



# Metropolitan Speleological Society

**Quarterly  
Newsletter**  
Winter  
*Issued September 2017*





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*Cover Shot: Jenolan, August 2017 (Nick, Marcella & Rob – Photo: Marilyn)*



## SOCIETY INFORMATION

### Club PLB

Just a reminder to all trip leaders that the Club PLB this should be taken on every remote trip. Our Equipment Officer, Jim (0407 284 256), [jcrockett3@bigpond.com](mailto:jcrockett3@bigpond.com) has this, so please coordinate with him to collect it before you lead your next trip.

### Office Bearers

President	<a href="mailto:president@mssadventure.org.au">president@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Jim Crockett
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Public Officer		John Gray

### Membership Fee Details (2017)

Full member	\$80	Prospective membership Options (3 months)	
Family (2 adults + children)	\$160	Single Prospective	\$30
Family (1 adult + children)	\$120	Family (2 adults + children) Prospective	\$60
Social	\$45	Family (1 adult + children) Prospective	\$45
Already a member of an ASF Club?	\$30		

Preferred method of payment by Direct Debit to: Account Name: MSS

BSB: 062-021 (Commonwealth Bank) Account: 00901421

Cheques or Cash also accepted.



## NEWS

### Welcome to New Members

We have three new members to introduce ... prospective members Loretta Visintin and Marcia Kaye and full member Anna Ossig-Bonanno.

Loretta has been on one caving trip with Rod to Cliefden and from the sound of it, is quite adventurous.

Marcia went to the MSS Field Day at Castle Hill back in May and got to try SRT for the first time. Both Anna and Marcia are keen canyoneers and bushwalkers so look out for them on upcoming canyon trips.



*Marcia Kaye*



*Anna Ossig-Bonanno*

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### Breaking News >>> Breaking News >>> Breaking News

*By Rod Smith*

At the last NSW Speleological Council meeting there was discussion about having a calendar of trips from all NSW ASF clubs; it would give cavers a greater variety of trips to choose from and would help ensure trips would go ahead.

Although we could all see the merit of this, at the time it didn't go any further than the discussion. This topic will be revisited in the future, possibly as soon as the next NSW Speleological Council meeting in October.

In a related development, MSS has been asked by a couple of clubs to do more joint trips. We already do a few of these but as another step forward, we've shared our calendar with NHVSS, BMSC and CSS. Other Clubs have had the option to jump on MSS trips if there was space, but we haven't specifically publicised our trips with other clubs as we have now.

Ultimately, it's the trip leader's decision who they allow on trips. The approach I'm going to take, and would encourage others to do likewise, is to welcome any ASF member on trips. If there's a limited number of spots available for a trip then MSS members will get priority, as long as they give me sufficient notice that they will be attending.

For now we haven't told the other clubs who the trip leaders are, so anyone interested in attending a trip will contact either me or Marilyn in the first instance.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this please let me know.

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*Garth in Wiburds Cave, Jenolan - June 2017*

# Report on the Speleo 2017 Congress

*By Jim Crockett*



The Speleo 2017 Congress would have to rate as one of my personal best achievements in my life to this day. But not only for myself but also a major achievement for ASF and Australian Speleology going by the comments of many of the international visitors "Australia is well and truly on the World Speleology Map".

I have been involved with this project for more than 5 years, including being a major contributor in the bid team that went to Brno Czech Republic in 2013. In the 4 ensuing years since ASF won the rights to host this event for the UIS, (Union International Speleology) an executive organising committee

was formed which in turn brought in many contributors from major speleo groups across Australia, who have worked tirelessly to bring this event to the many and varied speleologists from around the world.

From a statistics viewpoint we had over 460 registered attendees from 46 countries representing all but 2 continents. Unfortunately, Africa and Antarctica were not represented.

MSS has been heavily involved in this event and I am proud to say that the Joint MSS / CSS Yarrangobilly field trip was reported by the International visitors as the highlight of their trip to Australia with comments received such as "the best run and most enjoyable of the pre-conference field trips". Many thanks to those MSS members who were involved in the preparation and running of this trip. Credits go out to Beth Little, David Stuckey, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, and Marilyn Scott for your time, effort and hospitality on this trip and many thanks to the many helpers and organisers from CSS who also did themselves and their club proud. It was certainly appreciated by the attendees.

It was left to Rod Smith (as a helper) and myself to represent MSS during Congress. One of my major roles was to look after the AV equipment and presentations in preparation for the many and varied sessions that took place over the 7 day (and night) event. All I can say is that at the end of each day I was very tired as the pace was hectic in our department along with many of the other helpers onsite who were run off their legs supporting and helping attendees.

Although most of the time I was working to support the AV desk there were a few times when I was able to have a look at some of the sessions and the topics were as varied as the cultures from the audience at each session, with the common bond being that we were all CRAZY about anything to do with caves. Whether it was about the creatures that lived in the caves, how the caves were formed, how the formations were created and many many other aspects.

The other aspect of the congress was the social side. Meeting up with an acquaintance that you've known for 30 years or meeting someone new, everyone was friendly and willing to share experiences, a drink or have a laugh. I am sure those MSS members who attended the dinner can attest to that too.

To summarise the Congress, I would say that it was extremely well run, not to say that we did not have any problems, as there were some, however most of these were overcome to the benefit of the attendees. For those attendees that I had personal contact with, their comments were that they had a most enjoyable time, and thoroughly enjoyed the Australian hospitality. Many of those I am sure will become lifelong friends as I have already been invited to join them on expeditions.

The only bad side to this congress was reports of many of the attendees, including me coming down with the flu only days after the finish of the congress. I understand that more than half the people I have been in contact with since the congress have had flu symptoms, (this has also been the worst flu outbreak in the history of Sydney so no surprises there).

So, on a personal note I can now resume normal life having gone through so much worry and stress for the last 5 years. I hope I am able to attend a lot more MSS trips in the future now that this load has been stripped, but I'm so proud to have been involved in this "once in a lifetime" event.







## TRIP REPORTS

### Caving – Cliefden – June 2 – 3, 2017

Report by: Heather Reid

Participants: Rod Smith (TL), Lorreta Visintin, Chris Turner (NHVSS), Colin Tyrrell (BMSC) and Heather Reid

Photos: Colin Tyrell

Caves: Main & Trapdoor

I arrived earlier than everyone else, found the hut, the electricity, but not the water or the store of firewood. Not to be put out, I grabbed some wood from my car and hauled some water from the stream, and made a fire. Rod turned up soon and we settled down to a comfortable night after discovering the woodshed and an empty water tank.

Next day was greeted by bleary eyes, a huge yawn, and Chris, Colin and Loretta, all ramped up to go. Rod had elected to stay behind to tend the fire and do the housework (and look after his recent back operation).

We jumped in the cars and headed to a cave (to be expected if one is on a caving trip). After dropping down into the cave we proceeded

through it (again expected) What I didn't expect, from my vast knowledge of previous caving trips (one trip) was how beautiful and decorated it would be, how thick the mud was, and how nice it was just to sit in the quiet and absorb it all. We dragged ourselves up a rope that Chris had managed to place, to get to the Helictite Walls. Huge helictites, veritable ram's horns on a background of curling impossibilities.



When we were nearly back at the exit, we found a green frog despondent, possibly depressed and not in a good headspace. The team decided to take her to the light so that she could die with the sun in her eyes. Once on the surface, we put some water in her plastic carry bag, and lo and behold, she puffed up and lost her depression and tried to escape (note to self: must try this technique with depressed patients) We took her down to the river and released her (again, not a bad idea for the depressed).

After frog releasing and lunch, we hit Trapdoor cave. The entrance was a bit daunting to Colin, who decided that the great outdoors was preferable. I was more daunted by the crawl between chambers. By this time, I was sure I had no skin on my



*Green frog still in the cave*

knees and elbows, but after Loretta went through, I thought that blood would look great on the inside of my overalls, so I overcame my fears and proceeded. Good for the soul but not the body.

Next day was greeted by another yawn, but as it was only me and Rod, it was a rather late yawn. We decided to go to look for fossils near the Island Cave, and despite being told “we can’t miss them”, we found them. Lots of shell fossils making the rocks dappled and interesting. Beautiful country.

Thanks Rod for organising, and Chris for leading, frog carrying and encouragement, Colin for knowledge and Loretta for her enthusiasm. Hope to see you all soon.



*Typical countryside where cave entrances are found at Cliefden*



*The river at Cliefden, nice place to cool off in summer!*





## Caving – Jenolan - June 16 – 18, 2017

Report by: Chris Johnstone

Participants: Chris (TL), Helena and Owen Johnstone, Lillie Hyde, Fletch and Ray Etherton, Marilyn Scott, Trish Neil, Cat and Garth McLachlan, Rod Smith.

The trip started with the traditional picking up of the Keys from Jon Bonwick on Friday evening. This time I knew his house so we found it without the fuss that happened last year.

We arrived at the cottage sometime around 9pm and met Fletch and Ray already there. A bit later Marilyn and Trish turned up and later again, Rod.

I had spoken to the guide's office and found out that there were no planned trips into Mammoth that weekend so we decided to do Mammoth in the Saturday morning and if time permitted, find the entrance to Dwyers and have a look in there in the afternoon. Rod and Ray had, for their own reasons, decided not to go caving, Rod on account of his back injury and Ray just because he didn't want to. On Sunday we would go to Wiburds. We had permits to go into Rho hole and Henning's as well but these were more as reserves

On Saturday morning around 8am a few faces emerged and we prepared for the day. It looked like it was going to be a nice day. Ray prepared corn fritters with bacon for breakfast



*Cat on the abseil*

for all and while we scoffed these down Cat and Garth appeared. Around 9:30 we all headed down to the reserve to go caving. Rod helped me rig the abseil into the main chamber of Mammoth for those who felt adventurous and we went in. Lillie and Fletch decided not to do the abseil but the rest of us did. Ray once again proclaimed his desire not to go caving and he and Rod went back to the Cottage to clean up after breakfast and play board games. We arranged that Rod would come back around 3pm so we could look for Dwyers.

The cave was a first time experience for a couple of the party. So once we had all regrouped in the main chamber, we checked our equipment and started down towards the Jug handle and into the rock pile.

The rock pile is quite challenging for a first timer and Lillie decided that she had had enough about half way through. Helena went back to the surface with her and back to the cottage. In hindsight I think I should have gone to the railway chamber first. Oh well, the caves aren't going anywhere and she will get another chance to go back at a later date.

The rest of the party continued on, we finished negotiating the Rock Pile and made our way through the Gun Barrel all the way to Lower River. The water level was quite low so we could easily cross it but we



*Setting the rope up for the abseil into Mammoth.*



*Trish at the jug handle*

decided not to go further to Slug Lake as we had not brought any equipment to cross the short traverse and it was lunch time anyway. A few of us had a bit of a paddle around in the water and posed for photos but then it was back to the serious matter of caving.

After having lunch we made our way back taking a detour into Oolite Chamber. The chimney up to Oolite is not the only way into the chamber but it is the only one that is still allowed by the guides. We squeezed our way up and emerged into the main chamber. Oolite is definitely a highlight chamber so we stopped and took a few photos. After that we slid back down the chimney, then continued back via the gun barrel, through the rock pile to the junction that leads to the Railway tunnel.

We decided that we had enough time so we did a quick walk through into the Horseshoe Chamber and Railway Tunnel. The Horseshoe and Railway tunnel are big chambers and the passages there are quite open and easy to follow, so we made good time. We got as far as the sugar cubes before turning back.

Then back it was to the surface via the jug handle.

Outside the remaining group met up with Rod who had returned to help try and find Dwyers with us. Most of the group were pretty tired by then so only Owen, Marilyn, Cat, Rod and I stayed to look for the entrances.

After about an hour or so of searching we had not found the entrance to Dwyers. We did find a couple of new tags for Rod to add to his catalogue of GPSed tags, but not the ones we were looking for. Again Dwyers will have to wait for another trip.

Around 4:30 we all regrouped at the cottage. Time for hot showers, yarns, beer, wine, food and games. Wine and nibbles appeared from everywhere. Dinner was a communal meal of spaghetti bolognese that Helena had prepared and sautéed garlic bread prepared by Ray and Helena (the oven had gone missing). Games were played including Rod's new one called 'the cave'. We had a visit from the possum who appeared to think he owned the cottage. It even knew how to open the front door. The kids had fun feeding it and I think it will be there next time we visit. Slowly people peeled off to bed and only Ray, Rod and I stayed up late to ensure 'the cave' was a game worth playing late at night.

The next morning we arose at a

civilised hour. Rod prepared a hearty meal of pancakes with mountains of toppings. We discussed the day's activities and decided to go the Wiburds as planned and only go into Henning's if we had time.

We set off up the valley, with Rod as our guide to the location of the entrance. It is the furthest bluff of the main Jenolan Karsts and is about a 45 minute walk up the valley to the entrance. Rod set me a test to find the entrance



*Lower River*



*The resident possum*



*Rod's pancakes with all the toppings.*



without help and I got close but in the end my navigational skills let me down. Rod pointed out the entrance and we entered via the J92 entrance. This time Ray, Rod and Fletch had decided not to go into the cave.

It is a long time since I had been into Wiburd's and even then the last time I had tried to go there the gulches were flooded so we didn't go that far.

Once we had entered, we went down the slopes and into the maze section. We wandered around this section for a while, looking for the tunnel to the yawning gulches 2 but we did not find it. Eventually we found the passage to the yawning gulches 1 but the drop was quite

a long one and we decided not to climb down it as we had not brought a handline or ladder. Since we didn't get down into the gulches we did not go to the Dyke as planned.



*Walking up the valley to Wiburds.*



*Wiburds – one of the old river sections*

returned to the surface. When we got back to the top it was early afternoon so we walked back to the cars without stopping at Henning's.

After cleaning up the cottage, we left Jenolan at a respectable 3pm and headed home.

All up, the weekend went quite well. No injuries, no lost kids, some newly initiated cavers and a few new friends made. I think our Jenolan first timers had a good experience and I think we will see them again on future trips.

We stayed in the cave exploring passages and looking for the Lake cavern but again we did not find it. I don't think that mattered too much because there were quite a lot of large passages to walk through so it was a little less 'sporting' than the previous day's climb through the rock pile.

A few photos were taken and everyone was happy but I know I missed the passages I was looking for. I think I need a refresher from someone who has done the cave more than me before I go back there again. Next time I think I will leave a full day to Wiburds.

A lot of us were feeling tired and needed to get back home so we decided to make an early day of it and



*Fossils in Wiburds*





## Bushwalking – Mt Dawson circuit – July 8 & 9, 2017

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Marilyn Scott (Leader), Jeff Boyd, Beth Little, Trish Neil, Trish Morrow, Peter Foley, and Greg Gibson

This was a joint trip with Brisbane Water Outdoors Club all but one of the participants were MSS, or had been at one point in time. Originally advertised as a bushwalk to the Bungleborie, I decided that walking downstream might be a little cold in July, plus more daylight hours would be needed to achieve all the outcomes, so the Bungleborie trip has been shelved until early summer. And I decided to revisit Mt Dawson and its excellent camp cave(s).

The first half of the trip to the camp caves was known country to both Jeff and me but the second half to the exit route, only Jeff had done before. The plan was to walk up Little Capertee Creek from the Newnes campground, scramble up to the plateau and then find our way to the camp cave (through a maze of pagodas), picking up water along the way.

All went well until we started looking for The Slot in the cliff-line, that took a little scouting around but Jeff knew exactly what he was looking for and we eventually found it. The next benchmark was picking up water along the way.



*Nice friendly country, except for one section the how walk was open bushland.*



*Our slot through the cliff line.*

We found the spot, but sadly the well was dry, so we continued on our way to the campsite and Jeff took a few of us to his secret water source where we picked up plenty for our needs and to put out the campfire next morning.

We had happy hour on the cliff overlooking Pantoney's Crown, ... wine, beetroot dip, pork crackling, nuts, olives and crackers. Back at the camp cave, Beth had built a massive camp fire and we sat around cooking dinner and swapping stories.



*Happy hour on the cliff (our exit route is the hill in the background) – it was a bit cold!*



On Sunday, we climbed Mt Dawson, admired the views, then headed off into the wilderness. Peter and I navigated (giving Jeff a rest), and managed to negotiate a route through pagodas and along spurs to a small system creek above the Wolgan Road, almost opposite Zobels Gully. Here we encountered the only unfriendly scrub on the whole weekend.



*Greg, Beth and Trish on top of Mt Dawson with Pantoney's Crown in the background (a "must do" walk)*

Eventually, we made our way down Bell Minor Canyon (no abseils and supposedly dry). This was one of the highlights of the weekend, Jeff and I had done it before but the others were new to it, and it's a lovely little canyon and an easy route down to the road.



*A drop down where you had to take packs off to get through the squeeze*



*The canyon closes in (another squeezey bit)*



*Who says all my walks are epics?*

Back at the vehicles by 3pm (or thereabouts), thanks to you all for coming on this adventure!





## Caving – Yarrangobilly – July 17 – 22, 2017

Report by: Beth Little

This year the international speleo community travelled to our great southern land to attend the UIS Conference 2017. MSS took up an incredible opportunity to co-run a preconference caving trip with CSS. I



*Caves House - fully booked for the UIS pre conference trip*

could not be prouder being part of this collaboration, and it has been such a rewarding experience. Ten international guests joined our trip, and our active and dynamic calendar assured participants were shown a selection of the best caves of Yarrangobilly. The 1901 Caves House, and 1917 East & West Wing

were completely filled by cavers (internationals and helpers) and it was a wonderful thing to behold.

I was absolutely blown away by the amount of organisation and planning that John and Marj Brush from CSS contributed to bring this trip together, it was great to be a part of it. Helpers from MSS looked after some of the underground trip leading, the transport to-from Sydney, and added a bit of extra kitchen support. CSS helpers looked after the other portion of underground trip leading, the white nose de-contam station, and were the amazing catering team for us all led by Marj. This trip could not have happened without all the hard work and effort of all the amazing helpers. Our thanks also go to the local NPWS staff for their flexibility surrounding the week.



*Decontamination and drying room (photo Cathi H-H)*

CSS and MSS hosted the welcome drinks and BBQ on Monday night in Aussie style. The excellent

trips offered across the week included: South & North Glory, Jilla, Castle, Harrie Wood, Old Inn, Coppermine (including the upper section), Restoration and East Deep Creek (upper section), Eagles Nest (both a through trip and a return trip on offer), and Cooleman Plains (Murray, Barber).

Our day at Restoration & East Deep Creek reminded me of why I've not caved in Winter in the Snowies. It had snowed overnight, and while the atmosphere was absolutely magic with the snow and frost everywhere, my cotton overalls and fleece onesie were not enough to keep the cold out! Well ... until I got moving that was. The frozen toes in gumboots soon warmed up with the hike in. On the Eagles Nest day, we made it back to the car just as it



*Welcome Speeches and Drinks on Monday night (photo Cathi H-H)*



started to snow. Stripping off the dirty overalls as the snow was falling was a new experience for me.



*Setting out in the snow, wasn't snowing down at Caves House but up on the range it was!*

Evenings back at the accommodation were spent telling caving stories with full bellies from the delicious dinner, for most of us with wine in hand. There were a number of evenings we were treated with slideshows from the Internationals. We had Swiss, Dutch, English, and American International cavers. The slideshows and stories about the different huge cave systems that were their playgrounds were inspiring.

About midway through the trip, Marilyn and I cracked out a very colourful frog Jigsaw puzzle that Marilyn had thrown in at the last moment. Marilyn and I are confirmed jigsaw nerds but were delighted to discover that 50% of the group were also jigsaw-obsessed, sometimes it was hard finding a spare seat around the table.

We had hoped that the weather would hold out well enough for NPWS to permit us a Winter trip out to the Cooleman Plain. John had worked some flexibility in the calendar for this to possibly occur. This is a popular bushwalking area in the summer but the NPWS closes it during winter. The group was lucky enough for NPWS to agree to a one-off trip, escorting us in. I didn't get to go on this trip as places were limited and priority went to our international guests (I ran an Upper level Coppermine trip instead), however the descriptions and photographs tell of a fantastic day. Snow all around, brumbies racing in the fields, bluebird blue skies, and a jolly jaunt up the gorge and the main caves (Barber and Murray). By all reports it was a top day out.



*Caving in the snow - John Brush at entrance to Barbers Cave.*



*Brumbies at Cooleman*

It was sad to leave Yagby on Saturday when it was time to come home. Thankfully many of us were going to be at the Conference dinner later that week too so we were able to meet up with all the Internationals and CSS helpers again. What a wonderful week, and one I shall not forget.



## Caving – Jenolan August 19 & 20, 2017

Report by: David Stuckey

Participants: David Stuckey (TL), Nick and Marcella Payne, Heather Reid, Beth Little, Rob Clyne and Marilyn Scott

10 MSS members signed up for this trip, a full permit! Then, one by one, they started dropping like flies with such excuses as a broken collar bone or recent retinal surgery plus 2 inevitable cases of the flu! This was good news to Beth as she had been relegated to the “wait list”. So, we were down to seven for Saturday and five for Sunday. To top it all off, during the drive to Jenolan, late on Friday night, it started to snow! Conditions on the Jenolan Caves Road were so treacherous that any speeds over 30 k.p.h. would have resulted in disaster. The road between the Oberon turnoff and the top of the Five Mile Hill was completely covered with snow and the fluffy snowflakes were drifting down so thickly that forward vision was down to 20 metres. We were down to 20 k.p.h. by now and I



*Left - right, Heather, Marcella & Nick in the rock pile.*



*Marcella coming through one of the crawls.*

wondered whether the group would actually make it to the hut!

We eventually arrived to find them huddled in the garage, having made it through before the snow storm had started. I unlocked the hut door for them, Heather and Beth quickly lit a fire to warm everyone up.

Rob Clyne arrived on Saturday morning and hobbled into the hut to let us know that he too would be out of action! Then there were six! Rob, nevertheless, walked with us to the entrance of Mammoth cave then went back to the hut to keep the fire burning and watch over the bread machine.

Our chosen route for the day was the seldom visited “Ice Pick Lake - Naked Lady Chamber - Hell Hole” circuit which was, as always, action packed and very sporty! The



*Nick entering yet another chute, this one went slightly up hill which meant that you pushed rocks into the opening (which had to be cleared away) then you went around a corner, not easy.*





*Nick in The Rift*



*The Laundry Chute*

climbs seemed harder than in the past, the squeezes smaller and in some cases almost impassable but we all survived. The “Laundry Chute” provided the usual thrills. We were underground for just over four hours.

Back to the hut, we all enjoyed a “top” shower, except for Heather who had a “moderately pleasing shower” due to water temperature fluctuations. We then settled down for drinks and nibbles whilst waiting for the bread to bake and dinner to warm.

Beth and Marilyn explained the convoluted rules of “Settlers of Catan” to Heather. After a sumptuous dinner, some continued their gaming, others just enjoyed conversation and the comfy chair! It wasn’t long before we all crawled into our respective beds.

Next morning, we visited Wiburd’s Lake Cave and Hennings Cave. Both visits were relatively short but we explored all of the main passages of each cave. The standard entrance to Wiburd’s, (J92) is now banned from being used as there has been a recent rock fall just inside the entrance and it doesn’t look very stable at all. Use the J101 entrance instead. It’s about 8 metres west.



*Beth exiting a squeeze hole*



*Beth beside a nice piece of decoration*

By this time, all traces of the snowy weather had disappeared and Sunday turned out to be one of the most pleasant days with crystal blue skies and warm sun. We’ll do it again soon!



## Decadence Walk – August 26 & 27, 2017

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Party: Marilyn Scott (Co-ordinator), John Gray (canyon leader), Cat & Garth McLachlan & Rod Smith (Sunday)

Three months ago, when the trip went on the calendar, a cast of thousands signed up, it was only after sending out the instructions as to where to go the Monday before the trip that they started dropping like flies. Three days prior to our departure, all but two remained and Rod (legend that he is), chose to read into the physio's advice what he wanted and turned up for the canyon on Sunday. So, we were a very small group, but it actually worked well for us.

Years ago, I had read about a trip that a friend did in the Sunnyside Ridge area, visiting a lot of the creeks and lookouts, I've had the walk in my database of walks to do all this time. John was apparently on that trip and said that they'd stayed in a massive overhang, as it was easy to get to, why don't we use that for the decadence walk, and do a few of the minor canyons in the area. Sounded like a great idea, I'd at least get to do some of the walk!

We met up at the end of Fire Trail #7 on Friday evening, had a campfire and then set off next morning to take



*Cat and Garth in the camp cave ... where do you put your gear?*



*Sunnyside Canyon (aka Acoustic chamber) in the chamber.*

our camping gear into the camp cave. It was an hour's walk to the cave and it was, as John described, big, flat floor, with plenty of firewood. We dropped our gear then returned to the cars and set off for Sunnyside, our first canyon, on Fire Trail #8.

Sunnyside is always worth visiting, the amphitheatres are incredible. We had lunch in the sun, headed downstream to see the rest of the canyon, then headed out via the slot exit. We took the opportunity to check out the views of Wolgan Valley from the cliff at the top of the exit. An easy walk back to the car and then we were off to see if we could find Cathedral Canyon which is on Fire Trail #6.

We had a grid reference but I'd left my GPS back at my car (at Fire Trail #7), so we just "winged it". We did find an amazing slot ending in an abseil (which we didn't have the gear for). As it was, it would have to be one of the shortest canyons we'd come across at a mere 100m! But, we were not sure if it was the slot/canyon we were looking for. Time was getting on so we decided to be content with what we'd found and go back another time and spend a whole day looking at slots and entry/exit



points. Access to the slot we found is so easy now that we know the best route in.

Back to Fire Trail #7 where we picked up water for the night from our vehicles and then headed back to the cave, I had marked the route so it was a quick trip in, stopping briefly to photograph the setting sun against the cliff surrounding us.

This Decadence Walk was truly decadent, Cat, Garth and John all took chairs for around the camp fire. Dinner menus ranged from Chicken Schnitzel with mushrooms to rack of lamb with roast potatoes and asparagus and cheese jaffles. This was topped off with strawberries and dipping chocolate and copious amounts of wine!

A quick breakfast on Sunday morning (John having milo – he'd brought in a full can of milo, now that's decadent) we packed up our gear and headed back to the cars. We met up with Rod at the end of Fire Trail #7 and then drove over to Gang Gang Fire Trail. We parked the cars and went down into the creek to see Gang Gang Canyon (described by Michael Keates as "spectacular"). The first part was a little daunting, a major cliff in front us but we managed to find a way down. There was an intermittent footpad but didn't appear to be a well-travelled route, eventually we came to some nice canyon formations. The highlight of the trip though was a side creek that had had a massive rock fall, causing the whole creek to be blocked up with interesting slots that were so dark we couldn't progress, so, another place to come back to and check out what's beyond the rock fall.

The exit route was virtually straight up, a bit of rock scrambling and before long we were on the fire trail, wondering why we hadn't positioned a vehicle here to make life easier for ourselves.

Back at the cars by 2pm, an easy day. Thanks to John Gray for unerringly leading us through the bush, and to Cat, Garth and Rod for coming along on the trip and Rod for showing up on Sunday for the day walk.



*Garth carried in chairs and a hammer for the tent pegs!*



*Garth & Cat had Schnitzel and sauted mushrooms for dinner*



*Fresh Strawberries with chocolate dipping sauce!*



*Cat in Sunnyside Canyon*



# MSS TRIP CALENDAR

Sept 16 – 17 Caving Jenolan	<b>NEW</b>	<p>Trip Leader: <i>Andrew Baker (NHVSS)</i>  Contact: <a href="mailto:Andrew.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au">Andrew.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au</a> AND <a href="mailto:melissa.hadley2@tafensw.edu.au">melissa.hadley2@tafensw.edu.au</a>  Grade: variable, depending on participants  Details: This is a NHVS trip open to MSS members. Make sure you send email to both addressees. Caves to be explored will depend on participant's level of experience. Hut &amp; trip fees are payable and roughly the same as those for MSS.</p>
30 Sept – 2 Oct Canyoning Southern Highlands		<p>Trip Leaders: Marilyn Scott, Murray Newman  Contact: <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a> or 0417 453 170  Grade: Medium/hard  Details: Macquarie Rivulet, Belmore Creek and canyon over 3 days, camping at Bendeela campground Kangaroo Valley. Numbers Limited.</p>
Oct 14 – 15 Cave Surveying Course Wombeyan	<b>NEW</b>	<p>Co-ordinator: Marilyn Scott  Contact: <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a> or 0417 453 170  Grade: Instructional  Details: COURSE FULL</p>
Oct 21 - 22 Bushwalking Northern Wollemi		<p>Trip Leader: John Gray  Contact: <a href="mailto:JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au">JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au</a>  Grade: Medium  Details: This trip is to check out potential canyons and slots in the Glen Davis area. Camping at the Coorongoooba Camp Ground.</p>
Nov 4 – 5 Cave Surveying Cliefden	<b>NEW</b>	<p>Trip Leader: Rod Smith  Contact: <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a>  Grade: Instruction  Details: Cave surveying only, no recreational caving.</p>
Nov 10 – 12 Bushwalk Shoalhaven	<b>NEW</b>	<p>Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott  Contact: <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a>  Grade: Hard  Details: 3-day walk – Fri. walk down to Little Horseshoe Bend and establishing a base camp; Sat. day walk up to Wine Glass Tor; Sun. exiting via Washed Away Creek. All off track with rock scrambling involved and a fair amount of scree.</p>
Nov 18 – 19 Caving Abercrombie	<b>DATE CHANGE</b>	<p>Trip Leader: Rod Smith  Contact: <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a>  Grade: Easy  Details: (Previously scheduled for Sept 23 – 24) The main objective of this trip will be to catalogue the documentation and other paraphernalia held by the guides. Caving will also be available for those who don't want to catalogue.</p>
Nov 25 – 26 Canyoning/AGM Rylestone/ Dunns Swamp	<b>NEW</b>	<p>Trip Leader: Ray Etherton  Contact: <a href="mailto:sox@soxelectrical.com">sox@soxelectrical.com</a>  Grade: Easy  Details: Family orientated trip (<b>kid friendly</b>), easy abseils at Dunns Swamp returning to Ray's place for MSS AGM and socialising &amp; board games; Sunday a walk up Rocky.</p> <p>Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott  Contact: <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a>  Grade: Medium  Details: Camping Friday night for an early start for an adults trip to Greenup/Midwinter on Saturday; we'll then return to Ray's place to join the others for MSS AGM and socialising &amp; board games; Sunday canyon tba depending on how much red wine is consumed.</p>



Dec 9 – 10 Bushwalking Upper Blue Mountains	<b>NEW</b>	<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Marilyn Scott  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Easy  <i>Details:</i> Family orientated trip (<b>kid-friendly</b>) overnight walk - all off track from the Tootie Creek T3 car park following ridges down to Tootie Creek and a new campsite with plunge pool. Sunday walk down Tootie Creek to exit up a spur to the T3 track. Rock hopping and scrambling involved.</p>
Dec 26 Canyoning Wollangambe	<b>NEW</b>	<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Rod Smith  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Easy  <i>Details:</i> the traditional MSS Wollangambe lilo trip (don't be fooled by cheap imitations). Family orientated trip (<b>kid-friendly</b>).</p>
Dec 27 Canyoning ???	<b>NEW</b>	<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Rod Smith  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Medium  <i>Details:</i> tba – preferences sought.</p>
Dec 30 – Jan 1 Canyoning ???	<b>NEW</b>	<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Rod Smith  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Medium  <i>Details:</i> tba – preferences sought.</p>
Mar or Apr 2018 Caving New Zealand		<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> David Stuckey  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:stuckedl@cba.com.au">stuckedl@cba.com.au</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Easy/Medium  <i>Details:</i> Awesome! But be warned, after caving in NZ, you may never cave in Oz again. Numbers will be limited due to transport/accommodation logistics.</p>
September 2018 Caving Nullarbor		<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Cathi Humphrey-Hood  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:cathi@emeraldimages.com.au">cathi@emeraldimages.com.au</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Easy  <i>Details:</i> Advance Notice of a Joint trip with NHVSS. Looking for new caves using drones and other techniques.</p>



John Gray, Gang Gang Creek – in a side gully with huge amphitheatre



# APPENDIX 1 – MEETING MINUTES

## MSS 424<sup>th</sup> General Meeting – 3 August 2017

Held at Canada Bay SES

Meeting Opened: 7:30pm

**Present:** Roderick Smith, Beth Little, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Marilyn Scott, Chris Johnstone

**Apologies:** Jim Crockett, David Stuckey

**Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes:** None

### **Correspondence:**

Latest edition of NHVSS NewCaves Chronicles

Old newsletters from John Marshall's estate, courtesy of Bob Horn

Yarrangobilly field guide from UIS pre-conference trip

### **Committee Members Reports:**

President: None

Treasurer: Financial Update: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017

The current balance of the account stands at \$9,385.41, however the UIS Yarrangobilly pre-congress trip debts, and ASF fees, have yet to be paid from this. The account began this reporting period (3rd May 2017) at \$3,786.41, after opening the financial year at \$4,657.84. The account is expected to finish this quarter at \$2,694.18, a loss of \$1,963.66 from the beginning of the financial year.

Financial year open:	\$4,657.84
Total Incoming for the year:	\$17,329.79
Total Outgoings for the year:	\$12,602.22
Current Account Balance:	\$9,385.41
Outstanding Debts (Yagby & ASF Fees):	\$6,691.23
Estimated Account Balance after Settlement of outstanding debts:	\$2,694.18

Anyone who wishes to look at the full report, please email [secretary@mssadventure.org](mailto:secretary@mssadventure.org) and it will be emailed to you.

Equipment Officer: Beth has taken over from Jim as equipment officer due to Jim moving and not having sufficient space at his new place of residence. Beth conducted an audit of the equipment. This has raised some items to be discussed further in new business.

Training Officer: Last training day was a spectacular and well-attended success.

Librarian: None

Web Manager: None

### **Status of Action Items:**

Bolting Course – Rod Smith: None

Resurveying Stable Cave – Jim Crockett: None

Abercrombie surface survey – Rod Smith: None

Abercrombie documentation – Rod Smith: About 5 more tags have been located and GPS-ed.

Documentation (constitution) – Chris Johnstone: Some brief discussion previously via email and further discussion this evening, Chris will continue working on this.

Documentation (membership application form) – Chris Johnstone: After the last meeting, there were several emails sent around with comments regarding this. Chris will review these and update the proposed form accordingly.

UIS Yarrangobilly Trip – Cathi Humphrey-Hood/Beth Little: Beth, John Brush, Marj and CSS catering crew, and the rest of the volunteers did an amazing job and all the feedback was positive; NPWS were really supportive. The trip report to be provided and will be in the newsletter.



Final financial details are being sorted out and will be resolved. The trip ran to budget.

*Marilyn raised a motion to formally congratulate Beth for her efforts in running the trip. Seconded by Cathi. Carried.*

Facebook – Marilyn has changed the description of the Facebook page. Marilyn is expanding the group to include cavers from other clubs.

Website look and feel – Marilyn Scott: Marilyn has sent Rod details for the public portion of the website. It's now up to him to implement it.

**Membership:** New members - Loretta Visintin, Marcia Kaye and Anna Ossig-Bonanno

### **New Business**

Bank Balance – This item was added to the agenda as there were concerns that MSS would be down to less than \$500.00 in the bank by the end of the year. This was a misunderstanding and we're not doing too badly, but not as well as we have been in the past. This means we're likely to have to raise fees at the AGM.

Equipment audit – In 2013, MSS purchased some 2nd hand ropes. The last lot of new ropes was purchased in 2006. Industry standard, which we should adhere to (because of the insurance), is that anything over 10 years old should be replaced. Beth aged the ropes as best as possible based on the core colours. We also have 3 helmets that are well over 10 years old with a couple of new helmets to replace these. Helmets have a similar industry standard as the ropes.

*Beth raised a motion to get rid of any material (ropes and tapes) that are well over 10 years old, as well as the three old helmets. Seconded by Marilyn. Carried.*

At the UIS Conference, Jim also won a 200m coil of 11mm rope for \$400.00 in the auction. We agreed to purchase that off Jim. This will replace some of the 11mm ropes once we have determined the lengths we wish to cut this to.

Cave Rescue Grants – Just an FYI that there are grants available through ASF for Cave Rescue training as well as other activities.

### **Trip planning:**

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
14-15 Oct	Marilyn	Cave Surveying Course	Wombeyan	Instructional	Limited places available and a small cost will be involved
4-5 Nov	Rod	Cave Surveying Practice	Cliefden	Instructional	This trip is only for cave surveying practice
10-12 Nov	Marilyn	Bushwalking	Shoalhaven	Hard	3 day walk, so you'll need to take a day off work
25-26 Nov	Ray	Abseiling/ Canyoning plus AGM	Rylestone/ Dunns Swamp	Easy	Family orientated trip, see Ray's notes below*
25-26 Nov	Marilyn	Canyoning/ AGM	Rylestone/ Northern Wollemi	Medium	If you want to go canyoning instead of abseiling, but still joining us for the AGM and socialising
9-10 Dec	Marilyn	Bushwalking	Tootie Creek	Easy	2 day walk kid friendly down to a great campsite
26 Dec	Rod	Canyoning	Wollongambe	Easy	The traditional MSS Wollongambe lilo trip
27- Dec	Rod	Canyoning	??	Medium	Any preferences?
30 Dec/1 Jan	Rod	Canyoning	??	Medium	Any preferences?

\*Note: How about a very easy abseiling at Dunns Swamp rock formations, building up to abseiling into the water. Camping in my backyard and a walk up Rocky on the Sunday. – Ray

Next Meeting: AGM – 25 November at Rylestone

Meeting Closed: 10.00pm

Meeting was enjoyed with wine and chocolate biscuits.



# Volunteering

## Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve




[nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au)

### THE SYCAMORE WAR VOLUNTEER WEEKENDS

**2017 Spring Weeding Weekends**

Come along to volunteer and help remove 50ha of weeds invading bushland at Jenolan Caves.

Volunteer weekends are run to help control invasive weed plants around the caves. Professional bush regeneration contractors are on hand to train you in weed identification and control techniques, so experience isn't essential

- Tools, herbicides, training and PPE will be supplied for the weekend work
- Accommodation and ALL main meals are provided, + Saturday night BBQ
- Saturday evening activity (TBC each trip) - such as a guided cave tour or native fauna spotlight walk

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Appropriate work clothes; long-sleeved shirt, workpants, broad-brimmed hat, water-bottle, suitable enclosed footwear
- Warm / wet weather/ spare clothes
- Towel, toiletries, soap, PJs, your own snacks, (shared kitchen & cooking facilities)
- Optional to bring your own bedding - all linen, doona and pillows provided
- \*The terrain is uneven and steep in most places \*

There's an ATM, restaurant, souvenir shop, bar (suggest BYO), public phone and mobile coverage.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

National Parks & Wildlife Service  
[www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/Whats-On/blue-mountains/sycamore-war-volunteer-weeding-jenolan-caves](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/Whats-On/blue-mountains/sycamore-war-volunteer-weeding-jenolan-caves)

Office of Environment & Heritage  
[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkVolunteering.aspx?id=N0351](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkVolunteering.aspx?id=N0351)

### WHEN REGISTERING

- Please include any dietary requirements vegetarian/vegan as well as food or other allergies
- Indicate if you require a lift (where from), or if you're able to car-pool
- Please include your contact details (email and mobile is fine), and
- Let us know where you heard of the event from.

### WEEKEND DATES FOR SPRING 2017

- September 16th & 17th
- November 11th & 12th

**REGISTER and BOOK via email** to be sent an itinerary, and be sure to confirm your place!

**Bookings are essential**

Contact: Trish Kidd Project Officer  
 NPWS Office - Oberon  
 E: [trish.kidd@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:trish.kidd@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
 M: 0423 527 740 P: 6336 1972



**Office of Environment & Heritage**  
 NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service







**Local Land Services**  
 Central Tablelands