

CEGWA – New Club, New Caves!

Paul Hosie

CEGSA and CEGWA

IT IS my pleasure and privilege to announce to you that a new caving club has been established in WA – the Cave Exploration Group Western Australia (CEGWA) Inc. The club is named in honour of CEGSA—a group we are grateful to for setting such an excellent example, of how an active and enthusiastic caving club can be successfully run and so supportive of its members. CEGWA may not achieve a fraction of what CEGSA has done during its history, but we will certainly have a lot of fun trying!

CEGWA Background

CEGWA has been formed to fill a gap in WA caving—a community group where the social and recreational caving pursuits of its members takes priority. With more than 55 members and hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of limestone to explore, the future looks very bright indeed!

CEGWA Objectives

The Objects of the Group are as follows (direct extract from the CEGWA Constitution):

- To provide a safe, friendly and fun social environment for the Group's members.
- To explore, survey and study caves.
- To foster recreational caving, speleological research and the preservation of natural caves, with particular emphasis on the caves of Western Australia and the Nul-larbor Plain.
- To place on record the results of the Group's activities.
- To foster adherence to the Standards and Codes of Practice of the Australian Speleological Federation.
- To co-operate with land managers, traditional owners and other community groups in the furtherance of these aims.



The CEGWA Team

We are particularly proud and privileged to have the considerable experience and wisdom of people like Dr Roger Howlett, Frances Loveday, Mike Newton and John Cugley as invaluable members of the CEGWA team.

All successful clubs know that young people provide the enthusiasm and energy needed to get out there and do great things

and we have a number of youthful members (aren't we all?) to keep the 'older' members of the team motivated. Peter Rattigan and Kym Hosie have applied their creative talents to producing and maintaining the dynamic and beautiful www.cegwa.org.au website and *CEGWA Capers*, our quarterly newsletter, both of which we are very proud. I invite you to check it out and give us your constructive feedback—it will be very welcome.

An application for corporate membership of the ASF has been submitted for consideration at the next ASF Council meeting in January 2010.

Your club's support of our application would be greatly appreciated!

Recent Cave Explorations in WA

In the true spirit of cave exploration that CEGWA represents in WA, we are happy to report that a number of discoveries have recently been made by our members, including several beautifully decorated caves, over 100 karst features not yet in the ASF KID



John Cugley—not so squeezey

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King Browns Cave—coral roof and formations



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New Cave—Mudmens Palace

and a possible new cave diving site which has all the indications of being a significant cave system—stay tuned for that one later in 2010 (mum's the word!)

Eneabba

Probably the most significant discovery we have made was on June 26th this year when I happened across a small sandy doline under a bush thicket in the Beekeepers Nature Reserve. (CA176:5)

The water all drained into a small cluster of solution tubes—lo and behold, one of them was big enough to access and dropped 3 m straight down into a low roofed, 30 m wide x 1.5 m high chamber.

Crawlways lead to the three main chambers of the cave, the largest of which is 35 m in diameter and 8 m high. Virtually the entire chamber—ceiling, floor, walls and boulders are covered in multi-coloured speleothem deposits, the diversity of which is remarkable.

In addition to the regular straws, stals and flowstones, there are pendulites, shawls (including one 3 m long and 1 m wide), moonmilk, cave coral, calcified tree roots, dogtooth spar crystal in gour pools, helictites, cave pearls and the fascinating soil heligmites which we refer to as the Mudmen.

A low wide chamber at the furthest SE extent of the cave is notable for the number

and size of the Mudmen it contains including some that are growing off the top of stalagmites. This unusual and beautiful place we have named the Mudmens Palace.

Peter Rattigan, Kym Hosie and myself were the privileged first to explore and photograph the cave (designated 6-E100) on 27th June 2009. Mike Newton and Kim Halliday joined me one week later to begin the



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King Browns Cave—coralloid sucker pod

survey of the cave and John Cugley helped set up the track marking in early August. Mike Newton has been caving in WA for over 30 years and his comment, 'That's the best decorated cave in the Eneabba area—better than Weelawadgi, I reckon,' is a great accolade.

I think what makes it stand out from all the other caves in the area is the pristine condition and diversity of the speleothems, which is so rewarding to see and our number one aim is to keep it that way.

The land manager (Mr Keith Hockey, DEC-Jurien) has been briefed on the discovery.

Our intention is to complete the survey and track marking of the cave prior to submitting a report to the land manager with recommendations for its future management.

There is no doubt, this is a significant discovery and the cave will probably be locked and added to the Caves Access Committee list for future protection.

Nambung National Park

In addition to 6E-100, CEGSA/CEGWA members have also discovered and commenced exploration and mapping of two beautifully decorated caves in the Nambung National Park.

The park is located about 200 km north



Kaisers Cave – Roger Howlett in newly discovered chamber

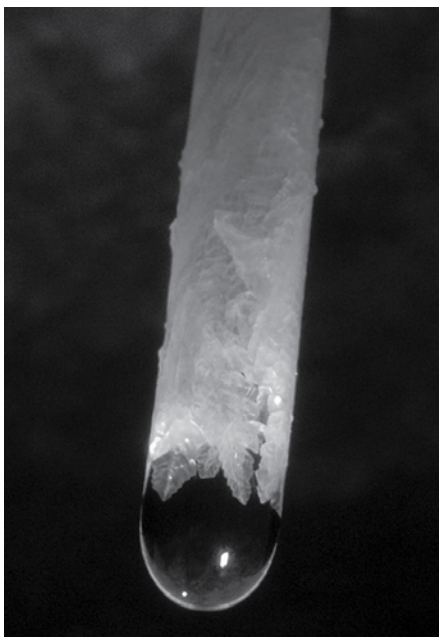
of Perth and 100 km south of Eneabba and is famous for the Pinnacles which are of course, limestone!

The karst region is referred to as South Hill River (6SH). Kaisers Cave was discovered by Peter Rattigan on 31 July 2009 when he fell into it.

The initial discovery and exploration revealed the stunningly decorated main chamber—Kaisers Hall (25 m long x 15 m wide x 3 m high) and a large floor-pit which was unsafe to descend without some rope.

In late September, Dr Roger Howlett and the author descended the floor-pit to explore another 100 m+ of finely decorated passages and chambers in the cave.

In early October 2009, a small hole in a shallow depression a short distance from Kaisers Cave was investigated and found to lead into a fascinating cave in which all the walls and ceilings from the entrance to the lowest point (approximately 20 m below



Nambung National Park straw detail

the surface) are covered in a thick layer of the most delicate and pure white cave coral imaginable.

A detailed survey of both caves has commenced and it is hoped this will help us to identify a connection between them so we can publish a map of the entire cave system.

More to Come!

Some of the photos of the new caves are with this article, but the CEGWA website www.cegwa.org.au has more photos in full colour for you to check out, together with more details of the caves and the stories of their discovery and exploration.

We look forward to contributing more cave and karst news to you in the future.

Kindest regards

Paul Hosie

President

Cave Exploration Group

— Western Australia

E-SPELEO BULLETIN

A publication of the Australian Speleological Federation

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