



FUSSI Newsletter

Vol. 24 | No. 4 | 2012



Pretty Things in Tailender, Mole Creek. Tasmania

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Front Cover Photo:

Speleothems: Tailender Cave,
Mole Creek.

Web address: www.FUSSI.org.au

Front Cover Photo Credit:

Thomas Varga.

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ON THE ART TRAIL IN THE LOWER FLINDERS

Clare Buswell

Some of us noted, as we unpacked the dust-riddled gear from the Nullarbor trip, that a trip to the Flinders in mid-Oct to collect bat data, was going to be organised. 'Really', we said to ourselves, and continued scrubbing crate loads of stuff that somehow or other had made its way onto the Nullarbor trailer! Did we really take all that stuff!

Time passed and a couple of FUSSI reprobates attended a lecture on "Cave Art, Philosophy and Perception", at Flinders Uni. The lecture given by Prof. Mats Rosengren, Professor of Rhetoric from Södertörn University, Sweden, was wide ranging, moving from Plato to the cave art of Niaux, Lascaux, and Chauvet caves to name a few. The result of the lecture was that the two FUSSI bods took pity on the poor academic who had only the cave art of Europe to examine, and asked if he would like to visit some Aboriginal art sites. A reply in the affirmative saw 6 of us trundle up to Bagalowie hut on the Friday night, via the Clare Valley, for a weekend of examining cave/rock art; and some caving just for a change.

To be fair, we had tried to see if we could arrange a visit to cave art sites in the Mt Gambier area, but time and logistics conspired against that plan despite the best efforts of Kevin Mott and Ian Lewis. Thanks for your efforts guys.

The Saturday morning saw a late gathering of the crew, who, the preceding night, decided that going to bed any time before 2.30am was uncool. I mean we had some serious talking to do concerning the climatic culture shock between Sweden (wet, cold, snow, shortage of daylight), and the Flinders Ranges (hot, dry, dusty and fly-ridden for starters). We then moved onto the plight of academia and finally to solving the worlds philosophical problems (which we did, but we promised Mats not to tell anyone). So the morning coffee was consumed by some, whilst others yearned for some concoction known as a Latté. Rule number one, if you are going to do drugs, do them pure, grow your own Anyway, coffee was followed by the rude the discovery of a flat tyre on the mighty Yaris hire car ...

We eventually made our way to Yourambulla Caves to look at the aboriginal art painted high up on some of the cliffs. There are 3 sites here, which are important to the Adnyamathanha culture and people of the Flinders Ranges. This aboriginal rock art site, and that found at Arkaroo Rock further south, contain art work executed with manganese, charcoal and red and white ochres. The artwork at Arkaroo Rock is purported to be 5000 year old.¹ The motifs depict the animal tracks of emus and kangaroos, hand stencils, patterns and ceremonies. The name Yourambulla refers to the two peaks to the East of the caves which represent two ancestral companions who camped near here while traveling in the Dreamtime/Creation time. The northern peak represents the Ararru man and the southern peak Mathari.



Access to site one, Yourambulla Caves
Photo: C. Buswell

¹ See Flood Josephine, *Archaeology of the Dreamtime: the story of prehistoric Australia and its people*. Marlestone, Adelaide. J. B. Publishing. 2004.

ON THE ART TRAIL IN THE LOWER FLINDERS

The walk up the hill and to visit all 3 sites takes about 2 hours or so depending on how long you want to spend taking photos and taking in the view. As you can see from the above photo, the sites are protected with sturdy steel and wire as in the past there has been some serious damage done to the drawings. Good interpretive signs are found at all the sites, and you can spend considerable time working out what the drawings mean.

What struck me though, having visited Niaux Cave in southern France and looked at that other cave art work in France, is the very different style of Aboriginal rock art. In the Flinders we do not see paintings of animals, but depictions of the trails that they make. In the Northern Territory we see 'spirit paintings'.² In the Lower South-East cave rock art we see a range of petroglyphs.³ In both Australian and European cave art you see hand stencils, think of those found in Koonalda Cave on the Nullarbor, and in Chauvet cave in France. Think also of the explanation given about one hand stencil in Herzog's film, "Cave of Forgotten Dreams". The rock art world is rife with discussions as to how old Australian rock art is, arguing that the lack of depictions of mega fauna, provide 'evidence' that aboriginal is relatively recent. Others argue that this is certainly not the case.⁴

However, such debates did not spring to mind as we looked at the art work and pondered what it all means. As if we could really know! We wondered about and generally enjoyed ourselves despite the heat. Lots of photos and discussions on cave art and aboriginal history in the area occurred. As we trundled back to our cars we met a tour group of 10 or so people at the last site. Shows how popular the area is. We adjourned to Hawker for a late lunch and to bid a fond farewell to our guests from Sweden. They assured us that as they had only 4 days remaining in the country, getting out of Adelaide with a bunch of mad cavers was a highlight. We wished them well.

Back to the serious business of caving, we elected to take Gabby into Clara St Dora Cave for her first below ground cave experience. She excelled herself and had a grand old time, crawling, squeezing and finally looking at some great speleothems. The following day we trundled off to Mairs cave and did our usual up and down ropes and ladders and continued to get Gabby lost and found.

We collected bat data from the two nights we were there and it shows the usual collection of species although not in large numbers. We used the usual sites, just west of the hut and the shaft entrance of Clara St Dora. On the Friday night we recorded three calls from *Tadarida australis* and *Nyctophilus geoffroyi*. On the Saturday night we recorded 40 calls of the following species: *Tadarida australis*, *Chalinolobus gouldii*, *Vespadelus baverstocki* and probably *Nyctophilus geoffroyi* and a couple that were not identifiable. The data is held by the South Australian Museum.

A great and different weekend. In respect to aboriginal cultures and the Adnyamathanha people, no depictions of the aboriginal art we viewed is reproduced here. If you wish to view the art work then search the web.

² See for example: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradshaw_rock_paintings.

³ Bednarik Robert G., Aslin D. Geoffrey & Bednarik Elfriede, The Cave Petroglyphs of Australia. Cave Art Research. 2003. Vol. 3. p. 1-7. <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/cara13/web/index.html>

⁴ Akerman K. & Willing T., An ancient rock painting of a marsupial lion, *Thylacoleo carnifex* from the Kimberley, Western Australia. Antiquity. Vol. 83. No. 319. March 2009. See: www.antiquity.ac.uk/projgall/akerman319/

CAVE SURVEY COURSE, BUNGONIA NSW, OCTOBER 2012

Thomas Varga

I will start by admitting that I love maps. I can stare at maps for hours, trying to decode the meaning of the various coloured areas, imagining the terrain changes based on the contour lines, following the continuous blue lines that indicate rivers and creeks and then the black ones that depict roads or railways. Thus when I learnt that HCG and Hills Speleos were putting on a cave survey course with the promised outcome of making our own map of a cave I was sold. I would get to experience the process involved in actually making a map. My enthusiasm must have been contagious as Clare also agreed to come along for the course. Hence we put our names down for the March three day course and booked flights to Sydney.

The Carto-gods were not in favour of the idea however as there was not enough interest nearing the course date and consequently the course got pushed back to October and advertised as a two day course instead. After some frantic dealings with airline companies we were set – again – to attend the course.

October finally came and with it the good news that the course was going to proceed based on the numbers attending. So after work on a Friday afternoon I embarked the plane to Sydney. Clare had already left earlier and was going to meet up with Joe and then pick me up at the airport. Joe was our chauffeur, caterer, organiser and all-around make-things-happen person for the weekend. After a hassle-free meet-up at the airport we made a side trip to pick up Al and then make our way to Bungonia.

It was dark by the time I arrived to Sydney so did not get to do much sightseeing along the way. Instead we had lively discussions about various topics. One thing that stuck out to me was that earlier in the morning there was snow in a nearby region ... Eventually we arrived at the Bungonia campsite and started putting up the tent that Joe had kindly brought along for us. After the usual rituals of arriving in dark to an unknown place we were finally in our sleeping bags.

The night passed with a familiar 'maybe it would be warmer on my right side – maybe it would be warmer on my left – on my back – on my stomach – flat – curled up' type routine. By morning I knew that neither worked. The miseries of the night were quickly alleviated by the scrumptious breakfast cooked up by Joe and warm sunshine promising a pleasant day.



A classroom session. Photo: Joe Sydney

With bellies warmed by food and hands by hot tea/coffee mugs we started the course proper. There were about a dozen attendees, including our three instructors. Introductions were made and an outline of the course was given. Our instructors took turns presenting the various topics involved with the odd break allowing the grey cells to have a breather and catch up on nutrients – courtesy of Joe providing an assortment of nibbles each time.

We started from the basics and worked up from there. We discussed

the various types of surveys and maps, plus the goals of doing them in the first place. We looked at the instruments involved and discussed the merits of using simple, low key ones as well as more complex tools. Then we delved into the process of performing an imaginary

CAVE SURVEY COURSE, BUNGONIA NSW, OCTOBER 2012

survey in a cave and how and what data to record. We then concluded by looking at how this all comes together on a map.

The delivery was well-paced but we did not feel rushed, there was always time and the possibility to go back and review a point that one of us may have missed or if something needed more clarification. Given that this was a weekend introductory course I think the depth and scope of the material presented was sufficient. The instructors were very knowledgeable in their fields and had ample experience that they could draw from (no pun intended) and share the odd anecdote how a certain problem was overcome in a real-life survey scenario. While there was a curriculum that we were going through and a previously laid out agenda the entire course was quite informal and in some cases turned into a two-way discussion instead of a one-way delivery of a topic.



Reading instruments. Photo: Thomas Varga

After lunch we all went to Grill Cave to put our recently acquired theoretical knowledge into practice. We split up into two groups with one group surveying the top level chamber while the second group followed the passage and surveyed that. It was a rude awakening that performing a real survey was harder than originally anticipated. While it may sound easy to 'run a survey line, record the Left, Right Up Down, (LRUD), sketch the surroundings and move on' in reality there are many hurdles that the budding cartographer needs to contend with. Luckily instructors were at hand and gave the odd nudge when things slowed down as well as passing on some tips and tricks that made life easier.

After emerging back into sunshine we made our way back to camp. There were discussions about whose survey 'closed' and how things would have been done differently a second time.



In the field, using the Plane Table and Forestry Compass. Photo: T Varga.

An early dinner was followed by presentations on using software to process survey data. We got introduced to some of the utilities available and what they are capable of. The highlight then was to enter our own data and see what the computer made of it. (Another 'I thought this was going to be easier' moment.) After some social – but mainly surveying related – discussions everyone slowly retreated for the night.

The second day had a similar structure to the first one. Thawing out followed by an abundance of

CAVE SURVEY COURSE, BUNGONIA NSW, OCTOBER 2012

food for breakfast and then into the course. We looked at the uses of the forestry compass and plane table for both above and under ground surveying purposes. After the theory delivery we wandered out into the bush, split into groups and took turns in using both devices to survey a designated area. It was good exposure to see and use different equipment in practice and have them in our arsenal for future use.

After lunch we did some course debriefing and started tidying and packing up. Clare and I had a bit of extra time till our plane left so Joe took us on a sightseeing trip around Bungonia, to the lookout and also to some cave entrances. After a pleasant drive back (where I got to see where we were going this time) we arrived back to airport and said goodbye to Joe and Al.

I would like to thank the Highland Caving Group and Hills Speleos for putting on a quality course. I would strongly recommend attending future courses by anyone who has a remote interest in mapping or surveying a cave. Also, many thanks to Joe who lent us various pieces of camping gear, organised the logistics of the course, shuttled us to and from the airport and for being a great host.



Inspecting the Entrance to Drum Cave.
Photo: J. Sydney.

MEMBERSHIP FEES 2013

Membership fees are due 1st of Jan. All fees are valid for the calendar year, except the Introductory ASF fee.

Adult:	ASF \$68.00	+ FUSSI fee \$20.00	TOTAL: \$88.00
Family:	ASF \$117.00	+ FUSSI fee \$20.00	TOTAL: \$137.00
Student:	ASF \$49.00	+ FUSSI fee \$20.00	TOTAL: \$69.00
Life member active:	ASF: \$68.00	+ FUSSI fee \$20.00	TOTAL: \$88.00
Introductory 3 mths only	ASF: \$30.00	+ FUSSI fee \$20.00	TOTAL: \$50.00

You can pay by direct deposit into the FUSSI bank account. Ask the FUSSI treasurer for details. Via: fussi@fussi.org.au Or bring hard currency to a meeting or a trip.

Note your personal details **must** be provided to the Club Secretary **3 days before any trip** so you are covered by insurance provided by the Australian Speleological Federation. You should also note that your details will be placed on the ASF database. In return, you will receive the ASF newsletter, *Caves Australia*. Your details will not be passed to any other organization, corporation, politician, parole officer or tax haven.

TRIPPING AROUND MOLE CREEK

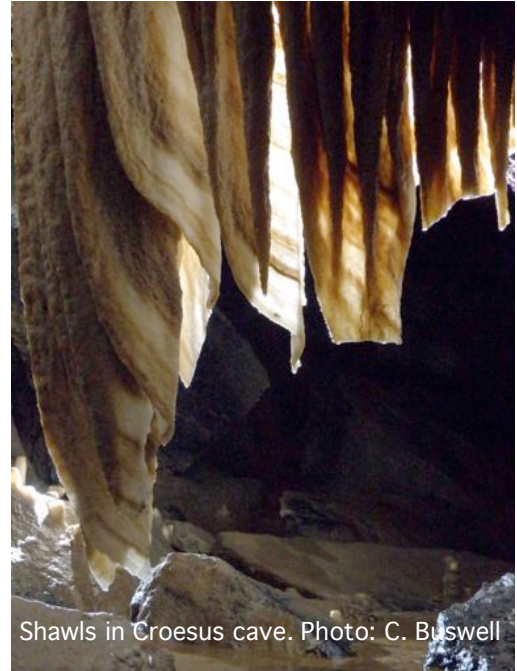
Heiko Maurer

Someone, who shall be nameless, but may be of the Aquarian persuasion, thought a weekend visit to Tasmania a good idea and suggested Dec 14-17 as the "ideal time". And so it came to pass.

We (four of us) caught the Friday 6am flight to Melbourne and from there a flight to Launceston. We met a fellow looney (Sil, from Melbourne - VSA,) in Launceston, picked up a hire car, did lunch and shopping in Deloraine, checked into the Mole Creek caravan park, drove to the Croesus Cave car park via the National Parks office to pick up the key, got changed and were in the cave by 3pm. Croesus is a walking stream passage - easy going, but your feet are constantly in 4-5 degree cold water, with the occasional waist-deep wade. But we had suitable gear (wetsuits, thermal underwear and 'SharkSkin' garments) to keep us warm and comfortable. We explored as much as we wanted and were out of the cave and in the Mole Creek pub by 8:03pm to have a meal. The kitchen closed at 8:00pm, but they were kind enough to let us eat anyway. A very good day.

That night it rained (about 30mm) and the next morning we were a bit slow to get started - breakfast, gear clean, and general chatting. So we didn't get away till near lunchtime. First stop was a cup of coffee, return the Croesus key and pick up the keys for the day's cave and then we went in search of that cave: Tailender. We had been to Croesus before (so it was trivial to find), but not to Tailender. But we had clear instructions, and they proved adequate.

However, the lock on the gate to the cave was more



Shawls in Croesus cave. Photo: C. Buswell



Upper level, Tailender. Photo: C. Buswell

difficult (since it is designed to be awkward in order to stop - or at least slow - unauthorised people from breaking it and entering the cave) to open, as it is in a wet and hence corrosive environment. We all tried to open it, but four of us failed and only the fifth person, Sil, with her magic touch, managed to open it. (She heated both the lock and the key with her cigarette lighter. This is after we had flushed out the lock with air via the use of a syringe to push the water out.) Meanwhile, while we were waiting outside the entrance, the leeches came looking for blood and I got bitten twice (the bites have just stopped itching as I write this) - very annoying, especially as nobody else got bitten all weekend.

We had several descriptions of the cave, but they were ambiguous. The cave is another stream passage, but much, much smaller than Croesus, and we were forced to crouch or crawl on hands and knees, and sometimes on our bellies. Very odd for Tassie caves! It was also drier, but much muddier which made things disconcertingly slippery at times. It always

takes a little 'acclimatization' to get a 'feel' for a cave, and with the conflicting instructions that we had, we took too long a time to find the way on as the obvious way was across some very

TRIPPING AROUND MOLE CREEK

specky flow stone! So we decided to abandon our efforts for the day and return to our caravan park cabin, clean up, eat and try again the next day. Sil cooked a fine pasta meal for us and we slept well.

The next day, Sunday, we were up by 7 and in the cave by 9:30. This time there was no problem and we negotiated the 200m or so of stream passage quickly and easily. (Think low tunnel, hands and knees crawl rather than open stream passage like Croesus.) At the end of the stream passage is an 8m wall which we had to climb. Local cavers had rigged a rope which we used, together with our ascending gear, to get up the wall. This was a slow process because everybody had to get dressed in the right gear and, of course, there was only one person on the rope at a time. From here on in, the cave was very extensively and beautifully decorated with many fine and delicate crystal formations. There were tubs of water (!!?) Somewhat unlike our typical Flinders Ranges caves!) with scrubbing brushes to clean boots off of mud which was abundant, particularly in the end of the cave. The idea is to not cover the clean, mud-free formations with the mud picked up from muddy parts of the cave. There were also a few tight spots to negotiate and one traverse along a sloping wall beside a deepish water pool.

But we negotiated it all without incident and were out by 5:30. I had help from my companions who carried (or dragged it behind them in the crawling sections in a 'dog' bag) my gear for me – thank you!. An excellent cave: Sporty and rewarding! What more could you want?

We washed gear and Clare and I cooked a meal. Afterwards we were joined by a Swiss couple (from St. Gallen) who were visiting the area to also cave in Croesus and Lynnds. They brought some Swiss chocolates with them and we talked long into the night. We supplied them with wetsuits, gloves, etc. to make their visit as comfortable as possible. As we were to leave the next day and they were heading for Adelaide after Tasmania, we exchanged phone numbers and addresses and caught up with them when they got here after cave diving in the Mt Gambier area and before heading for Wilpena.



The Crew in Tailender. Photo. C. Buswell

On the Monday, we swiftly packed up, had another coffee at the Maracoopa café and prepared for going into Maracoopa cave. This is a commercial, tourist cave and we were to follow the last group in (but keeping out of sight) and then climb over the railings and go to the non-tourist parts of the cave. Well, things went wrong from the start and we got caught between two (the second was a private tour that the guides had 'forgotten') groups. When we got to the jump-off point, the climb down the wall on the other side of the railings was too tricky for Clare (although she'd done it at least three or four times before) to negotiate, so we called the trip off, and instead killed some time, visiting a raspberry farm, a cheese factory and an art gallery, before catching the 5pm flight back home. A bit of an anti-climax of a day but a fine weekend of caving with a national and an international flavour nevertheless. We will do it all again real soon.

WHAT IS ON

Flinders Uni End of Year Break

Trogalong*	Jan 6 th -11 th	ASF National Conference. NSW. A must go to! Travel, meet new people and go CAVING! www.asfconference.org.au/2013
Jan 2013	19/20 th	Lower South East. Caves to be decided, dependent on fire danger. Expect wet & mud. Clare co-ordinating.

Semester One starts: 25th Feb

Fairday	Feb 27 th	Main Campus. Flinders Uni. 10 - 2.30pm. Sell caving on campus. Put your name on the roster. All help needed. Contact Bronya.
March	9-11 th	Wet and wild trip. BYO wet suit. Ewan's ponds and others. Thomas co-ordinating.
Easter trip.	29 March -1 April	Flinders Ranges. Exploration. Cave surveying and lots and lots of walking. BYO tent, boots, backpack. Heiko co-ordinating.
April	Sun 14 th	One Day trip, Corra Lynn. Clare Coordinating.

Mid Semester Break 13 -28 April

FUSSI AGM.	May 23 rd .	On campus. More details later.
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Other Events of Interest.

20th ACKMA Cave Management Conference 12 - 18 May, 2013. Waitomo Caves, NZ.
For details: <http://www.ackma.org/>

16th International Congress of Speleology Brno, Czech Republic July 21 - 28, 2013 For details: <http://www.speleo2013.com/>

For the FUSSI long term calendar:
Hang Son Doong and others, Vietnam. Late Oct 2014.