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*Journal of  
Blue Mountains Speleological Club*

# **OOLITE**

## **BLUE MOUNTAINS SPELEOLOGICAL CLUB**

**Post Office Box 37  
Glenbrook NSW 2773**

VOLUME 27 NO 1 1997

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Club Contacts   - Iain Lynch, President  
                  - Kevin Coleborn, Vice President

Editor - Cheryl Lynch

# PRESIDENTS REPORT

This weekend we are having our AGM that begins a new year. 1997 was a good year, with new Members and new Tripleaders, congratulations to all of these people. We look forward to another great year in 1998, with a lot of adventurous trips. This will allow everybody to further their abilities and experience in caving and leading trips. This last year saw a lot of club member involvement. We encourage all member to continue their involvement as it is you who make the club what it is. Thankyou for your support in my first year as club President.

Iain Lynch.

## REPORTS

### TUGLOW

9-10th August 1997

**Members Present:** Iain Lynch(TL)-9.5, Oliver Davies-6, Graeme Osborne-6, Steve Sawyers-6, Howie Davidson-3.5.

**Visitors:** Ryan Young, Mark Rottuno, Dave, Mat, Oliver. Caving hours-6.

**Report:** The weekend began with a slight hitch when the trip leader almost couldn't get a lift. Luckily Steve's 4WD managed to squeeze 5 of us plus gear and we headed off to Tuglow about 7.45am Saturday. We passed a bit of snow at Blackheath and Mt Victoria before heading towards Jenolan. We encountered heavier snow cover on the road to Jenolan and some ice on the road much to Steve's liking?! Our scheduled rendezvous (To which we were half an hour late) with Rob, Cindy and Timmy Mann) had revealed that they were not coming or had already left towards Tuglow so we headed off. Past Jenolan the snow cover was heavier, a good sign that the weekend would be cold and adventurous, however as we descended to the Kowmung we dropped out of the snowline.

Upon arrival at the Kowmung Crossing we found no sign of the Mann's or Glen Robinson, however the four visitors were there waiting. We headed up to the carpark, where we left the four guys to get ready whilst Steve, Graham, Oliver, Ryan and I went to set up camp at Dingo Dell and check for the Mann's

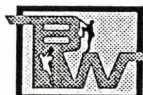
or Glen. No sign of the other, we returned to the carpark and set off for the Tuglow main. We headed in down the first little climb with Graham and Steve leading the way so they could set up the first ladder and belay. Steve belayed Graham and then I belayed the others so I could assess their competency and guide them if required. Once down this pitch we found our way through the rockpile down to find pitch to where I set up the ladder and belayed everyone down. Dave and Graham went first and rigged up the last ladder and belay. Soon we were all at the bottom, and we proceeded to the lower river for some exploration. After exploring several passages and getting some nice shots of the small waterfalls we headed back off the bottom of the ladders. The four visiting guys were keen and soon left us behind, whilst Ryan decided he would like to wait and rest as his leg was a bit sore. Satisfied that Ryan leg would be OK, I headed off to catch the others, with Graham, Steve and Oliver not far behind. After several precarious climbs over water and through the rifts I met up with the others near the waterfall. Graham, Steve and Oliver soon caught up and in turn, they all climbed through to base of the waterfall where more photographs were taken. With time getting on we decided to head out. On the way out I found the way to climb up and over the waterfall, however we were happy to leave and I did not wish for Ryan to be waiting much longer. By the time I arrived at the



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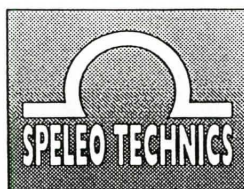


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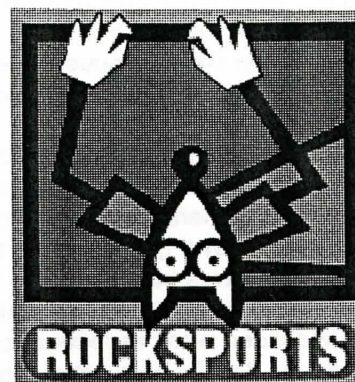


# ROCKSPORTS

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ladders, the four visitors had climbed the first ladder and were heading out, as they had to be back in Sydney by 8pm (it now being about 5.30pm) gradually we all climbed up, me belaying those that needed it. Once I'd got up the second climb I belayed Ryan up and the Graham. This allowed Ryan and I to move on the tip pitch whilst the others derigged and followed on. The others caught up at the top pitch, and we headed out, Oliver first, then Ryan and I following so that I could help if required. Then Graham and Steve after they had derigged the pitch. We headed back to the cars, where there was no sign of the other or their trip fees. We all then piled into the car back to Dingo Dell a not so warm fire, some dinner, something cheap and warm to drink and a good nights rest.

Sunday dawned a clear and sunny day. Just as we were about to pack and head on home, Howie arrived. Knowing Howie's ability and enthusiasm, I decided to go back into Main with him today. I quickly packed and Howie

and I headed off. Steve, Graham, Ryan and Oliver passed us at the carpark and headed home. Howie and I headed into the about 9.30am and quickly rigged and descended to the stream passage. We headed straight up stream and into the upper section via the way I had located the day before. We soon stood at the top of the waterfall and proceeding along the stream passage at varying heights above the water. We kept going until we reached the main cavern before the crawling starts. After exploring one passage for a short distance we headed out as I did not wish to risk running out of main light sources. This proved a good decision Howie had some problems with his light. So we headed back down the stream passage up the pitches and out. Then a quick wash in the Kowmung and off to Lithgow where I got out to catch a train home. All in all a thoroughly successful and enjoyable trip for all members and visitors.

Iain Lynch

## **Bungonia 6th September 1997**

**Members Present:** Kevin Coleborn, Lincoln Fowler, Oliver Davis, Graeme Osborne, Steve Sawyers, David Marsh, Iain Lynch, Rob-O and Cindy Mann, Mason Dow. A mate of David's and a mate of Steve's. 2 Hours Caving, 3 Hours Training.

**Report:** Most of us had arrived at the Ranger's office by about 8.30am on Saturday. Kevin, Mason, and myself went to find a somewhat ill Joe Sydney at the Highland Caving Groups 40th Anniversary campsite. After meeting Joe and a few of the others, we brought Joe back and then headed to the lecture room in the central kitchen. Soon after Joe had set up, Rob and Cindy Mann arrived (with Timmy) having passed the first test in Cave Rescue - finding out where the party members have disappeared to.

The lectures consisted of a back to basic's theme including what to wear when caving what food to take, general caving equipment, first aid equipment, knowing who is in the party and their ability. It was based around the need to be prepared for an incident, should one occur. Also discussed were aspects of caving such as keeping in touch with your party, informing someone if you duck off to explore a passage. Finally we discussed issues that may arise during a rescue such as sending person for help, gear required in different caves, the effects of cold, leadership, communication underground and on the surface, and the like. The central theme was that on any caving trip,

the party should be prepared for the trip, with the required personal equipment, party equipment and also bring some extra equipment just in case, plus have spare equipment on the surface. All this may seem excessive, but it could be required and deserves everyone's consideration.

After the lecture and some lunch, we split into two groups. Kevin took Dave Marsh, Cindy Mann, Michael Matterazzo and a mate of Dave's into B 50 with Dave acting leader. I took Lincoln Fowler, Graham Osborne, Steve Sawyers, Oliver Davies, Mason Dow and Steve's Mate into B71 (Dinosaur).

Each Party undertook a surprise mock rescue that highlighted the problems associated with evacuating an injured victim (!! Ops I mean injured person. This enabled us to apply some of the things we discussed at the lecture. It also highlighted some deficiencies in First Aid Knowledge which should be addressed by all of us.

All in all an informative and enjoyable day. After we finished our exercises, some of us left, whilst Kevin, Michael, David and Mason when back to Highland's 40th to see a few people. Kevin, Michael and I soon left leaving Dave and Mate to party on, in what would have been a good evening.

Iain Lynch



## Jenolan - Glass Cave And Mammoth Cave 15 November 1997

Due to general consensus, it was decided to make this a day trip to Jenolan. This was also due to limited access to the caves, after the decision by the Trust to restrict access. We arrived at about 9.30 and headed off to the caves. The group consisted of Rob, Cindy and Timmy Mann, Michael Materazzo, Graham Osborne, Steve Sawyers, John (work colleague) and myself.

As Steve was the only one who had a car with any clearance, we loaded it up with all our gear and ourselves, and headed down to Mammoth Flat. Rob and Timmy headed to the tourist caves for a more leisurely day. After tugging up we all went in search of J17 Glass Cave. Following Kevin's accurate(?????) Directions we found the correct bluff. Then 'follow the main track and you'll walk straight to it' - well, we found J16, J18 and J19 but where the hell was J17. After some extensive searching and bum surfing, the cave was eventually located. Graham led the way in, followed by Steve, then John, Cindy, Michael and myself. Soon the leaders had reached the ladder and stopped as it looked rather old and precarious. A bit of toing and froing, I decided to go get the ladder and rope from the car. Stripping off my caving suit allowed a quick run to the car and back in my shorts and t-shirt. Still suffering from the run, I dived back into the cave in shorts and t-shirt. Two of the group had decided the ladder to be safe and descended to the main chamber. John had tried to go up the tight shaft but it was a reasonably snug fit and difficult to use your legs - a nice introduction to caving. He came back to try again later. Cindy went through next with a belay which we set up prior to the tight shaft leading to the ladder. Michael then followed, on belay, taking a while to get onto the ladder. Finally John went through the tight section and down the ladder, again on belay. I then followed and discovered the difficulty of the ladder access, as you have to lean right out over the drop to get your legs free to step onto the ladder. All there is to hold onto is some awkward holds and a very thin and narrow band of rock about 1 metre away. Once down the bottom we split into two groups

and explored the various passages off the main chamber. It is clear why the cave got its name as some of the formations are like sheets of glass over the rock. After visiting the main passages, we all ascended the ladder. Graham went first to belay the others, followed by Steve. Cindy, Michael and John were all belayed up by Graham. Finally I trailed them all out into the hot sunny day.

Total time in cave: 4 hours

Members: Cindy Mann  
Graham Osborne  
Steve Sawyer  
Iain Lynch

Visitor: John

We then walked back to the car for a snack and drink, before heading to Mammoth Cave. My memory of Mammoth was so vague that this was to be an exploratory trip. We all entered and leading the way I found the Mammoth Squeeze. I had a decent look this time but was unable to even to turn onto my side so I think I may be excused. Cindy had a go, and got through. Steve also tried and got part way through before backing out. As no one else could make it, and not knowing how to get to the forty footer, I had to ask Cindy to come back through, which she did - a grand effort. We then headed back to the entrance chamber to find our way into other parts of the cave. With time running out we decided to exit the cave, but at the last second I saw the familiar jug handle. We took a quick trip down here and explored some of the passages including that leading to the Horseshoe Cavern, and also the Sand Passage. Soon we headed out, walked back to the car and back to meet Rob and Timmy.

We all headed home after a good day caving.

Total time in cave: 3 hours

Members: Cindy Mann  
Graham Osborne  
Steve Sawyer  
Iain Lynch

Visitor: John

## Cliefden 6-7 December 1997

The Christmas party weekend began with an excellent car observation trial. From the Edge cinema at Katoomba a scarecrow, chicken, Captain Pickard, a 50's dancer, Lady Macbeth, Batman and Robin and friends ventured off in comic spirit along the highway towards

Bathurst. A tricky list of questions saw our observationsists visit many places such as parks, graveyards and other places of interest, made particularly difficult by the absence of several of the answers.... where did those 10 letterboxes go??? After a couple of hours, and



leaving the general public wondering who those idiots were, especially the people at Raglan Mobil, we reached our rendezvous point. We then completed the remaining trip to Cliefden in normal transport mode, keen to get there and do some caving.

We arrived at about 2 pm and after unpacking a bit, got ready to go underground. The kids and some adults remained at the hut to play around, so that we could partake in some serious caving. Several of us ventured off to Trapdoor cave ably led by Michael Materazzo under the guidance of Kevin Coleborn and myself. The remaining party included Cindy Mann, Jo ??, Shaun ??, Rick Brett, Lionel Baker, Michelle Coleborn, and Amy Carp. Such a large group, we split up a bit in the cave, with Kevin doing the arm chair bit in the main chamber, whilst the rest of us explored the cave in all directions. The cave was very enjoyable offering some sporting climbs and squeezes, as well as some good formations. Rick was particularly keen, squeezing through a tight hole at the top of a climb, which he hadn't done in how (??) many years. After exploring all passages, we headed out, some of us taking advantage of the cool Belubula river with a swim. Others involuntarily enjoyed the same cool water thanks to some large rocks thrown in strategic places.

3 hours

Back at the hut, we spent the rest of the evening playing cricket, eating drinking, playing winky murder and having a pretty good time.

The next day began slowly, before the whole crew, bar Sue and Jade, headed off towards Main Cave. Judy and Angelique stayed at the surface, whilst the rest of us headed down to the main chamber. There was Cheryl, Iain, Mitchell, Belinda, Kevin, Richard, Terry, Louise,

Michael, Michelle, Amy, Jo, Shaun, Cindy, Rob, Timmy, Lionel, Howie, Rick, Jamie Lee and Kirsty. Sounds like an award speech at the Logies. I hope no one was forgotten. An hour or so was spent carefully assisting the kids climb down to the main chamber and play around on the mud slopes, whilst others explored around the chamber. When they were getting tired, we helped them all climb back out again. They did really well considering they ranged in age from about seven to two years old. Cheryl, Terry, Louise, Lionel, Rob all headed out with the kids whilst the rest of us continued on to the remainder of the cave.

First we headed to the boot room, visiting the crystal boot. Then we did the grand circuit to the domino slide, helictite wall, back down the slide, through the clown room, down the big slide and back to the boot room. Some were getting a bit tired, as we climbed back out to the main chamber and then up to the entrance. A very enjoyable caving trip, the new comers doing very well.

4 hours

Once out we headed back to the hut for a shower before finishing off the packing and driving home.

Hours

Members: Cheryl Lynch 1, Lionel Baker 5, Mitchell Lynch 1, Iain Lynch 7, Terry Coleborn 1, Kevin Coleborn 7, Louise Coleborn 1, Michael Materazzo 7, Timmy Mann 1, Cindy Mann 7, Rob Mann 1, Michelle Coleborn 7, Howie Davidson 4, Rick Brett 7.

Visitors: Judy, Jamie Lee Brett 1, Kirsty Brett 1, Richard Coleborn 1, Belinda Wise 4, Amy Carp 7, Jo ?? 7, Shaun ?? 7

Iain Lynch

## **Jenolan Trip Report - Mammoth Cave 29 December 1997**

Joe and I set out from Springwood about 7.15 unsure whether we would meet up with the gang from Kempsey. Fortunately they were still at the camp ground when we arrived. To our dismay they had visited Mammoth Cave they previous day and were packing up to depart for further adventures on their tour.

After sharing some stories and catching up again, Joe and I left them to continue packing and proceeded to the guide's office to get the key for Mammoth. The two of us then drove to

Mammoth Flat, trogged up and headed into the cave.

Joe suggested we head for the Naked Lady Chamber (where else) and then on to Ice Pick Lake, as he had not been there before. So, with maps in hand and no real idea where to go, we headed into the wild blue(??) yonder. We headed down the entrance chamber and quickly proceeded to the Horseshoe Cavern and unfamiliar territory. A check of the maps and we proceeded to the railway tunnels. When we reached the end, we realised that



somehow (??) We had missed the turn off. Another check of the map and we on our way back. We turned off and cautiously negotiated the ninety footer, before diving back under it and climbing down to the river passage. We then proceeded along the river passage for a while, with no real idea where we were going. Eventually the uncertainty got too great and we stopped to consult the map. After discussing our chances of survival here in flash flood, I scratched my way through a low arch and up a tube, soon emerging into a cavern. Looking back now I think this may have been Ice Pick Lake. However, at the time I had no idea where we were, so we turned around and headed back to the ninety footer. After climbing out, having some fun on the slides in the railway tunnels, we headed to Horseshoe Cavern and then down the Sand Passage. On the way out we were more able to look around a bit at the formations or lack there of. Down

the Sand Passage we came across a variety of interesting life forms..... Some sort of shoot rising from the mud, followed by leeches that were yellow with orange edges rather than black. Finally a small black beetle.

After dodging the leeches and exploring most of the Sand Passage, we headed out to the entrance chamber and down to the Mammoth Squeeze. Since my last trip to this place, a colony of bats had inhabited the end of the passage off the entrance chamber. We checked out Mammoth Squeeze and quickly decided it was not for us today. So we headed out for the short drive back to the Blue Mountains and some much desired rest.

Total time in cave: 4 hours

Members: Joe Mercieca

Visitor: Iain Lynch (BMSC)

## Narrengullen 10-11th January 1998

**Members Present:** Lionel Baker(T/L)Louise and Terry Coleborn, Iain, Cheryl, Mitchell and Angel Lynch.

**Visitors Present** Gary Coleborn.

**Report:** We set off for Good Hope Tourist Resort Friday afternoon. We were due to meet 2 visitors, Paul and Jenny at the resort. Arriving later than expected we found they had set camp at the pines and headed off to make our own camp. We look out at the lake it was hard to determine how far out the waters edge was (we had been informed that the lake was a bit down). The next morning with much horror we discovered how much a bit was. We had a prime camp spot at the waters edge, but we could not see any water.

The resort owner informed us that there was no water upstream and not much more down stream. Basically we would not be able to get a boat in. As this was our way of getting to the cave. We had some organising to do. After trying several other resorts, with no better luck. We were permitted to cross Narrengullen property. Which was a 7km walk. At this point Cheryl decided not to take the kids and headed off with Gary and Terry fishing. Guess what, no fish either. The party that headed off for the cave was Iain, Louise, Paul, Jenny and Myself. We pushed the cars about 4 1/2 km and walked the last 3 km. On arriving at the cave, several of the party enter the cave for a short distance. After a close look at this entrance we decided the better prospect would be to locate

the front entrance that is supposed to be larger. After an hour tugging, we still had failed to locate the other entrance. As time was limited, it was decided that we would check out the back entrance (TM3). As the property owner wanted us to report back by about 6:30pm. At 4:15pm we decide to head back to the cars and off the property. The evening was spent at camp organising the next trip. When there is enough water to get a boat in to the cave.

*Thinking w had found the upper entrance, we went up, up , up over the hill to serch for the lower entrance as it was there more spectacular part of the cave. After searching for a while, we agreed that Adam, Jenny and myself should get into the cave via the upper entrance. So we went back up, up, up and over the hill to the upper entrance, whilst Lionel and Louise continued to look for the lower entrance. We spent approximately 1 hour in the cave and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, except for a sore hip to Adam after slipping off a rock. The cave was majestic... enormous caverns (up to 50m high), active stream passage wih lakes, duck unders, mud slopes, active formations and in the inner most chamber..... bats, bats and more bats. The entrance chamber was about 50m long by 50m wide and high and was entered through a 4m by 3m opening. From the entrance a mud slope, strewn with rocks leads directly down to the stream. The stream led us to the next chamber, although we had to climb over some large boulders and dodgy looking timber*



planks. The entrance to the chamber is over a boulder under a mouth type roof with sharp teeth baring. This chamber was bigger than the first, higher and longer, with a duck under lake at the end. We climbed a mud slope to get around to the other side of the lake, after going through some low sections and down a bit of a slide. Moving on we climbed in, over and down some massive, dry rimstone pools, which looked more like spa baths. These led to the final chamber which had some impressive formations. Shaws, large stalagmites over a sand bed floor. The end of this chamber was the duck under connection to the lower section. As we were running late for our rendezvous with Lousie and Lionel we decided against (chickened out of) attempting the duck under.

We headed out for the delightful (??) walk back to the cars. Iain Lynch

Sunday morning we packed up camp and headed for home via Hilltop. To locate a sandstone cave that I saw back in 1970. We arrived and found it with no problems. As it is

now a tourist attraction. We set off with lights and candles, we pushed the cave through to the far end where we encountered a small lake. Helping a family of 4 through a short way to have a look. The caves about 70 metres through at a slight s shape. The height is about 2.5 metres. Cheryl sat at the edge of lake and with legs extended could not reach the bottom. We decided not to cross, back in 1970 we were able to walk across. So we exited the cave through the entrance we came through. Then walked around to the exit to have a look and back to the cars and home after a great weekend.

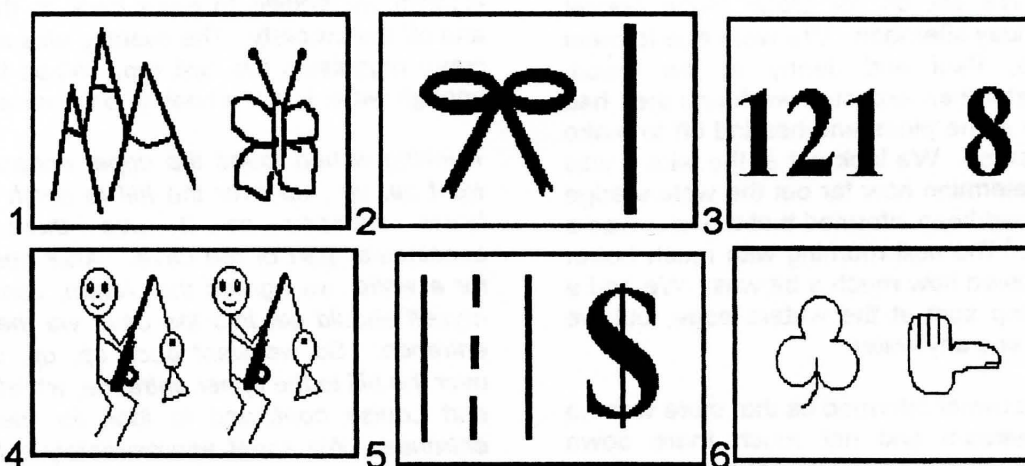
#### Members:

Iain Lynch	2 (caving), 1 (trogging)
Louise Coleborn	1 (caving), 1 (trogging)
Lionel Baker	1 (caving), 1 (trogging)
Terry Coleborn	1 (caving),
Cheryl Lynch	1 (caving),

#### Visitors:

Adam Praten	1 (caving), 1 (trogging)
Jenny Praten	1 (caving), 1 (trogging)
Gary Coleborn	1 (Caving)
Lionel Baker	

## Speleo Puzzles





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# Hold the front cave, chief: this'll blow the lid right off

By  **AISLING IRWIN**  
in London

Archaeologists believe they have discovered the world's oldest news story — a wall-painting from nearly 7,000 years ago recording a volcano eruption in Turkey.

Researchers have matched a twin-peaked volcano in central Turkey, now dormant, with the cave-painting from 5000 BC in a major human settlement 160 kilometres away.

They believe the wall-painting is the oldest reporting of an event, one which must have been etched on the memory of anyone who saw it and survived.

The painting was discovered decades ago during excavations of the large neolithic site of Catalhoyuk, probably the oldest major settlement known. It depicts the plan of an unknown early town, with a towering volcano erupting over it. Most scholars felt the picture must have recorded a natural disaster but the origins of the town and volcano have perplexed them ever since.

Now Turkish, French and British geologists believe they have found the volcano, Hasan Dag, which is 160 kilometres from Catalhoyuk. Below the volcano lies the ancient settlement of Asikli Huyuk, which the researchers believe was a precursor of Catalhoyuk.

Dr Neil Roberts, a geographer at Loughborough University, England, who led the British team, said they had found a large deposit down the side of the volcano which appears to be around the same age as the painting.

The deposit is the detritus from a spectacular type of



eruption known as a "nuee ardente", or glowing cloud.

The ancient people would have watched as a glowing, white-hot cloud of ash and gas emerged and swept down the side of the volcano. A nuee ardente wiped out 28,000 people in 1902 on the Caribbean isle of Martinique.

The geologists are planning to return to the area to date the deposit more accurately.

Professor Celal Sengor, of the Academy of Science in Istanbul, said the ancient eruption would have been fantastic.

"If you were a primitive spectator, these phenomena would have scared the hell out of you," he said. "This makes the painting the oldest news story that definitely points to a stupendous event that happened nearby."

The Telegraph, London

Sydney Morning Herald 26th July 1997

## **Solutions to Speleo Puzzle**

- 1 - Alpine Butterfly
- 2 - Bow line
- 3 - Figure \*
- 4 - Double Fisherman's
- 5 - Tar Buck
- 6 - Clove Hitch

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**NOTE: Any Changes or errors to Neil Fallshaw**



Rob & Cindy.

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*Journal of  
Blue Mountains Speleological Club*

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Vol 27 No 2



# **OOLITE**

## **BLUE MOUNTAINS SPELEOLOGICAL CLUB**

**Post Office Box 37  
Glenbrook NSW 2773**

**VOLUME 27 NO 2 1997**

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                  - Graham Osborne, Treasurer  
Journal Editor - Cheryl Lynch

Everything published in the Oolite is for the interest of anyone who reads it. So if anyone has anything that they think would interest all us other Speleos, then please give it to me for further issues of the Oolite. Thankyou.



# YARRANGABILLY

TRIP REPORT

17TH OCT 97 - 19TH OCT 97

## Yarrangabilly Yahoo!

Present	-----	Kevin Coleborn	14.5 (TL)
		Graham Osborne	10
		Steve Hallum	14.5
		Steve Sawyers	10
		Oliver Davies	10
		Michael Materazzo	9.5
		Howie Davies	4.5

Graham, Steve S, & Oliver arrived at Yarrangabilly on Friday afternoon at around 12.00p.m, they then waited for Kevin and Steve H who arrived at around 2.00pm. A Quick trip to Cottrill cottage, and in no time we were ready to go caving.

Kevin had selected East deep creek (Y5) as the cave for the afternoon's trip. After the walk in, we were at the cave entrance at a approximately 3.00pm. We proceeded down the lower section to the sump, where Kevin made the observation that the sump level was lower than normal, after looking around a bit, we then headed back up to the chamber by the entrance. From here we went up to the rogg section, at this point Steve S (who had been lugging a video camera all through the cave) and a couple of others detrogged and went in to take some video footage and still photo's.

After around five minutes the above mentioned, realized that caving in a pair of jocks only, was not much fun. As the guys dressed again and attempted to warm frozen feet, the tales of excellent formations in pristine condition seem to make it all worthwhile. We were to discover later that the still photos were not very clear, although the video was quite good but still not doing the cave true justice. we then made our way out and exited the cave at just after 8.00pm

It was on the walk back to the cars that we realized our caving had been pretty full on, as tired bodies began to complain. It was also about now that I began to think that Kevin Coleborn must be a blood hound crossed with a homing pigeon, as he managed to walk back to the car through thick undergrowth, with no tracks in the pitch black and did not deviate once. We also noticed that Steve Sawyers was finding the walk out pretty tough, but some encouragement from Steve H kept him going.

Back at Cottrill cottage Steve S walked through the door and crawled straight into his sleeping bag and was not seen again that night. Meanwhile the rest of us had a feed, and discovered that nearly everyone had brought along a bottle of port.

So with every in fine spirits we sat up and waited for Michael, who was expected late that night. When Michael did arrive only Kevin and Graham were still up but only just.

As could be expected it was a late start next day, so Graham, Oliver and Steve S (yes he was alive) did some ladder belay practice off a small bridge, while waiting for Kevin to awake from his death like slumber. Eventually we all got organized and got into some caving gear, today Eagles nest was the cave we had selected and by 2.00pm we were at the Y2 lower entrance. By the way it was 12.00 midday before Kevin rose from his port induced coma. Anyway we proceeded through Eagles nest, once again seeing some of the best example's of various types of formations that I have ever seen.

Today Steve S hadn't bothered with the video camera but we did take some more still photos some of which were not to bad, but once again none of them did the cave any justice. We traveled through the cave until we reached a low tunnel that had a locked gate. This section is called "F\*\*\* its cold"



yes, that really is it's name and we soon found out why, it has an icy wind blowing through the tunnel.

As this was as far as we could go, we turned around and made the return trip back to the Y2 entrance. It proved to be the same as yesterday with a daylight start and coming out in the black at 7.30pm. Once again Kevin got us back to the car in the black with no trouble, except for Steve S dying on the walk out again. In all fairness to Steve the caving was quite energetic and the walk out isn't that easy.

Back at Cottrill cottage we had our tea while Steve crawled in his sleeping bag to die again. As we expected Howie arrived making his standard Saturday night entrance. After being invaded by a bunch of students from Canberra uni, we had a few more ports and a yarn, then crashed for the night.

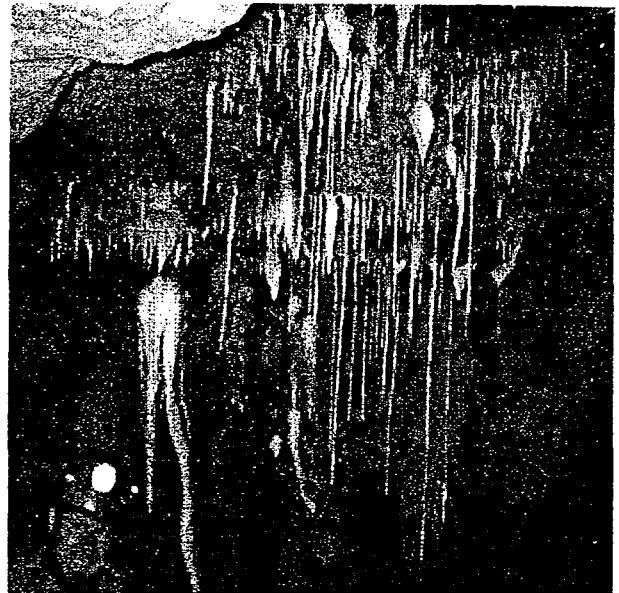
Sunday morning Graham Steve S & Oliver packed up and headed back to Sydney to be home by lunch time. Mean while back at Yarrangabilly the others were going caving, and with an earlier start today. Kevin, Michael, Howie & Steve H proceeded to Castle cave for a look through that, then on to Old inn where they found the remains of a kangaroo down in the bottom section and it was thought that the water course had changed direction in the last five years. A couple of the guys then had a look in the detrogg and from there the party headed out.

After four and a half hours caving it was decided to head for home, so it was about 3.00pm that everyone made there way home.

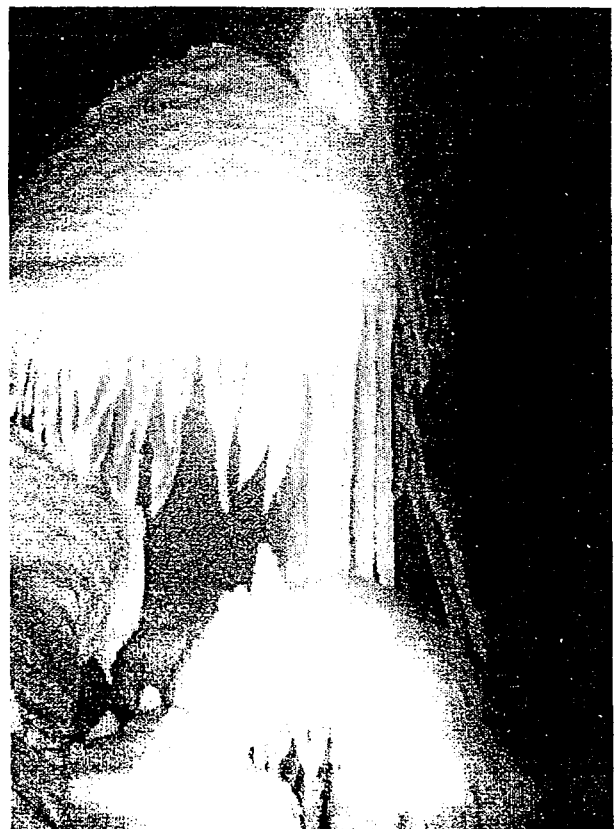
In summary Yarrangabilly proved to be one of the highlights of the year with exceptional caves viewed. It may be a long drive but for those that missed the trip I would recommend they make the effort to go along next time as I know I will be.

By Graham Osborne.

Steve Sawyers in Eagles Nest



Photos Graham Osborne  
East Deep Creek (Y5)



## ***JENOLAN 7 - 8 February 1998***

### **Saturday**

**P**resent---Iain Lynch           7 hrs (T/L)  
                  Cindy Mann       6 hrs  
                  Howie Davidson   6 hrs  
                  David Marsh     7 hrs

**V**isitors---Adam Prater, Jenny Prater,  
Shaun, Mason, Jody, Michael (Mason's  
friend), Brett                   6 hrs

**R**eport---This weekend was for two purposes, the Annual General Meeting and some serious caving action. Nearly everyone had brought a friend so there were plenty of people there. After some heavy lobbying and close votes (??) the government, err committee and office bearers, were elected. Many new faces in these positions.. great to see. We also presented a commemorative plaque to Barry Richards in recognition of his appointment as Club Patron. And congratulations to Kevin and Graham as joint winners of Caver of the Year.

With the politics complete, we all headed up to the cavers cottage to prepare for our underground exploits. About twenty of us were keen to go, so we split into two groups. Kevin leading a trip into Spider and I leading into Mammoth. Graham has written a report for the trip into Spider.

On the Mammoth trip there were eleven of us - Adam and Jenny, Cindy, Shaun, David, Mason, Brett, Jody, Michael??, Howie, and myself. We all headed into the Mammoth Squeeze being that it would take a while for several of us to get through. In the end, only Howie, David and myself decided against this little windy bit. Searching our way through the rock pile and eventually meeting the others at the bottom of the forty footer. From here

we all headed down towards the lower river. I was towards the back with Cindy leading. A short rest break was called for so Howie and I could go back to find David as he stayed at the squeeze a lot longer than us. Once we were all together again, we trundled down to the lower river. The water was

quite cold, a good indication of what to expect in Spider tomorrow. The brazen members of the team climbed and launched themselves across the river, Adam successfully negotiating the two finger hand change and staying out of the water - legend. Yours truly also had a go and using considerable skill and judgement ..... turned back before making a fool of himself. Those that made it over climbed up the mud slope on the other side and explored the continuing passage as far as they thought possible. The rest of us began to head out and soon we were searching the maze of passages back to the rock pile. After a lot of struggling, twisting, squeezing, groaning we all made it back to the main entrance chamber. Here several of us darted off to the horseshoe cavern and the railway tunnels to see a vastly different part of the cave to where we had just been. Some of us enjoyed the mud slides, others explored and found interesting features. Soon we trundled back to the entrance chamber and up out of the cave. Once back to the cars, Mason and his friends having left already, we headed down to Spider to see what was taking the others so long. After a while David and I entered Spider to the main chamber, where we waited for the others to emerge - tired and cold.

We followed them out locking up on the way.



## Sunday

<b>P</b> resent---	David Marsh	7 hrs
	Michelle Coleborn	7 hrs
	Iain Lynch	7 hrs
<b>V</b> isitor----	Adam Prater	7 hrs

**R**eport----Most members and visitors left for home on Saturday evening. Those of us that stayed spent the night mucking about with those damn phone books, and playing pool in caves house. A couple of us also took a cold dip in the hydro.

Sunday morning, Howie, Graham, Glen, Steve all headed for home, leaving Adam, Jenny, David, myself and Michelle, who turned up on Saturday evening with little or no intention of caving. Her prior experience in Spider, made Michelle somewhat reluctant to even consider returning to this cave of variety. After a small bit of persuasion (bribery), about 100 coffees, she Michelle agreed to at least try the squeezes.

So at about 10 am Adam, David, Michelle and myself headed towards Spider. As none of cars had good clearance, we walked from the cottage, cutting down the track to Charlotte's Arch and down the gully beside the wallaby enclosure. This led to a very steep slope of dewy grass, which we trepidly sidled across to the bluff at Glass and surrounding caves. An interesting and fun short cut.

We entered the cave about 11.00 am and were soon at the squeezes. David went first, followed by Adam, then Michelle and finally me. Despite my concerns from yesterday (it looked very small), we all got through with no drama. Similarly through the second squeeze, then along the passage to the third squeeze. David struggle through this first, the Adam with apparent ease. I followed Michelle quite closely to provide the shoulder steps we all could use if required. But Michelle got through quite easily before I struggled up.

We then entered the rock pile and I led through this without error. Once through, we all took a look up the Khan passage, before heading to the river. Keen to get through the duck under, before I chickened out, I quickly changed into my wetsuit and left the others to change also. What a buzz... the water was still quite cold and after acclimatising in the swim and a few seconds to psyche up, I ducked under the water and out the other side. Whilst it was short it was a very sweet experience. I swam across to the bank, and got out for a minute, before heading back through to the others. Keen to try themselves, David and Adam both went through the duck under. After about 10 minutes they came back through. at last. After exploring some further passages.

We all redressed in our dry caving gear and I headed out with Michelle. Once in the rock pile we waited for David and Adam. After a while I went back to find them, all the way back to the river.

No signs, so I headed back and found them near the entrance to the rock pile, after having visited the Khan passage again. We headed back up the rock pile and I found the way out, again without error. Letting the others find the way was more fun as they tested many roads to no where. Back through the rock pile we had a quick rest before pushing through the squeezes. Me leading, Michelle following, David and Adam working as a team behind us.

Soon we were all out into the entrance chamber and then up and out in stages as my light had expired. Just about perfect timing.

A quick trip it seemed, but seven hours all up. Then the long walk back, up the road this time, to the cottage where we packed up and headed home.

Iain Lynch

## Spider Cave 7th February 1998

### Saturday

**P**resent--- Graham Osborne 7 hrs  
Kevin Coleborn 7 hrs  
Glenn Roberts 7 hrs  
Steve Sawyers 7 hrs  
Neil Fallshaw 7hrs

**V**isitor-----Steve Hallum 7 hrs  
Robert 7 hrs  
Sam. 7 hrs

**R**eport----It was a sunny Saturday and AGM was over and done with, so what better thing to do than go caving.

We got ourselves organised and got to the Spider Cave entrance at around 1.00 pm. The party soon negotiated the climb down and arrived at the first squeeze.

On tackling the first squeeze, I soon realised this would be a challenging cave for people with any sort of height. This proved true, as myself and a few others had fun trying to get up the near vertical mud slope squeeze which soon followed.

Our group of eight soon arrived at the rock pile and made our way down to river level. Here we split up for a while, as some explored and others rested. After Kevin and Sam satisfied their lust

for curiosity we all regrouped and make our way to the duck under.

At this point Kevin (who I might add was suffering from the Flu) stripped off and got ready for a dive through and into ..... After one unsuccessful attempt Kevin gave Robert a go, who managed to get through. Kevin soon followed to join Robert on the other side

As they were coming back Robert managed to knock off his construction type helmet and watched it and a brand new Petzl Duo sunk to the bottom. Luckily for Robert though, Sam who was next to swim through was able to spot it and retrieve it for him.


Once the three swimmers were back safely back on the Spider side of the duck under, they quickly changed. As some were starting to feel the cold a quick trip made on the return.

At the squeeze nearest the entrance we bumped into Iain Lynch and Dave marsh who had come to see what we were up to. After a social chat the party headed out and re-locked the gate at around 7:45 pm

All in all a great afternoon caving had by all.

Graham Osborne


#### ● Light ladder

A new style of ladder designed for caving, canyoning and rescue applications and manufactured by Australian enterprise *Touchstone Climbing Equipment* promises to lighten the load of any haul bag. Made from sewn tape rather than wire (but still with threaded metal rungs), the tape ladder is claimed to weigh just 5.5 kilograms, 15 metre length) and be less prone to kinking or other damage than conventional ladders. Furthermore, the 25 millimetre diameter, triple-stitched tape should make the ladder easier to repair and rig in many situations. A 15 metre length costs about \$170. For more information, contact the manufacturer on 019 401 711. 

Extracts from  
Wild Magazine - Winter 1997

#### **OVERSEAS**

##### ● Vertigo inducing

The cave containing the world's longest pitch—in the Kanin Massif in Slovenia (see *Wild Information*, *Wild* no 64)—has been named Vrtiglavca—Vertigo. The shaft was previously explored in the 1960s but its true depth was disguised by a plug of snow at about 100 metres. The shaft has now been surveyed as 634 metres deep but as the first 110 metres of the descent are against a curving wall the extent of the pitch's free hang is 513 metres—still significantly longer than the previous titleholder. A nearby, 750 metre deep cave with an entrance pitch of 501 metres—Brezno Pod Velbom—was subsequently found blocked with snow at 370 metres. 

SB



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## *Bungonia 18/19th April 1998*

**P**resent--- Iain Lynch            5 hrs  
              Graham Osborne   3 hrs  
              Kevin Coleborn     3 hrs  
              Glenn Roberts       5 hrs  
              Howie Davidson     5 hrs  
              Steve Sawyers       3 hrs  
              Oliver Davis         3 hrs  
              Lincoln Fowler      2 hrs

**V**isitor----- James Fowler    2 hrs

**R**eport-----Glenn, Howie, Lincoln, James and myself ran a quick trip into B4-5, whilst the others prepared for Odyssey. We enter through B5 carefully climbing up through the slot to the sloping section which lead to the hairy traverse. I let the others lead through this part which provided some interesting caving, especially for Lincoln, who began climbing down into the 40 footer. Glen found the way on and we all crawled through to the hairy traverse.

Glen and Howie went down followed by James on belay, who did very well to overcome his fear. Then Lincoln and I followed down to the bottom. Lincoln then pushed a tight squeeze back towards the 30 footer, eventually turning around when it became to tight. He then followed us through the rift to Kings Cross. We all explored the various passages then I pushed up towards the B4 entrances. We had been in the cave for about an hour, so we decided to head back. It was a quick trip out, via the same route we came in. 2 Hours caving.

I then met the others and went into Odyssey. See Graham Osborne's Odyssey Cave "To the sump of Odyssey.

Saturday night Lincoln and James went home, whilst the others spent the night in the kitchen chatting before heading back to the camp site and to bed.

Sunday morning Kevin, Howie, Glenn, Graham, Steve and myself entered Drum Cave, I rigged the pitch and rebelay, abseiling down the first pitch. Once down the bottom we crawled through towards the second pitch, discovering foul air in the crawl. Wasn't to bad so we pushed on down the second pitch and walk to the top of the third pitch. Glenn headed back to the second pitch to prepare to prussik back up. Kevin and I rigged and descended the third pitch and did a quick trip down to the sump. We then prussiked back up and met Glenn at the bottom of the second pitch. Kevin Clipped on and ascended, followed by Glenn and then myself. We then crawled back the first pitch, glad to back in fresh air. Kevin then ascended the 50 metres to the top, again followed by Glenn and finally myself. A good fast trip to the sump and back. 3 hours Caving.

We all headed back to the camp site and packed up and headed home. A successful SRT weekend caving with enough horizontal thrown in for good measure.

Iain Lynch





# ODYSSEY CAVE

TRIP REPORT BY GRAHAM OSBORNE

SATURDAY 18TH OF APRIL 1998

## To the sump of Odyssey

Trip leader--- Kevin Coleborn  
Members--- Graham Osborne  
              --- Steve Sawyers  
              --- Oliver Davies  
              --- Iain Lynch  
Seven hours caving by all.

After a good trip to Bungonia we were at the camping ground by 8.15am. It was here that we were to meet with the other B.M.S.C. members. Once we were organized we made our way to the rangers office and picked up the key to Odyssey. From there it was off to do some caving. As this was a training trip for Tassie, some serious vertical caving was to be the order of the day, as well as a chance for myself to acquire some more skills and experience to aid me in my pursuit of trip leader status. So after distributing the required ropes amongst the party we made our way to the cave entrance. At 10.30am we unlocked the gate (which we found to be in good condition) and proceeded into the cave.

### To the first pitch

After entering the cave you are straight into the rockpile which we had been warned about, as it was known to be unstable, so it was five careful cavers who began the descent. Which entails down climbs and some squeezes through the rockpile. As Iain passed by the old second gate he commented on a loose boulder and another was found just above confusion corner, these were treated with respect and within no time we arrived at confusion corner.

From here a climb down and a chance to walk for a while led us to the squeeze that heads the first pitch. As the party donned their harnesses Kevin rigged the first belay for the 30ft pitch.

I then began the abseil and rigged the rebelay to give the rope a free hang down the pitch. Halfway down the pitch I noticed that the rope was approximately 15ft too short, great! after all, this was a training exercise. In no

time Kevin lowered another rope, I changed over and was soon at the bottom of the pitch.

After me the rest of the party soon followed with one and all doing well on the first rebelay for the day. From here the second pitch was soon encountered, myself and Oliver rigged the first belay and then I rigged the rebelay and abseiled down the 70ft pitch. This proved to be an impressive pitch as one passes down a roomy shaft and after 30ft or so you drop through a hole shaped like a funnel to pass some golden flowstone which is quite pristine. After Kevin made a few adjustments to the rigging, Steve, Oliver and Iain soon followed down the pitch and from there it was off to the 120ft shale band pitch.

### Where is the CO<sub>2</sub> ?

At this stage we were all beginning to think our good run with the foul air, or I should say the lack of, would come to an end. As we had been told and read, it is at this location in the cave where foul air is normally encountered. Kevin rigged the rope for the pitch, while I ensured my ascenders were close at hand in case of foul air. So it was with some unease that I began a slow descent down the 120 ft pitch stopping every few metres to have a good sniff of the air. Our luck was still with us and on reaching the bottom of the pitch I found the air to be okay and called "off rope". From here, some 20ft on leads to the top of the last pitch.

Kevin and I rigged the pitch and with my paranoia of foul air still with me I descended into the base of Knockers cavern. At this point I thought I may have detected a trace of CO<sub>2</sub>, so I asked Kevin for his more experienced opinion, who assured me we had no problems. Not doubting Kevin, but more for interest sake I struck a match and watched it burn quite well. While waiting for the rest of the group to abseil down and join us, Kevin observed two thermometers placed on and in a mud bank on your right as you face Knockers cavern. So Kevin then carefully read the temperatures, which showed the thermometer measuring air temperature read



17.5degrees, and the other which was measuring soil temperature was noted to read 18degrees. By this time the rest of the group had arrived, so it was on and into Knockers cavern, we filed carefully around the mud banks and silt formations to reach the sump.

Here we had a rest and decided to collect a water sample from the sump, as on our permit we had been requested to do so. After a ten minute break we decided to begin our return trip to the surface. So with Steve and Oliver leading the prussiks followed by Iain, Kevin and myself stayed at the rear and derigged as we came up. Once again every one did well with their S.R.T. skills and in no time we were at the head of the first pitch, where Oliver and Steve assisted in derigging the pitch.

From here a bit of gear was evenly distributed among the caving packs and we began the last leg of our journey up and through the rockpile.

Iain was now leading the way out and made good time to the cave entrance with the rest of the party right behind him.

On exiting the cave we locked the gate and noted the time to be 5.30pm, seven hours caving and a really satisfying trip for all of us, as we had not really expected to reach the sump.

From here we made our way back to the cars and then on to the rangers office to hand in the key and sign off in the register.

In summary I would like to thank B.R.A.G. (Bungonia recreational action group) and the Senior Ranger of Bungonia State Recreation Area for granting B.M.S.C. access into Odyssey cave, as I know this is not done lightly. It was rewarding to see a cave at Bungonia still in pristine condition and a good chance to hone our vertical caving skills.

I thought Kevin also did a great job in showing us techniques and simple things, like better ways to arrange a prussik system that you can only learn by experience.

Graham Osborne.



Graham and Steve descending.



## ***Bungonia 9th May 1998***

**P**resent---Iain Lynch                      6 hrs  
                  Cindy Mann                      6 hrs  
                  Michael Materazzo              6 hrs  
                  Adam Prater                      6 hrs

**V**isitor-----Gavin Frazer              4 hrs

**R**eport---Our rendezvous point was the Guides office. When all were accounted for we signed in and headed over to do Blowfly B51 and B16. The entrance had changed remarkably, the steep mud slope replaced with a timber stair and the rock pile entrance stabilised with a massive concrete pad, retaining wall and steel ladder.

Failing to see the concrete bollard until derigging, I instructed Michael to rig the abseil of the ladder. Whilst he and Cindy were doing this, Adam, Gavin and I trundled over to rig the ladder pitches in B16 entrance. Once finished we rejoined Cindy and Michael and after checking the rigging we enter the cave. Cindy leading off, followed by Michael whose thoroughly enjoyed the tight entrance. Gavin then abseiled down followed by Adam and finally Myself.

Once at the bottom we explored some of the passages, Cindy finding the way on. We all followed her up to the next chamber, just below the dragons teeth. Adam, Cindy and Michael explored the entrance to the adytum, whilst Gavin and I squeezed up through the dragons teeth. When the others followed we proceeded through the spokeshave squeeze stopping in the next chamber.

We waited for the others, listening to them trying to work out the way through the spoke shave squeeze. After about ten minutes I clambered back towards the others who had tried nearly every way, except the right way.

Adam and Jenny pushed through the tightest part followed by Michael, who went the way I had chosen - the biggest way.

Once we were all back together in the next chamber, we crawled through to the base of the ladder pitches. Soon we had ascended the 1st pitch, derigging before completing the top pitch and exiting the cave. We all walked back to B51 to derig. All tidied up we walked back to the cars. Gavin left for home after successfully completing his first caving trip.

**Time Caving: 4 hours**

Cindy, Adam, Michael and myself then headed into Grille, aiming for the sump. I led down the ladders eventually recognising the Crystal Palace, remotely similar to the photograph in the book.

We all climbed up to the back of this chamber, where we rested, talking about politics, saving the world and that sort of thing. The conversation being too deep for me, I began to nod off, so we decided to head on out. I let the others lead and Adam found the easy way back to the horizontal ladder. Then Michael took over and easily led the way out of the cave, followed by Cindy. Adam and I took a little detour and met Michael and Cindy outside, after we exited via B44.

**Time Caving: 2 hours**

We all walked back to the cars for the trip home, stopping at the BP diner to hassle a slightly disgruntled employee, who loved her job dusting, or was that destroying, the internal landscaping.

**Iain Lynch**



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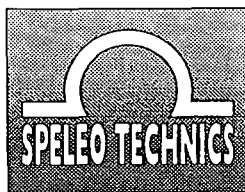


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Err.....  
..On Belay?!

Graham '98



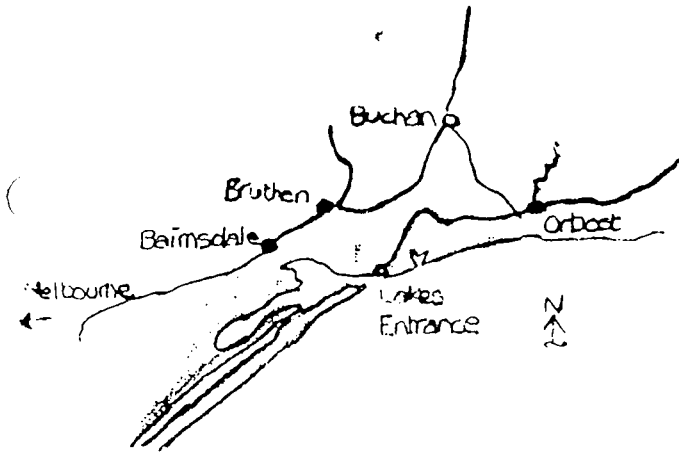
19th Annual Combined Emergency Services Seminar

**RESCUE FROM HADES CAVE**

**John and Kim Van Dyk, Buchan SES**

Buchan is located in East Gippsland, Victoria, around 400 kilometres east of Melbourne, approximately 56 kilometres from Lakes Entrance and 75 kilometres from Bairnsdale, our closest major towns.

The Buchan area was first settled by Europeans around 1840 (there is some confusion about the original dates) and the existence of many of the more obvious caves was certainly known by the early pioneers.



The first documentation and surveying of the caves did not occur until 1899 when government geologists and surveyors began to document and report on the limestone and caves in the area.

The name Buchan originated from the local aboriginal name 'Buccan' translating to mean 'stack of rocks with holes in them'.

The early pioneers often entered the caves, using candles and lanterns for light. Many left dated signatures in the caves, still evident today, along with impressions from hobnail boots.

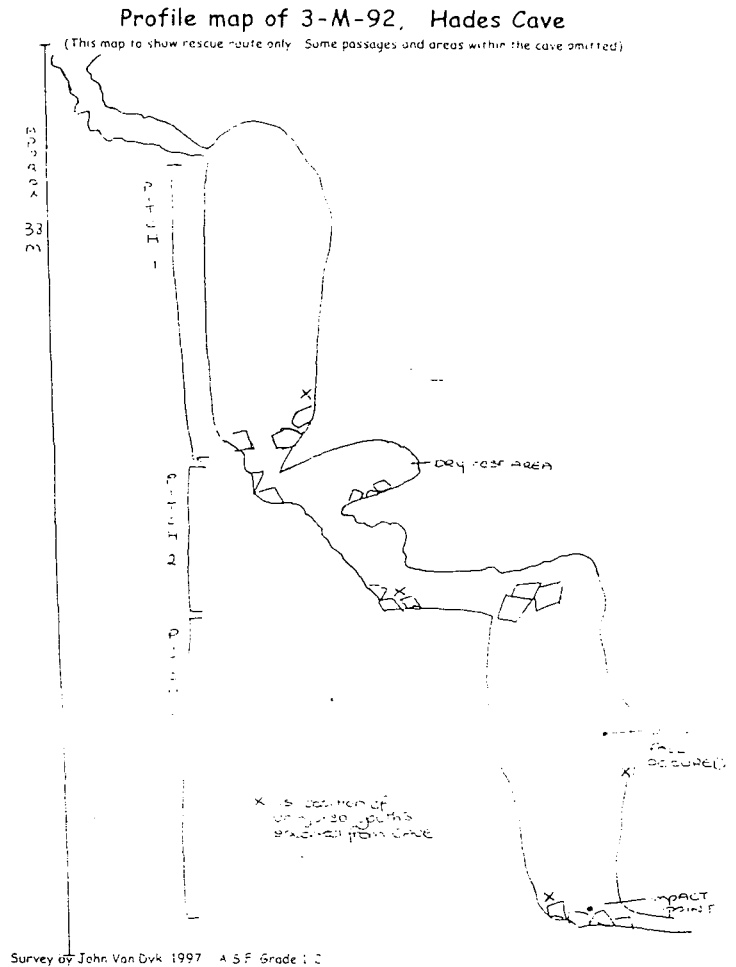
‘With the primitive equipment it is surprising how far into some of the caves these explorers ventured. One example being the 45 meter pitch (vertical drop) in m-14, Baby Berger cave which was first bottomed in 1908, a courageous (or stupid, depending on viewpoint) effort for the time.

In March 1907, Frank Moon, a local Buchan cave explorer discovered the Fairy cave and with this discovery came the full-scale commercialism of the caves in the area which continues to this day. Buchan is famous for its limestone caves with around 80,000 people visiting the show caves per year.

There are more than eight hundred caves within the East Gippsland area. Sections within three of the caves have been fully developed for tourism with electric lighting and well-defined pathways. Five other caves have been semi-developed for tourism with rough pathways and hand railing only where needed. The remaining caves are all classified as 'wild' caves.

Each cave is different. Although we have some horizontally developed caves the majority are predominantly vertically developed with some horizontal development at different levels.

The air temperature in the caves varies from 17°C down



to 14°C depending on the cave location, and all have high (90 percent plus) humidity.

Air temperature within the caves remains constant throughout the year with generally only small variations of less than one degree between the summer and winter months.

The water temperature in active streamways varies dependent upon the particular cave but is generally around 11°C.

Carbon dioxide build up (generally referred to as foul air) in lower sections is common in many of our caves and other gas build ups (including Methane and Marsh gas) have been known to occur.

Caves that do not contain foul air generally have a reasonable air flow through them increasing the risk of hypothermia to wet cavers by adding a high wind-chill factor to the already low temperature.

Most of the caves contain areas of rockfall, some stable but most unstable to varying degrees. Tight horizontal and vertical squeezes are common.

Each cave in Australia is allocated an identifying code (letter prefix then number). In Victoria a small metal disc is generally attached into the rock near the cave entrance. Not

all caves are given a name; indeed, the majority of caves are known only by their identification code. Hades cave is coded as 3-M-92. The 3 indicates it as a Victorian cave, the M indicating it is located in the Murrindal area.

As it is assumed that most cavers will know what state they are in, the discs have only location prefix and number attached.

In the 1970s, a slow but steady increase in caver numbers was noted in the Buchan area. In the 1980s this increase accelerated and in the 1990s numbers boomed.

In 1989 there was only one commercial tour operator offering wild caving as an activity. Today there are more than five licensed and umpteen unlicensed tour operators offering wild caving.

The numbers of individual people and groups caving has escalated in proportion to the tour operators. It is not uncommon to see more than one hundred cavers on a single weekend heading underground.

Cavers today are pushing further and harder than ever before in their quest for discovery and adventure. Almost impossible squeezes, known foul air passages, moving rockfalls and roof-sniffs are now routinely being entered, often by novices.

'Chemical persuasion' (use of explosives) is often used to gain entry into possible new caves and new areas within known caves.

It is all a great adventure for the fit but should an accident occur it is a technical, physical and emotional nightmare for rescuers.

Access to caves in the Buchan area is not difficult. There is limited access to wild caves within the main show caves reserve but outer lying cave reserves have to access restrictions. Any person is able to enter caves on these reserves.

It is a common sight in the show caves reserve to see children and adults wandering around with torch in hand looking for a cave to explore. Local store keepers at the caves reserve are regularly asked for information about cave locations by visitors to the area.

Local children on occasion use some the horizontal caves as 'cubby houses' or 'boozing' areas, depending on their age group.

Access to caves on private land is dependent on the particular land holder. Some permit access but many do not for fear of potential liability if a problem occurs.

Even through a landholder may not permit caving access is not uncommon for cavers to sneak onto property and go caving.

There have been several caving incidents and accidents over past years but these have been minor in nature (sprained ankles predominating) and easily dealt with by others in the group without any need for external assistance.

It is interesting to note that of the *known* accidents, the majority occurred in a simple, walk through cave.

In April 1992 the first major cave accident in the area occurred. A caver stepped backwards off a small ledge falling approximately 2½ metres to the bottom of the seventeen meter entrance pitch in a cave known as M-1. The fall caused one chipped vertebrae, a chipped scapular, one cracked rib and perforation of both lungs.

Although his injuries were very serious the rescue was technically a relatively simple one, being able to view the casualty from the surface, and with plenty of space to work in. The underground rescue work was performed by members of the injured cavers group, Ambulance Officers, Conservation and Environment staff and VICSES Buchan unit members.

The injured caver was flown by Helimed 1 to the Sale

hospital and made a good recovery. He continues to cave on a regular basis.

When an accident occurs in a cave a time bomb is triggered. The hostile environment of the cave initiates a rapid deterioration in the physical and mental condition of the accident victim. Speed is essential to arrest the onset of hypothermia.

Depending on the location of the cave, and the location within the cave, it may take several hours or longer for a member of the group just to get to the surface and raise the alarm.

The Hades Cave accident occurred at approximately 16:30 hours. It took around two and a half hours before the police were contacted and notified of the accident, another thirty minutes for the first members of the team to reach the surface of the site and a further forty minutes for the first rescuer to reach the accident site.

Since its inception in 1967, members of the Victorian Speleological Association (VSA), a caving group, undertook to assist in any cave rescue call out. Unfortunately most members were based in Melbourne, a five plus hour drive to Buchan.

The need for a local cave rescue team, particularly for first response was obvious.

As cavers and members of the Buchan VICSES Unit, we were approached by the local Police Officer in early 1994 and asked about the possibility of forming a first response cave rescue team as a role of our Buchan VICSES unit.

He recognized that to wait for assistance from Melbourne to arrive may well be too late.

He also recognized that to allow untrained people into a cave to start first aid and rescue was extremely dangerous.

Buchan and Bruthen VICSES units together were able to form the numbers needed for a viable first response cave rescue team.

Although the majority of team members have current level two certification or higher, we were fortunate to have Bruce Wilson, a caver, climber, MICA (Mobile Intensive Care) ambulance officer and member of the Bruthen VICSES train with us.

Training was initially intense, with rope work training and practice or lectures weekly and a full day spent underground each fortnight.

After the first six months, training was scaled down to a sustainable level, with shed rope work or lectures monthly and a caving day every five weeks. A major cave rescue scenario is held annually with invitations to other agencies involved in cave rescue to join with us.

The training was designed initially to create competent, safe and confident cavers, aware of their personal limitations. Because of the large number of caves in the area it is not possible to become familiar with them all so members were taught versatility.

A small finger thickness sized stalagmite may well be a safe anchor where a much larger sized one may be unsafe. Members need to gain a basic understanding of cave and speleothem (secondary deposits of calcium carbonate) development in order to be safe.

Cavers use two main techniques to explore vertical caves, electron ladder with self or assisted belay line or single rope technique. Members of the cave rescue team need to become proficient in both systems. Once this was achieved and the team were competent cavers we began to focus on cave rescue techniques and hauling systems.

Members have also had the opportunity to train in more 'specialized' areas such as working in areas with foul air, negotiating roof sniffs, and prolonged exposure to full wet conditions.

The focus at all times during training has been on safety,



conservation and the building of a team where every member could be both a leader and a follower depending on the situation. Age, gender or other perceived disabilities have no place in the team. Each member is important for what they can do and not what they cannot.

Most rescue situations call for specialist skills and this is particularly true of cave rescue.

Eyre and Franklin in their book 'Race Against Time' (a history of the British Cave Rescue Team) say: "The skills of a good cave rescuer are hard to define: A good caver is not necessarily a good cave rescuer but a good cave rescuer *must* be a good caver".

The cave environment is a hostile one, and it is often a difficult enough task just to get to the casualty on a stretcher through such inhospitable conditions.

Depending on the particular cave, factors making cave rescue difficult in the area include:

- A complete absence of natural light
- Difficulty with orientation
- Low temperature and high humidity
- Flooding, slow and flash often weeks after rainfall has last occurred
- Vertical pitches and steep slopes
- Loose rocks and debris at pitch heads
- Difficulty in rigging with lack of, or inappropriately positioned, natural anchor points
- Horizontal and vertical squeezes
- Lack of space, limiting general manoeuvring options and equipment choices
- Mud and water of varying depths
- Slippery hand and foot holds
- Foul air; naturally occurring and man-introduced
- Jagged, sharp walls, floors and projections
- Areas with varying degrees of instability
- Animal carcasses in varying states of decomposition
- Faecal contamination, both human (from septic systems) and animal
- Glass, wire, metals, chemical containers and other rubbish thrown into entrances
- Lack of communication from underground locations to the surface
- Combinations of any or all of the above listed hazards.

On the surface, depending on the cave and the location problems can include:

- Lack of, or poor communication to and from the site
- Inability to get vehicles close to the cave entrance
- Inability to set up a surface base area close to the cave entrance
- Distance from township and major centres when additional equipment or personnel are needed quickly.

The rescue of Jason Lau and four other members of the caving group from Hades cave had many of the factors listed above.

Tight squeezes over vertical drops, limited rigging options, jagged rock, lack of space, waterfalls and a risk of flooding (de-rigging the cave two days later showed the area where Jason landed filled with water to a level three metres above the floor). The only redeeming feature of the flowing water was it removed the foul air (carbon dioxide) that is normally present in this area of the cave.

Rigging was difficult and communication in the cave effective but draining on those having to deliver the messages. Communication from the cave entrance to the outside world was possible but with a long walk from the cave entrance to gain radio communication.

On the 5th of December, 1995 the 'Idle Tendencies' group (a sub-group of Scripture Union in Schools) decided to go caving at Buchan. The group leader had limited caving experience and a few of the group had been in a cave once

or twice before but the majority of youths had no caving or rope work experience at all.

The large group (20-plus people) went to the Potholes Reserve 8.6 kilometres north of Buchan and split into four smaller groups, each group entering a different cave in the reserve to explore.

In Hades cave, Jason Lau was attempting to free climb to the bottom of the cave. A slab of seemingly solid bedrock gave way and he fell ten metres (later measured) landing head-first onto the rocky floor, the force of impact smashing the construction-style helmet he was fortunately wearing.

To further add to his injuries the bedrock slab that caused the fall landed on him embedding large chunks of limestone into his facial skin. The fall occurred at approximately 16:30 hours.

It was fortunate that one of the youths (the nominal leader of the Hades group) was able to prussik up and get out of the cave and raise the alarm. He flagged a passing vehicle and asked them to phone for someone for help.

No other group of the Hades group had any knowledge of ascending rope. Each had been taught to abseil (descend a single rope) on the way down and they were all to be taught how to prussik (ascend a single rope) in the cave on the return journey.

Each of the youths was exploring a different section of the cave when the accident occurred.

One member of the group managed to free-climb down to Jason but found himself in the position where he was unable to safely move up or down. The third youth was at the bottom of the second pitch while the fourth was at the bottom of the first pitch.

The Buchan VICSES Unit were notified of the accident via a phone call from Police D-24 just before 19:00 hours.

Little information was known except an accident had occurred on Wyatts reserve and a large group was involved.

Buchan had no resident Police Officer at the time and Police from Lakes Entrance were already en route to the site.

D-24 notified Bruthen VICSES requesting all cave rescue team members to go straight to the site and the VSA and Police Search and Rescue squad to be on standby. Arrangements were made to get the Buchan surface team members straight to the site.

The first underground rescuers arrived at the Potholes-Wyatts Reserve area less than twenty minutes from the phone call with Police Officers from Lakes Entrance right behind them.

We were informed that the accident had occurred in Hades cave. Hades is located in the Potholes Reserve but being directly opposite Wyatts Reserve this caused no problems.

While we were changing into caving gear the leader of the group informed us that Jason had fallen approximately 5 to 7 metres near the bottom of the cave but had apparently stood up and was not considered to be in a serious condition.

We were also informed that the cave had been rigged for single rope technique so we geared up accordingly and walked to the cave entrance.

A simple assist out of the cave seemed the likely outcome.

The weather started to become nasty, a light but constant drizzle began.

The in place rigging at the cave entrance was, to say the absolute least, suicidal. The one and only anchor used could be easily lifted and two severe sharp points were evident without even entering the cave.

The entrance would have to be re-rigged and quite possibly the rest of the rigging in place in the cave replaced, which meant carrying large and heavy rope, ladder and rigging bags down into the cave.

Unfortunately Hades was a cave that we had only limited knowledge of, having not entered it prior to the rescue.

We could only assume it would be a typical 'Potholes style' cave and be prepared for tight, nasty areas, multiple drops of between three and four metres depth and some horizontal development.

One of the few things we did know about the cave at the time was it often had foul air concentrations (Co2) in some of the lower sections.

The name given to the cave, Hades, was not a good sign. Cavers generally tend to give descriptive names to caves.

The only good thing about the rain throughout the long night and following morning was, that by running into the cave, it was reducing the concentration of any foul air in the area.

The downside of this was that caves with foul air generally tend to flood quite rapidly in heavy rain conditions.

The first two rescuers entered the cave re-rigging as they went.

On the surface we could only wait for word from below as to the extent of the situation.

The Idle Tendencies group leader was asked to take the other members of the group away from the site and back to their camp as soon as possible after they exited the other caves.

Word from underground arrived on the surface. The situation was very serious. Bruce, our underground ambulance officer was called for, along with the Police Search and Rescue Squad, the VSA, the paraguard and extra blankets, and the most experienced first aider into the cave as soon as possible.

The message bearer then took the paraguard stretcher and larger first response pack containing blankets and other equipment to treat hypothermia back down to Jason. He guestimated when questioned that we would not have Jason out before daylight.

Underground, the first rescuers had descended the first pitch to find one cold, scared youth. He was reassured that help for him would soon be coming and to wait where he was for the time being. Similar reassurances were given to the second youth found at the bottom of the second pitch.

The third youth located was in a dangerous position. An abseil line was rigged and one rescuer abseiled down to his level then pendulumed across to him.

The rescuer's cow tail (spare safety line attached to rescuer's sit harness) was attached to the youth's sit harness and he was assisted up to a safe position and reassured.

The rescuer then continued the abseil down to Jason, quickly assessed the situation, gave instructions to the second rescuer at the top of the pitch then began first aid treatment.

Other members of the cave rescue team started to arrive on the site and began the task of getting needed equipment and rescuer numbers into the cave. A top assisted belay line was rigged on the surface (prior to this rescuers used a self belaying system) for the first pitch and a rescuer positioned in a minute alcove just before the pitch head to assist the descending rescuers and to act as a first communication point. At this early stage it was possible to communicate from this position to the surface with the youth at the bottom of the pitch. With the belayer on the surface blind to the abseiler, communication at this point in the cave was essentially for safety reasons.

The surface team set up lighting and shelter from the now quite heavy rain. The decision was made to transfer Jason to the stretcher.

When the first VICSES rescuers arrived Jason was slipping in and out of consciousness and obviously suffering hypothermia. His legs were splayed at odd angles and when conscious he was unable to feel his legs when pressure was applied to them.

Woollen and space blankets were placed over Jason along with chemical heat pads. His head was bandaged to cover dressed wounds and to assist with body heat retention.

Even with these measures Jason's condition was not improving and he appeared to be deteriorating rapidly. It was getting more and difficult to locate a pulse and he was no longer lucid during his conscious periods.

The rain on the surface was now starting to show in the cave and there was a very real fear that this area would flood.

For these reasons, even though spinal injuries were suspected, Jason was transferred (very carefully) into the stretcher.

Having been removed from the cold rock floor Jason slowly but surely began to improve in condition.

On the surface we now knew the rescue would be long and require more underground rescuers and equipment that we had.

The Police on site notified the Police Search and Rescue Squad, the VSA, the Ambulance Service and Bruce Wilson, our underground ambulance officer, of the situation as soon as the message from underground reached the surface.

Police Search and Rescue first tried to arrange to fly to the site by helicopter, then by fixed-wing aircraft but the appalling weather conditions across the state meant air travel was not possible and they had to drive all the way.

The Buchan Welfare Group were called to provide food and fluids for what we knew would be a long night. Sustenance arrived for surface and underground rescuers quickly and continued to arrive every hour throughout the rescue.

It was now dark, cold and the drizzle was now a constant rain.

At 22:35 the VICSES cave rescue team had three of the four uninjured youths safely out of the cave.

At 22:37 the leader of the youth group informed the rescue team that the group of six youths caving in M-14, Baby Berger cave, had not yet exited and were now well overdue. The group were expected to exit around 19:00 hours.

Baby Berger is a vertical cave, the first section is a large, stable rockfall with gaps in the rocks leading down to a forty-five metre pitch.

The first rescuer into the cave had exited for a much needed first rest. As soon as the underground ambulance officer arrived he would need to re-enter and start rigging of the haul systems.

Unfortunately, the rest was not to be. He was sent to investigate what was happening in Baby Berger. The youths were found close to the exit, the wet conditions had made the entrance area of the cave slippery and dangerous. They were escorted from the cave and exited as Bruce arrived at Hades. There was no rest, but a quick gulp of coffee and back into the cave.

The team had now safely assisted all the uninjured youths out of the cave. All were cold and scared. The rescuers' first priority was to care for Jason but, when time allowed, rescuers slowly but safely began to move each to the surface.

Each youth had a sit harness and top assisted belay line attached to them and each, with lots of encouragement and a very tight belay, made their way up each of the pitches. Ambulance Officers on the surface cared for each youth as they exited.

Jason lay at the bottom of a 15 meter pitch. When Bruce arrived near Jason he started medical treatment. The hauling system from the third pitch (from the bottom) was completed and the hauling system for the second almost complete when Bruce informed the cave rescue team that Jason was ready to be lifted when we were.

The rigging was technically difficult. There were few anchor points, little room to work in and a re-direct had to be installed.



A separate line needed to be rigged to enable one of the rescuers to position themselves to be able to assist to manoeuvre the stretcher through the tight sections and to unclip the re-directs.

The limited space at the top of the pitch meant only two people could get into a position to be able to haul on the line and then in cramped, awkward conditions. It was technically difficult and physically exhausting work.

Jason reached the top of the pitch having dropped into unconsciousness during the lift and was manoeuvred into the narrow lift above.

Although this section of the cave was very short it was also the most physically difficult. The tightness of the rift meant only two people could be in contact with the stretcher. The stretcher was belayed from above during the traverse of this area but all lifting and manoeuvring of the stretcher was done by two rescuers in cramped and difficult conditions. For the majority of this distance Jason's nose was less than two centimetres from the jagged rock wall. To get through, in one section, the stretcher needed to be rotated around and Jason was, at one point upside down.

The rain on the surface was increasing and underground rescuers began to notice the water now flowing in the cave.

On the surface the rain continued to increase in intensity. Hades cave entrance is located at the bottom of a large steep depression in the ground, a doline. The doline acted as a giant funnel directing its large catchment of rainwater straight into the cave entrance.

Trenches were dug around the cave entrance to divert the bulk of the water flowing down the doline into a dug pit that was being pumped.

A second pump was called for when the first pump was unable to keep up with the water flow in. Later, as the rain increased, sandbags were called for and the area around the entrance built up. The pit was enlarged to become a small dam and, at times, even with two pumps in operation, the water spilled over the bag walls.

The water was pumped into a nearby doline where it dropped into a cave known to drop almost straight down to large chambers all at a deeper level than Jason's accident site. This was important. The obvious place to pump the water to, down hill of Hades, contains a small cave that water connects to Hades cave near the top of the second pitch. Local knowledge of the caves is important for reasons like this one. Had the water been pumped into this area of the reserve we would have sent it straight into Hades, albeit by a different route.

Although we were able to minimize the water flow into the

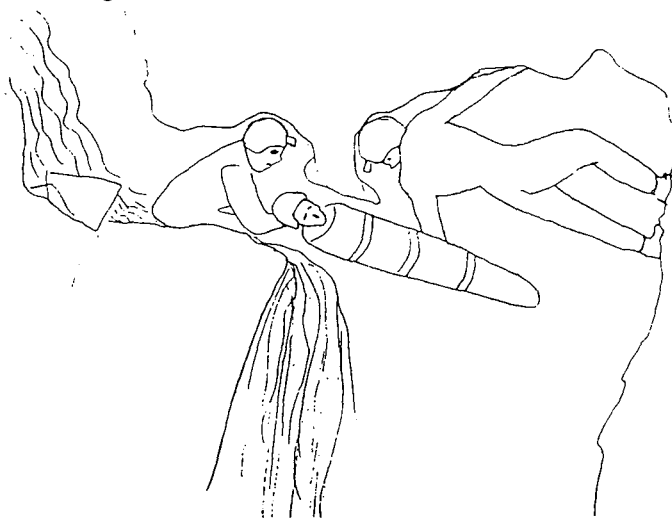


FIG 1

Diagram to show positioning of cave rescuer above pitch 1

cave via the entrance doline, we were unable to halt the water entering via surface seepage and minute and larger cracks within the fractured limestone.

The Police Search and Rescue Squad arrived around 02:15 (not recorded in the log and purely a guess). After briefing them on what had occurred and what the team had done to date, they elected to allow the rescue team to continue underground while they undertook roles on the surface.

The underground rescuers had now been working underground in appalling conditions for many hours. All needed to be rested but until more underground assistance arrived there was no option but to continue. The welfare team had been supplying regular hot food and drink packs for all rescuers on site. Underground rescuers exiting to collect extra equipment needed in the rescue operation were also given food and drink packs to deliver down to the other near exhausted rescuers.

The VSA team arrived at 03:00 and we were shocked to find that there had been a major communication breakdown somewhere. A team of only four arrived and, of these, one was in a surface only role.

We had assumed that when the VSA arrived they would be able to continue with the rescue allowing all our team to exit and rest. Unfortunately this was not to be.

When Jason had reached a point just below the first pitch the water flows in the cave was at its worst. He was manoeuvred into a small, relatively dry alcove.

The first pitch was a raging waterfall, with communication extremely dangerous but not impossible. Laddering up or down meant holding your breath and climbing a few rungs then pushing out from the wall to take a breath. Only the most urgent of messages were relayed.

The VSA members entered the cave, assessed the situation and discussed the options to get Jason through the squeeze. They then exited the cave to rewarm while the surface hauling system was rigged.

Police Search and Rescue Squad members rigged the final hauling system on the surface. The VICSES surface team used a chain saw to fall a tree of suitable size to use as a redirection guide across the entrance. A large sized, heavy duty plastic container lid improvised as a form of edge roller and redirect over the log. A 3:1 zed hauling system was used. The VSA members re-entered the cave and an edge roller was positioned at the lip of the squeeze. Jason was transferred into a Kederik Extraction Device as the paraguard with a person in it would not physically fit through the squeeze.

There were technical difficulties at the squeeze area. As with all of the pitches it was not possible to haul Jason into a horizontal position. The tightness of the cave dictated the necessity of vertical hauling.

Limited ceiling height above the squeeze meant it was not possible to raise the stretcher above the squeeze enough to make an easy transition to the horizontal. One rescuer positioned himself above the squeeze directly over the pitch while a second was on the entrance side of the squeeze (see Fig 1). When the stretcher reached the top of the pitch one rescuer released the edge roller and pulled it clear to give space for Jason to get through. The other rescuer physically lifted Jason to help position his head into the squeeze.

The hauling recommenced and with extreme care and careful work from those underground and the numerous haulers on the surface, Jason was slowly manoeuvred through the squeeze and up through the tight entrance area.

At 09:20 hours on Wednesday December 6th. Jason Lau finally exited the cave approximately seventeen hours after he fell. The last rescuer exited the cave at 09:53 hours.

It stopped raining a few moments later, but nature still continued to thwart the rescue effort when the ambulance was halted on the road by a large fallen tree that had to be cleared as there was no route around it.

The cave was left as it was. All rescuers were exhausted. After Police taped the area off everyone went home for an overdue rest.

The cave was de-rigged on the 8th of December with one paraguand stretcher and seventeen fully loaded and very wet, heavy packs of equipment removed.

This was Victoria's longest and most difficult cave rescue. It involved seventeen underground rescuers, and over eighty surface support crew.

By far, the bulk of the underground rescue was performed by the VICSES Cave Rescue Team. They were the first and last rescuers underground. Most endured more than eight hours underground, some more than twelve. In ideal conditions this is not an unreasonable length of time to be underground but, in a rescue situation and with the underground conditions as they were, it was a superhuman effort.

The vertical and horizontal manoeuvring of Jason in the tight, jagged, slippery conditions was physically and mentally draining. The level of technical skill needed for rescue in this cave in dry conditions is high; in waterfall conditions it was treme.

Communication from the rescue site to the surface, although maintained throughout the rescue, was difficult. Rescuers were positioned at strategic points through the cave to carry messages to and from the surface. As the rain increased, so did the noise in the cave meaning that, instead of calling up and down the pitches a rescuer had to physically ascend or descend to pass on a message.

Even with all the difficulties the communication system worked to an acceptable degree. It was exhausting work for the underground rescuers but it was the only option.

Tough decisions had to be made quickly. The pressure on all the underground rescuers but particularly key rescuers in a cave rescue is enormous.

The successful rescue of Jason Lau from Hades cave was only achieved because of the dedication to training by the underground team giving them the necessary skills to undertake the rescue and the support given to them from: the Buchan, Bruthen and Bairnsdale SES surface team on site, the SES members manning radios at local unit headquarters readily supplying extra manpower and quipment when requested, the Ambulance Service for underground and surface support, local Police for site management and communications, Search and Rescue Police for their technical assistance and support, the VSA members who provided extra underground personnel, the Buchan Welfare group for catering, the shopkeepers who opened up in the night to supply food, batteries and other requested goods and all the others too numerous to mention who worked behind the scenes. Following the rescue, assistance from the VICSES counselling people was offered and accepted.

Following the Hades cave rescue several areas that could have been improved on were identified and measures taken to correct them for future cave rescue.

We were fortunate that Bruce Wilson was able to be contacted. Jason's medical condition was very serious and if Bruce had not been contactable we would have had to somehow escort an untrained ambulance officer into a hostile, unfamiliar environment in the worst possible conditions. Difficult, dangerous and slow.

In May, June and July of 1996 five local ambulance officers undertook an intensive series of training sessions with the VICSES team in cave rescue techniques making a total of

six. Further officers will be trained over the next few years to ensure an ambulance officer who has been trained in caving techniques should always be available for any future call outs.

The team now have a cave communication system. The 'Bat Phone', designed, built and donated by a caver who is a qualified electrician, is a versatile but simple, two-way communication system. We have put it through a series of torture tests (water, mud, deliberate dropping etc) and it has shone.

The underground units are small, light and hands-free. There is no need to touch the unit to transmit or receive. Up to five units can be spliced into the wire before there is a noticeable loss in clarity.

Members of the VICSES Maffra unit have been training in cave rescue with us since the Hades rescue. In any future serious cave rescue call out we will have a second wave team of trained underground rescuers arrive around two hours after they are called out. At the time of writing the VICSES East Gippsland Cave Rescue Team has around thirty underground members training.

The Victoria Police, the Ambulance Service, the Welfare Unit and the Victorian State Emergency Service have all united to form a team able to quickly and safely undertake cave rescue in the East Gippsland region.

We feel the Victorian State Emergency Service should feel justifiably proud of the major role they have played in the formation of this important asset to our remote region.

### Glossary of terms used

Pitch — Vertical drop, unable to be free climbed.

Roof sniff — Area where water level in cave almost reaches roof leaving only a small airspace.

Wild cave — Cave not developed for tourism.

ASF — Australian Speleological Federation.

Rigging — To attach ropes etc. to anchor points.

De-rig — To remove ropes etc. from anchor points and out of the cave.

### About the Authors

Kim and John Van Dyk, Main Street, Buchan, 3885. Ph: (03) 5155 9458. Email: vandyk@b151.aone.net.au.

We have both been actively caving since 1977. Between us we have active memberships in the Victorian Speleological Association, the Australian Speleological Federation, the Australian Cave and Karst Management Association, the Buchan Area Troglodyte Society and the Australian Bat Society and were founding members of the Friends of Buchan Caves group and the Caving Club of Victoria.

John is currently working as a geologist-surveyor for a mining company and Kim on a casual basis for the Buchan Cave Reserve.

Time not spent working or in cave rescue training is spent caving.

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**NOTE: Any Changes or errors to Neil Fallshaw**



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*Journal of  
Blue Mountains Speleological Club*

# OOLITE

## BLUE MOUNTAINS SPELEOLOGICAL CLUB

Post Office Box 37  
Glenbrook NSW 2773

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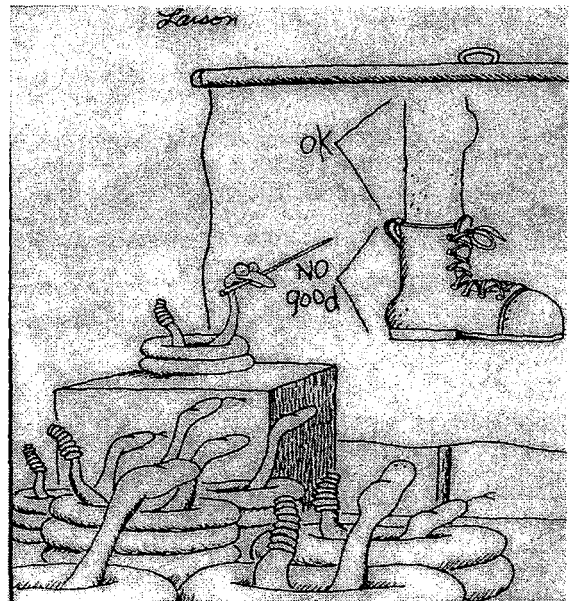
Iain Lynch.- President

Graham Osborne - Treasurer

Journal Editor - Cheryl Lynch

Everything published in the Oolite is for the interest of anyone who reads it. So if anyone has anything that they think would interest all us other Speleos, then please give it to me for further issues of the Oolite.

Thank you.



Everyone is into competency based training

# WYANBENE

13-14TH JUNE 1998

**Present**-----Graham Osborne (T/L)

Oliver Davies  
Steve Sawyers  
Glenn Roberts  
Michael Materazzo  
Iain Lynch  
Howie Davidson  
Brain Wells

**Visitors** Graeme Eddison

**Report**-----Our group arrived at Wyanbene around 7.00pm Friday night, and set up camp. After having breakfast Saturday morning we got ourselves organised to go caving, and by 9.00am we were at the entrance of the cave ready to go. After the first duck under from the entrance chamber, some of our group realised just how cold the water can be in Wyanbene on a winter trip, and with the water level looking higher than I had previously seen it, we were bound to get a little wet. We promptly made our way to the Blowhole where Glenn had no trouble at all unlocking the gate. From here Steve and Glenn rigged the ladder pitch, with Oliver belaying for the party to make the descent back to stream level.

Our plan was to now head straight for Frustration lake and do the sight seeing and photos on the return trip. We made our way along at a reasonable pace, bypassing the water where we could until we got to the water crawl. At this point we found the water not to be as cold as it was back at the entrance to the cave. After negotiating the wet section, we gladly left the stream and made our way to the Rockfall chamber. At this point it took us around fifteen minutes to find the way on through the rockpile and on into Caesars hall. We then made our way across Caesars hall and began the next leg of the journey down into the tube leading to the Diarrhoea pit. For this section we rigged a 9mm rope for a handline to aid us in the climb down into the pit. We all made the climb down with no worries and made our way across the Chamber pot. It was at this location that we encountered a fixed rope left behind from a previous caving party.

This in my opinion is an extremely dangerous practice and this situation even more so, as the

rope that had been left in the cave was not of any standard that should be used in caving. It appeared to be of the old hessian type rope, and we could smell the stink of it rotting away. Not only did this detract from the pristine condition of the cave that we had witnessed so far, but it also adds the likely possibility that someone may be injured if they were to use the rope in climbing up these climbs, and the rope were to break.

Perhaps the group in question should question their caving ethics, in as much as they have polluted the cave and in doing so put others at risk.

After having made our way to Andersons wall we encountered yet another of the same style fixed rope. Oliver was selected as our best climber, so he was volunteered to climb up Andersons wall and then lower a ladder for the rest of the group. Once we were all on top the ladder was rigged down the other side the wall and we make our way down and onto the lake. It was good to see the aragonite flowers were still in excellent condition, and we then proceeded to take some photos of these. After a quick break we decided to get moving again, as we still wanted to see the Gunbarrel aven and the Helectite chamber.

We soon returned to Andersons wall where Oliver was good enough to volunteer to belay us down the ladder and then do the down climb. From here we discussed the idea of taking out the old fixed ropes with us, but as we had no room in our packs and it would have been too awkward to try and carry it we decided to leave it. Perhaps a future trip with this clean up in mind is in order. On the way out climbing down the exit side of the Chamber pot, the old fixed rope finally broke when one of the guys went to grab it for a hand hold, lucky for him he fell only a few feet into a mud puddle and was unhurt. After this we coiled the rope into a place where future parties would not be able to use it to climb up. So after this slight drama we make our way back to Caesars hall, through the rockpile and into the Rockfall chamber.

We then spent around thirty minutes looking for the way to the Gunbarrel aven and were just about to give up when one of the guys found it.



After we all make our way into the aven and being suitably impressed by the sheer size of it, we made our way back to the stream level and on to the route out. With one more detour into the Helectite chamber for more photos and a chance for the first timers in this cave to view some impressive Helectites. From here we made our way back to the ladder pitch and then on the blowhole. After locking the gate we were

soon back on the surface, the time was noted to be 5.30pm a total of eight and a half hours caving.

In summary this proved to be a really good trip, with all of our objectives being achieved. Thanks must once again to Narooma National parks for us being granted access into the cave.

Graham Osborne

# BUNGONIA

7TH JULY 1998

## Present:

Graham Osborne (T/L)

Oliver Davies

Paul Stone

Graham Carney

Howie Davidson

## Hours Caving---six by all

**Report----**This was to be the first weekday caving trip held since I have been in the club, si it was good to see that we had 5 people keen to go in a Tuesday. Oliver and myself travelled down to Bungonia and met up with everyone else at the rangers office at 7.30am. As this was Paul's first caving trip, I felt an easy trip into Grille cave would be the shot to get Paul used to being in a cave. As it turned out Paul did really well in Grille having no dramas with the ladders, or his first taste of being underground. We soon made our way down to the horizontal ladder, and climbed down below this to an easy squeeze. As I wanted to see how Paul got on with the squeezy bits of caving, again he had So after a bit of sight seeing and with tow hours up in the cave we made our way back to the surface and on to something a bit more challenging

From here we made our way to Hollands hole to have a look at a cave that was not as roomy as the Grille. We all soon made our way to the Root Chamber and then on to the Hip Hugger squeeze. After most of us had a look at it, and one or two of us crawled up it, we decided it was a silly place to put a squeeze and we all basically wimped out and turned around. We then returned back to near the Root Chamber, where Howie showed us a second entrance into the cave that we unaware off, Oliver managed to

negotiate the tight exit but after trying for around five minutes I gave up thankful that there was another way out. Howie then managed to make it out the some way as Oliver, leaving Graham, Paul and myself to exit the cave form the normal entrance after one hour caving.

After all of us had gotten out of the cave we spent twenty minutes of so doing a bit of surface exploration in the general area of Holland's hole finding a few tagged entrances. It was then that we decided to go and explore College cave as none of us had been through this cave, although Howie thought he might have been in it years ago. College cave starts of with a 45 degree inclined tunnel which leads to a couple of rifts, so I led the way down the first rift which was tight in places and about twenty foot drop. From here, I let Howie and Oliver take the lead and ferret out the ladder pitch that we knew was below us. I stayed back to watch Paul climb down the rift where I noticed he was having a bit of trouble with the climb, as the next rift was even more awkward I decided to turn back and go and do something a little easy.

It was at this stage that Paul decided that we needed some practice in cave rescue, by volunteering to get stuck in the rift he had just climbed down. With Graham giving Paul a hand and a few not so kind words of encouragement, Paul spent the next five minutes grunting and heaving but going no where. So now it was time for plan B. I got Graham to whiz up to the surface and bring a ladder, which we dropped down the rift. With Graham at the top, myself in the middle of the rift and Oliver at the bottom we all pushed

and pulled until Paul popped out like a cork from a bottle.

After having spent an hour in college we decided it was lunch time. We all had a feed a bit of a rest, and were soon ready to go again. Everybody thought that a through trip in and out B4 B5, sounded okay.

So we made our way to the Fossil cave side and dropped a ladder down for us to climb up on the way out. We then made our way over to the Hogans hole entrance and were soon at the hairy traverse. Everyone flew down this with no drama and from the bottom of

this we made our way to Kings Cross. In no time we were at the start of the climb up and out, with a bit of teamwork the party made its way up to the fifteen foot climb where Howie belayed as everyone climbed up. At the last climb for the day Oliver belayed the ladder climb out and we were all soon back on the surface. Giving us a time of two hours in this cave. All in all the weekday trip proved to be a good days caving for all and hopefully with my new shift at work, we will be able to do some of these trips in the future.

Graham Osborne

# BUNGONIA

26 July 1998

## Present:

Iain Lynch	7hrs
Cindy Mann	7hrs
David Marsh	7hrs
Graham Carney	7hrs

## Visitors

Stephanie Whybrow	7hrs
Michael	7hrs
John	3hrs

Report-----Having slept in the 5 star luxury of the Excel, I awoke reasonably early. The others, who stayed from Saturday, arose soon after to another wet day. Today was fire control training day. Those coming down on Sunday arrived promptly at the designated rendezvous, except one, whom had obviously enjoyed a good party the night before. Adam and Jenny prepared to leave for home and the rest of us soon got started. Those on the party for today being David Marsh, Cindy Mann, Graham Carney and myself (club), Stephanie Whybrow (visitor), and Michael and John from fire control (also visitors).

We entered B4-5 again today, via B4, as this cave was well suited to the initial caving experience. Fairly easy caving, with some tricky climbs, the scary Hairy Traverse, some tight squeezes if desired and a variety of passages. We followed the usual route; into the cave, climb up into the cement bags and on to the hairy traverse. Initially David Marsh led, but after some pack difficulties I took over to the traverse. Cindy set up the belay, with some help from myself, and a quick lesson in the Italian hitch. We all negotiated the Hairy Traverse without incident and proceeded down the rift to the

Kings Cross turn off. Some how I had found myself at the rear of the party and as we were moving rapidly to B5 and the exit I decided we needed a bit of fun. Finding the smallest, trickiest hole at Kings Cross, I darted down it and called after the others, to come and inspect this marvellous little area. Most of them followed, some required a little coaxing, but still followed. We went down to a low silted up section, before turning back and admiring the fossils. This little hole proved quite awkward to climb out of, but after a bit of effort we were back at Kings Cross. Using various routes we continued on towards the climbs out to B5 entrance. Soon we all exited the cave via the climb to the right of the ladder pitch.

## 3 hours

After a quick bite to eat, we then trundled off to B22 Acoustic Pot, John staying on the surface having found caving a little too restrictive for his enjoyment. The rain had resulted in a small trickle of water most of the way to the pitch. So we all enjoyed grovelling through. At the pitch, the combined efforts of Graham, David, Cindy and myself, resulted in an abseil and ladder climb being set up.

Graham abseiled in first and proceeded to belay the others while I stayed at the top of the pitch, checking people's equipment prior to their descent. One by one I saw them abseil into the pot, then one by one they climbed out again. Some explored the small amount of passage at the bottom before returning to greater heights. Cindy began to get cold, so she with Michael headed out whilst the rest climbed out and de-rigged the pitch. Soon we followed the others

out to a clearing sky, shrouded in the darkness of night.

Back to the camp to pack up and then the late drive home.

#### 4 hours

A couple of interesting incidents to note:

1. A carabineer, which had not been screwed up, got caught on a ladder rung, locking the climber at that height. Should have been double checked by the accompanying cavers.

2. Some deficiencies in pitch rigging.

Iain Lynch

## WEE JASPER

8-9th August 1998

#### Present:

Steve Sawyers	10 hours
Brian Wells	10 hours
Glenn Roberts	10 hours
Iain Lynch	10 hours
Howie Davidson	9 hours

The weather was incredibly ominous for this weekend, but several of us decided to make the journey down the Hume for a bit of fun. After some death defying driving through the rain to Goulburn, the skies cleared - well stopped raining anyway making the rest of the journey comparatively safe.

I arrived about 10.30pm Friday night to find Steve, Glenn and Brian already in bed. Soon I rolled out the bivvy and settled down to dream of the next days caving. After a casual start, we were preparing to get underground, when the bush ranger strolled up. Howie had found us, so we all headed off to Dip. We set up the 65' pitch into series 4 and descended into the depths of Dip cave. Once at the bottom, we headed off towards to find series 5 but found it too muddy and squeezezy. Abandoning this we proceeded up the series 4 towards the Gong room.

After exploring this series, noting and photographing some apparent earthquake damage, we headed into series 3. It seems the trip leader was confused by the map, and after a long time and several laps of series 5, as Glenn determined, we went back to series 4 and quickly found the right way to series 3.

A party of 11 or so venturers had followed us in and also spent a long time in series 5. So once we had found the way we pushed towards series 2 and the rat hole, as some of us were wet. Through the rat hole we traversed delicately along the ledge and through the rim

stone pools which ensured we all got wet, to the small pitch adjacent to the 100' entrance. A quick abseil and we watched the venturers abseil straight out of the rat hole. We then proceeded up to the rubbish tip entrance and clawed our way up the muddy slopes to the exit.

5 hours

After returning to camp for a late lunch, we headed up to do Punchbowl. At the top we saw the last of some 15 scouts and leaders on their way to do some maintenance. We opted to come back tomorrow and headed to Signature. Howie had seen this often enough before, and headed back to the camping area. The remaining four of us played around in a dry cave, exploring the multitude of passages, before heading out.

1 hour

On the way back to the car we stuck our heads into Dog leg which was flowing with water almost to the roof. It being Saturday and icy cold water, we opted for dinner. A couple of beers down at the Wee Jasper pub, with a chat to some of the locals, wound down a great days caving. The day was topped off with a chat around the fire and a beautiful night under the stars.

Sunday, we raced the venturers into Punchbowl, and again shared the caving with them. We spent a further 4 hours exploring much of the cave. Of particular interest were the hundreds of bats nestled together in the main chamber, the size of the large chamber and the cave mud formations in Jim's hole.

There are some artistic cavers in this world. On the way out we explored the cave around the Strawberry short cut, before making our way out to the pitch chamber. Howie, Brian and Glenn



ascended the ladder, whilst Steve and I  
prussiked up the pitch.

4 hours  
Iain Lynch

# CLIEFDEN

19/20th September 1998

## Present:

Iain Lynch	10.5 hrs	M/T/Tr
Cheryl Lynch	2 hrs	M
Terry Coleborn	2 hrs	M
Louise Coleborn	2 hrs	M
Rob Mann	3.5 hrs	T
Cindy Mann	3.5 hrs	T
Michael Materazzo	5.5 hrs	T/Tr
Adam Prater	5.5 hrs	T/Tr
Jenny Prater	5.5 hrs	T/Tr
Kevin Coleborn	8.5 hrs	M/T
Wendy Hupton	5.5 hrs	M
Paul Stone	7.5 hrs	M/Tr
Steve Sawyers	8.5 hrs	M/T
Glen Roberts	8.5 hrs	M/T
Brian Wells	8.5 hrs	M/T
David Marsh	10.5 hrs	M/T/Tr
Rick Brett	5.5 hrs	M/T
Mitchell Lynch	2 hrs	M
Angelique Lynch	2 hrs	M
Richard Coleborn	2 hrs	M
Ryan Sawyers	2 hrs	M
Todd Roberts	8.5 hrs	M/T
Jamie Lee Brett	2 hrs	M
Kirsty Brett	2 hrs	M
Timmy Mann	3.5	T

**Report----**The meeting was postponed to allow any keen beans to get an early start on Friday night. Well several of us got there and between 10 pm and 6 am some more turned up. By 9 am most were there, fed and anticipating a cave full of kids laughter and excitement.

Those present headed off at about 10.45 am and got underground at 11am. There were 11 adults and lots and lots of kids from the not so young to the really young.

The climb down to the main chamber was interesting - the young kids keen to go and the older kids keen to help them down. Most of them climbed down on their own with a little guidance and the catch belay system ready if required. It did not take very long before everyone was down in the main chamber we gave the mud slope a work out and completed

the rocky circuit around the lower end of the chamber towards the dog tooth spar.

Some of the biggest kids headed down for a veterinarian dentist checkup. By the time we were all out, the others had started the climb back up to the entrance. The rest of us continued onto the boot room and the grand circuitous tour that completes Cliefden Main.

The water level was low. I mean about one metre high up the mud slope, as the high and dry calcite rafts depicted. We continued our tour to the calcified boot then back around the boot room then via the clown room we proceeded to and up the domino slide to Helectite wall. To the Sounds of shear pleasure, or was that utter disgust, we retraced our route down domino slide, searching for a way towards the lower entrance chamber.

High water blocked the way from the base of the slide so we headed back toward the boot room. Kevin and Wendy disappeared, whilst the rest of us having missed the turn off found ourselves in the boot room. After a while (?) Kevin and Wendy located us and we shot back up to the main chamber and out of the cave, which I found to be guarded by a whopping big brown snake. We all made it out alive and headed back to the hut for lunch/dinner or what ever.

On the way back we passed Rick, Michael, Rob, Cindy, Adam, Jenny and Timmy all in Ricks car heading off to Taplow. After a quick bite and recharge. We set off on foot to meet the others in Taplow.

The river crossing was fun, gumboots no use, when the water is threatening your backside. Fortunately a pile of dry shoes indicated that we were heading in the right direction, and we were soon at the entrance.

The others were still descending the ladder pitch, so we joined forces and after a while we merrily on our way to the blue room. Kevin got a few through the ticket box, but it seems people are becoming wise to his style of leadership.

After a few twists, doglegs, etc we grazed through the Rocky Point Road, nothing like soft marshmallow and chocolate, then down into a lower passage where we regrouped our party.

What was I saying about becoming wiser, as I was sucked into the blue formation joke of Kevin (nee terry)? After a break we trundled back out to darkness of night and dampness of rain.

Timmy got it right by falling asleep at the top of the ladder pitch. I wonder if I did that, would I be carried back to the car. Separating at the river, we found that it was quicker to walk back to the hut than drive - well power walk anyway.

Sunday dawned, many were heading home, but those with some energy headed for a quick trip to Trapdoor. Five arduous hours later we were met at the cars. After completing a normal 2.5 hour return trip.

The river now being well over ones backside, we set up a flying fox. The test victim got just as wet as myself (I waded across), but after some modification, we were across and into the caving. A quick trip to the extension squeeze after savouring the tricky (wet) climb down to the main chamber, of interest was the height of the water and the calcite rafts about 1 metre high up the mud slope.

The trip back across the river was made difficult by the 2 metre vertical rise to reach to the tree top landing on the other side. A grand effort for all those involved - the ironmen had best watch out.

A varied, challenging, enjoyable and extremely successful weekend's caving. Combined total caving hours was 121.5. Must be some sort of record for just 2 days caving.

Iain Lynch

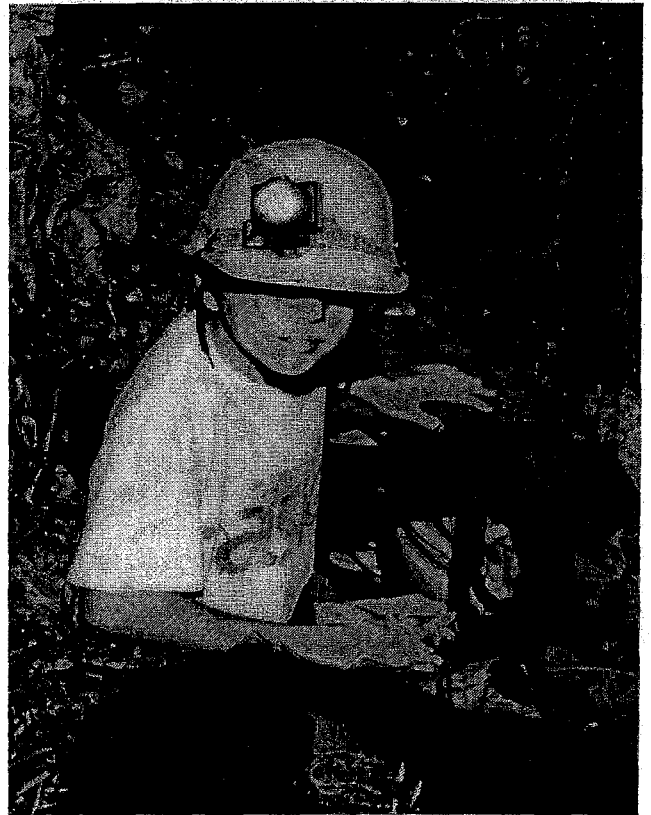
**Here are some photographs of our younger members enjoying what we all enjoy doing, CAVING. It was great to see so many of the kids spent a couple of hours caving**



Everyone ready to go underground.



Ryan Sawyers in the entrance to Main



Tod Roberts in the entrance to Main



Richard on the mud slope in the Main Chamber



Mitchell on the mud slope in the main chamber



Jamie Lee, Kirsty, Mitchell and Anglique on the log outside Main



Our youngest junior member,  
enjoying a crawl around Main Chamber.





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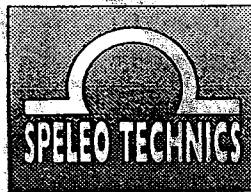


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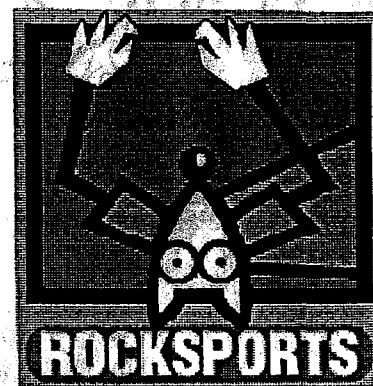
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**NOTE: Any Changes or errors to Neil Fallshaw**