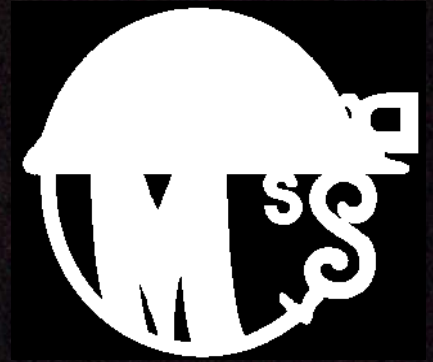


NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



Trip Reports:
Danae Brook
Kayaking – Mooney Mooney Creek

What Else We've Been Doing:
Looking Glass and Firefly
Week of Canyoning



March 2008

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Cover Shot:
Julie Burton on the second abseil in Claustral.
Photo by Rod Smith

Last Meeting

Last meeting we had trips reports from Danae Brook and Mooney Mooney Kayaking. There was an update on the progress of Dave's injury. Deb Harding, who contacted the club a while ago, came to her first meeting, and is looking forward to coming on some trips this year. We also had reports of other activities we've been up to, including a trip to Victoria Warwick and Caroline did. Tim Grimes continued his excellent role as catering officer.

Next Meeting

Date: 21st April, 2008
Time: 7.30 pm
Venue: Baden Powell Scout Camp
Pomona Street, Pennant Hills

Quote of the Month

"It's cold. It's dark. It's Awesome!" - Where else but Claustal.

Announcements

Fees are due for next year. We will be finalising the cheque for ASF at the April meeting, so please pay your subs before then. The subs have remained at \$70. Payment options include:

Cash – to Jim Crockett

Cheque – made out to Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc.

Bank Transfer (preferred option) – BSB is 062021, Account Number is 000901421 and be sure to include your name in the message.

Jim Crockett is looking into organising a trip to Wombeyan Caves. However, to do this, we need to join a trip with another club that knows the area. This will require a bit more organisation than for a normal trip, so Jim is wanting to know how many people would be interested in that kind of trip before going any further. So, if you are interested in visiting Wombeyan Caves sometime next year, please let Jim know.

Trip Reports

Danae Brook - 8th March, 2008

Participants: Rod Smith, Jim Crockett

It was a dark and stormy night. The rain had persisted from when I left home til I reached Hampton. Now the dark is punctuated with the random strike of lightning as I scan the road ahead looking for the Kanangra turn-off, and the dirt road that follows. It's all looking ominous for my first attempt at Danae Brook tomorrow morning.

That morning I had Jim and I had received an email from Johan informing us that he was sick and pulling out of the trip. Neither Jim nor Johan knew that I'd been contemplating the same thing due to a recurring calf injury. What to do?

I sent Jim an email suggesting we do something a bit easier, maybe Twilight? But no, Jim was very keen to do Danae since his only previous attempt had been aborted at the first drop due to the lateness of the hour.

Well, if my calf plays up it causes me pain, but doesn't slow me down. Let's do it!

Johan had earlier that week sent both Jim and myself a copy of the relevant section of the Kanangra topographical map with the planned route drawn in. I printed a copy of it. It looked simple, no need to think any more on it. Quickly pack as the rain starts and I begin the drive.

I arrived at an empty Kanangra carpark at approximately 11pm. Jim was coming up early in the morning. I didn't feel like pitching the tent, and knowing we needed an early start in the morning we'd be losing time while I packed it. Instead I rolled my thermarest and sleeping bag out in one of the tables under the shelter and slept there. It was dry and comfortable enough.

Jim arrived at 5:30am, waking me up. Our planned departure time was 6:30am. I didn't bother trying to get any more sleep, instead dragging myself out of a nice, warm sleeping bag. Breakfast by headtorch as sunrise was still over an hour away.

We started walking at 6:20am, ahead of schedule. The weather wasn't great, but at least it wasn't raining. Before we knew it we were turning on the Mt Thurat firetrail, and passing a couple of campers just arising. They were off to do Kalang, so didn't need the early start the we did.

On the downhill approach to the Kanangra creek crossing we had to detour off the trail to bypass a fallen tree. My calf grabbed! We had our first stop while I attempted to stretch it out. Soon we continued. There was nothing for it, I'd have to grin and bear it.

The ascent from the creek crossing is quite steep, but doesn't last too long, time to start looking for our turn-off. We weren't expecting a track, but we were going to drop into the top of Danae Brook, so it should be reasonably obvious, or so we thought. The firetrail continued its ascent through the mist, though not as steep anymore.

We arrived at a point where an old firetrail turned off to the right. A bit unexpected, but maybe this would provide a way in. We checked the map with the GPS.

It was only then that we realised our first problem. Both Jim and I had printed Johan's map, and neither had realised that it only had the Eastings, not the Northings. The GPS gave us our location. There was only one place on the map where the firetrail went through the Easting the GPS had given us, that must be where we were!

We'd overshot the turn-off, but if we went east here we'd still hit Danae Brook, just further upstream. So we'd lose some time, we could live with that. So east we went.

It wasn't long before we dropped into a creek. The scrub was thick and the going slow, but we were heading in the right direction. The further we went the more promising it seemed, and the traveling became easier.

"The guide book says we should be at the first abseil by 9am," Jim stated.

"OK. So what's the time now?" I asked, not having a watch.

"9:30"

Well, we were now late, but since we'd overshot the turn-off I wasn't too concerned. Besides, two experienced canyoners should be able to make up time through the abseils.

"We'll be at the first abseil in 5 minutes". Jim had come in a different way last time, but maybe we were close enough he recognised something. At 10am we were due to be there!

10:30am arrived, but the first abseil hadn't. Even if it was just around the corner, we're now starting late. Should we continue? Had we really lost that much time by overshooting the turn-off? I raised my doubts.

"Let's get to the first abseil and have a look," Jim suggested. It sounded reasonable.

"How about I get a GPS reading first, so we have an idea of how far away it is?" Since we were traveling east there was more to be gained by knowing the Eastings rather than the Northings. Unfortunately it wasn't clear enough where we were to get a reading. We continued.

Less than five minutes later we came upon a more open section of the creek. Maybe I could get a reading here. I gave it a go. We got a reading.

The news was rather alarming. If we were in Danae Brook, we were about 1.5kms past the first abseil!! We must have gone even further north than we'd thought. Were we even on the map?

Well, there's no point in going any further down this creek. And even if we were to find our way back to Danae Brook, it was too late to consider doing the canyon. The only thing left to do is head back to the cars.

We started back up the creek, but neither of us felt like going back the way we'd come down. We headed up to the left and soon reached the top of the ridge. We were a lot more careful with our navigation now, but without a definite starting point (and possibly not even being on the map) meant there was still some guesswork.

Our guesses can't have been too bad, we reached the firetrail at exactly the point we left all those hours earlier. We were back on familiar terrain. We stopped at the Kanangra creek crossing for a late lunch and arrived back at the cars at 4:30pm.

Although I had food and camping gear, I decided to head home. Jim, however, decided he'd camp in the mountains somewhere and maybe salvage something from the weekend by going down Empress on Sunday.

Before that we had to call Johan and let him know we were out safely. We met at the Hampton pub and I made the call.

"Car to car in ten hours, it was a great day! We even found the twenty cents you left on the gendarme and replaced it with a fifty!"

"Seriously, you even got to the gendarme in ten hours?"

"Yeah"

"I don't believe you"

"Well, actually, we didn't even get into the canyon!"

During the phone conversation we also planned to have another attempt next summer. Hopefully it'll be the second time lucky, or third for Jim.

Rod.

Knights up the wrong creek. MSS Trip Report - 8th - 9th March, 2008

Participants: Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett

Flashback 4 years to March 2004:

MSS Trip Report 27th, 28th March 2004

Danae Brook, well Almost

Participants: Lynton Goldsmith, Mike Reifenstein, Jim Crockett (T.L).

.....

We arrived at the first abseil point at about midday and Lynton advised it was too late to start completing Danae Brook as for sure we would end up being benighted.

.....

Well Danae Brook can wait until another time.

So this was my second attempt at Danae Brook.

I got up very very early on Saturday morning at 2am and got ready to go. Left home very excited about today's trip. I had received some bad news from Johan that he was not able to make the trip because he had come down with the flu. He said it should be no problem for the 2 of us to do it. The rest of the trip up was fairly uneventful until I reached Oberon and the visibility became very difficult due to the thick fog which almost caused me to miss the turn off to Kanangra Walls. Arrived at the Kanangra walls car park just before 6am and found Rod asleep on one of the picnic tables. I roused him and both of us had some breakfast and started to get ready. We started walking from the car park at 6.20am. We were soon on the fire trail and making good time before Rod had to stop as he was getting some annoying calf pains from an injury he had sustained a few weeks back on a Newnes trip with me and had been having physio since for with mixed results.

Rod tried a few exercises to try and loosen the knotted muscle and relieve the pain. He was not getting much improvement but was prepared to put up with some pain to do this trip so we continued on.

We had soon crossed over Kalang creek and started on the uphill section. We continued for a while and then came to a side road going right that we did not quite expect.

At this point we got out the map that Johan had sent us trying to determine our location, with the aid of Rod's GPS we got a fix but upon checking with the map we now found that there were no Northing co-ordinates on the map that Johan had sent us. Rod could only estimate on the map our approximate location taking into account our eastings. It looked like we had gone a little bit too far along the fire trail but we should be ok if we head east. We did this and before long we were in the headwaters of a creek which appeared to heading in the right direction although it was at first a bit difficult to negotiate the creek we were soon in more open creek with flat banks on either side and a reasonable flow of water. We continued along this creek making good time. We had been going down the creek for some time and then I decided to check the time and found it was 9.30am. I was expecting that we should be at the first abseil by now even considering the extra bit we had done on the walk in but the creek seemed to continuing. Rod again got another GPS co-ordinate and now we were getting confused as we appeared to be some where off the map. We were not quite sure of the accuracy of the reading as we were under heavy tree cover and maybe we were getting a false reading. We continued down the creek a little further and found a more open spot and this confirmed our suspicions that we were in fact on the wrong creek. It was quite possible that we were in fact in Thurat creek and not Danae Brook ! At this point we sat down to ponder what we should do while consuming Rod's macadamia nuts. (They were beautiful) We did not have much choice but to abandon our attempt at Danae Brook as it was much too late to try backtracking. We turned around and headed upstream for a while and then headed for a high point on the south side of the creek we were in. We were pretty certain that this was mount Danae (at least we got one Danae) At least now we were back on the map we had and we could devise our exit route. This was not very easy as we had to scrub bash making very slow progress for a couple of hours. Funnily enough our route led us back to exactly the same spot that we had left the main fire trail some 6 hours before. From there it was a relatively east walk back to our cars. We had been walking for 11 hours and we had not even got to the start on the canyon. One big lesson was learnt that day was to thoroughly check maps. By the end of the day Rod was totally stuffed and wanted to go home and have a big bath to soothe the pain. I suggested that it might be nice to catch up with Johan for a coffee if he was feeling better. Rod called him up and spoke to him to bring him the news about the trip but he was still feeling crook. Rod was keen to get home but I was looking forward to camping tonight so we parted ways.

I had decided that this was a good chance to car camp in the Blue Mountains something that I don't do often and I was on my way to have a look at the camping area at Megalong Valley. I took the turn off at Blackheath for the Megalong Valley and Shipley Plateau. A road I had never been on before. Along the way there was sign indicating the direction to Mt Blackheath and my curiosity got the better of me and so I headed there for a look. When I got there I was awestruck by the location, fantastic views looking west and a small camping/picnic area. I could not see any signs indicating "No Camping" and so I decided that I would spend the night here. The area was only quite small but enough flat ground for a few tents. There were a few people around but most of them went at nightfall except for a couple cooking their dinner. I had my dinner and it was not long before I was asleep as I had had a very long day.

I awoke to a fantastic morning and had a look around the area. I soon found a set of steps heading down an incline seemingly over the cliff edge ending on a metal platform. I was pretty obvious that this spot was the launching area for hang-gliders and then I turned around and found a small cleared area that was covered in artificial grass. I enjoyed breakfast and packed camp. My plan today was to go and solo Empress Canyon. I got to Wentworth Falls at 9am and headed to the start of Empress. I was soon down in the creek and getting wet. I negotiated the first few climb downs in the upper section including the hand over hand section before coming across 2 young blokes also doing the canyon for the first time. This was their first season of canyoning and they had already completed a dozen or so of the most popular ones. One of my first questions was to ask them if they were abseiling Empress Falls and when they said yes I asked them if it would be ok if I could abseil with them as Rod had taken the ropes home but I had come prepared with my harness just hoping that I would come across a group that would let me use their ropes. Their names were James and Pete and both were from Epping. I told them about MSS and they were interested in our activities and I invited them to our meetings. We continued down the canyon and got to the last pool before the Empress Falls and came across 3 young girls on their way back, they were going to reverse the canyon. We got ready for the abseil and I watched as one of the girls who was quite a large girl and not a very capable climber was struggling to get out of the last pool with the help of her 2 girl friends. I went to their aid and gave the girl a push up on the backside and instilled some climbing confidence and she was up! The 3 of us continued with the abseil after thoroughly checking I was happy with the rigging. What an awesome abseil! At the bottom of the falls my thoughts went back to the 3 girls reversing the canyon as I knew that there were harder climbs than the one that I had just helped them on. The 3 of us went back to Lillians Glenn and back down the canyon and we soon found the girls struggling at a much harder climb, 2 girls at the bottom trying to lift the larger

girl up. We rendered assistance and were able to get her up. One of the girls now tagged us their "Knight's in Shining Armour" We continued helping them out and the large girl was actually gaining more climbing confidence in the end. The canyon trip was actually a birthday present for the large girl. We were all relieved when we were all able to safely get out the canyon.

It turns out that this was the first canyon trip for 2 out of 3 of the girls although I did also have some rock-climbing experience. One of the girls was a vet and the other was her vet assistant. The 2 young blokes were keen to go rock-climbing and I said thanks and good bye before they headed off to Mt York. The girls were very thankful for us helping them out of trouble.

Mooney Mooney Creek Canoe trip - 15th - 16th March, 2008

Participants: Bob Horn (TL), Rod Smith

By Thursday night I had received only one call (Rod Smith) so I asked him if he was ok with just the 2 of us. He was keen to get out of the city and on to the water so the trip was still on.

We met at Mooney Mooney point at 0930 and packed the canoes. The weather was predicted to be fine and warm all weekend and a good thing as we were about to traverse some fairly open waters. The aim was to paddle the full length of Moony Ck to the limit of the tidal water, camp the night and return next day.

We set off in calm conditions and made good time in to the narrower section of the Creek. As the tide was out many oyster racks had to be avoided and we soon realised that getting out of the canoes with low tide was going to be a challenge as the shore was knee deep mud and slippery rocks covered in oyster shells.

Soon the need to get out to stretch the legs and do other things was fairly necessary so the search was on to find a bit of suitable shore. As nothing was about to offer itself soon, we pulled up next to a beached oyster boat and hopped on board for some leg stretching, eating and you know what over the side.

The next challenge was where to stop for lunch. Luckily the tide was on the way in and we found a mid stream sand bank just right for alighting.

A steady paddle from the lunch stop took us under the old Pacific Highway bridge then under the F3 massive concrete bridge and on to the more remote upper reaches. At about the 14 klm mark we looked for a suitable camp sight, many were evident and we opted for the one with the easiest access from the water. A pleasant mild evening was spent by the camp fire and soon the tiredness took over.

The morning was perfect, no wind, the water was like glass as we took off to paddle the last 2 Klms to the very end of the tidal waters. It was hard to imagine that this place was just a short distance by road from the city, wild life abounded, schooling and jumping fish, diving and hunting birds, lizards and one snake.

Lunch we knew would have to be on the sand bank or back at the start so upon reaching the sand bank we realised we were making good time so we made a quick stop and then continued on to arrive at the cars by midday. Another perfect day on the water. Thanks Rod for making the trip a success.

Bob Horn.

What Else We've Been Doing

Canyoning at Newnes - 16th - 17th February, 2008 Well it was almost Twilight

Participants: Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett.

This trip was at one stage going to be a MSS club trip but plans changed a number of times because of the unavailability of the trip leader.

Rod and I were very keen to do some harder canyons as the club trip for this weekend was going to be much easier and we wanted to prepare ourselves for the upcoming Danae Brook trip.

I drove up very early Saturday morning and met Rod in the camping area who was finishing off his breakfast. We very quickly got all our gear sorted for the day and started walking at 9am. The original plan was to do Firefly canyon today but Rod had suggested that we attempt Twilight canyon which was much further away and a better option for today. I agreed with him.

After fighting with the stinging nettles and various other nasty plants we crossed the river and found our way to the large gully on the southern side of the Wolgan River. We commenced walking up on the middle section of the gully and again found more of the stinging nettles so we changed direction a number of times to avoid them. Eventually we reach the cliff line and continued by skirting around to the left. This brought us to a prominent steep gully and a small section of climbing up a steep slope. At this point the cliff line was all around us and getting to the top wasn't looking too easy. Rod spotted a possible easier route on the eastern cliff line and we started going up that. We gained the first 50m of height fairly easily although we were starting to get in a position of exposure. At that point the cliff got steeper. Rod decided there was a way to continue up the next 50m to the top but it was much more exposed. He made it up safely but I had decided that wanted a belay so he set one up and I climbed up to him on belay.

We continued climbing an easier bit to reach the top and then made our way towards the ridge. This time we had to go down towards the creek on the other side and this required some route finding to avoid steep gullies and drop offs. We eventually made it down to the creek which was in fact the upper reaches of Firefly Canyon and crossed the other side and commenced ascending. The time was getting on as we had wasted a lot of time on the rockclimb and it was already about 1.30pm so we stopped for lunch. At this point we decided to abandon the attempt on Twilight Canyon which was a much further walk to the start and a very long return walk and decided to go for the closer Looking-Glass Canyon as fortunately up to this point the route to both of them was the same. Even so we still had a lot more ground to cover. We continued along a ridge making good time on fairly open ground and then easily found the gully to the start of Looking-Glass.

There was a fair amount of easy creek walking before we reach the canyon proper.

Once in the canyon the abseils were almost continuous and at one point we were actually able to do 3 abseils in one go with a single 60m rope. The canyon soon starts to open up and there is a last abseil which drops into a shallow pool. This avoids the natural path of the water which drops into a deep well which has an arch over the top which had to be bagged. This has a nice window overlooking the last drop. It would be possible to abseil into the deep well but almost impossible to get back out again so it was avoided. There is a short last drop with a fixed rope for a downclimb or a very short abseil as Rod did and then this is the junction with Firefly canyon. This quite a beautiful and magic spot as there is spectacular waterfall 20m from the junction up into Firefly. But the fun does not stop here. Firefly canyon continues in spectacular fashion with a number of jumps in and a couple of nice abseils and a nice waterslide, which was a little harder than expected. At the end before the descent into the Wolgan there is one more nice abseil down an open waterfall but this can be avoided on the left as we did, because we were running out of time. There is then a descent down to the road along side the Wolgan. At this point Rod was running out of energy but he had also run out of food. I still had a large snack bar which we shared and then regained some energy. It was then the walk along the firetrail to near the ruins to find the best point to cross the river but this of course led us into the stinging nettles, in the end we opted to walk in the river even though it was harder against the water flow. By the time we made it back to the camping area at 8pm we were both buggered after an 11 hour day. I commenced to put up my tent and start making dinner while Rod was totally stuffed and at that stage did not even want anything to eat. After I started eating my pasta and vegies he then decided to start cooking his Barramundi fillets. We both finished our meals and went strait to bed.

We got up and had a quick breakfast and packed camp.

We had decided the way to make today's trip quicker and easier was to drive back and cross over the other side of the Wolgan and drive up to the start of the ruins. We commenced the zig zag walk through the ruins to the large gully on the southern side of the Wolgan River where we had been yesterday.

This time we decided to start walking up the gully on the left had side just after crossing a small creek. Hopefully we were trying to avoid the stinging nettles and other obstacles from the yesterdays trip as this part of the trip was basically the same route. As we got higher up the gully we ended up in the same spot as yesterday with a short steep climb up a dry gully. The next move was to avoid the steep cliffline on the left where we wasted a lot of time yesterday doing a rockclimb. We sidled around to the right to find a possible route up the cliffs. This proved a little difficult but we found a possible climb and this led to a short chimney section which Rod climbed before we pack hauled and then I followed him up. We were now making good time and continued up finding a feint track to follow to the highest point of the saddle. This brought us to the same spot as yesterday and we basically took the same path down to the creek that was the upper reaches of Firefly canyon. A creek walk followed for an hour or so before we got to the main canyon section, which is quite spectacular. There were 4 nice abseils in this section with the last one quite interesting as you have to secure the rope to the belay then swim across a very deep pool before clipping on for an awesome abseil down the waterfall which brings you to the junction with Looking-glass canyon. From here on it is just a repeat of the last section from yesterday but nevertheless a very nice section before the march down to the Wolgan and a shorter walk to the cars. We got back to the cars at 3pm which meant we had been walking, wading, canyoning etc for a total of 19 hours for the weekend, but it was all worth it.

Canyoning - 21st - 30th March, 2008

A week of canyoning, can you think of anything better?!?

Having resigned from work I was looking forward to a couple of weeks off the finding a new job. With two weeks to go I got the offer. A friend (Michael Sliwka) needed a break from work, so how would I feel about canyoning for a week? There can only be one answer to a question like this.

The morning of Good Friday saw me drag myself out of bed, finish packing the car, and get Michael and I headed towards the Army Rd in the Northern Wollemi. We'd already picked our campsite from seeing it on a previous trip. By the time we'd met up with Jim Cook and Lyn Batha, arrived at the campsite, and pitched the tents, it was already well into the afternoon. And with the weather being less than kind, we decided the canyoning would wait til Saturday. We did, however, go for a walk further down the Army Road looking for potential places to explore.

We arose Saturday to thick mist, but it wasn't raining, so we started our exploration.



Looking into the first canyon
Photo: Rod Smith

During the day we went up or down a total of five tributaries of Ovens Creek. Only the first one offered anything in the way of canyon and, although quite beautiful, it was rather short.

We were back at camp in plenty of time, so we started on a fire for the roast. Despite the drizzle keeping everything damp, we were able to get a fire going. No-one else there had seen a roast done in a camp oven, so there was a reasonable amount of doubt during the preparation, but it all turned to praise once they started eating.

Sunday, and the weather hadn't improved. It hadn't gotten any worse either, so we set off again. Again about six tributaries explored, and only one canyon on offer. Like Saturday it was beautiful, but short.

Monday the weather finally started to improve, but Jim and Lyn had to head home and prepare for a trip to England. Due to some of the slipping we'd encountered on

the drive to the camp site, we decided it would be better if we all headed out together, so Michael and I also packed up to leave.

Since Michael and I weren't in such a hurry to head back, we went for a drive to check out some other tracks for ease of access to other areas, and we found another great looking campsite.



The only canyon for Sunday
Photo: Rod Smith

We arrived back in Sydney Monday evening. We opted for a break Tuesday before heading back up to the Mountains Wednesday morning.

Wednesday saw Michael and I check out a couple of canyons neither of us had done before, Hand Over Hand and Corkscrew. On the way into Hand Over Hand we were making out way under a small rock shelf when a rock was dislodged and hit me right in the middle of my head. As I'm sure you can imagine, I was not impressed. It took a couple of days for the lump to go down. Shortly afterwards we reached the start of the canyon and put on wetsuits and helmets.

Halfway down the canyon I slipped on a down-climb and twisted my ankle. I was not having a good day!

Thankfully we reached the junction with South Bowens without further incident and started our way upstream. A lunch break and another short walk before we reached the junction with Corkscrew.

The main feature of Corkscrew is a section where the water flows around and under itself. It's quite fascinating. We were tempted to follow the water through its course, but it was going under a lot of mud and debris that didn't look too stable. Not worth the risk.

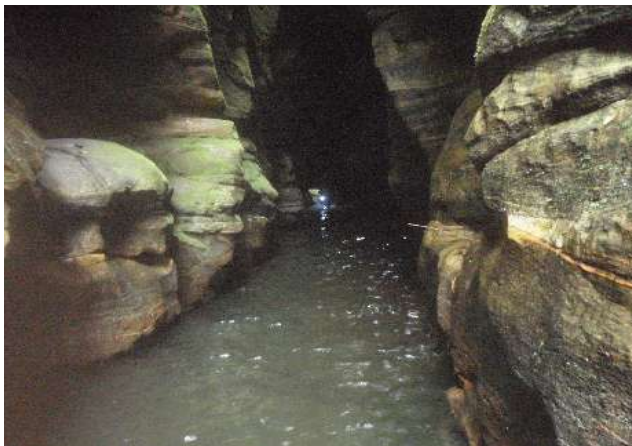
8:30am Thursday we met up with Mick O'Neill to do Water Dragon. I was the only one to have done it, but that was a number of years ago. I was keen to refresh my memory, and both Michael and Mick were happy to add another canyon to their lists.

Once you leave the Whungee Wheengee track the track into Water Dragon becomes less distinct, testament to the fact that Whungee Wheengee is certainly the more popular canyon of the two.

We abseiled in from a tree, which was different to the way I remember entering long ago. It's only a short walk downstream to the first abseil in the canyon. It's possible to do two abseils here, but we down-climbed the first one. This is where the canyon really starts. There is some walking/wading and a hand-over-hand section before the next abseil, which has a rather awkward start.

From the bottom of this abseil it's just walking/wading/swimming to the Wollangambe. The section is quite often visited by people doing Wollangambe and walking up from the bottom.

We had lunch opposite where water Dragon meets the Wollangambe and then jumped back in the water for the swim to the exit. The length of the pools is much more noticeable when not on a li-lo.



Claustral's tunnel swim
Photo: Rod Smith

Friday Michael and I met Mick and Julie Burton for a trip down Claustral. Neither Michael nor Mick had done Claustral, so they were looking forward to the trip. We passed a couple of army groups doing canyon leader training, the second group even allowing us to use their ropes on the first abseil.

Mick was sent down first to attempt to locate the bolt for the second pitch. He was up to the challenge. Both he and Michael loved the abseils (how could you not?)

At the Ranon junction I found Michael looking into a deep pool. It took me a while to see the carabiner he was looking at approximately 2 metres down. Despite his complaining about the swims, he ducked down to retrieve it, and found a prussik on it. Considering the colour of the

carabiner, it was clear it had been there for a while.

We stopped at the Thunder junction for lunch, and I took Mick up Thunder to the glowworm cave. He was suitably impressed. We arrived back at the junction to find Julie and Michael had started downstream in an effort to keep warm, so we hurried after them.

Julie showed me a different way down one of the down-climbs that brings you out under a small waterfall. Shortly after comes the tunnel swim, then it's not far to Rainbow Ravine, and the ascent. Another great trip through a great canyon.

That weekend Michael and I planned to take some beginners out. Saturday we met up with our three beginners: Dave, Nic and Jo in Katoomba. Dave hired a wetsuit from a stoned guide that couldn't work the EFTPOS machine, and probably wouldn't have noticed if we returned the wetsuit or not.

Although it's a bit of a drive out to Twister and Rocky Creek, they make a great beginners trip. It's just a shame when some have to get back at to Sydney by 5pm, not allowing enough time for both. Still, everyone had a great time doing the jumps and slides, often more than once.

Dave and Nic both had to return to Sydney, so there was only three staying at Mt Wilson to do Serendipity on Sunday.

Since Serendipity is a short day there was no rush to get up in the morning, but 10am was pushing it a bit. Still, we left camp around 11am and started the walk in.



Splash down! Nic lands as Michael watches
Photo: Rod Smith

We are launching a new competition this year. Yes, it's a photo competition. Unfortunately, Sinister has gotten his hands on it, so it's not your average photo competition. The idea of this competition is to select an item (for example, a hairdryer). Then, during the year, you must photograph this object at various locations (for example, halfway down an abseil). Submit your photos to the Newsletter editors for judging.

* The judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Bribes may work.

We were following Jo, and not paying too much attention, when we found the track running out. Somewhere we'd taken a wrong turn. We could turn back, or we could head bush. For some reason, at that point, the second option sounded more appealing.

We angled in hoping to hit the creek not far above the main canyon section. After plenty of bush-bashing, and two scrubby abseils, we arrived at the creek, and found the first abseil about ten minutes later. All-in-all I'd recommend sticking to the track.

We moved swiftly through the canyon and were soon having lunch on the exit rock overlooking the Wollangambe. Due to the lateness in the season and, therefore, lack of temperature, no-one opted for the water-jump.

Can anyone think of a better way to spend a week?

Rod Smith.

Dexter's Photo Competition

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
Lindfield Rocks	19 th Apr	Field Day		Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			16 th Apr	
Other Info: Preparation for the coming abseil trips								
Castle Head	3 rd May			Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 dstuckey@acay.com.au			30 th Apr	
Other Info:								
Malaita Wall	4 th May			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			30 th Apr	
Other Info:								
Boars Head	17 th May			Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 boonara@tpg.com.au			14 th May	
Other Info:								
Africa	18 th May			Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 boonara@tpg.com.au			14 th May	
Mt Solitary	31 st May - 1 st Jun			Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 dstuckey@acay.com.au			28 th May	

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Jenolan	7 th - 9 th Jun		TBA	TBA			4 th Jun	12
Other Info:								
Jenolan	2 nd - 3 rd Aug		TBA	TBA			31 st Jul	12
Other Info:								
Pierces Pass and ...	TBA			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			TBA	
Other Info: 200m abseils. Massive exposure!!								
Jenolan	1 st - 2 nd Nov		TBA	TBA			29 th Oct	12
Other Info:								
Danae Brook	6 th Dec			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			N/A	Trip Full
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Wyanbene	TBA		TBA	Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com	TBA	TBA	TBA	7
Other Info:								
Snowys	TBA 2008			Rosetta Lidano 0439 696 006 rosetta_12002@yahoo.com.au		\$390 accommodation + potentially transport, hire, etc. See other info	TBA	
Other Info: Accommodation will be booked at The Lodge for Friday 27 th July – Sunday 29 th July (2 nights). Check in between 2pm and 4pm. Cost of \$390 per person (twin share) includes breakfast and dinner. This MUST be paid upfront. Additional costs include: ski hire (including skis, poles and boots) - \$73.00, snowboard hire (including board, boots and risk guards) - \$90.00, Parker and Pants - \$43.00, Mountain Pass - \$190.00, Coach from Central to Bullock Flat ski tube - \$178.00 return, transport from Bullock Flat ski tube to The Lodge - \$53.00. If you plan on catching the coach, it leaves Central at 8:00am on Friday, arriving at 3:10pm and leaves Bullock Flat ski tube at 4:50pm on Sunday, arriving at 11:55pm								
New Zealand	Dec 2008 – Jan 2009			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au		TBA	TBA	
Other Info:								
Tasmania	TBA	 	TBA	Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com	TBA	TBA	TBA	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Nullarbor	TBA		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	
Other Info:								