

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY

JANUARY 2010



MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover Shot:

Dave and Johan scaling the icy, treacherous heights of an unnamed hill in New Zealand in January 2010. Details upcoming in the February Newsletter.

Photo from Johan Verhagen.

Society News

First Quarter General meeting for 2010 -

1. General Meetings:

was held on 14th January 2010 at Rod Smith's house, 7.30-9.30pm. Thank you to all those who attended the inaugural meeting of this new decade of MSS! A number of important issues were discussed, and these were:

It was decided that meetings would be held quarterly, during the months of January, April, July and October, and that the location of meetings would be rotated among members who will choose the specific date and location of the meeting and notify the membership in advance. This was decided to help even out the distance that different members had to travel and to take the pressure of specific individuals.

Notice of coming meetings will be placed in the newsletter and can be found on the website.

2. Aligning the Constitution with current practices:

It was noted that there were some discrepancies between the current constitution and current practice, and concerns were raised about possible legal ramifications of these discrepancies. After much discussion Warwick Blake kindly volunteered to look further into this issue and to make recommendations at the following meeting.

In the meantime, all office bearers should read the [constitution](#) and familiarise themselves with the current responsibilities as printed therein – if anyone has any concerns, queries etc, could they please contact Warwick.

3. Communication and Information sharing with members

We looked at the 3 main methods of communication with members, being the a) **website**, the b) **newsletter** and c) **email**.

a) The **website** in its current form is functional and informative and it was decided to expand upon this solid base to add interactive features, including:

Past trip reports
Interactive calendar
Photo galleries
Useful links

Alternative web hosting might be an option and this will be looked in to in the near future.

b) The **newsletter** will be retained as a monthly publication and expanded to include other news from the outdoor adventure world and related research, humor in its various forms, stories, photos and contributions from MSS members.

The format will remain in pdf for the time being.

c) MSS will extend the use of **email** to provide information about upcoming trips and meetings, but this will be limited.

4. Purpose

Why are we here? The question asked at the meeting revolved around whether we wished to become more active in the broader caving community. At the moment the MSS has been operating as a predominantly recreational club. The general consensus at the meeting was certainly to become more active, leaving the degree of involvement up to individual members, but with the club actively seeking opportunities for engagement.

Some of these activities include:

Joint trips with other clubs

Research projects

Active representation at ASF and NSWSC meetings

5. Membership categories

We considered different membership options for people wanting different levels of involvement within MSS, and decided that, on top of the existing Full Membership which will remain at \$70, we will offer a:

‘Non-ASF Membership’ at \$25 – a member of MSS but not a member of ASF. These members will not be able to take part in caving trips and will not receive the Australian Caver magazine,

and an

‘Honorary Life Membership (Inactive)’ at \$40 – a member of MSS and ASF and will receive the Australian Caver magazine but will not be able to take part in caving trips.

6. Joint trips with other clubs

Since it was decided that we would look into joint trips, we’ve begun arranging them. NHVSS have offered places on their upcoming Wombeyan trip and MSS has offered NHVSS places on our September 2010 trip to Yarrangobilly. We have also been talking to BMSC and OSS about joint trips to Cliefden and Abercrombie and will keep you informed about developments.

7. Possible Projects

Two possible projects have already been raised, and MSS has decided to investigate both of these. The first is a proposal by BMSC for a book on Abercrombie Caves, and the second is a feasibility study for Australia to host the UIS Conference in 2017.

If anyone wishes to assist in either of these projects, please contact Rod Smith or Jim Crockett.

8. Other Business

Account signatories are being updated following the office bearer changes from the last AGM. Internet banking options are also being investigated.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership for 2010 is now due. We will be finallising the cheque for ASF at the April meeting, so please pay your subs before then. The cost for full membership is \$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.

Trip Reports

Claustral Canyon – Non MSS Trip by Warwick Blake

After the trip planned for Christmas did not happen due to the weather, I was still keen to get my Claustral fix. My problem is that if I don't get this fix every 3-4 years I'm worried I'll forget what a beaut place it is in the greater depths of the canyon.

For anyone who hasn't done the canyon before (there surely can't be many of you) I'll try to describe it briefly. Rod and I met at the Mt Tomah radio tower about 9.30am on Australia Day for a late start. Our hope was that most other parties would have started much earlier. What we hadn't counted on was how quickly we would catch them.....

We waited about 20 mins before the 1st abseil to let the groups get all their people down. The thought of waiting long periods before each abseil in that always cold water did not appeal. The abseil is a relatively easy 12m drop. The 2nd abseils comes straight after the 1st and is through the spectacular and infamous "Black Hole of Calcutta". The black hole is not a place to get caught in a thunder storm, something that a few groups have learnt the hard way in the past. The 3rd abseil comes straight after the 2nd and drops you conveniently onto a ledge above the water where you can unrig and coil ropes.

There are a lot of tricky climb downs, hand-over-hand and cork-screws around and through rock slabs. This makes the next section in some ways the most challenging part of the day. The canyon then remains narrow,

dark and mysterious for another hour or so before we swam the last pool to the exit point. That last pool used to be a 50m swim, but global warming seems to have made it all that much easier now days.

On the walk back up the hill, Rod demonstrated an alternative scrub bashing route to climbing the overhanging ledge. Up over the camels hump and back to the cars for another top trip through Claustral. Never get tired of that one.

Upcoming Events

Saturday 6th February – **Mystery Canyon**

Trip Leader: John Gray 0427 876 679, john.gray@sydneywater.com.au

Contact by: ASAP

Sun 7th February – **Franks Ravine**

Trip Leader: John Gray 0427 876 679, john.gray@sydneywater.com.au

Contact by: ASAP

What's involved?

A weekend of excellent canyoning at Mt Wilson, beginning with a mystery canyon on Saturday, camping at the Cathedral of Ferns Camp Ground Saturday night before a trip down Franks Ravine on Sunday.

This trip will include abseiling, swimming, fun and frivolity.

You will need:

Abseiling gear, wetsuits (recommended), camping gear (if camping) and your usual canyoning kit. Contact the trip leader in advance if you are lacking any of these.



Saturday 20th February – **Freshwater Canyon**

Trip Leader: Jim Crockett 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com

Contact by: 16th February

What's involved?

A long walk in rewards you with a long and spectacular canyon. An early start is essential, and travelling up on Friday night is recommended. Camping will be at the Coorongooba Campground just out of Glen Davis.

You will need:

Abseiling gear, wetsuits (recommended), camping gear (if camping) and your usual canyoning kit. Contact the trip leader in advance if you are lacking any of these.



See the Trip Calender on Page 9 for what else is happening further down the track!

NEXT MSS MEETING: APRIL 15th at Bob Horn's residence

RVSP Bob (02) 9639 3672, randphorn@optusnet.com.au

Monthly Horrorskope

Your adventure starts for February 2010 ... or for any other time period you care to apply them to.

Galah: 1st April - 1st April

Nobody will take you seriously, not even you.

Butterbox: 2nd April - 12th May

Money will slip through your fingers. Do not eat crumpets for breakfast. Limit your exposure to high financial dealings (especially via Nigeria) and you will soon find yourself on solid ground.

Tiger Snake: 13th May - 2nd June

This is a dangerous month for you. Expect excitement at the beginning and the end of the month and excruciating boredom in between.

Midwinter: 3rd June - 23rd July

Nothing is as it seems. People you thought were friends will prove to be enemies. Seemly good decisions will turn bad. Your dreams will seem real and when you're awake it'll seem like a dream. The sun will rise at dusk and set at sunrise. You will hear colours, see aromas and smell sounds.

Starlight: 24th July - 18th August

All the glowworms are aligning for you. This month everything will go right for you. You will have untold success, make millions, sleep with whoever you want, become famous, influential, etc. Unfortunately for you, the month will end.

Empress: 19th August - 6th September

This month you should take your time as you will find things are over too quickly. Make a big finish so you will be remembered. People will think you are up yourself, just remember to look down on those peasants like the Empress you are.

Grand: 7th September - 29th September

The leeches feed on humans, the yabbies eat the leeches, but the humans no longer eat the yabbies. The circle is broken. What that means for you: I have no idea. You're on your own. Good luck.

Claustral: 30th September - 3rd November

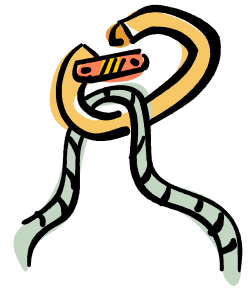
You need clarification on things to come. Seek help from psychics. Have your palm read and your future told. Drink tea so you can examine the leaves. Have your aura read. And join some religious cult to justify having multiple wives/husbands and partaking in mass suicides.

Wollongambe: 4th November - 4th December

Take it easy. Be lazy. Lay around all day and watch the world go by. You might as well, nobody would care anyway. Keep a patch ready for your lilo, you might need one.

Hole-In-The-Wall: 5th December - 19th January

This will be an eventful month for you. Your actions will have an impact on the world, even if it's a very small impact. You will do things. Other people will do things that will affect you. Some of these things could be good, some could be bad, and some may not be good or bad. Your month could probably be worse, but it could probably be better too.



Kanangra Main: 20th January - 10th March

If you find yourself going on and on and on and on, don't worry, everyone will agree with you.

Twister & Rocky Creek: 11th March - 31st March

This month will be twisted and rocky. You may find yourself in flood, but the only thing you will not be swimming in is money. Don't be afraid to jump into the murky depths of financial oblivion, you're going broke anyway, so you might as well do it with style.

Conferences and Events:

Some 2010 dates of interest (for those with an international inclination and budget to match):

Rescue Courses:

NZ Deep Cave Rescue Exercise 26th-28th February 2010

Cave Rescue Training for experienced cavers (previous Cavesar training required)

Further information available [here](#)

SSF Rescue Course 6th-14th November 2010 at Aillon le Jeune-Savoie in France

Organised by French Caving Rescue, 1040 Euro

Further information [here](#)

Please let Joe Sydney (UIS Cave Rescue Co-ordinator for South Pacific region) know if you're interested in going to either of these (Joe's contact details from NSW Cave Rescue, <http://www.caverescue.org.au/>).

Conferences:

SpeleoHungary 100



Vass Imre Cave, Jószafo, Hungary

The Blurb:

"The 5th edition of the **EuroSpeleo Forum** will be held during the "SpeleoHungary 100" event, 100th anniversary of the Hungarian Society, from the 7th to the 9th of May 2010 in Budapest -Hungary. Organisers have also prepared an "Hungarian SpeleoBar" that will be the main gathering point on the evenings.

Basic registrations are at 30 euros and full registrations including the different meals and all the proceedings are at 65 euros up to 31st of December 2009. Register soon !

Information at <http://www.barlang.hu/speleohungary100>

The 2010 FSE General Assembly meeting will be held on the Saturday afternoon 8th of May 2010 on the congress site.”

Congreso 70 Aniversario de la SEC | VI Congreso de la FEALC

4th to 8th August 2010 to be held in Matanzas Cuba

Organised by the Cuban Speleological Society

also scheduled for August 2010 and closer to home is:

The 14th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology

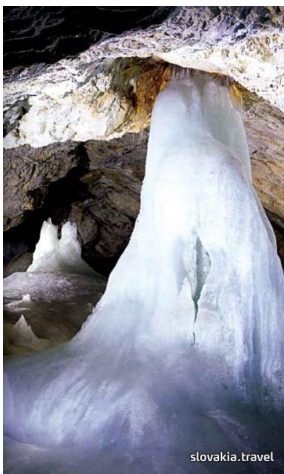
12th to 17th August 2010 to be held at Undara in Queensland

Organised by the “Undara Organising group for Commission on Volcanic Caves”

ISCA Congress 2010 (International Show Caves Association Congress)

20th to 24th October 2010 to be held at Demanovska Dolina, Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia

Organised by the Slovak Caves Administration and the ISCA



Focusing on the management and protection of Show Caves, this conference schedules some beautiful day excursions and - if you can afford to get there – don't forget some extra memory cards for the camera!

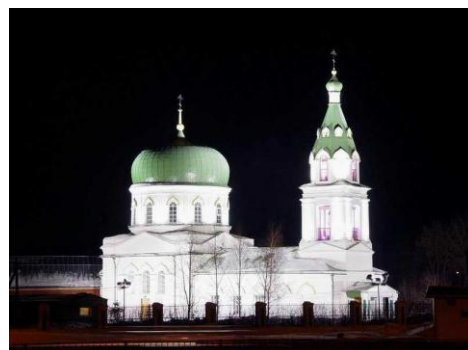
For more information see their [website](#).

← On the program: Dobsinska Ice Cave

International Speleo Conference

16th-20th November 2010, Russia

Invitations for participation in the International Scientific and Practical Conference “Speleology and Speleostology: development and interaction of sciences” are now open. The conference will be held in Naberezhnye Chelny, Russia.



Information is available from the website: <http://pro-speleo.ru/index/english/0-26>

(Strangely, general websites relating to this province seem to be heavily cluttered with photos of scantily clad Russian women – it is suggested that attendees of this conference be on their guard against the romantic attentions of divorcees called Svetlana, etc – you have been warned!)

News from the Underground:

News from the underground aims to provide snippets of what has been happening around the world, primarily in the areas of caving and canyoning, climbing, mountaineering...

December 2009 and January 2010

16/12/2009: An inexperienced caver (21) was killed in a fall in Sloan's Valley Cave, Kentucky, when he slipped into a deep pit while walking in the cave with two friends a short way into the cave system. The 25 mile long cave system is described as tricky and has also claimed experienced cavers in the past. Source: [Kentucky News](#) (posted on US Cavers Forum)

28/12/2009: Three cavers who spent five days underground in the Pyrenees when rising water cut off their exit were able to make their own way out to meet rescuers after the water receded. AAP News reports the men, two French and one Greek, were extremely cold and hungry after being trapped 700m underground in the Romy shaft of Pierre Saint Martin Cave, but were otherwise in good condition and were able to climb out. Source: [SBS World News Australia](#)

30/12/2009: A bat with White Nose Syndrome has been found in France...

This syndrome shows up as a fungal disease of bats and was first found in a New York cave in 2006. Since then it has spread across the US and has killed more than a million cave roosting bats. It is leading to cave closures in the US in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease, however, the disease is also found in limited access caves and there is little evidence that human activity helps spread the disease. The discovery in France requires urgent research to determine if the fungus is newly arrived in Europe or if it has been there for many years already in a mostly immune population. Source: [Emerging Infectious Disease 2010](#); [White Nose Syndrome](#), Wikipedia

3/1/10: A 50,000 year-old volcanic cave was uncovered (literally) in Syria in December 2009 when someone removed a boulder that was covering the entrance. The cave was formed by a lava flow and is thought to be 3km deep. Source: [Global Arab Network](#) (posted on the US Cavers Forum).

December 26 – Jan 8 2009-2010: 13 people spent 4 to 5 days each underground in the Dolomites, Italy, mapping the Piani Eterni cave system. During this time they discovered 2.5km of new passages and an 80m pitch. The original article is written in Italian. Source: [Caverinfo](#).

12/1/2010: More mapped cavern has been added to Bulmer Cavern in NZ, to a total of 66km long, with more to go. A 10 day expedition used the skills of 20 cavers to extend the known area of cave in December and January 2009-2010. Source: [The Nelson Mail](#).

21/1/2010: Cecilie Skog and Ryan Waters have achieved the first unassisted crossing of Antarctica. Pulling sledges without using ski sails, they skied for 1,800km via the South Pole after leaving Berkner Island on November 13th 2009, and arrived at the end of the Heiberg glacier on the 21st January 2010. Cecilie (who weighed around 60kg at the start of the expedition) lost almost 15kg during the crossing. Source: [K2climb.net](#)

Members Trading Post

Shady deals done here... Do you have anything you would like to buy, sell or give away? Let the editor know by the 20th February to have something included in the next newsletter.

Trip Calender

Saturday 6th February
Mystery Canyon

Canyoning
Trip Leader: John Gray
Contact: 0427 876 679 , john.gray@sydneywater.com.au
By: ASAP
Grade: Medium

Saturday 20th February
Freshwater Canyon

Canyoning
Trip Leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com
By: 16th February
Grade: Medium/Hard

Sunday 21st February
Canyon TBA (Glen Davis area)

Weekend 13th / 14th March
Myall Lakes Kayaking

Kayaking
Trip Leader: Bob Horn
Contact (02) 9639 3672, randphorn@optusnet.com.au
By: 9th March
Grade: Easy/Medium

Weekend 27th / 28th March
Deep Pass

Camping, optional canyoning, family weekend
Trip leader: Cathi Humphrey-Hood
Contact: 0414 663137, cathi@emeraldimages.com.au
By: 23rd March
Grade: Child's play

Weekend 24th / 26th April
Jenolan
! Permit Pending

Caving
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 21st April
Grade: Easy/Medium
Dependant on getting permit

Weekend 8th / 9th May
Wombeyan

Caving (Joint NHVSS trip)
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: ASAP (limited spaces)
Grade: Medium/Hard

Weekend 15th / 16th May
Tuglow
! Permit Pending

Caving
Trip Leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com
By: 11th May
Grade: Medium/Hard
Dependant on getting permit

Saturday 29th May
Oakes Fire Trail

Mountain Bike Riding
Trip Leader: Beth Little
Contact: 0405 226 811, littlebeth78@hotmail.com
By: 25th May
Grade: Medium

Weekend 12th / 14th June
Barrington Tops

Hiking
Trip Leader: Danielle lewin
Contact: 0404 305878, danielle.lewin1@bigpond.com
By: 8th June
Grade: Medium

Weekend 24th / 25th July
Perisher Valley

Snow-shoeing / XC skiing
Trip Leader: David Stuckey
Contact: 0414 590305, dstuckey@acay.com.au
By: 20th June
Grade: Medium

TBA August
Nullabor

Caving
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: TBA
Grade: Medium/Hard

Week 11th – 19th September
Yarrangobilly
! Permit Pending

Caving
Trip Leader: Beth Little
Contact: 0405 226 811, littlebeth78@hotmail.com
By: 25th May
Grade: Medium

Weekend 16th / 17th October
Gooches Crater

Decadent / Family Friendly Trip
Trip Leader: TBA
Grade: Child's Play