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*Journal of
Blue Mountains Speleological Club*

Oolite Blue Mountains Speleo Club

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BMSC apologises for any problems people have had with our postal address. There was a problem that has now been corrected

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Bungonia AGM - 6-7th February 1999

Present:

Kevin Coleborn, Wendy Hupton, Iain & Cheryl Lynch, Terry & Louise Coleborn, Rick Brett, Graham Osborne, Steve Sawyers, Glenn Roberts, Oliver Davies, Brian Wells, Graham Carney, Kaye Lowe, Howie Davidson, Steve Hallam, David Marsh, Ann-Marie Ford, Rob & Cindy Mann and assorted kids.

Saturday:

Meeting opened at 1010, in the meeting room next to the communal kitchen and Graham Carney's friend Kaye Lowe acted as returning officer for the voting part. Pretty well every office changed. Meeting closed at 1210.

Back at campsite we pitched camp and trogged up. It was very hot and sunny, after our recent very wet weather. Howie, Graham Osborne, Steve Sawyers and Glenn went off to do B3. They ended up having to surface quickly though, due to foul air. Glenn couldn't even get his cigarette lighter to burn. They ended up doing Dinosaur cave instead.

Most of the rest of us headed on to B4-5. We had Mitchell with us. It was slightly damp, but not too bad. It's a fun cave. No hard bits and no one had any problems. Did hairy traverse, the cement bags, 3 very short climbs and we went to the start of the extension to check it out. It goes on for about 1 km apparently, - crawl all the way. No doubt about Mitch - that kid's a real little trouper. Not even Hairy Traverse fazed him. We had descended at 3.00 and surfaced at 5.30.

Back at camp, Kevin rigged up a couple of ropes in a tree and we did some SRT practice. For me, the SRT was the highlight of the weekend. Kev made up my SRT and the others and I practiced ascending one rope, crossing over to another and abseiling back down. Tried out my new raprack. After dark it was still warm. We had our tea and sat around a fire telling bad jokes and having cups of tea or port.

Sunday:

Up at 7.00 - another pearler of a day. Had brekkie, broke camp, trogged up and all of us, with 5 littlies in tow, (Mitch, Timmy, Jamie, Kirsty, Ryan Sawyers) headed off to do Grill. The kids were very excited. We descended at 11.00 and exited about 12.00. The group was split in 2 - those with the kids made it as far as the bottom of the 8th ladder, and Kevin and the other guys made it to the first sump.

We had also hoped to do Blowfly and the adytum but we ran out of time. So it'll have to wait. I bought the Bungonia book.

Cindy Mann

Bungonia - 11th April 1999

Present: Iain and Cheryl (Fri. Night only - they left when Mitchell got sick), Kevin, Wendy, (Ryan, Richard, Siobhan & Jade) Glenn and Todd, Steve Hallam, Howie, Rick and Anne-Marie, Joanne (Wendy's sister) and 2 boys; Nashville and Grant, aged about 16, and Rob and Tim and me.

Saturday:

We got to Bungonia about 12:30. As it turned out they'd only set off for Grill about a half-hour ahead of us. We found their site and pitched camp and headed to the hut, where we found from the logbook they'd gone down grill with the children. But they were off by the time we got there. The general plan was that we'd go back, eat lunch and Kevin would lead us down Drum.

We didn't get to do Drum, as another group was down there. Their gear was rigged in the 50m pitch, and they weren't due out til 6.00 pm. So after a lot of wandering about in the rain, Kevin, Steve, Howie, Glenn and I went off to do Acoustic, which is right near the exit of Blowfly. The others had gone down the exit pitch of Blowfly using a ladder, (not the little kids, of course), but the 2 young boys weren't keen on going any further, so they exited.

We descended Acoustic about 4:40pm. The cave was wet and pretty cold too, I thought. But we kept on moving and it wasn't too bad. All the same I was glad of the thermal spencer.

Kevin rigged the pitch with a crossover, which was excellent practice for me at least. First we had to abseil down 10 feet or so, and then reach for the crab on the anchor point of the next part of the drop. Then (following Kev's instructions), I clipped in a cows tail, abseiled down till it took my weight, stood in the loop, removed the raprack from the short rope, crossed over onto the long, removed the cows tail and moved on down the final 100-foot or so of the drop. It was a new rope - very slick, and I needed all 4 bars. At the bottom we poked around a bit - some scrambly, rather confined climbing, then a CO2-filled squeeze to the sump, which I didn't attempt.

Prussiking up was an absolute breeze compared to when I laddered it out. Steve H. Very kindly adjusted the rig for me to prevent the top ascender getting out of reach. I was a lot slower than Kevin was (as well as being very fast anyway, he has a ropewalk system), but it was fun, including the crossover.

We surfaced into starlight at 8:20 and went back in Glenn's ute. It was great - a beautiful night. The rain had stopped and back at the camp the others had a blazing fire going, and Rob had chicken rolls waiting for me. We all sat up till about 11.00 (giving the port a nudge, in the best caving tradition), just enjoying the vibe and listening to truly appalling jokes (I even told some that were moderately bad).

Sunday

Up about 7.30am we decided to do Grill, to the ultimate sump (braving the CO2) and maybe Fossil-Hogan (B4-5) time permitting. And there's never enough time to do that last cave! We could feel the CO2 concentration rise, even above "Safe from the Russians". I waited with Timmy at the bottom of Crystal Palace and Rob went on with the guys, Rob came back after 10 mins or so.

The others came back after about 40 minutes, they did make it to the ultimate sump and we headed out. For a change I climbed out the tricky exit (although I'm the only person that would ever describe it as tricky), with some help from Steve H, Rob and Howie. Of course the guys just blitzed up it. We'd been down about 2 hours.

Anyway, after Grill we packed up and headed for home, via Macca's.

Cindy Mann

Cliefden - 5-6th June 1999

Trip Leader: Rick Brett

Attending Members: Kevin Coleborn, Wendy Hupton, Ann-Marie Ford, Iain Lynch, Cheryl Lynch, Michael Materazzo, Cindy Man, Rob Mann.

Children: Jamie Lee and Kirsty Brett, Angelique and Mitchell Lynch, Tim Mann, Ryan and Siobhan Hupton, Richard and Jade Coleborn.

Most of us arrived at Cliefden on Friday evening to find a group of scientists from Newcastle Uni already at the hut. They were there to carry out water sampling of Davey's creek. Little did they know that there was going to be just a few children bursting with energy about to descend on the quiet night air of Cliefden Hut.

After some night soccer antics the littlies finally hit the pillows inturn leaving us bigger people to tend to the warmth of the fire inside the hut with a stomach warming port. Quickly we had soon discovered that we had also consumed up some energy by setting up the camping gear and playing soccer with the little ones, so it was off to bed.

Saturday

We woke up to a sensational morning so we took our time preparing for the up and coming cave expedition. A quick trip was made up to Anthony's house, however we found that there was no one home and so decide that we would simply visit some of the smaller and less visited caves during the weekend.

Our plan was to visit Gable and to take a couple of the children into the entrance of the cave. With the arrival of Rob, Cindy and Michael we prepared the ute and loaded up the gear ready to head off. Finally with the hut left in our dust we were on our way to Mission flat. Upon our arrival we all trogged up and made our way across the river, remaining dry and geared for the Gable outcrop. So on enough we had arrived at the bluff and with out hesitation we were scrambling up the slabby rock to the entrance of Gable. As we had the children with us we entered the cave via the upper entrance and fed the younger prospective members through one at a time. We lowered down to the river end of the entrance chamber to a dry and dusty floor. With the whole party inside we moved up to the main chamber where we found a sign indicating that it was bat breeding season from June to September and that if we were in the cave one should leave immediately.

Well as you could imagine we had to now reverse what had just been down so we then assisted the kids and some adults back out of the cave. Prior to departing we did observe a couple of bats hanging from the ceiling indicating that they had already moved the cave for the winter period. This could be indicative of an early cold winter. Finally we had exited the cave so it was a unanimous decision to locate Swansong and poke around in there for a while. Sad to say that after much trogging in the glorious afternoon sunlight we were not able to locate the secluded entrance, however several other tags and caves were located. It was agreed that should one have exceeded 900+ hours underground then he is allowed to get a little confused as to where the cave entrances may be located and it was even outrageously suggested by some that we were in the wrong bluff?

These was strongly denied by yours truly who although a little embarrassed decided to go and familiarise himself with the location of Wyreema, even though our last trip there was some 7 years earlier. Upon my return to the Gable outcrop after the recon trip across the paddock, I found that everyone had departed for the car so they could go back for late lunch. With a quick pace we headed off only to meet up with the rest of the group who had successfully completed the river crossing with out getting too were wet. A little excitement at the ascent from Transmission flat where a total of three tailgate riding passenger took a slide on the wild slid to the ground as the ute churned up the hill. Fortunately Kirsty, Jamie and Kevin survived their ordeal and proceeded to dust themselves off before rejoining the tailgate only to hang on a little tighter this time.

Finally with lunch completed a group of six keen people made our way towards Transmission Flat where we turned off onto the vastly thistle overgrown track that leads to the Wyreemba outcrop. Navigation was made easy. If it went "bang", it meant that we had run over a rock. If it didn't it meant the track was acceptable. Finally the end of the track was reached so we parked the ute and trogged up ready for our trip into Wyreemba.

We eventually reached the entrance of Wyreemba where Ann-Marie on her maiden caving trip quickly suggested that Wyreemba is a Latin word for "Wombat Hole". Kevin led the way in (he was unaware that on the last trip Bruce Howlett had passed a brown snake just below the entrance). As the cave opened out, the way on was defined by a well-worn muddy trail through many of the small maze like passages. This cave was found to be small however somewhat similar to Taplow by the amount of passages heading off in so many directions. Cindy was the only one with a camera so some snaps were taken of the small but pretty formation that this cave has to offer. Iain and Michael had begun to work up a good sweat just by exploring the many passages and holes within the cave. The cave floor changed from incredibly sticky mud to dry hard floor making it all the more fun to explore. It was difficult to imagine that it was about 5 degrees outside.

With a couple of hours quickly becoming consumed we decided to make an exit from the cave. The way out was certainly different than the way in and required some classic caving body jams to allow us to ascend one of the slippery damp walls. Ann-Marie decided in one area to use some of her rock climbing skills to scale the incredibly slippery wall. It would have been easier to body jam however I would have hate to have seen the bruising on her body as she later showed me the bruising on her legs which were the result of the slippery wall. Cindy was also amazed, as she had not noticed the drop she had climbed over on the way into the cave. Some one was inconspicuously standing over the horrible hole when the party had entered the cave. Soon enough we had all extracted our tired bodies from the cave (Wombat Hole) and into the waiting dark and cold night air. Eventually back at the ute and the heater on full blast we made our assault on the overgrown thistle covered track, which lead the way to a nice hot and well earned shower at the hut

Sunday

A slow start to a bleak Sunday morning saw a group of 5 consisting of Rick, Kevin, Wendy, Cindy and Michael depart for CL 81 Kelly's Cave.

We made our way toward Molongulli and then parked the car, trogged up and wandered the 10 meters from the car to the cave. As Kevin was the only member who had previously visited the cave he led the way in. The cave was basically a collapsed chamber with some pokey small and squeezie side passages darting off into the hill and also contained some dry and pretty formations. Towards the bottom of the cave Cindy and Wendy became most excited at the sight of a lone flying bat and both hid wherever they could to avoid being attacked by the poor harmless creature. Apart from the one bat we found some mouldy deposits of bat guano in the upper section of the cave, indicating that the odd bat from time to time has used the cave over the years. Further exploration into the cave was underway when Cindy cropped down into the sumo where she immediately called out that she felt that CO2 was present as her breathing had become a little strained.

The trusty CO2 detectors (a box of matches) were passed to Cindy so a test could be carried out to see if the flu or CO2 caused her breathing problem. A strike of the match was undertaken and away it fizzed until the phosphorus was depleted and that was that. A second test was carried out with the same result, so it was confirmed that Cindy did not have the flu, CO2 was indeed in the sump. With the test concluded Cindy decided it was time to hightail it out of the sump and get some more pleasant air.

With most of the passage explored it was time to depart much to Michael's disappointment who was hoping that Kelly's cave might have been a bit bigger than it actually was. An uneventful exit was made up through the scrappy rock pile and we were then out into the daylight and cold wind. On the way back to the hut we stopped near one of the old workings just near Millamalong West driveway and went across one of the Western paddocks to see what had been done. The workings were nothing but a small quarry which was probably used for road fill, however more interesting was some limestone that was nearby and it was crying out to be trogged. Michael, Kevin and I starting walking around trying to find something interesting, and maybe hoping that we would discover a huge cave although as it turned out we had no such luck.

Well back to the car we headed, and then on to the hut for a late lunch. Once at the hut most decided to call it a day and packed up their gear and headed back towards the big smoke.

Rick Brett

Jenolan - 19-20th June 1999

Members Present: Iain (T/L), Cheryl, Mitchell & Angelique Lynch, Kevin Coleborn, Richard, Jade, Wendy Hupton, Ryan & Siobhan, Rick Brett, Jamie & Kirsty, Ann-Marie Ford, Glen Roberts, Michael Materazzo, Cindy Mann, Steve Hallum, Brian Wells.

Visitors: Brigidine College Duke on Edinburgh. Joanne Baker, Roger Cox, Tara, Kimberly, Amy.

An early start was planned for Saturday morning. All had arrived by 9.00am as planned and the rendezvous was kept with the Brigidine College Duke of Edinburgh visitors, who were discussing the area with the guides in the guides' office.

Before long we were rolling on down to Mammoth Flat ready for the introduction to caving in Mammoth. First stop Mammoth Squeeze.... No better introduction to caving than this. All the girls had a go, ably led by the Mammoth legend, Cindy and supported by Glen. Tara thoroughly enjoyed the 45 minutes it took to get through, while Amy and Kimberly made good work of it. Kimberly acting as a solid foot hold for Tara whilst alleviating claustrophobia. Jo and Roger opted for the easier way via the rock pile.

From the base of the rock pile we regrouped and headed down to Lower River. The pleasant surrounds made for a short lunch break consisting of a wholesome share of lollies. Those with a quest for adventure or at least into to afraid of a swim, attempted the gravity defying traverse across lower river. Challenge complete we turned back only to find returning a lot harder.

However no one emulated the efforts of the now legendary Jo, and we headed back out. The girls lead the way and must have caught the caving bug, as they headed for a look at grinning monster lake, or did they just miss the turn off. Well, after a look at the map and a subtle hint or two, we were off again, successfully back to the rock pile. We headed out from here some attempting the climb up the Forty Footer - fortunately they all made it. After some 4 1/2 hours caving we exited the cave.

The D of E girls, having been introduced to the joys of caving and testing their capabilities and mental resolve in the process, To their credit they did so with apparent ease. The members that were present also enjoyed themselves whilst adapting their caving to consider a different situation with the D of E visitors.

Those who didn't go caving found a good drift of snow in which to freeze their butts off and enjoyed a good snow fight.

Saturday evening was nominated as the time to enter Dwyer's and see how far we could get without having an epic. At 5.30 pm we entered the cave leaving Kevin to find his way back to the cottage in the dark. What?? Did you say you got a bit scared?? He is human after all.

Into the Dwyer's we descended, route finding providing a small challenge in itself. But it did not take long to get to the percolator. Rick tried several bodily aspects before finding the optimum slide down, back arch and keep sliding through the body hugging orifice. Sound painful... it was. Sounds uncomfortable and scary...wait!!! you hear about getting back up.

We descended the passages down to the Flattener, which did not look too flat. Well not on the way in anyway. The pitch was rigged by Steve and myself, which Steve descended as he rigged having already pushed through the confines of the Flattener. Rick was next to follow then Michael, Wendy and Cindy having overstayed her comfort zone with the circling bats. I descended last. Rick and I then descended the next pitch to get a feel for the sticky mud that is the essence of Dwyer's or so I'd heard.

It being about 10.30 pm already we quickly turned for the exit. Michael leading the way, anticipating a bit of a struggle up through the Percolator. He was not disappointed and was still struggling after we had de-rigged the pitch and packed up all the gear. Steve then went through first to provide what little assistance he could from above.

This led to another trip into Dwyer's on Sunday as Michael's helmet took a dive down a small hole, which was much smaller than any of the members present on the trip. Wendy and Cindy quickly scampered up the Percolator, followed by Rick. Many thanks to Rick for opting not go last, increasing my heart rate by lots as my psychological state lost stability - squeezes are not my most comfortable place. We exited the cave at about 12.00am, anticipation the search for the lost helmet in the later hours of the morning.

Roger woke us up at 9.00am for an early start to Sunday. A short delay before we headed down to Mammoth Flat and into Dwyer's about 11.00am. The D of E visitors enjoyed a more relaxing cave today whilst Rick and I searched for a found a way down towards a potential helmet position. Somehow Rick squeezed through a tiny hole and ta da! There was the helmet complete with function Petzel and all. Mission accomplished we headed out.

During the exercise, the D of E visitors did some general exploration and more caving.

We departed the cave after some 3 1/2 hours everyone indicating they had an enjoyable and rewarding trip. On this trip the following training was completed. Wendy - Belay ladder and hold fall.

Iain Lynch

Cliefden - 14th August 1999

Present: Kevin and Wendy, Iain and Cheryl, Rick and Chubb, June, Mike Materazzo, Rob, Cindy and associated kids.

It was freezing, and just starting to snow at Leura. It really started snowing at Mt. Lambie and by Sunny Corner /Yethome it was dumping down. The Forestry Commission pines were covered and the land was blanketed in white - just gorgeous, but also treacherous driving. Which slowed us down.

Got to the hut about 10:10. Everyone else was already there. It was bloody cold, and our desire for adventure was at its lowest ebb. Especially mine. But Iain egged / badgered / cajoled us on. I couldn't wuss out, because otherwise we'd only have a team of 3, as the girls weren't going. I lent my overalls to Iain, and wasn't looking forward to wearing my cotton ones, but Wendy very kindly offered to lend me hers, even though they'd then be clammy and revolting for her to use tomorrow.

We got going after 12.00 - Kev, Iain, Mike and me, and descended Main at 1.00, after picking up the keys from Anthony Dunhill. It was about 10-15 degrees warmer in the cave, and we couldn't get in fast enough. Little did I know it, but this was to be the BEST EVER Cliefden trip (and we've had some pearlers!). We got to Main Chamber, and over the back of it to check out the little grotto with the dogstooth spar, which I hadn't seen before. I always thought it was just the name of the chamber, but Kevin said dogstooth spar is the name of that type of formation. It's a little chamber with enough room for one person to sit comfortably in it. The formation almost completely covers the little chamber. They are flowers of chunky very regular quartz crystals. They were very dusty, but I could imagine how beautiful they must look if you could just clean them up. Even with the dust they were lovely. Sad to say, though, some evidence of past vandalism. And you can bet the vandals removed the best of the formation. I just wished Rob had've taken the girls up on their offer to mind Tim. Next time maybe.

Mike and I stopped to put in new batteries, and Kev and Iain pushed on, to the Bootroom I think. Mike and I ended up at the beautiful frozen waterfall, and I took some more snaps. They were gone a while. At least I'd got a bit of a rest. We now made our way to the Clown Chamber, Helictite Wall (with the scissors formation, which Mike has re-named the "X-chromosome), Boot Room, some place near the Sewers, all in rapid-fire succession. Then up and up to Main Chamber and out. I was exhausted when we stumbled out at 5.30. It was dusk, and freezing, but we were still hot and sweaty. I just shambled along behind the others, too tired to speak. We took our muddy things off and piled into Iain's car. As usual I was glad I'd brought an extra garbage bag with me - someone always needs one.

We got back to a hut full of noise and a log fire blazing. Newcastle Uni speleos were also there and probably couldn't believe their bad luck having to share it with our noisy lot! They were putting a brave face on it though.

Rob was anxious to go, having been cooped up all day with the little guys. And it had apparently dumped down snow at Blayney that afternoon. So we said our goodbyes and headed for home, via the Mt. Lambie Roadhouse, as usual. It was a pity to leave so early, as the others were planning to do some more caving tomorrow, but after today, I guess I can't complain.

Sunday morning after warming up after a very cold night in which the tent actually froze shut decided to go and do Tetanus Rick, Wendy, Iain, Ryan, Richard and Mitchell. Kevin body belayed the three boys down and we all had a little poke around then finished up after 11/2 hrs.

Back to camp to pack up and go home after an enjoyable weekend.

Tuglow - 28th November 1999

Members Present: Iain Lynch (T/L), Cindy Mann (trainee T/L), Steve Hallum, Howie Davidson,
Visitors: Fionnuala Collins, David Noble

We got to Jenolan Caves about 8:30 am were we were supposed to meet Glenn, Brian and Steve Sawyers. Glenn and Brian did turn up, but were having serious engine problems, so decided to go home while they still could.

Onto the Kanangra road and drove to the Tuglow turn off (2nd on the right - about 13 km along). It was pretty cool, but a pearler of a day. Definitely 4 WD on the track down to the Kowmung! River not too high.

At Tuglow we parked and trogged up, then Dave arrived. Walked the 15 mins or so the bluff. At 10:30 we descended Tuglow Main. I rigged the first pitch (15 footer), and down we went. By 12:30 we were down the bottom of the second pitch, which Howie and I both rigged.

Down the bottom of Wards Chimney we looked for the way on to the Rimstone Dams. As before I blocked the dams off with my hand so the others could go through to the other side of the little waterfall. I still haven't been there, as I didn't relish the idea of getting drenched this soon.

After descending from KKK we went along upstream, past a small waterfall over the horrible bit near the fixed rope swing where I always get scared. (I was ok on the way out, but flunked it really badly on the way back, unfortunately). All the way up we traversed the right hand wall of the stream way, a couple of meters above the water.

Went back to the Main Chamber where we rested briefly. Then upstream to Knight Knobble Knob which we ascended with (for Fi and me, anyway), the help of a tape. We sat around yarning for ages. We checked the visitor's book, and found it was one year to the day since we'd been there before.

We continued our way upstream, but not as far as the 5-way junction with the little beach where I got to last time. The guys had all gone further than this last time but my climbing wasn't up to it. It was Fi's first time in a cave and she said she wanted to go out now, and she's seen enough. So we turned back. We'd been under about 4 hours by now. She did really well. Getting this far in Tuglow is not easy for a first timer, even though she's a very capable climber. I hope she comes caving again.

To hasten our return trip we descended to the level of the river and waded out. The river was not as cold as I expected, and it was easy to keep warm if you just kept moving. It wasn't much higher than the top of my boots.

We ascended (as usual) in double quick time, (de-rigging always seems to be quicker, I reckon), and by 5:30 we were all out. Time underground was 7 hours.

Gear needed was 1 * 20' ladder, 2 * 40' ladder, and associated traces, and a few tapes and a belay rope. Before leaving for home we drove out to Kanangra Walls (10 km or so) because it was such a beautiful evening.

Cindy Mann

Cliefden - 11-12th December 1999

Present: Kevin (TL) and Wendy and Richard, Iain, David Noble and Jules, Rick and Chubb, Glen Robinson and Janelle, Jason and Joanne and Rhiannon, Michelle and John, Kylie and her boyfriend.

Saturday

No one seemed in a frantic hurry to get under, (it was a very hot day) so after setting up camp and catching up with our friends, we split into 2 groups. Kevin led Wendy, Richard, Jason, Iain and me through Murder. Joanne and Rhiannon were also going, but Joanne got spooked about it not far past the entrance and decided to wait it out up the top with little Rhiannon. Basically she backed out at the prospect of a squeeze - otherwise I think she'd have gone through with it.

We descended at about 11:10 and spent 2.5 hours down there. Richard did exceptionally well - he's a very gutsy little boy. He took the lead at one stage, giving heaps of orders. Kevin found the Blue Oal, and the Pineapple, and Jason asked lots of questions about whether any of the formations were valuable. They certainly are pretty, and I think he was surprised to hear they have no value beyond their own beauty in the cave. Murder is situated on the same bluff as Main, however I've decided I prefer Main to Murder - there's more to see in Main.

No further caving today. The weather was too conducive to the "lets have a few beers and slouch around the camp" vibes, which is pretty well what everyone did. It was good, all the same, as it gives you a chance to catch up with everyone.

Rick had taken Jules, David, Glen, Janelle, Michelle, John and perhaps Kylie and her boyfriend to do Wyreemba. I've done a little of this pretty cave before, but they were gone at least 2-3 hours longer than we'd done before in this cave, and did the whole lot, coming back really tired and exhilarated. As you do after a particularly long or challenging cave. I think they spent 4 hours down.

Sunday:

Up about 7:30, and we had the usual good time playing Frisbees and kicking a footy around. Everyone was pretty laid back. Eventually, those who wanted to cave decided on trapdoor. We headed down to the river - Kevin, Wendy, David, Jules and me. To get to Trapdoor, you cross over and head upstream to a big, black roughly triangular coal-black scree slope. When you climb to the top, just at the right there's a short little trail that leads a few meters to the cave entrance. Kevin pointed out it was very overgrown (with blackberries), so obviously we were the first visitors for some time. Kevin had quite a bit of trouble with the lock on the grate.

We descended Trapdoor at 12:15. We went straight to the sump, which is beautiful, with clear water and calcite rafts. We stopped a while to enjoy the sight of it. I took a few soil samples from this cave to analyse back at the lab. (David caves barefoot (ouch!) - he even walks around that prickly ground barefoot - don't know how he does it though.)

We headed on through a fairly large squeeze to a chamber with a long steep slope, which goes up to a squeeze in the roof. You go left here. Kevin actually did this squeeze as a 12 year old (so he must have been daring, even back then). David and Jules went to check it out. I'd been to the entrance of it on a previous visit, and the climb up is a bit hairy. Wendy and I both went about halfway up the slope, which was quite tricky anyway, as it is wet, and there's nothing much to step on or hold on to. There was no way any of us were going to fit through the squeeze, so no one gave it a serious try.

After that we retraced our steps, stopping again at the sump. Kevin had rigged a handline for the descent to the sump (for that wussy David Noble, probably), but no one needed it. We couldn't do much more today, as the Indoor Cricket World Championships were on, but we'd had a really good time. We exited Trapdoor after 2.5 hours.

Tuglow - 4-5th March 2000

Kevin & Wendy arrived at Dingo Dell at around 11pm then Brian and Brice in their 4WD in their 2WD just to be on the safe side, but made it OK. Graeme, Glen and Steve were already there after setting up camp and having a chat around the fire decided to hit the sack at about 12pm.

We all woke up around 8am the guys slept in fortunately for us, so we headed off for the cave at 9am and got in the cave at 9.30am. We all headed down the first ladder pitch to be met at the bottom by a dead and very smelly possum. So we headed on to the next ladder pitch, which had a bit of a climb down at the end because the ladder was about 2mtrs to short, but everyone did all right. Kevin then took Wendy to look at the rim pools and everyone else just had a little bit of a scoot around while they waited for the last person to come down the ladder.

Once everyone was down we all headed down to the book room to sign the book, have a look at Knobbly Knob and have a lunch break. Then we went up to Knights cavern to have a look, back down to the book room, then headed across to the river above the waterfall, then we headed down the river as far as we could go while Kevin had a bit of a kip. When we got back to Kevin we had a quick discussion decided to head back down the waterfall and through the water as some of us were a bit freaked out by the traverse and drops down that we had to climb over.

So back to the top of the waterfall and with one harness between us we decided that Glen would go down first down climbing with a bowline around him and Graeme belayed him down with an Italian hitch. It was then Wendy's turn she chose to use the harness and abseil down with an Italian hitch the first time she has abseiled without a device but she did all right.

When she got down the bottom the harness was pulled back up so that someone else could use it. Glen then took a look at where we had to go next and decided that it would be better to wait until we could all go together. As it was going to be cold, even though we were all wet up to the waist except Kevin, we were about to become even wetter. So we waited not too long and headed off through the water only got wet up to our necks, the water wasn't that cold. Then through the river in knee-deep water and back to the bottom of the ladder pitch. Kevin went first so that he could belay us up the ladders, I went next then Graeme and the rest of the guys. After the ladders a few tricky climbs up and the next ladder to another tricky climb up and finally we made it to the gate. All up we were in the cave for 8 1/2 hours.

When we got out of the cave it had been raining so we all had a bit of a slippery drive back to camp, but made it no problems, Graeme on his health kick decided he would jog back to camp instead. Everyone changed out of our wet clothes and started with dinner and a campfire Kevin & Wendy hit the sack around 9oclock the rest of the guys stayed up for a while. When everyone woke in morning it had been raining for a while so we all packed up and headed off. The track was a little bit slippery and Kevin & Wendy had to be towed in their 2WD, Wendy chose to sit in the 4WD on the way up to the top. Made it up OK and then everyone went their own way home.

Kevin Coleborn

Bungonia - February 2000 AGM

Kevin, Wendy, Joanne, Rheannan and Aileen got to Bungonia on Friday night about 9.30pm, pitched the tents and hit the sack practically straight away.

Saturday morning had breakfast then got ready for the AGM. Present at the AGM was Kevin, Wendy, Louise, Terry, Rick, Ann-Marie, Cheryl, Iain, Lionel and Kids. AGM went smoothly then all left for home after a quiet lunch. So left were Kevin, Wendy, Joanne, Rheannan and Aileen, not enough to go caving and it was much to hot so after speaking with the park ranger we hit the water for a couple of hours. After the swim we all went for a drive to the lookouts and the shop for an ice cream. Not much else was done for the rest of the day.

Sunday morning got up the weather was horrible so packed up camp and went home.

Kevin Coleborn

Walli Caves - 15-16th April 2000

Members Attending: Kevin Coleborn, Wendy Hupton, Ann Marie Brett, Rick Brett (TL), Naomi Brett, Iain Lynch.

We departed Sydney on Friday night with Kevin and Wendy following behind us. We headed west, hitting rain at Katoomba and continuing through to Bathurst. A quick loo stop and refuel at Raglan was carried out and a plan was instigated in case the rain continued to fall as we came closer to Walli. Our plan was that if it were raining we would probably stop at Cliefden hut for the ease of looking after two month old Naomi who happened to be on her first camping/caving trip.

We passed the Cliefden turn off in light drizzle and continued along to the turn off just past Reedy Creek Road. We entered the Bingara property at almost 11 PM so decided against alerting the property manager that we were there. A little bit of a mishap at the road to the hill as we ended up behind the shearing sheds. Oh well lucky Kevin had remembered the way to the correct track in the dark. Wendy opened the first gate in light rain so I was the one to lead the way up the hill. We had reached the halfway point on the hill when suddenly we lost traction and then encountered severe sideways movement in the ute. I eased off the gas a little and the car pushed the rear wheels to the edge of the grassy mound which divides the two wheel tracks running up the hill. Which gave us a little more traction although some substantial opposite lock was still required for some ten to twenty metres and then we picked up a little drier ground where we straightened up and were able to get some more forward momentum. A glance in the mirrors revealed that Kevin had come to a halt in the Front wheel drive Toyota.

At this point in time it was looking like we had to turn around and make our way back to Cliefden, however Kevin being an excellent driver was persistent and on attempt number four actually made it up the hill. Eventually we reached the second gate in bucketing rain and it was my turn to wade through the mud and diluted cow Shit to open the gate. Mission accomplished, so we moved across to the campsite in nice lush wet green grass, which thankfully lacked the normal thistles at this time of the year.

It was a wonderful experience erecting the large family tent in heavy rain and by the time that the tent was finally up and the additional tarps were in place the rain had all

But ceased. As the rain had stopped it allowed Kev and I to fit in a quick port or two before hitting the pillow.

Saturday morning was a little overcast as we attempted to get a fire started whilst we awaited the arrival of Rob, Cindy and Timmy. The wet firewood required a bit of assistance to ignite, however the petrol did get the fire going and we also used a bit of the dry fire wood that thankfully was stashed under the corrugated iron.

Brekkie was finished and there was no sign of Rob and Cindy by 11AM. Unknowingly to us Rob and Cindy had arrived at 10AM however the track proved far too slippery for their vehicle and they aborted mission to Canowindra for the balloon festival. With the sun now fully out and the clouds totally disappearing we set up some ropes in the trees beside the camp where we changed my rope walking prussic system to the frog system whilst we awaited the arrival of Iain who was due at about 1 PM. By 1:30 Iain's car appeared over the hill and headed towards us at the campsite with Iain clutching the steering wheel like Peter Brock. (The track was still a little slippery!)

Finally it was time to go caving, as there were now four of us. We trogged up and made our way over the hill to the entrance of Piano extension. The usual fun was had trying to find a belay point for the ladders that were close to the entrance. After about half an hour we had the ladders set at the end of a 11mm rope and with only two ladders we ensured that the ladders started at the top of the pitch. I was the first to ladder down and discovered that the ladder was about 5 metres too short, which meant that we had to climb the last few metres. Iain was next down and with the assistance of a sling attached to the last rung of the ladder was able to reach a good foothold to allow for an easier climb down.

Kevin and Wendy entered Piano where they came to the voice connection whilst Iain and I rigged Iain's back up light due to a rather rapid light failure. Backup light number two was dull so we swapped up the back batteries, which were his number three light sources, which failed to work at all. At this time we alerted Kevin to the light dilemma so he exited Piano and picked up another spare light, bought it back to Piano and passed the spare light to Iain through the voice connection.

Iain and I were able to take a good look around in the cave and discussed the probability as to how the wombat bones had entered the cave. A few scenarios were thrown around and we also considered the factor of how long it takes for cave formation to occur.

It was evident that the cave had not had too many visitors, as there was no evidence of any further caver impact in the cave since my last visit some four years prior. After some thorough exploration we viewed the unique calcite formations on the floor at the end of the main chamber, which Iain had never seen in any caves before, and then decided it was time to exit the cave. We noted that the cave was rather active as far as moisture and water droplets on the formations were concerned. It is apparent that the water is able to seep into the porous ground rather quickly due to the observations that we had made.

By this time Kevin was back at the top of the ladder pitch and kindly belayed us both back to the top of the pitch where we scrambled past him and then relayed the ladders back out of the squeezey and awkward entrance. We proceeded to pack up the equipment in darkness and then headed for the campsite where Chubb had prepared a superb meal for us. As there was plenty of food Iain was able to have a bite to eat before departing again for the Big smoke.

4.5 Hrs Underground.
Kevin, Rick, Iain & Wendy.

Sunday morning saw the clouds roll in again so we decided to wait for a while to see what the weather would do. We were concerned that should the threatening rain start to fall that we would tear up the track and also have immense difficulty in getting up the first hill. We enjoyed a leisurely time in packing up the camp and replaced some of the firewood under the iron sheets. This still allowed us time to have some cricket practice. Unfortunately my plan to check the level of the lake in WA42 "Lake Cave" was a non-event as the clouds were now very threatening. At this point in time we thought that we should depart for home after a great and leisurely weekend.

Rick Brett. (Trip Leader)

Jenolan - 22 April 2000

A Mammoth Effort

The scheduled rendezvous of 9.00 was well adhered to, with one minor exception, the trip leader. However, by 9.30 we were up at the hut and after catching up a bit we got ready and headed off to Mammoth cave, entering at 10.45 am.

Round One

First we gave the kids a bit of a go, with Richard, Ryan, Robyn and Daniel along with Alan, Kevin, Cindy, David, Jules and myself trundling into horseshoe cavern and the start of the Railway tunnels. It was a fun experience with the kids thoroughly enjoying the challenge of a bit of climbing as well as balancing the slippery mudslides. They all did really well, although there were a couple of wet bottoms and a few wet shoes by the time we returned to horseshoe cavern. After about two hours a call of nature led Ryan and Richard out of the cave, with Kevin escorting them back to the hut, negotiating the heavy traffic in the temporary car park below the cavers' cottage.

Round Two

Those remaining in the cave, ventured down to lower river. Cindy led Jules through the Mammoth squeeze, a brief feeling of bravado almost had the trip leader follow them through. However, sense prevailed and I returned to the rock fall to follow the others. We all reached the bottom of the forty footer about the same time and continued down towards lower river. Daniel and Robyn did particularly well on some of the tricky climbs between passages. At the river we stopped for a break, some of us playing around on the climb over lower river.

An interesting find by Alan, were the tiny piles of mud on the floor adjacent lower river. They looked the same as the piles made by crabs at the beach or river.

This may point to the theory that this cave environment is a breeding ground for STDs....Sub Terrainian Decapoda. Decapoda referring to ten jointed beings, which includes crabs.

After a break, we headed back to the entrance, Daniel and Robyn leading the way through the rock pile with help from Jules. Alan, Daniel and Robyn tagged with Rick and Wendy for round three to begin.

Round Three

We escorted Alan, Robyn and Daniel to the exit of the cave, before heading back to the skull and crossbones and down toward central river. The intention was to get to the dry siphon. We climbed over and down the 90 footer before climbing through the passage to central lake. Up and through some more passage we reached central river, and then continuing on to the dry siphon and some recollection of the glory days from Rick. As usual the dry siphon had a bit of water flowing through it.

After a short break we headed out climbing back up towards hellhole. A small directional error led us to the far side of the ninety footer so we climbed back over the rock bridge much to the dismay of some.

Safely back up to the railway tunnels, we headed back via horseshoe cavern. We exited the cave about 5.45 pm.

Iain Lynch
(Trip Leader)

Bungonia - 18 July 2000

An Ambitious Quest or a Questionable Ambition?

The challenge was on, to reach St Patrick's Lake at the end of the B 4-5 extension. No one from BMSC had reached this elusive goal, the ultimate sump in the cave known to date. Many had tried on numerous occasions only to be turned back by high water or the dreaded CO2.

We had timed the trip for winter, to give us the best chance - when CO2 is usually less prevalent. Luck had been on our side with little rain in the weeks preceding the trip, so the water levels would hopefully be low. With a little more luck we would accomplish our challenge and may even explore the 'Unexplored Chamber' above.

It was to be a long day, up at 5.00 am, drive to Bungonia, stopping at Macca's for the essential sausage and egg McMuffin breakfast, cave all day and drive home, probably stopping at Macca's for the non-essential McValue Meal. ETA at home who could possibly guess?

The anticipated rendezvous at McDonalds Sutton Forest did not happen and the party, consisting of Rick, Kevin, Wendy, Cindy and myself, found ourselves outside the guides' office between 8.30 and 9.00 am. Rick went back to pick up Howie who had surprised us with his presence, parked outside the gate. Sweeny would stand guard over the truck today. Whilst waiting for Rick & Howie to arrive we met a few people undertaking a guided day of caving for the measly some of \$120 each. We took the opportunity to advise the most active looking ones of the benefits of joining a caving club where trip fees for the weekend amount to some 5900% less.

Modesty and cold led us to the toilets for the girls to get changed. This allowed the childish men to play a game of bush footy, kicking balls in, over and through the native vegetation with the men sompering in, over and through the bush as though taking part in some sort of ancient chase for an elusive prey. After near exhausting ourselves at this 'sport', we headed over to the B4-5 car park. All trogged up we headed to the B5 entrance where the paying group were setting up for some abseiling - value for money on a caving trip.

Anyway, enough bagging out of the less fortunate, we were embarking on an adventure into the depths of Bungonia, a test of physical endurance, pain and mental perseverance. We entered the cave at 10.30 am.

We followed the normal route up over the cement bag and down the hairy traverse. Six adventurous souls snaking our way down past the Kings Cross turn to B4 towards the junction chamber and the start of the rat run.

As the leader and in order to calm my nerves about small crawls, I led the way into the first crawl. Head down, body down, legs down, flat out - commando style. As luck would have it, the way seemed to be recently travelled and with no digging involved, progress was good. Given the ease of passage, it still seemed to take a long time to reach the aptly named Coffin Chamber. Those who have had to dig through this should be held in reverence for their effort. Ever the scientist, Cindy collected samples along the way, despite the cramped conditions.

We exited the coffin chamber and into the first of the tight squeezes, a bit of a flattener, which required the displacement of some protruding rocks to avoid the discomfort of pointy things jabbing into places of one's body into which pointy things should not be jabbed. Progress to the traditional resting-place was slow, as the longer we grovelled the less capable we became at it. It was during this section that our quest nearly came to a sudden end. In a near disastrous occurrence, Cindy's traditional box of pikelets had exploded into a mash of crumbs mixed with a build up of caving grit inside her pack. How could we go on without the thought of possibly sharing the sumptuous pikelets? With some counselling and careful repacking, the now less than appetising contents were encapsulated into their box, and the party summoned the courage to continue. Having made a break ahead of the rest I gladly used this time to catch up on some sleep, as I had stayed up too late the night before with the usual last minute packing.

Regrouped, we rested again at the Traditional Resting Place prior to making the final crawl into the largest chamber, where again, we rested. The decision was jointly made to press on down the 3m climb, through the Upside Down RowBoat Tunnel and into the Ribbon Room.

Again we were in luck, with no sign of high water nor, increased levels of Carbon Dioxide in the air.

We all proceeded to the top of the 12m steep climb, where a council was held to discuss the future of the expedition. It was decided that Rick would lead Wendy and Howie out of the cave, whilst Cindy, Kevin and I would push on for a half hour or so to see how far we could get towards our goal of St Patrick's Lake. For the others it was the commencement of the long slow haul to grovel out, for us the fun was just beginning.

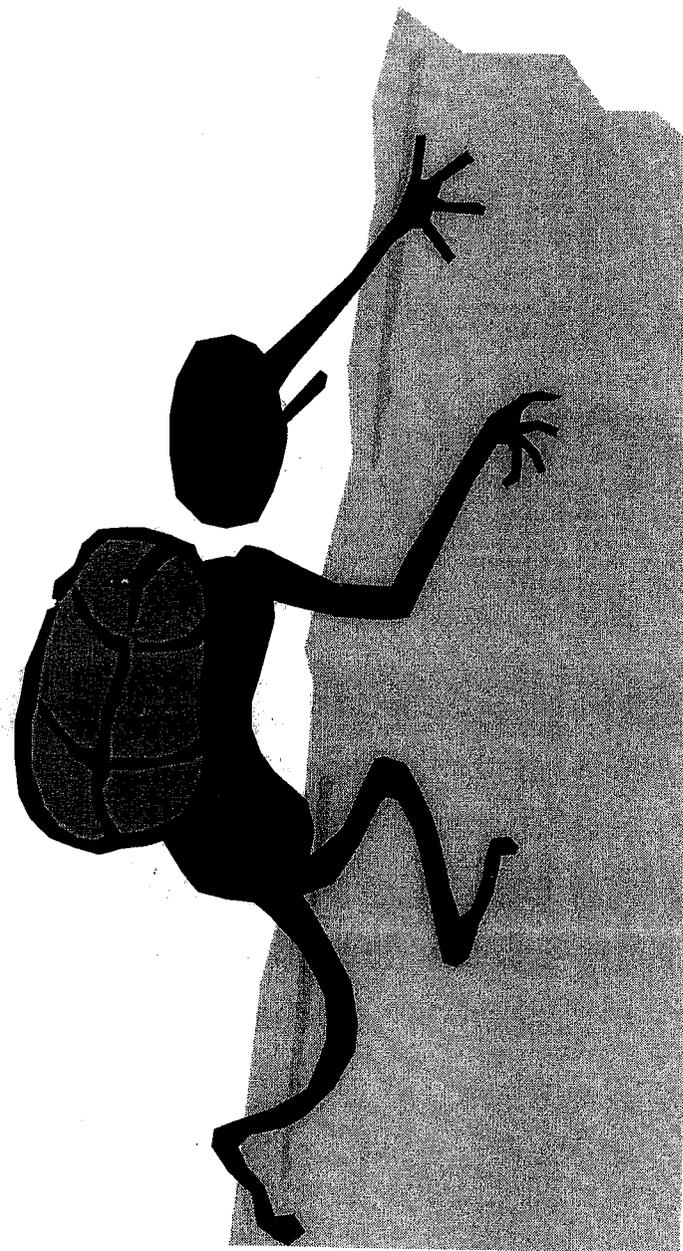
The 12m steep climb was easily negotiated but the low, wet, nasty crawl was just that, with sharper rocks in a low crawl, pain was unavoidable - in only a tee shirt anyway. Through this section, I led us into towards the Lavatory Pan Squeeze. Here, we conducted a test of the cave's acoustic properties as my heartbeat reverberated through the rock whilst I lay in a pool of water psyching up for the squeeze leading to what I thought was a 6.5m drop. Eventually I pushed through to a level passage, but had reached the end of my mental drive. I invited Kevin to lead through the next squeeze, which he did popping out to the top of the 6.5m pitch. He rigged a ladder and Cindy passed through both squeezes following Kevin down the ladder. I then popped through the toilet bowl replica squeeze and trailed the others into the low crawl leading to the Serpent. We weaved our way through the Serpent to the low awkward squeeze, where we pondered our next movement. The drive to reach our goal was strong and we manipulated ourselves though the squeeze to be confronted with two daunting problems. The Baby Snake, and a sudden and substantial increase in Carbon Dioxide. The Baby Snake squeeze was challenging but we were confident we could negotiate it. Cindy would have no problems, but Kevin or myself would need to twist our head and chest to find a passage wide enough to slither through. All this whilst wedging one's body about 30 cm above the narrowing floor. With the level of Carbon Dioxide, we felt to push on would be dangerous, so the decision was made to head out, but not without pushing as far as one could.

So near and yet so far - we had made it to within 150m of the lake. We headed up the low awkward squeeze and back into the Serpent, retracing the passage back to the Lavatory Pan Squeeze. Going up proved significantly harder than down, but we all made it through. Many thanks to Cindy for back tracking to man handle all our cave packs, including that one filled with the ladder and the now wet rope, which we did not even use.

It was a quick trip back to the largest chamber before heading into the long, arduous crawl. Sharing the burden of the heaviest pack was quickly given over to Kevin, as my tee shirt now seemed to offer zero protection to my body. Slowly, but surely we pushed on towards the end of the crawls and it was with sheer pleasure that we emerged from the rat run and proceeded to the climb out. Kevin belayed Cindy and I up the hairy traverse and down the last climb near the entrance, at which I subsequently spotted for him. Did he really expect me to catch him had he fallen? We exited the cave at 7.30 pm and were well received with a small fire back at the car park, where the others had arrived about one hour before. They had endured their own personal battles with pain and exhaustion through the squeezes. Congratulations to Wendy who triumphantly announced she didn't even cry.

Whilst not reaching our ultimate goal, we had set a new distance record for BMSC, that being part way through the Baby Snake. Would we return for another crack at the elusive St Patrick's Lake? Initially, as we began our recovery, the answer was a definite no. We were satisfied with this effort. But given a few hours' rest and rehabilitation, the answer is an absolute yes! With less non-essential gear, more protective clothing and a little more luck, we may just make St Patrick's Lake. Perhaps carrying a four-leaf clover and dressing in green will help.

Iain Lynch (Trip Leader)



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