



Rimstone News

Official correspondence of Rimstone Cooperative Ltd

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Rimstone Cooperative Ltd.
Rimstone Cooperative Ltd.
A Community Advancement Society

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Editorial

The Rimstone Co-operative has been growing with **Homeleigh*** being used quite a lot in recent times.

The **Lounge Room project** that Peter Robertson supervised has opened out the front of Homeleigh making for very relaxed premises. By moving the furniture out onto the verandah, the room just accommodated the 50 students and staff in December for the "Geology and Plant Life" study course lectures and reports ([see more details](#) on page 2 below).

Purchasing the **Shades of Death Cave** property has added to responsibilities. The Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) has loaned us the funds to purchase the cave property outright for which we are very grateful. This loan is without interest or loan establishment fees but just a written agreement. The loan was made available because it fitted with the ASF objectives and was "core business" of conserving and protecting Australia's karst. Daryl Carr is managing the property and many projects are on the go with the cave itself and the surface facilities and infrastructure. We need more donors to help pay off the property ([see details about how to donate](#) on page 6 below). We are holding off completion of the inside Homeleigh toilet and shower facilities (adjacent to the refurbished lounge room) until this debt is paid off.

We are required to ensure Homeleigh as accommodation premises has appropriate infrastructure and safety checking of the premises. You will see information on the FMClarity software to monitor our compliance with these requirements [on page 7 below](#).

We recently had an uninvited "guest" using Homeleigh and we are undertaking some security upgrades on the Lounge Room external door and we will also change the door access code; but we may need to do more than this.

We welcome several New Members to Rimstone Co-op, including the previous owners of Shades of Death Cave (see list below).

Rimstone Co-op Calendar

May 19-20 — Homeleigh Working Bee.

See more details below.

Friday 14 Sept — Rimstone Co-op AGM

Recent past: 10-12 March — Old Timers Weekend and M3 works (report below).

This Newsletter also provides information about the next Working Bee in May, and includes a request for volunteers for several projects. Please help us wherever you can.

Also feel free to send feedback or suggestions, comments, etc. to the Rimstone Co-operative directors: directors@rimstone.org.au.

Nicholas White, Rimstone Co-op Secretary

Newsletter Editor's Note: Many thanks to all of the people who have submitted reports, notes, text and comments as well as lots of photos for this newsletter, resulting in a bumper edition. In fact there are so many photos that some have been included rather small so as to fit them all in (which does not do them justice). But all photos are stored in a Facebook photo album, so you can still see much larger versions of all photos by clicking on the included links.

Rob Brain, Rimstone News Editor

* – About Homeleigh

For newer Rimstone members and other readers, Homeleigh is a building that was built in about 1885 in the rural town of Buchan in East Gippsland. It has been used variously over the years as a hotel, a guest house, and for other purposes.

A group of cavers formed the Rimstone Co-operative in 1974 with a key objective to raise funds and purchase Homeleigh for use by cavers.

Further information about Rimstone, and about Homeleigh, can be found on our website:

www.rimstone.org.au

HOMELEIGH 2017 WORKING BEE 30 September – 1 October 2017

This working bee substantially completed the replacement of the weather boards above the verandah at Homeleigh which had deteriorated from too much sun and weather. This included three of the four gable ends (on north side and south side), and the long planks between the gables (see two gables in the photo below).



Homeleigh north wall and refurbished gables
([see larger photo](#))

The long run of planks along the west and east sides above the verandah roof were also replaced. The old boards were replaced with new cement sheet weather boards. Only one remaining gable needs finishing. Some twenty people participated in the weekend.

The next photo here shows some of the team in action replacing the weatherboards in fabulous weather conditions.



Working bee - the boys at work
([see larger photo](#))

[See more photos in a Facebook album.](#)

Scrubby Creek Cave M49:



M49 Tufa Terraces ([see larger photo](#))

Recent Homeleigh updates

The remodelled front lounge room at Homeleigh is so large that it won't all fit into one photo. But here is a shot of the new wood heater,



The new lounge room and heater
([see larger photo](#))

surrounded by comfy chairs.

And Brendan Brooker has been busy experimenting with some new equipment, and has produced a number of bedroom door number plates — like the sample shown here. Thank you Brendan.



New door numbers
([see larger photo](#))

Geology and Plant Life Course conducted by Latrobe University

This was a credit field course based at Homeleigh for a week in December 2017. The course itself is a blend of geology and botany. The course students studied how the underlying geology dictates the flora and fauna of a particular site, including the Tufa Terraces on the Scrubby Creek Property (see adjacent photo at left).

As a part of the standard course, the students write management reports for the sites they visit. Some of those in this trip were of the Tufa Terraces. One of the significant plants on the terraces is Wild Sorghum that has disappeared from much of its range due to grazing.

Practical conservation is also part of the course and the students participated in cutting the blackberries and painting the stems with a strong herbicide at the Tufa Terraces. This will need to be repeated this autumn.

Some 50 students and staff stayed at Homeleigh for the week, which provided us with some very useful income.

These visits to Homeleigh are in line with the aims and objectives of the co-operative.

Nicholas White

PROPERTY UPDATE

M-3 Shades of Death Property

We still need more donations to help fund the purchase of the cave property. ([See more on](#) this on page 6 below.)

There has been a lot of cleaning up of the fenced property. This has involved clearing rubbish and trimming back trees and weed plants which had become overgrown, and this required numerous trips to the tip. Initial work in the cave has included replacing some steps and repairing rails. More is being planned and some painting is being undertaken.

Miles Pierce has been assessing the lighting system and generator. The generator needs some adjustments on the output side. It is believed that these few adjustments will allow us to light the cave for visitors such as on Open Days.

It would be nice to publish a booklet about the cave, its discovery, exploration and development as a Show Cave (volunteers needed please).

It is proposed to have Open Days on occasion but there is no intent to open the cave commercially. The purchase of a booklet or gold coin donation is all that we would ask.

At this stage we will work with the existing electrical infrastructure rather than rewiring for a low voltage solar system.

We now have insurance to indemnify directors and members when taking friends or visitors into the cave.

Some broken speleothem samples are currently being dated at Melbourne University to see when they formed. The results could be very interesting.

We are working with an existing map of John and Kym van Dyk's to define areas for investigation, and further surveying as well as for track marking or cleaning. Daryl Carr needs volunteers to undertake these projects. So the message is that there are a lot projects which members and the VSA could undertake.

Please contact Daryl or the directors if interested

Nicholas White

Photo: M-3 Cave
(Daryl Carr)
([see larger photo](#))



NEW RIMSTONE MEMBERS

The Rimstone Co-op directors are pleased to welcome a number of new members. The funds from the shares taken up go into the Shades of Death Cave property purchase.

Peter Guest	Geoff Rebecchi
Paul Grimmond	Graham Shaw
Melanie Roberts	Mary Shaw
Nick Andrews	Darren Camp
Kristen Wills	Stephanie Blake
Ian Barnard	

Most of these new members are active cavers and we especially welcome Geoff Rebecchi, Graham and Mary Shaw and Darren Camp who were involved in the development of Shades of Death Cave. Their knowledge is proving invaluable to us.

Nicholas White

WANTED / NEEDED — VOLUNTEERS

We are currently very keenly looking for some volunteers to give us a little hand:

- **Orchard Manager** — The Homeleigh orchard is looking tired with a number of dead or dying trees. Apart from leaving some grass for tents it is time for some changes including planting.
- **Editor for Shades Booklet** — This would cover karst questions and context in landscape, history of discovery and use including development as a Show Cave, survey, photographs etc. There is much material available, some needs writing and collecting. Publishing is the next phase and we do have people with skills in this.
- **Tufa Terrace Manager** — The fencing needs completion and blackberry and other weeds need being brought under control.

Nicholas White

Booking accommodation at Homeleigh

To book accommodation, please make sure to use the email address: accomm@rimstone.org.au so that the on-duty person can reply promptly. (Else your request might get lost.)

Contacting directors

Nigel CookeM 0409 967 084
Gary Coleman	...H 9808 3716 M 0418 108 274
Darryl PierceM 0428 746 139
Mark TregellasM 0417 840 692
Nicholas White	..H 9386 3970 M 0427 110 143

or email: directors@rimstone.org.au

TRIP REPORT

Old Timers' Weekend March 2018

On the 2018 Labour day weekend of 10-12th March, a bunch of old timers and not-so-old timers got together in Buchan for a weekend of socialising, interspersed with bouts of hard labour.

The focus of the socialising was a BBQ on the Saturday evening. The hard labour consisted of an all-day working bee, carried out on Saturday in and around the Shades of Death cave.

This was followed by a Sunday morning trip to the tip to dispose of three trailer loads of rubbish.

A few of the more hardy souls just could not leave it at that. They also had a trip into Scrubby Creek Cave on Sunday afternoon to remove the old gate (the one that you have had to squeeze past for the past umpteen years) and to bring out rubbish that had been left near the start of the sump.

As a result of the large effort in Shades of Death, the hand rails have been sanded and painted. Washed-in debris has been swept up and taken out of the cave.

On the surface, much rubbish has been removed from the land around the cave entrance. A solar panel has been installed to power a light that will be located just inside the cave entrance. The steel security gate has received extensive surgery, to make sure that it can be opened and closed easily.

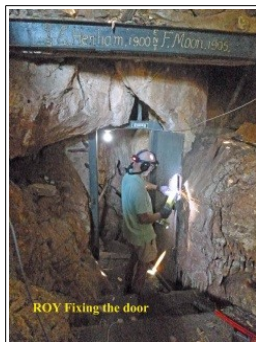
Thirty three people attended the BBQ on Saturday evening; most of them stayed at Homeleigh. All-in-all it was a very successful weekend. Old friends caught up, and much valuable work was done.

A big thank you to Daryl Carr for planning the working bee and also for cooking an excellent BBQ meal.

Here's to the next time.



Hand rails painted
([see larger photo](#))



Fixing the cave door
([see larger photo](#))

Brian Carter

Old Timers' Weekend more details

Brian Carter initiated a VSA Old Timers Buchan reunion on the Labour Day long weekend. "Now", thought Daryl the M3 projects coordinator, "what would be an excellent activity to undertake?"

The immediate thought was to run a combined VSA/Rimstone working bee at M3 (Shades of Death) cave. Whilst Brian began to contact the Old Timer cavers, Daryl began planning the work schedule and the VSA contacts.

Well, we ended up with 30 VSA & Rimstone Members booking into Homeleigh (remembering there are only 12 bedrooms and 2 bungalows to accommodate everyone). There were all ages, and they were all intent on helping with the M3 jobs or just relaxing and catching up with old friends, checking out the Homeleigh renovations, being very impressed, and even venturing into M3 cave to see the property that we now own.

A catered BBQ on Saturday evening served up food for 35 happy old and new cavers, and even some Parks Victoria staff.

But what was actually achieved?

Work teams were formed for each project task listed:-

- Fix that jamming M3 cave door — Done! with a long term fix, expect no more trouble here (see photo at left).
- Continue with the internal cleaning of M3 — Iron pipes, wooden planks taken out from below the walkways, rubbish and dirt cleaned from flowstone, still more to be done, but a really good start.
- Continue with the external grounds clean up — The old broken fridges & stove were taken away, much rusty old iron scrap and pipes and wood and branches cleaned away. A pile of burnable scrap wood and branches also stacked for burn-off this winter. We're starting to see what a tidy area may look like. (3 tip loads today, that makes 10 tip loads in total to date.)
- Top-coat the previously prepared hand rails — Looking good. Also used twisted wire brushes on battery powered tools to remove rust from handrails — works well. ([See photo on the web.](#))
- Further planning of a recreational caving and SRT training route — Commenced the placement of the required permanent safety belays along the recreational caving route.




Cave cleaning
([see larger photo](#))

- Replaced a burnt-out power outlet on the 5kVA generator. The generator voltage regulator is faulty so we have an output of close to 300V not 230 volts as intended. The regulator details have been noted and a replacement regulator will be sourced. Meanwhile, do NOT use or start the generator until the regulator is replaced.

So a great weekend and lots of jobs progressed by a truly great mob of VSA/Rimstone members.

Many thanks to all.

Daryl Carr (M3 Projects Coordinator)

 [See more working bee photos in a Facebook Album.](#)

TRIP REPORT

Scrubby Creek Cave (M49) working bee update

This was a side working bee on the Labour Day weekend, which made some good progress. Remembering that Rimstone Co-operative bought the Scrubby Creek property back in 2012 ([see more details on our website](#)).

We removed the materials that had been used to divert the underground stream to allow easier access to the cave and a safe access through the sump. So the old unused gate in the access crawl was removed, and a new secure lock to the current gate was fitted.

There is now a more available secure system of keys available for Scrubby access. These keys are copy-controlled. The sump is at this time safe. Keep an eye open for future M49 trips.

It is also very useful to note the following few words about the property, cattle grazing and electric fences.

Our neighbour, Doug, leases the property for grazing purposes, and maintains temporary electric fences across the Slippery Pinch & Sunny Point roads (these two roads, or actually one continuous road, provide access to our property from the Buchan-Murrindal bitumen road at the north end, or from Sunny Point to the south).

On our visit, both of these fences were down, so I gave Doug a call to advise (he was up north at the time) and he was very grateful for the heads-up, and he asked that we reconnect it across the road.

So the electric fence across the road was reconnected, and I can confirm it is active. With any visits to M49, unless told otherwise by Doug, please reconnect both the Slippery Pinch and Sunny Point road electric fences, even if they are disconnected or down at the time of your access.

Daryl Carr

NEXT WORKING BEE

19-20 May 2018

The next Rimstone Co-op working bee will be in May, and focused on Homeleigh. It will be great to have as many people as possible to help out with this.

Accommodation is free for participants, and the main tasks will include:

- Total clean inside of Homeleigh (a Spring clean in Autumn).
- New external door for the Lounge Room.
- Finish weather board replacement on the last gable.
- Paint new weather boards above verandahs.
- Re-install gutters to rainwater tank.
- Fix leaking taps — both main building and shower block
- Possible Room 8 refurbishment?

Nicholas White

M-3 Shades of Death Cave — HISTORY Murrindal, Victoria

In this update on the M3 property that is now owned by the members of Rimstone Co-operative, we include a little history, plus some information on how you can help us to secure magnificent property like this through simple donations to the Karst Conservation Fund.

The Shades of Death Cave got its name at the time of its discovery in the early 1900s. In the 1960s several cavers decided to develop the cave. It was operated as a Show Cave during holiday periods. The guides gave a very relaxed and informative tour. Graham Shaw and Geoff Rebeci were amongst the original developers and were the owners but decided managing the cave had become too difficult for them. They offered the property to Rimstone Co-operative which is a Community Advancement Society.



Photograph: Looking down the entrance chamber of the cave with the original owners and now members of Rimstone Co-operative Ltd, Geoff Rebeci (left) and Graham Shaw on landing (Photo D Carr).

[See larger photo.](#)

continued next page.../

Rimstone Co-operative, after assessing the cave, purchased the cave property with assistance from the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) and the support of the Karst Conservation Fund. This is the second cave property purchase as the Co-operative purchased the Scrubby Creek Cave property in 2012.

Our strategy with Shades of Death Cave is to have occasional Open Days where we interpret the cave for friends and the local community.

Early work has included tidying up both the external property and the cave infrastructure (pathways, stairs, lighting, etc.). Together with the Victorian Speleological Association (VSA) we have started a program of carefully surveying the cave and assessing areas that need track marking or cleaning. We expect to have recreational caving access trips, and further exploration possible.

We have also embarked on initial scientific work with some speleothem samples being taken for dating. As well, the biota is crying out for assessment! This whole project takes the Co-operative into challenging new areas with many opportunities for responsibly and sustainably managing the cave.

M3 — More funding needed

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated with just a small donation.


Please consider donating to this property purchase by donating directly to Rimstone Co-operative Ltd, or as a tax deductible donation via the ASF Karst Conservation Fund. Details of how to donate directly or via the ASF Karst Conservation Fund (tax deductible) are available at <http://www.rimstone.org.au/m3-cave.html>. This is a targeted fundraising campaign to support the purchase.

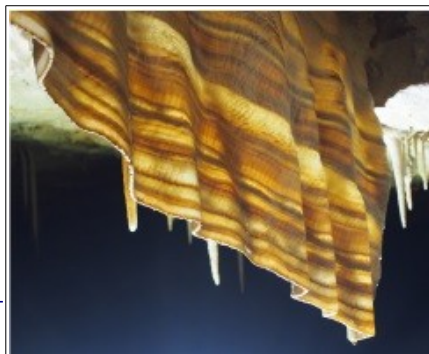
Nicholas White

More information:

ASF — <http://www.caves.org.au/>

VSA — <https://caving.org.au/>

 See more photos of M-3 Shades of Death cave in our Facebook photo Album.



Fantastic shawl / bacon
(see larger photo)

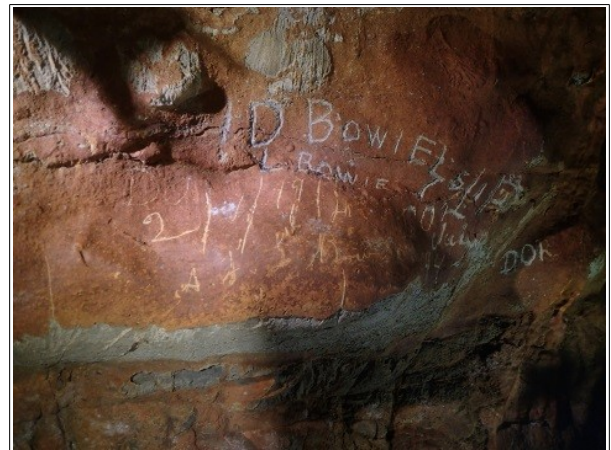
Bowies Cave at Scrubby Creek

The Scrubby Creek property has a cave on the hillside facing the Scrubby Creek dry valley, well up from the Scrubby Creek Cave itself.

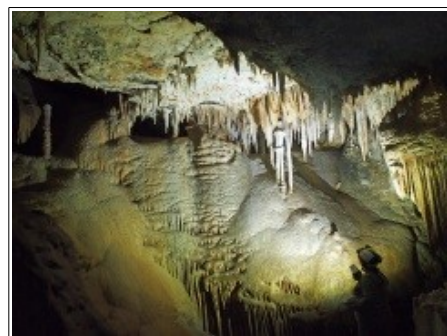
There were several visits to this cave two years ago. Neil Wilson struck a high carbon dioxide level that Daryl Carr and Lou Williams knew about from years previously. Neil has proposed trying a venturi approach to lower the carbon dioxide level. This has not been attempted as yet. It is a relatively benign approach without any physical modifications to the cave. Lower CO₂ levels would allow further exploration of the cave.

On the November 2013 visit photos were taken of the graffiti showing Bowie names from 1912. I received several photos from Cath Hemley (see below). I sent one to Rhonda Coates and asked whether the Bowie family was known locally. The same day she returned some information with a photograph of a house. Her father Jock Coates knew the house. Some Bowie family information is printed below.

Some detective work revealed that the original Bowie house is still in the Buchan Valley and it is the house at end of Sunny Point Rd over the Buchan Bridge. Daryl Carr and Rudy Frank sorted this out with Mick Roberts over a number of cups of tea.



Bowie Cave signatures with 1912 dates.
Photo :C. Hemley (see larger photo)



M-3 Cave (Daryl Carr)
(see larger photo)

BOWIE FAMILY (source Rhonda Coates)

Here is a brief snippet about the Bowie family, which is relevant due to the close proximity to the Scrubby Creek property, thanks to Rhonda Coates.

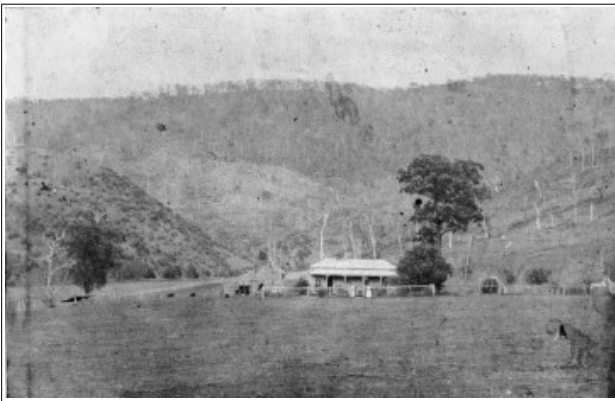
William Bowie moved to Buchan in the 1870s. The family settled at 'The Glen' on the Buchan River just before the Slippery Pinch on the left. Four children were: May, Arthur, Frank and George.

William Bowie was one of Buchan's first Shire Councillors. It is said (word of mouth) that William and another man named Reeves built a dividing fence between the Buchan and Gelantipy Stations in 1877 which was symbolic of the end of the 'squatting era' in the district.

The Bowie family was involved in farming and transport. In the early days Arthur had a five horse team that regularly travelled to Gelantipy. In later years both Frank and George held mail contracts.

The Bowie family had one of the first T-Model Ford cars in Buchan. Frank Bowie was a keen photographer. They were also a very musical family and helped form a band of nine to play for dances that included all four Bowie children. They sold their property in 1923 and moved to Maffra.

Below is a photograph of the Bowie Homestead I presume was taken by Frank.



The Bowie Homestead ([see larger photo](#))



M-3 Cave (Daryl Carr)
([see larger photo](#))

Further steps into the present using FMClarity software

Rimstone has been donated the use of some special computer software to assist with the maintenance and management of our facility.

This is FMClarity's **Facility Management Software Platform**, to help ensure that we are meeting our Preventative Maintenance Regulatory Compliance requirements and greatly simplify the management of such things as "Essential Safety Measures Inspections" (ie. fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, etc.) for a board of directors who live considerable distances from Homeleigh. Simultaneously removing a problem caused by the hard copy folder, which resides in Buchan, being the best means to easily confirm what has (or hasn't) been completed and replace it with a digital interface accessible to all.

The software will allow the Rimstone directors to easily confirm a number of things including: (a) that all legally required preventative maintenance inspections have been completed correctly and within specified time frames; (b) manage the subcontractors performing these works remotely from anywhere with mobile coverage; (c) view photographic reports; and (d) see actual works completed rather than just receiving a bill in the mail weeks to months after the event. We will also have the ability to interact with subcontractors in real time to solve any issues that may arise during an inspection and generate an immediate purchase order to have works completed at that time rather than incur future call-out costs etc.

FMClarity's platform software is extensive, designed for and used in the corporate management of huge building complexes. Rimstone will only be using a very small percentage of its capabilities. However, the simplicity of the user interface will, following full implementation, allow any member the ability to log on and check on the state of works via a traffic light system. Additionally documents such as the Co-operatives Act 1996, Co-operatives Regulations 1997, Rules for Rimstone Co-operative 1999 and New Member Information sheet have already been uploaded to allow all members ease of access to our key documents at any time.

An informational brochure on this product is available to members, and there is also more information on the company's website: <http://fmclarity.com/>.

Darryl Pierce