



# Metropolitan Speleological Society

**Quarterly  
Newsletter**

**Summer  
*Issued March 2018***



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*Cover Shot: MSS & NHVSS members in Wollangambe 3 (Photo: Garry Smith)*



## SOCIETY INFORMATION

### Club PLB

Just a reminder to all trip leaders that the Club PLB should be taken on every remote trip. Our Equipment Officer, Beth (0450 226 811), [equipment@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:equipment@mssadventure.org.au)) has this, so please coordinate with her to collect it before you lead your next trip.

### 2018 Office Bearers

President	<a href="mailto:president@mssadventure.org.au">president@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Jim Crockett
Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@mssadventure.org.au">secretary@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Rod Smith
Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@mssadventure.org.au">treasurer@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Cathi Humphrey Hood
Equipment Officer	<a href="mailto:equipment@mssadventure.org.au">equipment@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Beth Little
Librarian	<a href="mailto:library@mssadventure.org.au">library@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Rod Smith
Training Officer	<a href="mailto:training@mssadventure.org.au">training@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Beth Little
ASF Liaison		Jim Crockett & Rod Smith
Newsletter Editor	<a href="mailto:newsletter@mssadventure.org.au">newsletter@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Marilyn Scott
Website Manager	<a href="mailto:webmaster@mssadventure.org.au">webmaster@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Rod Smith
Public Officer		John Gray

### Membership Fee Details (2018)

Full member	\$80	<i>Prospective membership options (12 months)</i>	
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		

Cheques or Cash accepted but **preferred method of payment** by Direct Debit to: Account Name: MSS  
BSB: 062-021 (Commonwealth Bank): Account: 00901421



## Welcome to New Members

This quarter, we're welcoming three new members, **Paul Daniel**, **Trish Morrow**, **Evgenia Obriadina** and three returning members ... **Michael Sliwka** and **Ray & Fletcher Etherton**.



*Trish at Castle Head*

**Paul Daniel** was introduced to MSS through long term member Rob Clyne. Paul is a marine biologist and has travelled extensively. A keen bushwalker and canyoner, Paul hasn't done any caving but that shouldn't stop him.

It's been a few years since **Trish** first took out her Introductory Membership back in 2014, but (finally) she's become a full member. Trish has caved in the past, but her passions are canyoning and bushwalking. Trish is particularly partial to exploratory trips and is currently trying to tick off the canyons that she hasn't yet done. She's a member/leader of Brisbane Water Outdoor Club and has already stepped up to the plate and led a trip or two for MSS (well done Trish).

**Ev** (Evgenia), as everyone knows her, joined MSS after a run through Alcatraz with us. Ev's also a member of a couple of other clubs including Upper Blue Mountains Bushwalking Club – which has a lot of canyoning on its calendar, plus does excellent abseil training for their members. Ev has been canyoning for about 2 years and since joining after the Alcatraz trip, has been down Wollangambe 3 with Rod.

Whilst Ev's never caved before she'd be willing to give it a go but is worried about it being claustrophobic, never mind, MSS has a number of members who aren't "into" caving yet!



*Ev in Alcatraz*



**Michael** rejoins MSS after an absence of seven years. So, what's he been doing for the last seven years ... travelled to more than 120 countries, hiked the length of the Himalayas and slept in more jungles and on more mosquito-infested beaches than he cares to remember. Michael founded and manages *One World One Life*, an international charity organisation which operates in a number of troubled areas across the world, and which contributed heavily to rebuilding works in Nepal following the earthquake in 2015. Since rejoining, Michael joined Rod, Anna and Cathi in Banks Canyon and a visit to Mt Wilson.

**Ray** (and his son **Fletch**) have been associated with MSS for a long time, mostly through Ray's wife, Natalie, who sadly died just under two years ago. Ray has a long, long history of outdoor activities, caving, canyoning and bushwalking, but these days he's more into making great roast dinners for those of us silly enough to go underground for 8 hours ... or setting up hot showers with the Narnia light for us out in the wilderness after a hard day's caving. Fletch has been caving since he was a little kid, he recently went on a MSS trip to Jenolan and the adults in the group had nothing but praise for Fletch ... "what a lovely young man", "so helpful in the cave!", we're looking to having Fletch on more trips (and Ray of course!).



*"Arrr me hearties, let's go camping?"  
Fletch & Ray in costume!*





## MSS Projects

Have you felt that you wanted to give something back to MSS, but didn't know how? Or maybe you didn't want to commit to anything due to time constraints? Well, here's your opportunity.

Over the last few years various members of MSS have taken on projects on behalf of MSS. In most cases assistance on these projects would be greatly appreciated. This can be as little as offering an opinion on a topic up to contributing as much time as you're willing to commit.

The following list details the projects, the type of assistance you could make, and who to contact to offer your help.





- **Abercrombie Book** (Contact: Beth Little) - We have decided it's time for MSS to produce an up-to-date book on the Abercrombie karst area. A couple of planning trips to Abercrombie are planned, check out the Calendar for the dates. There's going to be a lot to do in a lot of different areas, so any assistance will be greatly appreciated.
- **Abercrombie GPS Tag Location** (Contact: Rod Smith) - The aim of this project is to locate and GPS all the tags at Abercrombie. Over half have been located but there's still plenty to go.
- **Abercrombie Surface Survey** (Contact: Rod Smith) - A lot of the tags at Abercrombie are very close together, so the idea is to do an accurate survey between those tags to be able to see potential relationships between the caves. This project hasn't started yet as there's been a focus on having GPS waypoints for each tag location, but there's no reason why a surface survey can't start. Surveying skills are not required to help on this project.
- **Surveying - Cave Map Consistency** (Contact: Marilyn Scott) - **completed**
- **Surveying - Resurvey Stable Cave** (Contact: Jim Crockett) - This project came about because we couldn't find a single map that covered the entirety of Stable Cave. This is likely to get rolled into a re-survey project of multiple caves at Abercrombie in preparation for the book.
- **Surveying - Resurvey Casuarina Cave** (Contact: Rod Smith) - With the threat of the dam that could flood Cliefden Caves OSS began a project to re-survey all the caves at Cliefden. We volunteered to re-survey Casurina Cave. Although the threat seems to have passed the cave survey is still wanted. We're hoping to do the main bit of work on this over the June long weekend.
- **Website Look and Feel** (Contact: Marilyn Scott) - This project is 90% complete, just need to do some work on the Members area. We still needed some good recent photographs for the website!
- **Documentation** (Constitution) (Contact: Chris Johnstone) - This is mostly complete although there's still some debate regarding the membership types we should be offering.
- **Documentation** (Membership Application Form) (Contact: Chris Johnstone) - **completed**
- **Catalogue MSS Library** (Contact: Rod Smith) - We have a lot of information in the MSS library, but it's not catalogued to enable us to find relevant information. The ultimate goal is to have the catalogue on the website so members can find any information we have with ease.
- **Bolting Course** (Contact: Rod Smith) - This hasn't progressed much passed the idea phase, but could be another useful skill members may be interested in.





## MSS Merchandise

New members ... you may not be aware that MSS has a range of branded merchandise (T-shirts, plastic wine glasses in addition to what's shown below)! So, when you're on the next trip and a bunch of us are wearing, say, Red Sox, this is where you order them:

	Price	Description
	<b>\$10</b>	<b>MSS Red Explorer Sox</b> (Volleys and good looking male legs not included). These sox are a must for MSS members, trips are often graded "Red Sox" (as opposed to Medium or Hard) which means that those on the trip will be wearing their Explorer Red Sox. These sox are scarcer than hen's teeth, only available through MSS, and at an unbelievable price – a limited supply are still available, buy now while stocks last!
	<b>\$30</b>	<b>MSS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hoodie</b> – best buy yet, toasty warm for around the campfire, yet dressy enough for a winter's night out on the (small) town. Plus, it's really cool when a bunch of us turn up to an event all wearing our hoodies or t-shirts – not sure that there's another caving club who has it's own hoodies! There is still a limited supply, so, buy now while stocks last. Colour: Black - Sizes: S, M, XL, XXL

Postage not included but pick up can be organised. To purchase these unique items at these amazingly low prices, contact Rod, [secretary@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:secretary@mssadventure.org.au)



## Diary Alerts

### The Darkness Beneath: Caving Tasmania

(31st ASF Conference 30 Dec 2018 - 4 Jan 2019)

ASF have a conference every second year and in 2019 it will be held in Devonport, Tasmania. This is an amazing opportunity for cavers as Devonport is a mere 60k as the crow flies from one of Tasmania's most renowned caving areas, **Mole Creek Karst Area** (Kubla Khan, Croesus and Genghis Kahn). Pre- and post-caving trips will be on offer, an opportunity not to be missed to cave with the "locals" and to see some highly restricted caves.

We've been told by the organisers that there'll be a range of accommodation available including cost effective camping at the venue. The conference organisers are looking to make this an inclusive event, so, if you're a caver and your family isn't, they're encouraging the whole family to come as there are plans to organise activities for non-cavers to do during the conference! So, mark your diary now, set the dates aside and, bookmark the [website](#) for further updates.



*Croesus Cave (Photo: David Wools-Cobb)*



## Bat Night – Friday 9 March 2018 from 6.30pm

**Where:** Blue Mountains Heritage Centre, Govetts Leap Road, Blackheath  
**Enquiries:** 02 4787 8877  
**Cost:** Gold coin donation  
**Bookings:** Essential for the Bat Walks



So, what will be happening ....

- Bat talks
- Bat Videos
- Bat Walks (this is really cool, a Ranger will walk participants down to an area that is frequented by bats and he'll have a sonar "thing" so that we'll be able to "hear" the bats talking to each other!
- Opportunity to meet a flying fox!
- Bat Cave for the kids

This is part of a national bat awareness program and looks like being loads of fun. It's a **kid-friendly** event and already a number of MSS members are planning on attending.

Don't worry, if you miss out this year, it will be on the program next year as this is an annual event that NPWS runs and we're encouraging MSS members, particularly those with kids who like to cave, to support attend ... It's never too late to learn more about the bats we occasionally come across.



## Vertical Cave Rescue Training 2018

The NSW Cave Rescue Squad prides itself in being able to efficiently and safely move rescuers and casualties in caves, where verticality and difficult walking is the norm. They run regular and rigorous training to maintain the skills needed, and keep up to date with international best practices and how they can best be applied to Australian conditions.

They believe that it's important to further reduce the likelihood of caving accidents by providing opportunities for cavers to practice and consider rescue techniques to extract an injured caver from a cave.

In 2018 they are opening a Vertical Cave Rescue program to the wider caving public. This program aims to provide basic training in ropework and the safe handling of a casualty in a vertical cave.

The following training weekends will be held in 2018 and it is recommended that the two weekends are combined, and both attended:

- **May 5-6 Sydney Region**
- **May 19-20 Bungonia**



*Photo credit: caverescue.org.au*

These training sessions involve two (2) days of fairly intense practice for each weekend. You'll need enough fitness and existing skills to make the most of the weekend's training – you don't want to be just watching!

For further information or to register, contact Brian Evans on [be.somewhat.insane@gmail.com](mailto:be.somewhat.insane@gmail.com) or 0409 443 415 at least a week before the training weekend.





## TRIP REPORTS

### Canyoning, Dumbano, 28 – 30 December 2017

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Rod Smith (leader), Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Ed & Jo Squires and Marilyn Scott

Rod has put this trip on the MSS calendar a couple of times, but for one reason or another it didn't go ahead. I'd always wanted to go back to Dumbano after an aborted CMW trip 15+ years ago, so I was hoping that this time the trip would go ahead.

The plan was to walk to Dumbano via Tunnel canyon - this isn't actually the Tunnel Canyon in the canyon guide which is further downstream so I'm now calling it "Good Tunnel Canyon" because on a canyon legend's map, he's written "good tunnel" on the creek we were going to ... no other name, so now it has a name. We were to then spend five days and four nights exploring the side creeks downstream, looking for more canyons.

Bad weather forecasts shortened the proposed five-day trip by one day, and then we ended up walking out a day early (for a variety of reasons). BUT, the three days we spent in the creek were well worth the effort to get there!

We started at 9am from Zig Zag Railway, driving out along Dumbano Fire Trail to the NPWS barrier. In hindsight, it might have been a late start, as I was walking down the hill in 30°C temperatures, I recalled a day trip out to Puzzle Canyon (in the same area) back in January this year, when we were all suffering from heat exhaustion by mid-day.

This time though, we were loaded down with overnight gear, wetsuits, abseil gear, 2 x 40m rope and 1 x 20m rope. My pack at 14k (without any ropes) was way too heavy for me and I hate to think what Rod's pack weighed! Climbing up the hill we were all sweating and taking lots of stops in the shade, it was the trip out to Puzzle all over again!



*There wasn't much scrub on the walk in, for which we were all thankful.*

We walked for about five hours before getting into the creek system for what would be our first



*Jo on an interesting climb down when we first entered Good Tunnel canyon*

(guaranteed) canyon, Good Tunnel Canyon. I was pretty much over walking in the heat through dry country so was thinking "this had better be a good canyon" for this much effort. When we got to the first pool, all thoughts of wetsuits went out the window, we were just too hot. We were also running low on water so coming to the first pool, it was a case of "let's get in there".

The canyon was definitely the highlight of the trip. There were a few climb downs and one abseil and the most amazing tunnel section of canyon I've ever seen, at least 100m of straight-as-an-arrow passage way, half of it with open sky at the top, the rest closed in. The walls were covered with green moss and ferns, and the dark



section had a long-ish swim. I would highly recommend anyone who's interested in something a little different to take the time to visit it!



*Looking downstream at a climb down, you can see the exit of the tunnel in the background.*



*Looking upstream in the canyon, straight-as.*

We were soon at the Dumbano junction, by now we're all freezing cold and shivering, so stood around in the sun to warm up. Some of us then did a quick 50m walk upstream to see a huge chock-stone. Regrouping we then made our way downstream, looking for our destination, an overhang for the night.

The going wasn't easy and there were a few swims that were colder than expected but eventually we were at what we assumed was the overhang, so set up camp. We were all too stuffed to look around further for something better and just wanted to build a fire and dry out our cold, wet clothes.

Next morning, we got up and reassessed the situation. None of us were keen to pack up camp and go downstream 2k to the next overhang (that we knew about) – the scrub was very unfriendly and it would mean adding a further 3k of walking downstream (through log jams) and a further 3k to our walk out and after the hot walk in we weren't keen to do either. There was an exit



*Our camp for the night - and chinese laundry!*

route 20m upstream from the camp cave, so we decided that we would make the overhang a base camp and explore the canyon we'd passed the day before, and then if we had time, go downstream looking for a better camp cave, and other possible canyons. So, leaving Rod in camp, Ed, Jo, Anna and I set off up a very convenient ramp adjacent to the side creek we'd explore.

We climbed up to the top and then wandered along looking for a good entry into the creek. Took a while and we ended up further upstream than expected, but at least we know now there's nothing there. Eventually, we came to some canyon section, not much and right at the end of the creek, however, there were a couple of drops and we enjoyed the challenge of determining whether or not ropes were long enough and what we would do if the ropes we took didn't reach the bottom, very good exploratory





*The short abseil at the end of the creek.*

canyoning exercise. The two / three drops (depending on how you did it), we nice and ended with an abseil down a small waterfall into Dumbano.

We made our way downstream to the overhang for lunch, then Anna, Ed and I set off downstream to see if there were better camp caves (not) and check out side creeks to see if there were any possible canyons (a couple). We made it to a big bend in the creek and then retraced our steps. If we'd gone any further we would have come to the 20m abseil which was our

turnaround point anyway. Our return to the campsite was a little easier, we stayed up out of the creek and hugged the cliff-line, something to take note of for the future. We've identified another way into Dumbano via a creek that may have some canyon formation and this will position us to explore two other creeks on the other side of Dumbano, plus then do the 20m drop and go down to what's known as a good camp cave.



*Jo practising her navigation.*



*Jo abseiling down into a pool, we actually did two drops as one due to lack of anchor at this point.*



*On our way downstream we did a little "caving".*

The forecast downpour of rain for the night didn't eventuate. We got up early and decided that we'd take advantage of the cool weather to walk out as we'd explored as much as we could over the two days. Jo led the way and practiced her navigation (well done Jo), we were back at the vehicles just after lunch and were on the road by about 2pm.

A great trip out to this rarely visited area, thanks Rod, and we're all keen to go back next year!



## Canyoning, Banks – 2 January 2018

Report by: Rod Smith

Participants: Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Michael Sliwka, Rod Smith (TL)

Newnes Plateau looks vastly different from when I started canyoning in the late 90s. Most of the trails are the same, although the condition of some of them has changed dramatically. Most of the old signs have gone, but some new signs have been installed. The biggest change to the area has been the denuding of the pine plantations, which has made a significant impact on how the Plateau looks. Since I go up that way almost every summer I've adjusted to the changes as they've happened. But for Cathi, who doesn't get up that way as much, the changes have made it all confusing, and finding a once familiar location has become a near impossibility.



Rod: "You guys go on, just leave me here" at the bottom of the entry/exit route. (photo: Cathi H-H)

out.

The temperature was already climbing by the time we reached Dingo Creek. I would have been happy just lazing by the water while the others did the canyon, but they weren't happy with me taking that option. So, I told them to choose between the wet crossing and the dry crossing. Due to the temperature, and the fact it didn't involve going steeply up and down, everyone opted for the wet crossing. Other than myself everyone pulled on their wetsuits halfway in preparation. It wasn't as deep as I remembered it, but we still got a little wet.

My recollection was that we had to go a little downstream and find a track up to a camp cave, then go left under the cave and into North East canyon. I couldn't find an easy way downstream and then Michael said he'd found a track, so we decided to follow that. The track took us straight up a tributary (not sure if it was the correct one) and to a scramble. The first half of the scramble was reasonably easy, but the second half got harder. Anna got up with some assistance from Michael and then deployed a hand-line. We hauled the packs and managed to get to the top.

Thus, it was not surprising to receive a request to meet at Zig Zag so she could follow me out to the Hole-In-The-Wall carpark, and preferably in daylight. So, at 4pm on New Year's Day I sat waiting for her to arrive. Nearly half an hour later Cathi arrived with Michael, cursing a driver that had crawled all the way up Bells Line of Road. We still had plenty of daylight as we drove out to the Hole-In-The-Wall carpark and selected our camp site for the next three nights.

The following morning Anna arrived ahead of schedule, so she finished her breakfast while we got ready. Neither Anna nor Cathi had done Banks before so they were looking forward to it. I realised the laminated A4 map I had didn't quite go far enough north, but that didn't worry me too much as we'd be all on track, so I didn't take it.

We were walking before 9am. The walk in was uneventful, other than Anna nearly stepping on the baby brown snake that both Michael and I had unknowingly stepped over. We lost the track briefly just after we left the Hole-In-The-Wall entry. I made a comment that sometimes tracks are easier to follow in one direction, and this was proven true on the way



Michael & Anna trying to get up a small rock jumble in North-East canyon (photo: Cathi H-H)



From here it looked like we were nearly at the top, and there certainly didn't appear to be a canyon upstream from here. I started to think we were in the wrong tributary. But we were here now, so we continued up.

A bit further up the stream we found a way up to the right and hit a track. I was at the back and feeling the effects of the heat so let the others decide where to go. They opted for turning right. This was at least partly due to believing we were not in North East and it had to be to the right.

We followed the track under a large overhang to a corner. Michael and Anna scouted ahead and after a while called for Cathi and me to join them. We turned the corner and encountered some very thick scrub which made for slow going. A bit further on we got to some pagodas. This made the walking easier, but we were exposed to the heat of the day, not that we could avoid it that much in the scrub.



*Michael abseiling (photo: Cathi H-H)*

By the time we reached the ridge we realised things weren't going according to plan. Complacency had hit again! So, the decision was made, keep going in the general direction we were heading and find the next convenient way back down to Dingo Creek.

Over the next knoll we started towards a likely looking tributary. As we approached it we found it was a canyon, but not North East. We may have found Banks after all. At this point we would need to abseil into the canyon, but it was all just low scrub with no convenient anchors. We paralleled the canyon until we eventually found a likely looking tree.

On close inspection the anchor looked even better than expected, so down we went. We were doing a canyon after all, and I was getting more convinced it was Banks. Even if it wasn't, it was definitely cooler in the canyon which made me happy.

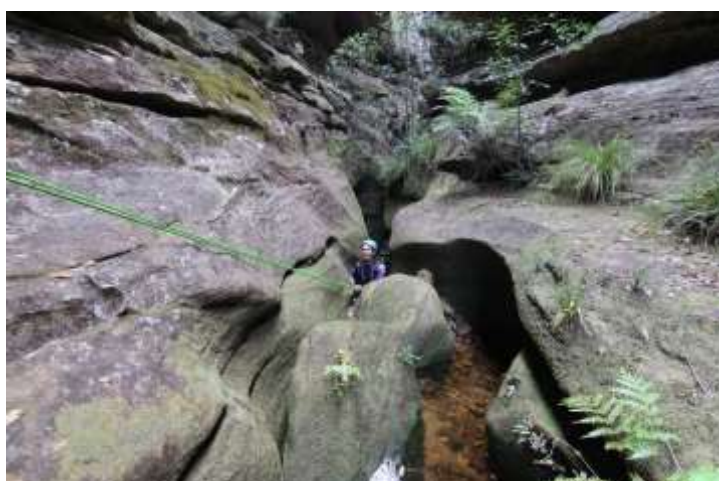
Downstream a short distance we encountered our first canyon abseil. This was a short drop that looked very familiar. It also ended in some rather cold water. I finally donned my wetsuit and was glad I did.

Another couple of short abseils and some tight sections. We were definitely in Banks, and we hadn't missed much by abseiling in where we did. The whole group was enjoying this very beautiful canyon.

I was at the back and after the last abseil in this section I encountered a problem. There was a spot where we needed to climb up a little way then squeeze between a boulder and the left canyon wall. The others had already done it and were out of sight when I found I didn't fit. Thankfully I wasn't stuck (unlike Fergies Canyon from a month earlier), so I backed up a bit and looked for an alternative. There was no easy option. In fact, the only option I could see was to climb higher and go over the constriction, not an easy feat. I threw my pack through and had another look. After a few false starts I finally found a foothold I was happy with and carefully made my way higher. Thankfully getting down the other side was easier and I was on my way.

My delay had given Anna and Michael time to have a bite to eat. I was happy with a quick drink and we were on the move again. We didn't want to stop for too long as we were running later than planned.

The canyon had opened up for a short distance, but still quite nice. Soon the next abseil appeared, and this was higher. It was possible to disconnect out of the water,



*Anna abseiling (photo: Cathi H-H)*

and even pull down the rope, but we couldn't avoid the water for long.

We encountered our second snake for the day in this section. It had gotten itself onto a smallish rock in the middle of the canyon, but the canyon was wide enough to be able to avoid it easily. Cathi took a couple of photos so we could try and identify it later, at the time we had no idea. It turns out it was possibly a juvenile Brown Snake as they are not necessarily fully brown at that age.

One more abseil and we were in Dingo Creek. We still had to make our way upstream, but this section of Dingo Creek is very pretty in its own right. It was also in this section that we encountered our third snake. Again, we had no idea at the time but it may also have been a juvenile Brown. No photos were taken of that one.

At the start of the exit track I reminded the rest of the group that I could have been quite happy lazing there for the day, and in hindsight they all thought it may have been a good idea. But we were all still happy to have done Banks Canyon. We walked in the evening light and made it back almost on sunset, just short of 12 hours (so technically not an epic).

The following morning the weather wasn't as good and no-one really felt like doing the planned Popeye Canyon. Cathi and Michael left during the day while Anna and I hung around to do Hole-In-The-Wall the following day.

As the day wore on the weather worsened and by the following morning Anna decided it was too cold and she was going home. I waited til 8:30 as we were expecting Mark and a couple of his boys to come. When they didn't arrive I started home, only to run into them a short distance down the trail. After a discussion we decided that the weather wasn't great for canyoning and I continued home.

Although the trip didn't go according to plan, we still all enjoyed Banks Canyon.



## Atlas of Living Australia (ALA)

Not a trip report, but I had half a page to fill, and I thought this was worthwhile. Sometime ago, when I was on an MSS trip when we carried a koala out of Hartley's Mistake Canyon, someone said "you should report this to Atlas of Living Australia". I didn't give it any further thought, but an email came across my desk the other day and I thought, "this is cool".

The Atlas of Living Australia (<http://www.ala.org.au/>) is a collaborative, national project that collects biodiversity data from multiple sources (including people like us) and makes it freely available and usable online.

They are currently assisting the University of Adelaide School of Biological Sciences research group to identify echidna populations. The ALA project is called **Have you spotted an echidna in the wild?** The Australian Government is supporting this project, and there's even a #citizenscience app to help researchers learn more about echidnas. Despite being one of the most widespread mammals in Australia - inhabiting deserts, rainforests, and alpine regions - echidnas can be incredibly hard to detect in the wild. The information collected by this app will be very useful to conservation scientists and researchers.



*Short-beaked echidna (Image courtesy of ALA, Louise Docker)*

For more information, visit [https://blog.csiro.au/tracking-elusive-echidna-populations/?utm\\_source=Snapshot-January-2018&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=Snapshot%27](https://blog.csiro.au/tracking-elusive-echidna-populations/?utm_source=Snapshot-January-2018&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=Snapshot%27)





## Canyoning, Alcatraz – 5 January 2018

Report by: Trish Morrow

Participants: MSS – Marilyn Scott (leader), Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Mark & Sam Hornshaw, Trish Morrow, Ev Obriadina

BWOC – Steve Cooper, James & Namaste Ossig-Bonanno

This was a joint MSS/BWOC Friday afternoon canyoning adventure, mainly advertised through the MSS Facebook page, but we got a really good turnout!.

We set off from the Glowworm Tunnel Road just after 4pm and found our way through the maze of fire-trails with only one wrong turn.

We followed the footpad, lost it, found it, lost it again, and eventually got to the start of the canyon – it's pretty straight forward you can't really miss it.

The canyon is really just a spectacular abseil into a pool, then you exit the pool and walk back along the creek. But the views on the way in and out are very specky and the abseil itself is worth the trip.

We were efficient and all surprised by the abseil and the pool exit. It looked like there was no exit from the top of the abseil. You only see the letterbox exit once in the pool - a bit of faith is needed.

We found our way along under the cliff line, all chatting and having a lovely time, and before we knew it we were up on the ridge admiring the cliffs and pagodas. Back at the cars at 7pm then to camp at Mt Wilson. Thanks Marilyn for an excellent mini-adventure.



*Looking out through the "letterbox" exit, Sam looking in.*



*Trish and Steve negotiating their way down a VERY slippery slope!*



## Canyoning, exploratory South Bowens area – 6 January 2018

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Marilyn Scott (leader), Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Trish Morrow, Emma Parnell, Murray Newman, Steve Rowse

The day started out perfectly, everyone arrived on time, we nailed the route we wanted to take and explored the creek we wanted to explore, but by the end of the day, I'd be spending two hours in Lithgow's emergency room. And I still don't know how I managed to injure not one but two legs! ...

We had always said we'd go back and explore one of the side creeks adjacent to what we call "Dug's canyon" to see if there were any other canyons in the area. This creek system is unpublished and in the Bell's Line of Road area. I didn't really think twice about scheduling the trip on the weekend before I was due to fly out to the Scandinavian countries to maybe see the Northern Lights. But the closer it got to the weekend, I was wondering the wisdom of going out into the wilderness (and rightly so some of you will be saying).

We entered the creek from a fire trail that services a power line, it was pretty scrubby on the way down and we had to do a little zigging and zagging to avoid some cliff lines, but eventually we dropped into a gully and set up a rope to abseil down the last 10m. We dropped into our creek right at the spot where a 20m waterfall stops you from going any further upstream. The creek at this spot has a Coachwood forest in it and was very pretty. We had high hopes for further downstream (Dug's canyon has a couple of nice abseils and some nice canyon section).

The lovely Coachwood forest didn't last all that long though and next thing we knew we were in a scrubby creek. There was the odd small section of canyon formation but that was about it.

The day was pretty hot and we were just about at the exit for Dug's canyon, and we hadn't found



*Steve abseiling into our creek from the small gully*

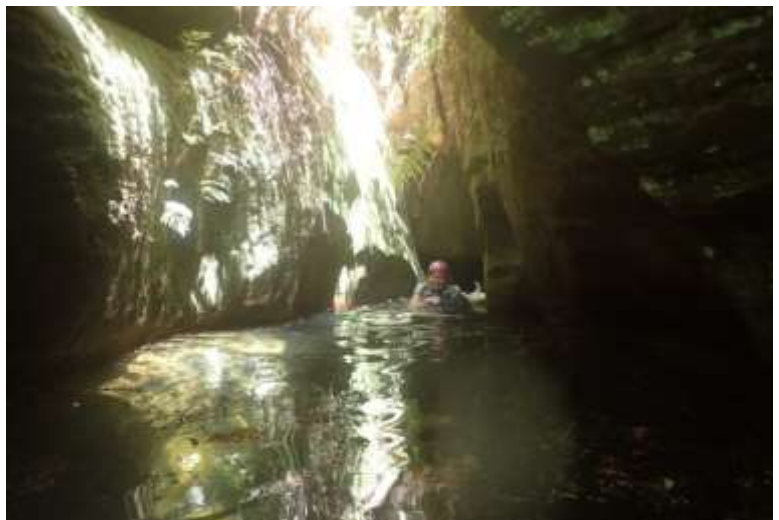
anything worthwhile. As it was so hot we decided that we'd make our way all the way to the end of our creek and drop into South Bowen Creek, and then walk upstream to the usual South Bowen exit. Once this decision was made we walked another 50m or so, and there was finally a drop into a deep pool, we were all excited that maybe we'd found some canyon. This was not to be so though, after our 10m compulsory swim, once again the creek opened out into a scrubby mess and after another 100m or so we were at the junction of our creek and South Bowen.



*This section of our creek was very pretty*



I'd heard that there were some nice canyon sections downstream of the South Bowen exit and the rumor was true, this section of South Bowen has really, really lovely canyon sections, none of us had carried in wetsuits, and despite the heat the compulsory swims were pretty cool. After about an hour of walking upstream we came to a muddy section of creek (only knee deep) and somehow, I walked into something (sharp log, sharp rock, who knows) and I thought I'd bruised both shins. I walked upstream for another 10m where everyone had congregated to talk with some Sydney Rovers Speleos that were walking downstream. I thought I'd take a



*Emma on the compulsory swim in the only "real" section of canyon we found*



*Walking up South Bowen, lovely canyon sections*

look at my shin and almost passed out, it was really nasty. Then I looked at the other leg and that was worse. Trish, Anna and Emma bandaged me up as best they could and then we started the long walk out. There were a lot of climb ups that the guys helped me with (as I was protecting the gashes), and eventually we arrived at the South Bowen exit. We didn't wait around but soldiered on and eventually got to the end of the fire trail around 5pm – Steve went on ahead and retrieved Trish's car which was about 2k away and she and I took off for Lithgow Hospital, getting there around 5.30. Two hours later after

much irrigation of the wounds and a lot of butterfly strips (they don't stitch you up apparently for these type of wounds), I was on the way back to Cathedral campground.

Our plans for Sunday were shelved, some decided to go home early, some went over to do a quick run through Empress. Steve drove me home and I was over to the doctor's next morning, wondering if I would be able to fly to Norway on Wednesday (I was given the all clear). The legs are still healing (after four weeks), and I now have a set of shin guards! Thanks everyone for looking after me on the walk out. Sorry we didn't find more canyon!



*Still in South Bowen (beyond the exit), really cool rock formations.*



## Canyoning, Waratah Ridge – 26 & 27 January 2018

Report by: Trish Morrow

Participants: MSS: Trish Morrow and Anna Ossig-Bonanno (joint leaders), Heather Reid, Trish Neil

BWOC: Brad Moore, Rob Rogers, Peter Terry and Jimmy Ossig-Bonanno

This was a joint MSS/BWOC trip, but it gets a little confusing when a lot are members of both clubs, and none of us had ever done these canyons before!

On the way up Thursday afternoon, bushfires were burning all around the Wollemi and I was quickly coming up with a Plan B. However, we were met at the Zig Zag station by RFT “firies” who said we would be ok, and to keep an eye out if there were dry lightning strikes.

So, we drove on and met Brad and Rob at the Hole in the Wall car park and were much later joined by Heather and Trish (we were already in bed). Anna and Jimmy arrived at 7am, and we set off about 7.45, but then I had to race back as I left maps in car! So, all up about 20mins late starting.

Navigation and track finding went well, and we were at a point to drop our overnight gear by 11am. We went searching for the Bubble Bath camp cave track but couldn't find it so



*Feral horses spotted in Newnes State Forest on the drive in.*

dropped overnight gear and got going for Bridge canyon. More navigation (Anna's navigational skills were excellent and very helpful) and we arrived at the entry, had lunch and wet-suited up by 1pm.

A really hard creek bash, with Rob just lying on the grasses to flatten them and falling through reed matting into the water, then no water and getting hot thinking “where is the canyon section?”, and finally it started.

Abseils and tricky climb downs just kept coming. They all took some time and we were trying to leap frog with 3 ropes and wished we had brought 4 along! Tricky starts, twisty bits, slotty bits, wades and swims, and the next to last drop into a chamber that I wasn't sure about being able to exit (you can't see it from the top, and I forgot that the reports say “you can't see the exit from the top” and stuffed about a bit too long).

Eventually we made it to the final abseil and we were at the Bungleboori at 5.30pm. Anna and

Brad searched for the exit track while others were getting water, getting undressed and struggling through the Bungleboori boulders. It was a long trek up the spur (but not too hard) and we lost the track near the top of the spur. It was also dark and stormy by now, and as we tried to get back to our overnight gear, we had to don headlights and navigate in near dark, then dark. Thank goodness for Rob's “goto” function, and Anna and Brad's working compasses (mine was now broken) and we got to our gear.



*What can one say about the ferns/scrub on the way in, horrific!  
We don't even know who this is.*



Now we were trying to navigate at about 9pm in the dark to the entrance track to get to the camp cave. We came to a deep gully, we had a sick member (exhaustion) we were still in wet gear, had no shelter, and decided that it was time to just set up camp in the open and hope for the best. Lucky no rain overnight. Water discovered in a pool in the morning - was really needed by then.

The GPS was telling us we were at the start of the gully, so we went looking north and found the gully



*Finally in the canyon!*



*Lovely canyon formation*

Next morning, we were up and away by 8ish, we easily found the track (and I've now noted it for the next trip) and retraced our steps back along the ridge.

We were back at the cars by about 12.30 – easy 4 hour walk out.

We had intended to do Bjelke's Mind on the Sat, but we were too tired after the big day before. Guess we'll have to save that for another trip.

I've made a note what I could do better and changes I would make. I have a plan for the next trip out there, but it has to be a long weekend, too far for just two days.

Thanks to all for their help and their resilience. A good crew all around. Special thanks to Anna for her navigation help, Rob for his strength, and Heather for her doctoring.

entrance about 60m away. Sick member a little better so we headed down and found the camp cave -which was occupied. But we found some likely spots for shelter and set up.

A quick lunch and we set off for Bubble Bath canyon at 12.30pm, leaving 3 behind who just felt a bit tired after the huge day the day before. Easy navigation, easy to find, and was one of the best and most beautiful canyons I've ever done. Fluffed about enjoying ourselves. Only 2 easy abseils. Out by 3,30pm right on our campsite. I would recommend this area as a base camp for some bushwalking and exploring too, not just canyoning.

Back to camp and we had an enjoyable fire, chatting, brewing up, enjoying dinner, etc. My site was on a slope and I ended up on a flat spot again in the open, got 8 drops of light rain at 4am but otherwise a clear and quiet night.



*Our campsite on Day 2*



## Canyoning, Wollangambe 3 – 13 January 2018

Report by: Rod Smith

Participants: The Hornshaws: Mark, Ilga, Hugo, Kai, Renatta, and Mini, Rob Clyne, Paul Daniel, Ev Obriadina, Garry Smith (NHVSS), Rod Smith (TL)

Writing a trip report is not easy. How do you do justice to the trip? Sure, you can relate what happened, and this has benefits, but can be a bit boring to read.

How do you capture the feelings in the morning as everyone meets at the Cathedral of Ferns? With two new members it makes for a lot of introductions. There's the excitement of the children, especially the younger ones, while the adults make sure everything is packed and ready, and then the car shuffle is set up.

Then the trip really begins. Without anything unusual or outstanding to add to the trip report it's easy to skip over this part, but this is when the excitement is building. Especially when the bush starts to open up and it becomes possible to see the terrain. The anticipation is building. And those of us familiar with the track notice familiar sections and know how close the canyon is getting. When the group reaches the final steep descent, everyone knows the wait is almost over.

The group arrives at the canyon and it's impossible to properly describe the feeling, the view, the sound of the water flowing through the canyon, the cold when your foot first enters the water, the fresh smell of the water and bush, and wind blowing through the canyon. There's a whole myriad of things triggering the senses, most blurring into a single large collective we simply refer to as nature. Photos can help illustrate the view, but even then, it's not the same as being there.

We all start getting ready for the next part of the trip, the section we all came for. As each individual finishes their preparation they make their way into the water to acclimatise, and then onto a li-lo to wait for the rest of the group. The wind was making itself known, trying to push us back upstream. Soon everyone was on the water and paddling downstream, not letting the wind deter us in the slightest.

This was a section of the Wollangambe none of us had ever done before, and it didn't disappoint. We were gliding across deep pools in that delightful mixture of joy and serenity. The occasional obstacle proving fun rather than difficult. A tributary came in from the north and I stopped for a look. It may warrant an investigation in the future for the possibility of a canyon, but I don't have high hopes. The next fifty metres around a corner seemed to funnel the wind through to the point there were small white-caps running across the water. If we stopped moving here the wind would have pushed us back, but it wasn't too difficult to get around the corner and into calmer waters.

Having done Wollangambe 1 and 2 numerous times I've become somewhat familiar with them, whereas this was all new and none of us knew what to expect. We started to find the pools getting



*The group, ready to set off (Photo: Garry Smith)*



*Renatta and Mini Hornshaw (Photo: Garry Smith)*



shorter and the portages getting longer, but the canyon is still beautiful. I was starting to think about packing the li-lo away when we came across possibly the longest pool in the whole Wollangambe River. Here we could lay back and drift lazily down the canyon, admiring this spectacular natural landmark. And here again photos, and certainly words, don't do justice to our surroundings.

Next was lunch. This was not a gourmet experience to have you salivating as you read this, but it was sustenance, and everyone appreciated the rest. We could have exited at this point but I'd been told it was a difficult exit to find and involved some scrambling which might not be good for the younger children. It was still early, so we jumped back in and continued downstream.

Not surprisingly the scenery continued to be stunning as we proceeded. Some of us did a water jump at one point although the down climb option was quite easy for the rest. Soon we reached the section where our exit would be found. Since none of us been there before we weren't exactly sure what we were looking for, but it was marked with a rock cairn or something similar. Over the next 500m we found at least one spot where we may have been able to force an exit, but no obvious markings to indicate the way out. Although it wasn't getting too late there was now a little concern creeping in.

We stopped briefly to look at the map and discuss our options. The only two options were to go back over the last 500m in hopes we'd find the exit this time, or continue to the next exit, which I had used once before after doing Old Man Canyon. We continued.

The canyon between there and our next exit point included a small section of boulder chute that look



*Nice canyon section (photo: Garry Smith)*

very impressive. The last section of the down climb looked difficult, but possible, then someone noticed a hole under a boulder, I dropped in and once I was through others followed, in the end about half the group did a little impromptu caving.

We arrived at our exit and the concern increased. Again, it's difficult to properly express the mood change. We weren't at the panic stage as we knew we were in the right spot, but there weren't obvious markings to indicate the exit as were we lead to believe. It was also about 6:30pm. There was no choice, we packed up ready to exit. We had to back-track slightly but soon found a way up, andnd then, about 100m above the river, we found a rock cairn.

We all know how the next part feels. After an enjoyable trip through the canyon we're now faced with the exertion of going uphill, and quite steeply. At times it almost felt like a track, but there were no more markers. It was just a relentless uphill trudge.

It's always a good feeling to get to the top. We still had to get to the cars, but the hardest bit was over. Here we found some more markers, an amazing view, and Ev had phone reception (she called her husband to let him know she would be back later than expected).

Mini, at only 6 years old, wasn't carrying a pack. Renata, as the next youngest, had a small pack. I decided Renata had been doing really well and so I put her pack in the top of mine. She clearly appreciated

that. We set off through the scrub in the last light of the day. Mini was getting tired and after a while Mark offered to carry her so she could rest for a bit. Ilka then took Marks pack, but she couldn't carry it as well as her own. Mark suggested she ask one of the others to help carry her pack. Before she did Renata volunteered to carry her mums pack, I was impressed. Mini, to her credit, wasn't carried the whole way, she walked at least half of it, amazing considering the length of the day.

We arrived at the car about 12 hours after we started. The mixture of exhaustion but happy contentment of completion is another feeling that the trip report can't make you feel, only being there can do that. Definitely a canyon to do again.



## Canyoning, Sidewinder & Yarramun – 10 – 11 February 2018

Report by: John Gray

Participants: John Gray (TL), Marilyn Scott, Jeff Boyd, Trish Morrow, Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Alan Green, and Ebony Anderson (NHVSS)

We all met at Zig Zag at 8am on Saturday morning. Already it was hot. The drive out along the Dumbano firetrail ended in us donning overnight packs at the National Park boundary barrier. Down into the first saddle and we completed an easy sidle to avoid a hill. The ridge from here was open and grassy for a while with occasional pools of water from the previous night's rain. Onwards we went along Shay Ridge (all the ridges around here are named using steam train terminology – in this case after the Shay locomotive that used to do the route to Newnes oil refinery).



*Easy walking on the whole trip and perfect weather! (Photo: M)*

Around lunchtime I started to feel the effects of heat exhaustion and the speed of the party was significantly reduced. A decision was eventually made to make directly for the camp cave on Yarramun Creek. Getting to the cool water was a relief. During what was left of the afternoon, Marilyn, Trish and Anna headed upstream to explore the canyon in Yarramun Creek while the rest of us relaxed at camp.

At about 10.30 that night, a very loud thunder storm made itself known directly above us. As the rain came down it was great to be in a nice dry overhang.



*Our overhang for the night (Photo: John G)*

Sunday dawned overcast and we all hoped for a cooler day. After a leisurely breakfast and pack up we set off up the ridge with the full packs. We quickly reached a small saddle where we left everything we wouldn't need in Sidewinder Canyon. The aerial photos showed an interesting black slot next to the creek so we headed for this point. On arrival we discovered a long deep slot that was a dead-end continuation of the canyon itself. Anna climbed on to a large chock-stone that made a great photo. Looking over the edge it was obvious that the canyon continued some way upstream from that point. Not

wanting to miss a single moment of what looked to be a great slot, we headed upstream along a series of ledges to a point where pools of water could be seen below.

A scramble way down was located and we soon had wet feet. Not far downstream we encountered the first abseil. No slings could be found for the 5m drop into a pool. A sling was soon rigged around a small boulder that was being held in place by a huge boulder above it. It wasn't far to the next small abseil where Jeff voiced his opinion that there was no way out of the pool below. Looking down, it certainly appeared as if





*Trish in Sidewinder (Photo: John G)*

the canyon walls pinched together at the end of a deep pool. Once again no old slings could be found, so we dug up a few small logs and put a sling around them.

The pool at the bottom turned out to be not so deep but quickly shelved down so that we were swimming by the time we reached the extremely narrow exit to the chamber. My pack only just fitted between the walls as I swam through. This was turning out to be an excellent canyon!

As we continued downstream we reached a point where the left wall of the canyon had collapsed. We now had a

choice to scramble around on the left or duck into a low dark tunnel on the right. Before too long we found ourselves in the dead straight piece of canyon below where we first hit the creek. Looking ahead we could see the giant chock-stone that Anna had climbed earlier. The way on was a very slippery slope into a deep



*Jeff on one of the abseils (Photo: M)*



*Anna in impressive part of canyon (Photo: M)*

pool. A handline was set up and some abseiled but all used the rope for the descent.

The canyon got deep and spectacular for a while but was replaced all too soon with a narrow creek jammed with sticks and logs. The sun had well and truly appeared and blasts of hot air hit us from above. I had hoped for an exit opposite a side branch and Anna willingly forged ahead up a promising looking ledge. With one small scramble up a steep slab we successfully reached the ridge and our packs.

Lunch was had while we contemplated the long hot walk back to the cars. We left the saddle at 2.30pm and arrived back just after 6.30pm. Everyone was very tired from the heat but all were satisfied with completing a rarely visited and spectacular canyon.



## Canyoning, Dead Log – 17 February 2018

Report by: Heather Reid

Participants: Rod Smith (TL), Heather Reid, Nick Payne, Marcela Quinto, Jen, Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Andrew Baker (NHVSS), Dave Mulligan (NHVSS), Luke Buckingham (NHVSS)

It was the usual start to a trip ... cancellation of the original place due to bush fires (Glen Davis), people overtaking me then deciding that the speed limit was obligatory on the way to Hole in The Wall car park, my cursing the Winnebago driver who thought the dirt road at Newnes was a good place to be. And then it settled down to being the usual pleasant start ... the Winnebago driver turned out to be Luke from NHVSS (now forgiven as he had a fridge that would hold my next day steak) and Rod, who turned up later, but not too late to join in the good conversation.

The others arrived the next morning - Andrew and Dave, also NHVSS, and Nick, Marcella, Jen, and Anna all from MSS.

We set off to Dead Log Canyon, with the NHVSS contingent striding out in front, followed by Marcella nursing a cold and me and Rod lounging behind (no excuse for me).

Excellent navigation by the boys in front got us to the start of the canyon pronto, and the fun began. I can't remember a single one of the pitches, but I'm sure we all enjoyed them. Hang on though, we did encounter the wail of "This Is Disgusting" on one of the drops - centimeter thick slime, untouched by wetsuits, for God knows how long, painting us all a lovely shade of brown.



*Abseiling in Dead Log (Photo: Andrew)*



*Climb down in Dead log - living up to its reputation, lots of logs (Photo: Andrew)*

At the bottom, we all fed, defrosted and rehydrated ourselves. The NHVSS contingent and Anna were keen to go up river and out via Hailstorm Retreat. Unfortunately for them, I was keen to join them. With a merry "we won't leave you behind" they marched off, leaving me behind, whilst I was still packing my lunch stuff. I caught up and we rock hopped, scrambled and maneuvered over the boulders and rocks that typify the Bungleboori for the next 2ks.

During this full body work-out, Anna I discovered that the two of our ages combined was more than their ages combined, and that our combined weight was less than one of their party (not mentioning any names or weights!). Not sure what that meant for Anna, but I felt old and light lol.





*Nice shot in the canyon (Photo: Andrew)*



*The group posing at the exit to Luna Park (Photo: Heather)*

We posed for photographs at the exit to “Luna Park” looking smug, as though we had done it. The correct creek was found by Andrew through sheer genius, and we set off up the canyon. Following someone with longer legs is not a good option, when trying to climb, especially when breasts get in the way. As the least fit, and the anchor for the group, I can say I only held everyone up for a total of 63 minutes, thank you Andrew and Dave anyway. This time was calculated by extrapolating the time it took for the other group to go 200 metres downstream, and scramble out, and encourage the sick and the weary to our meeting point 1 hour from base camp. Lucky for all there was a watermelon, cold and juicy, waiting in Luke’s fridge, and lucky for everyone, he got there with the first of the crew.

Great trip, usual bloody awful trudge out. Thanks Rod and Andrew for skillful navigation and thanks to Dave for his patience.



## **TRIP LEADERS WANTED!**

We’ve got a bit of a human resources problem ... not enough caving leaders, and whilst the calendar is full (the fullest it’s been for a while) we need some new blood to lead trips.

It’s not hard, some of our existing leaders will mentor you along the way (and there’s a leaders’ checklist plus heaps of other resources), all you need to do is put your hand up. You can start slowly, maybe lead one trip and see how you go and if it doesn’t scare you off, then maybe a couple of trips each caving season until you get the hang of it! There are lots of areas we don’t get to because of lack of leaders like Wee Jasper and Bungonia (both great places for kid friendly trips)!

To get started simply email [president@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:president@mssadventure.org.au)



# MSS TRIP CALENDAR

Mar 3 – 4 Canyoning Bungleboori		<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> Medium/Hard  <i>Details:</i> Waratah Ridge to Bungleboori then via unnamed ridges to campsite above <b>Arthur's Canyon</b> 1 or 2 abseils). Sunday Arthur's Canyon to Bungleboori and exit via <b>Hailstorm Retreat Canyon</b>.</p>
Mar 9 (Friday) at 6.30pm Blackheath	NEW	<p><i>Co-ordinator:</i> Marilyn Scott  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a>  <i>Details:</i> <b>Bat Night</b> at Blue Mountains Heritage Centre, Blackheath (part of the 2018 Australasian Bat Night initiative). This is an event which will hopefully educate us all about the microbats that we occasionally come across in caves. There will be bat talks, bat cave for the kids, bat videos and bat walks (bookings essential). We will see microbats on the walk and the rangers will have sonar sensors, so we can see when the bats are talking to each other. <b>Kid Friendly activity!</b> See Page 6 for more information.</p>
Mar 10 – 11 Caving Timor Caves	NEW NHVSS	<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Jodie Rutledge  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:jodie@rutco.com.au">jodie@rutco.com.au</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Easy/medium  <i>Details:</i> Join NHVSS on an easy-going trip in their backyard in the Hunter Valley. If you haven't been to Timor, make sure you go with NHVSS as they're the experts. Shearers quarters are available for the weekend.</p>
Mar 16 – 18 Caving Cooleman		<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Beth Little  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com">littlebeth78@hotmail.com</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Easy  <i>Details:</i> Three days car camp at Cooleman Plains checking out some of the caves. New area for MSS so don't miss out! This trip also appears on the CSS calendar</p>
Mar 30 – Apr 2 (Easter) Bushwalking Ettrema		<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Marilyn Scott / Jeff Boyd  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Hard  <i>Details:</i> 4 – 5 days walking in the Ettrema Tops area, route tba but taking in highlights such as Hamlet's Crown, Cinch Creek, Possibility Point and Manning Saddle. Multi day experience necessary.</p>
Apr 14 - 15 Caving Timor	NEW NHVSS	<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Jodie Rutledge  <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:jodie@rutco.com.au">jodie@rutco.com.au</a>  <i>Grade:</i> Easy / Medium  <i>Details:</i> Another Timor trip added to calendar at the start of the school holidays with families in mind. Super easy trip aimed to keep the little ones amused. If you haven't been to Timor, make sure you go with NHVSS as they're the experts. Shearers quarters are available for the weekend.</p>
25 – 29 April Caving Glenrock	NEW NHVSS	<p><i>Trip Leader:</i> Brian Reeves  <i>Contact:</i> 0402 099 329  <i>Grade:</i> Easy  <i>Details:</i> Join NHVSS for a weekend of exploration, photography and digging for new caves. They call it <i>basic</i> bush camping, but the venue is great, pit toilet, great campfire and tank water. Brian is a wealth of knowledge in the Glenrock area and is the only person allowed by the property owners to lead trips to the caves, so this is a great opportunity for MSS.</p>
May 3 Social Canada Bay	NEW	<p>MSS Meeting - opportunity to meet at Burwood prior to the meeting for a catch-up dinner. Email <a href="mailto:secretary@mssadventure.org">secretary@mssadventure.org</a> for information on meet-up venue.</p>



May 5 – 6 Caving Sydney	<b>NEW</b>	Vertical Cave Rescue Training in the Sydney Region conducted by NSW Cave Rescue Squad (see Diary Alerts for more details). Weekend 1 of 2. To register or for further information contact Brian Evans (at least a week) before training on <a href="mailto:be.somewhat.insane@gmail.com">be.somewhat.insane@gmail.com</a> or 0409 443 415.
May 12 – 13 Canyoning Glen Davis		<i>Trip Leader:</i> John Gray <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au">JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au</a> <i>Grade:</i> Medium <i>Details:</i> Checking out the small canyon we discovered in October with a large abseil. Day Two will be exploratory as aerial photos show a potential canyon in a branch of Coorongooba Ck. Saturday evening happy hour(s) and campfire will be a highlight.
May 19 – 20 Caving Bungonia	<b>NEW</b>	Vertical Cave Rescue Training at Bungonia conducted by NSW Cave Rescue Squad (see Diary Alerts for more details). Weekend 2 of 2. To register or for further information contact Brian Evans (at least a week) before training on <a href="mailto:be.somewhat.insane@gmail.com">be.somewhat.insane@gmail.com</a> or 0409 443 415.
May 26 - 27 NSWSC Meeting	<b>NEW</b>	The next NSWSC meeting will be held on the 26th of May. At this stage the plan is to hold it at Wellington and, if that happens, there will be an opportunity to visit some of the caves in the area. Rod cannot make it as he has a conflicting event, so if anyone wants to represent MSS at the meeting and potentially do some caving at Wellington please let Rod ( <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a> ) know and he can give you the details.
2 – 3 June Caving Timor Caves	<b>NEW</b> <b>NHVSS</b>	<i>Trip Leader:</i> Jodie Rutledge <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:jodie@rutco.com.au">jodie@rutco.com.au</a> <i>Grade:</i> Easy/medium <i>Details:</i> For those of you who missed the March NHVSS trip to Timor, here's another opportunity to join on an easy-going trip. If you haven't been to Timor, make sure you go with NHVSS as they're the experts. Shearers quarters are available for the weekend.
June 9 - 11 Caving Ashford	<b>NEW</b>	<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> This is a chance to explore a new area. Ashford is situated near the Queensland border. According to Google it's about 8 hours from Sydney. There's at least four known caves. More details to follow.
16 - 17 June Caving Abercrombie	<b>NEW</b>	<i>Trip Leader:</i> Beth Little <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com">littlebeth78@hotmail.com</a> <i>Grade:</i> Easy/ Medium <i>Details:</i> Caving during the day, Saturday evening we'll brainstorm to scope out the Abercrombie Book project including planning the surveying project. Possibility of accommodation rather than camping.
16 – 17 June Caving Jenolan	<b>NEW</b> <b>NHVSS</b>	<i>Trip Leader:</i> Andrew Baker <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:Andrew.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au">Andrew.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au</a> <i>Grade:</i> Easy/medium <i>Details:</i> Join NHVSS on a classic horizontal caving trip in the Blue Mountains. Be advised that this is likely to be a photography trip as Andrew has a new camera. Accommodation at Cavers Hut.
14 - 15 Jul Caving Wellington	<b>NEW</b>	<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> Another opportunity to visit an area most of us are unfamiliar with. Further details to follow.

4 – 5 August Caving Jenolan	<b>NEW</b> <b>NHVSS</b>	<i>Trip Leader:</i> Andrew Baker <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:Andrew.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au">Andrew.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au</a> <i>Grade:</i> Easy/medium <i>Details:</i> Join NHVSS on a classic horizontal caving trip in the Blue Mountains. Probably another photography trip. Accommodation at Cavers Hut.
25 - 26 Aug Caving Abercrombie	<b>NEW</b>	<i>Trip Leader:</i> Beth Little <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com">littlebeth78@hotmail.com</a> <i>Grade:</i> Easy/ Medium <i>Details:</i> Caving during the day, Saturday evening we'll brainstorm to scope out the Abercrombie Book project including planning the surveying project. Possibility of accommodation rather than camping.
15 - 16 Sept Instructional	<b>NEW</b>	<i>Trip Leader:</i> Rod Smith <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:roderick__smith@hotmail.com">roderick__smith@hotmail.com</a> <i>Grade:</i> Educational <i>Details:</i> Navigation Training
Sept 29 – Oct 27 Caving Nullarbor		<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.
Oct 20 & 21 Cave Surveying Wombeyan	<b>NEW</b>	<i>Co-ordinator:</i> Marilyn Scott <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:marilyn_scott@bigpond.com">marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</a> or 0417 453 170 <i>Grade:</i> Instructional <i>Details:</i> Back by popular demand a repeat of the cave surveying course facilitated by Mike Lake (SUSS), date yet to be advised, if interested please express interest asap.
Spring 2018 Caving New Zealand	<b>Rescheduled</b>	<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> Postponed to October 2018. Awesome! But be warned, after caving in NZ, you may never cave in Oz again. Numbers will be limited due to transport/accommodation logistics.
Nov 17 & 18 Canyoning Glen Davis	<b>Rescheduled</b>	<i>Trip Leader:</i> Rod Smith <i>Contact:</i> <a href="mailto:roderick__smith@hotmail.com">roderick__smith@hotmail.com</a> <i>Grade:</i> Hard <i>Details:</i> <b>Wowzers &amp; Doomsday.</b> Limited numbers for Wowzers as it is an exploratory trip (we have some details). If there's a lot of interest in visiting Glen Davis we may look at finding a second leader to take a group through Freshwater or Coinslot.
26 Dec 2018-4 Jan 2019	<b>NEW</b>	<b>The Darkness Beneath: Caving Tasmania</b> (31st ASF Conference) pre- and post-conference trip dates to Mole Creek Karst area into some spectacular caves. See notice on Page 5.



*Resting on a pagoda, perfect weather on the Sidewinder trip! (photo: M)*





# APPENDIX 1 – MEETING MINUTES

## MSS 425<sup>th</sup> General Meeting – 22 February 2018

Held at SES Canada Bay

Meeting Opened: 7:30pm

**Present:** Roderick Smith, Beth Little, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Marilyn Scott, Jim Crockett

**Apologies:** Chris Johnstone

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

**Correspondence:** Cheque from Lynton; Bank Statement; SUSS Bull; Jenolan Cottage requesting money; PO Box renewal; Certificates of appreciation for Yarrangobilly pre-UIS trip

### Committee Members Reports:

President: None

Treasurer: The current balance of the account stands at \$6,317.18, however the ASF fees for 2018 have yet to be paid from this. The account opened the financial year at \$3,275.18.

Financial year open:		\$3,275.18
Total Incoming:		\$3,564.00
Memberships:	\$3,280.00	
Trip Fees:	284.00	
Total Outgoing:		\$522.00
Account Closed:		\$6,317.18
Outstanding to be paid (ASF Fees)		\$2,556.00
Total after ASF Cheque clears:		\$3,761.18

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: A new spreadsheet cataloguing what we have has now been completed. A list of just the relevant equipment will be extracted from that and be provided for the website.

We have 5 old, pre-stamped, carabineers. Does the equipment officer have permission to dispose of these? **All agreed.** We are arranging to get approximately 100m of 9mm rope. **A discussion then commenced regarding applying for a grant for this. This was an example used at the recent ASF council meeting regarding things the grants can be applied for. We will look into this, Cathi will circulate what she has already investigated regarding grants in general.**

Training Officer: A one-on-one SRT training day has been arranged with Anna for the 9<sup>th</sup> of March. We will be trying different approaches to training, including one-on-one sessions. We're also planning a navigation course for interested people.

Librarian: Some time has been spent recently getting the library back out of boxes. It's now ready for the next spent of cataloguing, at a high level, what we have.

Web Manager: The new website is under way. A brief demonstration of what we have was conducted and everyone was happy with the direction it's headed.

### Membership Report: Renewals as at 22/2/18

7 Family memberships (2 adults and/or unlimited children)

22 Single memberships

3 Family Memberships (1 adult and/or unlimited children

Total: 38 adults + 13 children

Introductory memberships: currently 7

Full Members who did not renew: David & Bailey Scott (single parent)

New members since last meeting: 5

1 single parent membership: Ray Etherton

2 full memberships: Trish Morrow & Michael Sliwka

2 Intro Memberships: Paul Daniel & Evgenia Obriadina

*Strengths:* Membership is growing steadily. A number of new members are “active” having done two or more trips already. Plus two of those memberships in the past six are canyon leaders.

*Weaknesses:* (1) the majority of the “new members” over the past 12 months have joined because of the MSS canyoning calendar which is very strong and varied (compared with other clubs). It’s important to make sure that the canyoning calendar does not over-shadow the caving calendar (which is our core activity). (2) Not enough caving leaders and if we run trips that have restricted numbers (and people miss out), there are sometimes not enough trips on the calendar to cater for the number of cavers who are active, particularly with new cavers joining in past six months.

*Threats:* Some existing members (Rod, Cathi, Marilyn, Beth) also have memberships with other clubs (NHVSS, CSS) but, MSS is their primary club and they contribute considerably to the running of MSS. However, we’ve had three “new members” in the last few months join NHVSS, BMSS and SUSS because we’ve not been able to offer the number or variety of caving trips they’re looking for, and they’ve joined despite the fact that they can go on these other club trips without joining. They’ve usually joined after going on a trip from one of these clubs. There is the risk of them becoming aligned with these other clubs before they’ve formed an allegiance with MSS.

## New Business

Child protection stuff: There was debate about whether this is an ASF responsibility or just a club responsibility. While they’re debating that we are in a position where we need to have something in place.

The discussion started with Rod updating everyone on the debate that occurred at the recent ASF council meeting regarding this. We need to provide a mechanism for people to report any incidents and for those to be treated appropriately. One suggestion was to combine this with the below agenda item.

Incident report(s): We’ve had a couple of incidents recently that haven’t been too serious but could have been a lot worse. Should we keep track of these things and try to learn from them?

Further discussion agreed that combining these two is a good idea. A basic outline was agreed on: Should anyone feel the need to report anything then that can be raised with any of the committee members. Depending on the severity an executive meeting can be convened or the report can wait until the next general meeting. The incident will then be discussed within the committee and a recommendation, if appropriate, be supplied to MSS. If the incident requires reporting to other agencies, such as police or DOCS, then this will be done at the earliest opportunity.

More specific details will be agreed upon and supplied to all members.

Grants: There are grants available from ASF for a wide variety of items. We should apply for some of them for things such as - equipment (ropes, slings, distoX) - Abers - Nullarbor

Cathi has done some preliminary investigation and will circulate details and links.

Newsletter Distribution: We should make it clear in the email we send out regarding the newsletter about access to the newsletter. ie, is it open access, only for the recipient, for the club, etc.

This came as a result of copyright concerns raised by Graham Pilkington of CEGSA. It was agreed that Rod will send Graham an email regarding this.

MSS on Wikipedia?? Garry Smith of NHVSS has issued a challenge to all clubs to create a Wikipedia page for their club. Must be notable. Must have links to external resources to prove notability. Must not use words like "I", "we", "our", "their". Garry has written a document on tips and tricks to get it approved.

We will look at this further down the track once MSS has a 'few more runs on the board' in terms of accomplishments and given the lack of time available to work on it at the moment.

ASF Council meeting notes

Nothing needed to be discussed

Duplicate copies of newsletters in the MSS Library. Peter Dykes has requested any duplicates of any newsletters we have in our library. Are we happy to give them to him or should we keep them?

Once we have a digital and OCR'd copy then we can hand over duplicates

NHVSS have their account with The Greater and it allows them to make electronic payments with two signatories. Do we want to investigate this?



We all agreed that an account that allows us to do electronic transfers instead of writing cheques is a good idea. Jim will investigate our options.

CWCG want a website. I'm been asked to help with that. If we add their website to our current hosting arrangement they can help cover the costs. We could also look at a small fee for the IP.

We agreed that hosting the CWCG website with our hosting is acceptable as long as CWCG pay an appropriate amount towards the hosting cost.

### Trip planning:

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
June 9-11	Rod Smith	Caving	Ashford	Easy	A look at a new area
June 16-17	Beth Little	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Familiarisation and other projects aiming towards the book production
July 14-15	Rod Smith	Caving	Wellington	Easy	Going to a new area for most of us
August 25-26	Beth Little	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Familiarisation and other projects aiming towards the book production
September 15-16	Rod Smith	Navigation training	Capertee Valley	Instructional	September 15-16
October 20 – 21	Marilyn Scott	Cave Surveying Course	Wombeyan	Instructional	Facilitated by Mike Lake, Jill Rowling and Phil Maynard
November 17-18	Rod Smith	Canyoning	Coorongooaba	Hard	Wowsers and Doomsday

Next Meeting: Canada Bay SES 3<sup>rd</sup> May

Meeting Closed: 9:30pm



*Kubla Kahn Cave, Mole Creek Tasmania (Photo: Garry K Smith) – just one of the many caving excursions which will be on offer at the ASF 31<sup>st</sup> Convention 30 December, 2018 – 4 January, 2019.*