at. We negotiated the more 'watery' than I remember rock pile. You need to stay low, but don't need to drown in the process. Anyway, the wetsuit got a good workout as we clambered over rocks half covered in water and then climbed up and over dry stuff. Short and sweet, we were back in the main drag, trying to allow Thomas to see a fair amount of the cave before we needed to re-enter the world of cars, airports and planes! After about 3 hours, such thoughts impeded on us, we exited with a swim across the river and a walk back to the car. It was a quick yet satisfying trip.



The Things You Find Underground

Thomas needed to catch a 6pm flight back to Adelaide, so Heiko dropped him off while the rest of the crew decontaminated their bodies, hung up wetsuits and made the accommodation resemble any cavers hut! You know, wetsuits, boots, bags, thermals, gloves all hanging all over the place. Just after we had trashed the joint with our wet, filthy caving gear hanging over veranda rails, the owner informed us that there was a "perfectly serviceable clothes line around the back"!

Monday.

A leisurely pack-up saw us drive to Launceston return keys and 'do' Cataract Gorge – quite pleasant – before catching a 2pm flight back home. Thomas picked us up, and noted that wet patches were appearing on one large haversack. Imagine that!

Postscript.

Costs: Airfares were around \$300/\$400ea. All other costs worked out to be around \$400.00 ea. So for 3/4 days in Tasi that worked out to approx \$230/\$200 per person per day! Yep it was expensive, and no doubt we should have booked airfares way before we did. But you know how it is ...

THE Committed's REPORTS for 2011

Bronya Alexander

We must say that the year 2011 will go down as one of FUSSI's most active in terms of trips run as distinct from activity from lots of members. We had a total of 18 members throughout 2012, with over half of these as new members taking advantage of the three-month introductory membership with the ASF. That's an increase of 3 members compared to the last 2 years... so if you extrapolate that trend we'll have almost 50 members by 2030! Returning to the trips run we had three, 5 to 14 day expeditions. Notably to Tasmania in February, the Flinders Ranges in April, and the Nullarbor in late September. All of them were memorable (read about them in last year's editions of the *FUSSI Newsletter*), and if such trips are run again in the future then we encourage you all to attend.

In conjunction with the South Australian Museum we received a grant from the ASF's Karst Conservation fund. The grant allowed us to undertake bat research on the Nullarbor trip in September. Big thanks to Clare and Thomas for writing up the successful grant application. We are in the process of writing the report on the findings for the ASF newsletter, Australian Caver.

FUSSI members also helped out SA's other caving club, CEGSA in stabilizing the solution tube to SOS cave in the South East. The activity came about due to rainfall received over a short period of time that eroded the area immediately around the solution tube. This undermined the fence around the cave and caused the farmer great concern over the possible loss of calves down the hole!

A couple of the madder FUSSI members also helped out with the ongoing dig in Y1 and moved bucket loads of rock, clay and gunk from the dig area to another section of the cave. The dig is continuing this year.

As per usual we ran a number of beginners trips to the Naracoorte area and the lower Flinders and we will continue to offer such trips this year. We urge you all to go caving, have fun and get involved with the club.

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

Clare Buswell

Ok, so this year was not a great year for the Safety Officer, who caused herself injury and others the need to get her back above ground. For the rest of the club members, it proved the following:

- Bees like Thomas,
- Slippery boots like to turn Heiko upside down as he goes over the edge of a solution tube.
- Tall grass loves to light fires under cars and coffee cups make good fire fighting equipment.
- Importantly, safe caving practices and training kept the rest of you from such misadventures!
-

I would recommend that:

- everybody does a first aid course,
- never leave your in-cave first-aid kit behind no matter how short you think the trip will be.
- this year we will be running our cave rescue training day, so make sure that you all attend.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Thomas Varga

For the Period
April 1 2011 – 31 March 2012

Overall summary

Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Closing balance
\$5,121.93	\$2,253.50	\$1,053.91	\$6,721.52
Difference			\$1,199.59

FUSSI monies were stored in three locations: two bank accounts with ANZ and petty cash.

	Bank account	Debit Card Acc	Petty cash	Total
Opening balance	\$5,269.63	\$0.00	\$252.30	\$5,521.93
Closing balance	\$5,539.97	\$335.25	\$836.30	\$6,721.52
Difference	\$270.34	\$335.25	\$594.00	\$1,199.59

Breakdown of income

Bunnings Marion Fundraiser	\$879.15
FCCS Grant	\$784.35
Member contributions	
Membership fees	320.00
Gear hire fee	270.00
Total	\$2,253.50

Breakdown of expenditure

Gear purchases (SRT gear, lights, camping equip.)	\$784.35
Professional subscriptions/books	\$181.19
Operational photocopy, catering, first aid kit	\$88.37
Total	\$1,053.91

Treasurer's Notes:

- 1) The Bunnings Marion fundraiser was a significant boost to the bottom line this year.
- 2) FUSSI applied for FCCS grants once during this period and won approximately the same amount as last Year. Gear was purchased with no FUSSI money contribution as opposed to last year where FUSSI put in an extra \$500.
- 3) Had FUSSI purchased an extra \$500 worth of gear in 2011/2012, this year's report would have read very similar to last year's. The upshot of this is that there is an extra \$500 in the accounts.

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Treasurer's Report Continued.

- 4) We have opened a debit card account with ANZ which makes purchases and online transactions easier.
- 5) ASF fees (which all members pay) have remained unchanged for the current year.
- 6) Collected ASF membership fees totalled \$620.00.
- 7) Worth noting that since the current Treasurer has been in position FUSSI funds have increased by \$1,800.00

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

The editor is grumpy and will only become happy when supplied with trip reports and bottles of red wine. In that order!

GEAR OFFICER'S REPORT MARCH 2011-MARCH 2012

Clare Buswell

We replaced a fair amount of the stolen gear during the year, in particular the pulleys, a harness, ascenders, and a descender. We also retired a rope and purchased a new Blue Water 2++ to replace it. The cost of all this came in at around \$800. Thankfully, we got a grant to cover these expenses.

The loss of so much gear due to theft in 2010 seriously curtailed our gear replacement programme, so that gear that would have been normally retired over the last 2 years is still in use. So this year we will incur some large costs as we will be replacing 5 Helmets, 95 metres of the 1 inch Tube tape and 50mm seatbelt tape, due to age, wear and tear. We have retired 4 harnesses that were up for replacement this year. Unfortunately due to the unreliability of the Princeton Apex lights there is a need to purchase at least 3 new lights this year. (The mere mention of caving lights sends the gear officer into the nearest hole in the ground never to be seen again.) Options on good, robust, reliable with a long use life, caving lights range from Petzel Ultra at \$400 ea. to the Stenlight that comes in around \$300 (maybe a bit less). All up FUSSI is looking at gear replacement costs of approximately \$1300 in 2012. That's a lot of sausages to flip.

On more mundane issues, please note that FUSSI gear only goes on FUSSI trips. Any gear lost or damaged on such trips must be paid by those members on that trip. Please return gear in a clean state: wash it in cold water, use a brush to get the dirt out, and dry it in the shade. This makes for a happy Gear Officer.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

For those of you who don't know, FUSSI has its own library. Like most libraries, it is full of useful information, most of which you will not find on the Web. Similar to most libraries it is stored in the basement of a building, that most people never see, except for those archival types into the world of paper, hard covers and the smell of books. The library has had 3 new books come in this year and is awaiting another 2 or 3 local publications to come in. As usual we have received our normal range of journals from caving clubs and organizations around the world, with which we have reciprocal exchanges. So if you want to know about how caves are formed, or selecting caving gear, to information on Dead Dog Cave in Mexico

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then contact the librarian. Books etc. are available on loan for a month. If anybody finds any thing that you think the FUSSI library should purchase then let us know. Similarly if you find any useful stuff from the www then send us the link.

FUSSI Annual General Meeting Minutes 29th March 2012, Flinders University

Present: Bronya Alexander (BA, recorded the minutes), Clare Buswell (CB), Heiko Maurer (HM), Thomas Varga (TV), Michael Meynell-James (MMJ) and Margaret Ting (MT).

Apologies: Edwina Virgo, Richard Boyle, Alison Thompson and Chris Maynard

1) FUSSI Committee

All Exec positions were listed as vacant and a call for nominations was made. Each nomination was seconded and there were no disagreements, producing the following Executive Committee for 2012 (incl initials of nominating party followed by seconder):

President	Heiko Maurer (CB, BA)
Secretary	Bronya Alexander (CB, TV)
Treasurer	Thomas Varga (MMJ, CB)
Safety Officer	Clare Buswell (MMJ, HM)
Equipment Officer	Clare Buswell (BA, MT)
Library Officer	Margaret Ting (CB, BA)

2) Future Club Trips

- Corra Lynn day trip Sun Mar 31st.
- Can no longer run the pre-advertised trip to Naracoorte on Apr 14th (due to shooting in area).
- Naracoorte weekend on 28th/29th April. Will be a joint trip with CEGSA. We will be looking to make a possible connection between caves S102 and SOS because the existing entrance to SOS is very awkward.
- Flinders Ranges weekend May 19/20 – Mairs/Clara St Dora caves.
- Clare would like to run another cave rescue trip to Corra-Lynn some time during Jun/Jul.

3) Club Donation for the Scrubby Creek Cave Appeal

It was agreed for FUSSI to donate \$301 to assist Rimstone Co-op to purchase the Scrubby Creek land in Buchan Victoria. Thomas mentioned we were in a good position financially to offer some support. Treasurer to organise the donation.

4) Recording Student Numbers and gmail Accounts

Bronya mentioned that she adds member details to the ASF database but doesn't include student numbers, as that information is not required by the ASF. It is only required by

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Flinders Campus Community Services (FCCS). There is no longer a current Excel spreadsheet with this information on it (as we had in the past) which is used to apply for grant money from FCCS. Clare has this info, due to her involvement with the Fair Day organization. But we do not have this info in a central location. Thomas to add student numbers to the gmail account so they are recorded centrally. Thomas also brought up the fact that all our details are now on the Google system, but it was agreed that this was probably a safer option security wise than everyone keeping lists on their own computers etc. But Google knows.

5) Karst index Database South Australia (KIDSA)

Clare asked Bronya if she has password access to the Karst Index Data base through her ASF password. Bronya to look into this.

[Since checked and found the following. There is a guest password that lets you access some information, but for anything further you need to request permission from one of three listed people.]

6) Links with Flinders Uni Palaeo Society

TV has spoken with Sam Arman from the Palaeo Society as they have expressed interest in linking with our club. Sam is happy to come and give a presentation to FUSSI after he gets back from 2 months overseas.

7) Grant Applications

- Flinders One grant app. due tomorrow (Mar 30th). Thomas and Clare have been chipping away at this. Clare waiting on quote from Scout Outdoors.
- ASF grant also due this weekend but no application to be made from FUSSI this round. We are still yet to complete the full requirements to gain the funds from our last successful ASF grant as this involves writing up the data collected from the bat boxes on the Nullarbor last year. We are waiting on clarification on some of the bat call identification. (Why don't they all speak English!)

7) Spending priorities

The club is to retire 4 helmets, 4 harnesses and a large amount of tube tape. Agreed to slowly replace these items from FUSSI account.

Question was raised as to whether FUSSI should buy a rescue stretcher to replace the drag mat. Clare says if we had one it would get taken along to Nullarbor and Flinders Ranges trips. Other trips such as Corra Lynn and South East aren't so important as there would be emergency services in closer proximity. Michael raised option to "share" one with CEGSA. This then raises questions of storage, and who would get first use if trips clash. Approx cost: \$1200.

Meeting closed, 8:00pm.

WET, WILD AND MAYBE EVEN WARM

Richard Boyle

A bunch of 11 people headed down to Mt Gambier on the Friday night of the Adelaide Cup long weekend; Clare, Heiko and Thomas from FUSSI, and a good bunch of uni students from Flinders Uni, their friends and myself.

It was a late night and an early start, but on Saturday we split into two groups and went off to snorkel in Piccaninnie Ponds and Ewens Ponds. Both are pretty stunning in their own way. Ewens Ponds was extremely clear, and free diving for the first time in the ponds, the first of which is 10.5 metres deep, was highly enjoyable. The channels were awesome to float through, and the water is fresh and drinkable; there must be a huge volume to flow through those channels which are a couple of metres wide and about a metre deep. You can see fresh water bubbling up on the bottom of the ponds in small white sandy sections. The enjoyable part about floating through these channels for me was that you could completely relax and let the flow take you through, while focusing on watching the grasses, with their green and yellow colouring, and the occasional fish, crab etc. It was suggested that one day we could organise a trip to snorkel past the third pond, which is the usual exit point, to a road that crosses the channel before it goes out to sea. This is apparently two miles away, but now that we know how cold the water is and what type of gear is necessary, this would be an exciting adventure.



A View of the Bottom of Ewens Ponds

Picaninnie Ponds was not quite as clear as Ewens Ponds, and it is easy to stir up the bottom in the shallow sections which are very silty, so care is necessary when passing through these areas. The view down into the abyss was fascinating, but the hour time slot flew by too quickly and we had arrived a little late. Still, it was worth the small charge to get a permit and I would definitely do it again.

WET, WILD and maybe even WARM

Later that day we visited Sheathers cave, which took some finding. It was located in a pine forest that was in the early stages of regrowth after harvesting. I must remember the number of paces from the road and into the forest, in case our GPS system is down again. But as I am learning from seasoned cavers, the search for the cave entrance is half the fun!

My expectation of what the cave was going to be like from Thomas' description was very different to what eventuated. We took our wetsuits, and there was an expectation that we may be able to use an inflatable craft to cross the underwater lake. Unfortunately the water level was markedly increased from the last time FUSSI visited, and the right hand passage was completely blocked with water. The left passage only left "sniffing" room of six inches to a foot of air for about ten metres or so. We discussed the possible reasons for this afterwards: the fact that above ground is no longer a dense forest, only young trees, so they would not be drinking from the water table so quickly; or the extensive rains and mild summers that we have had over the last two years, with strong La Niñas. Either way, the water level is very high, so we crossed the passage on our backs with our helmets off. There was a couple of places where there was a full head space where you could bob up and take a break. Once we were past this ten metre section the passage opened up to join the right hand passage, with a metre or two head room. Thomas and I ventured through this section, where we could not touch the bottom, until the cave shallows out and ends in a dome about twenty metres or so down the passage. This leads nowhere, but there is a sump on the left which leads to a passage which runs back parallel to the first passage. This is quite spectacular as you float in water beyond your depth, and the passage disappears way down into the distance, with a few metres head room above the water.

After we got back in the evening we were fairly sure we understood from the map that this passage is over 150m long! It then doubles back to the access point of the cave. Thomas has been informed since our trip that people do this cave purely as a cave dive. Unfortunately we were getting extremely cold as our wetsuits were too thin and we had to head back.

On Sunday we again split into two groups and went down two caves; L263 Haydn's and L262 Lofty's. They are a couple of hundred metres apart close to the edge of two separate pine allotments. Thomas and Clare set up ropes and ladders, so we could climb down while being belayed. Haydn's was a bit more spectacular than Lofty's but it was great to be able to visit two caves so close together, for a different experience. The climb down the ladder into Haydn's is about ten metres or so. There is a moderate size chamber that steps down into quite a big chamber with stalactites and shawls, etc which made for good viewing.



Chris Maynard, Glove testing in L262.

WET, WILD and maybe even WARM

There are also some interesting passageways to explore if one is inclined to crawl into small spaces. Lofty's cave only required a climb down of a few metres. Once down the cave descends on a sandy slope around two sides and meets up a bit lower where we found tiny animal bones that Saz was trying to identify.

We crawled through a small smooth section with stalactites and stalagmites, and a few columns. This opened out into a cavern about ten to fifteen metres wide and three or four metres high, where previous occupants have made fires and had beers. There were some fine tree roots protruding from the ceiling as well. In the opposite direction from the entrance there was another small cavern that opened downwards where a few people could enter, but it didn't lead anywhere.

On Sunday afternoon we visited Gran Gran cave that had multiple entrances that are covered in metal grids and fenced off in an enclosure about thirty metres by thirty metres on the side of the road. The main entrance to the cave is also locked, and once you enter this, the cave opens into an impressive cavern with the other entrances in the ceiling above, letting lots of light in. We initially followed the left passage which has been flooded previously according to the map, but luckily we only had to go up to our ankles or so in mud. But coming back, there were sounds of people squelching deeper and deeper into the mud, from all the people passing through. Luckily no one sank out of sight, and we all made it back to follow a parallel passage to a large chamber with hundreds of bats sleeping on the ceiling.

Most of the group climbed up to the opposite side to explore a passage, while I, in my wisdom, followed Clare down a small passage to the right that is marked on the map to lead back to Quarry cave. We went down about twenty metres or so, until Clare squeezed through a very tight passage with the help of some interesting and colourful language. I decided not to follow, as I was at my natural limit of claustrophobia for the day (I'm quite a bit bigger than Clare as well!). Clare found a smaller cavern and a small passage, as marked, which lead down to the other cave. On our way back out of this passage we found a number of bones that looked like they may have been from multiple skeletons (we have photographs), but unfortunately neither Aleesha nor Saz were there to identify them for us. I should have looked at the skulls for clues as to what type of animal they were, as we had been discussing while in other caves.



Saz, About to get very muddy in
L60 Gran Gran Cave

When we came back into the chamber with the bats, they were swarming as it was approaching dusk; despite trying to move slowly so they would not hit us, I moved my arm too quickly and a poor little bat knocked into my arm and went splat in some fairly dry, but sticky mud. Clare was able to gently lift it from behind and it immediately flew off. Phew! I wasn't responsible for the death of a tiny defenceless flying mammal! We quietly left, and took group photographs to a spectacular sunset. We were, however, covered in mud, and bat shit – a very smelly experience.

WET, WILD and maybe even WARM



Sunset at L60 and Crazy People

Later that night a smaller group of us went for a night snorkel in Ewens Ponds, under a moon only briefly waning from full. It was very cold but thoroughly enjoyable. There were only limited lights, so I had to stick close to my buddies, but we all made it through to the last pond where we spent some time floating under the moonlight, duck diving to the bottom of the pond, and swimming underwater while looking up at the moon though the soft small ripples on the surface, which was like looking at the moon through a finely frosted glass. It was very relaxing and beautiful!

On Monday we visited Considines cave which was on a farmer's property next to a main road, and in a small grove of pine trees. I sat this cave out, but everyone else was down for an extended period, and it sounded like some very interesting caving. Our group drove back via the Coorong and we took in the sights just before sunset on a very pleasant and balmy evening.

A special thanks should go to Thomas and Clare for organising a fantastic adventurous trip away, and for sacrificing their own time at Piccaninnie Ponds to allow all of the new FUSSI members an opportunity to see this famous landmark.

People on the trip:

Trip Leaders: Clare, Thomas and Heiko.

Other Crazy People: Saz R, Joseph B-W, Ali S, Michael P, Richard B, Aleesha, Chris M, and Chris K.

CORRA-LYNN: To WOODSIDE and BACK

Margaret Ting

Members on the trip: Chris M, Joseph B-W, Matt Hammond, Margaret, Lucy Huang, Saz R, Nick Grant, David. Leaders: Clare and Thomas.

We all had an advantage on the day we attempted the Corra Lynn Cave; one-hour to be precise. Daylight savings kicked in at 3am on the 1st of April and we were all kindly reminded to set our alarm clocks (or dogs!) appropriately. After filling ourselves up with tasty pastries and lattes and dis-filling ourselves with membership fees (yes, life has its balance) at the Port Wakefield bakery at 8am, the 10 of us set off in 4 cars for the cave.

A short drive later, we arrived at the entrance. The gang gathered around Clare while she handed out helmets with strict instructions that they had to be worn so tight, they induced headaches. (A headachy caver is a better caver?) Next up, attaching the headlights to the helmets. Most seasoned cavers would carry 3 different sources of light, a headlight, and 2 torches. Evidently, batteries make the difference between life and death here. A minor crisis arose when the batteries I brought along, bought from the reject shop 2 years ago, (yes old rejects - I should have known better) proceeded to behave like rotten oranges and squished under pressure; naturally they didn't work. A caver without lights in a cave is equivalent to a

blind man (literally). Fortunately kind-hearted and also more prudent cavers brought spares and I was granted a pair of eyes to see into the cave.

We attempted 3 loops in total, 1 before and 2 after lunch. First up, the Crystal Chamber enroute to the Bush Walker's Run.

Bush Walker's Run is a misnomer. At no point in this loop were we allowed a comfortable trot, let alone a bush walker's gallop. Quickly, we established personal favourites in terms of moving through the low tunnels aplenty in this loop. Duck walks/waddles, slithering on our bellies, a leopard's crawling prowl, and my personal favourite - rolling gleefully on my sides!

Having attempted this cave last year, I came better prepared this time round, with a god-send for cavers - kneepads. Engaging in cavers geek talk, we decided that the soft volleyball kneepads that I wore were better for this Dolomite,



The Crew Map Reading, Corra-Lynn Cave

soft stone cave, as the kneepads were better shock absorbers. Hard hockey kneepads were ideal for caves where wedging in rocks was required.

We had a good time exploring the chamber and the run, learning to read maps and to lead the group through mis-turns and mis-mis-turns. One tends to lose track of distance while in a

CORRA LYNN: To WOODSIDE and BACK

cave, a 10m crawl often feels like 1km. Similarly, the concept of time is lost whilst in a cave, and without our watches, it could have felt like 12 midnight, rather than 2pm. Fortunately, our stomachs lived in the dark too, and got used to not having the sun as an indicator of time. Soon, we yielded to our stomach grumbles and decided to head out for lunch. (Thomas shouted 'There's a mutiny!' as initially the 8 of us headed towards the metal door leaving Clare and Thomas behind.)



Margaret, nearing Woodside!

After a pleasant lunch in the sun, and when we started to digest Clare's most deliciously juicy, sweet home grown cherry tomatoes, which she generously shared, we donned our helmets and overalls again and headed back into the underground playground. We attempted the Rope Crevasse this time. This involved descending a narrow rocky vertical chimney, roughly 2 stories high, with the help of a rope, upper body strength, wedging skills and courage. This was done one at the time, and cavers rested at the base of the crevasse while awaiting the rest

to descend. The scene, with several resting bodies eagle-sprawled out at the base of the crevasse made me think a massacre occurred, and it was hilarious, the conversation we had later (think the dead-talking).



The Happy Crew

CORRA LYNN: To WOODSIDE and BACK

Thereafter, we attempted the Beard's Squeeze and to balance the descent, an ascent to get us out of the bottom of Woodside. Beard's Squeeze was, as its name suggests, a real squeeze. Thankfully, none of us had beards, and we all managed to squeeze through successfully. The climb out of Woodside was an almost vertical, roughly 2 story high, slippery upward climb. Joseph somehow managed to free-climb this piece of rock (Spiderman!) and assisted in securing a set of seatbelt made etriers, which greatly helped all of us up this climb. Several 'I-wish-I-could-fly' sentiments were expressed prior to the helpful rope system being established. Team work was crucial here with members who already climbed up helping to stabilize the all important etriers and another member anchoring a second safety tail. Of course, bring handed Snakes once we reached the top motivated all of us too!

After this ascent, it was time to exit the cave. A Barking Gecko, *Neprurus milii*, bade us farewell as we crawled out of Corra-Lynn. The day ended with a few group shots, taken on a self-timer on my camera balanced on the car bonnet, with the sunset as the background. (It was remarked that no one could escape from my camera - they were either in a cave with no room to escape, or too tired to resist a picture, once out of the cave. I have to admit I was a little trigger happy!). We drove back at around 6pm, with not too many bruises hopefully, a bag full of muddy clothes, newly formed friends, and the sun setting behind us. It was a beautiful scene, and an expedition whose memories of it shall remain rock solid in my mind! (pun intended).

GEAR REVIEW: BLACK DIAMOND ICON HEAD TORCH

Clare Buswell

Caving lights go through hell: they get bashed up by falling rocks, pushed around in tight squeezes, covered in mud, dust and water. Yet, they still have to work and really let you see what is going on. A light (and helmet) is THE most important piece of cave gear, so here is a review of a recent addition in the market.

Specs: Runs on 4 AA batteries. Has 1 (QuadPower) spot LED with adjustable focus, two low beam LEDs and 2 red LEDs so you can see animals at night. Lumens: 200. But that is not the total story. The SinglePower LEDs run at 35 lumens (claimed) throwing light for possibly 10m. It has 4 operational modes: Hi, Lo, Strobe, Red and Lock and is waterproof to 1m. Cost R/R \$100 approx.

The modes are operated by holding down the on/off button for varying lengths of time, 3-6 seconds. This was found to be a frustrating process where you ended up working your way



through all of the various mode options looking for the main gig. The on/off button is on the top of the light box, rather than on the bottom as is the case with the Princeton Tec Apex for example. This makes for easy access.

GEAR REVIEW: BLACK DIAMOND ICON HEAD TORCH

The battery case is made of hard plastic with a metal clip that operates a plastic tongue which opens the case. Grasping the metal clip with a gloved, muddy finger could be interesting but was not tested in the dry, dusty cave we were in. The low beam power was disappointing to say the least. It seemed to simply put out a light of about one candle power, rather than the claimed 35 lumens. As a result, you had to run the light on high beam all the time so see where you were going. That at least saved you from all the frustration of working your way through all the modes to get what you wanted!

The light's harness strapping is difficult to clean in that it cannot be totally disconnected from the battery pack. So unlike the harness strapping on Petzels' or Apexs' you can't take it off and chuck it in the washing machine along with all the other bits of caving gear that get this sort of clean. You have to get out the scrubbing brush and do it the hard way.

Caving lights that have small diameter and thinly protected cabling have been shown to be prone to wear and breakage at sharp bend points. This light's wiring is stiff and, due to the 90 degree angle where it connects onto the battery, will, I think, over time end up broken. This is despite the attempt to make it secure onto the harness strapping at this point. The problem is exacerbated by the undoing of the battery pack to put in new batteries. It means you are effectively bending the wire back and forth on itself. The wiring then coils around the side of the helmet so that it has enough reach, as the elastic harness is stretched to fit onto the helmet. That idea is a good one, but I'm not sure how long it will last in a caving environment.



As for water resistance, I can't tell as we did not test for it. The 'O' ring that is present to keep the water out of the battery pack is really a moulded bit of rubber rather than a replaceable ring. At least you can't lose it when you open the battery pack!

Would I have this light as a main *caving* light? No. Would I have it as a spare or *back-up caving* light? No, as there are better options around and it is barely adequate.

WHAT'S ON

Lower Flinders	May 18–20 th	Clare co-ordinating.
General Meeting	May 24 th	Guest speaker. Caves of the Northern Territory. 6 pm Rm 241. SSN. Wine and cheese provided.
Flinders. Cave exploration	June 8–12 th	(Tentative at the moment).
Uni Exams Period. 26 th June – 6 th July		
Corra-Lynn trip:	Sun. July 8 th	Search and Rescue Practice.

Flinders Uni Semester Break July 7th – 23rd July.