



FUSSI

Newsletter



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Speleothems: In a Rift. S102
Cave. Naracoorte.

Front Cover Photo Credit:

Neville Skinner.

All photos in the article "The Re Stuff is Back", are by Neville Skinner.

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THE APPRENTICE CAVER

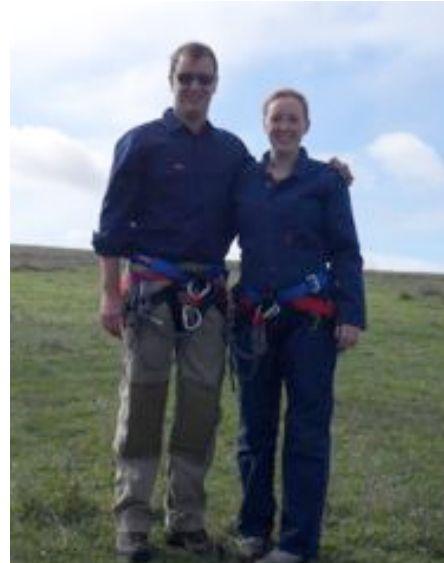
Clare Houston

When it was first suggested to me by my other half Brad about going for a weekend of caving I had 2 thoughts, the first was how cool it would be to say I've been caving all weekend, and the second being - tight spaces for hours on end, what if I panic??

Having only experienced caving twice in my life once when I was about ten years old going on a school trip in Northern Ireland to see the Marble Arch caves and second was this year when I was on holiday and happened to visit Stick-Tomato cave in Naracoorte. Both were a pleasurable experience but both were well rehearsed guided tours that had been tried and tested for several years. This potential weekend however was semi-rehearsed but we were told we could be venturing into some uncharted territory, a scary thought for a novice.

Regardless, my mind was thinking about all the worst possible scenarios but then a change of heart came I thought about all the positives this trip could bring. I started thinking of the experience I could have and the fact that it definitely be something I would probably never experience again. Emails I received from Clare and Thomas also added reassurance that they were experienced cavers and knew what they were doing. So with that in mind we jumped in the car on Friday after work and headed to Naracoorte for a weekend of adventure.

On Friday night we arrived at the cabin to be greeted by Neville who had the heating on (thank goodness) and informed us that the rest of the crew were on their way. We all headed to bed and woke the next morning to find 3 extra people in the cabin.



Brad and I ready for S102

Saturday Morning consisted of 2 main things: getting our equipment and clothing sorted and also making sure we had enough time to head to the patisserie to get some good coffee and chocolate croissants, ummm chocolate croissants!!! Both of which I now agree are a must for caving.



Thomas and Neville ready for the descent

S102 & Beekeepers

So off we headed in convoy to our first cave, S102. Situated in the middle of a cattle field my first thought was how do we get in, then Thomas produced ropes, harnesses and a steel ladder, my question was answered without me even asking.

We harnessed up, Thomas sorted the ropes, Heiko arranged a return time and Neville was the first to go down, followed by me. Having done wall climbing and abseiling before made me comfortable about going down the hole. The ladder took a little bit of getting used to but once Neville started explaining from below about how to work the ladder it became much easier. I went down about 7-8m and then

THE APPRENTICE CAVER

Clare Houston

the hole became tighter. And when I say tighter I mean it was hard to bend your knees, but still I wasn't panicking and was happy to head on down into the cave.

Once we all got into the cave we then started our two hour exploration of the cave. I have to admit some of the chambers were fantastic to look at and worth the climb down. There were some tight spots to shift through but Thomas and Neville were very calm and gave brilliant instructions so you knew what was coming and there was never any need to panic. While down there Neville and Thomas did a little bit of exploring while me and Brad could have a look around the chambers and take a few photos. It was also nice to just sit and relax as caving can be quite physical with crawling, pulling and climbing through the rocks. It is also pretty warm down there so limited clothing is a must under your overalls.

Time definitely escapes you when caving so before we knew it we had to head back before Heiko would start looking for us.

The climb up, I'm not going to lie, was tough. As a novice it took a while to get used to but by the time I had figured out the best way to climb my arms were on fire, my hands were cramping and my legs may as well have not been there. But I made it and have never felt so knackered in my life, the smile on my face as I reached the top I'm sure was priceless.

Thinking that that was it for the day Thomas and Neville then tell us we have the opportunity to go and visit another cave called Beekeepers. Still feeling exhausted we headed over to have a look and decided to do down. I was dreading another ladder climb but was assured it



Brad taking on the steel ladder



What we found under ground

was much shorter and if I didn't want to do it that was fine.

Being a redhead I decided to go down and I'm so glad I did. Indeed the ladder was much shorter and I found it much easier

due to already experiencing it earlier in the day. Again the entrance was tight but once in we came across something extraordinary, animal skeletons, a nest and also 2 animal carcasses that had dried out and were still intact. It was fantastic to see how nature can be so different above and below ground.

This time we only had about an hour and a half but we managed to cover a lot of ground as Brad and I were a bit more confident, so Neville and Thomas pushed us a bit more. It was great fun and I was surprised how much I loved crawling through the tight spaces. Again before we knew it time had run out so back we headed. This time getting out was much easier and I felt like Spiderman flying up the ladder.



A new cave feature!

THE APPRENTICE CAVER

Clare Houston

Once we returned back to the cabin I have never been so glad to have a shower. Dinner at a local pub was great and in the evening Mark give us a very interesting talk on caves in Spain he had visited last year. You may think, ahhh a talk, how boring, but as a novice it was great to see how caves are mapped, what other caves can look like i.e. waterfalls underground and also how caving has evolved over the years. Bed was followed very swiftly after cake and a chat.

Fox Cave & Survey Work



Sunday morning, my arms hurt, my legs hurt, I was covered in random bruises but was still excited about the last cave of the weekend, Fox Cave. We headed to Naracoorte Caves head office and to my surprise Frank, my original guide when I first went to Naracoorte was again my guide for Fox cave. Today was different, as a group we were going there to help with some surveying work. After a crash course in the use of Radio Direction Frequency, (RDF, Aka, radar,) we headed to the opening of Fox Cave which to my surprise we could actually walk down into, no ladders required.

Once in, it was very tight to get through some of the rocks before we hit our first chamber. This cave had been explored extensively and we were able to see fossils and beautiful stictites in different chambers. One of the great sights was seeing tree roots growing straight through a chamber. Again, this was another fantastic opportunity to see how nature works underground. But we had to remember we were here to work so we split up into our relevant groups and away we went. Thomas and I headed to a tunnel to set up a radio device. At the time we didn't think it had worked but once we returned to the surface we realised that they heard us loud and clear and we managed to get a good bit of survey work completed.



It was now time to head home. After a quick debrief and a spot of late lunch it was time to say our goodbyes.

My Overall Experience

As a Novice Caver I can honestly say I enjoyed every moment of the weekend. The FUSSI crew we were with were friendly and knowledgeable. We had great fun in the caves taking nonsense and having a giggle. I had it in my head that caving was all about being in tight spaces but I couldn't be more wrong. Yes, there is an element of crawling through tight spaces but the majority of it is experiencing how nature has created a second world underneath us and appreciating and preserving this world for the future. I will certainly be going caving again thanks to a really good schooling in becoming a caver.

IN THE NEWS

Press release from the SA Government.



Saturday 22 June, 2013

The iconic Nullarbor Plain has received South Australia's highest level of conservation protection.

The State Government has proclaimed the region a Wilderness Protection Area, Doubling to 1.8 million hectares the amount of land now protected under the Wilderness Protection Act.

Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Minister, Ian Hunter, says, the "new Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area has been created using 900,000 ha of land from the former Nullarbor National Park, and a portion of the Nullarbor Regional Reserve."

"This is a vast and beautiful stretch of our State that extends about 300km east from Western Australian border." He says.

"It's an iconic South Australian landscape, with open, flat plains and spectacular cliffs, it's also one of the largest semi-arid karst environments in the world, (landscapes that are formed by the dissolution of soluble rocks such as limestone and feature caves and sinkholes)

"About 390 species of plant and 160 species of animals live in this region, and will benefit from the increased protection – including rare species such as the slender-billed Thornbill, the Australian Bustard and the Nullarbor daisy."

Minister Hunter says when Labour came to government in South Australia in 2002, just 70,000ha of South Australia had Wilderness Protection status.

"We are extremely proud as a government to have given the highest level of protection to more than 1.73 million hectares of land." He says.

"The Nullarbor has long been a popular tourist destination, and this proclamation guarantees that future generations of South Australians and visitors will be able to continue to enjoy it."

The Wilderness Society's South Australian Campaign Manager, Peter Owen, has welcomed the proclamation of the internationally iconic Nullarbor.

"The Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area will cover 900,000ha, the same size as the famous Yellowstone National Park in the USA, making this a grand initiative," he says.

"The spectacular Bunda Cliffs are protected within the area, and when connected to the Great Australian Bight Marine Park, it creates a land and sea conservation estate of global significance."

IN THE NEWS

“Land that meets the wilderness criteria to an extent sufficient to warrant such protection is usually, but not exclusively in a remote location with limited access.”

It continues to be open for tourism.

The proclamation of the Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area is consistent with the objective of conserving the full range of South Australian ecosystems in Conserving Nature 2012-2020: A strategy for establishing a system of protected areas in South Australia.

THE RE STUFF IS BACK!

Clare Buswell

It was agreed that another trip into Mt Remarkable Blow Hole was needed to knock the vertical rust of a couple of us and to bring Neville up to speed with of the re belay, re direction, re stuff. So Thomas had the rigging job, Clare had the first rebelay teaching job, and Neville had to work out all the techno babble we talked about, and not kill himself in the process.



We organised the line into the cave and got our gear organized at which point, Clare broke an arm off her glasses. Out came first aid kits and the three of us proceeded to use leukoplast, steri-strips and bits of string to ‘glue’ the busted arm back and tie them onto Clare’s helmet and overalls.

It had rained heavily the previous couple of days and the entrance pitch was damp. Thomas found out just how damp when he attempted to tie in the rope to the thread at the top of the first pitch. His foot touched a rock the size of a soccer ball which then proceeded to fall all the way down the narrow shaft of 48 m that makes up this cave. He then spent about 20 minutes gardening, so as to shift all the smaller bits of rock that would also end up down the shaft hitting anybody who happened to be on a rope. In this narrow shaft there is no place to get out of the way until you are down the bottom and even then you have to take refuge well

away from the shatter area.

After about 40 minutes Thomas had managed to rig the joint and Neville’s education began. Clare talked him through clipping cows tails into bolts, changing descending devices from up ropes to down ropes, unclipping cowstails, checking all was safe and then moving on. He crossed the rebelay easily, facilitated by a ledge that you can stand on to get your weight off all your cow’s tails. This is followed by a simple redirection then two rope protectors. The

THE RE STUFF IS BACK!

redirection is in a narrow slot and the rope protectors in a chimney so you can support yourself against a wall whilst you clip stuff here and there, gravity does assist in this process.

We had placed a second rope down the pitch so that Thomas could hang about on a ledge about six feet from the last rebelay and talk Neville through the process for a second time. This rebelay is in 'space' so you have nothing to stand on to take any weight off bolts or ropes, thus making manoeuvring gear more difficult. For all of us who do this sort of thing all the time, it poses no problems but just remember the FIRST time you did it! Neville passed the rebelay, taking his time and at the bottom of the pitch, yelled off rope and hid in the nearest safe place. Clare descended and Thomas then changed ropes, crossed the bottom rebelay and joined us at the bottom of the pitch.

Ascending ropes with rebelay en-route is always fun, Neville just needed to remember to place his Croll on the up rope at the rebelay first, NOT his foot ascender. Thomas ascended first, and hang around on his ledge again and talked Neville through the process. All went well.



Clare brought up the rear, derigging as she went. We managed to get out on dark, pack our gear and then to get slightly lost walking back to the car. Now we had done the get lost bit on a previous trip to this cave, this time however, some bright spark decided to GPS the car location. So after a short detour down into a gully we retraced our steps and found our way back to the car. Thomas and Neville then proceeded to derig Clare's broken/glued/ strung up glasses from her helmet and overalls so we could pack up and head to the local pub.

It was a good trip, all learnt something and Neville is keen for more! We did however leave one steel screw gate karabiner either in the cave or near the entrance. It is marked with red paint and/or has 'FUSSI' etched on it. If anyone finds it, please return.

FUSSI Executive Meeting, 10:30am, Jun 29 2013. Mylor Café

Agenda:

1. Welcome, coffee & cakes.
2. Thomas's birthday
 - a. A big cheer for Thomas!
3. Treasurer's report
 - a. Grants. Clare stated that we need a stat dec (signed by a JP) stating that we will not spend da dosh on Political parties. All grant applications must be on cellulose technology. Clare has two signed Stat declarations. Clare has applied for a grant \$100, available for Fair Day attendance, but to get that amount we need to

EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES

supply receipts. Thomas is to check through the pile of receipts. Total grants applied for is \$450.00 for the first semester of this year. We can apply for more in the 2nd semester. Need to have this done ASAP as there is a 1 month deadline to get them in.

- b. Two lights were purchased from these funds, as two more (!) of the Princeton Apex's have died. Clare has bought two Black Diamond Icon (200 lumens) light @ \$110 ea. retail, but the lovely Scout shop sold it to us for \$66 ea.
 - c. Clare & Heiko looked at the Disto X310 (\$385). Heiko felt the lack of a compass was a serious disincentive. They will look OS and see what is on the market.
 - d. \$500 grant is available for an on-campus event, such as paying somebody to staff a stall for a week. It was felt this was a good way of recruiting. We need a caver to do this. Edwina, Mark S.? Jumping off the foot bridge was not seen as good way of getting this money.
 - e. Harnesses. Clare has asked 'the lovely Jamie' to investigate harnesses that are 'pre-buckled' á la Neville S. Two to four required. Price to come.
 - f. \$500 in petty cash, down from \$846.00 at the May AGM. \$6-700 in Blackwood acc and \$1500.00 in Hutt St account, \$5,000 in term deposit. Good to keep some petty cash, but put some of it into the bank and move another \$1000 to be transferred to term deposit which falls due soon.
 - g. ASF fees have not yet been paid! The meeting chastised the treasurer for not paying the ASF fees, due in March. He has started the process.... (Fees now paid! Yay to treasurer!)
4. FUSSI Web site.
- a. Links to T. Aberdeen's site was put in under "Other" as it was felt his was a quasi commercial site. Approved.
 - b. The VSA, CEGSA & FUSSI Joint dinner (Sept 6-8th) was put onto FUSSI What's On.
5. Future trips.
- a. The VSA, CEGSA & FUSSI Joint dinner (Sept 6-8th) was discussed.
 - b. Clare is proposing a trip to Smoke/Tortoise. She will contact the owner.
 - c. Thomas to run a trip to the Flinders in August. Thomas to webbify it.
 - d. Clare has vouchers for two airfares to Darwin (with Qantas) which could be used for a Tassie trip (David Wools-Cobb has offered to take us through Kubla) or to South-Western Australia - Strong's, Easter, Jewel got a mention. Dates to be advised (aim for February to allow for permits if Tassie). Herberts Pot, Lynnds, Ida Bay? Clare to investigate.
 - e. Kangaroos Island. Considered expensive, but winter specials may make it feasible. Thomas to investigate.
 - f. Mt Remarkable Blowhole. Need to recover the lost krab. October sometime. Ask other cavers (Scouts?) to keep an eye out for it.
 - g. Wooltana. Clare would like to go. October long weekend (4-7th). Clare co-ordinating.
 - h. Clare is negotiating with Sil (VSA) for an overseas trip. Spain, PNG, or New Zealand (deemed most likely).
6. E-mail.

EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES

- a. Clare, Bronya and Heiko to monitor and contact members via the fussi@gmail.com when Thomas is busy. Need password and associated details.
7. Any other business
 - a. General whinge on the vertical skills (or lack thereof) of SA cavers. Spanish caver has been in contact, looking to cave here next year.
 - b. Club promotion and membership drive. FUSA will do a poster for us. One generic, one aimed at Womyn. Bronya to have a starring role. These are for advertising meetings and to promote the club which we badly need to do.
 - d) All club newsletters have been put into digital format along with the 1974 Handbook and the current Handbook. Plan is to burn all onto a CD and send out to all ASF clubs, past and present members as part of FUSSI 40th celebrations next year. Some cost will be involved in this process.
8. Meeting closed 12:20 pm.

Addendum: Edwina, our librarian wants to run a library day on campus to sort through the library. Pizza to be provided for lunch. September some time.

WHAT IS ON

Uni Exams Period. 26th June – 6th July

Naracoorte	July 27/28	Caving skills weekend. Rigging, ropes, ladders and recalcitrant types. All welcome
Lower Flinders	August.	Date to be confirmed.
Naracoorte	Sept 6–8 th	Inter-State Cavers Dinner. A chance to meet follow cavers from Victoria along with other south Australian caver dudes. A weekend of fun in the dark, planning the overthrow of the imperialist warmonge ... Sorry, well if you want to know the deal, see the notice below.
Nullarbor	Sept 20–30 th	Tentative at this stage. First, get time off work then we WILL go ... All welcome. If you want to know about it ask Clare or Thomas or Heiko or see previous FUSSI newsletters.
Arkaroola	Oct Long weekend	SRT proficient only. Max 5 people.
Library sort day	On Campus	DTBA. Edwina coordinating.

Also in the pipeline, more wet and wild fun in the lower south east when it warms up, and possibly a trip to Tassie in Feb 2014, the FUSSI exec is discussing this one.

WHAT'S ON



DINNER and shenanigans

Friday 6th to Sunday 8th September 2013

You are invited to the 2013 VSA, CEGSA, and FUSSE dinner in Naracoorte. This year will highlight new and old activities and re-connect cavers from Victoria and South Australia.

Last year over thirty people attended the annual event that took place over a weekend in the Wimmera region. Members enjoyed the wonderful Naracoorte caves and went off with a bang at the local Naracoorte pub for dinner and drinks. This year's program includes caving and exploring as usual, however the dinner will cater a little more for shenanigans as it is jam packed with activities and a catered BBQ dinner on site.

Accommodation and dinner is at The Wirracunda Barkhouse. Dinner is \$31/person, drinks are BYO. Places are not limited as there is plenty of room for everyone.

Date: Friday 6th to Sunday 8th September 2013

Accommodation: Wirracunda Barkhouse - Caves District Road, Naracoorte, SA - CHECK out 10am Sunday

Accommodation cost: \$22 p/p per night Camping: \$30 p/p per night

Dinner cost: Saturday night \$31 per person

RSVP Payment by: Monday 26th August 2013 to:

Victorian Speleological Association
CBA BSB: 06 3611
Account: 10087011
Reference: Name, State, Din..... eg. Greg Vic Din or Greg SA Din
Email that you have paid, time, date you intend to come, and number of people. A program will be sent out
Email: cegsa@cegsa.org.au

If you would like to pay by cheque please send
To: Sir Iannetto / Cave dinner
3 Fyffe Street, Thornbury, Victoria, 3071
Cheques and Money Orders should be made to "
"Not Negotiable". GST is not included and is not payable

* Cheques should be marked:
Contact VSA: 0427 053 542