

SPELEOGRAFFITI

The Newsletter of the
National University Caving Club (NUCC)
G.P.O. Box 4 Canberra ACT 2601

Volume 23 Number 1

1991 - 1993



A member of the Australian Speleological Federation

Speleograffiti

1991 - 1993

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The (very) periodical journal of the
National University Caving Club

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Cover Photo: Tony Veness in the main cave at Bendethera, NSW. Photo by Andrew Wall

Cover Design: Chris Bradley

Publication Layout: Lyle Williams

Editor's Note

Yes! At long last another edition of Speleograffiti. We hope that it has been worth the wait - and that we won't have to wait as long to see the next edition.

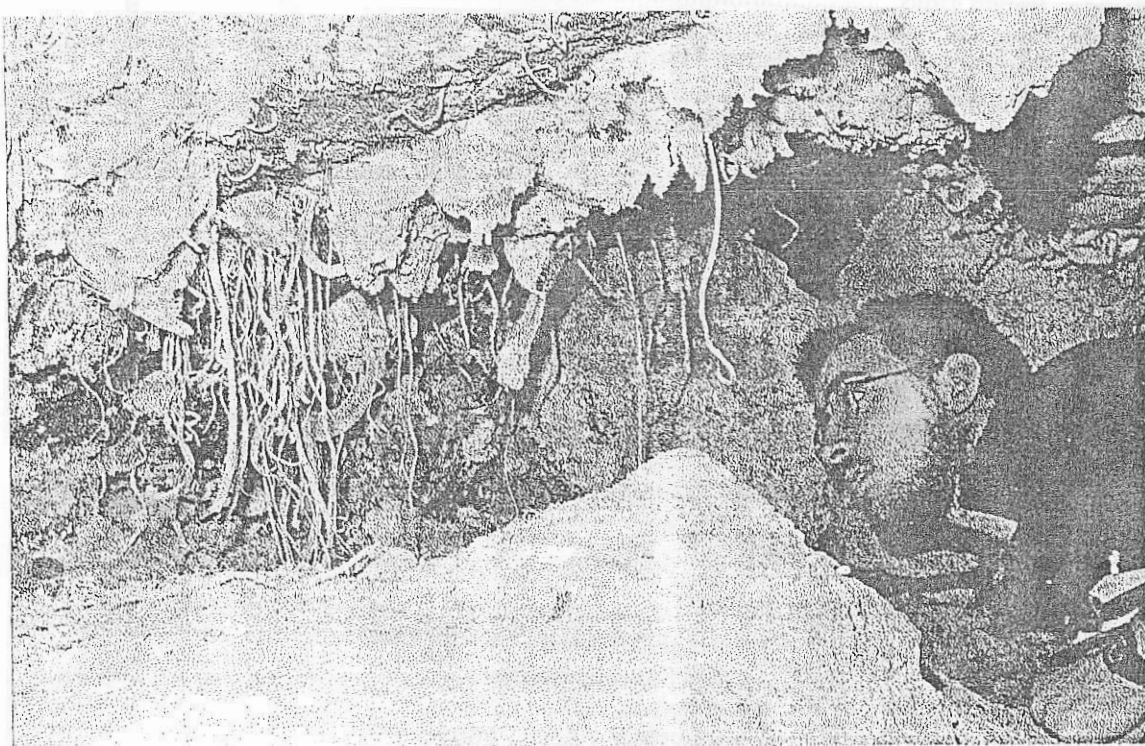
The last three years have seen many terrific trips including expeditions to Thailand, Northern Territory and the Nullarbor.

1994 is the 30th anniversary of NUCC and we all hope that it will be the most successful year to date.

Andrew Wall

NUCC Committee Members

	1993	1992	1991
President:	Cecilia Shlegel	Andrew Wall	Andrew Wall
Secretary:	Lyle Williams	Greg Lane	Tim Barrett
Treasurer:	Wilfred Fullagar	Cecila Shlegel	Meredith Orr
Publications Officer:	Andrew Wall	Tim Barrett	Jenny Dyring
Equipment Officers:	Tony Veness	Lloyd David	Doug Abbott
	Imogen Fullagar	Meredith Orr	Chris Bradley
General Members:	Lindsay Irvine	Chris Bradley	Jane Eakin
	Kenny Ang	Wilfred Fullagar	Colin Taylor
	Michael Stuckings		Jon Price



Greg Lane - The Salt Cellars, Mullamullang Cave - 1991. Photo by Andrew Wall.

President's Report 1993

In 1993 NUCC comprised of around 40 financial members, eight of who served on the committee.

Several caves were visited in the Wee Jasper and Bungonia regions and other trips were organised to Mt Fairy, Tuglow, Coolamon, Rosebrook, Yarrangobilly, and Big Hole and Wyanbene in the Deua National Park. The feature trip of the year was a two week expedition to caves in the Nullarbor Plain which took place during the September mid-semester break. The six NUCC members who took part reported that the trip was very successful. Much to the disappointment of many NUCC members the cave rescue exercise and Speleosports for 1993 were cancelled by their respective organisers. Other activities such as a weekend skiing trip were organised, but abandoned due to poor interest. Technical training in abseiling and ascending was provided to beginners but unfortunately was also poorly attended.

Moves towards the regulation of caving by a number of state governments have led the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) to propose a National Cave Leadership Scheme. This was an attempt to persuade the different state governments involved to introduce an ASF sponsored code of accreditation for leaders that is uniform for all states. NUCC has been prompt to introduce new procedures in accordance with this proposal, for the contingency that such a system would become mandatory. Prospective trip leaders were taught various technical skills and the practice of logging the details of all trips was established. The priority for 1994/5 is for more prospective trip leaders to become accredited in first aid as this will certainly be a requirement of whatever system is introduced.



Imogen Fullagar - near Madura Cave 1993. Photo by Andrew Wall.

Throughout the year NUCC has been conferring with the Canberra Speleological Society (CSS) regarding the cave leader accreditation scheme proposed by the ASF. There has been concern about several issues. Our views were put forward to the ASF by the four NUCC representatives that attended the annual ASF conference in January 1994.

During the year NUCC liaised with the ANU Mountaineering Club about the prospect of offering an option of joint membership for both clubs at a reduced price. This will be trialed in 1994 and we hope that it will increase the number of NUCC financial members and further cooperation between the two clubs.

In 1994 NUCC will celebrate its 30th anniversary. A competition was held for the artistic amongst us to design a new club logo and the winning entry was incorporated into the club's official letterhead. We intend to produce stickers and/or T-shirts displaying the new club logo for the upcoming anniversary.

Many thanks are due to the enthusiastic and energetic committee members who devoted a lot of time to running trips as well as performing their committee duties. Special thanks to:

Andrew Wall for his support and advice

Tony Veness and Chris Bradley for their efforts in equipment maintenance

and Lyle Williams for liaising with the Mountaineering Club on behalf of NUCC

Thanks are also due to the ANU Sports Union for their continued financial support.

Cecilia Shlegel

President's Report 1992

In 1992 NUCC had about 45 financial members with about half of that number attending some trips.

Trips were organised to Wee Jasper, Bungonia, Rosebrook, Coolamon, Big Hole, Yarrangobilly and Buchan. Bendethera was revisited after several years absence. A trip to Wyanbene was abortive as the Shoalhaven was too deep to be forded. Members of NUCC joined the Canberra Speleological Society trip to Thailand in early 1992, with three members returning to Thailand in January/February 1993.

NUCC was represented at the Cliefden meeting of the NSW Speleological Council and at the "Tas Trog" Conference of the Australian Speleological Federation. Special thanks are due to former president Chris Bradley for attending the ASF Conference in Tasmania on our behalf.

We continued to have an enthusiastic committee in 1992 with nearly all members assisting in running several trips in addition to performing their organisational duties within the Club.

NUCC wishes former committee members Colin Taylor and Meredith Orr all the best, both in their studies and personally, with their recent moves to Perth and Melbourne respectively. Mick and Nat Stuckings are welcomed back to Canberra following their extended travels.

Sports Union staff continued, despite their own onerous duties, to provide administrative support for NUCC. I would also like to thank the Sports Union for making available the new Club store room which has facilitated the running of trips and has served as a meeting room for the Club committee.

NUCC has recently received a request from the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the repair of Cotterill's Cottage. As NUCC members have frequently stayed (free of charge) at Cotterill's during trips to Yarrangobilly, I would recommend that the incoming committee address itself to this issue promptly.

In conclusion, as members of NUCC may be aware, there have recently been moves toward the regulation of caving by a number of state governments. The proposed regulation concerns both cave conservation and cave safety. In an attempt to pre-empt the creation of six separate regulatory bureaucracies, the Australian Speleological Federation is attempting to implement it's own system of caving leader accreditation. I consider that it would be highly prudent for the incoming committee to commence a program of leadership training and not be left behind should such a system become mandatory in New South Wales and Victoria.

Andrew Wall



Andrew on the job. Photo by Chris Bradley.

President's Report 1991

Membership of NUCC remained at about forty in 1991 with about half of that number participating in at least some trips.

Numerous caving trips were organised during 1991 to nearby areas including to Wee Jasper, Bungonia, Yarrangobilly and Wyanbene.

The expedition to the Nullarbor was highly successful with a number of the better know caves, as well as a sea cave and some blow holes, being visited. Club members Greg Lane and Tim Senden made the grisly discovery of the corpse of a person (not a caver) who had unfortunately died in one of the caves.

Doug Abbott joined the CSS trip to the Gregory National Park in the Northern Territory where several kilometres of passage were discovered and mapped. NUCC members also joined the CSS trip to Wombeyan.

As in previous years, a contingent from NUCC attended the 1991 Cave Rescue exercise.

NUCC was lucky to have an excellent committee in 1991 with all committee members contributing, in a harmonious and friendly fashion, to the running of the club. In particular I would like to thank former president Chris Bradley who was always willing to act as a sounding board and provide advice, Tim Barrett for his cheerful and enthusiastic manner and also for organising the Nullarbor trip, and Colin Taylor and Jon Price for organising and leading a number of trips to Yarrangobilly as well as assisting in the work of the committee. Finally, I would like to thank Doug Abbott who led or assisted in leading a number of trips for younger members and was always willing to assist in the general running of the club.

NUCC wishes Ian Household and Jenny Dyring all the best following their recent move to Tasmania where Ian has commenced duties as the Karst Officer with the Tasmanian Department of Parks, Wildlife and Heritage. We also wish Phil Holsten well on his return to California. Phil joined a number of trips and was well known for his enthusiasm and friendly manner.

Andrew Wall



Jane Eakin - Thampana Cave 1991. Photo by Andrew Wall.

Changes in NUCC Equipment 1991 - 1993

The primary areas of change in NUCC's equipment over the past three years have been lighting and vertical gear.

Maintenance of lights and an increasing preference for Petzl lamps over lead acid lamps have been prominent although two D-cell battery packs were also purchased in 1993 to replace lead acid packs.

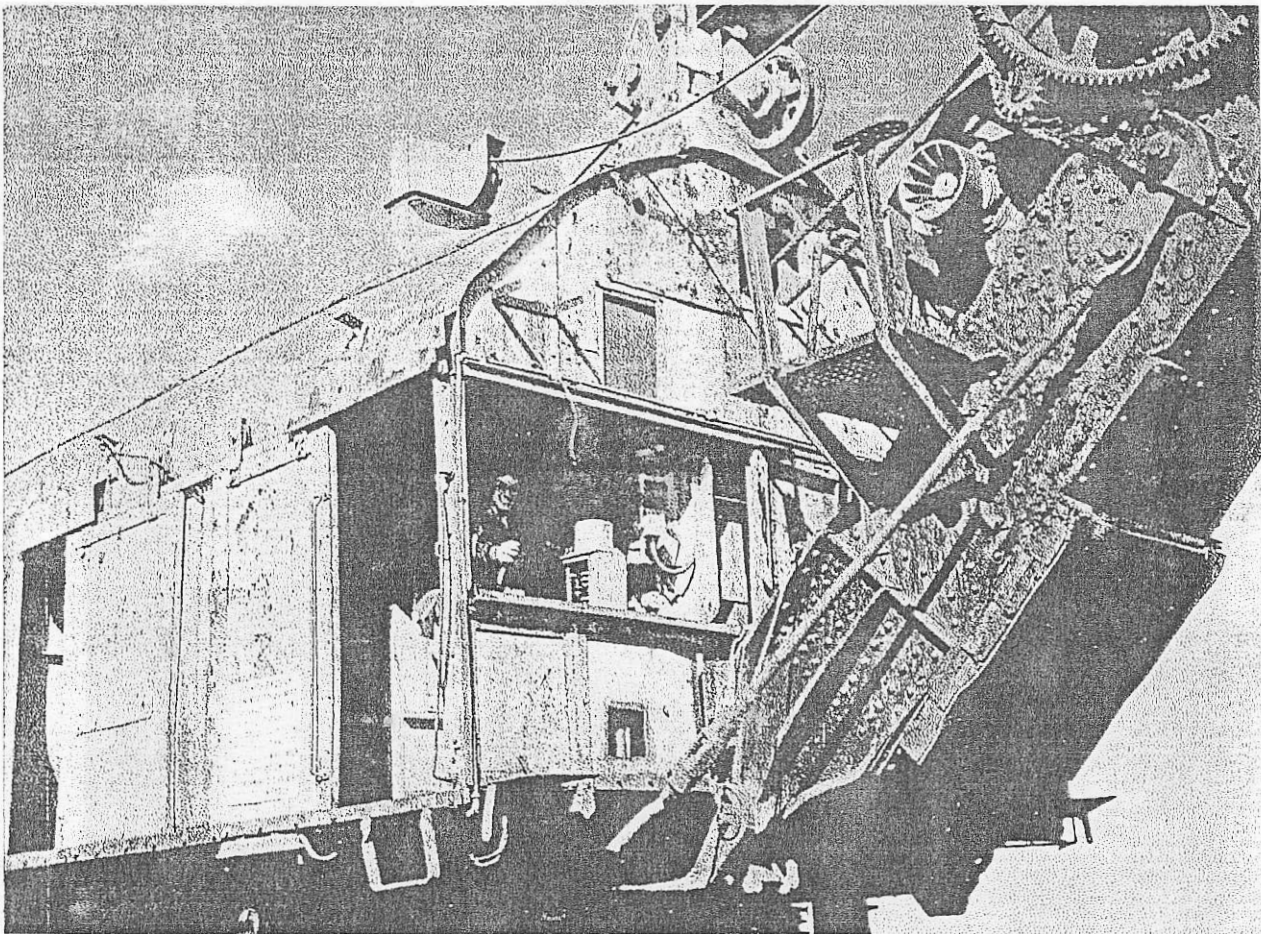
NUCC has also focused on vertical gear, and has purchased 6 sit harnesses over the past three years. These are the first harnesses owned by the Club. A growing use of SRT ascending techniques has resulted in the acquisition of two pairs of SRT ascenders (1991) and the manufacture of several sets of leg-loops (1993). Changes to other rope-related gear included investment in a sticht plate (1992), webbing tape and 9 new carabiners.

Upkeep of general equipment required 7 new haul bags (4 medium in 1991, 3 large in 1992), and two new fibreglass helmets (1993). Accessories to maintain existing helmets and battery belts were also bought.

In 1993, NUCC saw fit to replace a Suunto compass that "went missing" late 1990 - early 1991. Some fresh paint was also bought for equipment marking purposes.

It is hoped that updating and broadening of the Club's equipment will increase the attractiveness and flexibility of the Club's activities.

Imogen Fullagar and Edwin Aplin



Electric shovel (Wilfred Fullagar driving) - Iron Knob SA 1993. Photo by Tony Veness.

Nullarbor - Spring 1993

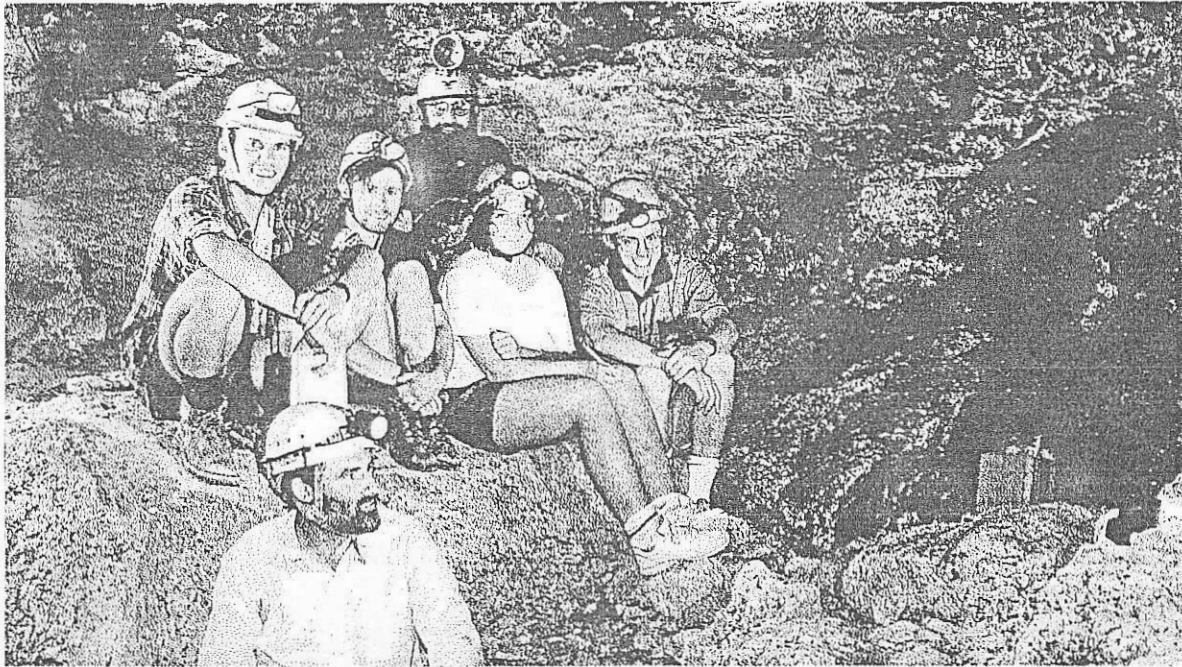


Photo by Andrew Wall.

18 September - 2 October 1993

Toryn Chapman, Imogen Fullagar, Wilfred Fullagar, Don Glasco, Tony Veness, Andrew Wall.

We had an early start on what was to be a general tourist trip. Don had been foolish enough to volunteer to be head cook. As a result, most of the group was eating better than they were used to in Canberra.

Our first camp was at Mildura and the second night we stayed at Kimba (SA). The third night we set up base camp at Mullamullang Cave, although navigating our way to the entrance was complicated as road-works at Madura Pass confused us and we followed the wrong track.

The following day we commenced the caving trip proper going into Kestrel cavern No 1, and spending several hours abseiling in, poking about and laddering out. We then moved on to Spider Sink where we persuaded Toryn to attempt to push a tight solution tube. As the afternoon progressed we drove to Kestrel Cavern No 2 and looked into, but didn't enter the doline.

On Wednesday we entered Mullamullang and, after blundering briefly into a side passage at Smoko Junction, we explored the initial sections of the Easter Extension. After admiring White Lake, we retreated to the campsite and dinner.

Base camp was shifted to No 1 Bore near Webb's cave on Thursday. On the way we briefly visited Joe's Cave (where we collected quandong fruit from trees growing in the doline) and Madura cave. On the following day we visited Webb's Cave and a cave which CEGSA members later informed us was called Purple Gorange Cave (a double doline entrance which led into large chambers). Both caves were heavily decorated with calcite formation with good opportunities for cave photography.

The group visited Thampanna and Old Homestead Caves on Saturday and Sunday respectively. Thampanna contained extensive crawlways and was blowing in when we arrived but out when we left.

A joint CEGSA/WASG mapping exercise was in progress at Old Homestead when we arrived. We entered the Northern cave only and progressed about 1.5 km, much of it reasonable walking in phreatic tubes, before turning back. Box work was observed in our explorations (apparently formed where cracks in the clay have filled with calcite and then the clay has subsequently washed away).

Camp was broken on Monday and we visited Witches Cave (heavily decorated with calcite and some halite formations) before heading to Eucla, visiting a rockhole (a source of water for aborigines) and Abracurrie and Weebubbie Caves.

We then headed back to Canberra having had a good holiday visiting many interesting caves.

Andrew Wall

Caves Visited:

Kestrel Cavern No 1	21/9/93
Spider Sink	22/9/93
Mullamullang Cave	23/9/93
Joe's Cave	23/9/93
Madura Cave	23/9/93
Webb's Cave	24/9/93
Purple Gorange Cave	24/9/93
Thampanna Cave	25/9/93
Old Homestead Cave	26/9/93
Witches Cave	27/9/93
Chowdilla Doline	27/9/93
Abracurrie Cave	27/9/93
Weebubbie Cave	27/9/93



Toryn Chapman. Photo from Andrew Wall collection.

Nullarbor - July 1991

7 - 20 July 1991

Tim Barrett, Lloyd David, Jane Eakin, Greg Lane, Meredith Orr, Tim Senden, Andrew Wall.

After waking early to a pea-soup fog, the group set out and met for morning tea in Narrandera. We camped near Morgan (SA) that night and proceeded to Ceduna the following day. On the Tuesday, we went to the Head of the Bight (between Yalata and Nullarbor Homestead) and watched the whales lolling in the large, rather open bay.

By that time the group was very fidgety with the unbroken driving and, when a small vertical opening was seen not too far from the water, a ladder was quickly recovered from the cars and attached to two precarious anchors. After descending via a narrow vertical shaft we popped out into a low, broad sea-cave into which the waves crashed and which looked out on to the ocean.

That afternoon and evening we drove further west and, following some rather interesting navigating down bush tracks in the dark, arrived at Mullamullang Cave at 4.00 am Wednesday morning and commenced pitching tent. Despite all good intentions to start caving early that morning, we arose much later in the day and managed only to explore a small blow-hole roughly to the east of Mullamullang.

On the Thursday we entered Mullamullang, spending some time in the Easter Extension taking photographs and examining the halite formation and encrustation. Tim Senden and Greg pushed further into Salt Cellars while the rest of us returned to the main passage. After regrouping, we pushed further into the cave. Shortly before reaching White Lake I heard Tim and Greg, who had veered to the left of the main track, having a strange conversation:

"That looks like a pair of legs!"

"No, it's some pieces of wood."

"No, it's a body!"

We all gravitated toward the object of interest, which lay between a block of rock and the wall of the chamber. I found myself looking down in total disbelief, wondering if someone had dragged a shop mannequin two kilometres into the cave.

Having decided on nothing except that it was about time to leave, we made the scene into a "Kodak moment", in case photos were needed as evidence, and then had lunch at White Lake - chewing over the events as well as our sandwiches. We then turned back to the entrance (and for some reason no one wanted to walk last).



Meredith Orr - Thampana Cave. Photo by Andrew Wall.

The Eucla Police were contacted from Madura Roadhouse and two officers, Mick and Nick, returned to the cave with us. On the following day, having been joined by detectives from Esperance, we guided the police to the corpse and assisted in the recovery of the visitor's book from The Dome.

Some weeks later, police from Perth and Eucla discovered a second body not far from where the first was located. The identity and cause of death of the two bodies was never satisfactorily determined.

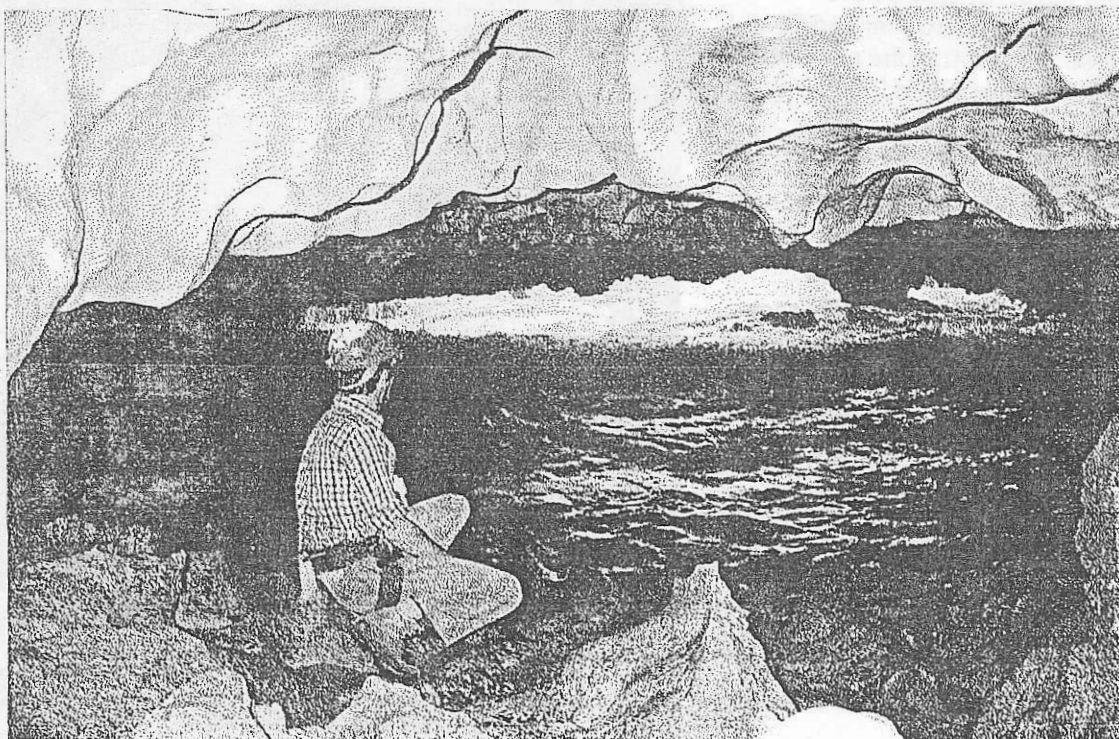
Following this distraction from the caving trip, we went to Old Homestead cave and spent one day exploring in the North cave and at blowholes to the north of the entrance. The next day we spent exploring the Spring Series and looking at fossils in the entrance doline. On the Tuesday we inspected Thampanna Cave, exploring The Tube and the chamber beyond.

At this point, it was time to turn back and we proceeded to Eucla inspecting Chowdilla Doline and Abracurrie Cave and swimming in Weebubbie cave on the way. From Eucla we returned to Canberra, stopping briefly at the "adult playground" in Monash, happy following a terrific couple of weeks caving.

Andrew Wall

Caves Visited:

Sea cave at the Head of the Bight	9/7/91
Blowhole, east of Mullamullang Cave	10/7/91
Mullamullang Cave (discovered corpse)	11/7/91
Old Homestead Cave (North cave and a blowhole approximately 1 km north of Old Homestead entrance)	14/7/91
Old Homestead Cave (Spring Series)	15/7/91
Thampanna Cave	16/7/91
Chowdilla Doline	17/7/91
Abracurrie Cave	17/7/91
Weebubbie Cave	17/7/91



Lloyd David - Sea Cave on Great Australian Bight.

Tribal elder's story reveals death clues

By NORMAN AISBETT

A story related by an Aboriginal tribal elder more than 50 years ago might explain the mystery of two mummified bodies found deep inside a limestone cave on the Nullarbor Plain last year.

The Aboriginal, known only as Jordie, told a young white man that his young brother, Buddon, had disappeared in a cave while looking for water.

Another younger Aboriginal, about whom he gave no details,

also disappeared in the cave about the same time.

Jordie told Albert Carlisle, then aged about 21, that his Meahineng tribe believed the Muldabbie, or devil, took the two men.

Jordie's story was uncovered by Det-Sgt Ron Carey, of the CIB major crime squad, during his investigations into the remains found in Mullamullang Cave, 38km east of Madura.

In his report to Kalgoorlie Coroner Peter Moloney, Sgt Carey gave details of an interview with Mr Carlisle, now 74, who told of the story-telling session with Jordie in the mid-1930s.

Mr Carlisle mixed with Nullarbor Aborigines and spoke the dialect from the age of 14.

According to Jordie, his people knew the cave as Gubbie Kunbennah, which meant "water, good".

The first remains were found by members of the Australian National University Caving Club on July 11 last year, 2.4km inside the cave.

Sgt Carey was investigating this discovery when a second

set of remains were found on July 30.

Forensic and other investigations showed them to be two men - a part-Aboriginal aged 20-25 and a full-blood aged 30-35.

Small amounts of fibrous material found underneath the buttocks of each man might have been a julbah, or primitive loin cloth, worn by Meahineng people.

Sgt Carey said tests found no sign of injuries which could have killed the men.

He could not rule out foul play but did not favour that possibility.

It was more likely the men lost their light source, became disorientated and mistakenly stumbled deeper into the cave.

Coroner Moloney has returned an open finding. While the cause of death and the identities of the men were unknown, he agreed with the conclusions in Sgt Carey's "excellent and comprehensive" report.

West Australian - 6 March 1992.

Caving In The Internet

Delving into the depths of the Internet, I have found a great means of communicating via electronic mail with other people throughout the world. It is where you can discuss topics of interest, obtain answers to questions, and find out about almost anything. Access to the Internet is becoming more common every day. Although commonly accessed through universities and government departments, you can access the Internet via a personal computer.

One good reason to access the Internet is to join some caving discussion groups. To join a discussion group you have to get yourself on to the discussion group's mailing list.

In the Internet, a list may or may not be moderated. A moderated list is one where each message is checked by someone to make sure each message is appropriate to the list. An unmoderated list accepts and distributes all E-mail messages from anyone registered to the list. Unmoderated lists generally use programs such as `LISTSERV`. `LISTSERV` is a program that manages discussion groups, controlling functions such as subscribing etc.

There are two caving lists that I know of on the Internet and there most probably are many more.

The Cavers Mailing list operates as a moderated list and is an open forum for sharing information about caving. Almost daily the moderator sends out a digest including equipment reviews, caving accident reports, new discoveries, and exchanges of cave related information. Anyone on the list can make submissions which may vary in length from a few to a thousand words. The Cavers mailing list is particularly helpful if one is travelling overseas or to another caving area and wishes to arrange a caving trip. Anything that is caving related will be accepted. This list is located at Boston University, hence the .bu. in the address.

To join, send a mail message to `cavers-request@vlsi.bu.edu`

Once you join the Cavers Mailing list, you will be sent a Cavers Digest on a daily basis. The Digest comprises all the mail sent to the forum.

A complete listing of the Cavers Digest Archives will then be sent to you. So far there are eight index listings, each are about 50k (50,000 bytes), or 16 pages each. A reader can then request an article from the archives by sending a mail message to `cavers-archive@vlsi.bu.edu`

You will be asked to send a self introduction which will be included in the Cavers Mailing List Digest.

To send in an article, mail to `cavers@vlsi.bu.edu`

BATLINE (Bat Research Information Exchange Network) is an unmoderated list using `LISTSERV`. This `LISTSERV` is located at the University of New Mexico.

To join, send mail to `LISTSERV@UNMVMA.UNM.EDU` and in the body of the message type
`SUBSCRIBE BATLINE <your name>`
eg: `SUBSCRIBE BATLINE Chris Bradley`

To send submissions mail to `BATLINE@UNMVMA.UNM.EDU`

It is important to distinguish between sending mail to `LISTSERV` and `BATLINE`. `LISTSERV` is where you join and `BATLINE` is for submissions.

Have Fun!!!

I can be contacted through CompuServe [100237,2753] or on the Internet as
`100237.2753@compuserve.com`.

Chris Bradley

Acknowledgment: I wish to thank Donald Glasco for his valuable comments on this article.

Reference: Navigating The Internet, Mark Gibbs & Richard Smith, Sams Publishing.

Silent Splendor, The Cave of the Winds, Colorado, U.S.A.

Date: 16 Nov 1993

Party: Kevin Smith, Pat Malone, Ron Potter, Colleen Belt and Chris Bradley

During the Conservation/Restoration Workshop held at the Carlsbad Caverns National Park in October 1993, I met Kevin Smith, a participant at the workshop and a Colorado caver. In the USA, there are spelunkers and there are cavers, Kevin assures me that spelunkers are rescued by cavers. As I had only a limited time in the USA, Kevin suggested that I should go with him to Silent Splendor which was a section they had dug through to recently. Of course I agreed and Kevin arranged the trip.

Cave of the Winds is a commercial cave, but it allows cavers and other interested scientific people access to the non commercial areas. Grottos (Caving Clubs) are given a yearly quota to access the cave, but as I was an international visitor, this trip wouldn't count against their quota.

Kevin and Colleen picked me up just outside Denver and we drove on to meet Ron. We travelled in convoy to Colorado Springs, about 1 1/2 hours south of Denver where the cave was located, then picked up Pat before heading toward the cave. We drove through spectacular country beside Williams Canyon, the view being spoiled only by the tourist centre which had been built over the cave entrance. This cave unlike Carlsbad Caverns, didn't have elevators going down to the bottom.

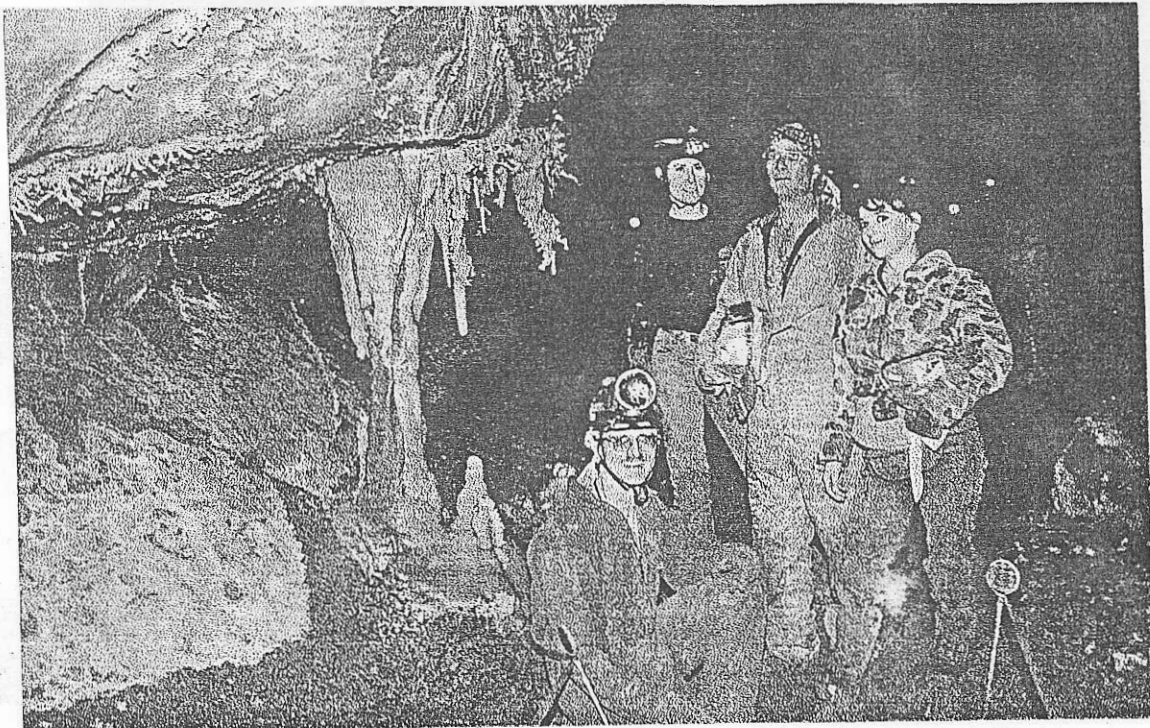


Photo by Chris Bradley.

Dressed in clean clothes carrying our coveralls (overalls) we entered the tourist centre, past the 7 ft tall bubble gum machine to the cave entrance. We filled out the paperwork and then went along the tourist trail of Cave of the Winds. This joins Manitou Grand Caverns and leads to where we were to go off trail. Here we changed and left our good clothes for later. After a few passages and crawls we came to a small chamber with what looked like two 44 gallon drums with lids buried in the mud. In fact they were two 1/2 44 gallon drums, installed to act as airlocks after the passage had had the mud dug out.

Heavenly Hall, a large chamber, was entered by crawling through one of the drums. There were beautiful aragonite flowers and beaded helictites. There were also "bat scratchings" in the mud. I am not sure how the bats got into that part of the cave, however I was assured that they did, maybe sometime in the past.

After crawling out through the drum leading to Heavenly Hall, we put the lid back on and removed the one to the Eucon Trail. This was quite an extensive bit of cave. The actual dig was impressive, they had removed a huge pile of mud to produce a belly crawl into a large chamber that had more passages. After we left the Eucon Trail we went back to our clothes and put on our clean boots and headed back

on the tourist trail toward Silent Splendor. On the way we heard a tourist party so we had to keep quiet until they had gone past before we could continue.

On the trail again, we changed back into our caving boots. We went through various passages until we came to an "art gallery", various figures and artefacts sculptured in mud, much of which had come from the next dig which lead to Silent Splendor. The dig actually went up vertically forming a chimney about 30 ft high. At the top of this was another airlock, this time made using a car tyre and inner tube which was smeared with vaseline to make a good seal.

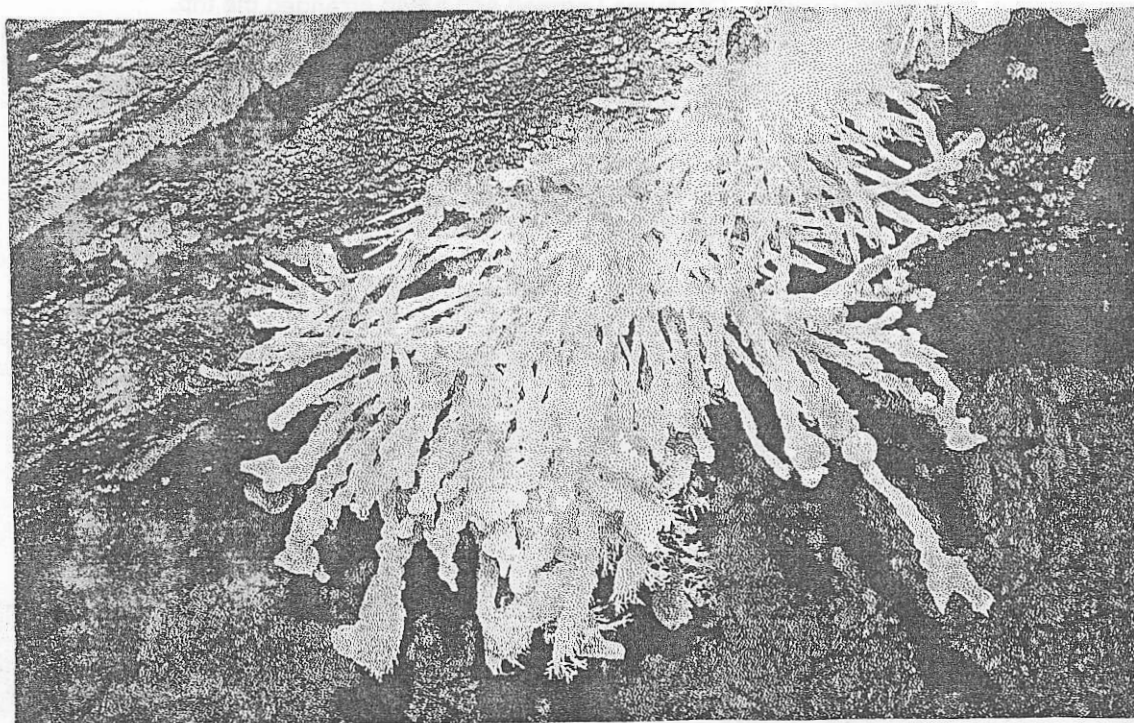


Photo by Chris Bradley.

At the top of the airlock was a large chamber at the end of which was a ladder leading to a passage. I walked along this passage in awe, there were the most beautiful helictite and aragonite formations I have ever seen. There were long stalagmites with very tiny helictites in the ends, there were aragonite flowers about 12 in across comprised of beaded fingers. The helictites were also all beaded and there was even an aragonite anemone. Many of the formations were pristine white and others were beautifully coloured, all surrounded by thick and sticky red mud. The passage wasn't very long, only a couple of hundred yards, but the formations were simply fantastic.

Returning out through the airlock down the mud chimney looked formidable, however the mud was so sticky you simply put your foot or hand out on to the wall and it stuck there.

When we returned to the surface, we looked outside from the visitors centre and it was hard to believe that deep in one of the mountains in the distance was the NORAD (North American Air Defence Command) installation. I wonder if anyone there had seen anything as beautiful as I had just seen in Silent Splendor.

Chris Bradley

Combined CSS/NUCC Trip to Wombeyan

Date : 25-25 August 1991

Party : Neil & Carol Anderson, John Brush & Marj Coggan, Jim & Niki Campbell, Andrew Wall, Tim Barrett, Lyle Williams, Doug Abbott & Lloyd David, Chris Bradley

We left Canberra on Saturday morning and met at the Wombeyan Caves camping ground. The aim for Saturday was to do Bullio cave which I was assured by Neil was "slightly moist". Consequently I packed a spare set of clothes and a towel!! Bullio cave has a slow moving river at the bottom, which was neck deep in places, needless to say we swam a lot of the way. After a bit of a roof sniff, it eventually sumped, and we couldn't proceed without diving gear. This was the second wettest cave I have done, both were led by Neil and both he described as being "slightly moist".

Three hours later we came out into warm sunlight and dried off, and called it quits for the day. We needed a campfire to dry overalls and boots. Actually I had a spare pair but most of the others didn't, I guess they must have taken Neil literally. They weren't as familiar with Neil's descriptive terminology.

The next day we went looking for Glass cave and on the way we stumbled across the marble quarry at Wombeyan. I remembered reading an article in the Australian Geographic and watching a program on the ABC, both showing how they cut the marble out of the ground. The quarry was impressive, particularly after having seen it on TV and in the magazine. We saw huge (20 ton) slabs of marble all stacked up like lego, waiting to be transported. We also saw huge pits which had been dug to extract the marble.

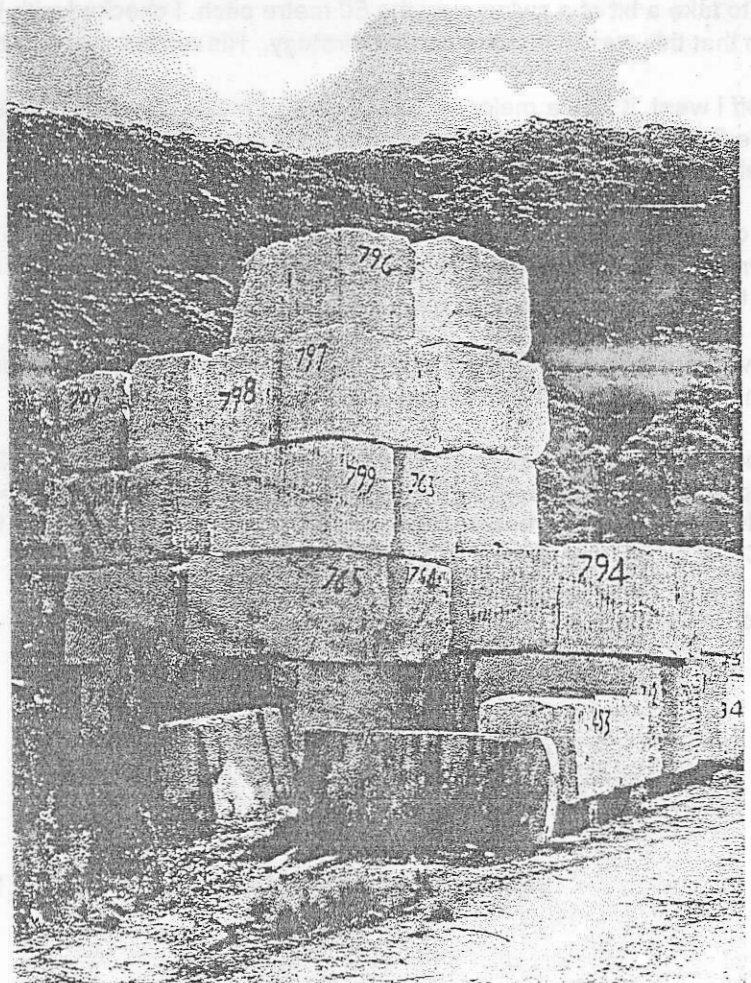
Two different methods are used to extract the marble. One method is the drilling of hundreds of holes in a line so the blocks can be split apart. The second method entails a wire 1000 metres long, directed by pulleys and used as a cutting wire, somewhat like cutting cheese, but in this case the wire moves and cuts the stone like a band saw. The method is much less wasteful, and the cut is clean. Wombeyan marble is used in the War Memorial in Canberra as well as other buildings in Sydney including the State Bank in Sydney's Martin Place.

We eventually found Glass cave. One person who shall remain nameless (but his initials are J B) was not dressed to do the cave and hence hung around on the surface. The rest of us made our way in as far as a squeeze. Neil had a bit of a problem here, remarking that the cave had shrunk since the last time he had been there (15 years ago). We then realised why the certain Nameless character had decided to remain on the surface. The thin ones in the party kept going into the rest of the cave, a ladder had to be rigged at the second squeeze. This part of the cave had some pretty helictites and columns. The rest of us decided in true caver spirit to return to the surface with Neil to join J B.

Chris Bradley

Reference:

Wombeyan Marble, The Noble Stone.
Australian Geographic, Number Five,
Jan - Mar 1987 pp 102-111



Bungonia Trip Report - 16 May 1993

Caves: Drum (B 13), Blow Fly (B 51) - Rescue.

Party: Lyle Williams (Leader), Chris Bradley, Andrew Wall, Torny Chapman, Wilfred Fullagar, Michael Stuckings.

This was to be an SRT trip as a precursor to the Big Hole trip in a few weeks time, hence we decided to try Drum cave.

We reached the cave at about 11.00 am and started to rig the main pitch. At the 1993 Tastrog conference, I had been informed by a SUSS member that new "Chem Set" bolts had been placed in Drum Cave. Consequently while expecting new safe anchor points in the cave, we didn't anticipate just how many sets had been placed.

Each anchor point was made from 3/8 inch thick angle iron attached to the limestone with two 3/8 bolts. Each piece of angle iron can accommodate two carabiners.

There was one anchor point at the top of the pitch in the usual position. The second anchor was placed on the left wall above and over the first lip. The third anchor (the wimp anchor) was placed at the first ledge in from the edge on the left wall. The fourth anchor (the exciting anchor) was placed on the left wall out from the first ledge giving an almost free hang on the whole of the Drum main pitch.

We set up two ropes from the first anchor, and Lyle abseiled to the first ledge to set up the re-belay. From my stance at the top of the pitch, it looked a little tricky swapping over onto the main rope at the re-belay, one needed to lean out over the pitch to reach the main rope.

I abseiled down next and arrived at the first ledge and I was right, it was a little tricky. Lyle had used the fourth anchor point. Reaching for the main rope which was hanging a couple of feet away from the ledge wasn't in fact the most interesting part. It was the fact that once attached to the main rope, one had to take a bit of a swing over the 50 metre pitch. I checked with Lyle who was at the bottom of the pitch that this was in fact the correct strategy. His replied that one took just a "little" swing.

So off I went, it was a major adrenalin rush. I made a mental note to redefine Lyle's definition of a "Little Swing". It was great, the anchor point provided the pitch with an almost totally free hang. A excellent abseil was turned into an even better one.

The others followed, some taking more time than others to come to terms with the exciting re-belay. Torny commented that usually cavers worry about claustrophobia. In this case, it was agoraphobia that was the problem.

On we went through the crawl to the first climb where we encountered foul air. So we retreated to the main pitch and all SRT'd to the surface.

Returning to the vehicles at about 4.00 pm, we decided to head to Goulburn for food. However as we stopped to log out of the caves at the Ranger's office, another series of events led us to becoming involved in a real live rescue in Blowfly Cave. This is written up in the article "Visit by members of NUCC to B13 Drum Cave", by Lyle Williams.

Chris Bradley

Another perspective of the same trip follows!

Visit by members of NUCC to B13 Drum Cave

On Sunday 16 May 1993 the National University Caving Club visited Drum Cave (B13) at Bungonia.

The party was comprised of the following members:

Chris Bradley
Toryn Chapman
Wilfred Fullagar
Mick Stuckings
Andrew Wall
Lyle Williams

After filling in the appropriate registration forms at the ranger's office the party proceeded to Drum Cave.

In the past year or two the old bolt anchors at the top of Drum Cave's entrance pitch have been replaced by a series of four twin 12 mm chemical anchors. Investigation into bolting technology by rockclimbers has shown that similar anchors have a pull out strength of over 4500 daN per bolt, and a useful life of over twenty years. Although these tests did not take into account the soft, chemically weak nature of limestone, one could probably stick one's neck out and say they you would be pretty safe hanging off these bolts.

Two 11 mm ropes were rigged down the main Drum pitch to prevent long delays waiting in SRT queues on the return journey. The full party descended to the bottom of the Drum, with concern being expressed at the rigging of the pitch by all the party bar one (the rigger). The concern was centred around the sporting nature of a rebelay point used to achieve a free rope hang. The author (the rigger) expressed his concern at the decline of moral fibre within NUCC, declaring to the rest of the party that they were "A pack of lightweight conformists who could all go and get _____."

While the party had descended Chris Bradley had been experimenting with some techniques for getting a really good photograph of cavers on the pitch. We look forward to seeing the results.

The party moved on into the low section of passage leading to further into Drum Cave, and found the air to be surprisingly good. Unfortunately this soon changed with carbon dioxide levels appearing to be around 0.5% initially rising to 2% once the party reached the larger passages. The party then returned to the base of the Drum pitch and jumared out.

After derigging the pitch the party returned to the carpark and discussed further caving for the day. It was decided that the Old Goulburn Brewery offered a superior speleological experience and so the party decided to move on.

As the party was leaving the park one of the two vehicles stopped to log out of the caves, and to pay the park visiting fees for the group. While waiting for the ranger they overheard details of an incident in progress in Blowfly Cave (B16-51). After paying the park visiting fees inquiries were made into the nature of the incident. The ranger informed us that a person had become stuck in Blowfly Cave, and had been there since 11 am that morning.

While we were talking two Goulburn Police Rescue Squad vehicles and four officers turned up at the park gates. NUCC offered their assistance if it was required and the offer was taken up by the PRS.

NUCC and PRS members proceeded to the B51 entrance to Blowfly Cave and discussed the incident with members of the party that had run into difficulty. They explained that they had attempted to move their companion, but after a few hours of unsuccessful attempts had decided to call in help. The caver involved was said to be between the Spokeshave and Kidney Squeezes at the top of the Dragon's Teeth, about midway between the B16 and B51 entrances.

Two Goulburn PRS Officers entered the cave via B51 while NUCC and the remaining two PRS Officers set up a hauling system on the surface. Two Goulburn Ambulance Officers arrived at the scene and sought to pass instructions to the PRS members in the cave. When communications difficulties arose two NUCC members (Chris Bradley and Lyle Williams) entered the cave to assist with communications.

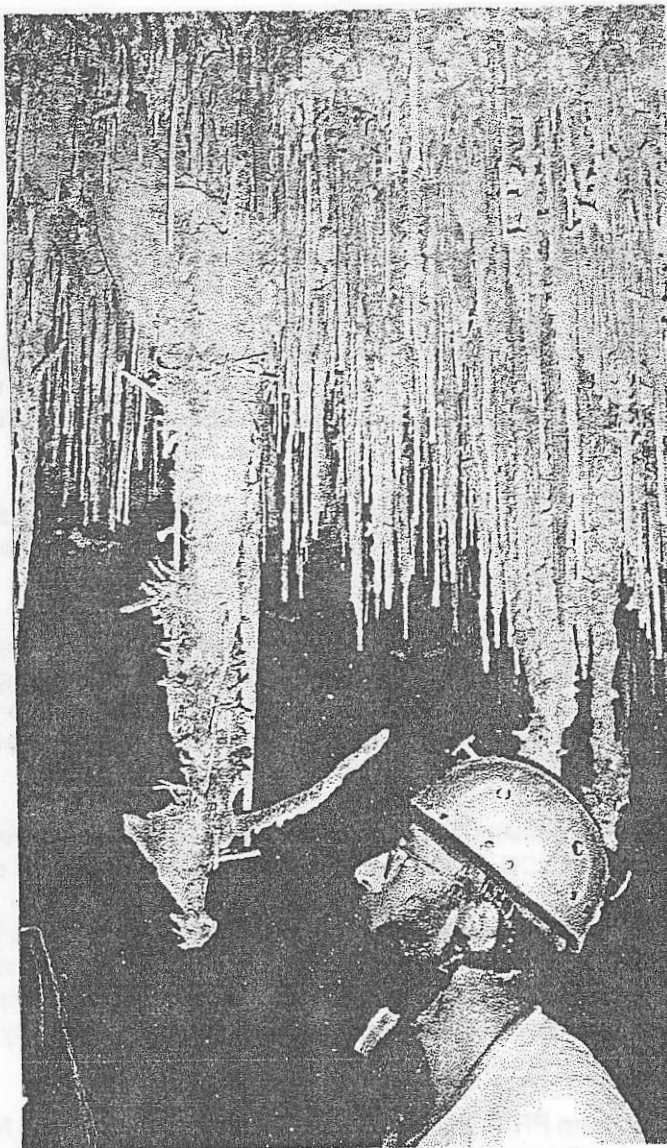
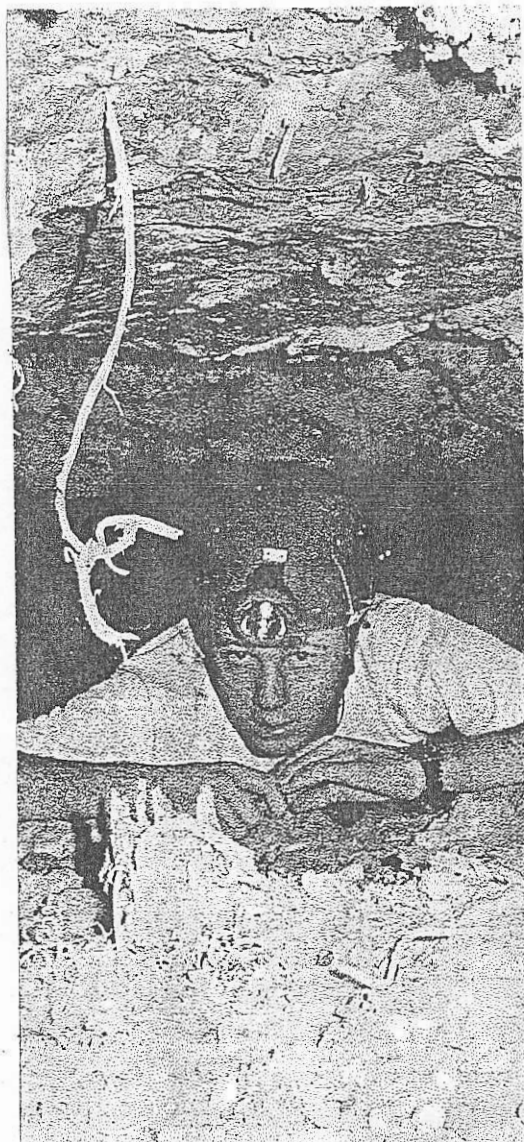
The two NUCC members spaced themselves out in the cave to facilitate the passing of messages between the incident scene and the surface.

When the Police Rescue Squad members reached the location of the trapped person, they found that the caver, who weighed around 115 kg, had dropped down through the Spokeshave Squeeze (a vertical squeeze) and had become stuck, or at least confined. Due to the size of the caver, he could not proceed through the Kidney Squeeze and exit the cave via the B16 entrance. When the caver had tried to pull himself up the Spokeshave Squeeze, the muscular action expanded his chest and prevented him from passing through the constriction. The two PRS members freed the caver from his predicament by lifting him through the squeeze with a number of webbing slings.

All persons then exited the cave via the B51 entrance, where a 1:1 haul system had been rigged. Some difficulty was experienced in hauling the large caver through the tight rockpile at the top of the B51 entrance pitch, but after a few attempts this tricky section was negotiated.

The freed caver was examined on the surface by Goulburn Ambulance officers, who found him to be physically unharmed by the experience.

Lyle Williams



Photos by Chris Bradley.

The Importance of the ASF

Introduction.

Many of you will not be aware that there is a national caving body in Australia called the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF). I will try to discuss what the ASF does and what NUCC has to do with it. I will also briefly mention the politics involved.

The ASF Membership Fees.

There has been much debate within NUCC regarding the pros and cons of the club being a Society Member of the ASF, the cost of membership fees and value for money being the major topic of discussion. The membership fee for the ASF until a few years ago was about \$12 per person. This meant that a club like NUCC with typically 45 members would be charged \$540 per year. There was no option for say half the club to become members and half not. Nor could an individual become a member of the ASF, it was for clubs only. In our case the ANU Sports Union pays this fee as part of NUCC's grant from the Sports Union. Membership rates for clubs have been modified so that a club is entitled to 50% discount if they pay early in the financial year. An individual may now also become a member of the ASF.

What Does The ASF Do For Caving?

This question has been asked many times. There is a perception that all members get is a magazine called "Australian Caver" every few months. In the last several years the quality of both the contents and presentation of the magazine have improved immensely. It is now an important form of communication between cavers about caves and caving in Australia.

"Australian Caver" in fact is only one of numerous tasks that the ASF is involved with. The first ASF conference was held in Goolwa in South Australia on the Murray river almost 40 years ago (1956). It was formed as a forum to discuss caves and caving Australia wide. The ASF is recognised for its role in conservation issues concerning caves. It also allows access to many karst areas for cavers who are members of the ASF. The ASF has become a respected body throughout the world for its contribution toward Karst Conservation and Management.

The ASF Conferences.

The ASF conferences have traditionally been held every two years. The last one was held in Tasmania 1993. Generally a willing club will host the ASF conference in their State. The ASF conference involves organising facilities for delegates during the conference and organising all the conference papers etc. This is a lot of work as anyone from CSS (Canberra Speleological Society Inc.) will gladly inform you. CSS organised one in 1960 and one in 1976.

Topics of the conference papers range from the very caver oriented (equipment and techniques, caving areas in Australia and Overseas), to straight scientific (Karst hydrology, Geology and Speleobiology). Generally a speaker will forward their paper to the host club prior to the conference for inclusion in the conference papers.

These topic examples come from the last Tasmanian conference: "EDM Height Traversing on the Nullarbor", "Geomorphology of the South-East Karst Province of South Australia", "Some Historical Materials on Tasmanian Caves", and "Recycling Mine Lamps". All of the speakers presented their papers using slides or overhead transparencies as visual aids.

Delegates travel from all over Australia to attend the conferences, so many of them take the opportunity to spend a week or two either side of the conference to go caving. It is traditional for the conference to be held in or near to a caving area. The host club then organises trips either side of the conference for delegates to go caving. I visited a couple of caves in Tasmania and they were fabulous.

The ASF Council.

Of course with caving, like everything, goes the politics. The "ASF Council" meets every year to discuss any issues that have arisen during the year, or issues which people think need to be raised. It is also traditional to hold every second ASF council meeting with the ASF conference. This brings together politics with the conference and with caving. Usually two days are set aside for the ASF

council meeting where voting members, non voting members and other interested people meet and discuss and vote on various topics.

As the ASF is the national body for caving in Australia, the ASF is looked upon for guidance in cave and caving matters by other groups such as the State and the Federal Governments. Now more than ever the ASF is becoming increasingly important as caves and karst areas are being threatened by pressures such as mining and by ourselves when we cave. Cave access restrictions also continue to be a growth factor across Australia, part of this is due to karst conservation issues. The ASF can help authorities assess the cave and karst resource they are managing giving a balanced view between conservation issues and those of cavers.

The latest main item of controversy discussed in the ASF is the National Caving Leadership Scheme, better previously know as the Caver Accreditation Scheme. I won't bore you with all the discussion about whether we as cavers want or need such a scheme. It is in fact the cave managers such as the National Parks and Wildlife who are demanding that we have such a scheme. This among other things is to enable them to properly gauge who can be allowed in the more limited access caves. So it is really up to the ASF to devise and implement a scheme. It is the clubs who comprise the ASF that will devise the scheme and then eventually decide if and how it will be implemented.

At the last ASF council meeting in Tasmania, the "Caver Accreditation Working Group" recommended that the ASF operate a National Caving Leadership Scheme. This was voted for and carried at the ASF council meeting.

NUCC Attendance At The ASF Council Meetings.

Having discussed some of the reasons why the ASF is important, why then was NUCC recommended to be suspended from the ASF at the 1992 ASF Council meeting? Because we didn't attend or have a proxy to 2 ASF meetings in a row. It is a rule of the ASF that a voting club must not miss more than 2 ASF council meetings in a row. As a club is allowed proxy votes, this does not seem too great a burden. The last few conferences have been in Tasmania (January 1985), N.S.W. (January 1987), Queensland (January 1989), Western Australia (January 1991) and Tasmania again in January 1993. The in-between ASF council meetings have generally been in N.S.W, Sydney or Jindabyne. If club members can't get to the bi-annual conferences, they can at least get to the other meetings.

The next council meeting is in Canberra again in 1994, the next ASF conference and council meeting is in Western Victoria in 1995. I really enjoyed the Tasmania conference "TASTROG" and would recommend both the conference and council meetings to those interested. The caving at the events is also great fun.

Conclusion.

NUCC has a part to play in forming and implementing the decisions made by the ASF because we are a voting member of the ASF. At a previous conference we had a say in implementing the 50% discount for early payment of fees. At the last conference we held 3 votes in 52 because each club that is a Society Member is allowed one vote per 15 club members.

Being a Society Member of the ASF is therefore very important for making our view known not only to other cavers, but to cave and karst managers in other organisations. However just being a Society Member is not enough. To stay a Society Member of the ASF with voting rights, NUCC club members need to participate in the running of the federation. This means someone attending each ASF council meeting.

See you in Canberra in January 1994 for the next ASF council meeting or in Victoria in January 1995 for the next ASF Conference and the ASF Council meeting.

Chris Bradley
1/2/93

Acknowledgments:
Many thanks to John Brush and John Dunkley of the CSS for their comments on this article.

References:
Conference Papers "TASTROG 1993" Launceston, Tasmania.

Tuglow - April 1993

Party: Lindsay Irvine, Daniel Watters, Blair Walker, Toryn Chapman, and Andrew Wall.

Dates: 9 - 12 April 1993

After minor delays, the party departed Canberra on the morning of Friday 9 April and set up tents at the Dingo Dell camping ground in the early afternoon. Lindsay, Blair and Daniel walked along the Tuglow Hole Creek to the Kowmung River, while Toryn and Andrew unsuccessfully searched for a cave on the edge or Horse Gully Sinks (marked on the Shooters Hill map but reported by the land holder not to exist).

On Saturday morning the party proceeded to Tuglow Cave. A 30 ft ladder was set at the entrance pitch with subsequent pitches being rigged with 24m, 19m and 56m ropes. The group descended to stream level and explored downstream for a short distance and then explored side passages.

On departing the cave in the evening, internal pitches were left rigged with ropes. However, the ladder was removed from the entrance pitch to prevent entry by bushwalkers and other chance visitors.

On Sunday morning, the party returned and, after descending to stream level, commenced exploring upstream. The group found the chimney to the upper level. The upper level was explored (without Andrew who remained at the head of the chimney as he was too large to negotiate the narrowest section of the climb).

The group de-rigged the pitches and departed the cave in the evening.

Of interest to the party was the large number of cars which arrived at the camping ground on Saturday and departed on Sunday. Several of the other groups brought dogs with them, despite the camping ground being located in a National Park. A number of the drivers proceeded to practice their "4WD skills" on the hill to the south of the Tuglow Hole Creek ford.

Comments

NP&WS may wish to consider locking the gate to Tuglow Cave due to the potential danger to inexperienced groups and also due to the difficulty that would be experienced in extricating an injured caver from the stream level.

In order to prevent further scarring of the hill to the south of the Tuglow Hole Creek ford, it would be desirable to restrict movement of vehicles by placement of relevant signs and fallen logs at places where the minor tracks intersect the major tracks.

A K Wall
National University Caving Club

Dip Cave - August 1993

Wilfred Fullagar (trip leader), Gary Morris, Cecilia Shlegel, David Stewart, Andrew Wall.

After a leisurely start with morning tea at the Wee Jasper shop, we arrived at the cave and decided to avoid the usual Series 3-5 trip. Instead we had a pleasant day visiting the Gong Room, entered at midday, followed by Series 1 and 2. The Gong Room was entered via a 20' ladder pitch. We sought, but couldn't find the voice connection to Series 4. We looked down a vertical shaft which had been travelled previously but which we avoided for lack of technical gear. After wandering around Series 1 and 2, we left the cave at 5.00 pm, and had a quick look at the Punchbowl, Anemone and Dogleg entrances, before retiring to the Wee Jasper pub for dinner.

Andrew Wall

Wyanbene - July 1993

Matthew McCauley, Michael Stuckings, Steve Telfer, Blair Walker, Lyle Williams, Andrew Wall.

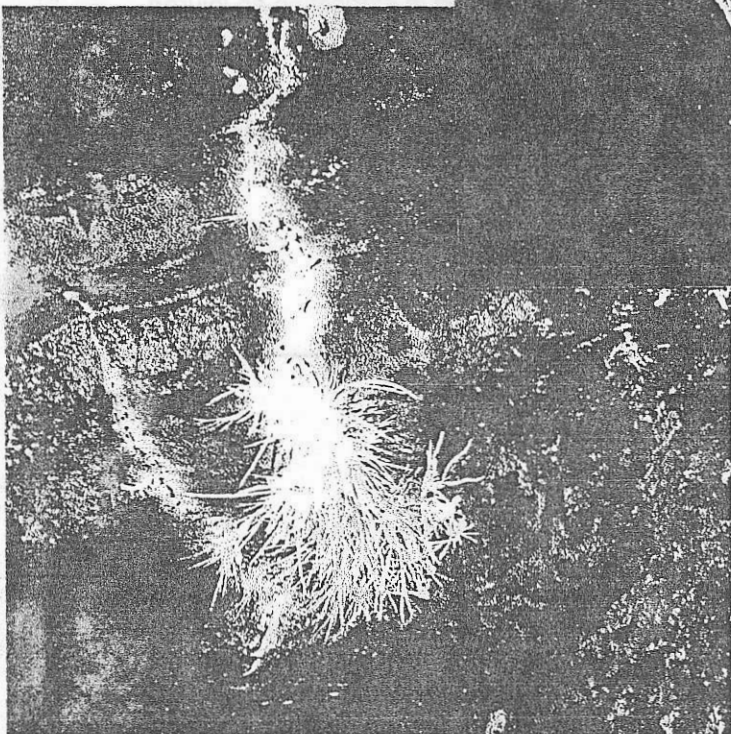
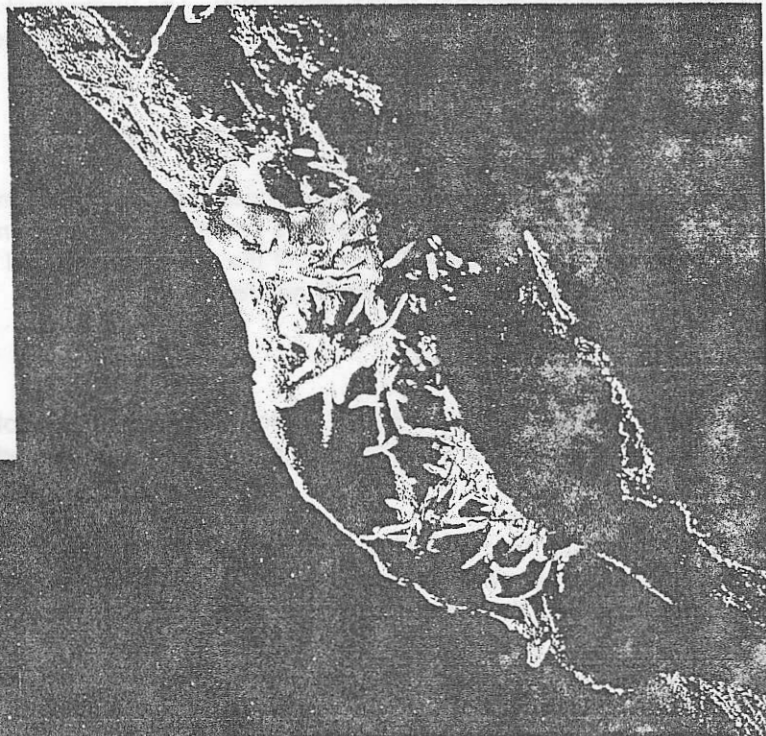
We departed Canberra looking anxiously at the clouds, worried that we would be unable to ford the Shoalhaven (as on the previous Wyanbene trip). However, luck was with us this time and there were no problems.

We entered the cave at about 11.00 am on a general tourist-cum-low level photographic trip. Negotiating the wet sections of the cave remained a pleasure. Lyle made short work of Anderson's Wall. The group visited the Meanders as well as some other parts of the cave which are usually ignored.

The cave photography met with mixed success: Some slides worked while some didn't. The only mishap occurred when a flash was dropped and slid into a puddle near Frustration Lake.

We left the cave at about 9.00 pm and bought dinner in the Captain's Flat pub on the way home.

Andrew Wall



Aragonite Flower, Helictites - Wyanbene 1993. Photos by Andrew Wall.

Rosebrook - May 1993

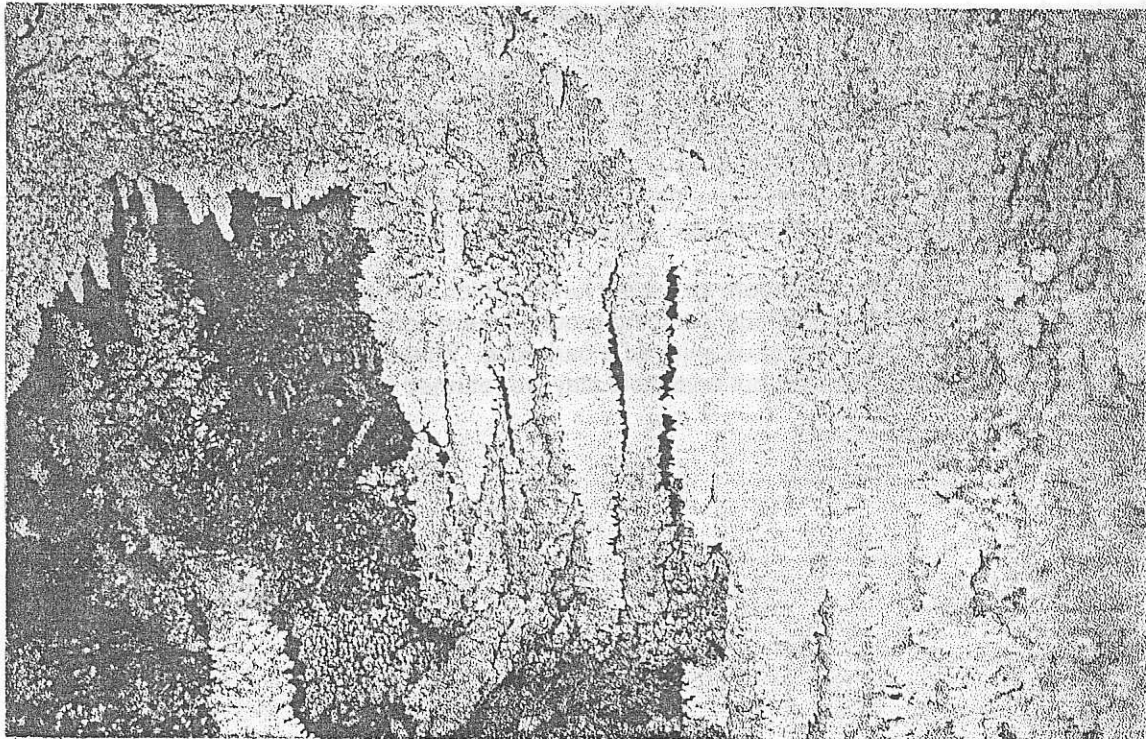
Imogen Fullagar (leader), Wilfred Fullagar, Lindsay Higgins, Damian van der Wijngaart, Jon Price, Chris Bradley, Penny Andrews, Ann-Marie Boden, Brendan Allen, Tony Aplin, Kylie Catchpole, Anthony Bettanin, Andrew Wall.

NUCC made a trip to Rosebrook on 8 May. We had a good collection of people of various associations with the club numbering 16 in total. The entrance to the main cave is via a fixed ladder. Although a small cave it has some interesting formations. Unfortunately, a lot of these have been muddied from handling - this really does spoil the effect of formations, so take care all ye cavers. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed squeezing their way about the place, and John even found a froggy friend down there.

After visiting the main cave, sub-groups wandered off and peered down the various holes and shafts nearby. It was a good opportunity to spend some time practicing chimneying and such delights, and we also had the chance of testing Tony's newly designed ascender leg loops and chest harness which were duly approved by all who tried them.

Unfortunately, the pub at Bredbo was catering for some local fund-raising event, so we were starved of a well earned countermeal. However, we did stop for the traditional drink before wending our way homewards. The various responses coming back from people regarding the trip were positive - it's a great introduction to caving.

Imogen Fullagar



Cave Coral - Rosebrook. Photo by Chris Bradly.

Wee Jasper - March 1992

7 March 1992

At 6.30 am my subconscious alarm clock alerted me to the fact that although it was Saturday, it was not a good day for sleeping in. Having established that the cause of the alarm was the 8.00 am start to the Wee Jasper caving expedition, I leapt out of bed, donned appropriately shabby raiment (I had yet to invest in a pair of overalls), downed breakfast, grabbed lunch, and set off at high speed to the Club's designated rendezvous, only to find that I was the only one there. Fortunately, the others eventually turned up, and we headed off to Wee Jasper in an assortment of vehicles.

Ten minutes in Wee Jasper was sufficient to convince most people that Greg is a better billiards player than I am, and then it was time to go searching for caves.

We reached the first set of caves where we equipped ourselves with appropriate caving apparatus, held a brief discussion about the virtues of eating lunch underground, located a wombat hole, and abseiled 50 feet into it. I was the second person in after Lyle, and there were not enough lights when I got there to tell anything other than that the cave was big. After what seemed like an eternity we had about fifteen people assembled in the cave, and we split up into three groups, each with different objectives in mind.

My own group, led by gung-ho Greg, had the task of finding "Dismal Chamber" which we were assured was "just through that wall, over there". After a couple of false starts we found a crack in the floor which seemed to go in the right direction, so we squeezed in and made for the wall. Several minutes of squirming through narrow holes led to a fantastic ceiling of straw-like stalactites; a bit further on Linda looked up and saw some truly bizarre helictites; another five minutes on our stomachs and we found ourselves on a ten-foot high ledge, the way down from which had no hand-holds. This didn't worry Greg, and we got down anyway. A few steps away we found Dismal Chamber, a moderately sized cavern in which most of the ceiling appeared to be beneath our feet. There was plenty of evidence of bats, although we didn't see any. A small passage was soon discovered leading away from Dismal Chamber, and after a couple of minutes of worming through the mould-infested tunnel we found ourselves back in the main cave, where we waited in the dark for the other two groups.

At this stage it was decided that we had seen enough of these caves for 1992, so Andrew and Greg led the way out of the first cave by yet another passage. A few caverns later and we crawled into a small tunnel called "The Rat Hole", at the other end of which was a 30-foot abseil into the middle of one of three large adjoining rooms. Although daylight could be seen in the cave on the left, the hole in the roof was impossibly high, so we took the cave on the right, which eventually led to the bottom of "The Rubbish Pile" (a cave entrance evidently once used as the local tip), and a way out.

It was by this stage quite late in the afternoon, so we ate lunch (which had unfortunately been through the caves with us) and then set off to the local camping ground where some of us did a bit more caving, some of us went for a swim and the rest of us enjoyed a barbecue. When darkness finally fell, we headed for the local pub, and after a brief but enjoyable stay we returned to Canberra.

Wilfred Fullagar

Blowfly - July 1992

(Letter from a visiting academic to his son)

4 July 1992

I have had a rather exotic adventure. Mary and I were invited to go caving by a young colleague, who had not realised exactly what we would be letting ourselves in for. Of course I agreed, but Mary had more sense, so off I went next morning, in boots, waterproofs, and a few layers of warm clothing.

There were thirteen of us, four of whom were experts, and the rest had never tried anything like that before. We got to the caves with only one car accident; not the car I was in, and no-one was injured, which was taken as a good omen.

There was a discussion as to whether we should be taught to abseil above ground or below. Fortunately the more cautious view prevailed, and I found that I could abseil down a cliff face without screaming or blacking out. You weave the rope through holes in a metal bar called a descender, which is attached to your harness, and hold the rope below the descender in your right hand, and then slow down by pulling on the rope, or by moving your hand behind your back, so that it rubs against you. The top end of the rope is tied to a gum tree, and the bottom end is held by someone whose job is to pull on the rope if you scream. The last advice you get as you walk to the abyss is that you should not get your left hand trapped, or let go with your right hand. Easy enough in broad daylight with a straight cliff to go down.

We were then divided into two groups, to go down different entrances. The entrance I had to go through was about the size of a hobbit hole, and after I had roped myself and gone down a short way, a simple vertical drop, the shaft got narrower, with a nasty kink in it, so I had to get the descender clear of the obstruction after I had got past it. It was pressed hard against the rock with my weight on the rope trapping it, so I had to use my left hand to wrestle with the thing. Of course my hand then got jammed, and I had to use my right hand to free it, but then I shot down the rope out of control. Fortunately there was someone in the depths of the cave to pull the rope.

The bottom of the shaft was not very roomy, and the exit was distinctly narrow and awkward the rock being hard and slippery. The person in front of me needed a fair bit of help to get going, and then I set off after her. Of course I found it hard just as well, but having got into the passage, I found that it was just about big enough to crawl in, but too small for a hobbit to stand.

The girl in front had not waited, so I set off as an unlikely pioneer, but at least the lights on our helmets were very bright. Nonetheless I found that I had come to a dead end, and had the nasty feeling of being lost. However, we found a small hole, which I had used as a foothold, and which seemed almost big enough to squeeze and anorexic body through. We sent a message to the back, playing Chinese whispers in earnest, and got confirmation that this was the way.

The hole was broader than it was high, with a narrowing half way across, so you had to decide which half to try. I decided, rather late, that I was going through the wrong half, and that my head and helmet were not going to fit. As I could not get any purchase with my feet, I could not begin to haul myself out, but was pulled out by the man behind, and tried again through the other side. I was too determined to get through to worry about what would happen when I did, so I found myself like Alice in Wonderland falling down another shaft, this time unroped. The shaft was not quite vertical, so I slowed my fall by banging against the side, and landed quite comfortably at the bottom, pursued by the alarmed curses of those behind me.

I had fallen about six feet further than I was meant to descend, so the exit from the shaft was just above my head, and it was decided that someone else should go through this before me, on the grounds that it was someone else's turn to have all the fun. The exit was very narrow, and you had to twist half way through. I helped to lever him through, and then scraped myself in after him.

The next section was known as a squeeze. That is to say, there would be enough room if you could take your arms off. The problem is that you don't get much motive force when you are trapped in a tube, so you wriggle very slowly like a worm. The nasty part is feeling that your head is going to get trapped, and at one point I had to take off my helmet.

After the squeeze, it was quite plain sailing to the bottom of the shaft we were to leave by. You can't very well abseil up a rope, as ab is german for down, so a ladder had been set up for us. I was foolish enough to observe that a ladder should not be too hard, and was told no - but it is not a common or garden ladder.

It came in two stages, and we were roped. You go up one at a time, with the rope through your descender and a competent person above to belay you, and another below holding the rope in case you lose control and abseil down. When I got up some ten feet, I was quite certain that I could go no further. I felt completely safe, but my arms had lost their strength, I was shaking mildly, and was having to climb with my arms as I could not get the ladder under my weight. However, one of the experts told me that I could do it, and got me to hold the ladder from behind so that it came closer to my body. This did the trick, and up I went, rather slowly. Then the light fell off my helmet, but this did not disconcert me. I got to the halfway stage, where there was a little ledge on which two of the others were waiting, so there was quite a pause before I had to climb the second and longer section of the ladder.

This time I found it easier, and went up without my light, in case it fell off again. By the time I got out we had been six hours in the cave. I finally got back to the flat at about half past eleven; I was so bruised that Mary refused to let me go out in shorts the next day in case people thought I was dying of AIDS, but the bruises were very superficial, and I have already lost their impressive colour. If I had known what I was getting myself in for, I would never have gone, but I am glad I did it; it was really quite and adventure.

C.

Buchan - September 1992

24 - 27 September 1992

Lloyd David, Imogen Fullagar, Danny Morgan, Werner Nickel, Cecilia Shlegel, Andrew Wall.

On the Thursday afternoon we embarked on the trip to Victoria, taking two vehicles. Lloyd, accompanied by Danny, drove down via Jindabyne while the rest of us travelled in Andrew's 4WD along the Bombala/Cann River route. We arrived at Homeleigh in Buchan at about 11.30 pm that evening.

On Friday, after a late start, we went to Honeycomb Cave (in the Potholes area). A Victorian caver called Greg Leeder came with us. It was raining lightly and continued to do so for the whole weekend, but this did not deter us. However, the rain made the entrance of the cave wet and slippery so we set up a ladder. Water was trickling down the entrance in a small stream, so we all had a shower as we went down. Nevertheless, the cave was quite pleasant inside, and it didn't take us long to work our way into a good sized chamber with a "wedding cake" formation in it. We then headed off to the right exploring the chamber and passages. When people seemed to have seen enough, we turned back with the intent of looking into other entrances. Unfortunately our enthusiasm drained somewhat when greeted by the steady cold drizzle outside, and we headed back to Homeleigh instead.

That night we went down to the Buchan pub where we played pool against the locals. There they entertained us with tales of a blue-ringed octopus possessing 10-inch tentacles.

On the Saturday we arose late again (possibly due the frivolities of the previous night). Greg Leeder kindly took our group to Wilson's Cave. A creek was running through the cave (it had been dry when last seen by NUCC members) so we refrained from entering and returned instead to the Potholes area.

At about 11.30 am, we went down Razor (by mistake) where we spent about one and a half hours. After this we entered Oolite Cave which we found to be a very friendly cave with mazy passages of comfortable sizes. We descended until a lack of vertical gear prevented progress, whereupon we backtracked and explored the upper areas more extensively. By the time we left the cave we were ready to return to Homeleigh for the night.

We left Homeleigh on the Sunday after giving it a fairly rigorous clean and returned to Canberra. Our esteemed president to be (in 1993 - Cecilia) narrowly escaped leaving her curling-wand in Homeleigh, only to forget her caving footwear. (These were retrieved five months later when some friends passed through Buchan.)

All in all everyone had a very pleasant trip. The scenery around Buchan is certainly spectacular, and was particularly green and beautiful after rain.

Imogen Fullagar

NUCC Approaches 30th Anniversary

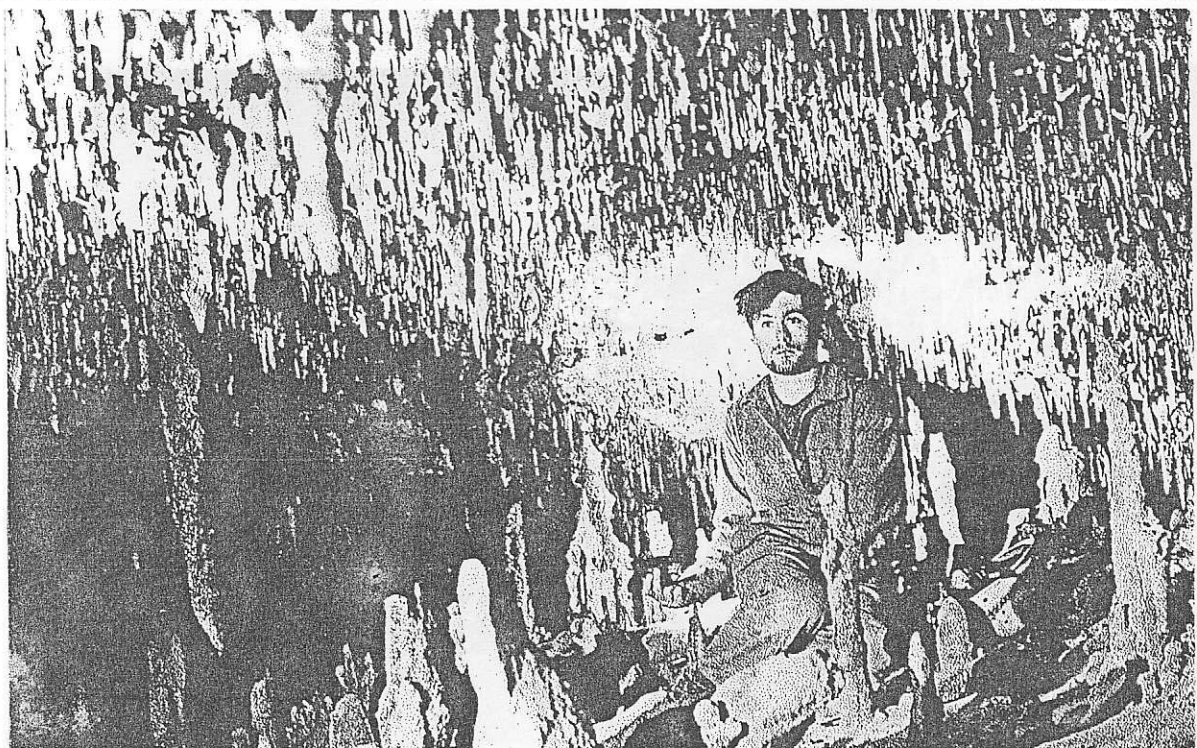
And finally, a note of some historical (hysterical?) interest - an extract from ASF Newsletter number 43, dated March 1969:

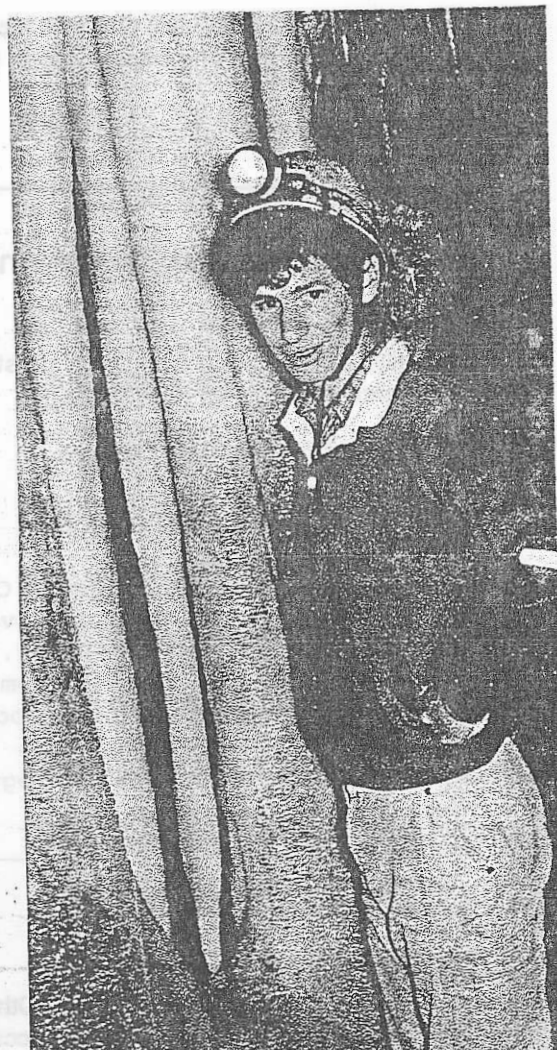
nucc

national university caving club

The National University Caving Club was formed on 5th March, 1964, and became affiliated with the University Sports Union. Average membership is 30 and there's plenty of activity. For example, in 1966 there were 28 trips and some 19 areas were visited from 1964-67. Perhaps the best work has been done at Bunyan (Rosebrook) near Cooma, an outcrop largely ignored by the older clubs. "Speleograffiti" is a refreshingly original name for a club newsletter and has appeared regularly for over five years.

Yes, that's right, NUCC celebrates its 30th Anniversary in 1994. We hope to get a special Anniversary issue of Speleograffiti out to mark the occasion.





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BOLT BRACKETS

"ARC'TERYX"

HARNESSES

"GIBBS"

ASCENDERS

"SOUTHWIND"

HARNESSES

"SUMMIT" GEAR

SEWN SLINGS
HARNESSES
CHALK BAGS

"STUBAI"

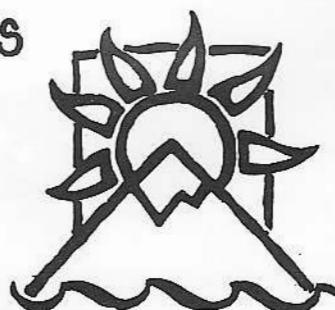
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