



Metropolitan Speleological Society

Quarterly Newsletter

Autumn 2016

Issued June 2016

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Cover Shot: Murray enjoying the view at the end of Fortress. Photo: Emma



SOCIETY INFORMATION

Club EPIRB

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

Office Bearers

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------|
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| Secretary | secretary@mssadventure.org.au | Rod Smith |
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| Website Manager | webmaster@mssadventure.org.au | Rod Smith |
| Public Officer | | John Gray |

Membership Fee Details

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Full member | \$80 |
| Family membership | \$160 |
| Prospective member | \$30 (3 months) |
| Honorary membership | \$45 |
| Already a member of an ASF Club? | \$30 |
| Preferred method of payment by Direct Debit to: | Account Name: MSS |
| | BSB: 062-021 (Commonwealth Bank) |
| | Account: 00901421 |

Cheques or Cash also accepted.



THE MSS T-SHIRT

has finally arrived!

This is the must have item for 2016!



This versatile T-shirt goes with anything and is appropriate anywhere from a friendly BBQ to a royal wedding.

- It comes in a variety of sizes from S to XXL
- It comes in a variety of one colour

BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

It's also available as a polo shirt



And a hoodie!



To purchase these unique items at these amazingly low prices, contact Rod, secretary@mssadventure.org.au but hurry, this offer will not last!

MSS WEBSITE SECURITY UPDATE



MSS = Adventure

[Home](#)[Activities](#)[Calendar](#)[Contact Us](#)[F.A.Q.](#)[Gallery](#)[Members](#)

<http://www.mssadventure.org.au/>

When logging in to the member's area of the Website, you will notice a new access method requiring a member's login and a password. This feature has been added to improve the security of the members' area.

- To access the members' area, the login will be your current email address and the password remains as "forester"
- There is an added feature to allow you to make a password change and also if you wish to change your login to something else other than your email you can send a message to Rod at webmaster@mssadventure.org.au



FACEBOOK



For those who are into social media, visit <https://www.facebook.com/MSSAdventure> and "like" us ...



"Why?" you ask. You'll get access to:

- Reminders about upcoming trips
- Extensive photo albums of trips



VALE NATALIE ETHERTON

MSS member, Natalie Etherton, wife of Ray, and mother of Fletcher, Josh, Dearne, Felicity and Thomas, died on March 10, 2016.

Passionate about canyoning and caving, Natalie travelled far and wide, not only visiting the usual caving areas like Jenolan, Wombeyan, Cliefden and Abercrombie but also travelling further afield to Tasmania, Buchan and the Nullarbor. Nat also learned how to survey and map caves and was also involved in an ongoing documentation project of cave and karst features between Lithgow and Mudgee.

Natalie, creative to the end, planned for her ashes to be spread far and wide, they've been



Nat in Mystery Creek Cave, Ida Bay, Tasmania. Photo: Jim Crockett

blasted out of a cannon at IronFest, sprinkled over the arena by an acrobat at the National Folk Festival, scattered in Midwinter and Fergies canyons and on Mirror Ball abseil and they're nurturing hundreds tree seedlings.

Before her death, Natalie wrote *"when I die, don't think you've lost me, I'll be there with you, living on in the memories we've made"*... larger than life, she will be sorely missed by those who were fortunate enough to know her, but it's guaranteed that we'll be sharing memories of her around campfires for many years to come. Nat, may your light always shine brightly and may you always be covered in mud.



Natalie, Tuglow Caves. Photo: Beth Little



Arethusa Canyon – 27 February 2016

Report by: Beth Little

Participants: Beth Little (TL), Andre Munck, Emilio Carretto, Rod Smith, Murray Newman, Emma Parnell, Nick Payne and USA friend.

The Ancient Greek theologians told of a divine nymph in a sacred spring whose beauty inspired poetry and artists. Arethusa's tale is one full of woe however, she was forced to disappear and flee from an obsessed suitor Alpheus. He pursued and eventually caught her where their fates were then entwined.

Arethusa canyon is indeed an incarnation of this myth. It is a wonderfully curvaceous canyon, the



Photo: Emilio Carreto

natural sculpture of the rock drawing the eye, and elegantly changing views at each stretch of canyon. It is lusciously green with slippery moss the product of many years of nutrient rich watershed that kept the canyon restricted for so many years. She runs dramatically to a large waterfall into the Grose Valley, where she is met by Alpheus canyon and together they plunge into the valley floor below.

The Blue Mountains canyon guide and a few online blogs speak of this canyon being an epic day, coming in from Pilcher's lookout and walking out along the valley floor after abseiling the large waterfall. I enjoy the route we took this day, entering the canyon instead from Mt Hay Road; a 4WD track brings you out towards the canyon and then you head off using similar grid coordinates as listed in the guide.

We were careful to stay high for as long as possible to avoid impact on the hanging swamps. Two large abseils from the cliff edge (both from large sturdy trees) down into the canyon proper. It's a super slippery canyon, probably the slickest I've ever been in, with no surface trustworthy, but many soft water landings to cushion all of our repeated falls.



View from the waterfall. Photo: Emma Parnell

The climb downs and abseils are lovely, although with the slickness of the canyon, using ropes to climb down are definitely the safer options in many places and the water is deep enough for a jump in or two.

The big waterfall is the perfect lunch spot, where we could sun ourselves, dry out the rope some, and wring out the wetsuits before the climb out.

We exited up the cliff line just upstream of Alpheus canyon. It's a very dynamic exit, with three short sections of approx. grade 10 climbing, which I love. There are a few rings to assist safety rigging for these ascents. It can be slow going with a group as large as ours was this day, but we still made pretty good time all things

considered. Following the abseils are a series of fixed tapes and ropes that zig zag their way up the cliff line. You end up at an excellent viewing platform at the cliff edge

looking back over the Grose Valley and Fortress Ridge. The hardest thing about the exit route is turning your back on this amazing scenery and heading up the ridgeline towards the 4WD track, there is a faint track that takes you directly to where you want to be. All in all, a gorgeous canyon and a good day.



Mountain Biking – Oakes Fire Trail – 3 April 2016

Report by: Beth Little

Participants; Beth Little (trip leader), Bob Horn, Venessa Horn, Daniel Hamilton and Chris Horn.



It was a very respectable 10am start for our Sunday mountain bike cruise down the Oakes Fire trail from Woodford to Glenbrook. Going in this direction makes for a nice fast fire trail where you can just release the brakes and go. This track is fun for duellies and fully rigid bikes alike. Although there are a few hills to get the heart rate up it is generally downhill for the 27km of track.

I chose to leave my car at Glenbrook catching the train up. The Horn family choose the opposite, to finish their day with the train back up to their car. I arrived off the train to find the Horns just having arrived and finishing their coffees. A great way to start the day.

We had a cool blue-skied day, with clear views from all the high points of the trail.

The track maintenance and additions to the single trail at the Glenbrook end were fun and new signposts meant no challenges with navigation.

All in all, a top day out; many thanks to the Horn family for sharing the day with me.



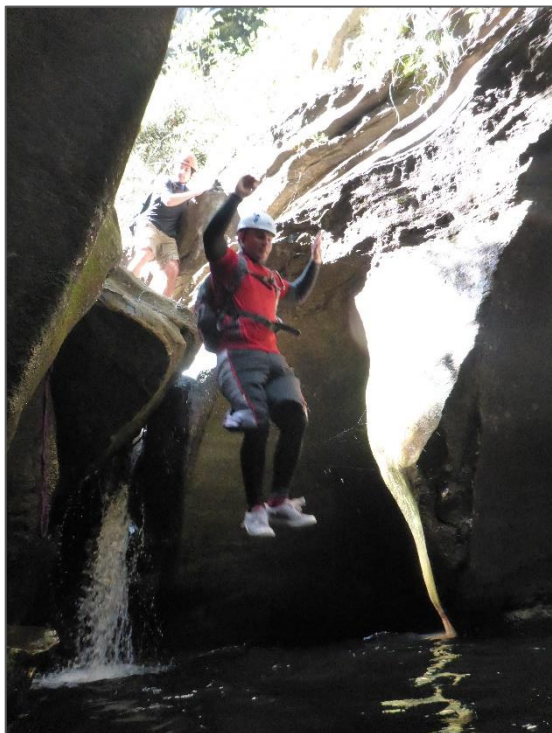
Lunch at the Weir



Fortress Canyon – 28 February 2016

Report by: Beth Little

Participants: Beth Little (TL), Rod Smith, Rob Clyne, Laura Clyne, Murray Newman, Emma Parnell, Nick Payne and his friend from USA.



Nick's jump in Fortress. Photo: Emma

Fortress is one of the classic shorter day canyons in the Blue Mountains due to its length, its accessibility, and stunning location.

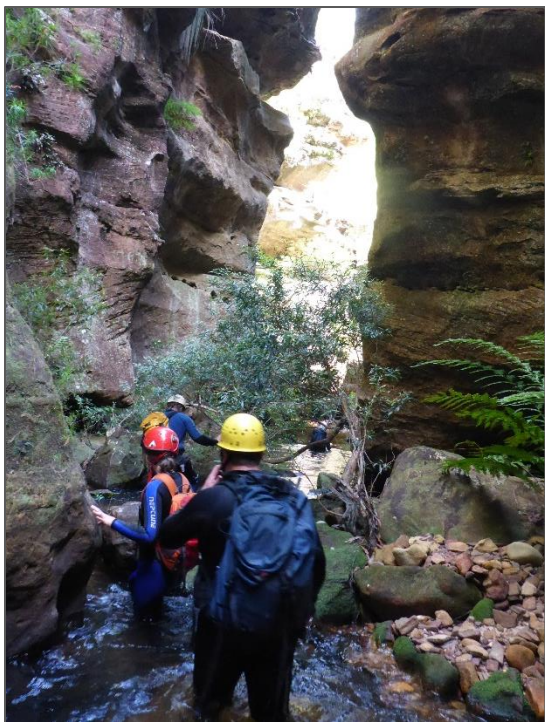
It was lovely to bring people today who were new to Fortress as you get to see it again with fresh eyes. Thanks to Rod for the straightforward navigation in, it had been a while for me and there were a few extra paths than I remembered so I was glad not to have to rely on my memory. Fortress has a nice combination of creek section, swims, scrambles and a few jumps.

Memorable moments included the squeal of delight that accompanied Emma's 3m jump. Also memorable were Murray, Nick, and his friend jumping the higher 6m jump a bit later on, while the rest of us took the tamer, slower abseil option.

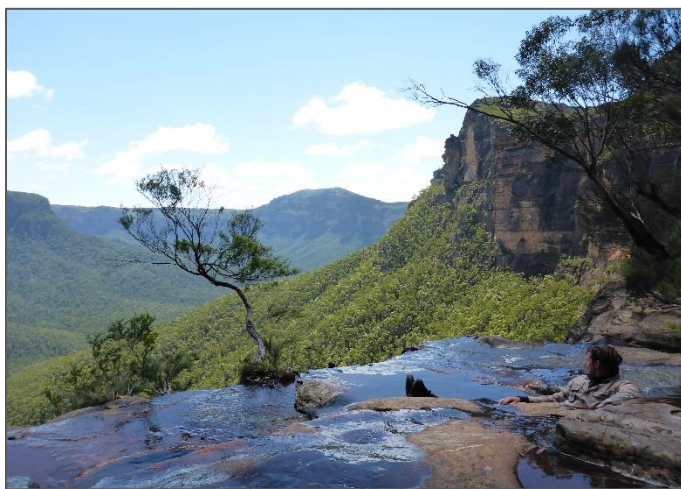
Our only casualty of the day was Rob's dry-bag and lunchbox which appeared to have been speared somehow before the swim sections of canyon. The small hole was sufficient to flood everything in his pack; sadly, no lunch for Rob as it had turned to doughy mush.

Thank god for all those spare muesli bars. Lunch at the

canyon end included the boys hanging out in the cliff edge 'infinity' pools, soaking in the view of the Grose lit by early afternoon light. Another lovely day out, and a good way to finish a weekend.



In the canyon. Photo: Emma



Murray taking in the views. Photo: Emma





MSS TRIP CALENDAR

| | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| June 5 – 10 Caving Yarrangobilly | | Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Grade: Medium/Hard Joint trip with CSS working on details of the UIS pre-conference trip |
| June 18 – 19 Caving Jenolan | | Trip Leader: Chris Johnstone Contact: 0401 988 096 or chris_johnstone@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Open to suggestions for caves to explore |
| June 18 – 19 Caving Timor | NEW TRIP | Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick_smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Joint trip with NHVSS and UTSSS |
| July 30 – 31 Caving Cliefden | NEW TRIP | Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick_smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy/Medium |
| August 10 – 26 Caving Iran | NEW TRIP | Grade: Hard Not an MSS trip. There was an official invite to Australian cavers from the Iranian expedition team. If anyone is interested, please contact Rod or Jim for more details. |
| September 10 – 11 Canyoning Newnes | NEW TRIP | Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick_smith@hotmail.com Grade: Medium/Hard Exploratory |
| September 17 - 18 Caving Abercrombie | NEW TRIP | Trip Leader: Jim Crockett Contact: jcrockett3@bigpond.com Grade: Easy Joint trip with SUSS. Originally scheduled for 27-28 August, date changed by Jim. |
| October LWE Caving Bendethra | | Trip Leader: tba Grade: Easy/Medium |
| October 22 – 23 Field Day TBA | NEW TRIP | Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Instructional |
| After June Caving Wyanbene | | Trip Leader: tba Push to Frustration Lake Grade: Hard |



WANTED – LEADERS!

There are a number of trips proposed on the MSS Calendar that require leaders. The more people we have willing to lead trips, the healthier MSS is. Those who are currently leading are already Committee members, or filling other roles in MSS, so, what about it, put your hand up to start leading.

- **October LWE:** Caving – possibly Bendethra – caves are graded Easy/Medium
- **After June:** Caving – Wyanbene – push through to Frustration Lake.

To get started simply email president@mssadventure.org.au



APPENDIX 1 – MEETING MINUTES

MSS 420th General Meeting, 12 May 2016

Held at Canada Bay SES

Meeting Opened: 7:35pm

Present: Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Chris Johnstone

Apologies: Beth Little, Ben Johnstone

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence:

We received an email from SUSS asking if we minded if they did a small re-arrangement of the furniture at Jenolan Cavers Cottage

Committee Members Reports:

President: None

Treasurer: None

Equipment Officer: None

Training Officer: None

Librarian: None

Web Manager: None

Status of Action Items:

Bolting Course – Rod Smith: None

Resurveying Stable Cave – Jim Crockett: None

Abercrombie surface survey – Rod Smith: None

Abercrombie documentation – Rod Smith: None

Documentation – Chris Johnstone: None

UIS Yarrangobilly Trip – Cathi Humphrey-Hood: There have been ongoing discussions between various people including Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Cathie Plowman, John Brush and Beth Little. Some items that need to be discussed are:

- What mechanism will be in place to let MSS know when someone has expressed interest in the Yarrangobilly trip, and whether it's their first preference or not? *Cathi to check this with Cathie*
- Will expressions of interest be sent to MSS as they come in or all at once when registrations close? *Cathi will check this with Cathie but we certainly want to know about expressions of interest as soon as they are registered.*
- How will bills be paid? *Cathi to check with Cathie. We certainly don't want too much coming out of the MSS account and then re-imbursed.*
- What/who will be the main point of contact for registrants? *Rod will set up a @mssadventure.org.au email address to be used. This will be auto-forwarded to whoever needs to get the emails, plus Cathi (and possibly others) will be able to send emails from that address.*
- How will the registration cut-off date work with the booking confirmation date? *At present we need to confirm the accommodation booking two weeks before the cut-off date for expressions of interest. However, we believe George and NPWS can be flexible with the date and the expression of interest cut-off was a date randomly picked by Cathie. So currently it looks like there may not be a big problem, but it needs to be finalised sooner rather than later. One suggestion was made – Early bird booking at set price and late bookings set at a higher rate.*

50th T-Shirts – Beth Little: The t-shirts are selling well. We are completely out of hoodies and one of the polo shirts sizes. There have been at least four requests for hoodies since selling out of them. Should we do another run, primarily of hoodies? *Yes, we will work out sizes, numbers, and colours over the next few weeks.*
Action Item – Jim: send an email to all members to see who wants a hoodie and an indication of size.

50th Publication – Beth Little: Progressing nicely.

New Business:

- Marilyn requested headshot John Goulding and Paul Richards (part of 50th).
- Should potential members get a copy of the latest newsletter? - Yes.
- Facebook – *Helena and Marilyn should discuss this in detail at Jenolan.*
- Trip Leader responsibilities – *Rod will incorporate Marilyn's suggestions and send a copy with the minutes. It will be renamed as a checklist. Then it can be published in the next newsletter.*
- Marilyn's proposed newsletter filler – *It's felt it should be reworded as an etiquette thing. This can also tie in with trip leader checklist.*

Trip planning:

| Date | Leader | Activity | Location | Grade | Notes |
|---------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 21 - 22 May | Marilyn Scott | 2 Day Walk | The Pondage | Easy | |
| 18 - 19 Jun. | Rod Smith | Caving | Timor | Easy | Joint trip with NHVSS and UTSSS |
| 30 - 31 Jul. | Rod Smith | Caving | Cliefden | Easy/ Medium | |
| 10 - 26 Aug. | | Caving | Iran | Hard | Not an MSS trip. There was an official invite to Australian cavers from the Iranian expedition team. If anyone is interested please contact Rod or Jim for more details |
| 27 - 28 Aug. | Jim Crockett | Caving | Abercrombie | Easy | Joint trip with SUSS |
| 10 - 11 Sept. | Rod Smith | Canyoning | Newnes – Coppers Canyon | Medium/ Hard | Exploratory |
| 22 - 23 Oct. | Beth Little | Field Day | TBA | Instructional | |

Next Meeting:

Canada Bay SES – 4/8/16

Meeting Closed: 8:55pm

Meeting was followed by Tim Tams and photos from previous trips.





APPENDIX 2: MSS Trip Leader Checklist

This is a checklist for trip leaders within MSS. It is primarily aimed for newer trip leaders, but can be a useful resource for all trip leaders.

Before the trip

- Plan details of the trip. I.e date, meeting place and time, etc.
- Keep track of trip participants. In most cases this will also include having a maximum number of participants. Also ensure participants are capable of completing the trip.
- Borrow any club equipment that may be required
- Organise any permits that may be required.
- If appropriate or desired, set an RSVP date.
- Ensure either yourself or someone else on the trip has all the technical knowledge to run the trip, such as navigation, rigging skills, etc.
- Ensure conditions, such as weather, park closures, etc, are suitable for the trip going ahead

During the trip

- Ensure any participants that are unfamiliar with any aspect of the trip are instructed appropriately. This includes things like minimum impact travel, no-go zones, etc.
- Collect trip fees

After the trip

- Ensure trip report is written, usually by yourself unless you can convince someone else to do it.
- Return any borrowed club equipment, and notify the equipment officer if there are any issues with the equipment, such as wear and tear.

