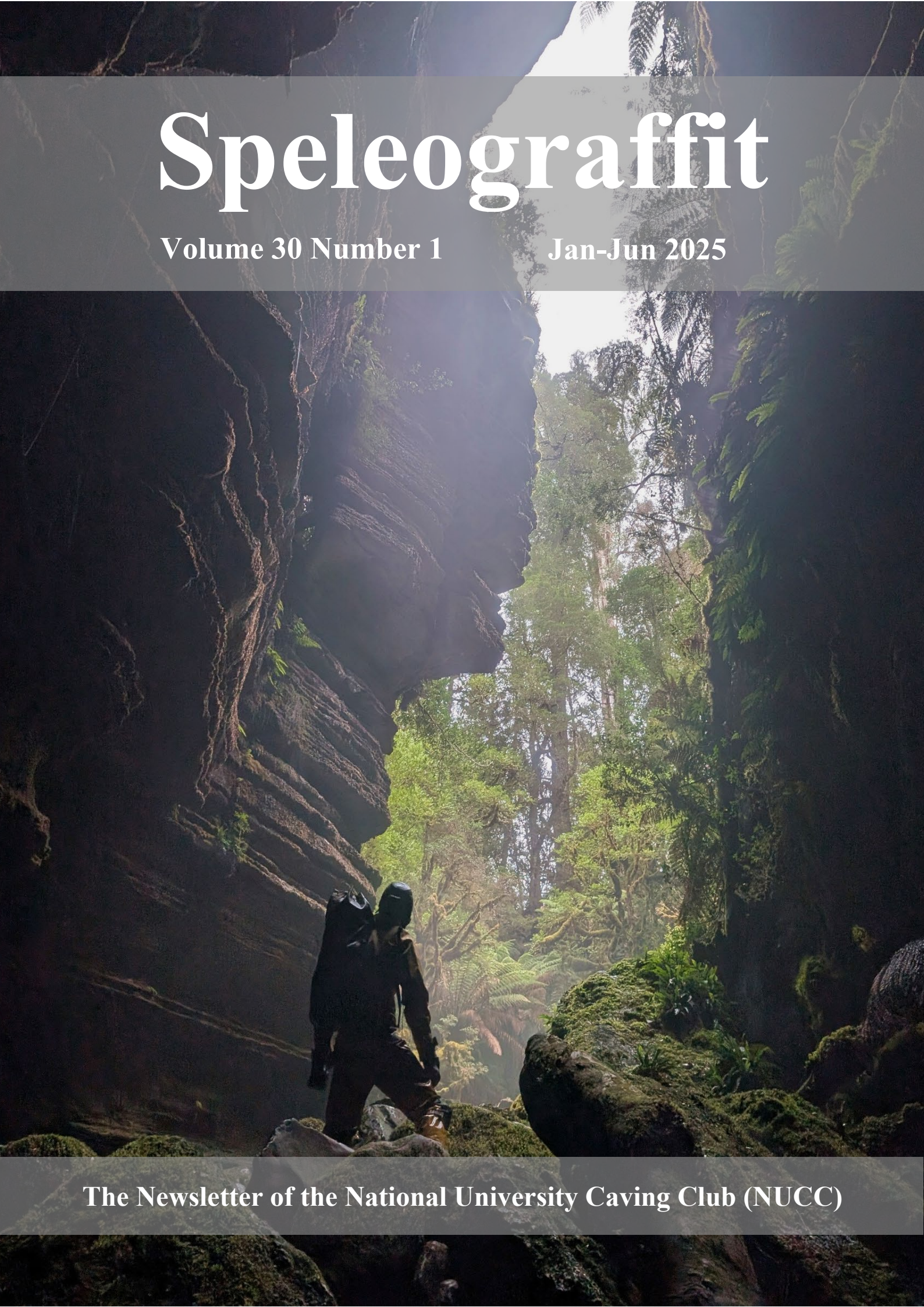


A person wearing a helmet and a backpack is standing on a mossy rock in a cave, looking out at a lush, green forest. The cave walls are dark and rocky, with some roots hanging down. The forest outside is dense with tall trees and many ferns. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a bright, hazy atmosphere. The person is in the foreground, looking out towards the forest. The overall scene is a mix of dark, shadowy cave interior and bright, sunlit forest exterior.

Speleograffit

Volume 30 Number 1

Jan-Jun 2025

The Newsletter of the National University Caving Club (NUCC)

Speleograffiti

The Newsletter of the National University Caving Club (NUCC)

Published by the National University Caving Club, an ASF Member Club

Edited by Lauren Jolliffe & Alice Kelly

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Volume 30 Number 1, 2025

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/65963976973/>

Front Cover: Lachlan Bailey exiting Growling Swallet (JF36). Photo by Cole Neering.

Back Cover: Saami Wallenius (front) and Jim Taylor (back) descend from the Deua trig point. Photo by Laurie Jolliffe.



Notes from the Editors

The Editors (one of the Editors in particular) would like to sincerely apologise for spelling Ben Hofmann's last name wrong consistently throughout the most recent edition (29.1). Among other errors, please note that, in regard to the Talmo project report in the last issue (29.1), several of the cave codes were referred to erroneously as TM. The area code for Talmo is TL.

Please also note that this issue (30.1) is merely a half-yearly issue in anticipation of the magnitude of trips (and consequent trip reports) NUCC hopes to run this year, Annual components of this publication, such as the President's Report, will appear in the end of year issue (30.2).

The Editors would also like to note that this issue was fuelled by Thomas Hill's potatoes.

Contents

2 2025 NUCC Committee

THE NEWS IN CAVES

- 4 Year of Exploration So Far
- 4 Nap Officer Appointed
- 4 Apartment Gear Cleaning
- 5 Trog Core-ner
- 5 Inaugural NUCC Photo Competition
- 6 Food & Beverage
- 7 Film & Sounds
- 8 Equipment Reviews
- 9 Karst Area Phone Boxes
- 9 Letters to the Editor

TRIP REPORTS

- 11 Interviews with an Auspicious Guest List
- 15 Cooleman, more like Rizzehuman
- 17 The First (?) 8+hr Blowfly Through Trip
- 18 Budawangs Bushwalk Bonanza Extravaganza
- 20 Aprilee Florentine
- 34 A Case of The Gones
- 38 "Everything Happens at Tuglow"
- 41 Hay Days at Yagby

- 45 A Better Map of Colong
- 46 A Tale of Separation, Salvation & ...
- 50 Bendethera Be My Friend
- 54 "A Plague Upon the Deserving Hedonists"

MEMBER REPORTS

- 58 The Very Long Swim
- 64 Journey to Cave Island
- 66 "I Went Down 14 Waterfalls Yesterday"
- 72 Paperwork Drives Caver Underground
- 73 Kitten Rescued (Plus Some Other Stuff)

PROJECT WORK

- 76 The Good, The Bad, & The Grovel
- 78 Punchbowl Aid Climb

OTHER REPORTS

- 81 ASF Conference 2025
- 87 Petzl Connect Adjust; An Argument
- 89 Mac Pass Incident Report
- 91 Dip Incident Report
- 92 Aprilee Florentine RPG sheets

2025 NUCC Committee

Your committee for 2025:

President: Rowan Phemister

Vice President: Carl Walsh

Treasurer: Andrew Kowalczyk

Secretary: Lawrence Coutroubas

2nd Equipment Officer: Ben Hofmann

Student Engagement Officer: Alice Kelly

General Committee Members: Ben Hofmann,
Eliza Tarcoveanu, & Saami Wallenius

ASF Councillor: Ben Hofmann

Librarian: Eliza Tarcoveanu

Training Officer: Saami Wallenius

Canyoning Officer: Corey Hanrahan

Bushwalking Officer: Lawrence Coutroubas

Webmaster: Saami Wallenius

Social Officer: Lauren Jolliffe

Speleograffiti Co-editors: Lauren Jolliffe, &
Alice Kelly

Additional appointments to the Committee (12 February 2025):

Nap Officer: Lachlan Bailey



The News in Caves

Carl Walsh explores a hole at Cave Flats. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe.

YEAR OF EXPLORATION

SO FAR

As we approach the middle of the year, let's take a moment to reflect on how NUCC's Year of Exploration has gone so far...

New caves discovered: 0	New leads unfollowed: 4
New passage uncovered: 10m	Scratches obtained: innumerable
Undiscovered caves named: 1	Kittens rescued: 1
Vehicles written off: 2	Emergency services called: 1

All to say, 2025 is thus far a terrific success! Keep it up NUCC!

"NUCC's year of exploration has been like following a twisting passage underground - sometimes tight, sometimes opening into vast chambers, always revealing more than we expected" – POTNUCC Rowan Phemister



NAP OFFICER

APPOINTED IN SPELEOLOGICAL FIRST!

In an effort to address the needs of NUCC's aging population, the committee decreed on February 12th to appoint the illustrious Lachlan Bailey (pictured below) as the club's inaugural Nap Officer. Welcome Lachlan.



APARTMENT GEAR CLEANING: THE DO'S AND DON'TS

- LAURIE JOLLIFFE

As the charnel house we call an economy grows worse for those aged under 40, the number of NUCCers with access to a garden rapidly dwindles. Here we contemplate a new age of apartment gear cleaning. Discover what works, what will keep housemates happy, and apartments (relatively) mud free.



The Laundry Sink Method

This author yet to encounter an apartment sink up for the task of cleaning trogged up gear. Do not recommend unless you prefer your floor, walls, door handles and every inch of the apartment muddy. 2/10 on the happy housemate scale.

The Balcony & Bucket Method

Perhaps the grimmest of the apartment gear cleaning options in winter. However, the balcony & bucket method provides a happy middle ground where your balcony gets very filthy, but your apartment only gets mostly filthy. Be sure to procure a large enough bucket. 5/10 on the happy housemate scale.

The Accidentally Leave it in a Friend's Garden Method

A more ingenuitive approach to cleaning one's gear within the confines of apartment life. You will be required to report for club gear cleaning. Happily, this is expected of you nonetheless, and you will be permitted to work on your own gear while others wash ropes. Downsides of this method include not regaining your gear for some days, and not abusing this method too often (unless you consider altering the terms of your relationship with said friend).

The Shower Method

By far the most superior apartment cleaning method this author has encountered in terms of mess mitigation. One simply needs to overcome the discomfort and oddity of cleaning one's carabiners in between shampooing and conditioning and it is all washed down the drain. 7/10 on the happy housemate scale for a shared bathroom, 9/10 for an ensuite.



TROG CORE-NER

The mechanics suit or the dungarees?

Notorious trog core icon Jack Richardson has been spotted underground in two new trog suit styles over the past six months.

One style (above) features khaki dungarees worn over a thermal layer or fleece. The second style (below) is an insulated mechanic's suit. When asked for a comment on his stylistic choices Jack only said *"Sure, but when I'm done hiking"*.



Notable newcomer to the trog core scene, Alek's "avant garde" and vegetable inspired approach is breaking boundaries underground and above ground.

Fashion first! Laurie styles a camp chair as a backpack.



THE INAUGURAL NUCC PHOTO COMPETITION

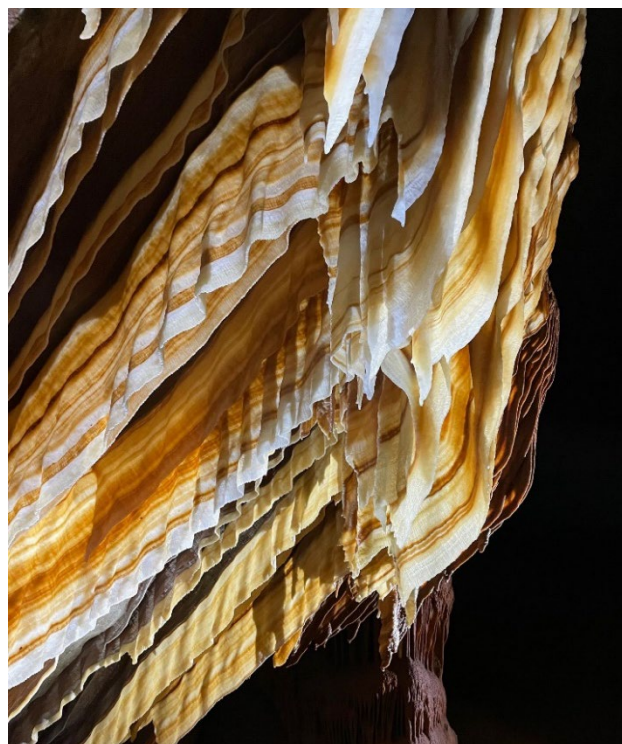
On June 3rd NUCC held its first club photo competition (or at least so far as recent memory would serve).

Competitors gathered in the Engineering lecture theatre. Tiramisu was consumed in vast quantities and photo zoom privileges used gratuitously.

A small taste of the winning photos are included for your viewing pleasure.



"Donda's Big Haul" - Winner of the Trip Shenanigans Category 📷 Ben Hofmann



"Not Bacon...Maybe It's Bacon..." - Winner of the Serious Photo Category 📷 Britt Meers
Speleograffiti Vol.29 No.1

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

THE ADVENTURES OF MR BAILEY'S KARST IRON POT

Notable speleologist and renowned NUCCer Mr Lachlan Bailey has been unable to cave for some time. Fortunately, his much beloved Karst Iron Pot has been able to join us on trips in his stead, providing comfort, company, hearty meals, and taking up much boot space. Featured in:

Coolleman Stew

Tuglow Shakshuka

Bendethera Risotto

Reunion Fried Rice

In the darkest of times, when forced to pack only essential items into The Beast II, we found room for the Karst Iron Pot. All other non-essential items, including rigging, SRT kits, Alek's swag, a dozen lemons, several onions, Saami Wallenius*, and all but one helmet were left behind.

*Captain goes down with the ship.



Can you spot the pot? 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

BREAKING NEWS >>> Homebrew on the rise among cavers

BEST HOT CHIPPIES ON EAST COAST!

Cavers and civilians alike rejoice as Lake Burrinjuck General Store named site of best hot chippies on the east coast (by a panel of ravenous cavers). Details to follow on page 65.



TRAGEDY AS CAVER STAPLE DISCONTINUED

In a devastating blow to all ACT cavers, Lazuppa Global Adventures is no longer being stocked on Canberra shelves.

Coming in two bangin' flavours (Thai Red Chickpea Curry or Coconut Daal) Lazuppa offers a sealed, waterproof, squash & smash-proof, non-crumblly nutritious meal with between 276 and 327 calories and 7.4g and 10.8g protein per pack.

Gluten free and vegan, Lazuppa requires no cutlery or refrigeration, and is perfectly portioned to be a large lunch for one, a small lunch for two, or a snack for many. What could possibly replace this lunch staple in the average cave pack?

"I'VE STOCKED UP ON LAZUPPA WHILE I CAN BUT I JUST CAN'T FATHOM WHAT I'LL EAT WHEN THAT RUNS OUT"

- AGGRIEVED CAVER



FILM & SOUND

- Ally Kelly

Whether struggling to capture film in the dark of a cave, drawing out a projector to create your own subterranean cinema or hollering your best opera attempt up the bowels of Acoustic Pot (B22), caves have always captured the attention of creatives. Let's see what media has reared its head from the depths!

MOVIE REVIEWS

Adapted to the Dark – Sil Ianello

This fantastic documentary from 2021 sheds light on the cryptic and little understood lives of Australian cave crickets (particularly those inhabiting the caves around Naracoorte, S.A.). With informative commentary and precise camera work, this documentary is a must for any budding speleo-entomologists!



Journey to the Centre of the Earth (1959)

Things I have learnt from this movie: 1) All subterranean navigation should be left to ducks. They are better at it. 2) Shirts are entirely optional. 3) Always ensure caves are empty of academic rivals before entering for your personal safety. While I can't say the movie is an accurate portrayal of caving, I can definitely say it is vastly improved by taking a sip of your drink every time something sexist happens onscreen. Cheers!



POETRY

The lament of a housemate or partner lost to the underground for the weekend; a feeling NUCC's nearest and dearest are no doubt familiar with. Here, Duvér, housemate to Ally, explores the emotional tension held within this concept.

Did Adventure Call?

Fridge Poetry by E. DUVÉR

did adventure call ?
behind you sky , sun , light , world !
pull toward s the dark
exist in your shadow maze
crawl from light
a happy filth

MUSIC

The sounds of Jolliffe's latest composition can still be heard echoing through the chambers of Porcupine Pot.

A Home Among the Rebelays 🎵

Composed by Laurie Jolliffe

Gimme a home among the rebelays,
Redirects for days,
A ledge or two,
And space for you,
And me to have some tea,
And prusik merrily,
In sweet June

EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

Wellington Boots - Ally Kelly

It is with a heavy heart and a tormented soul that I admit my new found dependence on cheap Bunnings wellies. Long did I preach the merits of hiking shoes over wellies but that time has come to a close. So why the change of heart?

Whilst poor on the ankle support front, in a wet cave, wellies are unparalleled. Sure, your feet may get wet eventually, but you'll save yourself the coldness of constant new water gushing in. The grip is robust and any qualms related to comfort can be remedied by the addition of cheap insoles from Woolies.

Oh god, I sound like Lachie...

Images sourced from manufacturer websites



OTHER EQUIPMENT NEWS

Canyoners note that the canyon ropes have been re-marked:

- One black bar/line at $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ way
- Two black bars/lines at $\frac{1}{2}$ way

The new rope colours are:

30m blue rope (pink bag)

50m green rope (orange bag)

70m green & purple rope (green bag)

Petzl Connect Adjust

Argument between Lachie Bailey & Carl Walsh Summary by Laurie Jolliffe

If you are considering an adjustable lanyard we highly recommend checking out Carl & Lachie's full argument on page 88.

If you're here for the TLDR: the Connect Adjust is a useful piece of gear that can make a lot of things easier in caves & canyons, including allowing you to:

- ➔ Extend your tether to high bolts for safer access to pitch heads
- ➔ 'Yeet' yourself up closer to anchors
- ➔ Haul things up (eg. bags) to yourself
- ➔ Alter your tether length for safer and easier rebelay, changeovers, & bolt traverses
- ➔ Lower yourself down to tight pitch heads on a longer tether.
- ➔ Have less bulk on your D ring
- ➔ And it's great in rescue situations (eg. pickoffs)

However there are a number of **serious safety concerns** involved with using the Connect Adjust in a caving context including:

- ➔ Petzl doesn't specify the rope properties
- ➔ Not optimised for caving
- ➔ Not designed for a 1+ factor fall or shock loading
- ➔ More expensive than standard caving cowstails (less incentive to replace)

Other, non-safety critical concerns include:

- ➔ Gets stiff & jammed with wet and mud
- ➔ More weight on your SRT kit
- ➔ Longer dangly bits on your SRT kit

We consequently urge cavers to seriously consider the risks associated with the Connect Adjust before using this equipment in a caving context (check out the full review on page 88!).

Raumer Handy Braking Carabiner

- Carl Walsh

"GOATED, everyone knows this!"

[Editor's note: This was the entire review submitted by Carl.]

KARST AREA PHONE BOXES

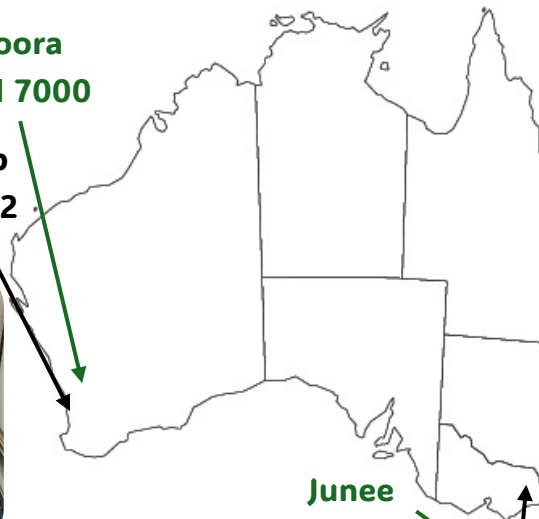
(collected so far) – Laurie Jolliffe

Maintaining an accurate & up to date database of karst area phone box numbers is clearly integral to caving communication. Thus I have made it my mission to collect as many as possible.



Moora
9561 7000

Yanchep
9561 2012



Wombeyan
4843 5998

Wee Jasper
6227 9610

Junee
Florentine
6328 2328

Providence
Portal
(Yagby)
6454 2447

Buchan
(town) 428 670 264
(camp) 5155 9209



LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editors,

I wish to point out some factual errors in Speleograffiti 29.1 (2024). These were in fact made known to the Editors of the previous edition, but wilfully ignored. The article in question is 'A Jolliffe Star Review of Jerrara Falls', p23-29 of Speleograffiti 29.1 (2024).

Firstly, the author of the aforementioned report complains on p23 that "it is impossible to discuss Jerrara [Canyon] as a singular entity". This is not so. On the very same topo that the author most stridently complains about on the following page, I very clearly give Jerrara Canyon a grading of v4a3IV** in the title block. This is, in fact, a standardised assessment of the canyon as a singular entity, as per the FFME canyon grading documentation.

Secondly, the author objects to my notation "J! 7m TL, dc TL", and on p24 accuses me of adding "sass" to my canyon topo, with a faux narration of "Jump! Go on, you know you want to! Don't mind the overhanging rocks or the tiny landing area. It's perfectly reasonable". At no point do I suggest as such, and I would claim this as misrepresentation of me. I've never jumped that thing, just enjoyed the show of other people doing so. I just walk around it, using the "dc TL" that I clearly indicate on my topo. I can only wish that the author had spent as much time reading my topo in the canyon as they have spent inventing invective afterwards. Possibly, I could also recommend a review of the Kiwi Canyons symbology dataset, and the FFME canyon grading standards too; both are easily available online.

Lastly, while there is other content of questionable veracity in this report, I would like object to the degree of complaint on p28. This pitch (P9 25m on my Jerrara Canyon topo), is very much downclimbable on the far true left. I would suggest that my topo is indeed accurate, unless there has been a rather substantial landslide in Bungonia Creek in the past year (there has not). It simply appears that the author's party did not look hard enough to find the bypass for P9.

Regards,

Lachlan Bailey

Trip Reports



Alek Meade and Laurie Jolliffe outside Voltera (JF207), Junee Florentine.

📷 Ally Kelly.

Interviews with an Auspicious Guest List

NUCC 2024 Formal Christmas Dinner; Punchbowl Cave

29 November – 1 December 2024

Wee Jasper (NSW)

Interviews by Laurie Jolliffe & Ally Kelly

NUCC Participants: Lachie Bailey, Tom Donda, Ben Hofmann, Laurie Jolliffe, Ally Kelly, Cole Neering, Jack Richardson, Floyd Stevenson, Saami Wallenius, & Carl Walsh with Alek Meade & Pavel Boer



NUCC Christmas Dinner: Ben Hoffman, Ally Kelly, Cole Neering, Carl Walsh, Floyd Stevenson, Saami Wallenius, Laurie Jolliffe, & Jack Richardson (back), Tom Donda (front left), and Lachie Bailey (front right). 📷 Jack Richardson

*“I THINK THE MUSIC WAS JUST IN MY
HEAD AND I THOUGHT ... NUCC’n
AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE”*

- Jack Richardson

Q: Walk us through the day; how did it start?

Donda: “that was a long long time ago when I was a young 24 year old... We were preparing for our Christmas trip heading on down to old Wee J...”

Cole: “I seem to remember it being very wet”

Jack: “It was a bit of a disaster from the beginning”

Carl: “The day started with depression and rain”

Laurie: “... we all looked at each other and thought ... who’s going to be the first to bow out”

Saami: “we all just turned up anyway and got out our snorkels for a day at the beach”



Raincoats hung up in Punchbowl. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

Q: NUCC threw a beach party at the end of Dogleg cave. How did the party go down?

Ally: “I wouldn’t say [a Dogleg beach party is] a long-time dream. I only went to Dogleg for the first time in “The Gap” ... and I went *‘it’s so sandy it’s like a beach back here’* ... I’m pretty chuffed it came together”

Jack: “Caught some big waves, dug a huge sandcastle, got buried to my neck... I’d say best beach in Canberra”

Ben: “Honestly the beach is not that impressive”

Floyd: “We all got our flamingoes out, our bikinis, board shorts, and snorkels, flippers, and little fish.... “

Saami: “Got into our swimmers, got out some shovels”

Donda: “I remember Floyd’s immaculate abs... I remember a buried Jack - a very sandy Jack who ended up washing off in the mud.... I remember catching a fish **this big** [Donda gestures]”

Laurie: “I think the highlight of Dogleg was definitely trying to coach Donda into taking a Tinder fish pic. Jack brought these flongs.... fish crocs from Bunnings and Donda was trying to take a tinder pic with it but he wasn’t doing it properly”

Ben: “Jack even ended up going snorkelling, which was a bold decision”

Q: What was the most challenging part of the trip?

Cole: “I wouldn’t say it was a challenging trip...”

Jack: “Finding my car keys at the end.... that was a whole thing. I’d love to say it didn’t take long, but we probably spent twenty or thirty minutes looking for them” (in the rain)

Laurie: “I did try to plank Dogleg....”

Ally: “Trying to keep my inflatable doughnut inflated in Dogleg once it was covered in mud”

Carl: “Probably hauling stuff up was just not very fun at the end. Everything got caught. Somehow the table needed two or three peoples’ attention. Trying to keep all our clothing clean was definitely a fail.”

Q: What’s your favourite memory of the trip?

Ben: “The Secret Santa was quite good. Saami really got into the role [of Trog Santa]”

Laurie: “Jack asked me in the weeks before *‘I’ve got this Secret Santa gift, I think it’s great but it’s very delicate and I’m worried about getting it down the pitch’* ... And I was like *“that would be hilarious because they’d have to get it back up the pitch. How funny is that gonna be?”* Of course I was Jack’s Secret Santa and I had to get a whole-arse terrarium up the pitch”



A fight breaks out at the beach party. 📷 Floyd Stevenson



Jack freedives the Dogleg gate. 📷 Floyd Stevenson



Donda gets pics for the dating profile. 📷 Floyd Stevenson

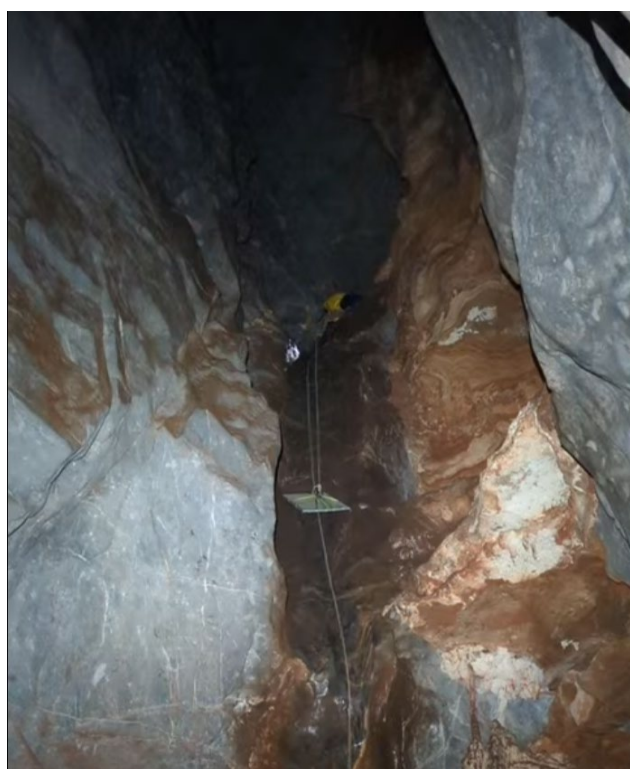


Trog Santa had gifts for all the safe little trogs.

📷 Jack Richardson



Canapes were served by sister society the National University Cheese Club. 📷 Jack Richardson



Saami ushers the table down pitch. 📷 Carl Walsh

Cole: “Seeing everyone dressed up in fancy clothes was pretty comical”

Carl: “Probably [Laurie’s] reaction when Lachie and I turned around and went back to the pub... “

Floyd: “just being in a cave in a black tie suit, walking around and drinking champagne¹... it was pretty sick”

¹ zero alcohol champagne

Q: Can you walk us through the outfit you chose for the evening? Do you think it was ‘Trog-Core’

Lachie: “No”

Carl: “[Lachie’s] final choice of the tweed jacket was simply the best choice for that man”

Ally: “I would say it was when I was going back up the pitch ... once I’d put back on the helmet and SRT kit” (Ally prusiked out in her dress).

Laurie: “I think [my outfit] was very trog core. I found a \$15 dress from Vinnies that the straps had broke so I just got some rope I had and fashioned the back out of that it was at least three meters of rope”.

Donda: “Absolutely not! It was a formal outfit.... I got it dry cleaned immediately before... that was an expensive mistake...I didn’t bring any perfumes, I’ll save that for next time”.

Saami: “I managed to cobble something together with the help of some friends. It was tactical on the bottom with gumboots and formal party on top”

Q: Did the refreshments meet the standard of cave snacks that you’re used to?

Ben: “It was actually really impressive”

Carl: “THEY WERE SO GOOD! It exceeded the standard by a lot. Full canapes, fully cheeseboard. It was car-cuterie level snacks. Mega carcuterie level snacks but in a cave.... I think every second or third trip should include a cheese platter.”

Q: Do you think we outdid the 2004 NUCC Ball?

Jack: “We definitely had a better cheese selection... but I think we did. Just in the whole chaos of it. Christmas is about chaos... and more cheese.”

Saami: “Yes but they potentially had booze.”

Ally: “It looked like they had alcohol involved... I think we matched their energy”

Carl: “There’s no way we didn’t outdo them ... it was fancy as hell - we had a tablecloth!”

Saami: “The attention to detail was the most important part - the presentation.”

Ally: “I think we can go bigger and better next time.”

Q: How committed were you to the bit?

Lachie: “Which bit? ... Sorry there was a joke involved? I thought it was deadly serious.”

Jack: “Very committed... “I had a little swim in Dogleg- that was grim. Don’t ever do that- and then I got buried.”

Floyd: “Probably the right amount of committed...It was pretty sick- We buried Jack a bit but he had a snorkel so he was alright.”

Laurie: “I don’t go in for all that silliness... I’m here for serious caving”.



Sketch by Laurie Jolliffe (coloured pen)



The 2024 Christmas portrait series. 📷 Jack Richardson

Coolleman, more like Rizzehuman

24-27 January 2025

Coolleman (NSW)

by Carl Walsh

NUCC Participants: Laurie Jolliffe, Ally Kelly, Alek Meade, Rowan Phemister, Jack Richardson, Carl Walsh

Other Participants: Britt Meers (MSS) & members of ROC



Pebbles & NUCCers assembled for a day of Coolleman Caving. 📷 [A Helpful Hiker](#)

We believe there is a generational gap in caving... To make trip reports more accessible to future generations we have written this in a language they will understand. *[Editors note: we requested Carl write this trip report in 'Gen Z']*.

Ahem... Aight, rewind slightly to the week leading up to the trip:

- Is this happening?: maybe.
- What caves are we hittin?: idek ngl but we've got a permit for like 16 caves or smthn.
- We got like maps n coords n stuff?: "Hey Lachie, where are the caves?", *Lachlan cries in firfr no cap Thesis Deadline* - still sends coords and maps, King shit.

K so, the OG plan was to take the 4WD track, did not happen because I was about an hour late (F's in the chat). So Lauren rocks up in the new Paj (The Beast 2.0), we swing by Rowan's place and gather the troops. Rowan quickly opts-out of the karaoke car and joins Alek. Meanwhile, Laurie, Ally and me are in full careocuterie

mode (Ft. Chappell Roan, French brie and GF Jatz). We arrive, campsite is bangin, Britt brought some Alpha Mates with big 4WDs to tend the campfire, they're playing country music at like 100 dB, all is well, nature is healing. Oh, ROC is there as well, love those pebbles.

So the first day of caving, Britt's crew is off to the gorge around the time they said they'd leave. The NUCCers and Pebbles slept in (slay). We're vibing the plain so head that way, My 'tism is popping and I'm on a mish, the nav game is on point (I will hear no objections). POTNUCC Rowan tells us about his skibidi rizz.

We hit up Murray's Cave first, it's chill. Then Glop Pot, kinda love the name ngl, also so accurate, it a pot, it so glop, fire. Ok next, River Cave, full of Tea (ikykyk). River actually kinda slaps, sadly we didn't go past the first sump. I was on dry or die gang, Lauren and Ally ended up wet-maxing but gumboot gang (Rowan and Alek) might actually be based in this instance, stayed dry and minimum of faff.

‘Alright over to Keith’s Faint Hole, bruh, it’s *faint*, took us like 15 minutes to find it even with a decent pin drop. Lachie’s description of “just keep going past River Cave” was cap, bro needs to touch grass. The entrance pitch was giving Howlers Hole, but I’m lowkey cracked and squirmed down. Sadly, everyone else decided to nap. Cave was bussin though, would go back. Getting out though, dayum, absolute grind, v high effort. We finished the day with a dip in the springs at blue waterholes, fuck me it was cold. Did not last long, ran back up the hill in our undies and dried off.

Sunday saw us teaming up with ROC and heading out to the gorge, dry or die was not an option here (skill issue?) with 6 or so creek crossings to get to the falls. We split off into two ROC/NUCC hybrid groups and swapped between Upper Easter and CP92/93, both actually pretty nice caves, very crawly though. I’m not in my crawling arc rn having lost my kneepads, needa nick some more from ROC at Buchan... (I kid). Vibe was good though and we returned from our bonding experience with the Melbournites to camp to rig a tyrolean, mess about, then get drunk. It was great, Jack had finally arrived in time to sweat it out in a heated discussion about Free Will vs Determinism over the campfire (outcome unknown, Lauren and I were concentrating efforts on polishing off the tequila and tea wine, W bestie).

Monday, oh Monday. Morning was a bit slow ayy. But POTNUCC had a plan, we’d just go walk through Cooleman Cave, “shouldn’t need your cave suit, it’s a tourist cave”. So off we go dripped out in crocs, tshirt, shorts, walk up to the right side entrance, looks kinda low for a walk through, sus. Bro was highkey delulu about it being a walkthrough or was gaslighting, it was a full on crawl. Immediate bail from me, Rowan and Lauren. But Alek and Jack, they committed, really on that sigma grindset. We went out and walked over to the other entrance, had a nap in the cave, waited. 15 minutes later, goblin noises, Jack appears covered in mud, Alek soon followed and both applauded Rowan on the high Q sandbag. Another freezing creek swim required to wash off the mud and trauma.

And that was kinda the wrap. Wait no, actually the pit stop in Adaminaby was elite. Fish n Chippy for lunch and a sleep under the tree was so bussin. But yeah good trip, would slide into Keith’s Faint Hole again.



The NUCCers hit up the plains. 📷 Ally Kelly



Rowan gets Howler’s Hole flashbacks and opts for a nap.

📷 Ally Kelly



Carl slides on down into Keith’s faint hole. 📷 Ally Kelly



Ally, Carl, & The Beast II enjoy a sunset drink. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

The First (?) 8+ Hour Blowfly Through Trip

29 March 2025 Bungonia (NSW)

by Lana Kim

Participants: Inacio Botelho, Lawrence Coutroubas, Zong Han Goh, Skye Higgs, Laurie Jolliffe, Lana Kim, Lloyd Ofearth, Rowan Phemister, Jack Richardson, & Saami Wallenius

This trip was full of revelations.

Revelation 1: Caving = Pilates.

You workout muscles that you didn't know exist, your entire body is aching the next day and it's impossible to stop talking about it. There is a cute special outfit that you get to wear and after the session you go for a girly pop drink (beer).

Revelation 2: Caves are scary, but spiders are scarier

I huffed, I puffed and I got scared. If you know me as a person, you might be aware that my baseline mental state is 'scared'. When caving it simply elevates to 'extra scared'. Notable scary moments: almost put my hand in a spot full of spiders (cried); had to have Jack help me hold my feet because I was terrified of suddenly losing control of my body and falling to my death (1.5 metres); bat flew past me.

Revelation 3: "Baby" by Justin Bieber is still a banger.

The main objective of this trip was to practice rebelays, and we did practice them. All one thousand trip participants practiced and re practiced and it took a while. During the inevitable downtime we partook in engaging conversations, but after a while all you need is a good song. Luckily, I know one! Baby Baby Baby ooooooh. All jokes aside, as I am writing this trip report several months later due to procrastination, I realise that I forgot how to do rebelays.

Revelation 4: My wife will not let me borrow her car again.

After a great time outdoors and many rebelays it was time to drive home. As usual everyone changed into their clean clothes. The issue here is that even if the clothes are clean, but the clothes-wearer is not clean, the result is one messy car.



The beginners were hard to keep on track. 📷 Lana Kim



Laurie kitted up and muddled from an 8hr epic through Blowfly. 📷 Skye Higgs

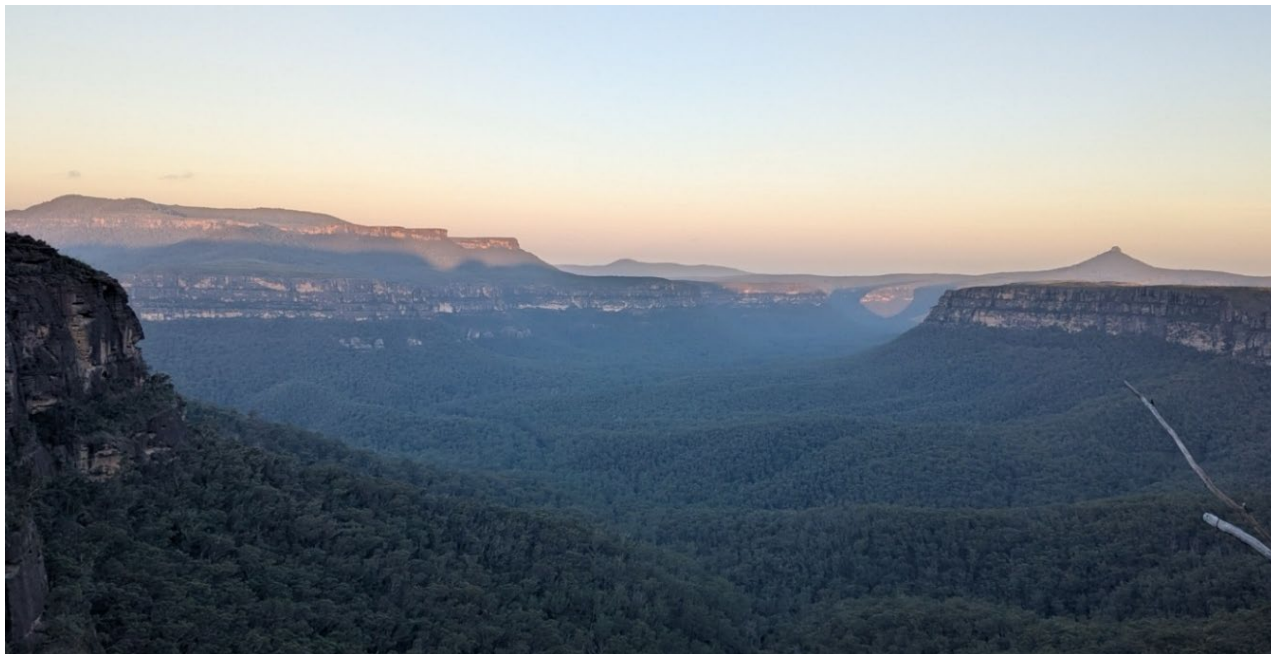
Budawangs Bushwalk Bonanza Extravaganza

11-13 April

Budawangs (NSW)

by Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi with an interview of Trâm Ngọc Lê.

Participants: Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi, Lawrence Coutroubas, Trâm Ngọc Lê.



Dawn rises over the Budawangs on the third day. 📷 Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi

When I got to ANU Sport, Lawrence was there, and Trâm arrived a few minutes afterwards. Lawrence helped us reorder the stuff in our packs to be as efficient as possible. It took around three hours to get to Budawangs from ANU. Trâm and I were very impressed with Lawrence's fluency in our native languages (Vietnamese and Spanish respectively).

It didn't take long for one of the highlights of our trip to happen: After setting up camp near a stream, we decided to go check it out. A few seconds into our conversation front of the stream, a platypus swam by. The water was crystal clear, so we were able to appreciate its majesty to in the fullest. It was a surreal experience. They are quite

smaller than I expected them to be though! I blame Perry the Platypus for that. We ate dinner and sat around the campfire telling ghost stories.

Trâm: You can see I was using my phone instead of a headtorch cause I was super underprepared cause it was my first time camping. I think I was kinda insane for taking on Budawangs as my first major hiking trip! Oh you are typing all of that? Hahahaha.

We fell asleep a few hours later. Next morning I asked Trâm how her night was and she said "Not entirely terrible" (she had a terrible night). We started the hike by crossing a river on which we took our shoes off to cross. It was slippery and cold. The first few hours were mainly horizontal hiking on a well established trail. Trâm was leading, I was in the middle, and Lawrence was at the back. I noticed that there were no spider webs, and thought it was very interesting since usually there are spiderwebs crossing trails. That's when I realized Trâm was headbutting spiderwebs and clearing the way.

Trâm: In my defence, I wasn't trying to headbutt the spiders, although I did make a joke about how I would clear the spiderwebs my height, but you would run into the rest of the spiderwebs. [Editor's note: We note that



Trâm and Loz dine on the first night. 📷 Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi

Loz is again taller than Kiyoshi and therefore would've headbutted a third level of spiders].

The end of the horizontal trek was marked by ropes which we used to get to part of the trail where it was more overgrown. It was at this point where some of the hiking became bouldering and much more challenging. Sometimes the way wasn't that evident and Lawrence would go ahead and scope that path.

Trâm: I wish I remember what Lawrence said about the rock formation. It was this area full of pebbles that was very hard to balance, and when you get past that you see big giant rocks made out of compressed pebbles...

We rested along the way in a cave and near a waterfall where Lawrence taught us how to get water for drinking. We filled our bottles with water from the waterfall and Lawrence used a tablet to purify it. I also took a quick shower in it.

Trâm: Was this the place where we saw the middle aged guys trail running? I felt like a senior citizen compared to them.

Eventually we made it to the camping location Cooyoyo where there were many people already camping. We later learned that it was half a class of med students from Sydney. That day we also went to Monolith Valley, where Lawrence said we could brag we had went to it to y'all reading this report.

Trâm: Monolith valley was very different to the rest of the

ecosystem. There was something else about the rock formations there.

The rock formations were mudstone. They looked pretty peculiar, as you can see in the photo below.

On returning to the campsite, we assembled tents and made a big campfire. We also watched a beautiful sunset, one of the most magical we've ever seen. While we collected fallen branches from trees, some of the other campers in the campsite next to us weren't as eco-friendly and went around breaking trees to collect wood. They had a roaring fire for a while. Lawrence and I had a Spanish conversation. We saw a marsupial that night trying to sneak around to get our food.

The next day was our descent. It was simply backtracking everything we had done up to that point. In one of the locations we had previously rested, Lawrence went out to explore a bit and found a really cool cave with a beautiful view. By the time we reached the stream, we were so grateful for the cold refreshing water on our feet.

Trâm: I remember when we left the campsite we saw a really big lizard called goanna and that aboriginals eat the tail of the lizard. We were in that last campsite because I left a tent peg there. (inaudible) big big lizard.

On the way in we saw Pooh's lair, where people put teddy bears. We also saw Wedge-tail eagles. We also saw fake ponies. So cute. Wow. I'm just yapping.

My knees were incredibly weak for the following weeks.



The mudstone formations in monolith valley.

 Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi

Aprilee Florentine

Tassie Trip to Find Carl's Dream Home

15 – 28 April 2025

Junee Florentine (NSW)

by Lachie Bailey, Laurie Jolliffe, Ally Kelly, & Carl Walsh

Participants: Lachie Bailey, Cole Neering, Eliza Tarcoveanu, Ally Kelly, Carl Walsh, & Laurie Jolliffe (left to right), & Alek Meade (front). 📷 Laurie Jolliffe's Phone



It was decided early on by our friend, mentor, and idol Mr. Lachlan D. Bailey that this trip report would be styled as an RPG campaign (receipts attached). Many nights were spent by the heater working on our stat blocks, considering cave maps, and otherwise being nerds.

Our characters were decided: Sweet W (Carl Walsh), Pepita AI (Alice “Ally” Kelly), The Rampage Spanner (Alek Meade) (ifykyk), Sir Cole of Romulan (Cole Neering), The Alchemist (Eliza Tarcoveanu - the only actual Doctor among us), and Laurie Gentle (Lauren “Laurie” Jolliffe). And our leader, the man in yellow, none other than Dr. Bailey (Lachlan “Lachie” Bailey - who is not yet a Doctor). Why did we follow him? Because, of course, he is in yellow. Together, we were Dr. Bailey & The Merry Band; marauding around Junee-Florentine & being general nuisances. Our noble steed (a 2WD Venue) was dubbed “Moose” (hottest venue in Canberra).

And our handler, the mysterious “SF”, was issued with a different code name each day to maintain his anonymity. What follows are our adventures (refer to page 92 for our character sheets).



The receipts. Lachie has since denied all knowledge of this plan. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe's Phone

A Sandbagging Affair

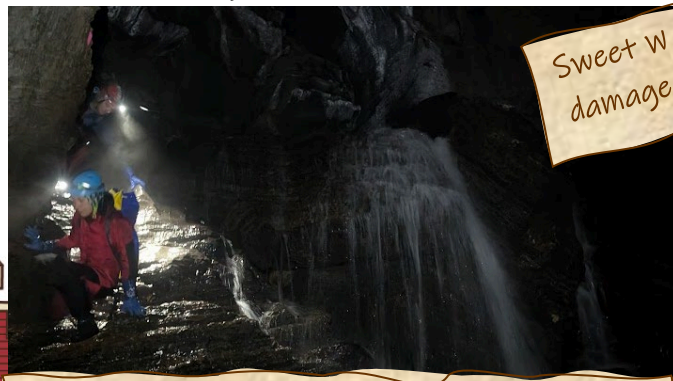
Growling Swallet -> Slaughterhouse Pot

17 April 2025

Written by Carl

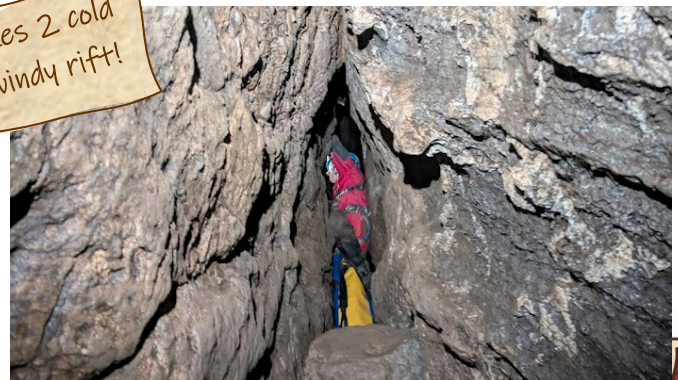
Party: Sweet W, Sir Cole, The Alchemist, & The Rampage Spanner

Our first day in JF! (except for 3 of us...) We successfully got Moose, our hired steed - a brand new Hyundai Venue (no insurance, sorry Steve) to the Eight Road car park with only minor beepings and grumbings from the car's traction control system. After a quick and awkward group photo (above) we split into two groups for our Slaughterhouse-Growling crossover. Lachie tactfully chose to take the group (himself, Laurie, Ally) entering Slaughterhouse, which meant starting with the Wet Concrete Crawl and abseiling the pitches. Alek, Eliza, Cole, and I went in through JF36 via the Dry Bypass bypass (read: not the Dry Bypass), adjusting to the climbs we'd been promised.



The Dry Bypass -Bypass 📷 Cole Neering

Sweet W takes 2 cold damage in windy rift!



The Alchemist disappears up Windy Rift. 📷 Carl Walsh

*Margin art from Freep!k

The Lazuppa Losers

Slaughterhouse Pot -> Growling Swallet

17 April 2025

Written by Ally

Party: Dr Bailey, Pepita Al, & Laurie Gentle



📷 Laurie Jolliffe's Phone

Down down down to the pitch to Windy Rift, poked our heads down to the sump (yep, sumpy), and proceeded up the pitch.

Now comes the fun bit, Windy Rift. My first encounter with this delightful bit of passage involved waiting at the back for 30 minutes while the rest of the party shimmied through. Needless to say, I got cold, I got cranky. Yay my turn to shuffle through, and on the other side found the other group waiting. Gratuitous rant about being effing cold ra ra ra.

Despite my complaints, I was having a great time, particularly when we got to the Slaughterhouse rockpile. Carrying blessedly small bags, we followed the trog trail (and pink tape) up through the rockpile without a hitch. A misinterpretation of the map meant we got about 60% through the Wet Concrete Crawl before realising it was the Wet Concrete Crawl. Alas, no point taking your SRT kit here, onwards and outwards!

Naturally, when faced with the option of a cruisy abseil down Slaughterhouse vs a long pitchy slog back out we made the sensible call and followed Lachie to the top of the hill with the plan to cross-over with the others and exit out of Growling Swallet.

Having been thoroughly warned about the Wet Concrete Crawl, we were wary as we descended the first few hundred metres of the cave. Turns out that with only a few bags to carry and the

freshness of a first day in Tassie, we'd scooted straight past the squeeze with little note.

Buoyed by the smooth start we sailed through the first of the few pitches (I only made a few pitiful squeaks upon seeing how exposed they all were) and the rockpile was well marked.

Not content with the squeezes in the rockpile, Laurie took it upon herself to take a slide into a slot in the floor with the intent to bypass the small pitch at the base of Slaughterhouse. This, predictably, did not work and we spent the next 15 minutes fishing her out.

windy Rift followed in a similar nature, though in this case we took turns needing to be fished out. It was here we met the others, who'd already been thoroughly chilled by the rift. We cheerfully reminded them that that would get the chance to warm up on the long series of prusiks out and continued on our merry way.

Soon the streamway was before us. Lachie took this opportunity to point out the flood line high on the roof above us and I took this opportunity to tell him to shut up. Tasmanians, I have also decided, have an unusual bar for what should be a climb and what is better off as a pitch. Either that or they are all incredibly tall or can stick to walls.

Upon stopping for a breather we decided, as is tradition, to turn off our lights for a bit. Strangely, the chamber refused to dim in its entirety. Glowworms! A nice surprise. Especially considering we were slightly lost. Every right turn since hitting the streamway we had decided was Yorkshire Drain, yet this could not have been true. Eventually we decided to look up and saw the way on glaring blatantly back at us. Oop!

The rest of the trip out went without incident, and I stopped a moment as the exit came into view to appreciate the glorious sight and drink the fresh Tassie water. This unfortunately placed Laurie, who was behind me and apparently not finding peace on Earth, in the path of a torrential waterfall as she waited for me to conclude my

contemplation. Nat 1 on perception there from me (but a pass for Laurie on water breathing).

We made our way back to the car with the dwindling light, dubbing ourselves the "Lazuppa Losers", after Laurie's cult-like lunch obsession. But safe to say we all had a new obsession. JF was closer than ever and I fear to say we'd grow quite addicted!

The Notes (Don't) Lie

The Chairman

18 April 2025

Written by Lachie

Party: Dr Bailey, The Rampage Spanner & Laurie Gentle

I can't be bothered writing this in the DnD style, having never played it, so you're getting a bog standard report here. Alek, Laurie, and I went to JF99 The Chairman. We walked up the hill, and the route was beautifully easy to follow. Apparently, I'm meant to be describing this as "Lachie rolled a nat 20 on perception and we found the path magically cleared".

Anyway, whatever the hell that is... The notes were great, we rigged the first pitch. Got down to where the second rebelay is, couldn't find the bastard. Alek and I collectively spent about an hour swinging around looking for the damn thing. It remains missing in action, although I could see the subsequent bolts. Had a nasty rub point as a result of the bolt missing in action, so we fuffed around and called it a day. Picked some mushrooms on the way back to Maydena, a good feed of shaggy ink caps (*Coprinus comatus*). Most of the group wasn't willing to eat them until they saw me eating them, almost like they thought I was gonna poison them.



Dr Bailey takes a short rest. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

Laurie Gentle rolls 16 with advantage on an aquatics check.

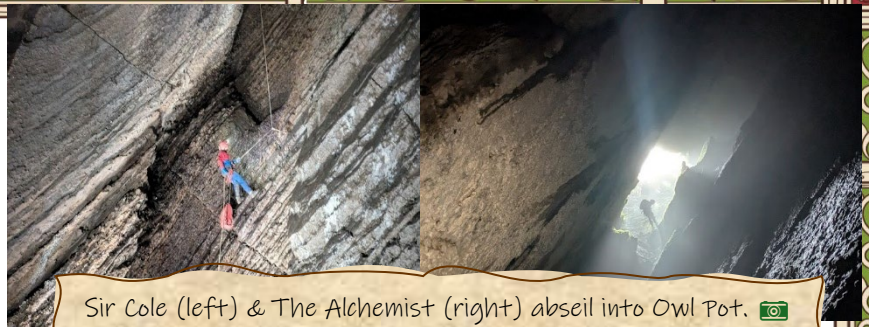
Owls Potentially

Owl Pot

18 April 2025

Written by Carl

Party: Pepita Al, Sweet W, The Alchemist, & Sir Cole



Sir Cole (left) & The Alchemist (right) abseil into Owl Pot. 📷

“YO! ARE YOU CAVERS?” Alan said (I don’t think he said yo), “YEAH, WE’RE NUCC!” said NUCCers in the car driving up Florentine Road. We pulled over. Our first encounter with Alan Jackson and none of us knew who he was. Apparently, these guys were going to Niggly to do some bolting, sounds like thirsty work, so we invited them back to our crib (Maydena AirBnB) for a beer when they were done. The old guy (not the British guy) was asking if we were up to getting our tiny hire car up the Nine Road. “Yeah! We have a chainsaw!” declared Ally proudly (crit fail). “Yeah... my chainsaw...” replied Alan (who had lent us a chainsaw). It was then we realised... this was Alan Jackson (of “Bah” Speleo Spiel fame).

After our encounter with Alan and Ben, we felt the need to come good on our claims that Moose was good for the harsh JF conditions and skidded up the Nine Road to the Owl Pot carpark. The entrance pitch: muddy. Pitches 2-4 lovely. Thanks to the slips and slides of cavers past and some helpful tips from Alan, we had a very easy time navigating and made it to the base of pitch 4 in good time.



Pepita Al is equipped with Chainsaw!
+2 to hit. 1d10 damage. 📷 Carl Walsh

After a bit of a poke about and lunch, we went up and decided the first pitch is significantly worse in that direction. Some time after we returned to the Crib, Alan and Ben rocked up looking only slightly worse for wear. Beer and dinner revived them.

Urbex Side Quest

Greater SE Tasmania

19 April 2025

Written by Laurie

Party: Dr Bailey, Pepita Al, Sweet W, & Laurie Gentle

Intent on a long rest, some of our adventurers committed to a day above ground. The gear-washing set up was optimised, SF issued with his

new codename (Scuba Fantastic), ice-cream was enjoyed, doggos met, and perhaps too much cider consumed.

Inevitably, come lunch time, boredom had set in, and our adventurers found themselves conducting a bit of urban exploration. Caught up in their own quest, the party almost failed to notice that the team underground was approaching their call out time. Panic ensued, Bunnings was speed-run for essential supplies, and the Woolies stop skipped entirely in favour of the party high tailing it back to Maydena. Of course, the underground team had made it out intact (although late). But, as a result of the panic, our adventurers were now out of booze, and on plague rations for the next few days (if only someone had not eaten all the chocolate).



Side quest loot:
new laptop
(works), fancy
cider, & a
women’s weekly
cheese book.

📷 Carl Walsh

Gormenghasties

Gormenghast

19 April 2025

Written by Lachie

Party: The Alchemist, The Rampage
Spanner, & Sir Cole.

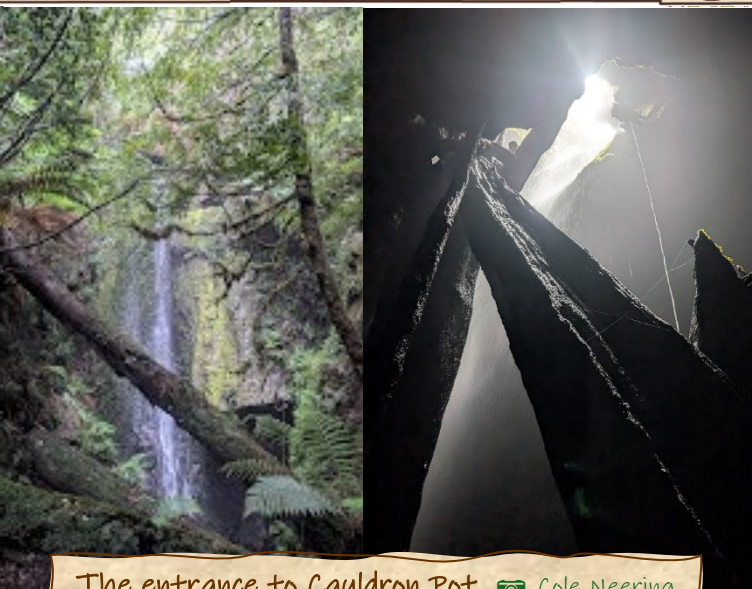
This blather is written by Lachie; I clearly am neither Alek, nor Eliza, nor Cole, and was preoccupied with drinking cider while this trip was happening. All of the above NUCCers were unavailable for comment at the time of writing, so you shall be left with some generic remarks collected from the Gormenghast group on the day.

These are as follows. Firstly, Cole rates the side passages - quite beautiful. Secondly, Alek did a shower squeeze and got wet. Thirdly, they got horrendously lost and were worried about not making callout so didn't sump the cave. Lastly, there were some fun chimneys and fun climbs.



All in all, having been in Gormenghast previously, I think I'd still take the cider tasting if given an option again. It really was quite excellent cider, and definitely better than my efforts with homebrew cider using roadside apples.

The Rampage Spanner receives the 'wet & cold' debuff. 📷 Cole Neering



The entrance to Cauldron Pot. 📷 Cole Neering

Following the Man in Yellow

Cauldron Pot

20 April 2025

Written by Carl

Party: Sweet W, Pepita Al, Sir Cole, &
Laurie Gentle.

After our first encounter with Alan (the famous chainsaw incident), we were hugely stoked to follow Our Man In Yellow into Cauldron Pot for an epic mission (bolt testing). As Alan has already written a trip report (*Spiel 464*, p13), we will distill only the most salient points.

Firstly, accusations of nattering were well founded. As we were essentially "Passenger Princessing" on the way down, we yapped Alan's ear off as he furiously tried to rig his way ahead of us to no avail.

The real fun began on the way up, where testing of the bolts was conducted with a live load, and also the bolt tester. The packs grew heavier with rope, boots grew laden with water, and the ascent of Bill's Bypass began. What had seemed rather innocuous on the way down proved slightly more of a hurdle on the way back up although I (Carl) was appreciative of the tip to strip down the SRT kit and drag the pack up on the tether + cowstails, whereas the others missed this and hauled packs up hand over hand. Ally unleashed her distaste by emptying a gumboot of fetid boot juice... right on Alan's head. Luckily he was in PVC and escaped the worst of it.

The drive back was perhaps the most adrenaline inducing part of the day, where us timid NUCCers were introduced to a new extreme sport: riding in the Wallaby Snuffer. This mechanical beast has a thirst for native wildlife and an apparent disdain for potholes. It has almost as little regard for Tasmanian native wildlife as Sustainable Timber Tasmania...

Big thanks to Alan for his patience. He's pretty spry for an old guy, and is a delight to cave with (for a Tasmanian). Our experience in Bill's Bypass has also inspired other adventures, including Bill's Wine-pass, Bill's Bed-pass, and others.

Constitution check (DC15) if you had
Mexican beans the night before caving.

Porcupikers

Porcupine Pot

20 April 2025

Written by Lachie

Party: Dr Bailey, The Alchemist, & Sir Cole.

Some delicious weather today, and while the rest of the group was helping Alan in Cauldron Pot, Alek, Eliza and I went for a sticky-beak into Porcupine. Mumbling and grumbling about the weather, we followed the taped route in, and were thoroughly soaked by the tree-ferns by the time we got there. We cruised happily down the first couple of rigged sections, bringing a spare 30m rope with us, as there'd been a rockfall hit the rope with unknown consequences for the last STC group.

In the long run, we didn't get too far. I am long, and my leg bones do not like bending through squeezes. As a result, I declined to do one of the vertical squeezes, which was rather close to the bendyness limit of my legs. Alek and Eliza- both being less elongated people- got through it with barely a blink. I probably could have gotten through it had I applied myself more thoroughly, but my enthusiasm was lacking on account of thesis lassitude (yes, I'm going to wring this excuse out as long as I can).

Alek and Eliza roamed onward for another half hour or so, before returning. We called it a day, and meandered back up the cave. Alas, we didn't get down to see if the rope was damaged (as per Suspicious Figure's instructions). Consideration was had of visiting JF7 Frankcombe Cave, but with the rain, we decided we'd head back to the cottage and chill, as everyone was planning some exertion in Growling the next day.

TLDR: We went to Dreamtime Sump, Lachie pondered where Herpes 1 and 2 were, Cole experienced Windy Rift upside down.

Went in via Growling, at least found the Dry Bypass this time, climbs are sketchier that way that the Dry Bypass bypass. Since we were leaving them rigged (1 concrete screw + tape) for the others to climb out on, Lachie decided to showcase the advantages of a rack over a bobbin style descender and abseiled the tapes (Carl tried to do likewise and promptly got jammed). Up through Windy Rift which was quickly becoming my favourite passage in JF (I know most of ya'll are neurospicy so to be clear, this is aggressively sarcastic), up and down through Slaughterhouse Aven and Trapdoor Streamway, until we were staring at Herpes III. This crawl is full of deliciously squelchy mud and ensures total coverage (see the after photo). Later, Lachie was heard musing that he couldn't find Herpes 1 and 2 on the map, which was odd because why else would there be a Herpes 3? Alan cleared this up for him (apparently, you can find Herpes 1 and 2 at some of the local establishments).

After that comes Necrosis and Brochial, convoluted interwoven sets of passages that would be a nightmare to navigate. Thankfully Alan got tired of people being lost in there and taped the shit out of it, making it a pretty straightforward exercise to follow the pink tape. Once through there we dropped into Mainline, yaaaaay stomping streamway!!

We followed this and off into some dusty thing Lachie was trying to find (near Ice Tube) which connected to Dreamtime without having to get wet (we all know how Lachie feels about getting wet). We found this thing (I remember now, its Bloody Smokers) and followed it down through a clay lined slot which was hilarious to get back up later.

Went and sniffed around the Dreamtime Sump. I really like how the character of the streamways changes between different passages. Dreamtime is definitely lower energy, with smaller (well rounded gravel - cobbles) sediment rather than the cobbles and boulders in Mainline which clearly takes more water.

To Mainline & Beyond

Growling Swallet

21 April 2025

Written by Carl & Lachie

Party: Dr Bailey, Sweet W, & Sir Cole.



+1 Filth. 📷 Cole Neering

+2 Filth 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

Notable things as we headed back up were the slip n slide we made of the clay slope up in the slot now that we were a bit wet. A few mild navigational challenges in Bronchial and Necrosis where we got turned around (up, down, back, every which way) and once again the crawl back through Herpes III, which was somehow worse on the way back.

The real fun as always was Windy Rift. This time, I shuffled through and thought "yay, won't have to do that again this trip!!" Lachie followed and had some troubles with his foot loop getting stuck, managed to unclip it and thrutched his way through to the safe side, leaving it for Cole to grab on his way past. Cole started through with his bag behind him [... intermission, as Carl presumably boards a plane at Helsinki Airport, with Lachie taking over...] and proceeded to get it jammed on the chockstone. This left Cole in a rather precarious position, staring head first into the rift, and jammed on his pack.

It was not a tenable long-term place to be, so Carl slithered back into Windy Rift (and over Cole) to unjam everything, while I supported him at the freedom end of the rift. After a bit of heaving (and a nearly new Scurion almost lost down Windy Rift), Cole was freed, but with a substantial expenditure of effort for an end of day activity. Carl made his third transit of Windy Rift for the day, and we all headed for the entrance to Growling. Happily, there were no more surprises on

Author's note (the author is Carl): I write this 30 something hours into flying across the globe (in Economy) thus you're getting the Delirium Experience.

the way back up the cave, as I think some general fatigue and soreness was beginning to set in. Happily, booze and dinner were waiting for us back in Maydena.

[...back to Carl, as the plane arrives in Stockholm Airport and Google Drive tries to reconcile two different accounts of the trip..] Dropping down into Growling, we definitely slowed the pace and took care on the climbs coming back up the dry bypass. We arrived back at the car to find it VANDALISED by a bunch of goons operating under the banner of "Destiny's Children". We took off back to Maydena, all of us wistfully thinking about all the hard liquor waiting back at the house.



Dr Bailey crit fails a perception check on Herpes 1 & 2 with bardic inspiration from Sweet W. 📷 Cole Neering

Destiny's Children

Slaughterhouse Pot

21 April 2025

Written by Ally

Party: Pepita Al, The Rampage Spanner, & The Alchemist

Destiny was most definitely with these divas as we made our glorious return to Slaughterhouse Pot. This much was obvious as I immediately found my lighter (which I'd lost days prior) at the entrance to the cave [Note to all Tasmanians: I fear your judgement and I am aware y'all don't get foul air. The lighter just happens to live on my helmet normally]. The descent went as smoothly as it had the first time and we soon found ourselves looking out over, what was to us, new passage. We paused for some lunch and to assist Eliza with her progress through the 2m of fruit leather she'd purchased. With HP maxed we hopped down into the trapdoor streamway. It took a small amount of bumbling about to find the turn off to the Destiny Pitch. Bumbling which led us to a large



and mysterious a ven a short ways down towards Herpes III. We poked around the old rope hanging at least 30m above us in the roof before figuring that this was probably not the way on.

Back on track, we enjoyed the radical curves of BYO Skateboard, lamenting our ignoring of the name and vowing that next time we would carve sick moves. It was here that we finally reached the fabled pitch. For Alek, this was as far as he'd ever visited so we were eager to see what was beyond. I was somewhat less eager upon inspection of the exposed drop before us, but shut my eyes tight and was soon at the bottom. I was definitely glad to have opened them again as I got off rope, both for practicality and also because a number of *Anaspides* were staring (admittedly blindly) back at us. Most bodacious! After ogling for a few minutes we started the climb up through the rock pile. While Eliza and I took some time exploring the upper chamber, Alek galavanted ahead to Black River camp (leaving "HI" written in rocks to be later discovered in the July Growling Swallet trip).

Content that we had sufficiently manifested destiny, we decided to pack it in for the day. Windy Rift was as unpleasant as usual (but we at least restrained ourselves from any head-first bungee jumping) and we took the opportunity to introduce Alek to the actual Dry Bypass (previously bypassed). Before long we were once again standing in the refreshing (cold) Tasmanian (cold) air (cold air). Eliza and I poked around for bioluminescent mushrooms with no success so instead set our attention on graffitiing Moose. With our profanities sufficiently carved into the car's muddy windows we turned tail for the cabin and enjoyed a luxurious dinner before our muddy compatriots finally unearthed themselves.

Geomorphological Reconstruction of an Archaeological Site in the Nepean Peninsula

Maydena

21 April 2025

Written by Laurie

Party: Laurie Gentle

As my first experience as a trip leader, there were some learning points. Left behind at The Crib to finish my incumbent lab report, I noted that I had been left without a first aid kit and thus was without Panadol to combat the crippling dehydration from previous days of caving (I view this as a failure on my behalf as trip leader - not ensuring adequate safety gear). However, with access to a tap, I did succeed in following the ANU Sport guidelines of having 6L of water per person per day. Nonetheless, the mission was a success, with dinner made, and the lab report completed and submitted. Although Lachie did insist on adding the word "soil" to every paragraph.



Laurie Gentle uses Trackwalk! 📷 Ally Kelly

Gear cleanliness is restored after a long rest. 📷 Ally Kelly



The Lumberjacks



Ally's Phone

Maydena & New Norfolk

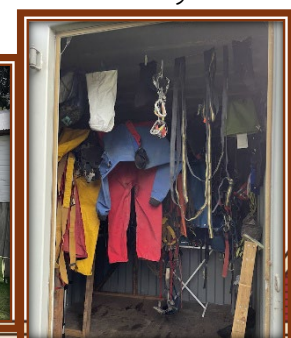
22 April 2025

Written by Laurie

Party: Laurie Gentle, Sir Cole, & Pepita Al

With: Dr Bailey, Sweet W, The Rampage Spanner, & The Alchemist

Another rest day was in order for our intrepid adventurers, and a walk along the trainlines (equipped with flannel) ensued. We alarmed some locals by testing out the two adult loading capacity of the local playground swing, met some more doggos, and speed ran a shop in New Norfolk (we were no longer on the plague rations - huzzah). Following a nerd-out with "Squid Feelings" on Teams about the geomorphology of Juneeflorentine, we retreated to the Bush Inn for a relaxed dinner, and hit some EDM bangers on the drive home.



No Extraction Necessary

Voltera

23 April 2025

Written by Lachie

Party: Dr Bailey, The Alchemist, & Sir Cole

Easy walk in, and quite a nice entrance pitch. The Fistula was closer to the bottom of the entrance pitch than I was expecting. The overwhelming advice from (most of) STC had been that this was the good bit of the cave, so stop here. Cole and I crawled into the horizontal part of the Fistula, looked at the bolts, and crawled back out again. We were more than willing to accept the collective advice of STC. Eliza was more keen to have at it, so jumped down the pitch. Muffled comments were heard as she cruised down and then back up, but she seemed to enjoy it, so all's well that ends well.

The Alchemist entered Rage & plummeted into the Fistula with advantage.

Despite Eliza's entreaties of Cole and me to proceed onwards towards Stairway to Niggly, neither of us were budging in our steadfast acceptance of STC's advice. We posited that it would be absolutely churlish of us to ignore the freely and kindly given advice of the local cavers; nay, it would even be an insult to all Tasmanian cavers everywhere. So we cruised back up the entrance pitch, and out of the cave. It really is a lovely entrance pitch.

The sun was out when we exited the cave, so Cole and I chatted to the birds a bit on the walk back to the car. I think Eliza was more than a bit baffled by this. Poor Moose enjoyed the trip back down the hill even less than the trip up it, with Cole adopting a fang it and hope for the best attitude to maintaining traction.

The Double Date

Porcupine Pot

23 April 2025

Written by Laurie

Party: Sweet W, The Rampage Spanner, Pepita Al, & Laurie Gentle

The quest to find Friendzone! The challengers: the four people sharing the Queen beds at the Air BnB. We insisted on taking a "before friendzone" photo at the cars; just in case we made it to Friendzone and our relationships did not last.

Note: We were informed that a flake had come off on the 20m pitch with the extended access line on the last trip to Porcupine, and that the rigged rope may have been damaged. However, on inspection the rope appears undamaged and several large chunks of rock (fresh breaks, minimal mud) are sitting at the base of the first section of the pitch. The rock was probably 30-ish kg unbroken judging by the size of the remains at the bottom of the pitch. More could've kept bouncing down the rest of the pitch series. All ropes on the rest of the pitches into the rockpile chamber are intact (albeit very muddy so some minor damage might've been missed). The concrete screws are looking a bit worse for wear in some places (corroded), particularly the last 2 deviations going to the rockpile.

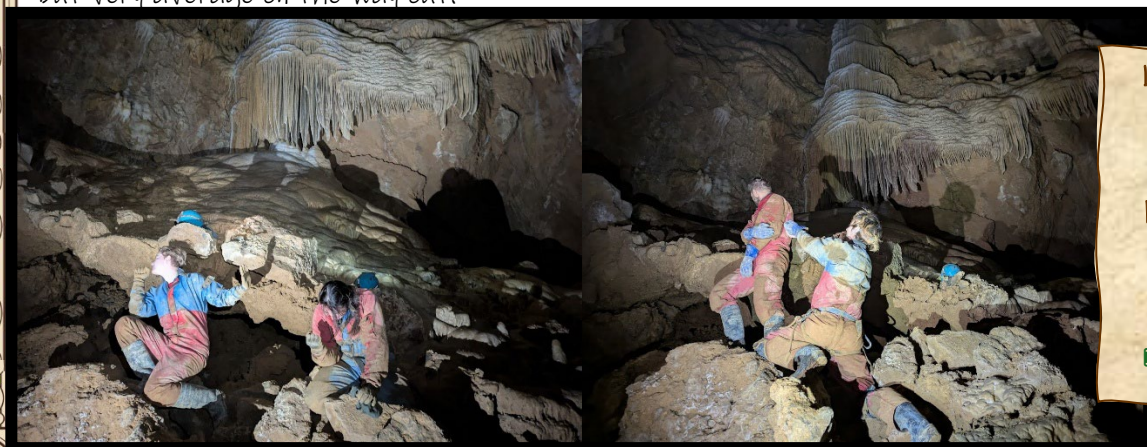


It's a double date! The party all receive +5 Temp HP from 'Romance'. 📷 Ally's Phone

After the descent down the ropes, and a scramble through the rock pile, we began our search for the elusive Friendzone. After much shuffling and crawling Laurie stuck her head up a squeeze hole, and, finding a bunch of formation, insisted this path could not possibly have been trogged. After some conferral below, Alek and Carl also wormed their way up and quickly ascertained this must be the way onto Friendzone. After a quick slide down a slope, and a short scramble, sure enough we were there - our relationships were over.

After sussing the awesome cross straws in Friendzone we took lunch (LAZUPPA) in the Gormy stream. The lads (now broken-up) checked out the sump and the wet crawl while the ladies (also broken up) ascended the pitch series while composing the latest NUCC album. Future Porcupiners may note that there are less loose rocks on the pitch heads. It might also be noted that vertical squeezes can be fun on the way down, but very average on the way out.

Emerging to a romantic, studio Ghibli-esque landscape of glow worms, Carl was unfortunately beset by a clump of mud to the eye and unable to take in the beauty of it all. On the drive out, we were forced to briefly contemplate our mortality, when we encountered a landscape aflame. Of course, this was merely the loggers burning off-cuts. But the adrenaline rush was real.



Laurie Gentle
&
Sweet W
both take 15
Heartbreak
Damage.

📷 Carl's Phone.

The Needles Bushwalk

The Needles

24 April 2025

Written by Lachie (mostly)

Party: Sir Cole, Dr Bailey, The Alchemist, Sweet W,
Pepita Al, & Laurie Gentle



Sweet W
uses
Squeeze.

📷 Laurie
Jolliffe

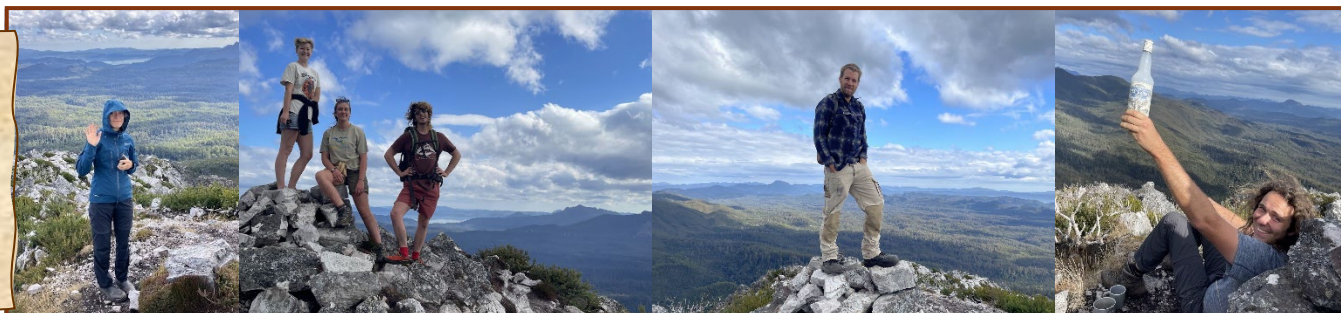
We all felt like a bushwalk today to enjoy the okayish weather- plus, a rest day was in order, as the tail end of the trip was pretty packed. After much haggling over bushwalking destinations (insufficient park passes for Mt Field, Mount Mueller was too much walking, Ida Bay was too far away), we settled on a jaunt up The Needles, a tad to the west of Maydena. It was a bushwalk; we walked up the hill, had a cuppa at the top, then walked down the hill. Nice views of the south west were had, and spleen was vented about Fake Pedder.

On arrival back at Maydena, it was decided* to see who could fit in Carl's 120L duffel bag- just for shits and giggles, of course, not with any ulterior motive of breaking the QANTAS-Virgin Australia airline duopoly on future caving trips. Eliza is potential baggage-fodder, with Carl a close runner up. The rest of us are stuck with full-price plane tickets.

* Lachie was asleep for most of this and thus not able to comment**

** Lachie would like to add that there are photos of him in the duffel bag, and thus he was awake for at least some of it.

📷
Ally Kelly,
Cole
Neering,
& Carl
Walsh



Voltera Voyage

Voltera

25 April 2025

Written by Carl

Party: Sweet W, The Rampage Spanner, Pepita Al, The Alchemist, & Laurie Gentle

With STC in Niggly poking at the prophesied Voltera connection and Steve's voice in our ear, we went to Voltera. Several days of silliness leading up to this meant that group morale was limited and we opted for a quick in and out, rather than slogging it down Stairway To Niggly (a notoriously taxing meander). Eliza maybe had a bit too much energy and started pushing a new dig where the water disappears down a 5m into the cave. I instead went to the pitch and found it a lot nicer than the wet gravel which she quickly abandoned.

The first pitch drops about 60m and is well worth the visit, abseiling down through a large aven and finishing up near the base where it craps out into a choked rockpile. Luckily there's a terrific bypass called The Fistula! We'd been promised horror and misery in Voltera and told we'd certainly find it in The Fistula. Much to my disappointment (having brought extra gear to rig a fun haul), no one got stuck.

At the top of Stairway To Niggly we finished our mission of muddying the waters (to help the Niggly crew trace the water coming from Voltera which worked fabulously). Ally and Eliza, being the smaller members of our posse, were unbothered by the thought of crawling back up through The Fistula and decided to give us a headstart by poking their heads down the meander.

Receive one free kiss from
Laurie Gentle

📷 Ally Kelly

The Alchemist gains XP in
the fistula.

📷 Carl Walsh



The rest of us thought small thoughts and wriggled back up (once again, slightly sad I dragged 2 pulleys and a second rope in).

After successfully navigating The Fistula, I must've levelled up and gained an additional skill point because on the prusik back up the first pitch I magically unlocked the ability to rope-walk. This was great for the first 40 or so metres, blasting up the pitch and feeling like hot shit. Unfortunately, my cardio didn't get a similar buff and before I hit the top my arms and legs were cooked.

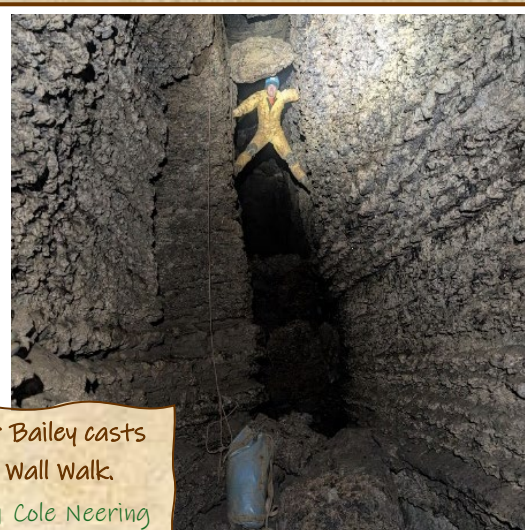
On the surface Laurie whittled Bug (a bug), I made tea, and Alek bumbled about. After a second cuppa and no sign of the smols, I had almost (almost) resigned myself to trogging back up and going to the top of the pitch to check for them when Eliza emerged from the entrance. Huzzah! Homeward to drink beers after a hard day caving.

New Feeling (*insert feelings pun here*)

Growling Swallet

25 April 2025

Written by Lachie



Dr Bailey casts
Wall Walk.

📷 Cole Neering

Cole and I had no intentions of going to Daily Cases on the 26th, and as a result, felt no overwhelming desire to suffer pointlessly in Voltera for the day. Instead, Cole and I decided to go check out New

Feelings, part of Growling Swallet I've wanted to visit for ages after multiple trips walking right past it. The crawl at the entrance needed some flood debris removed, but otherwise the route finding was pretty good. The old ropes at the 14c in the *TCC Explorations Journal* map are extant, and while a bit mud and water swollen, still fit for purpose.

We were looking for the bypass route at this 14c described by Jeff Butt in *Southern Caver* 58. We thought we found it, and thus spent an embarrassingly long time in New Feeling Chamber being confused and thinking we were at Mini Khan Chamber. It didn't help that neither of us have actually ever been to MC1 Kubla Khan, so didn't exactly know what we were looking for, beyond it being a big ol' lump of flowstone. A quick perusal of historic Tasmanian caving literature suggests that we're decidedly not the first people to make this mistake....

The setup of the bolts on the 12p to get down from the phreatic tunnels to Mini Khan Chamber had my fingers itching for a hammer drill and a couple of surplus expansion bolts to optimise it. Despite this, the bolts themselves seemed in decent enough nick (well, the new ones that is, the old ones are nasty). Mini Khan Chamber was worth the stroll to get there, with a striking big lump of flowstone in the middle.

More impressive was the mud speleothems, with some excellent conulites that had had sediment eroded around them, producing a delicate tracery. This is an interesting bit of cave, with some surprisingly large phreatic passages. Cole and I bummed around in here for a few hours before toddling back to the Growling carpark around dusk.



Sir Cole is enchanted by Mini Khan

Lachie Bailey

Laurie Gentle & Pepita Al roll for a navigation check.

Lachie Bailey

"Tassy Pot"

Tassy Pot

26 April 2025 Written by Lachie
Party: Pepita Al, Sir Cole, Laurie Gentle, & Dr Bailey

We had the best of intentions to go caving. Some of us were actually in the cave for upwards of an hour (?!). Faff ensued, and we ended up at Gordon Dam. Photos of faff attached below. I (Lachie) managed to not get arrested for climbing on Hydro-Electric Commission property, and tried to talk the HEC employee into joining STC rather than rousing at me.



Laurie Gentle loses concentration while casting "disguise self".

Lachie Bailey



Laurie's Phone

Lachie Bailey

Daily Cases Bounce

Delta Variant

26 April 2025

Written by Carl

Party: The Alchemist, The Rampage Spanner & Sweet W

The Alchemist
readies abseil as an
action.

📷 Carl Walsh

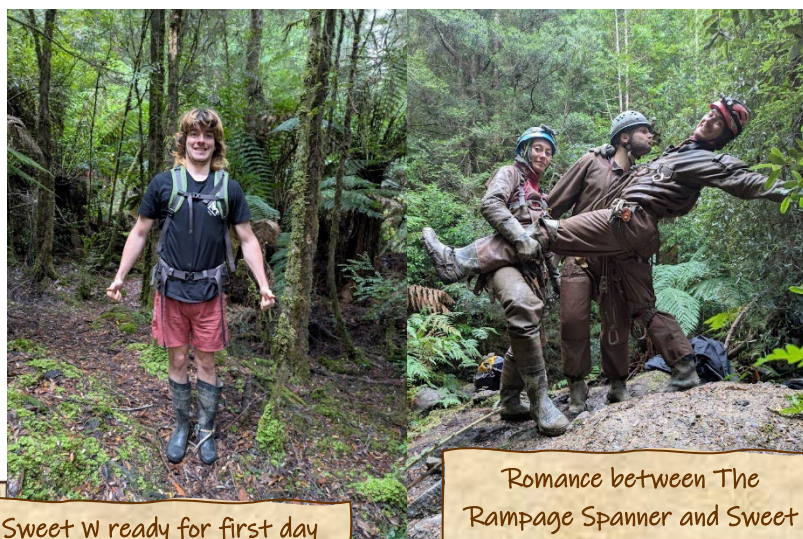


While the others slacked off and went touring above ground, Alek, Eliza and I strolled up to Delta Variant with perhaps the lightest packs to ever grace the trail. Our goal was to bounce Daily Cases; the ~165m pitch that drops from near the top of the hill down towards the connection with Niggly. On the way up we detoured to some of the other cave entrances, including the original Niggly entrance JF237 which has an awesome and ominous canyon-like gully leading up to it. Arriving at Negative Rat Hole (JF761), we had some clues we'd found the right place by the pile of packs outside belonging to the STC group currently at the pointy end of the cave.

Up until now, Second Father had maybe oversold the gnarliness of the JF squeezes (we mainlanders have some good shitty squeezes and not much else to do). Negative Rat Hole however, was certainly as tight as promised. After a bit of thrutching about, we got down the short entrance pitch and into Superspreader. This shoots you out at the top of Daily Cases, the aforementioned very big pitch with 9 or so rebelay, dropping 165m. Several of the concrete screws were a bit loose which added to the excitement somewhat. Down down down, rebelay after rebelay. The aven itself is hard to grasp the size of as it's too big to see the bottom of, mostly because of the water spray in the air. Looking back up from the bottom, Alek and Eliza's headtorches seemed a loooooong way up.

After regrouping we clambered through Close Contact and reached the top of Freedom Day, the next big pitch after Daily Cases. This was probably going to be our turn around point, but I was keen to poke my head over the edge so rigged my Stop and dropped the first leg of the pitch. Above me, Alek's foothold decided to part ways with the wall it was attached to, sending him (clipped into the traverse line) for a bit of a ride, and the rock sailing past my head. No harm done but that was enough excitement for us for the day and we promptly turned tail.

Arriving back at the bottom of Daily Cases and looking up, we were once again pretty thrilled to have essentially empty packs. This was going to be a slog. At the top of the pitch I decided to be belligerent and record Alek and Eliza topping out the pitch and get their first thoughts. Alek declared "I am so not ready for project work" and Eliza reckons "I'm going to have massive biceps after this".



Sweet W ready for first day
of school at Daily Cases

📷 Carl's Phone

Romance between The
Rampage Spanner and Sweet
W restored with an assist
from the Alchemist.

📷 Carl's Phone

After the prusik up Daily Cases, Superspreader seemed more annoying and catchy than it had on the way in, sapping energy which was needed for the rebirthing experience of coming up Negative Rat Hole. For this, as we had pretty small packs, I figured it wouldn't be *too* bad to prusik with them attached, but maybe it would've been a better idea to haul them separately. I writhed and wriggled a bit too much, popping my Pantin off, which left me reverting to the high energy approach of just pulling/pushing hard and



The Rampage Spanner emerges with GHP remaining.

📷 Carl Walsh

thinking skinny thoughts. I did recover a carabiner in a crack that was dropped on the way in though! Alek came up next, making short work of the ascent. Eliza seemed to be taking a long time which was ok with me and Alek who were lying down on the surface admiring the rainforest. As it turns out this was because her primary light had died. Oh well, nowhere to go but up towards the smidgen of daylight!

Lachie's Extended Waffle

27 April – 5 July 2025

Written by Lachie

Having come to the end of our trip, nothing remained except gear cleaning and house decontamination. This took us most of the 27th, and was apparently convincing enough to fool Jetstar and Virgin Australia into allowing the group's luggage to be checked onto a plane back to the mainland. It also somehow convinced the AirBnB owner, who gave Laurie a glowing review after the trip. An emergency run to the Lachlan Hotel at Ouse was required though, as we were finding the cleaning to be very thirsty work, and had promised the STC crowd in Niggly a beer if they stopped past on the way back to Hobart.

Departure day dawned, and panic ensued to get everyone into vehicles and out of Maydena in time for flights home. Once everyone else departed, Eliza, Alek and I had a more relaxed time of it, departing northwards to deposit Eliza at Launnie airport. This was duly done, although poor Eliza had a delayed flight, and multiple issues getting back home to Canberra.

Unlike the slackers who headed back to Canberra by plane, Alek and I continued to slack off in Tassie. Alas, this didn't last long before we were back on the ferry, and between the two of us, we utterly failed to sneak any booze onto the ferry to ease our passage northwards- couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery...

Alek had a pesky phd to show his face for, and ignored my advice that phd timelines were a moveable feast. So he dumped me in Geelong (that well-known part of Tassie) and roared off into the sunset. Happily, my parents happened to be in the same postcode, so I was able to scab a lift to warmer climes. I proceeded to faff for two months before getting back to Canberra, but I'm pretty sure Alek still got back to Canberra faster driving than Eliza did by plane.



Sweet W levels up!

📷 Ally Kelly

Dr Bailey & The Rampage Spanner take the long route home.

📷 Lachie Bailey



A Case of The Gones

Acoustic Pot Bungonia Trip

10-11 May 2025

Bungonia (NSW)

by Zong Han Goh

Participants: Zong Han Goh, Laurie Jolliffe, Ally Kelly, Rowan Phemister, Jack Richardson, & Carl Walsh



Can you spot Jack? 📷 Laurie Jolliffe



Carl gremlining around Acoustic Pot. 📷 Ally Kelly



Zong rates the echo in Acoustic Pot. 📷 Ally Kelly

One autumn morning, Jack was asleep in a bed of brown autumn leaves.

We were excited for the camp and found food at Coles supermarket. We packed sleeping bags that can take the cold to a minimum of -3°C, mats, and tents to prepare for an awesome two days one night adventure in Bungonia National Park. We took about four hours to leave the Australian National University (ANU). Being a newbie to caving and staying overnight with the cavers was a scary but also exciting adventure for me.

Once we reached Bungonia, Jack was looking forward to explore a unique adventure to do a bushwalk as an independent young man while Alice, Carl and I decided to explore the Acoustic Pot. [Editor note: Laurie elected to have a nap “upstairs” due to extenuating circumstances]. Alice and Carl gave me a refresher briefing on the steps to do rebelay by testing and guiding me on how much I remember on how to do rebelay.

When entering Acoustic Pot, the entrance felt like a slide with rocks but followed by about 35 meters deep cave that requires about two rebelay abseiling down a single rope and prusiking up the single rope. It was scary but exciting to do a rebelay down the caves but my two friendly caving seniors guided me how I should abseil and prusik the rebelay, their voices echoing out loud. This probably explains why this Bungonia cave is called “Acoustic Pot” because people’s voices echo can be amplified louder just like how acoustic instruments make sounds.

Meanwhile, after Alice and I went down the caves, Carl was doing awesome moves and trips as he rebelayed and abseiled down. Alice asked him to do at least 2 different poses for the photo competition on 3 June 2025.

Afterwards, we, as three caving explorers were sliding down the narrow snaking path of the caves and then came across two different paths. As curious cavers, I went to explore two different paths but both paths required squeezing through tight spaces. Even though it was tiring,



Zong, Jack, Carl, Laurie, and Ally (left to right) break camp in the morning. 📷 Rowan Phemister

we had smiles as we had fun exploring almost every part of Acoustic Pot Caves as Alice took more photos of us with a hunger to win as many categories of the caving photo competition.

After exploring two diverging caves from the snaking part of the caves, we decided to climb back up the narrow snaking part of the caves that required strong upper body strength. I was grateful for Carl and Alice for using their leg to support me as I tried to go a steep snaking path of the caves as well as guiding me how to rebelay and prusik up the caves. After I managed to safely reach back up the caves, I requested Alice help me take more caving photos up the caves and tested echo level of the caves by making loud sounds. If I had to give rating on echo level of caves out of 10 stars, I would probably give it a 10. Fortunately, we managed to come up from the cave before about 5pm when the sunset occurs.

Overnight: Camping at Bungonia (10-11 May)

After an exhausting but fulfilling our adventurous exploration in Acoustic Pot (at least for Alice, Carl and I), we took a bath, changed our clothes, and refilled our water bottles. When we camped at night, the five of us set up our tents and we sat together on the ground or our camping chairs. We shared our food and had our own dinner, cooking hot pasta and chips with fruitful conversations about caving, as well as our age and favourite colours. I enjoyed staying overnight with caving friends because it feels very authentic as we camp with our tents and camp chairs as we sit by surrounded with a group of thin green leafy trees. We get to see the stars in



Obligatory selfie at the bottom of the Red Track. 📷 Zong Han Goh

the early evening but was unfortunately blocked by the dark clouds at night. Being in Bungonia National Park allowed us to walk at least five minutes to the toilet and bathe over there. At night, I had to wear three layers of clothing for shirts and pants because at night the temperature was about 10°C with gloves as well.

Afterwards, we slept in our tents except Carl creating a hammock tying around the trees and Lauren sleeping in her car. Even though the weather forecast did not show that it was raining, unfortunately it started raining cats and dogs around 3am and Carl and the hammock and Carl become drenched. Hence, Carl had to run to sleep with Alice in another tent. *[Editor's Note: Laurie was also sleeping outside for "Bivvy Bitch Winter" prior to the aforementioned deluge and took efforts to wake Carl up and get them out of the rain. She was rewarded by Carl immediately dibbsing the free spot in Ally's 2-man tent. Thus, Laurie ended up in the back of the Beast II].*

When I woke up from my sleep from my sleeping bag, my hands felt frozen as the temperature ranged around 10°C to 15°C possibly because I did not wear gloves. During our breakfast, we share food and have our breakfast such as croissant, bread toast, butter and pesto. I learnt that both Alice and I had common love for pesto in pasta or as a dipping sauce or spread for the bread that gives ecstatic satisfied joy when we savour food with pesto. After our breakfast, 5 caving members became 6 as Rowan reached to Bungonia National Park at 9am and helped to take a photo of 5 of us as caving members who went to Bungonia and stayed overnight in the National Park.

ZONG'S

ADVENTUROUS RECIPE FOR AN AWESOME BUNGONIA NATIONAL PARK 2 DAYS 1 OVERNIGHT CAMP DURING AUTUMN PERIOD

- 1 **Tent** – Indoor area to store personal belongings and shelter against rain
- 2 **Mat** – Protects you from sleeping on an uncomfortable and uneven ground
- 3 **Sleeping bag** that can keep you warm at a minimum of -5°C especially if it is winter
- 4 **Gloves** – Useful to keep your hands when sleeping
- 5 **Portable Chair** – Useful when sitting down anywhere on the campsite
- 6 **Small Portable Stove and Portable Pot** – Useful for boiling water to make coffee and tea + Cooking cold food such as pasta to make it warm added with sauces such as pesto
- 7 **Small knife and chopping board** – To cut bread into 2 pieces and spread with butter or sauces such as pasta
- 8 **Fork and Spoon** – To eat food such as pasta with pesto
- 9 **Container** – To store cooked rice and pasta to ensure sufficient food for 2 days 1 night camping trip
- 10 **2 litres Cups + Bottles** – To stay hydrated and use it to store coffee, tea or water
- 11 **Snacks and food** – To stay energized when doing caving and bushwalking for a 2 days 1 night trip
- 12 **Enthusiasm + Friends!** – So that even if caving and bushwalking is tough, cavers are tougher than the trials and tribulations in caving and bushwalking

Day 2: Red Track Bushwalk and Rocky Exploration in search for new Bungonia Caves (11 May 2025)

The 6 of us decided to split into 2 groups. 1st group: Carl, Lauren and Jack decided to explore the caves. 2nd group: Alice, Rowan and I decided to explore the red track of Bungonia. The red track of Bungonia is known to be a grade 5 difficulty (super difficult!), steep, off-track with minimal directional signage that is about 5.8km and take about 4-5 hours according to the red track notice board based on the picture.

Alice, Rowan and I started going down the track that was very steep on a ground slope as we are carry our bag containing our water bottles and food to eat. We aim to find possible new caves along the red track of Bungonia by surface trogging.

We get to observe mini waterfalls and rocky mountains as we walked down the steep red track where we also need to carefully scale the rocks by walking slowly, observing our next step and sliding on rocks.

After we went down the slopes, we took a “lunch” snack break as we get to see majestic rocky mountains while we are walking straight with ground rocky paths between the rocky mountains. I felt like a small ant in a large world filled huge mountains as Alice, Rowan and I further adventure in the search for possible caves.

As cave explorers, we observed some potential caves that are could on the rocky mountains but we would probably need to prusik, abseil or mountain climb the rocky mountains so that we could enter such caves in these mountains.

In the pictures shown above, Rowan was standing on the rocks that look like a marking of waterfalls flowing down. However, as we walk further, Alice, Rowan and I had to complete a strenuous rocky obstacle course as we scramble and climb on the rocks as we properly place our hands, legs and body so that we have maximum friction on the rock to reduce chances of injuries due to falls. Moreover, in some cases, we would need to slide on the rocks slowly. This was similar when going to a playground just like when we were kids between 7 to 12 years old but except this rocky obstacle course would be suitable as a playground for adults due to how observant, strenuous and problem-solving skills required to do this obstacle course as safely as possible.



Zong, Rowan, and Ally before the ascent! 📷 Zong Han Go



Ally's car was defaced with several signs including "THIS CAR BELONGS TO TROG DODGERS", "CW, JR, & LJ BLOWFLY SUB 8 HRS" and the classic "GET NUCC'D".

📷 Ally Kelly

After completing the "rocky" obstacle course, our Bungonia red path adventure continues, to the creek with rocks where we need to sure that we would probably place our appropriate footings on the dry rocks instead of stepping on the green mosses to minimize slipping and falling on the water that would lead to disastrous consequences such as getting our clothes and shoes soaked along with bone injuries. Some of parts of the creek waters were so clear that we could see rocks underneath. There are also certain parts of the creek water that would be light blue. In addition, certain part of the creek water are brown possibly due to sediments run-off from the soil surface.

Afterwards, we saw the warning sign to inform that if it a weekday (Monday to Friday) at 3.10pm where blasting

would occur, there will be a 6 siren signals sounding for 30 minutes before 3.10pm so that we have sufficient time to leave. This is so that we would minimize the risk of getting injured from debris, loose rocks and boulders. After completing the path to creek water with rocks, we took another snack break. This was before we had to walk upwards back to Bungonia National Park by the red track path, which was the most energy draining when we bushwalk upwards. However, we would be less likely to slip and fall easily after we walked up the red track path. Rowan and Alice were more physically fit than I am because I kept on panting and having leg pain as I went up. I am thankful that they gave me at least 5 mini breaks when we went up and they supported me as I was in the verge of feeling that my legs cannot move. I was walking between Alice at the front and Rowan at the back.

Fortunately, as we walked upwards, we observed a gigantic rockslide, a layered mountain that are brown and grey along with the zig zag diagonally shaped building as well as a lookout for people to have an awesome spectacular breathtaking view observing beyond Bungonia National Park. I am thankful for travel beyond the horizons of Bungonia National Park with Alice and Rowan as we explore the Red Track with curiosity to find potential caves when we walk down, straight and going back upwards. Going this Red Track Bungonia bushwalk requires moderate walking fitness, ability to put hands and legs in an appropriate place with being able to slide down with our body that are important problem-solving skills on how to go from location to another in a rocky obstacle course. I also enjoyed with deep and fruitful conversations with Rowan and Alice about the possible caves, rock formations, observable features of the red track in Bungonia as well as the comparison between caving and mountaineering club.

After Alice, Rowan and I finished doing a bushwalk on Bungonia Red Track, we observed from the tapes and green packaging of chips on the white car. The tape implied that Lauren, Carl, and Jack were the trogs who completed exploring the Acoustic Pot and Blowfly Caves less than 8 hours caves by testing themselves on endurance and speed in doing rebelay's abseiling and prusiking probably at least 2 times. The last picture shows evidence that Lauren, Carl, and Jack were setting up for rebelay's at Acoustic Pot to probably achieve their team best within 8 hours to complete both Acoustic Pot and Blowfly Caves.

“Everything Happens at Tuglow”

With An Account of a Person who has Never been Stuck at the Entrance to Windows Cave

16 - 18 May 2025

Tuglow (NSW)

by Jack Richardson

Participants: Laurie Jolliffe, Andrew Kowalczyk, Cole Neering, Jack Richardson, Eliza Tarcoveanu, Saami Wallenius, & Carl Walsh

“Everything happens at Tuglow!!!”

– Jack ‘Never been to Tuglow’ Richardson in response to hearing literally anything about Tuglow.

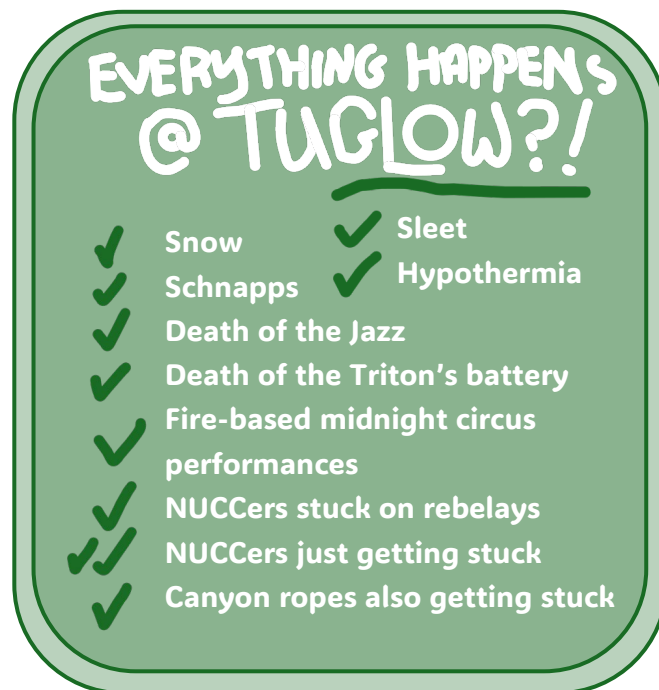
Everything happens at Tuglow... that’s what I was told. And it seems true, whenever I hear a story of a car getting winched, a group got snowed in or something went wrong it was always at Tuglow. And that was true too for this trip.

For other reasons, Tuglow was a special trip for me. It was my last day of work before and the rest of the year was set for travel, so for some NUCCers, it would be the last I saw them. With a 5:30pm meet (or so I thought) I was very stressed at my last day, reassigning all my projects and farewells to team members but eventually, my time as an APS slave concluded and I was able to live my true calling as a hermit in a cave.

A dash to ANU sport later I discovered I was the only one there, and an hour early! That gave me time to heat up my curry, which I ate in the back of THE BEAST (Laurie’s car).

After Goulburn, (like straight after, while Laurie’s still driving) I decide to ‘theoretically’ have a drink or two. Now being unemployed it was the natural course. I convinced Carl to also have one, but we could tell Laurie was missing out and getting stressed at the Silent Hill - esque fog that caused us to drive half the speed limit.

As we turned off Abercrombie Road, into the logging forest, I understood how Rowan gained air last time. The steep decline was broken up by misleading flats and inclines that can very easily separate the wheels of the car from God’s red earth below. Laurie, being an excellent driver handled them with no issue, and I, being the backseat baby I am, was probably having a nap.



Arriving at Tuglow campsite and joining the others, we were surprised to find that we had stumbled upon an international rave equipped with gazebo, full BBQ set up, LED lights and a very loud speaker. They rotated between reggae, Bollywood and American country music. We spent the night drinking Tun, ginger beer and apple cider, and burnt I think an entire tree on the fire. A very nice way to ward off the cold of the coming winter.

That Saturday began with a delay in the form of a very flat tyre on Cole’s Ute. After the typical cave prep faff and a quick spot of car maintenance, we ended up loaded into the tray of Cole’s Ute and zoomed down the trail, stalling only in the river.

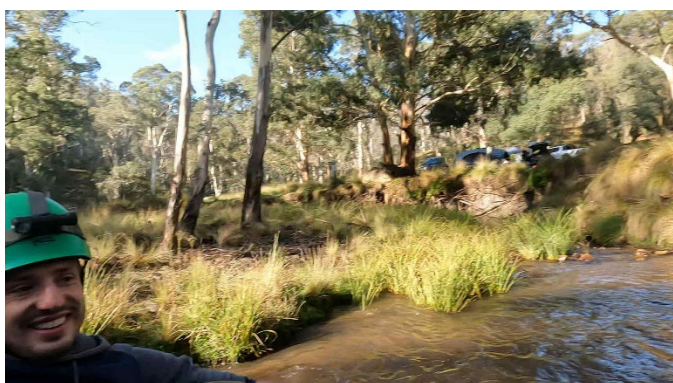


Saami, Laurie, & Carl contemplate the drive to T-1.

Jack Richardson



Not a great place for the Ute to stall. Jack Richardson



Andrew wonders if the Ute will start up again (it did).

Jack Richardson

It was probably good that we didn't have any beginners on the trip, because the descent was rebelay hell. Three or four isolated rebelays, meaning if we got stuck it would be very difficult to get assistance from another caver. I was the second down, and once Saami had joined, the two of us went exploring downstream. It was not the main route we planned, but I was keen to check it out as I hadn't been here before.

The most impressive feature of the cave was the stream way cutting through the black rock, allowing two options of traversing in some places. Either thugging out the wet shoes or chimney walking the tier above. The stream way ended with a waterfall. We found an alternate dry route down, and sussed out the extension, but after deciding not to risk drowning, we turned back. I was sweating buckets

in my thermals and overalls, so I took the cooler route back up, ascending the waterfall itself and drenching myself from head to toe.

We knew the rough route the others took, further up the stream from the pitch. Clout struggled to locate them. Eventually we heard their voices, but due to another waterfall, they couldn't hear us, and we were perplexed how to get down to them safely. Eventually, Carl came back into earshot and assisted us over a hump of rock. We connected with the upper stream way and traversed the very impressive pull-down waterfall abseil.

It had been a few hours by now, and the ascent was not one to look forward to. Saami had all the water and as we sat at the bottom of the pitch, not keen on the added weight, we decided to dump the water so save weight.

We knew the others had ascended, as Laurie had left alpine butterflies in the rope, indicating each ascension, so there was little waiting involved (none for me as I went first).

The climb was brutal and known to take a long time. I believe Carl said they waited at the bottom for 6 hours during the last trip (tbh there were beginners there...). As such we intended from the beginning to stagger the climb so no one would freeze, waiting at the bottom. Twenty minutes and two rebelays up, I was sweating and aching from the prusik, and seriously in need of some water...

Once we all regathered at the top, we winced at the coming cold night and borrowed some surrounding wood into Cole's Ute tray. The drive back, the Ute now fully laden, was even more sketchy, as each bump sent bits of log airborne. Luckily, we were subject to the same inertia, so no harm was caused, and we had another large warm fire that night.

The next morning, I woke up 'early' to cook up some shakshuka, as I'd been craving it in the cold mornings prior to the trip. It doesn't tend to be a solitary meal, so I made enough for everyone. At some point the neighbouring ravers quietly and quickly packed up and disappeared. This phenomenon was to be known as a 'duff-and-poof'.

With the main showy parts of Tuglow Cave seen, I was keen to have a shorter day and went with Carl and Laurie to check out Windows Cave, just next to the entrance to Tuglow 1. This was my first time, and I was also told that Laurie had never been and certainly never gotten stuck in the entrance to Windows Cave.

AN ANONYMOUS PERSON WHO HAS NEVER BEEN STUCK AT THE ENTRANCE TO WINDOWS CAVE

Many viewed this day as inevitable. Some doubted it would occur. But as any true caver knows, the only logical response to nearly (but not) getting stuck somewhere is to go back and do it all again six months later. And thus, there I was, dangling on rope just below the exit, contemplating the hole that Rowan had, six months previously, instructed me to essentially handstand up and out of: feet first and hands on the ledge below. Extensive testing had revealed that this was not, in fact, the best way to exit Windows Cave. Extensive psychological evaluations have also revealed that Rowan can be an ass¹ sometimes too.

This time I had Carl lurking on the other side of the window, just itching to help (rather than a flabbergasted Alek, and a sarcastic Andrew “Oh I guess you’re really stuck, aren’t you?”). And, fearing that things might go badly I had made sure to put the rescue pulley on my harness. Not to somehow save myself, but just to at least temporarily delay Carl in realising their sordid rescue haul fantasies. This time I was also equipped with two previously unimaginable weapons: a harness that fit, and the Petzl Vario.

Approaching slowly and strategically I opted this time to put my knees on the

ledge (as opposed to my hands) and quickly consult with Carl through the window.

“So then I just.... go through”

“Yep, just come through. Headfirst, then you’re out”

“Just like that. Just go through”

“Yep”

“Easy”

“Easy”

I lengthened my Vario, braced my knees, briefly (and vividly) recalled dangling headfirst over the pitch last time, my arms shaking under me as I tried to push myself up and out after doing a handstand for ten minutes straight, knowing that if my arms gave way I would shock load my long cowstail, swing wildly across the pitch and smash face first into the opposing wall and then just be left hanging there upside down bloody nose still stuck in the cave....

“Just come through”

Communication from Carl had gone from reassuring to annoying. So now, emboldened by spite and certain that if I waited any longer he would start rigging a rescue haul I just stuck my head through the window and wriggled out. Just like that.

¹Australian not American use of the word ass.



As always, the entrance to T-1 threatens misadventure.

📷 Jack Richardson



Jack apparently contemplates flight outside T1 (not unusual).

📷 Jack Richardson’s Go Pro (somehow)

It was a short cave with a few small runarounds. It's possible to make a voice connection with Tuglow 1, but it requires planning which we didn't bother with. I had a very pleasant cave nap before leaving and exploring the surrounding area.

Just up the hill I found a beautiful grassy spot with a view of the surrounding hills and river. I beckoned the others over when they de-rigged and left Windows and we shared some chocolate with the view.

The rest of the group was exploring 'Crystal Palace' is located before the hanging rebelay and is a well

documented and supposedly well decorated section of Tuglow 1. Or so one would think. The area was so thoroughly trogged that the section was only recognised by a similar extruding polished rock as seen in a photo from the 90s. The group decided to place a ban on the naming of sections 'Crystal Palace' unless it really really means it. While waiting for the others to exit Tuglow 1, I had another nap, this time in the sun. After the long weekend, and plenty of 'Tuglow' things happening, I think I deserved it.

P.S Can someone please download some other music onto Laurie's phone other than Ghost??

Hay Days at Yagby

24 – 25 May 2025

Yarrangobilly (NSW)

by Laurie Jolliffe with instructions from Carl Walsh

Participants: Zong Han Go, Laurie Jolliffe, Rowan Phemister, Jack Richardson, Nakita Taylor, & Carl Walsh



Rowan rehashes old tales outside West Eagles Nest. 📷 Jack Richardson

I have no idea how we pulled this trip off.

At 6pm on Friday evening (the original planned departure time) I was still writing two of my final Masters' assessments, Jack was roasting four metric tonnes of Richardson Potatoes, Carl was dealing with a work crisis, Zong abandoned carless on campus, Nakita on the other side of Canberra (so far away), and Eliza had been struck

down with the dreaded cold. Rowan made the call to move to a Saturday morning departure.

While Rowan collected Zong and the ropes from campus, I somehow managed to gather a hungover Jack, Carl, their gear, my gear, and breakfast for the three of us from various locations across the inner north and fit it all into The Beast II. Concerned and eventually threatening

messages were exchanged with Eliza until she agreed to go back to bed and we finally hit the open road somewhere in the vicinity of 9:30am (emphasis on the vicinity).

Despite messages from the cars ahead regarding the wildness of Rowan's offroading and Zong's introduction to the Jesus handle, we nevertheless caught them up pulling into the Old Inn car park. A sojourn into the doline and we were up for an afternoon at Old Inn.

After signing the logbook, we helped everyone down to Strawhaven and stopped for a light snack. Apparently feeling benevolent, Rowan gave Carl and I leave to go explore the detrog section while he dragged the others to go reassess the sketchiness of a climb in Wormcast Chamber he and Ben had written off as too sketchy a few years ago. Not willing to wait for Rowan to change his mind, Carl and I gleefully scrambled back towards the rock pile.

Now, the Old Inn rock pile is the setting of one of Carl's favourite stories. Apparently on his first NUCC trip, Lachie took Carl into Old Inn to try find the detrog section. But, confused by the rock pile Lachie sat down to "contemplate the map" with his eyes closed for about an hour while Carl apparently scurried around. As the story goes, Carl did indeed find the way on but was unable to communicate this with Lachie (on account of him contemplating the map with his eyes closed). They never made it to the detrog section.

Determined to right history, Carl had us looking up, down, and around every boulder for a particular set of boulders that they described resembled a certain part of the male anatomy. Unfortunately, there are trog marks everywhere in the rock pile (no doubt from generations of confused cavers doing exactly what we were doing). Having retraced our steps and accidentally gone in about seventeen circles I eventually proclaimed that maybe the key to success was recreating the conditions in which Carl found the way on last time. I made them show me which boulder exactly Lachie contemplated the map on last time (The Rock of Contemplation) and did my best to recline in a gangly fashion. Just as I was assuring Carl that this was all pure strategy and I wasn't really closing my eyes, I heard some muffled but exciting babbling. Carl had found the way on! Lachie must've really contemplated the map hard last time if he couldn't hear Carl.



At last, the detrog section in Old Inn. 📷 Carl Walsh



Laurie and Carl waiting smugly as the others crawl out of Strawhaven. 📷 Jack Richardson



Jack after the ordeal that was exiting Old Inn.

📷 Carl Walsh

INSTRUCTIONS FROM CARL:)

To get to the upper extension you need to climb up and to the right before you get to logbook chamber, about 10 m closer to the entrance I think. There's a sort of upward spiral leading to a mezzanine and you continue in that same up and right direction to get to the small chamber where the straddle block starts.

The next issue was of course finding Carl again. I could hear him above and to the left but getting there was another matter. After three more circles of the rock pile and muffled instructions like *"just go left at the boulder and then up"* and *"Not that boulder. The boulder with the pebbles"* I just gave up and figured I just had to get myself upwards. Identifying a small scree slope opposite The Rock of Contemplation (it's the nice flat one near the logbook) I was able get myself up into the mezzanine level of boulders. Suddenly Carl's voice was significantly less muffled. Traversing around a few boulders to the left (helpful instructions I know) you eventually get to the graphic looking boulders. Unfortunately, the best way across this is to straddle the length of it and shimmy yourself across. Onward and around to the right you come across what could be a little pitch. But if you chuck a boot on the wall, it's easy enough to skirt around and into a little rift to the left. Chimney the rift onwards and you'll eventually make it to the rabbit hole room. The rimstone chamber and detrog section is on from there.

I'd never seen "the golden stream ways" of Yagby before. And, despite the name the detrog section truly was

beautiful. They sparkle in a way I've not seen with any other formation.

After messing around in the detrog section for half an hour or so we made our way back to The Rock of Contemplation to meet the others. However, there was no sign of them – the signal, Jack's jacket (Jack-et) had not been moved. Thus, we settled in to wait. I have no idea how Lachie managed to contemplate on The Rock of Contemplation for close to an hour. Because, after about fifteen minutes we were struggling to keep warm. Giving up and moving back towards Strawhaven, we eventually found Zong doing a completely optional squeeze alone, with the others further back. I am uncertain how exactly their day went, but Rowan has thus far failed to answer my questions regarding the potential climb, and whether it was reassessed as sketchy.

We emerged as night drew into Yagby, and Cotterills Cottage beckoned for some of us. Nakita, who has the most luxurious 4WD camp set up I've ever seen, opted to offset that luxury by camping on the frosted -2° front lawn. Others (Jack, Carl, and myself) opted to take neither the tent nor the cottage and instead made an early start to "Bivvy Bitch Winter".

The second day brought us to Eagles Nest where we, against all odds, managed to navigate our way through the cave without incident. We even remembered the key. Rowan did fail to navigate to the cave without incident. But that's perhaps another story. I would also like to note here that Rowan tricked me into dragging the heavy pack through the gate by clipping it onto me as I was going into the squeeze. Vengeance, naturally, lies in his future.

If the Old Inn detrog section is 'pretty', Eagles Nest is gargantuan. The formation just... keeps going. Grey flowstone, golden rimstone pools, straws. You tilt your head at another angle and you see something else truly



Carl and Rowan post Old Inn exit. 📷 Jack Richardson



The NUCCers descend into Eagles Nest. 📷 Jack Richardson



Zong had a grate time going through the gate.

 Jack Richardson



Laurie judges Rowan changing the redirect to a rebelay into West Eagles Nest.  Jack Richardson



Jack captures the glimmer of flowstone in Eagles Nest in a single photo.  Jack Richardson

beautiful you'd missed not a moment before. We toured around before eventually dragging ourselves out around 1pm so Nakita could leave early.

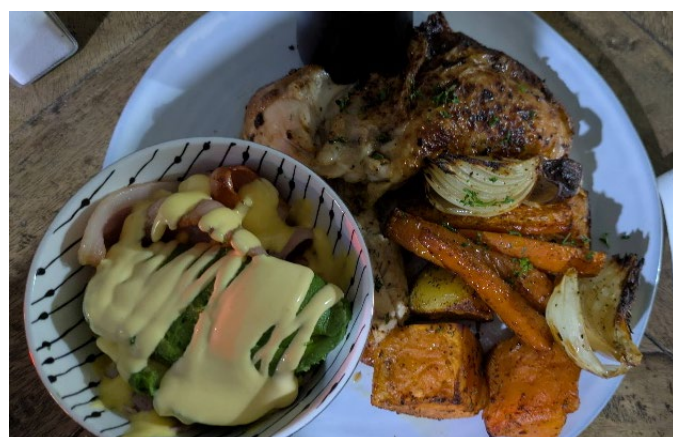
The rest of us spent the afternoon abseiling into West Eagles Nest - the site of another NUCC tragedy some years ago (wherein Rowan successfully navigated to the cave but not through the cave). Like modern tourists at an ancient Greek theatre, we visited the site of "the awful exposed vertical squeeze" that connects West Eagles Nest to Eagles Nest and verified that it was in fact, an awful exposed vertical squeeze. Only Rowan chose to go all the way up. Carl explored up it enough to verify its horridness. Meanwhile I identified a second, more squeezier but less exposed way up that I might have gotten through if I'd taken my kit off.... Maybe. Really didn't fancy it though.

The lesson to learn here is:

a) If you're lost in Eagles Nest and encounter the vertical squeeze that connects to West Eagles Nest... It's fairly simple to get down, but fairly horrid to get up.

b) Do not listen to Lachie when he says that the West Eagles Nest exit is "walkable", "scramble-able", "free climbable" or anything "-able". Turns out Lachie has never actually been to West Eagles Nest. Carl and I scoured all possible avenues out and short of jumping across a three meter chasm or doing an exposed 25m free climb (neither of which are actual options) you cannot get out without a rope.

Wisdom imparted, we prusiked out and made for the Snow Goose Motel for a good pub meal. Where Zong, (who had introduced us to the concept of guacamole with absolutely anything the night before - ravioli and octopus in this instance), took the opportunity to continue our education by ordering a side of guacamole with his Sunday roast.



Zong's Sunday roast with a side of prawns & guacamole.

 Zong Han Goh

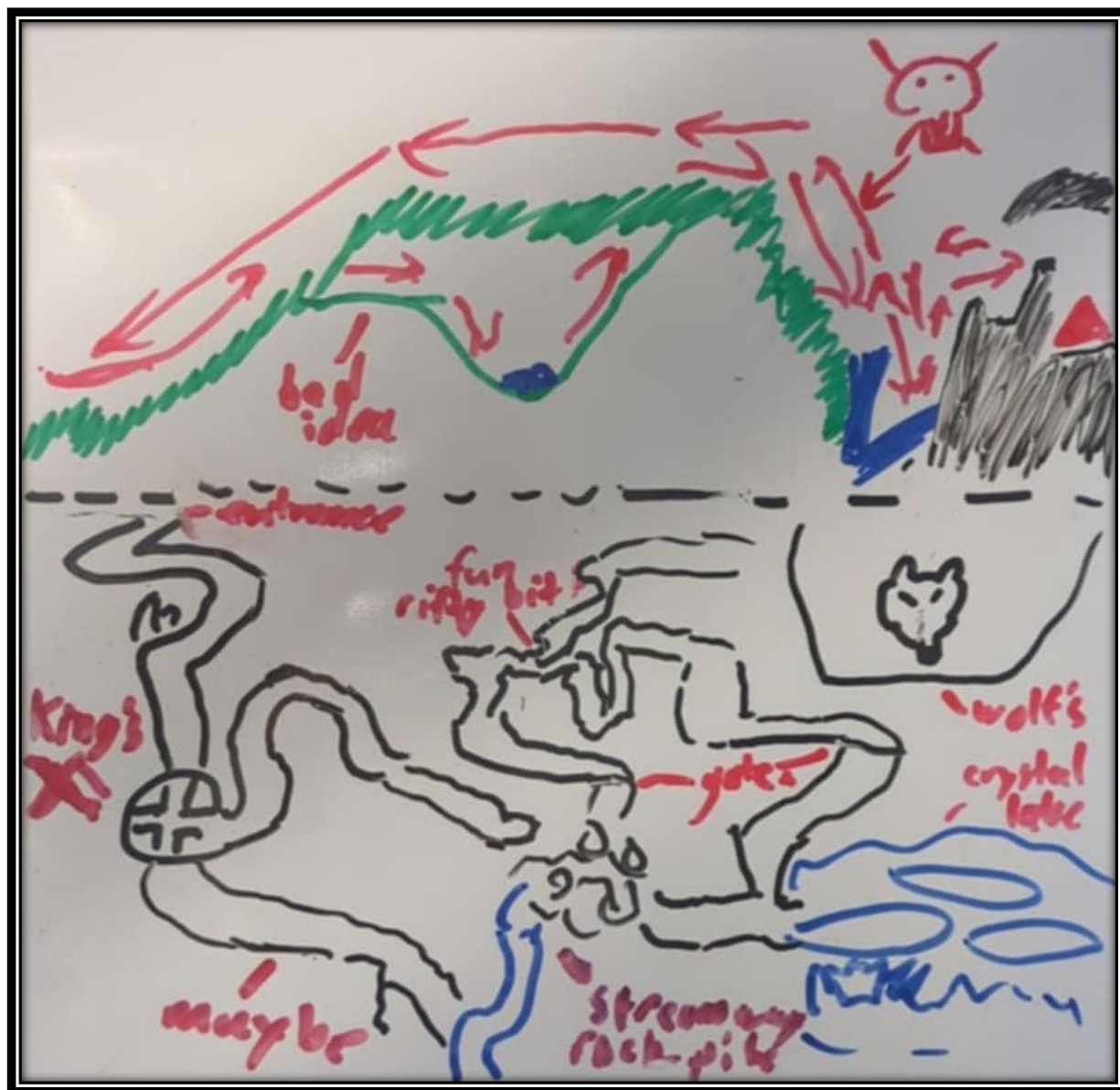
A Better Map of Colong

31 May – 2 June

Colong (NSW)

Map by Alek Meade, Commentary by The Editors

Participants: Andrew Kowalczyk, Manny Kruza, Alek Meade, Cole Neering, Rowan Phemister, Floyd Stevenson, & Saami Wallenius



A glorious return to Colong has been on the agenda since the inception of NUCC's *2025 Year of Exploration*. Formerly a familiar haunt, none of today's NUCCers have stepped within Colong's hallowed halls.

After careful deliberation, NUCC concluded that we could only send our best team on this most important mission... but alas the best team was not available. Instead, in our usual fashion we simply sent whoever was available and willing. And thus a lads' trip was born.

What occurred on the lads' trip The Editors could not say. Complaints have been made regarding the state of the Colong track, suggestions made about rotary hoes, and even more complaints made about the available cave maps. When The Editors dared solicit a trip report and photos for this most important mission, the only reply we received was the above "Better Map of Colong".

They say that a cave map truly does not make sense until you have been into the cave in question. In this instance, The Editors could not agree more.

Buchan Caving Expedition

A Tale of Separation, Salvation, & Soggy Circumstances

6 – 9 June 2025

Buchan (Vic)

by Claude Sonnet 4*, prompts by Ben Hofmann with Girls Trip by Ally Kelly

NUCC Participants: Zong Han Goh, Ben Hofmann, Laurie Jolliffe, Ally Kelly, Cole Neering, Jingjing Pan, Rowan Phemister, Eliza Tarcoveanu, & Nakita Taylor

* The Editors note that the AI software Claude Sonnet 4 has never been in a cave, and therefore readers are advised to interpret its trip report with common sense and discretion.

Being a comprehensive account of the annual King's Birthday Long Weekend pilgrimage to the limestone labyrinths of Victoria's Buchan region, featuring

organisational chaos, aquatic reptile rescue missions, and questionable Hollywood safety measures.



Formation in Shades of Death (see Girls' Trip). 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

Pre-Departure: The Great Splitting of Ben & Ally

Our expedition began with the kind of logistical complexity that would make a UN peacekeeping mission seem straight forward. In a move that can only be described as either tactical brilliance or cruel fate, Ben and Ally found themselves separated for the journey south – presumably to ensure punctual arrival rather than the alternative scenario of roadside romantic entanglements causing significant delays to an already ambitious itinerary. *[Editor's Note: Ben would like it noted that Claude has grossly misrepresented the events of last year's Buchan trip. Ally concurs].*

Day 1: Morning Revelations & Underground Disappointments

The Dawn of Disorganisation: The first day revealed a fascinating anthropological phenomenon: the stark contrast between NUCC's military precision morning routines and ROC's more... interpretive approach to timekeeping. Our NUCC contingent, despite being geographical strangers to the Buchan terrain, found themselves thrust in leadership roles with the bewildered enthusiasm of tourists suddenly appointed as tour guides.

The Goanna That Wasn't: Our primary objective – locating the presumably magnificent Goanna cave – proved as elusive as its namesake reptile. With the adaptability that characterises all great expeditions, we pivoted to rigging Sundial instead, demonstrating that in caving as in life, sometimes you settle for telling time instead of chasing lizards.

Operation Turtle Rescue: A comedy of errors midday bought urgent intelligence regarding a chelonian in distress – a lost turtle discovered in Oolight cave. With the noble instincts of underground first responders, we mobilised a rescue team. However, our mission was undermined by navigational instructions that can generously be described as “interpretive”. The turtle, displaying remarkable patience with human incompetence, remained in situ until a guided rescue operation the following day.

Baby Peirre: The Anticlimax: The afternoon expedition to Baby Pierre began promisingly, with ally demonstrating admirable commitment by descending hallway down what we believed to be the main passage. This enthusiasm was somewhat dampened when local intelligence informed us what we had, in fact, dispatched her down the entrance to an entirely different cave system. Baby Pierre itself proved to be the underground equivalent of a disappointment sandwich – featuring a modestly challenging entrance pitch by lacking any memorable characteristics that might justify future visits.

Baby Berger: So Closer Yet So Far: Those possessing residual energy (supplemented by Vince from FUSSI) attempted Baby Berger, only to discover that our rope was approximately three meters short of reaching the bottom. We extend our gratitude to Rowan for this precise measurement, though one suspects this information might have been more useful prior to descent.

Day 2: Multi-Cave Assault & Cinematic Criticism

The Great Trifurcation: Day two saw our forces divided into three specialised units: Ben shepherding two ROC members through Elk River, Rowan leading an expedition to Hades, and our female contingent joining Nigel for what was ominously named “Shades of Death”.

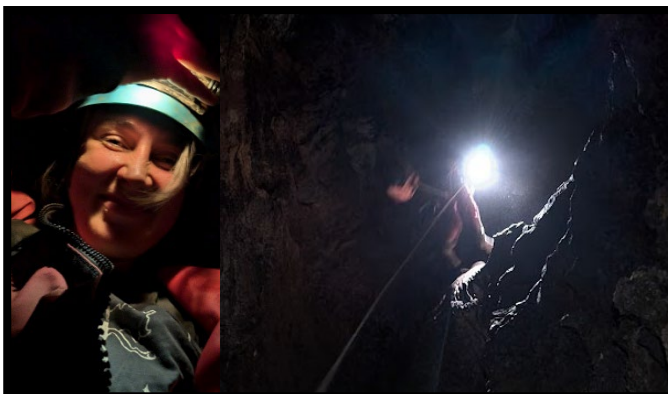
Hades received uniformly positive reviews, while Shades of Death lived up to its benign reputation by producing zero casualties – despite some concerning whispers about non-compliance with certain individuals’ personal views on caving standards.



Rowan announces his bid for Nap Officer 2026 in Sundial. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe



Eliza: coolest woman in Buchan 📷 Laurie Jolliffe



Some downtime was had in Sundial after Rowan’s group caught Britt’s group. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

SHADES OF DEATH



Girls' Trip

(+Nigel)



On Sunday, Laurie, Eliza and I (Ally) bid the NUCCers a goodbye and set out for Shades of Death (invitation courtesy of Britt's well leveraged connections). Our powerful feminine energy was complimented by that of Kristin (VSA) and, most enthusiastically, Keith (Rogue Agent), who'd promised to guide us through the ominously named system. Under the wise and watchful gaze of Nigel (VSA) our subsurface sorority squeezed and crawled our way into the bowels the cave. The formation was as varied as it was brilliant, with huge pools of dog tooth spar, selenite needles and plentiful stals. We were admittedly disappointed to not find "dick and balls chamber", however we agreed this wouldn't have been in the spirit of our femininomenal frolic. Nigel took the opportunity to show off the former show cave's lighting before returning us to the warming sun of the surface. Thanks for having us VSA! Shades definitely passes the Bechdel test.

Elk River: An Exercise in Hydrological Endurance:

Ben's leadership of the Elk River expedition proved particularly noteworthy, given that the team consisted of unfamiliar cavers armed with navigational instructions that covered only the "Significant parts" – a term that proved frustratingly relative. The two roof sniffs en route to Bathtub Chamber provided cardiovascular challenges that separated the committed from the merely curious. The team's subsequent rapid exit strategy, motivated by the cave's enthusiastic water temperature, demonstrated admirable tactical thinking.

Movie Night: Hollywood vs Reality: Hurricane conditions forced the abandonment of traditional movie night at Wilson's – a recurring theme that speaks to either consistently poor weather luck or questionable venue selectin. The evening's entertainments, "Journey to the Centre of the Earth", provided ample opportunity for professional critique. While the film demonstrated remarkable accuracy in depicting female cavers, modern academic rivalry, and geological formations, the rope

work displayed such egregious safety violations that it fundamentally undermines the entire premise. One suspects the film's technical advisors were either absent or ignored. *[Editor's Note: Ben insists he prompted Claude to write about the treatment of speleological ducks in the movie. Claude's apparent dismissal of this instruction is clearly fowl erasure].*

Day 3: Meteorological Challenges and Accommodation Revelations

The Wet Morning Standoff: Overnight precipitation continued into the morning creating a Mexican standoff between cavers, weather, and equipment. Pack-up operations were delayed as participants demonstrated a curious reluctance to become thoroughly soaked – a preference that speaks well of their judgement if poorly of their hardiness.

The Great Accommodation Deception: Morning light revealed the full extent of Ally's accommodation arrangements for Zong. What had been promised as standard tent space proved to be a swimming pool-adjacent location, explaining the remarkably affordable rates. Our budget-conscious approach to loading had placed use squarely on the local floodplain – a fact that became increasingly relevant as water levels rose.

Wilson's Cave: The Final Frontier: With most participants showing the kind of enthusiasm for further caving typically reserved for root canal procedures, only

Ben and Zong (in a partnership that surprised absolutely no one) volunteered for a final underground expedition. Their assault on Wilso's Cave proceeded while the remainder of the group pursued more civilised coffee-based activities. The sensation of being deposited for sporting activities while parents retreated to comfort was entirely coincidental and certainly not deliberately fostered by the circumstances.

Wilson's Cave provided genuinely interesting formations and passages, though the available time proved frustratingly limited. The duo's observation of rising water levels from the cave's interior provided both scientific interest and a natural countdown timer for their exit strategy. The annual Buchan expedition continues to provide valuable lessons in logistics, leadership, and the fundamental unpredictability of combining humans with underground environments. The expedition's success should be measured not in cavers conquered or formations photographed, but in the accumulation of stories that will improve with each retelling.



Zong is impressed by the waterflow at Wilson's.



Ben contemplates returning to the deluge.



It wouldn't be Buchan without a bit of light flooding.

THOU ART MINE ENEMY! Bendethera ~~Be My Friend~~

13 – 15 June 2025

Bendethera (NSW)

by Ally Kelly

Participants: Ally Kelly, Laurie Jolliffe, Alek Meade, Jack Richardson, Saami Wallenius, & Carl Walsh

Recipe for a Full English Breakfast

Reviews [Jump to recipe](#)

Hearty and warming, a Full English is sure to satisfy many a hungry caver. This praise-winning breakfast recipe comes together with a devil-may-care cooking style and ever charming set of melted sporks. Faff and delight for the whole expedition!

Our Story

The Bendethera Caves were first described over 110 years ago. Despite this they remained cryptic for a long time, only being rediscovered and surveyed for the first time in 1960. After a brief period of intense interest that extended into the late 1970's, research into the area ceased with the incorporation of the region into Deua National Park. Since then, a few caving groups have returned to the area to again search for the elusive caves. Unfortunately, efforts have been largely uncoordinated and almost entirely un-digitised.

Enter NUCC... To say the club has influenced the advancement of caving in Bendethera whatsoever would unfortunately be a boldfaced lie. But what we lack in credibility we make up for in ambition.

The fascination began in the sunset of 2024 with a coast trip that brought, in all honesty, mostly hangovers but also introduced us to Bendethera. Or at least Bendethera campground... (*Vol 29.1- Bendethera & the Lengths Cavers Will Go Oct 5-7, 2024*).

Since then, the caves have become something of a white whale. Despite not ever having so much as visited the existing mapped Bendethera caves, the explorers of NUCC have turned their attention to potential unexplored karst to the north and east of the area. An earlier, professedly harrowing, quest to Deua had sighted a tantalising face of exposed rock from the Minuma fire trail. Meanwhile our resident geologists (read: rock nerds) had been poring over various maps and noticed a limestone outcrop east of the river that had apparently remained unvisited during the early days of discovery in the region.

And so our story begins, with two targets, seven NUCCers and the promise of new discovery buried within the steep and forested wilds of Deua.

You Will Need

On a cold Friday in the depths of winter, our brave NUCCers shared a pint at the Captains Flat Pub as they poured over their many maps. The plan was simple, but it would require some grit as the trip promised extensive bush bashing, steep terrain and high potential to lose our way in the dense vegetation. We downed a Captain's Flat mystery shot (WTF is Black Death?) and set out for Bendethera in our two vehicles, prepared for anything the wilds might throw at us.

As we hurtled through the dark in Saami's Triton, I commented blithely at how lucky we were to have such a capable vehicle along with us on the trip. We weren't far off the turn into the national park, but my spirits were already buoyed by the knowledge that our steed could carry us through the tough terrain to come.



A strategy session at Captain's Flat Pub left us more confident than we ought to have been. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

“Is that smoke?” Saami was peering suspiciously out the front windscreen, eyes on the bonnet.

“Just fog I think,” replied Alek.

“You sure?” questioned Saami dubiously as he disappeared beneath an ocean of sickly-sweet smelling smoke which was rapidly pouring out from beneath the car’s bonnet and filling the cabin.

By the time Saami had executed an emergency landing, the Triton was more smoke machine than vehicle. It wasn’t long before our other vehicle, ‘The Beast’, a diminutive aqua Pajero-mini adorned with Rottneest Island stickers and barely retained WA patriotism, pulled in behind us to investigate. We popped the bonnet for a diagnosis. The ten of swords inverted and the Devil. It wasn’t looking good. The Triton managed to limp to the turn-off, but it was already clear that it would get no further. With little better to do, we got a fire going and cracked open some drinks with the promise that the night was not for decision making and all would be well in the morning.



Laurie performs a tarot reading for the Triton. The cards tell a grim tale. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

Forced to make camp on the Middle Mountain Range turnoff. 📷 Ally Kelly

Why You'll Love This Recipe

The NRMA driver arrived close to 11am. The Saturday morning had been lazy for most, with the exclusion of Saami and Laurie who’d spent their time shuttling back and forth in The Beast to get reception and contact help. By the time they returned, a full English of a scale hereunto only dreamed of was in full swing. After about ten different courses and a side-bar to do a lil bootscootin, the NRMA driver appeared.

The prognosis was grim and a tow truck prescribed. We collectively bit back a curse but reluctantly set ourselves to figuring out a new plan for the day. Saami would be sacrificed to the cause of rescuing his car but that still left us with five NUCCers, all our gear and only one tiny Pajero. In the usual club spirit, we elected to say, “fuck it”, and piled in. The clown car fit all barring Alek’s swag (RIP), and our prospects were already brightening. Maybe Bendethera was



Jack with his Full English birthday cake. 📷 Ally Kelly

Carl & Laurie slave away at the griddle. 📷 Ally Kelly

The Full English in full swing. 📷 Ally Kelly

back on the menu. Cautiously optimistic, it was decided that we would push on. Like a captain going down with his ship, we watched Saami disappear in our rear-view mirror with the knowledge that this white whale would elude him once again. Feeling only a little bit bad, but a lot bit squished we charged onwards in the laden Beast.

The Minuma fire trail, it turns out, is not as flat as it looks on aerial maps. It's rocky, steep and at times quite exposed. Yet even as conditions on-track deteriorated, The Beast battled on. However, bearing the weight of so many passengers, so much cargo and so many hopes was always going to be too much for one vehicle. We were about a third of the way down the trail when we encountered "The Law"; a great cobbled slope that loomed dark over The Beast. It must be said we tried, sliding backward down the slope regardless of the run-up or number of passengers. But alas, The Beast of Burden could go no further, and after being warned that the trail ahead would only get worse, we did not ask her to.

We were conflicted as we stared out over the Bendethera landscape below the precipice that had bested us. Our quarry felt almost within reach. But we were beaten. Three times she had eluded us, yet we were no closer to learning its secrets. Returning the way we'd come, we nursed our bruised egos but felt the unspoken promise that we would one day return and finally claim victory over the elusive karst. *[Editor's note: There is no doubt The Beast could make it up The Law with a third go. Contributing factors (the diminishing daylight, lack of a support vehicle, and the prospect of a -5° night at Deua Trig Point) turned us around.]*



The Beast tries her best but is bested by
The Law. 📷 Ally Kelly

Another unsuccessful mission. Another group photo at
Bendethera trig point 📷 Laurie Jolliffe's Phone

Tips I Swear By

All was not lost. The Braidwood pub was deemed quite nice as we stopped in to reunite with Saami and say hello to his folks who had come to retrieve him (and their car). Those of us still standing made tracks to the Wog Wog campsite and settled in for a chill evening. Sat around the fire we reflected on what we had lost in the short 24hrs that had led us to this moment: a whole vehicle, a person, Alek's swag, a dozen Sydney lemons, most of our food, all the firewood, and a handsome amount of booze. It didn't make for the most successful expedition we had to agree. But the night was long, and the booze was not completely gone so things really could have been worse.

The Sunday morning was cold. Or at least the swag-less Alek would probably say as much. We'd slept about as well as could be expected with the nearby country-bro music extending nearly as long as the alcohol tolerances of our neighbours. We stretched our legs with a bushwalk out into Morton National Park which quickly turned into a nap in the sun, but all agreed that between the chatty lyrebirds and the much-needed vitamin D that enough had been done to justify returning back to Canberra. Though our mission had not yielded success, fun was still had and the burning desire to conquer Bendethera redoubled for another day. For some day, one day, we would return.



Definite evidence of making it to Bendethera [the non-haunted photo]. 📷 Ally Kelly's Phone

Recipe for a Full English

Prep:
30min

Cook:
3+ hrs

Serves:
Slay

Recipe Contributors:



Ally Kelly



Saami Wallenius



Carl Walsh



Jack Richardson



Laurie Jolliffe



Alek Meade

... + [3 more](#)

Equipment:

Mr Bailey's Karst Iron Pot

The Deua Bear

All the Cooking Equipment you Collectively Own

***Tip:** for an authentic, full-body Full-English, ensure the pan being used has not been cleaned since the previous cook-up, even if (especially if) that was at least three months prior.*

Ingredients:

1kg	Hashbrowns
1 Bag	Mushrooms
2 Tins	Baked beans
12	Eggs
1kg	Suspicious Vegie Log
2kg ¹	Onion
500g	Spinach
500g	Bacon
6	Tomatoes
1kg	Halloumi
180g	Bocconcini
1	Overpressurised Coolant System
5 Cans ²	Hahns Wheat Lager
2-3 Bags	Car Chippies ³



Serve with:

Toasted English muffins (GF options available)

Nice fella from NRMA

Tow truck

Swag (optional)

Instructions:

1. Take all ingredients.
2. Put all ingredients on pan over fire.
3. Not the NRMA man.
4. Consume over the course of 3-4 hrs.
5. Optional dance party.

¹ A ratio of three onions to one person is traditionally observed.

² Go ahead and ignore the person who can't have gluten. It's not like she always gives you cider and ginger beer.

³ To snack on while you're waiting for everyone to argue about how to get the fire optimised for cooking.

“A Plague Upon the Deserving Hedonists”

20 – 22 June 2025

Wombeyan (NSW)

by Thomas Hill

Participants: Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi, Thomas Hill, Laurie Jolliffe, Manny Kruza, Alek Meade, Cole Neering, Rowan Phemister, Floyd Stevenson, & Eliza Tarcoveanu



The SUSSers slowly reverse into Locksmith. 📷 Tom Hill

An icy sheet covered a canvas sea as grey incandescence peered through the enclosed vale. Strange sleepers tossed within enfrosted ridges, benumbed with the chill of a ceaseless June night. A small city of tents, inhabited by NUCC and SUSS, lined the ground as dawn frowned upon the visitors of the vale. Layers did little to appease the dull numbness which spread through their extremities: not even for you Cole; who once indulged the notion that three sleeping bags would be enough to keep out cold such as this. Boots hardened to stone, water bottles froze, wetsuits became fixed to the rigid forms into which they were thrown. Through a haze of half-consciousness the cavers envisioned wisps of their native vaults where the seasons would never reach them. Little more than faint visions fading away as the sky brightened their gulf.

The cavern dwellers wandered about the plain like abandoned row boats on a flat lake. Adrift, they float here, they float there, standing about the open space. Soon the frosty white sea withdrew to leave a crystalline shade where the image of their settlement marked the hard soil. Eventually, they found their way into coveralls with helmets in their hands. Glaciers will cross oceans given enough time.

Later, the cave people were waiting by a sunny stream for their leaders to collect keys or permits or something. Sallowed, ghoulis faces winced as the harsh light offended their eyes, hastening these creeping souls toward their refuge. A priest among them wore gleaming white robes with ceremonial red and blue vestments. He led the fellowship to perform a ritual. Directing all the members to lay supine toward the sky, he called for the revellers to flex their abdomens as they lurched forward repeatedly;

gasping as they flexed ever harder and firmer. It was at this moment that the trip was doomed, for behold, Apollo himself looked down on these unworthy supplicants who presumed to enter his once sacred domain. Offended by this Bauchic orgy of groaning exertions, he resolved to send down a plague upon the deserving hedonists. For reasons we still don't understand, he aimed his first and sharpest arrow directly at Laurie. Bleeding, she didn't survive the night for the second day of caving, but was reduced to a yellow crawling thing by midmorning. Shortly following, Rowan was struck down with either pity for the afflicted or perhaps a desire to sit in the sun and do NUCC admin work, and was forced to sit out the next day. Tom from SUSS was wounded next; the camp doctors endeavored at length to determine if he had a cold or a flu, but alas, no diagnosis was reached. Whatever it was, it began to spread. Uncounted victims fell to the great plague during and shortly after this trip.

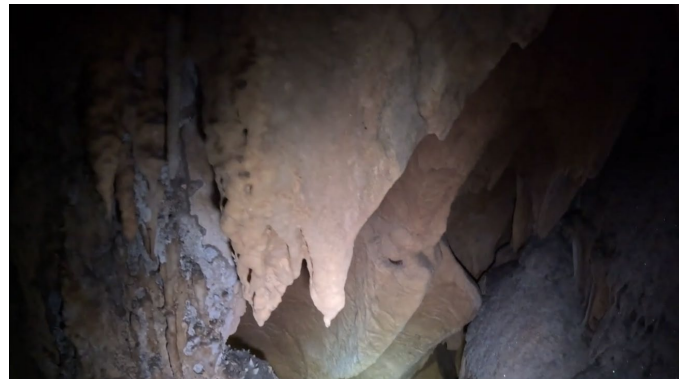
The first cave completed on the trip was Locksmith's, which was unlocked and didn't require a key. We walked from the campground and down into the gully leading towards Grant's cave. Shortly before the vertical climb-down leading to Grant's Cave, you find Locksmith's to the right after climbing a short way up the ridge, appearing as a small hole through the rocks. As turned out to be an error in hindsight, we crammed the entire party of somewhere between 10 to 16 people, there were too many to count, through the hole in single file. I could aptly compare the event to dish-water clogging a sink when overused: the once shining, pristine faucet is besmeared with grease and the roommates have to wait around waiting for someone to unclog it.

Myself and three others from SUSS were completing this as a first cave. I didn't have any concrete idea of what being in a cave was like and found this to be an appropriate start. There was a reasonably open squeeze through a decline leading to a chamber filled with giant spiders, which was then followed by several short climbs using supporting ropes. Most of the way was small tunnels sloping down into deeper sections, after which there was a low difficulty climb

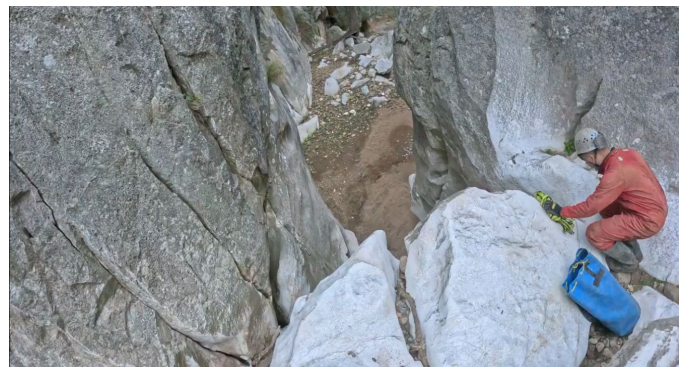


Kiyoshi follows the SUSSlings deeper into Locksmith's.

 Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi



Locksmith's Delight  Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi



Rowan rigs a handline down the Wombeyan waterfall.

 Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi



NUCCers and SUSSlings in Wombeyan creek.

 Kiyoshi Andres Takeuchi

of 3m with some chimneying and a longer rope supported vertical climb of perhaps 6m, although we didn't follow this path further and returned to the entrance when leaving. There were a good amount of obstacles to get us used to the basics of navigating a cave while not having anything crushingly difficult. While I don't think it would be too challenging now after having completed a few more caves in the interim, climbing out of the entrance was difficult since footholds were hard to find and I wasn't used to not having the freedom to move my arms when in a superman position. There was some risk of having new-starters being introduced to a cave with formation in it, but we were instructed on how to avoid damaging it. We all inhaled thick clouds of dust for the entire duration.

Grant's Cave is accessed by walking further down the valley away from camp and descending a dried out waterfall edge. There were large rock faces sloping down toward the bottom at about a 40 degree decline, for which a tape was threaded between two boulders at the top to act as a hand line. Grant's cave was comparatively open and easy to navigate with a light amount of crawling through rooms of crystal walls and a short squeeze. We returned by ascending

the ridgeline to bypass the rock face from which we came.

The next day I was on the Bullio expedition led by Tina. We entered on a short abseil down a hole on an exposed rocky hillside, securing the rope around a nearby tree. Apparently this setup had a rub-point on the edge of the rocky hole, but we accepted this risk since it was a short abseil which we wouldn't prusik back up. I didn't notice this myself due to inexperience and am going off Alek's observation. There was another descent toward the underground river on an old rickety ladder. The ladder slopes down gradually with a steel hand line between posts into which a cow's tail can be secured. At the vertical section, I believe we rigged a rope next to the ladder and climbed down while intermittently lowering a hand ascender as a safety. We then returned with the hand ascender as a safety while doing a kind of half-rebelay on the ladder, the details of which I don't recall. There is a short vertical climb that's a little tricky to angle yourself into followed by a bum slide on a rope. Apparently this cave is mainly worth doing for the swimming section through the underground river, but we skipped this since it was freezing, most of us didn't have wetsuits, and we needed to get back in time to return the keys.

Other Club Trips Jan – Jun 2025

Because not everyone writes a trip report no matter how much we annoy them.

Deua Exploration Trip (REPORT COMING 30.2)
(15-16 February)

Bungonia Beginners Horizontal Trip
(22 February)

Mac Pass Beginner Canyoning Trip
(1 March)

Wee Jasper Beginner Vertical Trip
(10 March)

Wee Jasper Easter Horizontal Trip
(21 April)





Member Reports

Zong Han Goh at the horizontal entrance to Wilsons Cave (EB-4), Buchan.

 Ben Hofmann.

The Very Long Swim

A Jolliffe Star Review of Watta Canyon

1-2 February 2025 Watta (NSW)

by Laurie Jolliffe with photos by Jack Richardson & Jump video by Laurie Jolliffe

Participants: Laurie Jolliffe, Jack Richardson, & Carl Walsh

Disclaimer: The details provided herein are not associated with any NUCC trip. Data provided for this review was collected by three very bored individuals who happened to run into each other at Jack's house one Saturday morning. With nothing better to do, they took brunch at Gang Gang ("a boulderer's start") and decided to drive to Mittagong on a whim. The back of Carl's car (as always) was filled with random gear, so they whiled away the afternoon with some sport climbing. Dinner was sourced by "vibe navving" around the countryside until they found a fantastic Asian fusion restaurant in Bowral. Unfortunately, the cocktails had hit hard, and they were forced to pull over and camp at a nice little picnic spot that they may or may not have recognised from their earlier "vibe navving". After a restless night (three attempts were made at sleeping outside; NUCCers=0, Mosquitoes=3), the only thing for it was a Robertson pie for breakfast. Sitting in the Robertson Pie Shop on Sunday morning and recounting Upper Mac Pass woes, Jack, Carl, & Lauren realised that they were very close to this "Watta Canyon" Lachie had talked about. Moreover, there was enough canyoning gear in the back of Carl's car to make a go of it!

For those unfamiliar with the popular Jolliffe Star canyon review system, the Jolliffe Stars are follows:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>★ Guano level. Would rather be at the Old Climbing Wall.</p> <p>★★ You're not really having fun if you're not suffering a little right?</p> <p>★★★ Good fun. Barely even wondered why I was doing this to myself.</p> | <p>★★★★ I'd take on Upper Mac Pass again if this pitch was at the end.</p> <p>★★★★★ I finally understood the meaning of everything on this pitch. It was as if the universe touched my soul with a soft but strong hand. Yet when my feet touched down, I was left only with a disquiet sense of something prolific. This pitch made me fall in love with the world all over again.</p> |
|--|---|

A temperature rating for each segment of the canyon is also provided:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>❄ Springsuit weather. A slight chill.</p> <p>❄❄ People start talking about double layering wetsuits.</p> <p>❄❄❄ Time to create a nest out of sticks and rocks and assume the foetal position.</p> | <p>☀ Good sunbathing as you wait.</p> <p>☀☀ There's always one person still wearing a wetsuit.</p> <p>☀☀☀ Everyone has taken their shirts off. You can vaguely smell sweat over the canyon water.</p> |
|--|---|

Canyon Entrance	300m+	★★★★	☀
Description: Follow a very civilised walk down a well beaten, woody track from the car park sign. Then, confusedly look at Lachie's GPS point for ten minutes, give up, and just climb down into the canyon.			
			

[Canyon Entrance]			
<u>Review:</u> Our uncertainty led us to a slightly prematurely enter the canyon. But, it was a warm day, and the water was cool. Why wouldn't you?			
<u>Recommendations:</u>			
1) Wet-maxx it. This is not a canyon for Dry or Die gang. 2) The premature entrance has a fun slide & a lovely "changing room" to put wetsuits on. Would recommend.			
Jump	3m	★★★★★	❄️
<u>Description:</u> Two boulders overlook more of the canyon. Is this the jump? Is this a pitch? There were far too many sticks to wantonly throw oneself off the edge.			
<u>Review:</u> Uncertainty, vegetation, and confusion led to me double roping this jump with only Carl & Jack as my "anchor". This allowed me to safely clear said vegetation so the gentlemen could have a crack at the jump.			
<u>Recommendations:</u>			
1) Be sure to record Jack when he jumps. He makes funny noises. 2) Don't volunteer to be the hero. You don't get to jump :(			
   			
Upper Canyon	N/A	★★★★★	❄️
 			
<u>Description:</u> A series of interconnected pools as the creek weaves around boulders and fallen trees. Some of the way is scrambleable, with a few deep pools to swim.			
<u>Review:</u> To cave and to canyon is to push oneself to the farthest reaches of where humans dare tread; all to see a place that is as it was when humans first beheld it (if you ignore palaeoclimatic fluctuations and environmental changes, of course). Watta is one of those places. Swimming along countless pools and climbing over moss-eaten boulders, you feel as though you are inside a whole little whimsical world that civilisation has forgotten.			
<u>Recommendations:</u>			
1) Just floating downstream is beyond peaceful. Watta is a canyon you want to take your time in. 2) There's a few fun spider holes / water tunnels that are great to worm your way through (a squeeze?!)			
Logjam 1 & 2	N/A	★★★	❄️
<u>Description:</u> Two beaver style rooms (think Narnia) a short distance (50m?) apart created by branches crushed between the wall of the canyon. In February the water levels were low that there were no safety issues climbing down into and through them.			
<u>Review:</u> You do feel like you're in some kind of fantasy world climbing through these. I suspect my feelings would be different if the water levels were higher though.			

[Logjam 1 & 2]

Recommendations:

- 1) Don't sit on the sticks. They're sharp.
- 2) Don't let Jack sit on the sticks behind you. He complains because they're sharp, and then drops sticks on you.

"Very Long Swim"

80m

★★★★★



Description: The canyon walls rise above a corridor of deep water. With the sun filtering through the roof above, you feel as if you are in the hall of God (whatever God is?).

Review: In Mr. Bailey's notes he refers to this as a "very long 60m swim". I can only think this is a typo because if anything this swim was not long enough. I wish I was still swimming this swim. And eternity trapped here would not be purgatory, but bliss.

Recommendations:

- 1) To be fair, it's probably more like 80m than 60m.
- 2) It's not a long swim.



Pitch 1 "The Flow Pitch"

20m

★★★★★



Description: The Very Long Swim falls straight into Pitch 1, a sporty little pitch with reasonably high flow. A convenient ledge provides bolts on the right. A short bout of waterboarding lands you on a ledge in the pool below.

Rigging Notes: The bolts appear to have been recently replaced & seem pretty bomber.

Review: The bolt placement sets the rigging beautifully through the flow. Four and a half Jolliffe stars for the waterboarding. It's enlivening change from the serene swim.

Recommendations:

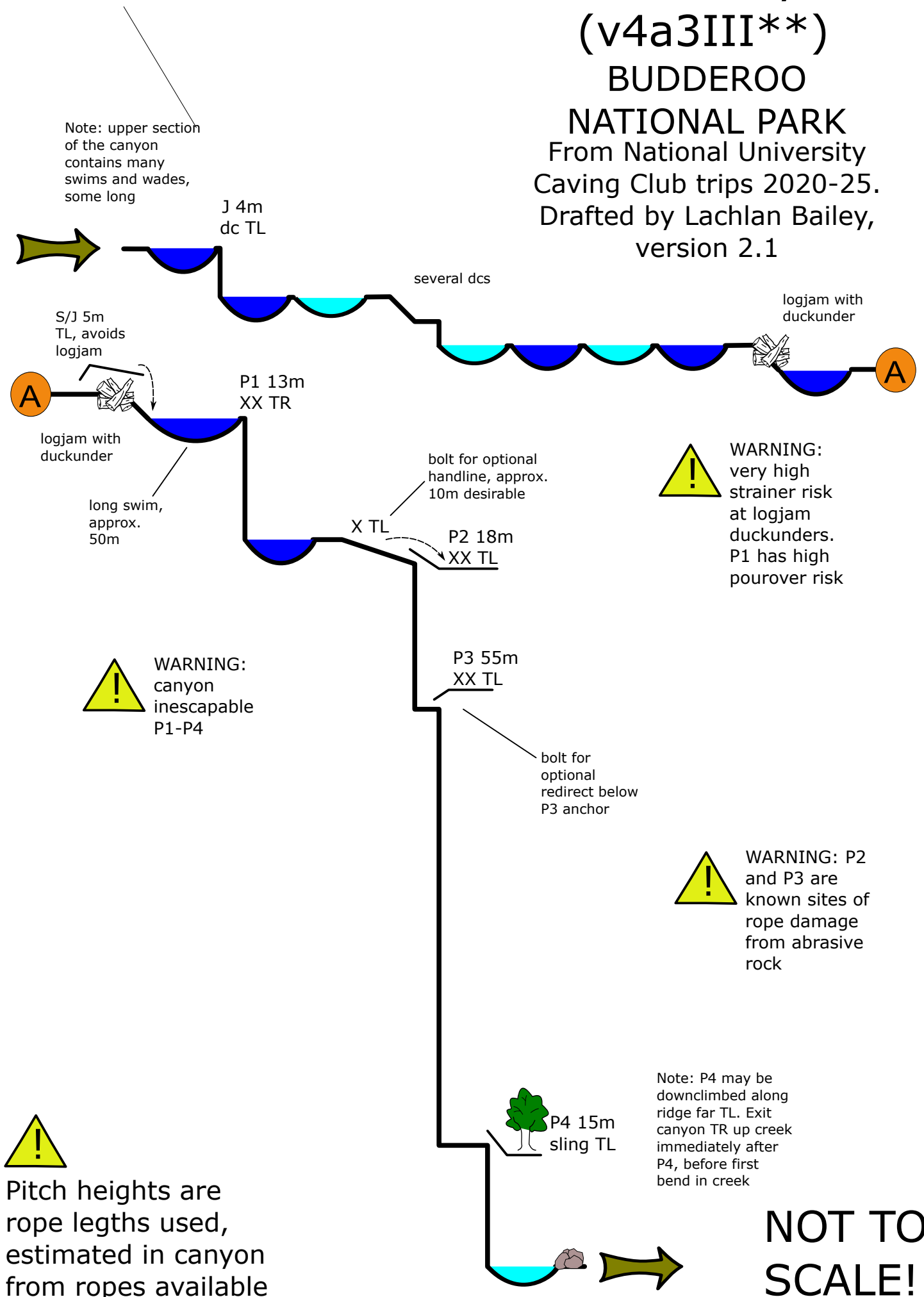
- 1) Enjoy the flow. It's your only opportunity at Watta to get smashed around.
- 2) Careful of the ledge at the bottom. It's a little awkward, and with some difficult luck you could get yourself into a tricky situation.

Pitch 2 “The Lead Up”	20m	★★★	❄️
<u>Description:</u> On the edge of the world, you stare out over a valley fed by waterfalls. Beside you, Jack wonders how many people have ever seen what you are seeing. A short downclimb leads you to the bolts, where the scenery disappears behind the rock and shrubbery. You are left sadly walking backwards down a sloping ramp. You know this pitch. It’s the lead up.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> Bolts have recently been put in to replace the vegie-anchors. There’s also now a handy access chain (the approach is slippery). We climbed up above the pitch and were able to remove three generations of tatt from the surrounding vegetation.			
<u>Review:</u> A little boring after Pitch 1. And you do get unceremoniously dumped in some shrubbery at the Pitch 3 anchor. But the view at the top unrivalled. Three Jolliffe Stars.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) Lunch or a snack are to be had at the top of Pitch 2. Here you can look out over the world and dream of abseiling the 80m waterfall on the other side of the valley. 2) Note to self: Don’t abseil into the shrubbery. Abseil around the shrubbery.			
			
Pitch 3 “The Big Pitch”	55m	★★★★★	❄️
			

[Pitch 3 “The Big Pitch”]			
<u>Description:</u> If you dream of a waterfall, it is this pitch.			
<u>Review:</u> Somehow, on this pitch, the World both presses in on you and fades away. You could be drifting in space or crushed under the pressure of the ocean. The falls belt away next to you, but you are left abseiling, almost floating, in the spray beside it. I’ve never been more aware of holding my own life in my brake hand. Five Jolliffe Stars. No question.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> Someone’s put some new bolts here as well. Inexplicably we lost some NUCC tape somewhere around here. But there’s now a great Y-Hang arranged on the new bolts. There is a nasty rub point right at the top. Some clever rope-protecting got us around it. Although I now understand the big wear mark in the club’s 70m.			
<u>Recommendations:</u>			
1) Absolutely sending it down this pitch made me confront my mortality in a way that only some may enjoy. 2) Scream into the waterfall. Scream loud. Scream joyously. 3) If you have a higher friction option maybe start off with that. 4) Always use rope protection.			
Pitch 4 “Optional” (Not Really)	15m	★★★★	☀
			
<u>Description:</u> Pitch 3 leaves you at the bottom of the main falls, but with a 15m slabby cliff between you and the main pool below (Pitch 4).			
<u>Review:</u> Nice. Slabby. Good foot traction. A chill little abseil to return your heart rate to a sustainable rhythm after the last pitch.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> According to Lachie’s notes you can downclimb this pitch on the far TL. I again must question either Lachie’s sanity or thoroughness in ground-proofing what he deems down-climbable (see my Jerrara Review <i>Speleograffiti 29.1</i>). There is also a perfectly good tree immediately next to the bottom of the pitch ripe for double-ropeing.			
<u>Recommendations:</u>			
1) Crawl across to the tree like a marooned sailor - on your belly if you must. The rocks at the bottom of Pitch 3 are so slippery with spray that one false step would send you right over the edge. Somehow Carl just walked (?) across. I have long suspected he is a fae changeling. Gravity does not apply in the usual manner.			
Canyon Exit	1.2km	★★	☀☀☀☀
<u>Description:</u> After the final pitch swim across the large pool and pick your way downstream until you encounter a small stream on your right. Bus it up the hill (why is it always up a hill?) through the loamy rainforest until you make it to a sudden, inexplicably placed farm. Follow the property boundary back to the car, picking leaches off as you go.			
<u>Review:</u> Far too many leaches! Cool mushrooms though.			
<u>Recommendations:</u>			
1) Don’t get changed out of your wetsuit after the last abseil. Two attempts were made at Dry or Dying it around the pool. Only one was successful. Get changed at the stream. 2) Despite the temperature rating I’d advise against taking your shirt off...			

Watta Canyon (v4a3III**) BUDDEROO NATIONAL PARK

From National University
Caving Club trips 2020-25.
Drafted by Lachlan Bailey,
version 2.1



Journey to Cave Island

8 March 2025

Cave Flats / Lake Burrinjuck (NSW)

by Ally Kelly

Participants: Laurie Jolliffe, Ally Kelly, & Carl Walsh

Long weekends are for two things: leaving Canberra and engaging in silliness. This Canberra Day long weekend we intended to indulge in both, having gotten into our heads that a trip to Cave Island was in order.

Cave Island is located in the middle of Lake Burrinjuck, just outside of Yass and around the corner from Wee J. Formerly Cave Flat, the island came into existence when the area was flooded to facilitate the damming of the Murrumbidgee in the 1920s. True to its name, the island hosts a number of caves though most are only accessible by divers.

We'd heard from Lachie of the miserable trip he'd been dragged on in an attempt to get there previously and naturally decided we had to see this misery for ourselves. Helpfully, the dam water levels were the lowest they had been in some time (48%), so the opportunity seemed ripe for the taking.

Lachie, as usual, found a convenient excuse to not make contact with water (cider brewing with Saami's family), so Carl, Laurie, and I were left to make the most of the beautifully sunny autumn day without him. We commandeered Ben's pack raft ("Kayak Jack"), donned our swimming caps and made for the Burrinjuck boat ramp.

It really was a gorgeous day! The water was still and warm, and a number of other boaters had evidently seized the break in the weather to also hit the water. They perhaps hadn't expected our vessel to number among them, watching us with mild curiosity as we toddled down to the water in swimmers, gumboots and snowboarding sunnies with a boat only big enough for two and a sizable cave pack taking up one of those seats. However, we were unperturbed as we set sail, rotating between swimming, kayaking, and slow-mo, face-first water skiing behind the vessel. Laurie, the aquatic organism she is, practically swam circles around us. A short 45 minutes later and we'd reached the island.



Laurie points out the distant and mysterious isle.

📷 Ally Kelly



The intrepid crew set out! 📷 Ally Kelly



The entrance and tag to CF-14. We must return with vertical gear! 📷 Ally Kelly



A muddy exit from CF-15.

📷 Ally Kelly

A muddied but not mellowed crew prepare to return to the mainland.

📷 Carl Walsh's Phone

Style remains one of the club's key tenets.

📷 Carl Walsh

It was surprisingly big; a reasonably desolate exposure of limestone with a couple of scrappy trees at the centre that made for a decent picnic spot. We wasted no time scattering across the shore in search of cave entrances. And there were a fair few around. Most were little more than a small dip or den, but we did manage to find two that were tagged; CF14 and CF15.

CF14 proved rather intimidating with a straight entrance drop that we weren't game to climb in our swimmers or attempt without rope. CF15 was a little more promising with a slick mud slip that dropped us out into a sump, though it went little further. Despite the limited finds, we were hardly disappointed, having a little too much fun with the silly amphibious trip we'd ended up on.

The southern end of the island came to a sizeable bluff over the lake on which the words "jump rock" might well have been plastered. All that to say, the rock was jumped.

Numerous times. The water below was cut with a dive line that dove down into the island's main cave which was completely submerged. After pottering about the jump rock a little longer and ogling the well-preserved fossils where it met the water, we finally decided it was time to head back across the waves to the real world.

Pausing only briefly to climb the submerged trees which poked out of the water around the island, we journeyed back across the lake. With minimal sunburn and some minor abandoning of Carl a distance offshore we made it back to the boat ramp.

Starved as we were and with plenty of sunlight left in the day, we found ourselves at the Burrinjuck general store. It must be said, the experience was religious. If you've ever wondered where the best hot chips are produced, we are happy to inform you that the promised land has at last been found. We were reluctant to leave but vowed to return and spread the general store's gospel of chicken salt and grease in the meantime (and I guess find a rope to take down the unexplored lead at CF15).

We were content and sun kissed as we departed Lake Burrinjuck, taking the surprisingly long road around to Wee J where we would spend the night. The sun was setting as we pulled into Wee Jasper Reserve but... the campsite was fully booked! Whatever were we to do?!

Tune in at pages 76 and 91 to see what else went down over the Canberra Day long weekend! (Definitely nothing bad... No ambulances needed or nothing...Promise).

“I Went Down 14 Waterfalls Yesterday”

A Jolliffe Star Review of Kalang Canyon

21 – 23 March 2025 Kanangra (NSW)

Written by Laurie Jolliffe. Graded with Ben Hofmann, Ally Kelly, & Carl Walsh

Photos by Carl Walsh

Participants: Ben Hofmann, Laurie Jolliffe, Alice Kelly, and Carl Walsh

“*I went down 14 waterfalls yesterday*” is the entire trip report I gave my parents following our descent down Kalang Canyon (and our ascent up Murdering Gully). For keener canyoneers, I have compiled a more detailed trip report using the Jolliffe Star system. If you are unfamiliar with this popular canyoning review system, you may refer to page 58 for a detailed overview of the

review structure. Note, however, that from herein I will be reviewing canyons with the amended 2025 Jolliffe Star Canyon Review Guidelines, which include +★ for any booty found on a pitch. Booty is cave loot found outside a cave.

Walk In	300m	★★★	☀
<u>Description:</u> A short 10 minute walk down the marked Kalang Falls track.			
<u>Review:</u> Very civilised, nice stairs. Three stars. Did wonder about the elevation loss = elevation gain on the walk out. 10/10 would stair again.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 3) There’s a good spot to suit up at the bottom of the stairs. 4) While the walk is warm, it’s about to get substantially colder. Suit up hard.			
			
Pitch 1 “The First Booty”	25m	★★+★	❄❄
<u>Description:</u> A scramble down the sharp and slippery quartzite stream takes you to the top of the first abseil. The abseil itself is reasonably dry and provides a nice view.			
<u>Review:</u> It is at this point I realised I would be doing the entire canyon on my arse. Very slippery. Ben got a booty biner at the bottom (booty). Two Jolliffe starts + one for booty.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) If you go first on the pitches, you get the booty :(2) If someone finds booty you get to use the word “booty” at least six times (and counting) in the trip report.			

Pitch 2 “Here be Waterboardin”	48m	★★★★★	❄️❄️
<u>Description:</u> The first flowy abseil of the canyon leaves from a shrubby start True Left.			
<u>Review:</u> Sets your expectations to be waterboarded for the rest of the day. This was Ally’s first flowy abseil, and she took it entirely on her knees (unsure on this beta). Other unwise decisions were made: Ben went first again, joked about finding more booty, actually found more booty (a Figure 8!) but then just... got off early halfway down.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) Don’t be fooled by the fun little ledge halfway down and get off rope early (although this is where the booty was). 2) There’s a nice spot for an early snack at the bottom if you’re waiting for Ben to get back on rope. 3) A message from Ally: don’t just sit down halfway down the pitch.			
			
Pitch 3 “The Cave Pitch”	42m	★★★★★	❄️
<u>Description:</u> Another flowy, quartzite-y abseil. This pitch is set apart by the presence of (real) caves KF-01, and KF-02 at the top and bottom of the pitch respectively.			
<u>Review:</u> Nice heavy flow. Another good snack spot at the bottom in the sun. Picked up some rubbish. Postscript: Certain individuals have expressed that KF-01 and KF-02 are “not real caves”. I have chosen to ignore them.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) A good opportunity to go caving (YO!) 2) This is Kalang. Start bleeding the ropes if you haven’t already.			
Pitch 4 “The Warm Up”	15m	★★★	❄️❄️
<u>Description:</u> A dry and dull pitch that leads up to a fun little pitch series (pitches 4-7).			
<u>Review:</u> This pitch should be familiar to you by now. It’s the warm up pitch. Ironically, just as you’re starting to get cold. Clumsily walk/abseil backwards down the rock face, avoiding shrubbery, thinking of the waterfalls to come.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) You don’t need to savour the warm up pitch. There’ll be another. Just you wait.			
Pitch 5 “The Calf Burner”	29m	★★★	❄️❄️
<u>Description:</u> Scramble across from the end of the warm up pitch and get back on rope by the edge of the falls.			
<u>Review:</u> Awkward AF getting on rope straight from Pitch 4. Plus, the calf gains getting on rope kinda sucked. You have to stand on your tippy toes on a tiny little foot jug to reach up to the bolts. The pitch itself was fun and flowy.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> The bolts are quite high up & access to them is not great.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) Kalang seems to be a ‘tallest person first’ canyon. Sadly, we rotated through all roles (it’s faster). Sadder still, I was the second tallest – what giant (with ripped calves) put those bolts in? 2) Friendly reminder to keep bleeding those ropes.			

Pitch 6 “The Litte Undercutter”	10m	★★★	❄️❄️
<u>Description:</u> A short and strong little pitch weaves between some boulders with high flow that packs a punch. Beware a serious little undercut with high flow past the drop.			
<u>Review:</u> Given this was a short pitch, and I'd been left with a single biner (people are always taking my biners!) I opted to rig this with a stone knot. This proved to be a mistake, as I had to double rope on my rack, had far too much friction, and got stuck in the undercut getting absolutely pummelled. Carl did confess later that he and Ben had shared a look at the bottom and wondered if I was perhaps going to drown. But alas there was nothing they could do and, in stunning fashion I managed bounce my way out of what could have been quite a precarious situation.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> Given the undercut I'd rig this as a releasable the second time around. And go down single rope, or on a descender with more friction options.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) A little pitch is still a pitch. Don't underestimate the little ones.			
Pitch 7 “Giant’s Reach”	34m	★★★★	❄️❄️
<u>Description:</u> From the bottom of Pitch 6 swim across a deep rimmed pool. Water tumbles over the stone rim at the pitch head, where you need to reach out over the pitch to access the bolts.			
<u>Review:</u> A nice flowy abseil with a view. Good spot for a snack at the bottom, although not many spots to relieve oneself, which proved awkward for one of us (I shall not name names). A fitting end to the Pitch 4-7 pitch series. You feel as though you've really smashed them out at the bottom. Overall, I would rate the pitch series as Four Jolliffe Stars overall. There's a lot going on here, you've got dry abseils, overspray, swimming. There's something for everyone in the Pitch 4-7 pitch series.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> Didn't rate the access to the bolts. Kinda dodge. Apparently, a giant did all the bolting for the Kalang wet route. Carl had to get to the bolts on rope from pitch 6 and then run a safety access line with an alpine butterfly for the rest of us. The rub point wasn't as bad as the notes – the giant's setting of the bolts has made sure of that. But there is definitely the potential for rope wear if you don't take a good line. We bled the ropes pretty much all day anyway.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) There's really nowhere to use the facilities during the Pitch 4 to 7 pitch series. Go early or hold it. 2) Keep bleeding those ropes.			
Pitch 8 “The Slippery F*er”	28m	★ (+★)(-★)	❄️
<u>Description:</u> A low flow, algae encrusted ramp you access by walking true left around some foliage and then scrambling back over some boulders to the centre of the canyon.			
<u>Review:</u> I got cocky. I said I would take the entire canyon on my arse. And I nearly took it on my face instead. Instead, I executed a spectacular belly flop & landed squarely on my frontal right iliac crest. What a slip. What a fall. Boy it fucking hurt. The others enjoyed this pitch. Apparently, Carl did some super swish run down after me - undoubtedly changeling magic (see page 62 for my theories on this). But alas I didn't notice. I was trying not to vomit from the pain. One Jolliffe Star (probably three but this is biased who are we kidding). Also, it isn't a Jolliffe Star review if it doesn't include the odd quote from Ben: <i>“I'm guessing that pitch is getting one Jolliffe Star”</i> – Ben Hofmann 2025. Technically I also got booty from this pitch (Carl retrieved a crusty old maillon that they gifted to me at the bottom of the pitch). It doesn't screw up anymore & now lives on my rear-view mirror (after months spent dangling from the Jesus handle and nearly knocking out Carl repeatedly – and once successfully assaulting a hungover Lawrence). For that I am removing the booty star out of sheer spite (-★). I do treasure my maillon though.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> The anchor used to be a crusted old maillon on an even crustier piece of red tape, wrapped around a tree trunk. Happily, it is now equalised and made from a rap ring and new black canyon tape.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) TLDR this pitch is slippery. 2) This pitch has both directly and indirectly assaulted many NUCCers. 3) Unless you are supernatural, I would recommend taking the entire canyon on your arse. 4) If you are one of the persons assaulted by the maillon that used to dangle from the Beast II's Jesus handle, I would apologise, but you now know which pitch to thank.			

Pitch 9 “The Baby Pitch”	8m	★★★★★	❄
<u>Description:</u> A small, dry pitch just past the pool at the bottom of Pitch 8. Abseil down a small smooth slab using a tree true left. Otherwise, unremarkable.			
<u>Review:</u> No one else remembers this pitch. But it is seared in my memory. I railed all Carl’s drugs for my hip and then rigged it, still trying not to vomit as the others finished up on Pitch 8. Ally eventually caught up and reminded me of my recommendation from my Jerrara Review (apparently people actually read these canyon reviews?) – “ <i>every pitch is more fun if you say “wee” all the way down</i> ”. And you know what I had the best time.			
<u>Rigging Notes:</u> This is a double rope-able pitch. I just elected to rig it as a fully releasable system for personal reasons.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) No matter how much it hurts, saying “weeeee” all the way down <i>does</i> make it more fun. 2) If you ever need to catch your breath, or wait for the pain meds to kick in, rigging a pitch in the most over-complicated fashion is a fantastic strategy. 3) This is not really a Five Jolliffe Star pitch. I just had a Five Jolliffe Star experience on this particular day.			
Pitch 10 “The Muppet Pitch”	25m	★★★★★	❄
<u>Description:</u> Three short falls connected by two short pieces (~ 10 m each) of flowing streamway with rimmed edges. The streamway was approximately 2m deep, meaning we had to swim between the falls while still on rope.			
<u>Review:</u> Another Ben quote “ <i>Because you all looked like muppets on the way down</i> ” was the rationale for this pitch’s name. And I must admit, while I did miss Carl’s descent (I was still derigging the last pitch), Ally looked like some kind of rag doll on rope being swept about as she swam between the falls. I immediately pledged not to do that, and to swim decisively between the falls, lest Ben also make fun of me. But alas it is difficult to swim backwards decisively while staying on rope in a horizontal pool with high flow. Ben, I suspect, was only saved this indignity because he came last and was therefore out of sight above the lipped rims of the pools. I gave this four Jolliffe Stars for uniqueness – when else do you get to swim-abseil? I would do Upper Mac Pass again if this was at the end.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) Embrace the muppetry. Swim-abseil with wanton abandon.			
Pitch 11 “The Tree Anchor”	25m	★★★★★	❄
<u>Description:</u> Another quartzite fall with reasonable flow leaves from bolts under a tree true right.			
<u>Review:</u> It was at this point that I realised that I could no longer continue to either take the canyon on my arse or abseil front on (like a normal functioning human). Instead due to the loud complaints of my right hip each time I used my right leg on the wall, I would, in fact, be abseiling the rest of the canyon side on, with my left hip sliding down the wall. This resulted in both irreparable damage to my wetsuit, and loud complaints from the muscles involved in this contortion over the following days. Consequently, I would like to do this abseil again at some point as I feel I did not really appreciate it at the time.			
<u>Recommendations:</u> 1) Don’t abseil side on unless you really need to. It’s not comfortable, rips your wetsuit, and, most importantly, you look stupid.			
Pitch 12 “The Big Boi”	55m	★★★★★	❄❄❄
<u>Description:</u> A very high flow pitch on sharp and slippery (how is it sharp <u>and</u> slippery?!) Kalang quartzite.			
<u>Review:</u> This is the abseil that’s in the back of your mind for the whole canyon. Fear, excitement, trepidation. You don’t have to be Ally to look over the edge of this Big Boi and feel butterflies. I got quite cold at the top of this pitch waiting first for Ben (handicapped by his glasses and the high flow), and then Ally (handicapped by a crippling fear of heights). Carl, however, was in his element and confused by my insistence on sitting in silence and hyping myself up – there was no way I was going to be able to slide down this one on my left hip. I just had to take the hit and do the abseil. And you know what – it was unreal. Five Jolliffe Stars. Once I started getting waterboarded there was far too much going on to even think about how much each step hurt. This pitch isn’t five Jolliffe Stars in the way the main Watta pitch is – a breathtakingly serene & somehow floating, religious experience. This pitch is just literally breathtaking – largely from volume of water swallowed. It’s the O Fortuna of pitches. It slaps you in the face, surrounds you, consumes your soul and then hands it back to you as you stand confused, bewildered, and longing for more in the pool at the bottom.			

[Pitch 12 “The Big Boi”]

Rigging Notes: Seriously, bleed the ropes. There’s a lot of rub points and because of the flow it’s hard to stay on the best route (if you even attempt to look up and check where your rope is you are rewarded only with the sight of water in your eyes). Also, a fireman’s belay isn’t something to turn down on this abseil.

Recommendations:

- 1) Helmets aren’t just good for protecting your head – they also keep water out of your eyes!
- 2) Alas the helmet only goes so far. You can generally see only as far down as your chest, maybe your feet. Forget about looking up or sideways.
- 3) I meant it when I said bleed the ropes fifty times already.



Pitch 13 “The Slide”

22m



Description: A slippery series of ramps and boulders connected by a low-moderate flow series of streams and mini falls.

Review: An excellent opportunity to revisit my resolve to take the entire canyon on my arse. I sat down, ran the rope in front of me and I sliiiiiiiiiiddddd all the way down... with a few wincing bumps... actually many wincing bumps... I did not make it all the way down and did in fact have to transition back to abseiling on my left hip as the adrenaline from the Big Boi pitch wore off. I would if I could though.

Recommendations:

- 1) It’s a slide. You know what to do.

Pitch 14 – The Infinity Pool

32m



[Pitch 14 “The Infinity Pool”]

Description: An awkward scramble and then downclimb true left is the safest way around and back down to water level here. Once you are again in the flow there is an awkward swim around what can only be described as the canyon version of a meander. The meander ends at the bolts, where water spills over the stone rim of the pool at the end, much like on the “Giant’s Reach” pitch. Unlike “Giant’s Reach”, however, the pool is wide, and the flow gentle allowing you a view out over the edge into the canyon below.

Review: I immediately compared the pool at the top of this pitch to an infinity pool (my sister Dana was obsessed with them for a while) and confused Carl while they were rigging by yammering on about hotel pools, and would he like me to get the pool attendant’s attention? Would Sir like a cocktail? A bowl of chips perhaps? Great pitch too. Nice view, not too flowy, a good way to finish off the canyon. The rock was unforgivably sharp on the pitch itself (*cough* bleed the ropes *cough*). But that might just have been because I’d reverted back to slide-abseiling on my left hip. Ally would also like me to note that she was abandoned halfway down this pitch with not enough rope before eventually being lowered like a ragdoll on full lock.

Recommendations:

- 1) Did someone say bleed the ropes?
- 2) I called this the infinity pool so you can pretend to be ordering a margarita from the poolside bar as you wait at the top of the pitch. It brings a certain *je ne sais quoi* to this, the final pitch before your life gets sweaty, muddy, leachy, and miserable. I insist you order something (the wait is atrocious though).

Walk Out

I don’t want to know



Description: As usual, a skip and a hop downstream takes you to the exit point: a clear slabby bit of sloping bedrock that’s good for a change & snack stop (picture above under the Pitch 14 notes). From there you just bus it up Murdering Gully. Theoretically from there you’re supposed to traverse right at some point to get to the gap in the Kanangara Walls. That is not what we did though, so I could not comment.

Review: Look, it’s called Murdering Gully for a reason. It was hard and boing, and we were (as usual) beset by leaches. What I actually did enjoy is when we got abominably off track in the dark and ended up climbing up these little cliffs. Fun stuff. Good vegie-trog moment (the trees are jugs!). There is an excellent photo of us all shirtless and sad in the dark when we finally made it to the car. Ally has vetoed its inclusion on the grounds that it is from the waist up and thus appears as if the gentlemen are entirely unclothed.

Recommendations:

- 1) Read the track notes earlier.
- 2) Keep an eye on Ben while walking. He’s sneaky about getting everyone to walk in “car formation”.
- 3) Take shirtless photos with careful framing.

BONUS: Cruisy Second Day Canyon Recommendations

After a big big day, the good little canyoners made themselves a banging green curry, ample mulled cider (legit just cider heated on a camp stove – so good), and tucked themselves into bed, agreeing to a Rowan O’clock (8AM) wakeup call for a cruisy canyon the next day. None of us were up to anything big... Hang on you thought this was another canyon review? Bah! *Some* of us were awake at 8AM. And, with no sounds from Alice’s Palace (the abode of Al-en) we were quite happy to let the hour slip by unnoticed... Then two hours. We were not completely idle. We did eventually all rise, make pancake orbs (a new favourite), and scope this year’s end of year celebration location: Dance Floor Cave! (a twist you weren’t expecting). Pack your frocks & get your boogie on. We’re going dancing.



Paperwork Drives Caver Underground

21 – 23 March 2025 Wombeyan (NSW)

Written by Lachie Bailey

NUCC Participants: Lachie Bailey

With: The SUSSlings

Honourable Mention: Corey Hanrahan & Oxana Repina



“Downstream Sump of Fig Tree Cave, and before I fell in, which you can tell, because my headtorch appears to be on, and I’m not soaked” – Lachie Bailey  Alan Green

Editors’ note: Lachie began this report with a comment on trip paperwork that we, as editors, have decided to omit.

... I decided to go caving elsewhere for the weekend. Happily, SUSS had a trip on to Wombeyan, so a viable alternative was available. Scooted up Friday night, had to be back in Canberra Sunday morning. This left a good solid day available for caving, and I was keen to get underground.

W148 Fig Tree Cave¹ was the main objective for the day, and we had a good roam around. I’ve never had a particularly thorough look around the off-track areas of this cave, so it was nice to be shown where things were. Next time, I think I’ll have to take the map and try orienting myself. We visited several sumps, and while playing silly buggers on the way to the Downstream Sump, I fell in. This was fun, but full-body immersion caused my headtorch to short out. As a result, I bailed

on the rest of Fig Tree Cave, as I’d lost my spare Zebralight recently, and was now cold and wet. I understand the rest of the group went to Grants Cave or Locksmiths Delight after Fig Tree Cave, but I did not, as I no longer had a functioning headtorch.

Instead, I meandered back out through the streamway to Victoria Arch and lounged in the sun until all the SUSSlings got back, drying my caving gear. This was followed by a cosy evening around the campfire, and I headed back to Canberra Sunday morning. The trip was not without excitement best left undescribed here, but thanks very much Corey and Oxana for rescuing me from Goulburn. Wombeyan is lovely, but the camping fees are extortionate now.

¹ I’ve never quite managed to conclusively determine what the preferred tag number for Fig Tree Cave is, so W148 will have to do...

Kitten Rescued (Plus Some Other Stuff)

8 – 16 April Mole Creek (Tas)

Written by Lachie Bailey

NUCC Participants: Lachie Bailey & Alek Meade

With: Deb Hunter (STC)

Following my undescribed excitement on the way back from Wombeyan, I was stuck without a car for my planned pre-Tassie faffing. Happily, Alek was willing to be talked into giving me a lift around, and extending his stay in Tassie to include some JFing. After he had picked me up in Launnie, we'd organised to meet Deb Hunter from STC, and go caving with her for a few days in Mole Creek. Camping overnight at Wet Cave Reserve was a bit brutal, with a spotlessly clear sky (first frost of winter); on the flip side, there was a flawless view of the Great Western Tiers!

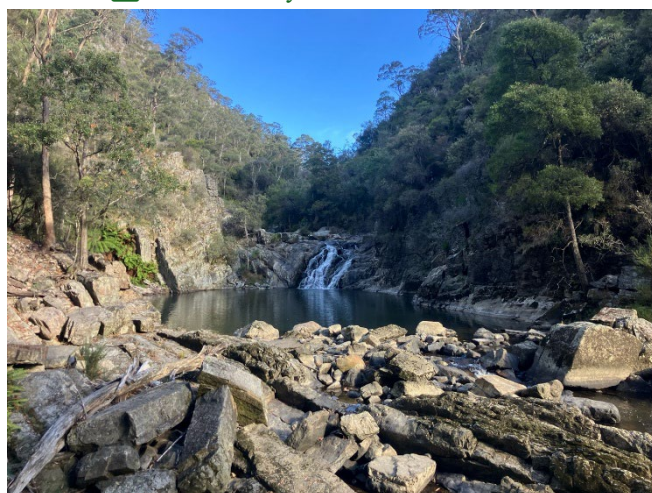
We had this first day to ourselves and pottered around a bit, roaming through Mole Creek and going for a bushwalk to Lobster Falls. We met up with Deb in the evening, who was kindly letting us stay at her place at Caveside. The next morning, I kindly repaid her by accidentally breaking her shower head...

Anyway, the plan was to visit two caves over the day, both on private property, with Deb and a Northern Caverneers member Neil Wilson. The first was MC166 White Rabbit Cave, and the second MC208 Snail Space Cave. White Rabbit Cave was a fun little through trip in a bluff of limestone off Mayberry Road, with some really excellent formation in it. Mind you, like the landscape above it, White Rabbit Cave was very dry, with no evidence of much in the way of water in it. Deb and I were regularly pausing to happily take photos, much to the annoyance of Deb and Neil. There was a bit of possum poo around, and the local possum evidently didn't care as much about the formation as we did!

After a lovely lunch, we popped into Snail Space Cave. This was a bit more crawly, and apparently often sumps out in the crawl. There's lots of very dark limestone in this cave- apparently it's chemically altered by the runoff from the dolerite rocks above the limestone. This crawl popped up into a gorgeously decorated chamber with a lovely variety of formation in it. Lots of straws, some twisty shawls, a bit of flowstone, some oolites, and a few glop holes were the highlight of this chamber. Snail Space Cave was also meant to be a through trip, but we couldn't find the exit, so we returned back along the crawl. I may have gone off chasing the exit, and



Looking up at the Great Western Tiers from Wet Cave Reserve. 📷 Lachie Bailey



This is not Lobster Falls according to the Tassie topo maps, but most tourists seem to think it is. 📷 Lachie Bailey



Deb climbing out of White Rabbit Cave; it's a bit awkward and the tape sure was handy. 📷 Lachie Bailey

overlooked our callout time...

The next day, Deb very kindly let Alek and I tag along on one of her wild cave tours. We visited MC84 Honeycomb Cave first, after meeting Deb's clients in Mole Creek. Like most cavers who've camped at Wet Cave Reserve, I've stuck my head into Honeycomb Cave before, but never much more than that. So it was really interesting to go for a proper roam through the cave with Deb, who knows it extremely well! Honeycomb has lots of excellent options for popping in and out, and Deb gave us a thorough run down on the geology and geomorphology of the cave.

After lunch on the surface, we headed across to the World Heritage Area to visit MC96 Sassafras Cave. I was rather charmed by this cave- there was an abundance of glowworms, an interesting streamway with quite a range of invertebrates, platypus tracks, and some very pretty reflection pools and formation patches. Deb pointed us to where the new extension was, but we didn't go in; it looked rather crawly. At the tail end of the cave, Deb brought out her flute, and played a little on it- it was quite mesmerising to watch the glowworms react to the sound of the music, and almost a shame to emerge into a lovely early autumn afternoon! It was very much a privilege to go caving with Deb on one of her tours. I certainly picked up a few ideas from caving with her about presenting cave information to people new to caving that I'll have to try out on some future NUCC beginner trips.

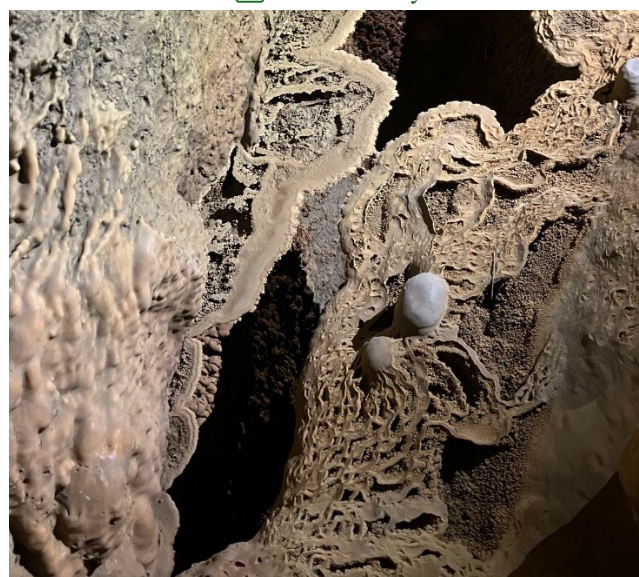
Following our last night at Mole Creek, Alek and I decamped towards Mount William NP, before circling back to Hobart to meet the rest of the NUCC group for the JF trip. As no caving was done here, I will not dwell on it, but it featured the following:

- 1x Market in Mole Creek
- 1x Mural wall in Sheffield
- 1x Accidental detour to Port Sorell because I was too busy looking at roadside potato stalls to read a map
- ? Purchase of much sausage and cabbage at Beaconsfield IGA to go with potatoes from Mole Ck as our only food
- 1x Bored publican in Gladstone with questionable political opinions
- 1x Rescued kitten, called Petal as we were camping at Petal Point
- ? Much fishing, in which Alek and I competed to catch the fewest edible fish
- 1x Increasingly decrepit camp chair from Launnie tip shop
- .



Alek and Deb in MC166 White Rabbit Cave.

 Lachie Bailey



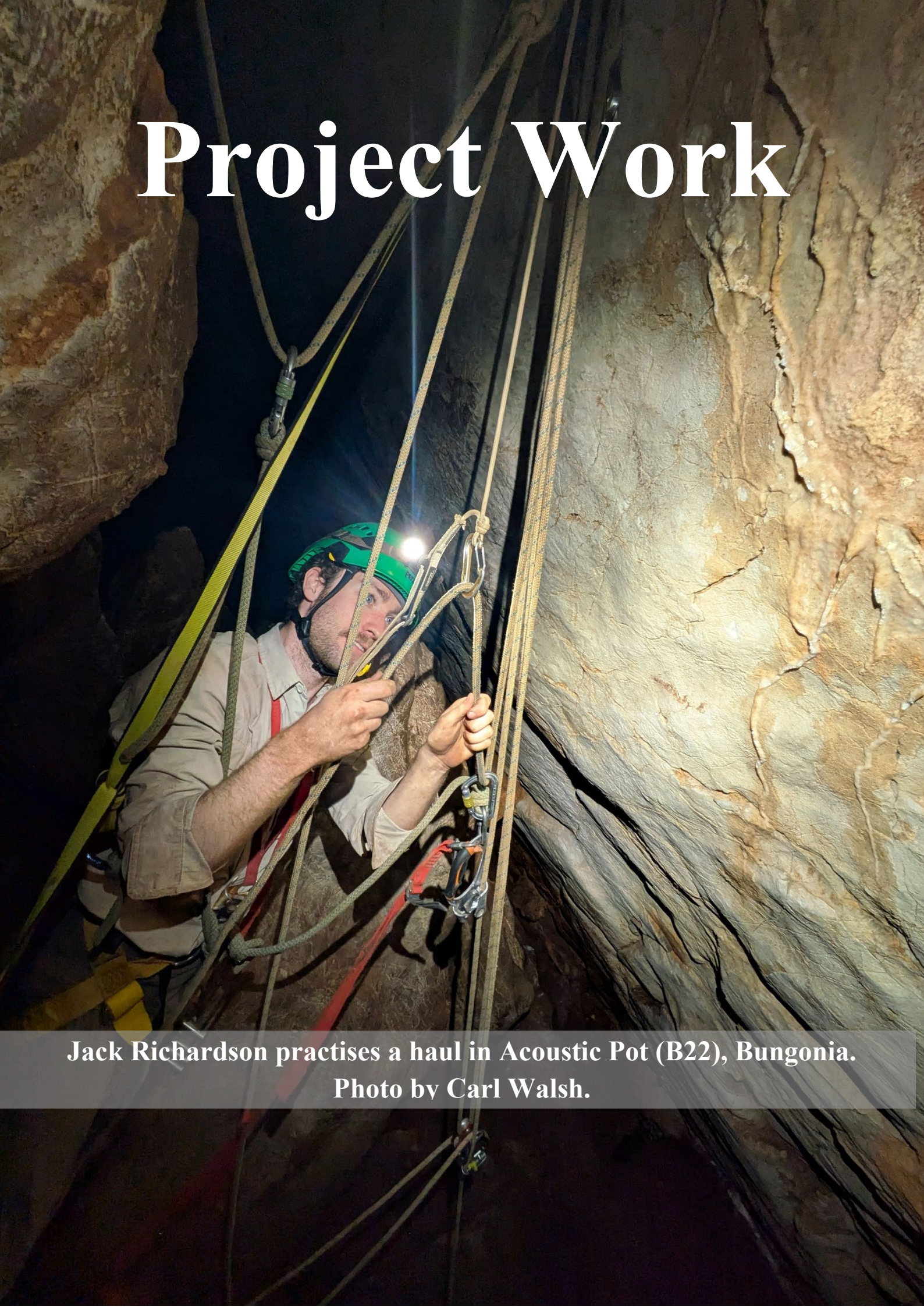
More pool-associated formation in White Rabbit Cave.

 Lachie Bailey



Petal spent the entire trip from Petal Point to St Helens wrapped up in my jumper purring. If this had been on a NUCC trip within driving distance of Canberra, I would have a kitten now....  Lachie Bailey

Project Work

A man wearing a green helmet and a tan shirt is positioned in a cave, practicing a haul. He is holding onto a rope and a metal carabiner. The cave walls are made of rough, layered rock. A bright light source, possibly a headlamp, is visible on the man's helmet, illuminating the scene. Several ropes and carabiners are visible, indicating a complex climbing or hauling system.

Jack Richardson practises a haul in Acoustic Pot (B22), Bungonia.
Photo by Carl Walsh.

The Good, The Bad, & The Grovel

9 March 2025

Wee Jasper (NSW)

By Carl Walsh

Participants: Lachie Bailey, Ally Kelly, Laurie Jolliffe, Jack Richardson, & Carl Walsh

Foreword from Carl

Hello fellow troglomen. I bring you the tale of (which trip report am I writing again?) ...

It started with faff, an unusual occurrence for NUCC, who generally are extremely efficient and scorn tardiness. We went on a trip, we probably had cheese in the car, or at least chippies, hopefully sweet chilli and sour cream.

I can't recall who was there because I've yet to remember which trip I'm supposed to be writing about...I think we went caving (or canyoning), and it was good. We probably executed it flawlessly

AAAAH! I have consulted my *Messages With The Editor*, and (amongst other civil discourse) have discovered I was to write about Hume and Grovel, the long fabled extension of Dip Series 5.

The Trip Report

Context time: Hume and Grovel was pushed the day after Cave Island (see previous report in this issue), and the day before we decided not to take beginners to Dip until the Rubbish Tip entrance had opened up again.

Yes, it was mostly good. I recall only 1 police car, 4 paramedics, 2 SES volunteers, and several cavers who actually did all the work (See Dip Incident Report page 91) I do recall at one point wishing that I had a cigarette or two, having only huffed a dart once previously in my life. It seemed appropriate.

Before all of that (i.e., the day before), we had a mostly great time. The day started with Ally, Laurie and I waking up to the sweet sounds of Lachie tramping down to our legal camping spot. Alas, we were mortally hungover and required a bit of a kick. After a hasty decampment where we (once again) confused some tourists by offering them interesting side quests, we acquired another straggler in the form of Jack (also hungover).

We then visited the phone booth to call somebody, I think Rowan? The vicious hangover claimed Laurie's Wee J vomginity out the back of the distillery. Following that,



Guess who's feeling under the weather. 📷 Ally Kelly



Carl with the correct amount of gear to carry at all times.

📷 Jack Richardson



Waiting in the ED with reverse mud socks. From filthiest (left) to cleanest (right): Carl, Laurie, Ally, Lachie, Rowan.

📷 Vin Goonesekera



The support crew in various states. 📷 Jack Richardson



Lachie's power pose (+10 wis & style). 📷 Jack Richardson



Matchy Matchy (Laurie's trog suit's first outing).

📷 Jack Richardson



Carl does much of the grunt work. 📷 Jack Richardson

we decided to go caving. The caving plan was fairly straightforward, Lachie had some leads to push in Dip, and Carl (that's me) was keen to be on the pointy end of an aid climb. We headed for the most promising lead, a short but delicate climb up to what appeared to be a glorious extension to Series 5 of Dip Cave. Luckily, our reporter on site was there to capture it on camera (Jack with his DSLR, not 9 News this time) and we got some sick photos, including about 100 of Lachie prusiking 5m for some reason.

Carl put in a valiant effort by not dying or kicking any formation and got about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the height of the climb and decided that Lachie should finish the traverse. Lachie complied, used his enormous arms to reach past the bad rock, and thrutch his way into the glorious mastercave beyond. It went about 10 m and dead ended, but it was really cool to see some genuinely untouched parts of Dip, most of which has been desecrated by generations of Scouts and school kids. After some photographing and enthusiastic promises to come back and survey it properly, we retreated and made our way out of the cave.

We did some more discrete camping, made banging nachos (fresh guac, salsa, everything, was so fire), and rested up for what was to be a big day tomorrow with several beginners being sent our way.

We had a boulderer's start (woke up at 9, made breakfast, got going by 11), and met Rowan and his entourage of beginners, before heading to Dip again. This is where the Troubles began (see incident report at the back). A bit of a loosey goosey plan resulted in the aforementioned emergency services visiting us but didn't really actually help in any way. In hindsight, we managed the rescue situation well but have identified several procedural and decision-making measures that should have been implemented to avoid an incident in the first place (again see report).

Anyway, Hume and Grovel was good. We have plans to borrow or purchase a survey device, whatever happens first, and go back to survey the new passage. I'm sure that in the intervening time that someone suitable will go and make sure that the pitches in Dip are equipped for modern rigging, negating the need for IRT from the dark ages and avoid the horrific rub points.

See you later in the issue,

Carl



Images from Hume & Grovel, including some cool trace fossils that have been calcified! 📷 Jack Richardson

Punchbowl Aid Climb

5 April 2025 Wee Jasper (NSW)

by Lachie Bailey

Participants: Lachie Bailey, & Carl Walsh

As connoisseurs of Wee Jasper may be aware, there is a question mark hidden in the Joe Jennings map of WJ8 Punchbowl Cave. This map has been republished in the several editions of the *Wee Jasper Caves* book, but was drawn by Joe Jennings in 1962. It was published in *Helictite* 2.2 (1964), and as I understand, the original material is now held in the Joe Jennings map collection at the National Library of Australia.

More specifically, the question mark is located in the top left-hand corner of Sheet 4 of the map series. Sheets 4-7 of the map series are longitudinal sections and cross-sections of the cave, and most cavers do not have the fortitude to tread in this dread place, contenting themselves with plan maps in sheets 1-3. Cross-section

A10, describing Pitch Chamber is the item with which we are interested. Excerpted below are portions of the map from Sheets 2A, 3A, and 4, which pertain to this article.

Anyway, the question mark is of interest as it is one of the closer parts of Punchbowl Cave to WJ10 Dogleg Cave when both are projected in plan relative to each other. This was pointed out to me by Alan Pryke of SUSS in Christmas 2018; it only took the entirety of the time required for me to write one thesis to actually get around to checking it out. The spot is about 2/3 of the way up the wall on the right-hand side of Pitch Chamber as you're looking towards the Snicket, but in the part of Pitch Chamber that connects across to Loxin Chamber. It is cleverly disguised on the map as a piece of unsurveyed¹

¹ The map doesn't actually state that dashed walls are unsurveyed passage. However, it is assumed to be so, based on where such areas occur on the Punchbowl Cave map, and 78

the fact that this is the symbol Joe Jennings uses for "unsurveyed outline of cave" in his map of WJ1 Dip Cave

wall passage, but close inspection reveals it to be a question mark. There are, as best I can tell after careful perusal, no other question marks on the Punchbowl Cave map, although there are numerous places where the cave was marked as unsurveyed or as open passage, which could be worth systematic inspection.

On the appointed Saturday, two days before I left for a Tassie trip, Carl and I decided to actually finally check this out, after our recent efforts in Dip Cave. We rocked up to Wee Jasper, and descended the entrance of Punchbowl Cave, escaping some gloriously nice weather. Carl quickly prepped up to aid climb, with me belaying him. This being neither remote nor hard to get to, concrete screws, impact drivers, facilities to make hot beverages, and folding chairs were the name of the game. Carl quickly started up with a couple of bold moves, and then boldly discovered that he was not the first person to attempt climbing this wall, as there were several rather rusty (but still bomber) pitons on its lower part. These vanished 2/3 of the way up, where the going got tougher, and there was no other sign of human activity, so we presume that whoever did this climb stopped part way up.

Carl got 4/5ths of the way up, and then decided it was time for a tea break, while I christened my new water

bottle. We swapped places on belay, and were back at it. Before coming down, Carl was able to see that there was a meander up there, but sediment banks obscured whether it went anywhere. I'm unable to make the decidedly *exciting* moves when climbing that he can, but excessive application of long limbs and surplus concrete screws helps make up some of the difference. Climbing up to the top of the slope, and precariously balancing on one overextended concrete screw,² I was able to see that there was, in fact, a solid wall behind the sediment banks. Bummer.

Rather deflated, but not overly surprised, Carl and I derigged, leaving a single³ concrete screw and hanger at near the top of the climb to facilitate the pull-down. The route we'd taken was difficult enough that we couldn't retrieve all of the concrete screws. We toddled out of the cave, and admired the... uhhh... public art installation beside the road on our way home. The mission was a successful failure, and no one needs ever contemplate climbing this piece of wall again.

On a last note: if anyone knows who previously climbed this wall, or if the effort is recorded somewhere, please let me know. I'd be quite keen to hear or read the account of their climb!



Carl's latest contraption holds one flask of tea, two stubbies or four tinnies and is rated to "at least 1000kg straight pull".

. Lachie Bailey

Lachie is equipped with his favoured belay device.

Carl Walsh

Uncertain what Carl is doing here.

. Lachie Bailey

² Hence why I didn't take any photos, it was all I could do to keep my balance and not fall on said concrete screw. No, I didn't want to think about fall factors and the MBS of 6mm concrete screws either...

³ Again, no I don't want to think about the MBS of a 6mm concrete screw...

Other Reports



Carl Walsh abseils Acoustic Pot (B22) in Bungonia.

Photo by Ally Kelly

ASF Conference Buchan 2025

(as written for Caves Australia)

14 – 19 January 2025

Buchan (NSW)

by Jack Richardson, Laurie Jolliffe, & Ally Kelly

NUCC Envoy: Brad Hearn, Jack Richardson, Alek Meade, Laurie Jolliffe, Cole Neering, Britt Meers, & Ally Kelly (left to right). 📷 Nadine Muresan



Wednesday 15th - Jack Richardson

Our first full day at the conference began with a ‘practical’ cave diving demonstration. The pool water, fresh from the underground, was an effective wake-up method, even if we only dipped our feet in. Steve Fordyce (soon to be our good friend) donned his cave diving gear and demonstrated the techniques and practicalities of cave diving while Ann-Marie gave an... interesting, perhaps mis-informed, running commentary of the behaviours and actions of the ‘endangered’ cave diver.

We then travelled to the SR-Tree set up at Caver’s House to practice a variety of rescue-techniques, including ‘pick ups’. This was a good opportunity to get close and familiar with some of the cavers we had yet to meet. One thing we do know for sure is that NUCC is making its name as ‘the club with the looooooong cows-tails’. A quick comparison saw our short cows' tails were longer than most peoples long! We collectively blamed our former equipment officer (an abnormally tall man) for setting the lengths.

The afternoon promised some interesting talks inside. Soon however, the forecast gave a frightening warning and rain threatened. We had some waterproofing to do. It was a good thing too, because for a span of about 30 minutes, the campsite was pelted with some very heavy rain. Thus was born: Fort NUCC. A set of tarps and poles covering a picnic table, which provided suitable enough



The NUCCers look suitably impressed as Steve gets lost in Buchan pool. 📷 Gary Smith



Alek awaits the deluge in Fort NUCC. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe



Friends were made during pick offs-ups. 📷 Cole Neering



Jack & Alek steal phones in the pub.

📷 Laurie Jolliffe's Phone



Laurie, Jack, & Alek at our little picnic spot. 📷 Ally Kelly



Representing the new NUCC merch. We were on task all conference. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe

shelter for about 5 people. Until the rains stopped some half hour later.

The two final members of our party were scheduled to arrive around 5. However, the rain that frightened us before had hit them while driving down from the Snowies. So they arrived closer to 7:30. They were frustrated, but the pub was furious. I had to sheepishly ask them if we could add 2 meals to the collective caving order. Everything worked out in the end, but we were all pretty tired come bed time, and eager for what the next day would bring.

Thursday 16th - Jack Richardson

Caving and diving are two sports that, to those who have never tried them, seem like dangerous, terrifying ways to risk your life. The same thing that scares some, is what thrills us. Being somewhere humans were never meant to be. Seeing natural formations, jaw dropping depths and the intentionality of every action is what brings us back to the dark and back in the water. But combining the two, for many, is a step too far. We began the day by gaining an insight into the adventure that is cave diving. Keir Vaughan-Taylor, a prominent cave diver presented a recount of some of his recent expeditions. Including a Mt Fairy project trip with NUCC, diving a sump we otherwise couldn't get to. I was enthralled by it. Beginning with a rejection of the idea from fear of diving on a strict time limit, through narrow, dark holes with often zero visibility. However, by the end, Kier had me considering the idea of getting back in the water, re-learning my scuba skills, and working up to the point of venturing into a deep dark hole where no other human has ever been before. Despite the long hauls of cave-pack after cave-pack of gear, the thrill of exploration entices. Although some may have other ideas about the sport, in which I will point to a text from my family after I sent photos of the sort of stuff I get up to on the weekends, "Jack, I'm glad you only tell me about this after you've returned alive."

Another aspect of the conference I enjoyed was the scientific discourse, which mostly came about via updates from current conservation, ecology and geology research and projects. Nayeli Luis Varagas gave a very interesting talk on her current research on the microbiology of Mexican lava tubes, and other talks of the day involved the hydrology of underground rivers and the ecology of Jenolan caves.

Following the talks some of the NUCC members went back to the tree to practice more pick-offs, not that we

would *ever* need to rescue anyone from a cave! I opted to go for a walk up to the top of Moon Hill and enjoy the scenery and views. I even spotted the others in a tree off in the distance.

As evening came, our little group of NUCCers and NUCC adjacent cavers went for a picnic along the bank of the river (I was on the look-out for platypus). Our meal of pesto and cheeses was very pleasant and the whole outing was lovely. We were one of the first to light a fire back at camp, and we attracted fellow cavers like moths to a flame. Plenty of lively conversations and new meetings.

Friday 17th - Lauren Jolliffe

Over the past couple days we'd learnt about a diverse range of topics, and Friday was no different. In the morning we were tantalised with our good friend Stephen Fordyce's tales of wet, horrible, and unforgiving Junee-Florentine, and dreamed of one day being in such a miserable cave ourselves [*Editors note: We question if having this wish published in Caves Australia may have been wise given later misery*]. The afternoon had me longing for home, with Bob Karshaw's talk on the Nullarbor Caves, and some of the fascinating research they've been helping.

The cave rescue exercise after lunch was a personal favourite from the conference. It was fantastic to work with cavers from different states and clubs, and to see how everyone did things. And, while it seemed a disorganised chaos at the outset, the activity eventually resolved into something resembling a rescue. Our enduring patient survived several "dry runs" doing doughies around the Team 1 Chamber and then was unceremoniously hoisted through the first few stations.

Unfortunately, we ran out of time to complete the mission, but hopefully we have more opportunities to revisit some of the new skills we'd learnt in the future.

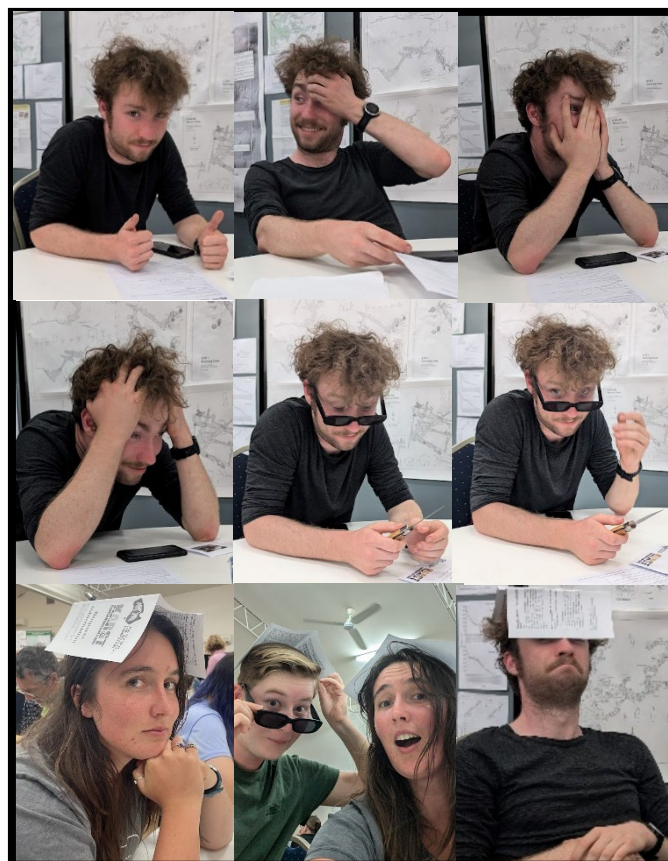
It was a mad rush to the Quiz Night, where we sat, still filthy from the cave rescue exercise. Our scavenged bottom-the-eski snacks paled in comparison to some of the other tables, and we had little to no clue on any of the answers. But an entertaining night it was nonetheless! One thing that has really surprised me about attending the ASF conference is the peek into the strange little complex biome that is caving in Australia. Many of the clubs seem to know one another, and have decades long projects, politics, and more. Almost anything can be achieved by speaking to someone who knows someone else who knows a particular karst area or project. As a younger



Many a trog gathered around the NUCC fire as the sun set each night. 📷 Ally Kelly



Alek models in Alan Green's Cave Rescue photoshoot with the Trog Goblin Trog suit (icon). 📷 Garry Smith



ASF Quiz Night: A Photo Collage
📷 Laurie Jolliffe & Ally Kelly
Speleograffiti Vol.29 No.1

person standing on the outside of what can seem like a dauntingly older and far more experienced demographic, the club's continued collaboration and communication with each other through events like the ASF conference gives me hope to continue caving in the future and develop my own skills to one day eventually contribute back to our convoluted, hydra-like community.

Saturday 18th - Alice Kelly

Saturday heralded the last official day of the conference and brought with it the promise of classic caver shenanigans. The morning was unassuming, with many interpreting the “stop-by-whenever” nature of the day's events as a perfect opportunity for a sleep-in. And we would need it too, given the big ticket item of the day was Speleo-sports.

Needless to say the NUCC gang had decided (perhaps overconfidently) that this was our day to go all in, and it's safe to say we gave it a good crack. We kicked off with

the speed ascent, apparently choosing to expend as much energy as possible in the shortest amount of time at the very start of the day. A confident Alek was chuffed to beat out Steve's time so we counted this a win for the whole group and rolled over to the SRT course.

The course, it turned out, looked rather intimidating. Despite our confidence, our range of rope skills lacked and to many of us “tyrolean” was a completely new word that spelled certain doom. But after being bullied once more about the length of our cows tails (“Wait which one is meant to be the short one?”) and watching the pros take a turn (“What do you mean Bo did it in six minutes?!”) we were feeling a bit bolder about our chances. So off we set and, catastrophic tangles aside, all made it to the other side with times we were really quite proud of. The course proved to be great fun and we've been giddily rigging tyroleans at campsites since.

Next up was the relay, which was honestly a huge highlight. The atmosphere was electric, with each team stepping up to the course's four challenges to the enthusiastic cheering of onlookers. There was the dexterity-defying one handed carabiner opening, the mind-melting upside down stop rigging (terror to rack-users everywhere), the adrenaline pumping ladder ascent and finally the breath snatching squeeze. It was a heck of a lot of fun. We even left with our shoulders intact and everything (which proved to be quite the accomplishment).



Britt Meers demolishes the rope course.

📷 Jack Richardson



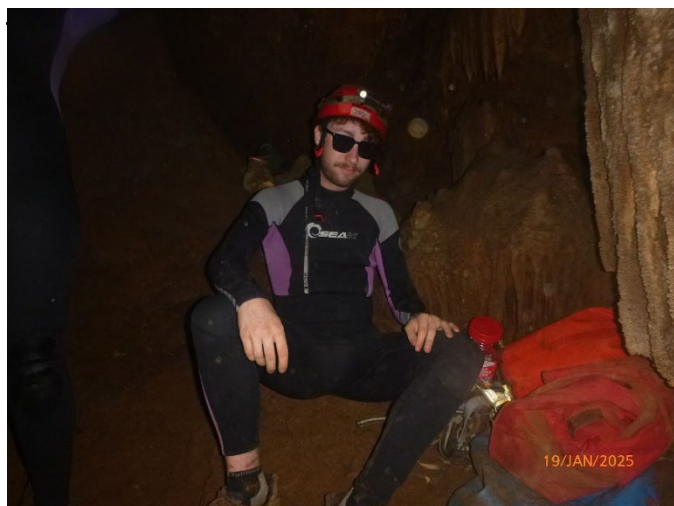
The NUCC envoy imagines the '80s.

📷 Nadine Muresan

The NUCCers retired with a Roadhouse lunch and hearts set on a swim. We adopted Elly from the Victorians and headed down to the Buchan River

where we settled in to cool off, get swept around by the strong river currents and, to our great delight, swim with a platypus. Presentations from earlier in the week had us speculating about if they might use the caves in Buchan, but perhaps that's an investigation for next time. We had bigger fish to fry. That fish being an 80s themed dinner party.

Glitz, glam and obnoxiously neon bathers worn over equally obnoxiously neon lycra. It was a sight to behold. With the 80s being over a decade prior to any of our gang being born we could only wonder at what a terrifying time this must have been. That said, the food was incredible and the outfits really did grow on us after a time, even if some people appeared to have gotten the wrong memo (Brian, your nargun outfit will always be famous).

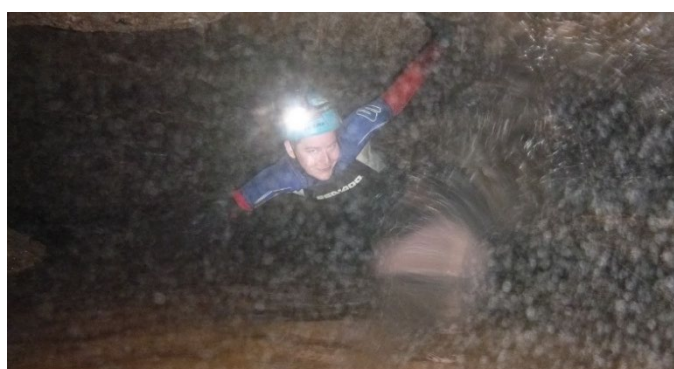


Jack gets my vote for No Cap Officer. 📷 Laurie Jolliffe



Britt gets to see her pretties. Ally & Jack also pictured.

📷 Laurie Jolliffe



Steve was introduced to the concept of Gollum Summer.

📷 Laurie Jolliffe



“Take a photo of me like this” – Jack Richardson.

📷 Laurie Jolliffe

And with that the 33rd ASF conference drew to a close. The event was a brilliant insight into the wonderful little world of caving in Australia (and around the world). As someone who'd not had the opportunity to attend before, it was brilliant to pick the minds of so many accomplished cavers from across the country. Massive kudos to the organisers who made sure everyone was fed, entertained, in the right place at the right time and put so much time and effort into pulling everything together for a brilliant week.

Hope to see you all at Chillagoe in a couple of years time!

Sunday 19th - Lauren Jolliffe

****Speleograffiti Exclusive****

Just to try something different, we thought on the last day of the caving conference we might go caving [actually, because we got the discount under 28 tickets most of us were too late to sign up to the main trips, except Cole who somehow managed to visit probably every cave in Buchan].

We'd met our good friend Stephen Fordyce some days earlier during the conference proceedings when he, a person under 50, was forced under the weight of social expectations to interact with us other persons under the age of 50. Naturally, we immediately made like Brad escaping the Auskarst talk, parkoured over the courtyard wall and ran for the nearest phone booth to tell Lachie that yes, we had in fact been networking (did you know Buchan has TWO phone booths?). And in fact, we had made not one but two friends (if you count Elly from VSA which we absolutely do). Allegations of poor interpersonal skills and NUCC being ‘insular’ are entirely fabricated.

Consequently, we were giddy when we discovered on Sunday morning that none other than our good friend, subsurface Steve, would be taking us through Elk River. Our group consisted of Jack, Ally, Cole, myself, as well as Britt, and Onni (MSS). Alek, being disorganised was off to Shades of Death instead. Brad, unfortunately, had chosen to be responsible and head back to Canberra.

Despite Steve's organisational efforts and copious lists, most of the NUCC contingency was underprepared for the trip. Both Jack and I had forgotten wetsuits, meanwhile Ally had actually lost her boots somewhere in Wilson's Cave (if found please return to A. Kelly at Belco Owl, Belconnen 2617) and was contemplating caving in her camper vans. Fortunately, Steve inexplicably had a women's size 10 and a size 12 wetsuit that Jack & I fit

into, while I was able to equip Ally with my hiking boots that are half a size too small for me, but they were \$60 brand new leather Scarpas at Vinnies (total win even if my feet hurt).

After this initial first impression on Steve, we were keen to consolidate our image as capable and prepared cavers by being our most obnoxious selves for the rest of the day. Cole somehow got lost in the rock pile on three separate occasions, probably completing eight speed laps of the entrance. Ally, Jack and I incessantly offered people snacks and prattled on about electing NUCC a Nap

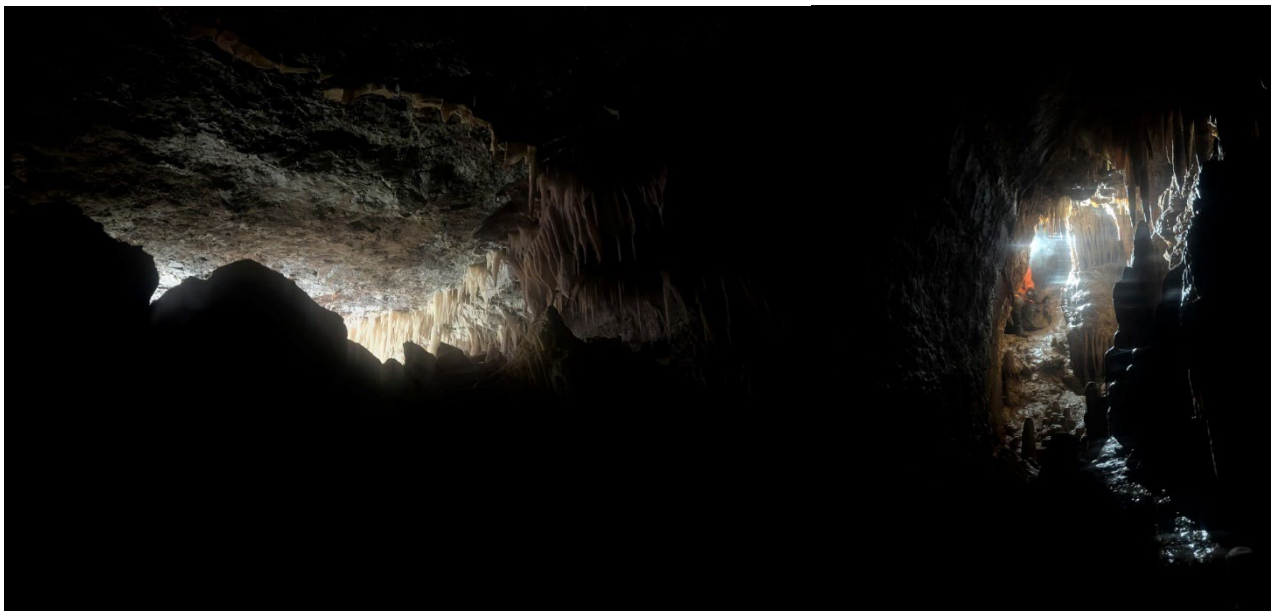
Officer, a Rap Officer, a Wrap Officer, a Cap Officer, and a No Cap Officer. Britt, naturally, was frustrated with all the blathering and only wanted to see the pretties. Jack wore sunglasses for most of the cave and posed for photos. I was talking too much and went up the chute the wrong way, splitting my lip open. While Ally's only response to seeing my face and teeth covered in blood was "THAT'S SO METAL". All in all, Steve seemed confused by our cavalier attitude and lack of caving goals (other than bumblng about) and could only suggest that we should also elect a Crap Officer (solid advice).



Mud acquired! A chaotic day in Elk River. Left to right: Cole Neering, Onni Elliott, Laurie Jolliffe, Ally Kelly, Steve Fordyce.

 Jack Richardson

Supplemental: While some of us were simply wandering around Buchan being a general nuisance, Cole actually went caving and took some pretty cool photos...



The Petzl Dual Connect Adjust- An Inferior Caving Cowstail Option

by Lachie Bailey with comments from Carl Walsh

There has been increasing prevalence of use of the Petzl Dual Connect Adjust in NUCC. For those not familiar with it, this is an item sold by Petzl, and described by them as an “Adjustable double lanyard for climbing and mountaineering”. It has sewn terminations, and three loops: one enclosed by a sewn termination, a second created by an alloy friction control device, and a third sewn loop between the other two. It is also available in a form with a single lanyard- the Petzl Connect Adjust, but this is much less practical for caving use. Generally, it is attached to the D-ring via a girth hitch using the intermediate sewn loop, and carabiners are placed in the other two loops to form arms of a dual tether. The loop enclosed by the sewn termination is fixed at 45cm long, but the one with the alloy friction control device (“rope adjuster” in Petzl’s parlance) can be quickly and easily manipulated to change its length.



Petzl’s single connect adjust (left) and dual connect adjust (right). Images from Petzl.com.

I wish to discuss its suitability here as a caving cowstail, without getting off into the weeds of other inappropriate, inferior, or plainly dangerous cowstail options that get spotted occasionally in the caving community (eg, cowstails made of tape or static rope). I am not suggesting here that either of these Petzl items are dangerous, and I would certainly suggest using them in preference to some other cowstail alternatives. However, I remain unconvinced that this is generally a suitable and practical item to use for caving purposes, when compared to a standard caving cowstail. For reference, a generic caving cowstail is a double tether handmade from 9-10mm full dynamic rope, with fixed and personalised lengths for both arms. The arms usually terminate in barrel knots, with a figure eight knot on the bight in between to provide an attachment to a D-ring. To elaborate, first, let us consider the practical issues, before considering the more critical safety items:

Carl: Glad you put your strongest argument at the top Lachie. This is really the only downside

Expensive. The Petzl Dual Connect Adjust is expensive, at about \$140-150 a shot. Compare this to about \$20AUD to replace the rope in a normal cowstail. Cowstails are generally the single piece of caving equipment that gets replaced the most, making this a frequent outlay. Using an inherently more expensive item creates a disincentive for replacement, which is not a good outcome.

Carl: I’d argue racks in JF are pretty up there!

Carl: Why girth hitch it when you can simply clip the loop to your D ring... if you looked at what everyone who has them does, that’s it. So single loop, no knot, so lower profile than a fig 8 on cowstails.

The Editors note that, in September 2025 prices range from \$75-\$150 for the Dual Connect Adjust and \$60-\$135 for the single Connect Adjust (dependant on retailer).

Takes up more space on your D-ring. The girth hitch used to secure the Petzl Dual Connect Adjust to your D-ring uses more of what is already a cluttered and valuable space when compared to the single loop of a figure-8 on the bight (or overhand knot, but I think that’s an inferior choice generally).

Bulky and weighs more. Hard to argue with the extra piece of metal crap on the Petzl Dual Connect Adjust...

Carl: It weighs like 30g... if this is a big deal, get a Croll S instead of a L.

Dangly bits. cf. premade cowstails that are actually the right length for you.



The Editors would like to store cheap points by mentioning the club cowstails aren't the right length for anyone under 190cm.

Extra crap. The Petzl Dual Connect Adjust is a more complicated and moveable system than a standard double cowstail. This makes it more likely to be prone to suffering niche or unexpected issues, unlikely though this is.

What the hell is it actually? I've read Petzl's documents, and nowhere in them does it actually state what the rope used in the Dual Connect Adjust or Connect Adjust actually is, beyond that it is dynamic rope. What are its properties, how can I expect it to perform, what diameter is the rope? Petzl tells you none of these things, all of which I think are important. While I don't expect Petzl to be doing anything unethical or dangerous, I don't think it's good to completely trust a manufacturer, and I like to understand the gear I'm using as much as possible.

Now, on to the meat of the argument. The Petzl technical notices for the Dual Connect Adjust and Connect Adjust describes them as an "adjustable lanyard", and certifies to the UIAA 109:2018 and UKCA 0120 standards. The former of these two standards (certifying it as a "belay lanyard"), is based on:

A single end to end inline static pull to 15kN.

A single inline static pull across the adjuster (if present) with <50mm slippage at 100N (about 10kg of force)

A fall factor 2 dynamic test with a falling mass of 80kg, with the first drop peak force <10kN, and able to withstand 3 falls without breaking.

This UIAA document notes that the standard "applies to lanyards intended to be the primary connection between the climber and the belay stance", so it is a better choice for alternative cowstails than a positioning aid. However, beware that this is clean and dry conditions; performance (especially slippage) could be expected to decline when wet and muddy...



The French School of Speleology did extensive testing on caver's cowstails and some alternatives. They're from 2006, so getting a little old, but the results are still entirely valid.

Basically, not only do they confirm how awful tape products are as cowstails (eg, Petzl Spelegyca), they also demonstrate that sewn terminations generate really high forces on the user in the event of a fall. Basically, the presence of properly tied (and not cinched tight) knots in the system absorbs a lot of the energy in a system, preventing plastic deformation of a cowstail.

So that's a big part of why things like the Petzl Connect Adjust are potentially dangerous; they're fine at not breaking when loaded, but they're just not optimised for use in a system where shock loading is a real possibility (and the manufacturer's documentation supports that). Sure, the Petzl Connect Adjust might be tested to UIAA 109:2018, but, 10kn will very likely badly hurt you! So, if you

Carl: Unfortunately it actually gets less slippery in the wet and mud, tbh this is my biggest grievance is that the mud gets worked into the rope and it becomes stiff.

Carl: If I had a dollar for every time we loosened our cowstails to absorb extra force... I would not be any wealthier. Maybe a point here, but not when no one actually does it. Also, I'd argue that if you wanted a "softer" catch, use a prusik, they're great at slipping before they bite and actually reducing force in a factor 1+ fall. I don't think encouraging people to undo the knots in the cowstails is a good idea in our case, where many people aren't experienced or competent enough to recognise when the barrel knots are too loose and may come undone, I'd prefer it if most people's knots were practically welded on. Sire if you're planning to go wandering around above anchors all the time, maybe loosen your knots, but at the same time, swap that snapgate for a locking carabiner!!

Carl: I don't think there's any evidence to suggest this, there's no comparative testing on adjustable lanyards vs cowstails for shock absorption in a fat 1+ fall. Again, if this is what you're mainly worried about, use a ferrata lanyard or a pursel?

fuck up and have a higher fall factor fall with one of these sort of items, you're more likely to be subjected to a higher force than with a normal caving cowstail. PAS (and beware, there's a gazillion things that all seem to get called PAS) are usually risky in a caving context for the same reason.

It's also worth keeping in mind how the manufacturer describes their equipment; this is perhaps more important than the technical minutiae of the standard it is approved to. Petzl at no

point ascribe any capacity to absorb falls to the Connect Adjust, caution people using it at or above the same level as the anchor it is attached to (a not uncommon occurrence for caver's cowstails), and explicitly warn users to "Keep your lanyard taut; stay below the anchor". This is pretty obvious that the manufacturers do not want it to be used in a situation where it will be exposed to falls. This is further reinforced by Petzl noting that it is a "dynamic rope lanyard, to reduce the force transmitted to the user in the event of a short fall", and further expounding this point with the comment that the Petzl Dual Connect Adjust is for "use below the anchor point: positioning lanyards do not have an energy absorber. These lanyards must only be used when the potential fall factor is less than 1".

So in summary, can you use it as a tether instead of a cowstail? Yes. Is it optimized for this? No, definitely not. Should you use it as one? Generally not, unless the capacity to adjust the length of the item is critical, which is generally rare in a caving context (outside of aid climbing).

Carl: Yes, and this applies equally to cowstails, which also do not have an energy absorber. If someone were to sell a pretied cowstail, it would be in exactly the same boat from a manufacturer safety point of view.

Mac Pass Incident Report

1st March 2025

Macquarie Pass (NSW)

This document serves as the National University Caving Club's formal re-port of the events that occurred at Dip Cave of Wee Jasper on 10th March, 2025, and the lessons learned by NUCC from this incident. For further information, contact NUCC at caving.nucc.anu@gmail.com. All times and information provided are correct to the best knowledge of those involved, however it is noted that there may be errors in recollection. All persons involved in this report have been de-identified for their privacy

NUCC ran a beginner canyoning trip to Macquarie Pass. Ten people participated, and as such the group was split into 2 subgroups. One group was led by Trip Leader 1 and supported by Experienced NUCCer 1, the other group led by Trip Leader 2 and supported by Experienced NUCCer 2. The group arrived at the canyon carpark at around 11:15 am.

Trip Leader 2's group went first and were ahead of Trip Leader 1's group. After the first two abseils and initial section of rock hopping, Trip Leader 1's group arrived at a section with a steep slide with a moderate amount of flow which in a ~1.5 m drop into a very shallow (~0.2 m) pool. Trip Leader 1 arrived at the obstacle first and instructed the group that we would be avoiding the slide

by going around and walking down on a track to the river left. The remainder of the group poked about near the top of the slide while Trip Leader 1 navigated down the scrambly track.

Other members of the group were looking at the slide from the river right of it from a dry rock, Experienced NUCCer 1 was on the river left and the casualty was in the water near the top of the slide. Experienced NUCCer 1 reiterated we weren't going down the slide and to go around. Several people started calling out, as the casualty had slipped into the slide while trying to go over it, and was scrambling to get back up. No one was within reaching distance and within a couple of seconds the casualty slipped again and slid down the slide,

across a short flat section, and fell off the 1.5 m drop, landing in the shallow pool. The casualty verbally confirmed she was ok, and stood up and sat against a rock. She was fine but had landed on her ankle. This was at approximately 2:30 pm but to my knowledge no one checked the time.

The rest of the group went around and down via the scramble track, got to the casualty, spoke to her and assessed her condition. She again said she was fine but her left ankle hurt and just need to sit for a bit. We sat down and Experienced NUCCer 1 strapped her left ankle from her first aid kit. We did not have painkillers on hand. After maybe 5 minutes, the casualty said she was good to keep going but slowly and the group started moving again slowly.

Trip Leader 1 decided that someone should go ahead and inform the other group who were likely waiting at the next pitch, about 5-10 minutes down the canyon. Experience NUCCer 1 took our rope and went off at a faster pace than the rest of us. After about 30 m the casualty was in too much pain to continue through the rest of the canyon. At this point, we decided the best course of action was for the rest of the group to take the pack with most of the gear and continue through the canyon with the other group and Experienced NUCCer 1 while Trip Leader 1 helped the casualty to escape the canyon and get back to the cars.

Trip Leader 1 and the casualty left the rest of the group, had a break to eat some food and drink some water, and climbed the hill out of the canyon, intersecting the track where the fire trail ends near the canyon start at approx 3:20 pm. They walked out on the fire trail to the cars,

stopping for rests, food and drinks breaks throughout this time. They arrived back at the cars at 4:40 pm. Ibuprofen and paracetamol were administered at the cars.

The remainder of the group returned to the cars at 6:05 pm with no further incidents. The casualty was monitored on the drive home, we had a debrief about the event and discussed other possible scenarios. The casualty took another ibuprofen at about 8:30 pm and was in fairly good spirits about the event.

Reflections by Trip Leader 1 & Experienced NUCCer 1

It would've been better to not send Experienced NUCCer 1 ahead as it meant I needed to leave the rest of the team to go on ahead to meet up with the group (fairly trivial, Experienced NUCCer 1 was also only ~50 m in front of them but out of earshot) but also that the most experienced vertical leader, and trip leader leaving the group wasn't too ideal. A better plan might have been for Experienced NUCCer 1 to go with the casualty and for Trip Leader 1 to have continued with the rest of the group to manage the pitches and navigate, having the most experience with the canyon. That being said, the navigation up the hill, while straightforward, was aided by having topographic maps and GPS, so the most direct route to the fire trail was made easier using Trip Leader 1's phone and maps. Trip Leader 1 should have kept the group together longer to see how the casualty was performing compared to her own self-assessment, which was fairly poorly as I think the initial shock quickly faded into intense pain despite the strapping.

Dip Incident Report

10th March 2025

Wee Jasper (NSW)

This document serves as the National University Caving Club's formal re-port of the events that occurred at Dip Cave of Wee Jasper on 10th March, 2025, and the lessons learned by NUCC from this incident. For further information, contact NUCC at caving.nucc.anu@gmail.com. All times and information provided are correct to the best knowledge of those involved, however it is noted that there may be errors in recollection. All persons involved in this report have been de-identified for their privacy.

Brief Descriptive Information

- **9:00am** Group of beginner cavers meet outside ANU Sport and depart on Trip
- **Approx 11:30am** Group of cavers enter Dip
- **4:30pm** While exiting the cave, some trip participants accidentally dislodged a rock, which fell into the chamber below and struck "Caver A"'s helmet as he waited to exit. The other members of the party provided first aid and found that he had sustained a cut to the head beneath his safety helmet. Although he appeared conscious, he was visibly stunned. Given the potential risk of a head injury, an ambulance was called immediately.
- **4:30pm - 6:30pm** Paramedics arrived at the scene and determined that it was safe for "Caver A" to walk out of the cave with assistance from the other trip participants.
- **6:30pm** "Caver A" exits the cave and is assessed by paramedics. Is transported to Yass District Hospital.
- **7:30pm** "Caver A" arrives at Yass District Hospital
- **7:30pm - 9:30pm** Medical staff determine that "Caver A" had not suffered a concussion, and he was discharged at 9:30pm.

Existing Risk Mitigation Measures

- The risk mitigation measures taken on the trip met NUCC expectations. While they did not

prevent the incident, they helped manage it and prevent escalation. These measures were valuable and should be considered alongside the proposed changes in this report. The order is not reflective of any weighting or hierarchy but used for comprehension and clarity. The risk mitigation measures that were actively relevant on March 10th included:

- Helmet PPE: NUCC wear helmets as standard in vertical caves to mitigate events such as these. The Petzl Vertex Vents worn at the time were relatively new (<6 months old) and in extremely good condition. A similar incident may have had a different outcome with the previous generation of helmet.
- First Aid Training
- First Aid kit: The group moving through had a first aid kit available.
- Below Calling: The club promotes a practise of calling out "Below" where an item is falling.

Proposed Changes

- First Aid kit maintenance
 - Club has made the commitment prior to replacing first aid kits. This will be followed up with more urgency
- Post event support

Aprilee Florentine RPG Character Sheets

(from next page)

Character Name:

The Alchemist

Class: Anchor

Race: Wombeyan
Trog

Background:

Unknown

Alignment:

Lawful Neutral

Player Name: Dr Eliza
Tarcoveanu

Wisdom

+1

Physical

+1

Vertical

+1

Water

+2

Teamwork

+2

Constitution

+3

Skills

- ☐ Navigation (wis)
- ☐ Cave Knowledge (wis)
- ☐ Strategy (wis)
- ☒ Squeezing (phys)
- ☐ Scrambling (phys)
- ☐ Carrying (phys)
- ☐ Rigging (vert)
- ☐ Rope Skills (vert)
- ☐ Bolting (vert)
- ☐ Diving (wat)
- ☒ Creek Creeping (wat)
- ☐ Swimming (wat)
- ☐ Morale (tea)
- ☒ Healing (tea)
- ☒ Faff (tea)
- ☐ Endurance (con)
- ☐ Drinking (con)
- ☒ Calm (con)

HIT POINTS

24

Speed

5

Armour

Cordura?

Attacks/Spells:

- Dehydrate
- Evade
- Speak with stubborn individuals

Equipment:

- fur suit (+2 heat damage)
- Petzel dual lock
- Broken ladle

Feats and Proficiencies:

- Nemesis of Mud: Advantages on all cleaning actions
- European: Impervious to cold damage
- "Easy": Enters a rage-like mindset with buff to constitution.

Character Name:

~~Dr ~~Mr~~~~ Dr Bailey

Class:

SpeleoSage

Background:

PHD Candidate

Race:

Buchan trog

Alignment:

Chaotic Neutral

Player Name:

Mr L.D. Bailey

Wisdom

+4

Physical

+1

Vertical

+3

Water

-1

Teamwork

+2

Constitution

+1

Skills

- ☐ Navigation (CWIS)
- ☒ Cave Knowledge (CWIS)
- ☒ Strategy (CWIS)
- ☐ Squeezing (CPHYS)
- ☐ Scrambling (CPHYS)
- ☐ Carrying (CPHYS)
- ☒ Rigging (CVERT)
- ☐ Rope Skills (CVERT)
- ☒ Bolting (CVERT)
- ☐ Diving (CWAT)
- ☐ Creek Creeping (CWAT)
- ☐ Swimming (CWAT)
- ☐ Morale (CTEA)
- ☐ Healing (CTEA)
- ☒ Faff (CTEA)
- ☐ Endurance (CCON)
- ☐ Drinking (CCON)
- ☐ Calm (CCON)

HIT POINTS

23

Speed

6

Armour

PVC

Attacks/Spells:

- Speak with wee beasties
- Ascender check
- finger of gaslighting

Equipment:

- Tea makings
- Orange fleece
- Jaffle maker (round)

Feats and Proficiencies:

- Nap officer: 2min nap anywhere gives benefits of short rest (3 per long rest)
- The Chairman: Roll D20 saves on all chairs when sitting. Chance of failure increases throughout trip.
- Long Limbed: Advantage on climbing/scrambling.

→ subclass: Creek Creeper

Character Name:

Laurie Gentle

CLASS: Wet Maxxer

Background:
Archaeologist

Race: Tuglow Trog

Alignment:
Neutral Good

Player Name: Lauren Idliffe

Wisdom
+1

Physical
+1

Vertical
+1

Water
+3

Teamwork
+2

Constitution
+2

Skills

- ☐ Navigation (WIS)
- ☐ Cave Knowledge (WIS)
- ☒ Strategy (WIS)
- ☐ Squeezing (PHYS)
- ☐ Scrambling (PHYS)
- ☐ Carrying (PHYS)
- ☐ Rigging (VERT)
- ☐ Rope Skills (VERT)
- ☐ Bolting (VERT)
- ☐ Diving (WAT)
- ☐ Creek Creeping (WAT)
- ☒ Swimming (WAT)
- ☒ Morale (TEA)
- ☒ Healing (TEA)
- ☐ Faff (TEA)
- ☐ Endurance (CON)
- ☐ Drinking (CON)
- ☒ Calm (CON)

HIT POINTS

26

Speed
7

Armour
Cordura

Attacks/Spells:

Clear Waters
Macbeth Carol
Siren Song

Equipment:

Rotnest Island Sticker x10
Service Boots
Coke Brick FAK

Feats and Proficiencies:

Surf Lifesaver: Advantage on all healing checks.

Editor in Chief: Spread the good word of Speleograffiti & inspire one party member.

Aqua-affinity: All damage is halved when wet.

Character Name:

Pepita AI

Class: Explorer

Race: Jenolan Trog

Background: PFAS

Alignment: Neutral Good

Player Name: Alice Kelly

Wisdom
+2

Physical
+1

Vertical
+2

Water
+1

Teamwork
+3

Constitution
+1

Skills

- ☐ Navigation (wis)
- ☒ Cave Knowledge (wis)
- ☐ Strategy (wis)
- ☒ Squeezing (phys)
- ☐ Scrambling (phys)
- ☐ Carrying (phys)
- ☐ Rigging (vert)
- ☐ Rope Skills (vert)
- ☐ Bolting (vert)
- ☐ Diving (wat)
- ☒ Creek Creeping (wat)
- ☐ Swimming (wat)
- ☒ Morale (tea)
- ☐ Healing (tea)
- ☐ Faff (tea)
- ☒ Endurance (con)
- ☐ Drinking (con)
- ☐ Calm (con)

HIT POINTS

26

Speed

7

Armour

Jorts

Attacks/Spells:

- Pacifist
- Rogue throw
- Chainsaw attack

Equipment:

- Bag hang only (full SRT kit equivalent)
- Lipbalm (attuned)
- A nice rock

Feats and Proficiencies:

- Youth: Immunity to hangovers
- Vertigo: Disadvantage on vertical checks >20m
- Eezy squeezezy: +1 morale during and 1hr after a squeeze

Character Name: 
The Rampage Spanner

Class: Pack Mule

Background:
Land Cruiser

Race: Tuglow
Trog

Alignment:
True Neutral

Player Name: Alek Meade

Wisdom
+2

Physical
+2

Vertical
+2

Water
+1

Teamwork
+1

Constitution
+2

Skills

- ☐ Navigation (wis)
- ☐ Cave Knowledge (wis)
- ☐ Strategy (wis)
- ☐ Squeezing (phys)
- ☐ Scrambling (phys)
- ☐ Carrying (phys)
- ☐ Rigging (vert)
- ☐ Rope Skills (vert)
- ☐ Bolting (vert)
- ☐ Diving (wat)
- ☐ Creek Creeping (wat)
- ☐ Swimming (wat)
- ☐ Morale (tea)
- ☐ Healing (tea)
- ☐ Faff (tea)
- ☐ Endurance (con)
- ☐ Drinking (con)
- ☐ Calm (con)

HIT POINTS

35

Speed
7

Armour
Cordura

Attacks/Spells:

- Release Bowels
- Sarcastic word
- Hurl Pack

Equipment:

- Tie Dye Hoodie (attuned)
- Imaginary SRT Kit
- Electric Razor (on)

Feats and Proficiencies:

- Bush Basher: 4wd proficiency. Can increase or decrease damage on passengers. Passengers in "the Crib" must roll saving throws.
- Skint: Can survive without rations or accommodation.
- Leatherman: +2 on any checks with a leatherman.

Character Name:
Sir Cole
of Romulan

Class:
Snap Oate

Background:
Feijoa Farmer

Race:
Wyanbene Trog

Alignment:
Lawful Neutral

Player Name: Cole Neering

Wisdom
+ 1

Physical
+ 3

Vertical
+ 1

Water
+ 1

Teamwork
+ 1

Constitution
+ 3

Skills

- ☐ Navigation (wis)
- ☐ Cave Knowledge (wis)
- ☐ Strategy (wis)
- ☐ Squeezing (phys)
- ☒ Scrambling (phys)
- ☒ Carrying (phys)
- ☐ Rigging (vert)
- ☐ Rope Skills (vert)
- ☐ Bolting (vert)
- ☐ Diving (wat)
- ☐ Creek Creeping (wat)
- ☐ Swimming (wat)
- ☐ Morale (tea)
- ☒ Healing (tea)
- ☐ Faff (tea)
- ☒ Endurance (con)
- ☐ Drinking (con)
- ☒ Calm (con)

HIT POINTS

38

Speed
9

Armour
Cordura

Attacks/Spells:

Cross breeze

Disguise self
Only as Carl

Entangle
(self-cast)

Equipment:

Smash™ Lunchbox

Flannel

60x Rations

Feats and Proficiencies:

Big Voice - All calls and sneezes are heard throughout cave. Nearby cavers roll D6 sonic damage.

Well connected - Needs no introduction to any NPCs.

Hey Buddy - ~~Proficiency~~ Proficiency in dog handling.

Character Name:

Sweet W

Class: Pitch
goblin

Background:
Geologist

Race: Cooleman
Trog

Alignment:
Chaotic Good

Player Name: Carl Walsh
↳ not Cole

Wisdom
+2

Physical
+1

Vertical
+3

Water
+1

Teamwork
+2

Constitution
+1

Skills

- ☒ Navigation (CWIS)
- ☐ Cave Knowledge (CWIS)
- ☐ Strategy (CWIS)
- ☐ Squeezing (CPHYS)
- ☒ Scrambling (CPHYS)
- ☐ Carrying (CPHYS)
- ☒ Rigging (CVERT)
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- ☐ Swimming (CWAT)
- ☒ Morale (CTEA)
- ☐ Healing (CTEA)
- ☐ Faff (CTEA)
- ☐ Endurance (CCON)
- ☐ Drinking (CCON)
- ☐ Calm (CCON)

HIT POINTS

29

Speed
8

Armour
Cordura

Attacks/Spells:

~~Dis~~ Disguise Self
(but only as Cole)

Carabiner click =

Goblin Laughter

Equipment:

Crocs 

Spare descender

Mocha pot

Feats and Proficiencies:

- Spider Step: advantage on climbs and
Scrambles
- Cave Rescue: advantage on rescues but increased
likelihood of others needing rescue
- Gear nerd: gear constantly changing. Unable to
attune to one piece of equipment.

