



Rimstone News

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

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Editorial

Since the Rimstone Co-operative AGM in late September, there have been a few changes.

Firstly, the AGM meeting itself was interesting, because a few of the many members there were surprised to find out they had not paid their recently due membership fees, making them ineligible to vote at the AGM, nor qualified to hold office.

After being a very active director for many years, Nicholas White decided to step back a little, and not re-nominate for a director role. Nick has put in many years and many hours of hard work in this role, as well as responding to the many booking requests for accommodation at Homeleigh. Many thanks, Nick, for all the tireless effort.

We now have one new, and relatively young, director on the team – Thomas Elms. There is some information about Tom, and the other directors, in the following pages.

The team of directors have had their first meeting and nominated Nadine Muresan to chair the team, and Nadine has prepared an informative update – see it on page 3.

Daryl Carr has prepared an update on the improvements at M3 Shades of Death cave*, with photos – see page 2.

Development and maintenance work has continued at Homeleigh. An update report is included below.

And the Rimstone Treasurer has a few very important words to say in a report below. Some Rimstone members are about to forfeit their shares in Rimstone – are you one of them?

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the Rimstone Co-operative Newsletter.

Rob Brain
Newsletter editor

Send feedback to: directors@rimstone.org.au.

* – Property owned by Rimstone Co-operative.

Upcoming Rimstone events

14-17 December – Homeleigh working bee.
Stay tuned for details.

2024 – Rimstone Cooperative's 50th birthday – Put that in your calendar now!



Oww! - Who put that mouse trap behind there?



*Most of the people at the 2023 AGM
(see more photos on page 7)*

Rimstone Co-op directors

Nadine Muresan, Nigel Cooke,
Peter Stewart, Paul Brooker, Tom Elms.
Contact by email: directors@rimstone.org.au

M3 improvements September 2023

The M3 (Shades of Death) cave electricity generator exhaust is now vented to outside of the machinery shed. The generator was moved closer to the shed's east wall. A 5cm diameter metal pipe was fixed through the corrugated metal shed wall and an extension attached to the generator exhaust to fit into the 5cm exit pipe.

Replacement power leads were installed on a new cable runway from the generator to the power distribution panel.

Inside M3 the cave lighting was improved near the end of the "Hall of the Mountain King" chamber. The massive flowstone area near the end of the "Hall" is now highlighted nicely (see photo below).

**Roy Furness
Miles Pierce
Daryl Carr**



The generator in a new position in the machinery shed



Hall of the Mountain King - Miles appreciating the improvements

The Rimstone board of directors

Chairman – Nadine Muresan

I am so excited to be taking on the role of Chairman of Rimstone Co-operative and to continue in the great footsteps of Nick White.

As Chairman, my goals are to:

- Increase the involvement of all directors on the board.
- Keep members informed of decisions and directions being made.
- Make the process more inclusive.

I have been visiting Homeleigh for over three years and have started and finished projects throughout that time. Over the last year, I have dedicated more time as a director to finishing jobs such as painting, installing new kitchen stoves, and ensuring there is enough cut wood ready for all members to enjoy.

My role as Chairman is to:

- Show leadership.
- Help with the visions of the directors and members.
- Write and drive the agenda.
- Ensure that the board operates effectively and fulfils its duties to the members.
- Facilitate discussions and debates.
- Shape a strong, healthy direction for Rimstone collectively.

We hope to have more consistent scheduling of working bees in the future and with monthly newsletters these will help keep all members informed and allow them to plan ahead and come and lend a hand.

Apart from Rimstone I also carry many hats. First and foremost, I am mum to an amazing little 5year old caver Edmund and a wife to the amazing Bogdan Muresan. Within VSA I am the program organiser and editor and publisher for the Nargun newsletter. Through the ASF I am now also the editor and publisher of Caves Australia which I guess led me to also be the chairman for the upcoming ASF conference in 2025 which will be held in Buchan.

I also work with my husband (Bo), as arborists, hedge trimming and tree works. Before this I taught photography and media studies to year's 10-12 students. I am organised, pro-active and keen to work with people and bring them together.

Through this newsletter you'll see a short introduction to all the directors and their goals throughout this year. I'm very excited to be working with such a great group and look forward to seeing what the next year brings.

**Nadine
Muresan**

Rimstone Directors' Meeting Minutes Summary 9 October 2023

On 9th October, the first Rimstone directors meeting since the AGM, was conducted via Zoom with attendees: Nigel Cooke, Nadine Muresan, Peter Stewart, and Tom Elms, while Paul Brooker sent his apologies.

Key appointments included: Nadine Muresan as Chairperson, with Nigel Cooke taking on the roles of Treasurer and Membership Officer. Nigel and Nadine jointly manage Homeleigh Bookings, with a future goal of automating the process. Paul Brooker has been assigned the responsibilities of Property Manager for Homeleigh, and Peter Stewart remains as the Secretary.

Nick White now manages Scrubby Creek property, and Daryl Carr is responsible for M3 Shades of Death cave. Sandra Brooker oversees Homeleigh supplies, while Rob Brain holds the positions of Newsletter Editor and Website Manager. Tom Elms is flexible in his role, offering assistance as required and taking on specific projects as needed.

At the meeting there was a discussion about M3 cave's specific projects and the need for more communication with members. This included the clarification that "access to the wild sections of M3 is for specific projects only" and currently the only project is the survey (Nigel Cooke).

Nadine addressed concerns from some members regarding a lack of communication from the directors to the general membership. It was decided to work towards releasing a monthly newsletter that includes a summary of the previous meeting's minutes and other relevant information.

Homeleigh

Discussions at the meeting revolved around various Rimstone projects, such as Homeleigh's internal bathroom project, working bees, and plans for the organisation's 50th Anniversary in 2024.

The need for an archive of essential documents was addressed, and the potential refurbishment of the large bungalow was suggested as a priority target. The meeting also touched upon concerns related to the septic tank, which will be pumped out to prepare for the installation of the new bathroom.

Nadine will run a working bee from 14th to 17th December to finish painting the veranda balustrade and the workshop/equipment store. The external timber of the north window of the lounge room has weathered and requires attention.

Nadine Muresan (Chairman)

Outgoing director Nick White

The 2023-24 team of directors would like to acknowledge the significant contribution that Nick White has made to Rimstone over many years.

Nick has served in various roles including Chair and Secretary and in the words of one ex-Chair he has been the glue that has held Rimstone together.

Nick has taken the lead role in conserving caves and their associated flora and fauna and was instrumental in Rimstone's acquisition of the Scrubby Creek and Shades Of Death properties and in their ongoing management. He has also tirelessly managed Homeleigh bookings for many years.

Thank you Nick!

About Rimstone directors

Peter Stewart (Secretary)

I became a Director in 2021 and I am currently Secretary. My goals are to contribute to the responsible management of Rimstone and its assets through: (1) participation in decision making, (2) ensuring that Rimstone complies with requirements of government, insurers, etc., and (3) preparing minutes of director's meetings which accurately document both the decisions made and also who is responsible for implementing those decisions.

I started my caving journey in the early 1980s and I am one of the many Peters associated with VSA and Rimstone.

Peter Stewart

Nigel Cooke (Treasurer, Membership)

Greetings to all members. I am excited to take on the role of director of the board this time around, as we embark on a fresh approach and rejuvenation of our cooperative's operational aspects.

I eagerly anticipate implementing moderate changes that will align Rimstone's operations with the current membership's needs while remaining relevant to the modern environment in which we operate. While change is inevitable, preserving the traditions of Rimstone, which date back almost 50 years to its foundation, remains a top priority for me.

I have full confidence that the current board will prioritise inclusion and communication with our membership. Expect to receive regular updates from us in the coming months. Communication should be a two-way street, and I encourage all members to reach out to the directors and share their thoughts.

Currently, I wear three hats: Treasurer,

Bookings, and Membership.

As Treasurer, my role is centred around maintaining financial records and safeguarding the financial interests of our membership. This includes reconciling accounts, managing bill payments, issuing invoices, and diligently following up with late payments – all the standard responsibilities of a treasurer.

In my capacity as the Bookings Officer, I focus on coordinating members' access to Homeleigh and ensuring the efficiency of our accommodation booking system. I handle booking requests, allocate rooms based on members' preferences, and follow up with members-in-charge (MICs) after their stay.

As the Membership Officer, I am responsible for receiving membership applications, verifying application details and payments, and presenting the applications for approval at directors' meetings. Once approved, the Chairman extends a warm welcome to new members. I also maintain the share register.

Beyond my involvement in the cooperative, I am currently an engineering student at Swinburne University, nearing the end of my four-year study in Robotics and Mechatronics.

I'm looking forward to having the freedom once again to dedicate much of my time to caving. In the coming months, I plan to spend a considerable amount of time in M3 cave, working on completing the survey.

An associated hobby and project that I am excited to pursue, once exams are over, is the construction of an autonomous cave survey robot. This venture combines my passion for engineering and caving, and I can't wait to see where it leads.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as a director, and I look forward to working together to make Rimstone even better for all of us.

Nigel Cooke

Paul Brooker (Homeleigh Property Manager)

Being a Director of Rimstone for the best part of 25 years (apart from a short break) I have seen the Cooperative emerge from being financially challenged to comfortably holding its own. In that time the holdings of the cooperative have expanded to now include Scrubby Creek and Shades of Death properties along with Homeleigh.

Homeleigh has undergone a significant transformation, with accommodation facilities that are more welcoming, comfortable, safe, durable and enduring.

I believe it's important we have a vision for the future of Rimstone that aligns with the intent of

the principles Rimstone was founded upon – to provide opportunities for Speleological activities.

Rimstone is not in the business of renovating buildings and properties – any improvements should be warranted, sustainable, compliant, safe and financially sound.

The next era for Rimstone will see new ideas, aspirations and intent. My role as a director is to ensure this aligns with the values of the cooperative, and that this is communicated to the shareholders and is appropriate for a sustainable future.

I have a wealth of practical skills that I bring to Rimstone, a background in Land, Fire and Project Management, a passion for adventure travel and a long history of community networking.

While I may not get to Buchan as often as I used to (junior sport!) I continue to contribute in many ways and cherish the times I can visit and spend time with friends and family utilising the unique facilities available.

I am looking forward to another 25 years, although I'd like more of that to be enjoying the view off the back verandah rather than plastering bedrooms!

Paul Brooker
(Property Manager)

Tom Elms (director)

As a relatively new member of both Rimstone and the caving community, I'd like to introduce myself and provide some insight into both my background and aspirations as a member of this board.

I became interested in caving after a road trip through east Gippsland led me to Buchan, where I came to the realisation that more caves existed beyond the show caves in the reserve. A follow-up trip led me to explore every cave I could find in the area, including those within the Potholes reserve, Dickson's reserve, and Wilson's. With no rope and no idea, I free-climbed into caves I now know to be Honeycomb, Georgiedig, Maxidig as well as many more in an attempt to satisfy my curiosity. Thankfully, after realising that I probably needed a better idea of what I was doing, I was introduced to Homeleigh and the VSA and fell in love with caving.

My personal goals reflect a commitment to be a highly active and productive member of Rimstone and on this board. As one of Rimstone's youngest members, I hope to contribute in a way that looks forward to the future, so that I might enjoy places like Homeleigh for as long as some of you have.

I intend to continue as a leading contributor to the management and improvement of Homeleigh through frequent visits. I'm looking forward to

gaining valuable experience through collaborating and working closely with the director's team to develop my capacity to have a lasting positive impact.

My role will involve providing assistance to other Rimstone directors and tackling specific projects when they arise. This will give me opportunities to develop my skill set and build the experience required to properly manage this organisation. I can promise that I will compensate for my greenness with endless enthusiasm and hunger for learning.

In parallel with my caving interests, I'm also an active Whitewater kayaker. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to travel to the Czech Republic this July to represent Australia at the Wildwater World Championships and have achieved recent success domestically in Australia's extreme racing series.

My experience in a variety of additional disciplines including canoe slalom, freestyle kayaking, and whitewater rafting has given me the skills to work as a whitewater instructor and high-performance coach for the last 5 years.

Aside from my paddling, I'm a full-time Osteopathy student finishing my third year of study and also an aspiring rock climber.

Tom Elms

Homeleigh projects

Internal Bathroom: Gary Coleman has commenced waterproofing and preparing the new internal bathroom on the 23rd of October. Our goal is to have this project ready for use by the end of this year. We extend a HUGE thank you to Gary for his contributions to this process.

Keeping this in mind, we have also scheduled the first proper washout of the septic tank in quite some time. This operation will take place over the next couple of weeks and will also help us prepare for the ASF conference in 2025, ensuring we avoid any unpleasant odours.

Painting: We have another working bee planned for December 14–17. During this event, we will focus on completing painting of the balustrade and, if time permits, painting under the roof.

Anyone is welcome to lend a hand. We will create an event on the Facebook page so that people can RSVP their desire to help out.

Big Bungalow: Stay tuned for updates; at this stage, we are planning a working bee at the end of January to renovate and enhance this fantastic resource, ensuring that we maximise its capacity for the upcoming conference.

Mouse traps: At a request of Daryl Carr please ensure that the mouse traps are easily seen as with his last trip he had an unfortunate incident when one was behind an object and OUCH! Please ensure all mouse traps are set before leaving Homeleigh; but that they are in plain sight for humans 😊

Bookings: As Nigel mentions below, Nigel and Nadine have taken on the role of managing bookings for Homeleigh. They are currently preparing a document that will be sent to all who book, reiterating the roles of the MIC, payment requests, and information requirements before and after booking, making the bookkeeping process smoother for Nigel to manage and reconcile.

Please remember to send all booking requests to: accomm@rimstone.org.au

Grumbings from the treasurer

Now that the AGM has concluded, it is imperative to remind all members who have not yet paid their annual subscription that it is overdue. It is crucial for all members to fulfil their obligation to pay their annual subscriptions, as this not only upholds their status as members but also grants them the rights associated with membership.

Those members who remain unfinancial are, in essence, non-member shareholders, as per the model rules. Non-members cannot actively participate in meetings, address the board as a member, make bookings at Homeleigh, or claim members' rates for their stay at Homeleigh, among other privileges. For those who have promptly paid their annual subscriptions, thank you for your diligence and commitment.

Forfeiting your Rimstone shares – Now, if I may put on my grumpy hat, it is worth noting that the model rules provide for the forfeiture of shares belonging to members who are not financial. In simpler terms, they could risk losing their membership. Regrettably, we currently have several members who are several years behind in their payments, despite repeated reminders and requests for settlement. In my role as Treasurer and in the best interest of safeguarding the cooperative's financial health, I will be referring these cases to a director's meeting with the intention of recommending the forfeiture of their shares. This is a step I do not take lightly but is necessary to prevent the accumulation of bad debt.

Failing to pay for accomm – Another issue of concern for the Treasurer is the occurrence of members who utilise Homeleigh facilities and neglect to make their payments. This issue extends not only to the member but also to the Member-in-Charge (MIC).

One of the key responsibilities of the MIC is to ensure that all members and guests settle their accommodation charges before departing Homeleigh – a policy that has been in place for decades and remains unchanged.

Some members have admirably adopted the practice of paying upfront, even before arriving at Homeleigh, for which I am genuinely appreciative. This practice not only simplifies the MIC's responsibilities but also reduces my workload as Treasurer.

In today's digital age, it has become common for payments to be made online, and cash transactions have become a rarity. Online payments can be conveniently completed at any time, including before one's arrival at Homeleigh.

For those who still wait to be prompted for payment, it's important to note that online payment is now available at Homeleigh, thanks to our WiFi access. Therefore, regardless of their mobile carrier, there is no reason for members to delay payment beyond the conclusion of their stay at Homeleigh.

Thank you for listening.

Nigel Cooke
(Treasurer and Membership)

Booking accommodation at Homeleigh

Please remember to request accommodation using the proper email address so that your request is received promptly. Then our on-duty accommodation officer can reply promptly. (Else your request might get lost.)

Homeleigh Booking Officer
email to: accomm@rimstone.org.au

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Extra photos

Additional AGM meeting photos below.

The new “accessible” inside bathroom.



And the new bathroom with water-proofing and tiling activity under way.



Please remember:
Do set mouse traps,
but do NOT
hide them.

Always great seeing Homeleigh getting dirty.
Here, a cleanup is under way after a caving trip, taking a break from the painting. The wash-up facilities are great for paint brushes as well as caving gear.

