



FUSSI Newsletter

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Front Cover Photo: Heiko in the entrance chamber of Tkalca Cave. In the Rakov Skocjan Valley, Slovenia. Note the high water mark.

Front Cover Photo Credit: Clare Buswell

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2008 has been another successful year for FUSSI and its members. With the introduction of the Flinders One system we have remained affiliated with the University and through their grants scheme we were able to obtain some funding to purchase some new equipment to enable more members to participate in Single Rope Techniques for vertical caving. This was a much needed support avenue, as without external funding, FUSSI relies solely on its membership fees and gear hire fees to remain a viable functioning club.

During last year we were invited to make a library display in the foyer of the Flinders University Library. With some great support from our members in obtaining posters, display equipment and writing feature stories we were able to put together a very successful display that raised to profile of speleology in the minds of students and generated positive interest in FUSSI. We have since taken the new members on some successful trips and we hope to continue to grow their and others interest (and enjoyment) in caving.

A number of successful trips were run last year. We even managed to run a trip while some prominent FUSSI members were absent on duty attending an international speleological conference in Europe. The end of year trip was set in the Yarrangobilly region of NSW and for those who attended, it was a fantastic week that culminated with a permit to enter a reference cave. The caving was spectacular and inevitably we did both types of walking (up and down very steep hills). The great natural setting and the accommodation in the hut made for a great communal atmosphere.

Looking forward, we have some exciting avenues for FUSSI to pursue. The success of the latest Flinders One grant has funded our rejoining of the ASF Public Liability insurance policy that, in theory, should give us access to more caves in South Australia and open up our options for running more weekend trips. This year we have finally been able to coordinate an application for the Active Clubs grants program and if successful, will represent a significant milestone (1.6 Kilometre-stone for those metric people) for FUSSI. Only two days after lodging that grant application there was an announcement of further community grants available. Just when we thought it was over (but while we were on a roll) we put in another two applications to fund trips to collect scientific-standard in-cave data and bat surveys. We wait in anticipation of the results, but at the very least we have honed our grant writing skills. I think this is an important skill as I envisage it will become a more common way of helping FUSSI financially and will prove to be a valuable way of gaining exposure in the community.

I would like to welcome Matthew as our new Club President and as outgoing President I will offer him all the support I am able. FUSSI is positioned well and while we continue to receive enthusiastic support from all our members I think Matthew will have no problems in leading us through the next year. I would also like to thank Jan for doing all the finance stuff over the past five years and for putting up with our: "can you pay me for this map, or can you pay me for these 3 light globes ..."! I would also like to thank Ehon Chan for doing the newsletter and for having to chase up all those recalcitrant writers! An editor's job is not an easy one! Finally, we can only hope that the well-published and politicised GEC that seems to have gripped the world at the moment must obviously stand for:
Go Explore Caves.

Michael M

SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

I disappeared OS so not much happened.
Clare Buswell

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since the AGM last year we have had four new members join us on trips, plus the usual suspects! First off in April 2008 we trundled over to Victoria and visited Mt Eccles Volcanic caves. Then last May a vertical trip to Penola, where all involved grunted their way out of L322 cave. We ran another trip down to Penola later in the year, this time horizontal only, with the highlight being the quite beauty of Quarry cave. The major trip over summer was to Yarrangobilly in NSW. After a lazy start to the year we ran a fun day-trip to Gloop cave near Swan Reach and made our very own mud figurines! So here's to another exciting year of caving to look forward to in 09/10!

Bronya Alexander.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jan Schmorte

Date	Details	Incoming	Outgoing	Balance
1/1/08	Opening Balance			\$3,939.45
2/1/08	ASF memberships	\$429.00	\$429.00	
	Memberships FUSSI	\$240.00		
26/2/08	Printing costs for stickers		\$394.97	
7/3/08	Sticker sales	\$34.00		
7/3/08	Sundry petty cash		\$38.95	
19/5/08	Gear hire	\$215.00		
30/5/08	Gear purchases		\$616.10	
19/6/08	Grant received (Gear)	\$534.80		
6/9/08	Battery sales	\$32.00		
8/9/08	Battery purchases		\$32.85	
10/9/08	ACKMA annual membership		\$55.00	
24/11/08	Totals	\$1,484.80	\$1,566.87	\$3,857.38 (Loss of \$82.07)

EQUIPMENT OFFICERS REPORT

The time has come ...

to spend a bit of money and:

- A) employ a consultant to plan to auction off the President's tie.
- B) sell all 8 of our antique carbide lamps
- C) upgrade all our lighting systems to Scurions.
- D) all of the above.

Which will actually happen, I wonder?

On the more practical side, I have been investigating using the Scurion battery set up, (4x Lions, 6-7 volts) to run an Oldham cap lamp with LEDs. The battery pouch of a Petzel Zoom, with a bit of creative remodelling, will hold 4 Lion bats. Problems will be heat dissipation, getting the appropriate LEDs and finding the money to do it. There is also the issue of value for money and finding the time to do it. If the A\$ dollar improves against the Euro and Scurion becomes less bloody expensive we could perhaps, possibly, maybe, have a snow flakes chance in hell of buying the helmet mount bit of it ... Dream on!

On the other hand what is currently available in the LED headlight area are Black Diamonds, Princeton

EQUIPMENT OFFICERS REPORT cont'd

Apex, and Petzel Duo. All come in around the \$180.00 mark. PLUS batteries and battery chargers.

Another bit: when borrowing gear from our store, what you take must be recorded, and it must be returned clean. Otherwise Mavis will play in your car, and when this happens it is usually broken! I, on the other hand, will return the gear to you to clean. You have been warned. All the rest of our equipment is in good condition and needs some use. So see you all under ground.

Clare Buswell

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Same as last year. Read, entered into the database and filed. Lots more stuff is coming in electronically so that saves on a bit of space. We urgently need to do a library cleanup, helpers needed.

Min Xu.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

I have to say that as I have finished studying at Flinders and the big wide world awaits, I can no longer be the editor. Thanks for the opportunity and for all the caving fun. See you all underground.

Ehon Chan.

THINGS THAT ARE FOR SALE AND OTHER MATTERS

8 Carbide lamps, X Broken Hill mines, so the invoice from 1974 tells us! At least they have an established provenance. All in working order, (well they were the last time we checked). Extra reflectors and jets also available. *POA*

Last few copies of the esteemed tome: *The Australian Karst Index*. Never to be repeated as a published document. Will be out of print for eternity or whatever. ... You can use it to either plan your next caving trip, or use it as a door-stopper. It has so many uses that you will wonder why you never purchased one before. Be the envy of all your friends, read it at the bus stop, at your work, in the gym. Don't read it in bed if you value sleeping with your tru luv! *\$10.00ea.*

The club has been applying for grants around the place and has currently had no success from two applications but is still holding out some hope for a remaining application to go through the motions. So if you have a spare moment go and talk to your local state politician and invite them underground where they will be assured of no false emails or leaks from the public service! On some of these grants they place the final signature.

Membership to FUSSI gives you automatic membership of the national caving body, the Australian Speleological Federation and a copy of its Newsletter, Caves Australia. If you change address you must let Bronya know so she can update your change of address on the ASF newsletter database.

CAVING TRIP TO PUNYELROO AND GLOOP

Alison Thompson

Members Present: Bronya Alexander, Alison Thompson, Feng Zhao, Sylvia Zuiderduin Clare Buswell

On the 25th of April, 2009, I finally got the opportunity to meet some members of FUSSI and go on my first caving trip. The worst of the day was getting from my house to Bronya's early in the morning. From there, the day went from good to great, and great to Gloop. In a single vehicle, Bronya drove myself, Fen and Sylvia up to the hills where we met Clare, swapped cars and went the 'scenic' drive to Swan Reach. It hardly seemed like a 2 hour drive as we got to know one another and talked about caving. Before long we were at Swan Reach eating our lunch and getting geared up for the caves.

First stop was Punyelroo, with a gentle trek down and along the rivers edge to the cave entrance. Punyelroo is a dry, horizontal cave and it was surprisingly warm inside – surprising for me as a new comer to caving. I made very good use of my helmet and discovered that kneepads are a good idea. Fortunately



Entrance to Punyelroo cave

we did not have to crawl, or duck- waddle too much. The highlight, for me, was the sheer number of fossils in the cave walls at the entrance and surrounding it. Having got a feel for caving and taking turns in the lead, we came out of the cave entrance, a quite beautifully framed view of the river, rested a bit and returned to the car.

The second cave was Gloop and it was a little trickier to get to. Some side-stepping down an embankment was required and Clare had to strap up a tree for us to lower ourselves down to the river's edge where we could walk along to the cave entrance. Gloop was not a dry cave like Punyelroo, but lined with clay – it was fascinating to feel the

walls and structures in the centre of the tunnels thinly coated with fine clay. Gloop was also a horizontal cave, so another easygoing experience for new comers. Clare and Bronya led us down a specific tunnel to a kind of bath of Gloop where we allowed our feet to sink deep into the clay (requiring some team effort to escape with shoes still attached to feet). There, in the lonely dark of the cave, we found some little



On the cliff face to the Murray River

Gloop creatures left behind by other cavers. We added a Gloop duck and a Gloop teddy bear – hopefully they will delight the next cavers who shine their light around that part of the tunnel. Having explored and exited the cave, climbed back up the embankment, it was time to change our now very dirty, muddy and gloopy gear for cleaner clothes and shoes and head back to Adelaide.

There are lots of ways to meet the members of a group when you first join, but I think going straight out to your first caving trip was a wonderful way to meet four people from FUSSI. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and am looking forward to the next opportunity to go into the dark depths and get real dirty. But my hiking boots are still covered in gloop!

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

From the Economist. May 29th 2009

CUTE BUT CONTAGIOUS

Richmond, Virginia.

And coming sadly to a cave near you.

Swine flu may get the headlines: but white nose syndrome, a fungal disease that shows as a powdery pattern on the face, wings and legs of bats is moving far more swiftly across America. Bat colonies have been decimated in at least seven states: New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. At least half a million bats have died, depriving the country – particularly in the spring and summer months of a natural pesticide. Bats consume huge quantities of insects: as much as their own body weight during a night aloft. The Forest Service estimates that the die-off from white nose syndrome means that at least 2.4m pounds, (1.1mkg) of bugs, will go uneaten.

The effects of the disease though, go beyond an itchy evening in the garden. Without bats, farmers may have to use more insecticide, raising environmental worries and pushing up grocery prices. And white nose syndrome could threaten an already endangered species such as Indiana bats, tiny creatures with pink noses that flutter from the northeast to the mid-Atlantic and the big-eared bat, official state bat of Virginia. It may be carried on the boots and gear of humans who poke about in caves. Scientists however, suspect that it is transmitted bat to bat. The disease disorients bats, disturbing their sleep, causing them to fly when they normally don't during hibernation. Unable to find insects, they weaken and die. The Federal Fish and Wildlife Service has advised closing caves to explorers in 20 states, from the Midwest to New England. This directive, enforced with fines and jail, will soon be extended to 13 southern states. After all, as one Virginia scientist points out, "If it gets into caves more to our south in places like Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia and Alabama, we're going to be talking deaths in the millions."

UPDATE ON WHITE NOSE SYNDROME

The NSS, (National Speleological Society) has closed caves that it owns in affected areas. It has asked cavers to honour all cave closures on both private and government properties. It has asked cavers to decontaminate all caving gear using State enforced decontamination procedures, and not to use any caving gear or clothing that has been used in the area under restriction outside of it or in a WNS free area. It has asked all cavers to educate, fellow cavers, farmers, school groups, scouting organizations etc about WNS and the seriousness of the disease, and the need to control it by not visiting caving areas affected. The NSS has also donated considerable funds to scientific bodies working on the disease in an effort to find out more about it. See NSS News June 2009 for further details. In the middle of all of this is the International Speleological Union's 15th Congress with pre and post congress trips all across the US. Watch out for further info on this. The Syndrome is not known in Australia. (Yet!)

INTERESTING WEB SITES

The Swiss Society of Speleology (SSS), member of the Federation of European Speleologists (FSE), has inaugurated, during this spring, a useful multi-lingual on-line search engine to look for speleological monographs and magazines among the thousands of books that are in the SSS library. The present version is available through: www.speleo.ch
or directly on : <http://212.147.38.216:8080/English/Main.htm>

For stuff on LED caving lights check out: www.technicalconcepts.org.uk/ledlighting/HTM

Or google LED caving lights and checkout what comes up.

For Oldham cap lamp conversions to LED look up: <http://www.terraluxcorp.com/products/index.php>

WHAT'S ON

Yorke Peninsula	18 th July	Trip co-ordinator: Bronya
Yorke Peninsula	August TBA	Trip co-ordinator: Michael
Training days	TBA, over mid-semester and term breaks	Uni footbridge and other sites
15 th International Congress of Speleology. Kerryville, Texas, USA. 9-18 July, 2009.		
Search & Rescue weekend	Aug 10 th	Trip co-ordinator: Bronya
Yorke Peninsula	September Uni Hols	Trip co-ordinators: Michael
Flinders Ranges	October long weekend	Trip co-ordinator: Bronya

Aug 2010. 15th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology
Undara Lava Tubes, Qld and Mt Eccles Victoria. Contact: *ozspeleo@bigpond.net.au*