

## LLOYD ROBINSON

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### Lloyd Robinson 1927-2013

I will touch on some personal recollections of Lloyd Robinson as others have also written about his caving exploits.

Lloyd Robinson was an explorer, always looking to discover something new. Not for him repeated visits to old ground. When I started caving in Australia in the 1960s, he had already been caving at Bungonia, his first area. He had the travel bug and had been caving many places, particularly out of Margaret River. There he explored the Augusta Jewel Cave with Lex Bastion and Cliff Spack in 1958. Together Cliff and Lloyd developed the cave over the next year and it was opened in 1959.

Other phases of his caving were the repeated trips from Wollongong to the Kimberley, WA with ISS (Illawarra Speleological Society). It was Mimbi Cave in the Eastern Kimberley which he kept returning to. Joe Jennings said he should try and record wet season floods in the cave. Lloyd then applied his photographic knowledge to installing a camera to record floods. This camera had to have electromechanical flash mechanisms to trigger a flash with motor drive to advance the film and repeat the photograph. He kept making return trips to retrieve film or set up the camera again. Several times photographs were successfully taken but when he developed the film the emulsion just washed off. He continued this approach much later in the Bullita system, Northern Territory.

For some years he tried to obtain photographs using balloons in the Gunbarrel Aven in Wyanbene Cave in what is now Deua National Park. These trips involved various ways of generating hydrogen initially to fill balloons to lift a camera high up into the aven to photograph the walls. Later trips used helium. The results were never conclusive and it was not until the aven was physically climbed that was it found that there were no obvious passages leading off the aven despite the aven having its own microclimate with winds, mist and clouds.

I really only started caving with Lloyd in 1996 on a Bullita trip. It was on my next trip in 1999, because the exploration of the Bullita system was a long way from vehicles each day, Lloyd and I said we would do some ground searching to find the bottom end of the Bullita system. So we started off on day trips to see what we could discover. It was not until the third day of this in pretty intense heat that we found an "efflux". We could not get into the cave from it. We then went around and up over a bluff and quickly found an entrance. This entrance led to big passages, sections which flooded and were certainly close to the efflux. This was a cursory exploration but we took a GPS fix on the entrance and returned to the vehicle in Spring Creek some 8 km away and went back to camp. We were chastised for not



*Lloyd Robinson in Trezzkin Cave, Chillagoe. Taken in April 2011 at the ASF Conference  
Photo: Nicholas White*

surveying as we went but had looked at several hundred metres of passage with leads continuing everywhere. Not the time and place that day to undertake a survey! This became known as the SOGS section of the Bullita system. It was found on the 16th July 1999. The name comes from "Silly Old Goats Section" for the crazies who flogged around in the heat to delineate the extent of the system. We caved together each year at Bullita for some years after that. It was a very rewarding project needing a lot of teamwork. Highlights include extending the length to over 100 kilometres. On the best days survey teams of 2-3 people would return with new passage of about a kilometre. Lloyd and Dorothy proved invaluable to the success of these Bullita trips for nearly twenty years.

Of course Lloyd as well as being a traveller and explorer put time into the ASF and his own society, the Illawarra Speleological Society. He was the ASF President for some 7 years during which there was a major restructure of ASF which has served ASF well since. He was made a Fellow of ASF in 1995 and to the end managed the Awards Commission for ASF. Lloyd's legacy and imprint will last a very long time in ASF.