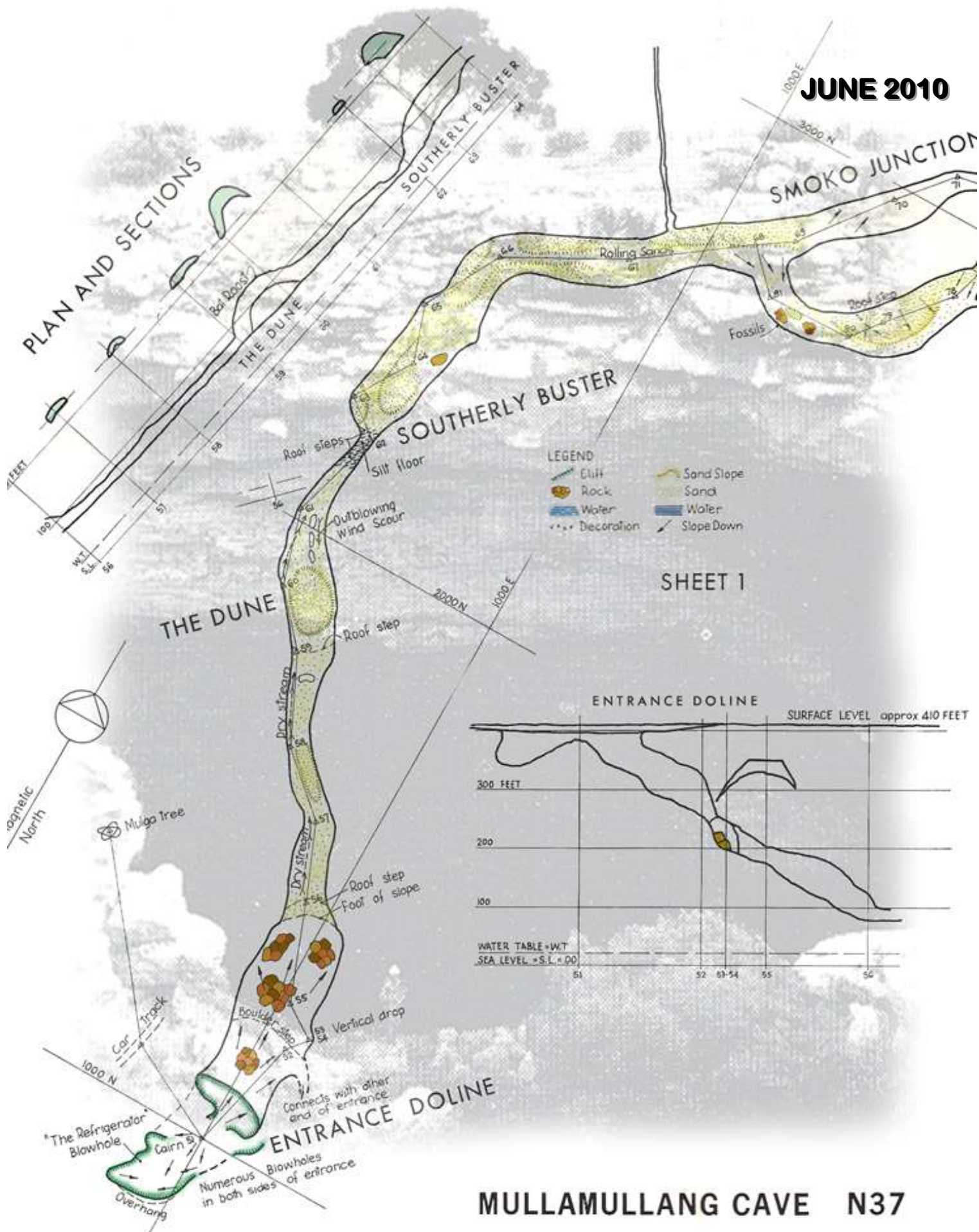


NEWSLETTER MONTHLY

JUNE 2010



MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover:

Mullamullang Cave - on the MSS Agenda for August 2010

From: Mullamullang Cave Expeditions, 1966, Ed. A.L. Hill and
Caves of the Nullarbor, 1978, Eds. J.R. Dunkley and T.M.L. Wigley

NEWSLETTER OF THE METROPOLITAN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.
P.O. Box 178, THORNLEIGH, NSW, 2120

Society News

NEXT MSS MEETING

The next MSS meeting is scheduled for the 1st of July 2010, to be held at Jim Crockett's residence. Please RSVP Jim if you intend to attend, 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com

Changed Date for MSS Training Day

The MSS training day scheduled for June did not go ahead, primarily due to the weather, so the training day has been rescheduled to Sunday 29 August, to be held at Berowra. Please contact Rod Smith if you are interested in taking part: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com.

Bats as a Health Hazard ? (Australasian region)

Cathi Humphrey-Hood

By venturing into their natural roosting and breeding habitats, love them or hate them, all cavers will at some time come in contact with bats. Many caving clubs and associations proudly sport the bat as an icon, and many a caver has begun their spelunking career through a desire to study these fascinating creatures. Much has been written recently about the threat of WNS on the bat population of the USA, and the possible role that people might play in inadvertently spreading the disease (for those not familiar with the name, WNS (White Nose Syndrome), is an extremely serious disease killing large numbers of bats in northeastern USA and now across the border into Canada).

But what of the role of bats in spreading disease to people? What kind of a risk do Australian cavers run by having close encounters of the chiropteran kind?

A quick glance at the bat-virus literature brings the comforting knowledge that most of the really nasty diseases are carried by fruit bats, very few of which regularly use caves as roosting sites. The people most at risk from these diseases are people who care for bats, and who breed horses where there are nearby bat colonies. The only historically proven risk for cavers in Australia is a fungus called Histoplasmosis. However, Australian Bat Lyssa virus has been found in sheath-tail bats, a type of bat known to frequent caves, and further research may yet reveal other pockets of infection in cave populations that are just sitting out there waiting to be contracted... sorry, discovered, by some (un)lucky explorer.

Here are some of the nasties you might like to look out for:

Australian Bat Lyssa Virus



Black Flying Fox,

Photo by Bruce Thompson of QPWS, Source:

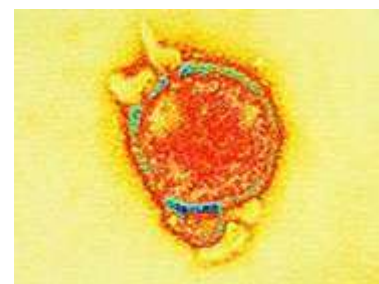
<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrenpa.nsf/LinkView/BAA86C6B029BC723CA256BF2001E406916C869C35CA02BB14A256DEA00247222>

A.B. Lyssa virus is a type of rabies virus, and it was first found in a black flying fox. Four species of fruit bat and an insectivorous bat (a sheath-tail bat) have been found to carry the virus. Two people are known to have died in Australia from this disease, both in QLD – a bat caregiver from Rockhampton, and a 27 year old Mackay woman (who died two *years* after being bitten by a large flying fox) (2). There is also a European form of this virus. If bitten or scratched by an infected bat, the rabies vaccine may offer some protection (7). The development of symptoms (headaches, fever and tingling at the entry site, followed by agitation, delirium, convulsions and coma) usually occurs between 30 to 90 days after exposure, and death follows within a few days. Best not to play with the bats if one can avoid it.

Hendra virus

A severe respiratory disease that can result in meningoencephalitis, Hendra was recognised for the first time in Australia when the virus killed 2 people (a horse trainer and a farmer) and 22 horses in 1994. In the case of the farmer, it appears he was infected, unbeknownst to him, for up to a year before the virus suddenly reactivated, resulting in a fatal case of encephalitis (2). The virus was initially labelled equine morbillivirus before it was found to be a member of the family Paramyxoviridae (9).

Hendra is an established virus in fruit bats, with a widespread presence in black, grey-headed, little red and spectacled fruit bats. Another outbreak occurred in Queensland in July 2008, killing seven horses and putting another two people in hospital, one of whom (a veterinarian) died. Another vet died of the disease in 2009. The disturbing aspect of this recent outbreak was the appearance for the first time of neurological symptoms, causing the affected horses to appear drunk. This might mean that the virus is mutating, or that there are several co-existing strains.



*Scanning electron microscope image
of the Hendra virus*

Source: See References and Links (9)

According to Dr Linfa Wang(1), there is no evidence that the Hendra virus has ever jumped directly from bat to human – in all human cases a horse passed the virus on. Horses don't appear to alter the virus to make it transmissible to humans, but rather they act as an amplifier, boosting levels of the virus to the point where people can be infected. Bats themselves apparently carry too little of the virus to infect a human directly – there are no records of wild-life carers nursing sick and injured fruit bats catching the disease – so far. Pregnancy in bats and horses appears to increase the risk of infection.

Nipah virus

Closely related to the Hendra virus, this nasty cropped up in Malaysia in 1998 and over the course of a year killed 111 people out of 229 infected (3). Nipah is a type of Heniparvirus, likely closely related to another outbreak in Bangladesh in 2004 (killing 17 people), and which was linked to flying foxes (4).

Menangle Virus

This one was found in stillborn piglets, and was traced to a large breeding colony of grey-headed and little red fruit bats nesting within 200m of the NSW piggery. Several workers became ill with flu like symptoms and a rash. The birth rate of live piglets dropped 27% and deformities increased dramatically (2).

Tioman

Closely related to the Menangle virus and carried by bats is Tioman, which was identified during the course of an outbreak of Nipah on Tioman Island, Malaysia, in 2000. Though identified, this virus is not yet known to have caused an outbreak of disease (3).

Histoplasmosis

Caused by the soil-based fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum*, Histoplasmosis infects the lungs, causing a variety of symptoms from a flu-like fever to organ enlargement and brain inflammation. Serious infections can be fatal if left untreated. Infected animals excrete the fungus in their droppings, making guano a primary risk factor. Though rare in Australia this disease IS a definite concern for cavers or those in frequent contact with bats. A large outbreak came from Church cave in Wee Jasper in the 1970s. Avoiding exposure to bats, dusty caves and wearing a 2 micron HEPA filter can help minimise the risk of infection. (5,6)

Garry Smith of NHVSS has written a comprehensive article on the risks of histoplasmosis to cavers, covering the history of Australian infections (6). As mentioned above, Wee Jasper (Church Cave in particular) is the most well known histoplasmosis risk, but caves on Glenrock Station (120km northeast of Muswellbrook) have also produced infection. Caves that are dry and hot and contain dry and powdery bat guano should be looked upon with suspicion and if you feel ill with chest pains or have flu-like symptoms soon after visiting a cave like this you should remember to mention this to your doctor. It is possible to fight off the fungus without showing any symptoms, so although the number of people developing this condition from a caving environment is extremely low compared to the number of active cavers in Australia, the actual number of people who are affected by it could be higher than reported.

So, should cavers be worried by any of these things? Probably... not so much. While the statistics will not be of any comfort to the unlucky future spelunker who crosses the wrong bat one day and picks up the Australian equivalent of rabies, caving is not considered a high risk activity for contracting these conditions. It's common sense, really - unless you need to chase bats for your latest research project, keeping your distance from them will certainly help to keep you out of harms way... and the bats will most likely be happier as well.

References and links:

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<http://www.csiro.au/news/newsletters/SIROSCOPE/2009/May09/htm/spotlight/bats.htm>
- (2) Emerging Viral Diseases: An Australian Perspective, John S. Mackenzie, Emerging Infection Diseases, 5:1, Jan-Mar 1999 <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol5no1/mackenzie.htm>
- (3) Disease Archive: Novel Zoonotic Viral Diseases <http://www.fas.org/ahead/disease/new/index.html>
- (4) Bats suspected in disease outbreak, Leslie Biennen, The Ecological Society of America, 2004
<http://www.jstor.org/pss/3868225>
- (5) Topic: Histoplasmosis, Queensland Health, 2009
http://access.health.qld.gov.au/hid/InfectionsandParasites/FungalInfections/histoplasmosis_fs.asp
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- (7) Australian Bat Lyssavirus, CSIRO Feature Article, 2007, <http://www.csiro.au/science/Australian-bat-lyssavirus.html>
- (8) Could Killer Horse Virus Spread Among Humans? Rachel Nowak, July 2008, New Scientist,
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn14377-could-killer-horse-virus-spread-amongst-humans.html>
- (9) Hendra Virus, CSIRO Feature article, 2010, <http://www.csiro.au/science/Hendra-Virus.html>

A Quick Look at the World's 20 Longest Caves

Rod Smith



Restoration work in Crystal Cave, part of the Mammoth Cave system
<http://www.nps.gov/macapa/parknews/crystal-cave-restoration.htm>

In less than one month's time MSS and NHVSS will be heading west to the Nullarbor for an exciting caving experience. One of the caves we will be visiting is Old Homestead, which is reported to be about 30km long. This makes it the longest cave I will have been in, but how does it compare to other caves around the world? Here is a brief look at the 20 caves currently listed as the longest in the world at: <http://www.caverbob.com/wlong.htm>.

1. Mammoth Cave

USA

590.629km 115.5m

It's not easy to compress the sheer volume of information on Mammoth Cave into a single paragraph. Besides being easily the longest cave in the world, more than double the length of Jewel Cave, there are a number of fascinating aspects to its exploration. One of these is Floyd Collins, the discoverer of Crystal Cave and explorer of much of Salts Cave. It was also a major part of the cave wars of the early 20th century. After Crystal and Unknown Caves were connected, and Colossal and Salts Caves were connected, these two systems were connected making it, at the time, the longest in the world, surpassing Hoelloch in Switzerland. This system, known as the Flint Ridge System, was then connected to Mammoth Cave in 1972. Further connections have been made, the connection to Roppel Cave as recently as March 19, 2005. It is anticipated that more connections are still possible.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammoth_Cave_National_Park

2. Jewel Cave

USA

241.595km 192.6m

Located in South Dakota, Jewel cave was discovered in 1900 by Frank and Albert Michaud. The opening was too small for anyone to enter and was enlarged by the use of dynamite. By 1959 less than 3km of passage had been explored, when two local rock climbers, Herb and Jan Conn, began exploring further into the cave. Within two years 24km of passage had been mapped, and within 20 years had mapped over 100km of passage. Although Jewel Cave is currently the world's second longest cave at 241.59km, it is estimated that only 2% of the volume has been mapped, based on the amount of air the cave "inhales" and "exhales" during changes in air pressure.



Jewel Cave

<http://kozar.wordpress.com/2010/04/05/5-longest-caves/>

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewel_Cave_National_Monument

3. Optymistychna (Optimisticeskaja) - Gypsum

Ukraine

230.140km 15.0m

Translated from Ukrainian, Optymistychna means optimistic. This is the longest cave in gypsum, and is contained within a 2km square area less than 20m thick. The sheer number of interconnected passages make what is called a maze cave. First discovered in 1966 by the Lviv speleological club "Cyclope" there have been over 50 expeditions into the cave, though the number of expeditions has dropped in recent years. Located very close to Ozernaja, a connection has yet to be made.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optymistychna_Cave

4. Wind Cave

USA

214.429km 193.9m

The first documented discovery of Wind Cave occurred in 1881 by brothers Tom and Jesse Bingham. They heard a sound of wind rushing out of the hole, according to the story, strong enough to blow Tom's hat off his head, and giving the cave its name. It wasn't until the 1890's when 16 year old Alvin McDonald explored beyond the first few metres that the cave was found to extend beyond the original hole. Like nearby Jewel Cave, Herb and Jan Conn played a major part in the exploration and mapping of Wind Cave. There is still an average of four new miles of cave being discovered each year.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_Cave_National_Park

5. Lechuguilla Cave

USA

206.946km 488.9m



Photo by Gary Newman, from: Carlsbad Caverns, National Parks Service
http://www.nps.gov/cave/naturescience/lechuguilla_cave.htm

Until 1986 Lechuguilla Cave was known only as a small, relatively insignificant historic site. Small amounts of bat guano had been mined from the site in 1914 and the cave only infrequently visited after that. In the 1950s a wind was heard roaring up from the rubble-choked floor and permission was given in 1984 to conduct a dig. The subsequent discovery is not only the fifth longest in the world, but also the deepest limestone cave in the USA. It also contains a large number of extremely rare speleothems and a large amount of gypsum and sulfur. It is believed that the cave was formed from sulfuric acid derived from hydrogen sulfide migrated from nearby oil deposits. Thus, this cave apparently formed from the bottom up rather than the normal top down method of carbonic acid cave formation.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lechuguilla_Cave

6. Hoelloch

Switzerland 195.914km 938.6m

The initial exploration in 1875 was led by Alois Ulrich, a large part of the following exploration was led by Alfred Bogli. By 1952 Hoelloch had been surveyed to a length of 25km. By 1968 this had increased to 100km, making it the first cave in the world to be survey to 100km in length.

Until 1970 it was thought to be the longest cave in the world. It is also 938.6m deep making it, currently, the 111th deepest in the world.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%B6lloch_Cave

7. Fisher Ridge Cave System

USA

182.067km 108.5m

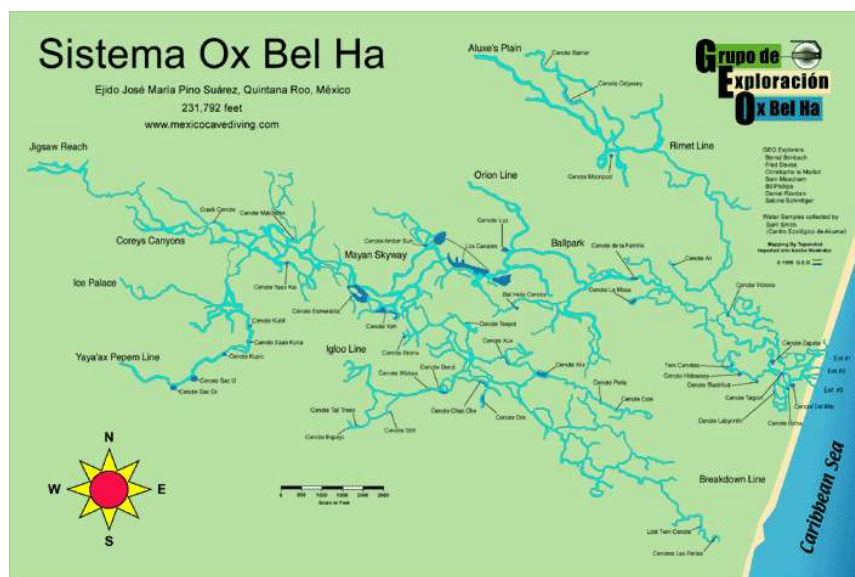
The Fisher Ridge Cave System was not found until 1981, high on Fisher Ridge, just below the sandstone contact. Within six months a second entrance was found from the inside, and by the end of the first year over 10 miles had been mapped. In the first four years over 28 miles of passage had been mapped, as well as footprints and cane torch remains dated back nearly 3000 years. In 1996, with the total length surveyed approach 100 miles, two separate parties were trapped while surveying a recently discovered extension to the cave. This effectively ceased exploration of the cave until 14 months later when a 55 foot shaft was dug directly into the new section. In 2001 the 100 mile mark was reached, by 2004 107 miles were surveyed. Many leads are yet to be checked and mapped.

Source: <http://home.comcast.net/~FISHER-RIDGER/history.html>

8. Sistema Ox Bel Ha - Under water

Mexico

180.038km 33.5m



Map by G.E.O. Grupo de Exploración Ox Bel Ha,
from: <http://www.mexicocavediving.com/mapp.html>

The exploration of Sistema Ox Bel Ha began in 1996 when Orane Douxami, Travis Mack, Sam Meacham and Bil Phillips were shown Los Canales, a large cenote deep in the jungles of Quintana Roo. Two years later Sam and Bil were shown another cenote close by and on the first dive used their entire 600m dive reel in the exploration. Later that year Sam and Bil, along with Fred Devos and Daniel Riordan explored, surveyed and mapped just over 12.6km of passage in just 28 dives. By May 1999 another 15km of passageway was dived, explored, surveyed and mapped. This is the largest underwater cave in the world.

Source: <http://www.mexicocavediving.com/historyofourproject.html>

9. Sistema Sac Actun (Nohoch Nah Chich) - Under water Mexico 175.721km 71.6m

Translated from Spanish and Yucatec Maya, Sistema Sac Actun means White Cave System. In 2007 Sistema Sac Actun, the second longest underwater cave in the world, and Sistema Nohoch Nah Chich, the third longest, were connected. At the time this made it the longest underwater cave in the world and, since then, the title has been continually swapping between it and Sistema Ox Bel Ha as further discoveries are made.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sistema_Sac_Actun

10. The Clearwater System (Gua Air Jernih) Malaysia 175.664km 355.1m

Serious cave exploration in this area of Malaysia didn't begin until 1978. The Clearwater System is contained within the Gunung Api limestone block, the largest in the area.

Source: <http://www.bookrags.com/tandf/mulu-sarawak-tf/>

11. Siebenhengste-hohgant Hoehlsystem Switzerland 156.000km 1340.0m

Currently ranked as the 11th longest cave in the world, Siebenhengste-hohgant Hoehlsystem is also one of the deepest, currently ranked at 22nd. The exploration began in 1966 when the first 3 entrances were discovered. Currently there are 34 known entrances to the cave. Exploration has been conducted by Belgian caving clubs as well as the Swiss.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siebenhengste-Hohgant-H%C3%B6hle>

12. Schoenbergssystem
(RaucherkarHoehle-Feuertal-hoehlsystem) Austria 130.190km 1060.0m

13. Ozernaja - Gypsum Ukraine 123.191km 8.0m

Also called Blue Lakes Cave, these caverns served as a sanctuary for Jews escaping Nazi persecution during WWII. Thirty-eight people survived for 527 days underground by sending only a few young men and boys to the surface to scrounge for food and fuel. All of them emerged alive when the danger was over. Artifacts and defaced writings on the walls can still be found in this gypsum cave.



Source: <http://www.easegill.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Ukraine%20Giant%20Gypsum%20Caves.html>

14. Bullita Cave System (Burke's Back Yard) Australia 120.400km 23.0m

In 1993 a CSS located an entrance to Burkes Backyard and surveyed 11km of passage. Over the next four years a further 46km of passage was added, partially by connection to two other caves to the north, and the system was named Bullita. Exploration turned south and by 2004 there was 93km of surveyed passage. By the end of 2004 the 100km marked was reached. Surveying and exploration continue, which could see Bullita move further up the list of long caves.

Source: Caves Australia No. 169 - March 2006

15. Shuanghe Dongqun	China	119.792km	593.0m
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A vague reference in the french language “Caves and Karst of China” is the only readily accessible information about this cave in the Chinese area of Suiyang.

Source: <http://www.grottes-et-karsts-de-chine.org/nlds/index.php?op=edito>

16. Sistema del Mortillano	Spain	114.000km	950.0m
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17. Systeme de Ojo Guarena	Spain	110.000km	193.0m
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18. Reseau Felix Trombe / Henne-Morte	France	105.767km	975.0m
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An expedition to Henne-Morte, including Norbert Casteret and Marcel Loubens, in 1941. Norbert's son Raoul is perched on the car. From: <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/g.casteret/page11.htm>

The Reseau Felix Trombe Henne-Morte is the longest cave in France. French wikipedia lists it as having 115km of caverns and 52 entrances. It is located in the French Pyrenees near the village of Arbas and the main cave complex was named after Felix Trombe, a well-known chemist, doctor and caver who explored it in 1947 along with another well-known French caver, Norbet Casteret. At that time they pushed it to be the deepest cave in France at -446m.

Source: http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9seau_F%C3%A9lix_Trombe

19. Sistema del Gandara	Spain	104.204km	814.0m
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20. Toca da Boa Vista	Brazil	102.500km	50.0m
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By 1999 84km of passage had been mapped and it now extends to just over 100km. It was, for quite some time, the longest known cave in the Southern Hemisphere (that title now belonging to the Bullita Cave System).

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toca_da_Boa_Vista

Upcoming Events

Scheduled club events for June did not take place due (mostly) to bad weather – let's hope we have better luck with the rest of winter!

Saturday: 24 - 25th July – SNOWSHOEING / XC SKI TRIP

Trip Leader: Dave Stuckey

Contact by: ASAP

What's involved?

The proposed Snow Shoeing / XC ski trip is intended as an opportunity to wander up into the back country in the vicinity of Porcupine Rocks at Perisher Valley, perhaps a bit further, select a campsite and experience snow camping. Participants will need to hire snow shoes or XC skis. It is not intended as an instruction in the use of XC skis. If the snow conditions permit, we may attempt to build a snow cave or igloo, however, you will need to take a tent. You will also need to be fully equipped for the worst that the weather can do and we will be carrying a GPS unit in the event of whiteout. Stoves will be mandatory.

It is proposed to drive down, very early on Saturday morning for brunch in Jindabyne, then drive to the Ski Tube and catch the train to Perisher Valley. From there, it will be on foot to the campsite, returning the next afternoon.

Please let me know early if you intend to participate in this trip.
We will attempt to car pool where possible.

You will need:

Tent, stove, warm clothing, food, hire or own XC skies and ski gear



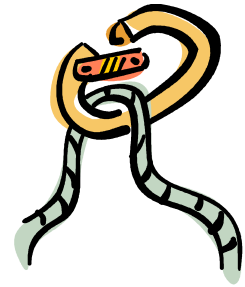
NULLARBOR CAVING TRIP

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact by: ASAP

It's not too late to join the Nullarbor expedition! All the planning is coming together in preparation for this trip, due to kick off in less than a month. Current plans include driving to Broken Hill on the 29th July and on to Ceduna on the 30th. From there we'll cross the border into WA and begin exploring a number of the caves in the area. The Nullarbor is a very remote location and we are required to be very self-sufficient. Should be an amazing trip!

Monthly Horrorscope



Your adventure starts for July 2010 ... or for any other time period you care to apply them to.

Harness - Jan 23 - Mar 2

You might find yourself feeling rather clingy this month. Don't be surprised if you feel the need for lots of attention, and plenty of physical contact, especially around peoples private parts.

Rope - Mar 3 - Apr 14

This month you will have a lot of hangers-on, which is nothing unusual for you. Try to be flexible and cater to their needs, but don't let yourself be overloaded or you might break.

Croll - Apr 15 - May 1

Things are looking up. You're on the rise. And when you're on top of your game and everything is looking peachy, there's only one way it can go.

Rack - May 2 - May 29

You will be stretched in all directions trying to cater for all your needs. You will have to sacrifice something in order to get anywhere. Try to pick something you don't really need, like you collection of wind samples, or your left leg.

Carabiner - May 30 - Jul 1

You will be the lynch-pin holding everyone together. Just make sure that when people around you start going to pieces, you take all the bits to the hospital with them, otherwise it could get really messy.

Cowstail - Jul 2 - Aug 12

If you constantly feel like you're at the arse end of the world, that's because you are. All the shit comes around you, you attract it like flies to, well, shit.

Tibloc - Aug 13 - Sep 22

Oh what a prickly personality you have! Always sticking you nose in where it doesn't belong and then being offended by some of the most minor comments. If you don't want people saying bad things about you, then mind your own business.

Figure Eight - Sep 23 - Oct 16

Hang your head in shame. You spend your whole life twisting things to your own ends, creating tangled messes for everyone around you. It will leave you ostracised, and rightly so.

Scaling Pole - Oct 17 - Nov 5

You're not the most stable person this month. People will climb all over you, which will threaten your stability right down to it's foundations. Hopefully you're on stable ground, or things could get messy.

Jumar - Nov 6 - Nov 21

Don't be surprised if you're feeling a little outdated. You'll lose races to younger competitors, younger employees will be promoted above you, your partner will leave you for someone younger. And guess what? It'll only get worse!

Piton - Nov 22 - Dec 15

You will die a horrible, horrible death.... Oops, sorry, that's next month. Now let me see.... You will die a horrible, horrible death.

Pit Stop - Dec 16 - Jan 22

It's all downhill for you. As you descend into the depths of oblivion, possibly the only thing that will save your sanity is the saying "what goes down must come back up".

News from the Underground

News from the underground aims to provide snippets of what has been happening around the world, primarily in the areas of caving and canyoning, climbing, mountaineering...

June 2010

End of May reports from Everest – Twenty-eight year-old Peter Kinloch summited Everest on May 25th but did not make it back down. He lost his sight and coordination and was suffering from frostbite. Three Sherpas helped him from the summit and stayed with him for as long as they could, before they were finally forced to leave him at 8,600m. There has been some debate about whether altitude sickness was responsible for Peter's death, as some reports had stated that he had suffered from temporary blindness before, and at much lower altitudes, but no one could offer firm suggestions as to what his condition could be.



Peter Kinloch on the summit of Mount Everest, Photo by David O'Brien
From: <http://www.summitclimb.com>

While there were a few more cases of frostbite, everyone else has made it off Everest for the season. The man turning the lights out was James McGuinness, who reported that Base Camp had an empty feel to it. Source: [ExplorersWeb](#). The action continues, however, in the Pakistan arena, on Nanga Parbat, K2, the Gasherbrums and Broad Peak. Also from [ExplorersWeb](#) comes news that polish climbers Artur Hajzer and Robert Szymczak fought high winds to summit Nanga Parbat on June 23, after climbing 15 hours from C4.

Perhaps you've been exploring the watery wonders of Challenger Deep or were kidnapped by aliens and tied to stakes in some remote and hitherto undiscovered island, but if you haven't heard the news about 'the hole' by now, you haven't been paying attention.



25m in diameter and more than 60m deep, the circular hole opened into carbonate rocks beneath Guatemala City. Miraculously only one person was killed, though a three storey house was removed from the face of the earth by the collapse. A similar sinkhole opened in 2007. The youtube video is here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhbuuW8PD8k>

... and apparently some people are convinced it *was* the work of aliens, who must have been taking a well-earned day off from kidnapping people.

An Australian man, John Parisi, 38, was killed when he slipped over while hiking on the Franz Josef glacier in New Zealand's South Island on June 12th. He apparently just fell over, but this caused him to lose consciousness and stop breathing. While he was quickly aided by staff of the tour he was on and flown to hospital, he could not be revived. Source: [SMH article](#).

Camping can be dangerous - June 12: Flash floods in Arkansas, USA killed 20 people when floodwaters rushed through the Albert Pike campground in the Ouachita National Forest in the middle of the night, flattening cars and sweeping away campsites. Some people survived by tying themselves to trees.

Within minutes the floodwaters had risen above the roofs of vehicles (rising at up to 2.4 metres/second) and were swiftly washing people away.

Park warning systems will be reviewed in the wake of the tragedy, as weather warnings were issued but not conveyed to campers.

SMH article [here](#), also photos and updated information from [National Geographic](#).



AP Press photo from SMH

Another 3D James Cameron film is being made... this one about cave diving. 'Sanctum', an action-thriller starring Richard Roxburgh and Ioan Gruffudd, is being filmed in a man-made cave set built on the Gold Coast in QLD. It is based on the real-life cave collapse experience of co-writer Andrew Wright while he was filming "Nullarbor Dreaming" in the 1990s. The story is set in a Papua New Guinea Cave. Source: <http://tecrec.wordpress.com/2010/03/18/sanctum-features-cave-diving-with-ccrs/>

10 June - Chinese authorities are issuing age limits for climbing Everest. The China Tibet Mountaineering Association (CTMA) have decided to restrict permits to mountaineers aged between 18 and 60 (though producing a medical certificate may allow exemptions). China hopes to stem the increasing level of competition to claim the 'youngest to climb' crown, with speed climber Pemba Dorjee Sherpa hoping an eleven year-old Nepalese boy will climb with him so the country can reclaim the youngest title from thirteen year-old Jordan Romero, who successfully scaled Everest last month. The International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA) is critical of the ban on older climbers, saying they bring a wealth of experience to mountaineering, and that climbers over 50 have no higher death rate than younger climbers. The oldest person to have climbed Everest is 76 year-old Nepalese Bahadur Serchen, though the former foreign minister of Nepal is reported to be considering a challenge. Source: [The Alpinist](#).

While the race to claim artificial 'age' titles appears to be descending into the ridiculous, inspiring many ambitious parents to exploit their children, it is possible much of the protectionism being

proposed, particularly on younger adventurers, is simply due to envy and ignorance. Talented 16 year-old sailor Abby Sunderland was rescued earlier this month after her Open 40 yacht was dismantled in the southern ocean while attempting to sail around the world. Abby's near miss prompted outrage that a teenager should be allowed to take such a terrible risk – the Dutch government had already prevented fourteen year-old Laura Dekker from leaving on her own round-the-world attempt. Tina Sjorgren captures the essence of the argument in her article "[Young Guns Current: Abigail Sunderland and the Kid who Flew to Space](#)" when she decries the current trend of an affluent, paranoid society hell-bent on extending childhood into the late twenties.

Caverinfo.com reports the [discovery](#) of 35,000 year-old paintings in Coliboaia cave, in northwest Romania. The paintings include a buffalo, horse and rhinoceros and is the oldest confirmed art in Central Europe. It must have been the week for it – a [report](#) from June 11 describes the discovery of the oldest leather shoe in a cave, Areni-1, in Armenia. The 5,500 year-old shoe is a single piece of leather and is perfectly preserved complete with shoelaces. The low humidity and cool conditions of the cave provide excellent conditions for preservation and ancient foodstuffs such as barley and apricots have been found in containers in the cave.



Photo by Boris Gasparian,
from [hertiage-key.com](#)

Mt Kundudo, near Garsum in Ethiopia, has been explored by Italian cavers. According to Caverinfo.com, the limestone mountain rises 2965m above the surrounding plain and caves have a depth potential of 1000m. The brief original [report](#) is in Italian and there is also a [youtube](#) video of one of the newly discovered caves (cave footage starts about 4 minutes into the video).

19 June - a 19 year-old man was injured in Johannsen's Cave, about 20km north of Rockhampton in the Capricorn Caves area of QLD, after falling 2 and a half metres on to his head. He was with a group who had climbed a fence to enter the cave, access for which is restricted. Rescuers said the man, who was critically injured, was a few hundred metres into the cave and that the confined space made the rescue particularly difficult. The cave is closed over winter to protect the bat population. Source: [The Morning Bulletin 21/6/10](#) and [ABC News](#).

The 12th International Cave Rescue Conference is to be held in Bulgaria at the Dryanovo Monastery, 8 – 15 May 2011, so you have plenty of time to prepare for that one, but if you'd like to go to the Sixth Iranian Caving gathering, you'd better get moving - it starts next week in Ghar Qalaichi-Bookan-West Azarbaijan-Iran. Details from [Caverinfo.com](#).

The European Speleological Federation and its European Cave Protection Commission has announced that during last General Assembly Meeting in Budapest, Hungary on May the 8th, 2010), the EUROPEAN SPELEOLOGICAL CHARTA FOR CAVE PROTECTION - "10 principles for cave and karst protection in Europe" was approved as a reference document for Cave and karst protection at European level. The half page charter is can be found at [eurospeleo.org](#).

Finally, Alex Honnold repeated his dramatic rope-free solo of Yosemite's Half-Dome on June 22, getting up the 23 pitch Regular Northwest Face route in just a little over 2 hours. He then climbed the Nose of El Capitan on the same day, in six hours, calling it a fairly relaxed climb. Alex used a rope to help him swing a couple of overhanging pitches. Report from: [The Alpinist](#).

Trip Calendar

Thursday 1st July
MSS MEETING

Quarterly MSS Meeting
To be held at: Jim Crockett's place
Contact: 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com

Weekend 24th / 25th July
Perisher Valley

Snow-shoeing / XC skiing
Trip Leader: David Stuckey
Contact: 0414 590305, stuckedl@cba.com.au
By: ASAP
Grade: Medium

31 July – 15 August
Nullarbor

Caving
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick__smith@hotmail.com
By: ASAP
Grade: Medium/Hard
Joint trip with NHVSS

Sunday 29th August
MSS Field Day

SRT & Rigging – Training & Revision
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick__smith@hotmail.com
By: 26th August

Week 11th – 19th September
Yarrangobilly
Permits acquired

Caving
Trip Leader: Beth Little
Contact: 0405 226 811, littlebeth78@hotmail.com
By: ASAP
Grade: Medium

Weekend 16 / 17 October
Coko Creek (if we can find it)
and Ilford Cave

Cave exploration
Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick__smith@hotmail.com
By: 11th October
Grade: Medium...ish
Joint trip with NHVSS

Weekend ? / ? October
Myall Lakes

Kayaking (date TBA)
Trip Leader: Bob Horn
Contact: (02) 9639 3672, randphorn@optusnet.com.au
By: End September
Grade: Easy/Medium

Milford Track
Mid-late January 2011

Hiking
Trip Leader: Johan Verhagen
Contact: 02 4758 9811, johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au
By: 15th June 2010 (because bookings need to be made)
Grade: Medium

Easter 2011
Chillagoe QLD

Chillicon
Trip Leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com
By: expressions of interest by Oct 2010
Grade: Conference with field Trips

May or June 2011
Timor Caves

Caving
TBA
