

Quarterly NEWSLETTER

Summer 2013 Edition
Issued March 2013



MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover Shots: Top - Joe Sydney inside the entrance to CV20 at Port Macquarie property. Note the colony of wasps just in front of Joe's head. Below - Spirifer Brachiopod fossils found just below CV20 entrance.

Photos by Jim Crockett

Society News

Club EPIRB

Just a reminder to all trip leaders that we have the new EPIRB and this should be taken on every trip. Our Equipment Officer, Jim (0407 284 256), jcrockett3@bigpond.com, has this, so please coordinate with him to collect it before your next trip.

MSS Officers list

Position

President
Secretary
Treasurer
Equipment Officer
Librarian
Training Officer
ASF Liaison

Newsletter Editor(s)
Website Manager
Public Officer

Name

Jim Crockett
Rod Smith
Jim Crockett
Jim Crockett
Rod Smith
Beth Little
Jim Crockett,
Rod Smith
Fedz Alfeche
Rod Smith
John Gray

MSS Subscriptions are now Due

At the AGM we agreed to keep the subscription fees the same as the previous year. The exception is the Non-Caving membership will no longer be available (there was only ever one person to take this up membership type) The other reason is that now ASF covers

members for public liability on club canyoning and abseiling trips in addition to the coverage for caving activities. But please remember this is “ Public Liability” insurance and not personal accident insurance. To cover for personal accident insurance would cost in the order of 100's of dollars per person which is just not feasible. I don't know the legalities if we had a non-caving member on an abseil trip with other full members should an incident have occurred as its possible the liability could have been passed on to the person without any insurance.

Full member \$80

Prospective member \$30 (3 months)

Family membership \$160

Honorary membership \$45

Preference is for payment by Direct Debit to MSS Bank Account

BSB 062-021 Account 00901421 (Commonwealth Bank)

Cheques or Cash also accepted.

2013 UIS Congress in Brno Czech Republic

If anyone is interested registrations are still open to attend this event.

See <http://www.speleo2013.com/>

Or contact Jim Crockett

Jim

Trogalong

Report on the ASF 29th Bi-ennial ASF Conference.

It was NSW's turn to host the bi-ennial conference which was planned to be joint effort between all NSW clubs. The conference had been in planned for nearly 2 years and Rod and myself being involved in the organising committee gave a sigh of relief a few weeks out from the start when the convenor announced that “ Everything was ready”.

So we only had to get over christmas and the new year and then Rod and myself set off with a trailer load full equipment for the Speleo sports cunningly disguised as rubbish. The only thing of concern was the weather reports for week, hot,very hot and hotter.

We made our way to the conference centre at Galong which is about 50km south-west of Yass without any incidents and settled into our accommodation at Galong Retreat and conference centre. This was a former monastery which has been converted into a conference centre.

The only formal activity planned for the day was the ASF Executive meeting which I had to attend. In the evening we had a welcome barbecue to meet up with old acquaintances and make some new ones.

Monday started with the official opening and the first bit of real work for Rod who was responsible for the running of the IT equipment and everything was working just fine. The official opening speaker was Dr Armstrong Osborne with a presentation on recent developments in Cave and Karst Science. We only had a couple more presentations before lunch followed by the ASF council meeting. After dinner that night we had a trivia night which was all questions about caves, karst and speleology which I though would have been easy but many of the questions were quite difficult and my team did do all that well.

Due to the weather predictions of temperatures for tuesday greater than 44 Deg C the convenor made the decision to change the SpeleoSports and Prussic challenge to first thing in the morning to avoid being outside in the hottest part of the day. So this meant that Rod and myself had to get an early start to setup the Speleosports as well as making some changes to the obstacles due to the heat. Fortunately we had a swimming pool available where we could focus some of the obstacles in and around. In the end the Speleosports worked out well even though it was a bit disorganised. Thanks to Rod for his great help with this activity.

There was a bit of concern towards then end of the activity as a grass fire had started on a nearby property and we were overrun with smoke, fortunately the fire did not spread any closer to us.

The day continued inside out of the heat with some interesting presentations including one on cave palaeontology in the 21st century and another about the discoveries in South Africa in uncovering remains of man's ancestors in caves.

Wednesday seemed to be themed workshop day, with workshops on cave surveying, cave database, OZKarst, geology for non-geologists and a number of other interesting presentations.

That night we all put on our best outfits to attend the Caver Person's dinner. The dinner speaker was Al Warild recounting stories and slides from many of his overseas expeditions, all very interesting.

The thursday saw many more indoor presentations as the outside temperatures remained in the 40's. Before dinner we had the karst fund auction with some heated bidding on some items including a Trogalong embossed coffee mug (the only one in existence) went for \$100, of course all funds went to a good cause being the Karst Conservation fund.

The last day was my turn to make a presentation on bidding for the UIS Congress in 2017. After lunch we had the final ASF council meeting and the only item we had for discussion was to make a decision as to whether the ASF should continue with the bid for the UIS Congress in 2017. There was a lot of discussions most of it was in favour of making a bid and when the final vote was taken there was only a handful of votes against making a bid. I have been given the task of forming and chairing a bid committee as well being appointed an ASF Senior Vice President. I now have a bit of work to do in the months leading up to the UIS congress in Brno Czech Republic where our bid team will spruik and present our bid to the UIS representatives.

After all that it was time to go home and rest.

Capertee Valley Documentation Weekend

There is an ongoing project to document all the caves in the Lithgow to Mudgee area which is being expertly co-ordinated by Joe Sydney.

It usually begins with an invitation for cavers from any club to join up and assist with for the weekend.

One of the first areas that is being looked at is the Karst and caves of the Capertee valley.

The 3 known karst areas in the Capertee Valley are Coco Creek, Blue rocks and Port Macquarie Station. The first 2 have already been recently looked at and now Port Macquarie station (Now called Capertee Valley National Park) was the objective of the trip.

So I made an early start on saturday morning and met the rest of the group at Capertee township.

The convoy made its way to the new National Park, which was formerly a station and now managed by the NPWS. We set up camp beside the Capertee River which runs through the property and then made our way to the first area of interest which is a Tufa spring feature.

There are no caves here but 2 active springs, an area of Tufa on a creek and a number of small dolines and holes. These were all documented, eg GPS'd, tagged and photographed. We then moved onto another area supposedly containing some dolines but it seems were in the wrong location because we could not find them.

We later located the dolines as well as a limestone bluff hidden amongst a small area of fig trees and other luscious trees. This area seems to be get a lot of moisture from a spring at the base of the bluff and hence had rainforest like vegetation not found anywhere else nearby.

The next day we focussed our activities on the area west of the campground tagging known features there including the hole where there has been a lot of rubbish removed from and the dug out doline

(which I did some digging in last trip here) and a small slot which you could almost call a proper cave as it goes down about 4m and has a dark zone. Then we moved on to have a look at a cave that was suppose to be on the side of the steep hill about 500m from camp. Very steep sided hill with no obvious limestone outcrops but rock that resembled hard shale, I said "no way, there can't be cave here", but sure enough $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the hill there is hole going straight in, guarded by a colony of wasps. The cave goes in horizontally into the side of the hill about 12m, in bedrock that could be be considered poor limestone (probably about a 50/50 mix of limestone and shale). We documented the cave, surveyed, tagged it as CV20 and phototagged. I volunteered to draw the map of the cave. On the way back Joe made an exciting discovery just below the cave where he found some good examples of Brachiopod fossils.

After lunch we had a look at the obvious limestone outcrop behind the stockyards next to the road. There are some deep holes here amongst the bedrock and we removed some loose rocks from one to make it more comfortable to enter. One hole goes down about 5m and it appears you may be able to pop out of an adjoining hole with a bit of work, but even so its hard to consider them caves, but this outcrop show more promise than most of the other areas except for perhaps the steep hill to the left of the road after the river crossing which could possibly contain other caves similar to CV20.

A week later I got an email from Joe asking if I could send him the survey data for CV20, but I did not have it and was sure Joe had, it turns out Joe left the folder with all the survey data at the entrance to the cave and so this will have to be recovered on the next trip.

Capertee Valley Documentation at Coco Creek

This was Rod's first try at a real cave map.



Joe sydney have been very active in NSW co-ordinating traning workshops for various Speleology disciplines.

He had a request through some members of RSS to organise a training workshop aimed at bringing cavers up to date with the latest techniques and equipment for SRT.

He managed to get Al Warild as the major instructor and then sent out invitations to all NSW clubs to attend this workshop.

Well what a response, the room was full with about 30 people turning up.

The workshop was mainly about updating us on the latest European techniques, materials and equipment being used for SRT. Also we had the opportunity to get help with setting up our gear to give us the best possible efficiencies. Al also had a supply of new equipment such as waist and chest harnesses available for purchase at discounted prices.

Beth and myself both attended and we will be passing on all these ideas from the workshop at the next MSS Field day.

Hermit's Cave of Griffith

I recently went on a weekend trip to Griffith to catch up friends and attend a birthday party, oh boy that's a long drive for just the weekend.

Friends there knowing that I had an interest in caves surprised me when they asked if I wanted to see the local cave.

We were taken to the highest point in the area overlooking the township which has a lookout and a large area of conglomerate. A short stroll brought us to a natural overhang amongst boulders. Then a little bit further we came upon another natural overhang, only about 2.5m high but there had been considerable stonemason work to make it habitable.

There are signs there telling the story of a hermit that lived there, he was an Italian migrant who obviously a very skilled stonemason.

His name was Valerio Ricetti and he lived in this cave for 23 years. Working at night and in the early hours so that he would not be seen, he turned the cave into his own private utopia complete with kitchen, chapel, landscaping, pathways, stone walls and stairs, terraced gardens and his own water supply. He used to plunder the local orchards and gardens for his food and much of his construction tools and materials he found at the local tip.

He was only discovered by local when he fell ill and was found by a local who assisted him to medical care. After recuperating he continued to live in the cave and was helped out by local to pay for a fare to return to Italy to visit his brother.

He did not return and later the locals found out that he has died 3 months after arriving in Italy.



Sheep Dip and Rocky Creek Canyons

26th January 2013

Canyoneers:

Rob Clyne (TL), Laura Clyne, Rod Smith,
Chris Johnstone, Ben Johnstone, Owen Johnstone,
Natalie Etherton and Josh Etherton.

Lots of rain and being in a canyon doesn't really mix, so the forecast for the Australia Day Weekend didn't look so good. With Weather zone guessing on the previous Monday "end of the world conditions" to "Still dodgy but slightly better conditions" on Thursday, I gave Rod a call and asked "what do you recon?"

Reassuringly Rod suggested going ahead with the trip and decide on the day.

So Saturday arrived with the weather thankfully being not too bad (good call Rod) – even the Sun appearing now and then. The Clarence/ Zig Zag Railway car park was full of 4wd clubs heading out on various trips where we all meet at 9.00am. Luckily the 4WDs weren't headed our way as we headed out for Waratah Ridge.

I must admit I hadn't been out this way for a while so it was a surprise that the graders had been at work on the Glow Worm Tunnel Road and all the "normal" pot holes and ruts were virtually gone. What was amazing was that the forestry commission can radically change the landscape with harvesting the pines.

Turning onto Waratah Ridge Road, I noticed parks had installed a new gate just past "Yobbos" campsite. I suppose this will be used at the first sign of bushfires or other weather extremes.

Parking at the normal car park, we all check our gear and with much excitement headed down to Sheepdip. It's nice to have new blood on a trip to remind you what it was like when we all first canyoned ourselves. Even though the majority of us have done these canyons before – it's great to share the kid's excitement in discovering the canyons for the first time.

Well the water wasn't too bad – mainly lots of yells from me as I adjusted to the water trickling into the wetty as usual!

All the "team" loved each new slide and jump with the mandatory "That's nothing! Wait till the next bit".

I did enjoy looking at everyone's faces on top of the last "waterfall" jump.

"What down there?!"

"Step of faith!"

(Hey even I had a few moments deciding the best foot placements before plummeting down the drop!)

Casting an eye skywards – the weather still looked OK and with everyone still keen we decided to head down to Rocky Creek.

Lunch "as usual" was enjoyed at the start of Rocky and everyone eager to tackle the darker and colder canyon.

With lots of instruction, swimming, climbing and yahooing we made it through to the "half way" point with the big wide waterfall. Some of the kids were getting cold so it was decided to call it a day and return back to the beginning of the canyon.

As always (we usually) – there was the hill to climb back to the cars.

Tired bodies arrived back at base around 3.30pm.

Laura was so tired on the way home she didn't even want to do the "Empirical Canyon" at Mt Vic (for refreshing lemonade of course!)

SO – "Top Trip"

Cheers,
Rob

* * * * *

24th March FIELD DAY & BUSH BARBECUE
Field day organiser: Beth Little 0450226811 littlebeth78@hotmail.com
Find out about and practice the latest in SRT Techniques
Contact by: 21st March
Grade: Instructional and delicious
Location: Yellowrock Blue Mountains
We will have a friendly BBQ after the field day
Overnight trip to some remote canyons

18th - 19rd May JENOLAN CAVING
 Trip Leader: Rod Smith
 Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
 Contact by: 16th May
 Grade: Medium/Hard
 Grade: TBA

6th - 7th April
Caving in Abercrombie area.
West Abbas, The sounder and Sancho's hole.
Pending permission from property owners.
Camping at Abercrombie caves

Trip leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407284256
jcrockett3@bigpond.com
By: 4th April
Grade: Easy

4th May
Wombeyan Working bee

Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407284256
jcrockett3@bigpond.com

5th May
NSW Speleo Council Meeting
Wombeyan

Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407284256
jcrockett3@bigpond.com

16th May
MSS Meeting
At Jim Crockett's place

Trip leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407284256
jcrockett3@bigpond.com

18th - 19th May
Caving at Jenolan

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 16th May
Grade: TBA

23rd - 24th May
The Science of Jenolan Caves Seminar

See flyers attached
Bookings essential

25th May
ASF Executive Meeting
Sydney

Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407284256
jcrockett3@bigpond.com

8th - 10th June (Long Weekend)
Caving at Cliefden

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 6th June
Grade: TBA

15th - 16th June
Caving at Bungonia
Lots of Vertical caves
SRT skills required

Trip leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407284256
jcrockett3@bigpond.com
By: 13th June
Grade: Medium/Hard

20th - 21st July
Caving at Jenolan

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 18th July
Grade: TBA

21st to 28th July 2013
UIS – International Caving Congress
Brno – Czech Republic

<http://www.speleo2013.com/>
contact: Jim Crockett 0407 284 256
jcrockett3@bigpond.com
for more details

14th September – 12th October,
Nullabour Caving

Trip Leader: Natalie Etherton
sox@soxelectrical.com
By: TBA
Grade: Expedition

19th - 20th October
Caving at Jenolan

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 17th October
Grade: TBA

October or later (TBA)
Caving at Colong

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: TBA
Grade: Medium

Meeting Opened: 7:45pm

Present:

Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett, Chris Johnstone, Helena Johnstone

Apologies:

Beth Little

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence:

Post –

The Very Latest
SUSS Bull
Caves Australia

Committee Members Reports:

President:

We've recently added a few new members to MSS and some other interested people as well. This is a positive for MSS. I urge everyone to make these new members feel welcome.

Jim.

Treasurer: None

Equipment Officer: None

Training Officer: None

Librarian:

I've been sorting through the library in an effort to find out exactly what we have and file it all accordingly.

During this I've come across a lot of material that I don't believe we need to keep. At this stage none has been thrown out, but it has all been separated. If anyone wishes to go through this pile of material please let me know and I will organise an opportunity for that to happen.

Rod.

Web Manager:

I've been working on the website. At the moment the plan is to have a new version live by the end of February.

The majority of the changes for this will be behind the scenes, so it won't look much different to what's currently there.

I will be taking this opportunity to update members contact details. I'm also happy to receive any comments regarding the content of the site.

Rod.

Status of Action Items:

Updating membership details – Jim Crockett: None

Bolting Course – Rod Smith: None

Resurveying Stable Cave – Jim Crockett: None

Abercrombie surface survey – Rod Smith: None

Abercrombie documentation – Rod Smith: None

New Business:

Trip planning:

Nullarbor: 14th September – 12th October, TL Natalie Etherton

The Jenolan trip in May will be for beginners and will include an optional abseil into Mammoth as well as a tyrolean across Lower River and trip to Slug Lake.

The Jenolan in July will not be for beginners. This trip will include SRT work in Mammoth and (hopefully) a trip to Silverfrost.

Permits have not been obtained yet for either trip, so details may change.

Next Meeting:

Jim's Place – 16th May

Meeting Closed: 8:15pm

Your invitation to a major event



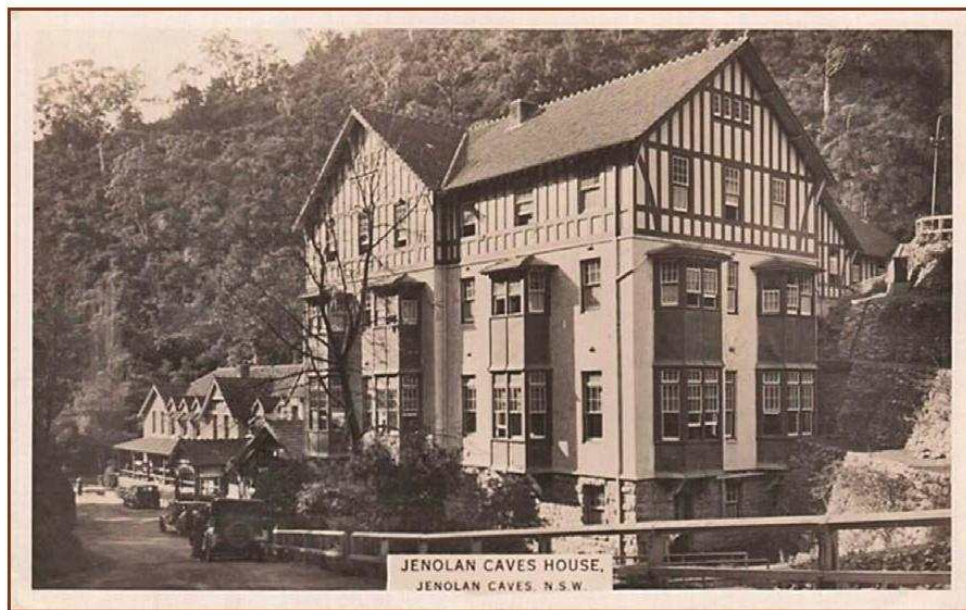
The Science of Jenolan Caves:

What do we know?



A symposium to explain, interpret and review recent scientific research on the caves and karst, including the contribution of exploration, mapping and diving to an understanding of the science.

Co-sponsored by The Linnean Society of NSW and the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.



WHEN: Thursday 23rd (from 10am) & Friday 24th (9am – 5pm), May 2013.

WHERE: Kanangra-Boyd Room in the heritage-listed Jenolan Caves House.

WHY: Because recent research results are scattered in many places and can be hard to find.

WHAT: Talks from experts, posters, maps and displays, karst walks, excursions into the caves.

WHO: Anyone with an interest in understanding Jenolan will find this a pleasant and enlightening experience. Scientists, speleologists, guides and others will be present.

CAVE TOURS: There will be field trips into the caves between and after scientific sessions on both days, to discuss issues raised in the presentations. Tours may include cave monitoring sites, the Nettle Cave stromatolites, a show cave and/or karst walks. By courtesy of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust and a genuinely world-class guiding staff, the cave trips are free to all registered participants. Surface karst walks will also be available depending on time and demand, and the Blue Lake platypus colony can usually be seen on a quiet walk.

*Official Supporters: New South Wales
Office of Environment and Heritage,
The Jenolan Caves Trust; Jenolan Caves
Historical and Preservation Society;
Sydney University Speleological Society*



Office of
Environment
& Heritage





Registration Form for Attendees

The Science of Jenolan Caves



Jenolan Caves House, Jenolan NSW

23-24 MAY 2013

Name (for name tag):

Affiliation:

Address:

Contact details:-

E-mail:

Phone: (work/home);

..... (mobile)

I will be attending on the following days (tick each box):

☐

Thursday 23rd May;

☐

Friday 24th May.

The registration fee of \$55 should be paid as follows:

By cheque to the Linnean Society of NSW, and posted with this form to:

The Secretary, Linnean Society of NSW, PO Box 82 Kingsford, NSW, Australia 2032 ;

OR

By direct bank transfer

Account: Linnean Society of NSW St George Bank 112879 466447867

Put your Surname & initials as the reference so that we can identify you.

Send the form by e-mail to linnsoc@iinet.net.au

or post it to:

The Secretary, Linnean Society of NSW, PO Box 82 Kingsford, NSW, Australia 2032

Registration and Payment MUST be received by 15th April

*Official Supporters: NSW Office of Environment & Heritage,
The Jenolan Caves Trust; Jenolan Caves Historical &
Preservation Society.*



Office of
Environment
& Heritage



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A. CONTEXT

Richard Mackay: KEYNOTE SPEAKER (World Heritage values)

John Dunkley AM (ASF): History of cave science at Jenolan

B.CAVE SCIENCE PROGRAM

1. GEOLOGY

Dr. David Branagan (USYD): Regional geology and landscape development in the Jenolan area”

Dr John Pickett (NSWGS/LS): Silurian geology & development of Jenolan caves”—to be presented by Dr Ian Percival

Dr. Ross Pogson (AM): Mineralogical research at Jenolan

2. WATER & AIR – Cave and climate dynamics

Dr. Andrew Baker (KCU): Environmental monitoring at Jenolan

Prof Chris Waring (ANSTO): “Understanding cave dynamics at Jenolan” (talk will also refer to Treble’s work on speleothems)

Drs J. James & G. Cox (USyd): Jenolan stromatolites and climate

Prof. Andy Baker (UNSW): Karst hydrology & geochemistry (Wellington Caves – to be confirmed)

3. FOSSIL & EXTANT BIOTA

Dr Anne Musser (AM/JC): Vertebrate palaeontology -Trace fossils

Drs

Mike Gray/ Helen Smith (AM): Cave arachnids

Graeme Smith & Stefan Eberhard: Cave insects, millipedes & crustaceans

Dr Anne Musser (AM/JC): Vertebrate fauna of the Jenolan Caves Reserve

4. SURVEY & EXPLORATION AS AIDS TO CAVE SCIENCE

Drs Michael Bosse & Robert Zlot (CSIRO): Efficient Mobile Mapping of Jenolan Caves using a Handheld 3D Lidar System

Alan Warild (ASF): The Jenolan show caves survey project and its applications.

Drs Ian Cooper & Phil Maynard (UTS): Cave exploration at Jenolan

Dr Ian Lewis (CEGSA): Exploration of cave waters

Dr Keir Vaughan-Taylor: Water course of the Styx (southern limestone)

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Steve Meehan (Head of KCU, Bathurst): overview of karst research/conservation activities in NSW

Kath Bellamy & Dr. Craig Barnes (USyd): Jenolan caves mapping project (with Julia James)

Andy Spate: Australian cave invertebrate fauna

Ted Matthews (JC Guides): Observations on cave development processes at Jenolan

Ian Edison (JC): Karst Flora of Jenolan (to be confirmed)

LOOKING FORWARD : PANEL DISCUSSIONS

1. Future directions for cave science and exploration – ideas from presenters & general discussion

A/Prof Armstrong Osborne (U Syd) : Future research on geology & cave palaeogenesis at Jenolan

Bruce Welch (ASF): Conservation issues

Dr. Phil Maynard: Future prospects for Exploration & Survey (To be confirmed)

2. Cave Science/exploration and Tourism — contribution that cave science and exploration can make toward increasing tourism interest, education and the caving experience at Jenolan (proposed Jenolan book is one example). Input from Dr Elery Hamilton-Smith to be sought.

Dan Cove (Jenolan): Interpreting cave science to the general public

SCIENCE TOURS in caves:

Surface karst walk

Nettle Cave stromatolites (Julia James)

Monitoring stations (Andrew Baker & Chris Waring)

Jenolan Caves genesis (1: Armstrong Osborne; 2: Ted Matthews)

Show Caves (Guide + Naming Project member)