

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



Trip Reports:

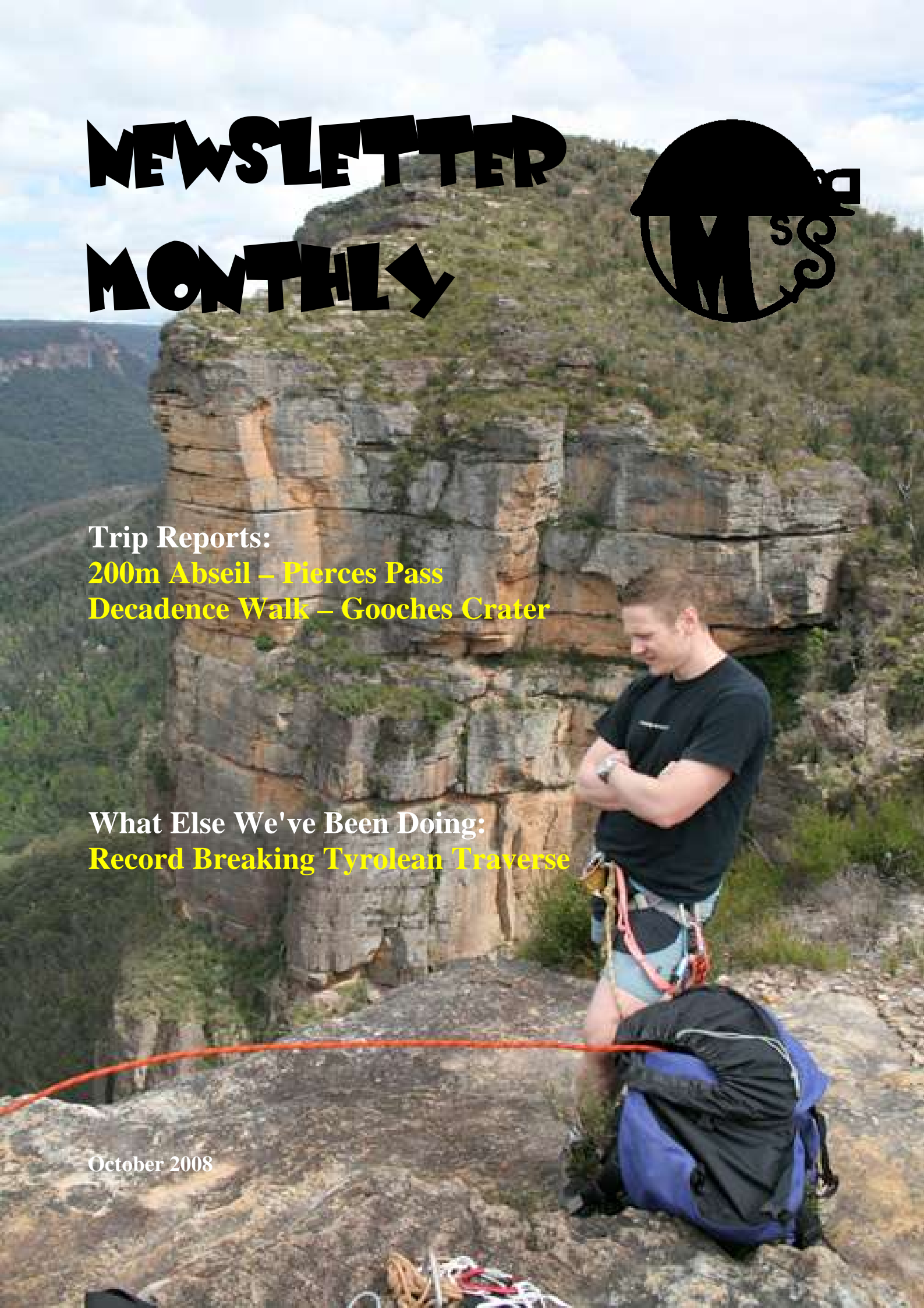
200m Abseil – Pierces Pass

Decadence Walk – Gooches Crater

What Else We've Been Doing:

Record Breaking Tyrolean Traverse

October 2008



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Cover Shot:

Nathan watching 200m of ropes emerge from the bag.

Photo by Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Last Meeting

Last meeting we had trip reports on climbing the Mirraball and the 200m abseil at Pierces Pass. This was followed by another superb supper before the evening winded up with Bob showing us some slides from various trips he's done over the last four years.

Next Meeting

Date: 17th November, 2008
Time: 7.30 pm
Venue: Baden Powell Scout Camp
Pomona Street, Pennant Hills

Quote of the Month

“Don't go out in the, pouring rain” - Repeated by Johan ad nauseum during the recent Decadence Walk.

Announcements

Next meeting is the AGM. If you only come to one meeting this year, you should make a bigger effort. Next years committee will be voted in, otherwise we'll be stuck with the same editors, the same librarian, the same secretary

There has been an update on the bet between Brett and Dave. Due to the unfortunate cancellation of the November Jenolan trip, the bet has been postponed. It is also worth noting that Brett has lost the bet. As such, the next Jenolan trip that goes ahead, Brett will be supplying lamb shanks (cooked in the slow cooker) and a bottle of Mead.

This next month is known by some as Mo-vember. This is an opportunity for every young man to fulfil their dream of looking like a 70's porn star. One such young man is Rod Smith. He's also raising money for men's health issues, namely the fight against men's depression and prostate cancer. Any donations would be greatly appreciated. If you feel like donating you can:

- go to <https://www.movember.com/au/donate/donate-details.php?action=sponsorlink®o=1547011&country=au> to pay by credit card;
- make out a cheque to “Movember Foundation” and send it to Movember Foundation, PO Box 292, Prahran VIC 3181;
- Or give the money to Rod who will provide you with a receipt.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Trip Reports

Abseiling 200m – Pierces Pass - 11th October, 2008

Participants: Nathan Timms, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Rod Smith (TL)

There's a saying “If it wasn't for the last minute, nothing would get done around here”. And with that in mind I threw a heap of rigging gear into my pack Saturday morning, before the drive to Pierces Pass.

Despite the rain in Sydney I arrived to fine weather, and right on schedule. Cathi was already there, having slept in the back of her car the night before. Nathan arrived shortly after. We were now only waiting on John Strathakis. A minute later I received a message, despite having no reception, but all it told me was that I had a voicemail message.

I drove up to the road to listen to the message that said John was 10 minutes away. 20 minutes later I called him back. I was informed that John wouldn't be joining us. Apparently a police officer had an issue with the fact his car was unregistered. Who'd have thought!

So it was three. We put packs on our backs (and fronts) and headed out to the drop zone.

After a bit of sight-seeing, admiring the view, and trying not to look too carefully at the height of the drop, we got down to business. I started rigging the anchor while Nathan and Cathi donned their harnesses. Nathan gave me a hand with the backup anchor by observing what I was doing.



Over the edge and working hard to get the rope through the descender

Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Once the anchor was set up, the next step was to deploy the rope. I connected one end to the anchor and then pulled the rest out of the pack. I threw the other end over the cliff and stood back. It was interesting watching the rope deploy itself.

The rest of the rigging involved placement of rope protectors, especially since Nathan was planning to prussic back up. Of course, by this stage, it had changed from “will” prussic to “might” prussic.

“So, who’s first?”

I’d already determined I was going last, and Cathi wanted shots from the top of someone going down, so that left Nathan. He was obviously starting to get nervous considering the number of expletives being uttered, and the number of times he checked buckles, biners, etc. As Nathan went over the edge it changed to “probably won’t” prussic.



Nathan on the overhang
Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

When Nathan reached the first ledge he encountered a pile of rope. Thankfully for him it was a smallish pile as he was only about 30m from the bottom of the drop. He quickly deployed the pile of rope and continued his descent. Before long he was at the bottom.

Now it was Cathi’s turn. Cathi decided to use a new descender (a Hydrobot) for the abseil. I checked her connection to the rope, and over she went.

With the borrowed radios I had I was able to get a running commentary from Nathan of Cathi’s descent, the climbers on the Mirraball, and the quality of the radios. It wasn’t long before the message was that it was my turn.

It’s not the easiest start for an abseil with the anchor basically at foot level. A slight ledge to the left helps. The height of the drop playing on your mind doesn’t. I wasn’t as nervous as the first time I’d done that drop, but you never fully dismiss the nerves (nor would you want to).

5 metres later and you’re not touching rock. It’s a real 360 degree view as you descend, a very different feel to standing on the top of the cliff. The further the descent to more noticeable the stretch in the static rope. Imagine doing it on dynamic!

By the time you touch rock again it’s only about 30 metres from the bottom. There’s an awkwardly placed tree on a ledge, but, otherwise, it’s an easy descent. After a drop like that it’s nice to get the feet back on terra firma.

By this stage Nathan had decided he would do the prussic. Cathi wanted to get a photo or two of ‘crazy prussic man’ as he began his ascent. After a couple of minutes Nathan had progressed to the bottom of the cliff, but he’d finally gotten the slack out of 200 metres of rope. After getting off the ground, and a couple of photos, it was time for Cathi and I to make our way out.



Nathan making fairly quick progress up the cliff
Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

I picked up the BASE jumpers track with minimal difficulty, and it wasn’t long before we were on the main Pierces Pass track. We left our gear at the cars on the way through and went to check on Nathan’s progress. We arrived at the cliff top to find not only Nathan, but 200 metres of rope in a pile beside him.

It didn't take too long to pack up. Nathan, trying to show how much of a man he is, insisted on carrying the 200 metre rope back to the cars. A nice early finish, about 1:30.

Another great trip!

Rod (TL).

Decadence Walk – Gooches Crater - 25th & 26th October, 2008

Attended: Brett, Steph, Rod, Johan, David, Debbie, Sally

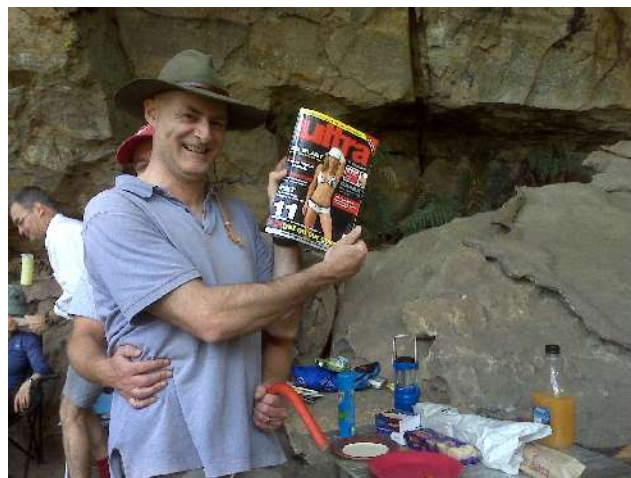
After a week of hail storms, thunder, and lightning we were all looking forward to a fine weekend in the mountains. On Saturday we met at The Imperial Hotel at Mount Victoria for a coffee and a hearty breakfast of warm, homemade scones with strawberry jam and cream. Unfortunately Rod missed out on the catchup chatter due to a light night and a little sleep in. But in true Rod style he made up for lost time with a lead foot and arrived at the hotel at 10.30am.

We headed off to the Zig Zag Railway and proceeded the dusty journey to the obscure road that would lead us to our destination. Brett and Steph decided that this year the old Hyundai probably wouldn't make it up the steep and rocky track without losing the undercarriage at least. So Debbie was kind enough to offer us a lift. We left the Hyundai beside a rusty burnt-out wreck and followed another obscure road until we reached as far as we could go. We managed just enough room to park three cars.

After some much thoughtful and "secure" packing of packs we headed off on the leisurely walk in. Brett led the way and we soon ended up at the precarious rock slide leading into Gooches. A conveniently placed fallen tree helped the trail of packs and people to get safely onto the landing below. And then it was just a hop, skip, and jump into the serenity of Gooches Crater.

Within a matter of minutes we had each decided on the most comfy piece of ground that would be our beds for the night. I was a bit concerned at Sally's 90 degree slope, but she managed to sleep through the night without sliding into the bush. Next to fly out of the packs were the all important nibbles, candles, and reading material. In true female style Sally and I sat down to catch up on the news and travel stories. Debbie and Dave made the most of the gorgeous weather and went to explore the surrounding area and collect water from the nearby canyon. And as promised Johan, Brett, and Rod had the delightful job of collecting firewood. Johan was very handy with his handsaw and the constant droning of Dragon's "if you go out in the rain....." soon helped to build up a year's supply of firewood.

As the sun started to go down we set about lighting the truck-load of candles on the surrounding rocks. A total of 368 and we were running out of room. After a few burnt fingertips the cave looked magnificent. The effort was well worth the outcome.



No comment

Photo: Steph Pilcher

We hooked into the over-abundant supply of crackers, cheese, and cabanossi. There was much chatter about the culinary delights that would be dished up for dinner and as such Johan received a prize of Korjo zipped bags for his glorious marinated lamb rack and roasted veg. Amid the ever-flowing wine the prizes for the most number of candles was awarded to Rod. He was overwhelmed with his pack of water-proof matches and his finger-saw. Sally stole the show and was awarded an emergency blanket for the most decadent accessory – a pearl necklace, and earrings.

As the night starting to set in so did the yearnings for some firecracker fun. There were round fizz bang ones and the old faithful double happys. After a few heart-attacks, screams, and fits of laughter the evening slowly drew to a close and we tottled off to bed.



Gooches Crater camp cave by candle-light

Photo: Steph Pilcher

Surprisingly there were no early risers on Sunday and we all enjoyed a sleep in. After the usual camp breaky we packed our gear and made good the camp site for the next lot of happy campers. We made good time on the way out as the sun started to beat down. Brett and I said our goodbyes while Sally, Johan, Rod, Dave, and Debbie decided to head back to the Imperial Hotel for a post-camp refreshment.

Thanks to all for yet another memorable and enjoyable trip.

Steph Pilcher.

What Else We've Been Doing

World Record Tyrolean Traverse *(Application to Guinness in progress) – 25th & 26th* **October, 2008**

Quick Facts:

- Previous record – Czech Republic, 950m across the Elbe River
- World record attempt first conceived: Feb 2007
- Location – Pt. Perpendicular, Beecroft Peninsula
- Length – 1.1km (twice the length of Sydney Harbour Bridge)
- No. ropes - 2 x 800m joined with quadruple fisherman
- Weight of rope: 160kg
- Maximum tension in the rope - < 1000lbs with climber
- Date – Saturday 25th to Sunday 26th October
- Time to set up – 6 hours (6:00AM to midday on Saturday)
- No. of people to set up – 3
- Time to de-rig – 5 hours (10:00AM to 3:00PM Sunday)
- No. of people to de-rig – 4 (plus extra 2 while reeling in one 800m rope)
- No. of traverses completed – 2
- Participants – Richard Bock, Graham Boyles
- 1st traverse – Graham on Saturday starting at 3:30PM to 5:30PM
- Direction of 1st traverse: North to South
- 2nd traverse – Richard on Sunday starting at 8:00AM to 9:00AM
- Direction of second traverse: South to North

This project all started with a first tyrolean traverse at The Overhang at Walls Lookout, Pierces Pass involving some base jumpers. While out there Richard and I had the same thought that it'd be pretty cool to go right across the Grose Valley over to Hanging Rock or to the Launching Pad (base jumper parlance). Given the technical difficulty of stringing up a rope across the Grose we started hunting for an easier alternative. Using Google Earth Richard discovered the site. After many weekends of practice and after destroying several ropes and prussic loops to test breaking strains we were ready to have a go.

Here are some interesting facts we found on the way. An 11mm static rope really does snap at exactly 7000lbs of force. An old 11mm static rope that had been lying in the full sunlight for more than a year snapped at 3500lbs of force. A prussic loop made from 8mm cordalette with 3 turns slips at 1200lbs of force and in so doing melts and fuses to the static rope. The same prussic loop applied with 4 turns holds comfortably at 1500lbs but slips at greater than 1700lbs, but does not melt as severely as the prussic made with 3 turns. We have some pretty cool footage if anyone enjoys seeing stuff get wrecked.

About 1 year ago Richard and a couple of mates went out to anchor point 1 (the Southern anchor which is about 200m north of the Pt Perpendicular lighthouse) with a generator and an industrial drill. They drilled 3 holes each 30cm deep and Chemset 3 threaded bolts about an inch in diameter into the rock. Each bolt was rated to 18 tonne. Once set a ring can be screwed on to the protruding part of the bolt to complete the anchor. Anchor point 2 is 1.1km, as the crow flies, north of anchor point 1. Anchor point 2 consisted of 2 large boulders that we guessed we could not pull off. As it turns out, it was a good guess.

Anchor point 1 was constructed with the three 18 tonne bolts, a rated chain, load cell, Tirfor, 8mm prussic loop for tensioning and one end of the 1.1km rope backed up to the bolts with a figure of 9.

Anchor point 2 (northern anchor) was constructed with one 60m rope and 10m of webbing (kindly lent by Rod Smith). The 60m rope was converted to three loops, threaded through fire hose to protect it from abrasion and placed around one boulder and completed with a figure of 9. The seat belt webbing was threaded around the other boulder, tied with a tape knot and equalised to the figure of 9. Two opposing screw gates completed anchor point 2.

The rope set up really was the crux of the world record attempt given that once it was set up anyone with a harness, pulley and ascender could complete the traverse. The first time I visited the site my reaction was, flatly, it would be impossible. After several hours walking the cliff line though no single problem seemed insurmountable. There were two main obstacles. A 100m stretch of cliff near anchor point 2 with dense scrub occurring right up and actually over the edge of the cliff. The other obstacle was a massive cutting half between the two anchor points and about 50m wide.

The first obstacle was cleared with a pilot line consisting of 150m of 3mm cordalette and a 5m length of PVC conduit. By tying the pilot line to the top of the PVC conduit I bush bashed my way through the scrub while Richard paid out the pilot line. The conduit kept the line clear of the scrub and once through to the first clear platform it was simply a matter of using the pilot line to pull the 800m rope across.

The second obstacle was cleared with a very high tech reel of fishing line and a rock. Dick bush bashed his way around the cutting to the south side as low down as possible and I threw a rock attached to fishing line at him. Moments later the 800m rope had cleared that obstacle.



During the set up of the tyrolean traverse
Photo supplied by: Graham Boyles

Once the first 800m rope had been paid out it's full length with three tie backs to the main cliff we all moved to anchor point 1 and started the same process in the opposite direction. With no obstacles on the southern side 300m of the second 800m rope was quickly paid out to meet the first. They were joined with a quadruple fisherman knot and the tensioning began all thanks to Rob Clyne's Tirfor.

The centre of the 1.1km rope was tethered to the main cliff using a locking gate karabiner which was placed on a belay from two carrot bolts with a double backed 120m rope. As the tension was increased with the Tirfor and all other tie backs had been released I belayed out the centre of the rope. When it was clear the main line was not going to hit the water I released the belay allowing the 120m rope to run freely through the karabiner connected to the main line. When the 120m rope whipped through the karabiner on the main line I quickly pulled it back to avoid it going into the water or getting snagged on the cliff. That completed the set up.

The traverse itself was done with a standard climbing harness connected by two locking gate karabiners in series to a high speed pulley, a chest harness constructed of two slings and a karabiner connected to a one way pulley by two locking gate karabiners in series and an ascender connected to our feet with a sling and two locking gate karabiners in series. This was all backed up by two locking gate karabiners and a sling.



Graham on the traverse
Photo supplied by: Graham Boyles

The only real technical difficulties in completing the traverse was connecting to the rope at the North end as the figure of 9 on that side protruded well out over the cliff edge once tensioning was complete. The other technical difficulty involved bypassing the knot which was somewhere between 100 and 200m from anchor point 1. The descent from the North side was a zinger and probably constituted the longest flying fox ever ridden anywhere in the world. It took me 2 hours to complete the traverse due to some horrendous quad and hamstring cramps. In hindsight I wished I'd waited till the next day as I was exhausted before I even got on the rope. Richard completed his traverse the next morning and was finished inside an hour.

The retrieval was pretty simple. We attached a pulley to the main line at anchor point 1 and then a 120m rope to the pulley. Marty and I walked along the cliff edge heading north while Dick released the tension at anchor point 1 using a trusty rap rack. As he released the main line Marty and I hauled it back to the cliff edge and secured it in various places. Once we'd secured half of the rope from anchor point 1 to the cutting at the half way mark we cut the knot and retrieved the southern 800m rope and packed up anchor point 1.



Would you go on it?
Photo supplied by: Graham Boyles

Three of us then moved to anchor point 2 and on our signal the end of that 800m rope was released from the cliff edge into the water. We three, myself, Dick and Marty and two very nice climbers reeled hand over hand 800m of rope back to shore and to the top of the cliff at anchor point 2.

Record complete and all rope retrieved. What seemed to be impossible turned out to be pretty easy but now seems to be impossible again. We'll keep our fingers crossed that we have dotted the i's and crossed the right t's to be given the record by Guinness.

Graham Boyles.

Future Trips

Welcome to the new look future trips section. Anyone with artistic abilities are welcome to submit their own icons for any of the categories here, and/or any other categories. If we use your icon then you'll have to be prepared to accept the praise and admiration from your fellow club members. Send your icons, or any other feedback, to roderick_smith@hotmail.com.

Legend:

Activity



Caving



Canyoning



Diving



Hiking



Abseiling



Cycling



Horse Riding



Kayaking



Climbing



Skiing

Grade



Easy



Easy/Medium



Medium



Medium/Hard



Hard



Extreme

Accommodation



Camping



Cottage















Extras




















Kites



Camp Ovens

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Little Big Hole and Daylight Tunnel	15 th Nov			Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 caver@people.net.au			11 th Nov	
Other Info:								
Malaita Point	16 th Nov		Instructional	Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			11 th Nov	
Other Info:								
Danae Brook	6 th Dec			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			N/A*	Trip Full*
Other Info: * If enough other people are interested, we will run a second trip on the same day								
Xmas Party	6 th Dec	Eat, drink and be merry		Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			2 nd Dec	
Other Info: 								
Wollangambe	26 th Dec			TBA			19 th Dec	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Claustral	27 th Dec			TBA			19 th Dec	
Other Info:								
Dargans	28 th Dec			TBA			19 th Dec	
Other Info:								
New Zealand – Routeburn trail	Jan 2009			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au		Hut fees, flights	20th Jun	
Other Info: This needs to be booked and paid for, specifically the huts on the walk, thus the early notice required. Gourmet eating. 								
Kites over Kosci	24 th - 26 th Jan			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			20 th Jan	
Other Info: 								
Alcatraz	TBA			John Gray 0427 876 679 john.gray@sydneywater.com.au			TBA	
Other Info:								