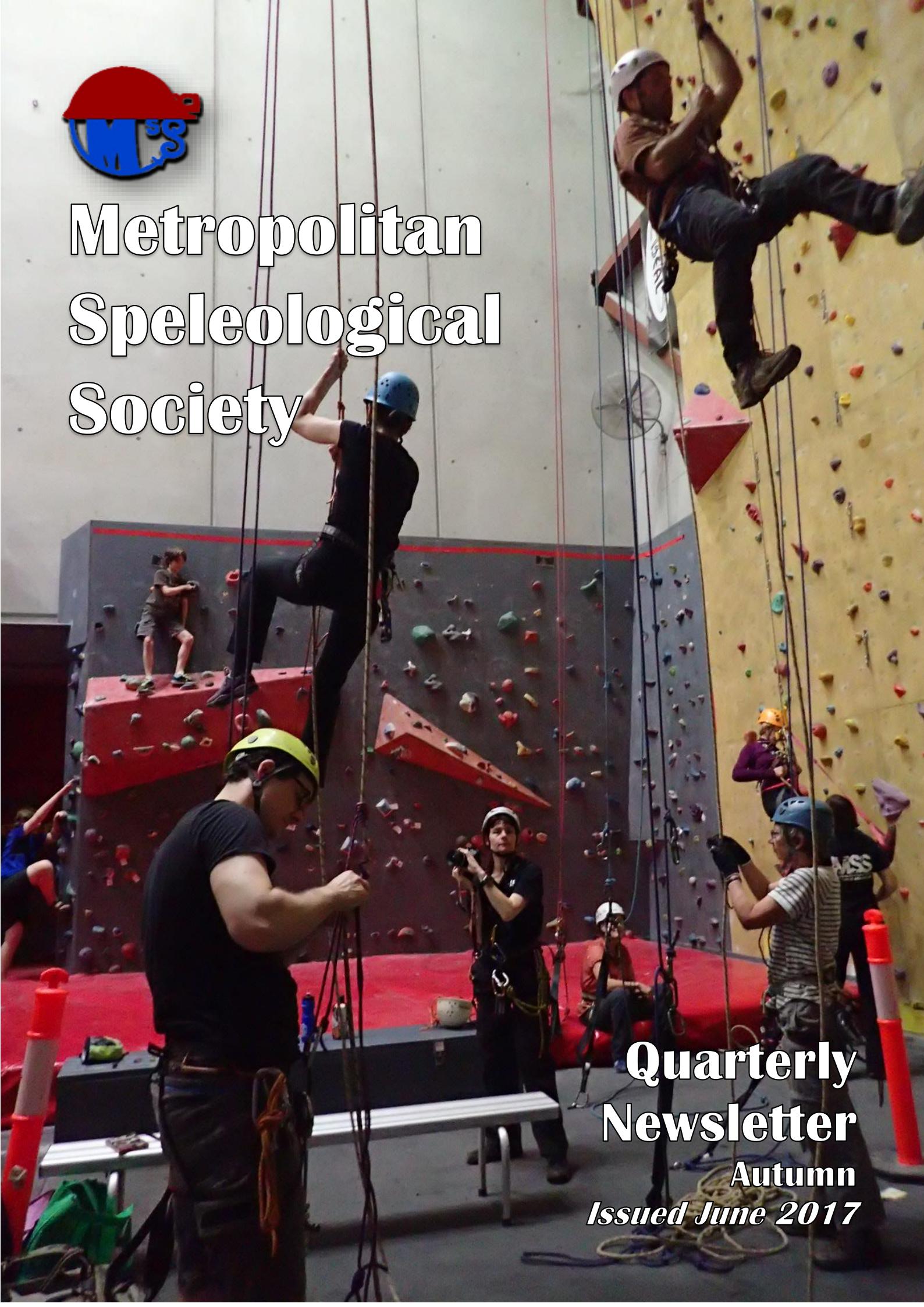




Metropolitan Speleological Society



Quarterly
Newsletter
Autumn
Issued June 2017

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Cover Shot: MSS Skills Day @ The Edge (Photo: Marilyn Scott)



SOCIETY INFORMATION

Club PLB

Just a reminder to all trip leaders that the Club PLB this should be taken on every remote trip. Our Equipment Officer, Jim (0407 284 256), icrockett3@bigpond.com has this, so please coordinate with him to collect it before you lead your next trip.

Office Bearers

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

Membership Fee Details (2017)

		Prospective membership Options (3 months)	
Full member	\$80		
Family (2 adults + children)	\$160	Single Prospective	\$30
Family (1 adult + children)	\$120	Family (2 adults + children) Prospective	\$60
Social	\$45	Family (1 adult + children) Prospective	\$45
Already a member of an ASF Club?	\$30		

Preferred method of payment by Direct Debit to: Account Name: MSS

BSB: 062-021 (Commonwealth Bank) Account: 00901421

Cheques or Cash also accepted.

Vale John Marshall

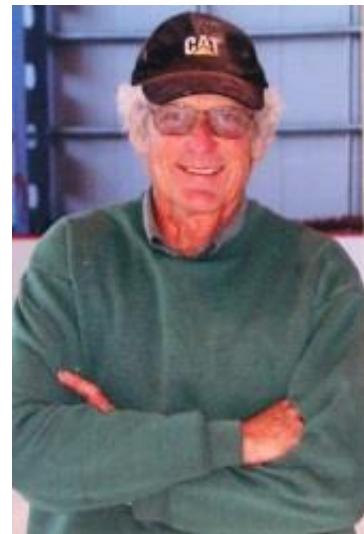
On the 13th of March one of our longest serving members, John Marshall passed away after a short battle with post-operative complications and rapid onset of dementia, he was 80 years of age.

John joined MSS after a chance encounter with one of our founding members in a cave at Wee Jasper in the early 1970s. He was very active in the early years of his membership and rarely missed a caving trip. He lent his building and digging skills to many projects including major digs and project work at Abercrombie, Tricket's Hole break through, the Bedroom Dig (including tunnel clearing with gelignite, 1976), the Efflux Dig, the first break through of Maiden cave at Jenolan (1975) and restoration and repairs to many cave cottages and huts. John was so enthusiastic about cave digs that his nick-name was "Digger", he could dig all day without losing enthusiasm and one of his many quotes were "we must come back and dig that cave out"!

In 1979, he was fully involved in the design, construction and installation of the Abercrombie Main Arch time capsule, which was placed to coincide with the switching on of the new lighting system throughout the Arch (MSS, with major input from John, were heavily involved with this project).

John was an adventurer and keen outdoorsman, in later years he attended MSS activities other than caving which included canyoning and bushwalking, his navigation skills (without modern technology) were amazing. John was an active participant in MSS right up to his later years.

He will be remembered for his enthusiasm and interesting fireside conversations and that he was always there to give advice and lend a hand.



NSW Speleological Council

Report by: Rod Smith

The NSWSC Meeting was held on the 13th May 2017 at Cliefden Caves. The following points may be of relevance and/or interest:

- There have been a couple of more incidences at Jenolan Caves caused by a caver or caving club. This hasn't helped the relationship between Jenolan and caving clubs, and included a threat to stop clubs accessing any caves used for tourists, including adventure tours. This would include all the show caves, Mammoth, Aladdin, Wiburds and Hennings, and possibly others. Although things have been calmed down and MSS is in no way responsible for any of these issues, it is a reminder to make sure we behave ourselves and stick to the conditions of the permit. This includes contacting the guides office at least two days before arriving and letting them know when we are leaving.
- HCG are conducting a working bee on the June long weekend regarding the ASF library and what could be sold at the UIS conference. If you are interested in assisting please contact me and I will pass on your details. It will be in Canberra, as that is where the library is stored.
- The NPWS Cave Access Policy is up for review soon. We will have an opportunity to comment on this, and considering the impact it could have on us, we should at least view any proposed changes.



Welcome to New Members

This will be a regular feature of future magazines as our membership grows, and this month we're introducing Garth McLachlan, our latest new member.

Garth is married to the amazing Catherine (Cat) who's been caving with us for three and a half years now. Garth was our camp security on a canyoning trip a few months ago, and decided that sitting around camp looking after the fire wasn't much fun, so he signed up as a full member (he was a temporary member when Cat first joined).

His first "official" trip as a member was Abercrombie Caves (the joint trip with BMSC).



Publication Review

***The 1830 Cave Diaries of Thomas Livingstone Mitchell* by John R. Dunkley**
(published in Helictite, 2016 42:21-37)

In 1830 the Surveyor-General of NSW, Thomas Mitchell gathered bones at Wellington and other cave sites in the NSW Central West, initiating almost two centuries of research. This paper transcribes Mitchell's previously unpublished diaries for the 16 days of this essentially 'private' first expedition to Molong, Borenore, Wellington and beyond, during which he spent 13 days in cave exploration and several more drawing cave maps and sketches. Mitchell's background, motivation and outcomes are discussed along with the contributions of some minor players.

This paper is available as a free download in high and low resolution PDF from:

<http://helictite.caves.org.au/contents4.html>.

Whilst I gather there are numerous publications regarding Mitchell's explorations, this is the first time that his diaries have been published. As someone relatively new to caving some things jumped out at me:

- Mitchell exploring Wellington area caves was way before any exploration (that I can find) of Jenolan (which is a bit closer to Sydney).
- I was surprised that he went to the effort of drawing maps and sketches, although it appears some of the sketches were completed a while after he actually visited the caves (so may not be that accurate).
- The discovery of bones in and around the caves seemed to be far more interesting to him than the actual cave formations, and in fact they did a lot of "digging" in the caves looking for more bones.
- It was almost as if he was on a holiday, taking time out from his "real job" of surveying to ride around on horseback, and drop down sink holes "on a rope". Pretty adventurous for those days, was he one of Australia's first recreational cavers?

Reading the article certainly peaked my interest in the caves at Wellington, maybe time for an MSS trip up that way.



Caving – Pilchers Mountain – March 5, 2017

Report by: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Participants: **NHVSS** - Garry Smith (Trip Leader), Melissa Hadley, Daniel Burt, Ebony Anderson, Valentina Vanghi, Murray Dalton. **MSS** - Marilyn Scott, Bailey Scott. **MSS & NHVSS** - Cathi Humphrey-Hood. **SUSS** - Phil Maynard, Rafid Morshedi, Keir Vaughan-Taylor



The team ready to go: Photo by Murray Dalton using Garry Smith's camera

For those interested in the area:
Garry K. Smith, 2007, *Tectonic and Talus Caves at Pilchers Mountain, New South Wales*, Helictite 40(1), pp.11-20

This was a multi-club trip being led by NHVSS. Marilyn kindly offered to drive and she and Bailey picked me up at the Sparks Rd exit on the M1/F3 around 7am. The weather was looking pretty grey but at least (unlike the rest of the week) it wasn't actually raining. As we turned off the Hunter Expressway towards Paterson the clouds grew heavier and it started to sprinkle; by the time we reached the town a little after 8am it was indeed sprinkling and looking decidedly like it was going to stay that way for the rest of the day. Almost everyone was already

there, with the SUSS guys turning up a few minutes after we did. After some introductions, a rest stop and a quick outline of what we were going to get up to, Garry led the way out of Paterson and off to the north-east.



Climbing up the first hill after leaving the cars. The weather did not get any better. (Photo CHH)

The track into the farm through which access is gained was very green and a little slippery. Our destination, Pilchers Mountain, is a Crown Reserve surrounded by private farmland, and permission to access the reserve must be sought from the landowners before setting out. A couple of the cars needed a push up the grassy slopes before we arrived at a what looked to be an old cattle yard fence. The walk up the first hill was pleasant; it was a pretty place, a standard farmland setting with an old, crumbling homestead picturesquely sited beneath the branches of a Morton Bay Fig, the paddocks were very green after all the rain we'd had, and there was an abundance of mushrooms dotting almost every cowpat.

There were more hills to go - nothing too steep but distinctly and unrelentingly uphill - and Garry pointed out that the cool grey weather was actually a blessing in disguise, as the place is often very hot and dry. We didn't set a cracking pace, but there were mushrooms to look at! Large solid *Panaeolus* species (not that I recognised them at the time) either on their own or clustered across each cowpat, a mass of little



A solitary *Panaeolus semiovatus* var. *phalaenorum* stands guard as we pass by. (Photo CHH)

had come apart: Rebel Cave and Bat Cave. We by-passed them for the moment and after looking at the geology and admiring the narrow walls and their imposing height, we had a bit of a snack while Garry explained the theories about



Exploring the top part of the first chasm. (Photo CHH)

bird's nest fungi and some solitary puffballs were but the start of the mushroom extravaganza that the trip had in store.

It didn't feel like a long walk, but we may have taken almost an hour to get to the top of the hill, crossing over a fence where the gate didn't open, and reaching a point where the normal grassy paddock suddenly (and quite literally) dropped off a cliff. Right in front of us was a 30m drop, with a deep, rich rainforest rising out of it.

There were a few easy scrambles required to get down the side of the cliff, but before long we were standing in a chasm with the walls rising up around us. In his paper, Garry describes the theory of how the chasms (and the caves within them) formed - a thick, shallowly dipping sandstone unit had slid down over a slippery band of shale, cracking apart as it did so.

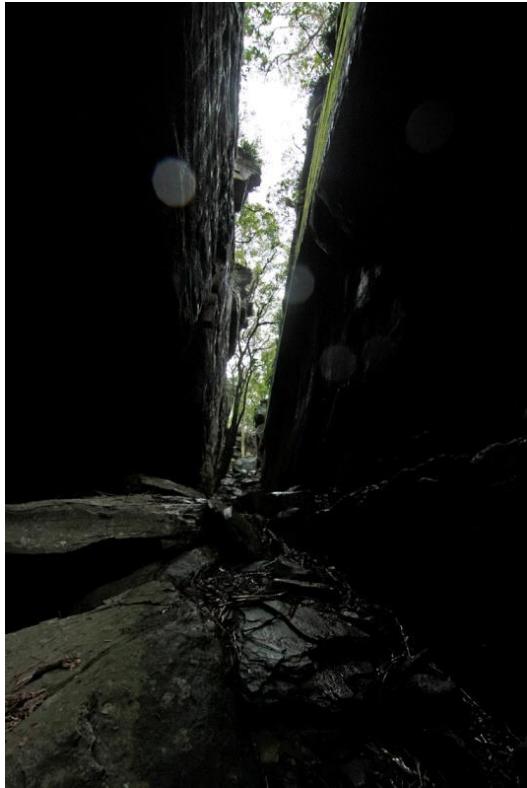
Over time the walls of the chasms further down the hill had crumbled into piles of rubble, but the one near the top looked as though it had just cleaved off from the main hill yesterday (as it had, geologically speaking). Two of the bigger caves were to be found in this chasm, formed when the walls



The view from the brink of the first chasm - there are cow-paddocks behind us, and this gorgeous rainforest with a narrow canyon in front of us. (Photo CHH)

the area, and the stories of how he and some friends had come to explore it many decades earlier.

Garry then took us on a tour of the rainforest. This little enclave would have been more at home in the Lamington area on the NSW-QLD border, and the misty weather added much to the atmosphere. Large blocks of stone had rolled down the hill as the walls of the chasms crumbled, and on one of these a large strangler fig had taken up residence. Garry used the roots to climb up with speed and grace, while half the group also decided to survey the rainforest from on top of the block. I didn't quite have the energy for that, but Bailey scrambled up without too much trouble.



The green, canyon-like walls of chasm no.

1. There are caves to be found underfoot, formed by the walls of the chasm and roofed by blocks fallen in from above. (Photo CHH)

boulders near the top, and then a 25m freefall into the black void of a deep trench. Because of this, visiting this cave would take a fair amount of time, leaving little time to look at other caves. The SUSS guys and a couple of the NVSS crew decided they would be up for that, and so Valentina, Ebony, Rashid, Keir and Phil took the ropes and set off to plumb the depths of Rebel. The rest of us wanted to see as much as we could, and so Garry led us first into Bat Cave, which is also in Chasm No.1.

Bat Cave starts with a little drop down between some boulders, and then there is a bit of a tricky turn, and a crawl with a flattener in it. We all got through this relatively easily, though Murray huffed and puffed a little on the way through. Bailey, being reed thin, had no problems whatsoever.

Bat Cave was a reasonable size, tall and narrow, with holes in all directions, and we explored some of these. We could hear the high pitch of the bats in the chamber overhead. There were a couple of thin veins of coal in the walls. Near to the entrance Garry found a large spider and a small frog, and further in there were odd triangular trapdoor spider webs, though none of the owners seemed to be at home.

The bats became restless after a while, and some of them exited the cave with us. It was actually quite dull outside, and the weather was slowly getting worse. We left Chasm No.1 for Chasm No.2 and a rubble cave called Valentine (named after the scouting group).

There are several ways into this cave, which was a good thing as poor Murray couldn't fit through the first one. This cave is slightly smaller than Bat Cave, with a bit of a trench down one side and many boulders to climb around. Melissa found a cluster of little snuggling horseshoe bats, which were promptly photographed from all angles while they wondered what on earth was going on.

While the bats were being photographed, Marilyn and Bailey joined Melissa down in the trench. Garry's instructions were that you could come back up to the top chamber (where the bats were) by

There were a number of strangler figs, and massive Moreton Bay Figs with buttress roots. Tarzan would have been pleased, there were vines everywhere, and more bracket fungus of various kinds than you could poke a stick at. A couple of tiny red mycena viscido-cruenta were easily spotted in the leaf litter - a very distinctive mushroom which is quite common in eastern Australia.

After looking over the rainforest, we sat down to have some lunch and then split into groups to tackle the caves. Rebel Cave, the largest in the area, is found in Chasm no.1 and has two pitches in it, a shortish 8m drop from



Climbing "the block". (Photo CHH)

wriggling up around to the right. Easier said than done, apparently - and when Garry finally went down to show the team where the route was, there was much shuffling and wriggling and some swearing before everyone reappeared – apparently, it was a bit tight and a bit tricky, and not at all obvious.

After enjoying the confines of Valentine Cave for a while, we ventured back out into a day even greyer than it had been an hour or so before. The Rebel Cave team had not yet reappeared, but Marilyn wanted to give Bailey the opportunity to get in some abseil practice, and there was a convenient spot available right in front of us. So, on went the harness and down came the rope, and the rain came down along with it. Murray kindly belayed, holding a rope in one hand and an umbrella in the other.

The Rebel Cave team finally emerged from the depths to regale us with the tales of their plunge into the dark. While they detoured to take a quick look into Bat Cave, Marilyn, Bailey and I made our way out of the chasm, leaving the hidden forest behind returning to the normal paddocks of the real world. I took more photos of mushrooms while the rain fell steadily and by the time the others joined us at the top around 5pm, there was thunder starting to roll through the clouds. The trouble was, we were in the clouds with it! The walk back to the cars was fortunately mostly downhill, and the rain had the courtesy to ease off when we got there, allowing us to

change into something a little less damp for the drive home. I did try to get Marilyn lost at one point coming out of Maitland (the roundabouts are cursed with a couple of conflicting signs), but otherwise the return trip was uneventful and Bailey was able to sleep through most of it.

Thank you to Marilyn for driving, and a big thank you to NHVSS and Garry Smith in particular for sharing the secrets of this unique little natural wonder with us.



Marilyn coming out of the tight bit (photo CHH)



Bailey prepares to slide down into the trench. The boulder in front of him can be navigated on both sides, and the bats were found up to the right, through a narrow tunnel. (Photo CHH.)



Caving – Abercrombie – April 1 – 2, 2017

Report by: Roderick Smith

Participants: **MSS** - Rod Smith (TL), Catherine McLachlan, Garth McLachlan, Heather Reid, Paul Richards; **BMSC** - Ric Webber, Paul McKendry, Phil Niciak (Saturday only), Colin Tyrrell (Sunday only)

This was always going to be an interesting trip. A week and a half after this trip I was booked in for a discectomy, key-hole surgery to remove a bulge from a disc in my spine. As such I wasn't going underground, but I was happy to wander around on the surface, and hopefully find some more of the tags out there and GPS them.

I was also not as organised as I should have been and so didn't start packing until getting home from work on Friday evening. A quick detour via Coles and I was on my way by around 8:00pm. A non-eventful drive saw me arrive at the camp ground around 11:30pm. I saw a car that I thought was Heather's so I pulled up close to that (although not too close in case it wasn't her). Within ten minutes I was curled up in my sleeping bag.

I woke to a fine and cool morning, which was a welcome change to the constant rain we'd been

experiencing in Sydney. I found out it was Heather's car, and Paul R had set up camp a bit further along. No-one else was there. They'd all decided to come out Saturday morning, so it wasn't long before they showed up, even though they'd apparently taken various detours through Bathurst.

I was in no hurry to get going, and thankfully no-one else seemed to be either. After a while a few people got itchy feet, so we made ready to depart. Firstly, we dropped in at the guides office to say "hello, we're here" and retrieve a key to open gates.



North Eastern end of Stable Arch (Photo: Ric Webber)



Southern end of Abercrombie Arch (Photo: Ric Webber)

We meandered towards the Arch while I amazed everyone (including myself) with my in-depth knowledge of the area. From the Arch we followed the track up and over, having a look at various holes on the way. We arrived at A24, and Garth and then Cat stuck their heads in to have a look. From there it's across to A13-14 and the first foray underground at Abercrombie for most of the group.

I let everyone know that the two holes connected, but only smaller people would be able to do the through trip. A few headed into A13 until a traffic jam formed, so the rest went into A14 while Paul R and I stayed above ground. Pretty soon it became a guessing game of who would surface next, and from which hole. Only Cat and Ric managed the through trip.



Balcony section of Grove Bluff. (Photo: Ric Webber)



Formation (Photo Ric Webber)

a look. Everyone participated in this activity, including looking at features as we followed the creek. By the time we reached the falls it was obvious, to me at least, that I hadn't done much exercise for a couple of months. It's an easy walk, by my standards, but I didn't find it that easy on the day.

There was water flowing over the falls, although not a lot. It certainly makes for an impressive view, and I imagine it'd be even more impressive in flood.

Paul R, Phil and I decided that we'd head back via the road. The theory was that it'd be easier, even though it was longer. Had we realised exactly how much longer we may have reconsidered. To our immense

Phil then asked me about the daylight hole. With my interest immediately piqued we started looking for this daylight hole. Phil, backed up by Paul M, was sure it was straight up the hill from A14, and should be easily visible, but we had no luck finding it. Eventually we convinced Cat to go back in and try to locate the daylight hole, and then establish a voice connect at least. She found the daylight hole after some prompting and headed towards. About 10 seconds later she emerged from A13, the mystery of the daylight hole solved.

We then wandered over to the top entrance of Stable Cave. With a thorough description of what to expect I sent the group in and then Paul R and I made our way back to camp and our waiting lunches.

The group must have had a very thorough look through Stable Cave judging by the time it took them to return. After everyone had lunch the decision was made to walk down to Grove Creek Falls and have

relief, Paul M, upon returning to camp, drove up the road to find us. We returned to camp to find the camp fire already ablaze.

It was now late enough in the day to consider a trip through the tourist caves. After much debate about whether to eat first it was decided that I would mind the fire and get my roast under way while Paul R would give everyone else a guided tour through the caves before returning for dinner, and Phil went home.

I don't know what lies Paul told them all being the perennial prankster that he is, and it being April the 1st. Whatever he told them it obviously kept them entertained as my camp oven was almost ready to remove from the fire when they all returned.

After a variety of meals, and showers for some, we all sat around the fire enjoying the company and conversation, before turning in for the night.

Another fine morning, that made two in a row. I don't think we'd had two in a month in Sydney.

Colin rolled in about 9am, or 8am if you hadn't turned your clocks forward. Inevitably discussions turned to what to do for the day. I wanted to have a look at a hole I'd seen near creek level and not far from camp when we'd walked to Grove Creek Falls. Both Pauls, Heather, and Colin joined me. Before we'd even crossed the creek to have a look Colin had spotted another couple of holes near the first. We found a convenient set of rocks to get across keeping our feet dry and then split up to look at the various holes. It took a while, but eventually tags were spotted, so I've now GPS'ed 103, 104 and 105 to add to my list.

Despite a bit of a hunt around we found no other tagged holes, so we then made our way back to camp. Paul R had had a shower and was about to depart, everyone else was ready for some more caving. After another visit to the guides office to pay for camping we then headed for Grove Cave, with a detour to find another couple of tags. Unfortunately, these were in places that there was no GPS signal, and I'd forgotten to take my camera with me. The positive is that I know where to find them now.

I didn't expect the group to take long in Grove Cave, so I pointed them in the right direction and sat down to enjoy the serenity.

Upon their return from Grove Cave most people decided they'd done enough for the weekend and headed back to camp. I had one tag I wanted to try and locate that was meant to be opposite the balcony, so Colin, Ric and I headed into the thistles in tag locating mode. After an unsuccessful bash through the bush we made our way back down the track and spotted a likely looking hole, in a very difficult looking place. Best to leave it for a future trip.

On the way back to camp I returned the key to Stuart and during the conversation we started talking about the files and other paraphernalia at Abercrombie. We decided that it would be a good project to catalogue what's there, especially anything of speleological significance. If you're interested in participating in a weekend of that then keep an eye out for a trip on the calendar around September or October.

Due to the B2B (Blayney to Bathurst) bike ride a number of roads were closed until early afternoon and even once opened we were likely to encounter cyclists. So we all decided to head back via Burraga and Oberon.

Another top trip.



Formation (Photo: Ric Webber)

Canyoning – Exploratory canyoning Mt Wilson – April 8 – 9, 2017

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: **MSS** - Marilyn Scott, Steve Rowse, **BWOC** - Brad Moore & Trish Morrow

This was a joint trip with Brisbane Water Outdoors Club, mainly because (for a variety of reasons, like surgery, weddings, children) the usual suspects from MSS couldn't join me, so, I dragged in some ring-ins to make up the numbers.

On a trip through Wotta Canyon a few months ago, we had noticed a big waterfall. Looked like it was 60m, as it turned out, it was probably only 45m but still a lovely pitch.

We positioned a car at the end of the Birrabang track and then drove back to the Mt Wilson turnoff. We walked out on the Yileen track and then peeled off in a vaguely west direction and found the gully we were looking for. Despite a bit of grumbling from the ranks, I decided that we'd drop into the gully to get the full "canyon experience", although there ended up being bugger all canyon and quite a bit of scrub.

The saplings at the waterfall weren't all that great but were bigger than the biggest thumb on the trip so they passed the test and we used two of them to be on the safe side.

Steve lost the toss and was first over the edge. The waterfall was stunning, it had three levels and was very, very mossy. Once we were all down, we headed downstream with the plan to go down to Birrabang Brook and then walk out from there. A little way downstream though, we saw another gully so Steve and Trish went up that one to see if there was a negotiable route out and Brad and I went up the next gully down to check it out. Both were negotiable although one was a lot easier than the other which involved setting up a bit of a hand-line. As it turned out the person (who will remain nameless but starts with B) whose car was at the end of Birrabang hadn't brought the keys with him, so it was fortuitous that we didn't stick to the plan and go up Birrabang. We found ourselves near the top of the waterfall for lunch then wandered over to retrieve my anchor. We were back on the Yileen Track around 3.00pm (it was a cruisy day) and in camp around 4pm.

Next morning we broke camp and headed off to do Steve's Secret Canyon which I've now renamed Dug's Canyon. Apparently, 15 years ago, the late Dug Floyd had heard about a canyon. Dug and Steve could see into a side creek from a lookout and saw a "dark hole" and figured this side creek was the one where the canyon was. The first time they went there, they got to the second abseil and figured that their ropes weren't long enough, so turned around and retreated only to return a little later with longer ropes. They completed the canyon and found a way out and Steve hadn't been back since. He did go through last Christmas though with a small group and he agreed to make one final trip to take me through.

Steve & Dug weren't the first ones through, there were some slings already set up when they visited the canyon the first time. Last Christmas he didn't see much evidence of visitation, but this time when we went, he said that the wear was more obvious and there was definitely a footpad forming on the exit route, so, this little-known unpublished canyon is possibly no longer under the radar.



Brad, half way down the waterfall (Photo MS)



Brad on the 2nd abseil

It's a very scrubby walk in (and out) and there are three pitches ranging from 3 to 30m. It's usually only a semi-wet canyon with pools knee deep but after all the rain, the small pool (for me) was waist deep. The anchors that Dug and Steve put in are still there, but we took out the original anchors on the last pitch (which was way dodgy ... they'd used two little pillars of sandstone no bigger than a pencil).

Our rope got stuck on the 3rd (and last) abseil and Steve volunteered to prussic up to see what the issue was, positioning a small log in the crack to eliminate the problem.

Even with the stuck rope, it was only a half day trip, we were back at the cars by 2pm in time for a civilized lunch at Tutti Fruity.

So, another canyon is off my wish list (which is seems to grow each time I go out!). Thanks to Steve, Trish and Brad for joining me on the adventure!



Steve on the 3rd and last abseil

Kites over Kosci – April 14 - 17, 2017

Report by: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Participants: David Stuckey (TL); Marilyn Scott and Cathi Humphrey-Hood



Marilyn and her Aldi kite (photo: Cathi)

This trip marked the reappearance of the old MSS classic. Originally there were six of us scheduled to go, but poor Johan found himself betrayed by work, leaving him unable to make the rendezvous at David's place on Thursday, while Heather and Trish, not liking the look of the weather, decided to head for the same area but do something a little less exposed with the potential of heavy snow.

The weather the previous weekend had, in fact, marked the turning point for winter, with 20-30cm of snow falling over the Kosciuszko area and bitter winds felt all the way up the coast. Had we picked *that* weekend, the trip would have been extremely difficult. But the weather moderated somewhat during the week and as such the prospect of the hike became somewhat less daunting - however I was still determined to stuff my snow tent into a pack already protesting the addition of puffy jackets, extra gas, thermals and anything that offered another layer of insulation. Somehow bits of kite were added in there as well.

Marilyn and I joined David at his place and we headed off to face the Easter traffic out of Sydney. And while it might sound odd that we found ourselves pleasantly surprised by being stuck in really bad traffic, this was because the really bad traffic wasn't as positively awfully bad as we had been expecting.

After Sydney, the drive to Cooma went smoothly and we arrived at the caravan park just past dark but pretty much on schedule (after a quick drive by Rose's restaurant to make a booking). We dropped our gear and returned to the restaurant for an excellent meal.

The van we stayed in was small, but mostly comfortable and surprisingly warm. Next morning we got up (reasonably) early, packed the gear back in the car and set off before breakfast to visit the lookout at Mt Gladstone, with David restraining himself from attempting a new hill-climb record in Marilyn's car (the route is used as a race track). The view from the top was beautiful, with a rising sun bouncing off a sea of white fog to the north east, and the Snowy Mountains forming a dark topographic line to the west and south.

We then headed back into town for breakfast at the Lott Bakery, our last chance to have a good hot meal before heading for the hills. Heather and Trish met us briefly to say hello before they settled down to their own breakfast and we started on our drive to Thredbo.

Some inspired nutcase had scheduled a mountain biking festival at Thredbo that weekend, so there was a little bit of traffic heading in, and a queue at the National Parks gates ... whereupon Marilyn discovered that if she had remembered her pension card, we could have driven in for free.

Thredbo itself was bustling, but we found the car park relatively empty - said hello to Trish and Heather as our paths briefly crossed again - and set off down the road toward the chairlift, happily pretending that our packs weren't as heavy as they actually were.

As we bought tickets for the chairlift, David casually inquired about the attitude of National Parks toward flying drones. He had already done his homework and knew where he could and couldn't fly the Mavic Pro that was surreptitiously nestled in his backpack, but was curious about what they had to say. The girl selling the chairlift tickets shook her head – apparently they were frowned upon.

Kites, of course, were a different story. She did recall that there were a group of people who used to come up every year to fly kites from the summit ...

The chairlift was ferrying large numbers of mountain bike riders up to Crackenback, and it was somewhat entertaining to watch the procedure: wrestle the front wheel of the bike onto the yellow racks hanging off the back and then run round in front of the chair, hopefully in time not to get whacked in the head. Not everyone managed this smoothly, and the chair stopped a number of times as the bikes tried to get away. Interspersed with the bike riders were walkers and families, and a few obviously insane people with backpacks the size and weight of ours.

I had been wondering about how I would manage to casually toss a backpack I could barely lift up to my waist onto the chairlift without making a complete idiot of myself, but somehow it all worked out OK. Marilyn and I took one chair, and David took one a little behind so that he could film some video through the Go-Pro. Mountain bike riders crisscrossed the trails beneath us as we went up.

It was windy in Thredbo itself and even windier heading up the mountain. Frowned upon or not, drone-flying was out of the question because of strong wind, however that didn't seem to deter a couple of boys who were carrying a Phantom along the trail - obviously they hadn't read the memo. From the crowds, it looked like every man, his dog and his drone had turned out to hike to Kosciuszko over Easter. When we paused at Rawson Pass, it looked more like a bus stop on George Street than the last toilet stop before the highest mountain in Australia.

Most of the "highest" mountains in any country have to be climbed with some kind of aid (or even oxygen), but not Kosciuszko. It's a highway, it's paved, and on this day, it was packed with sightseers. We would have an audience for our kites...

There was certainly no shortage of wind! We unpacked the kites and while it became apparent that I'd have to do some repairs on mine, David put up a home-made kite that consisted of a series of colourful tubes. It struggled at first in the gusty wind on the lee side of the mountain, but it was bright and unusual and it drew attention!

"Wherever you go, there has to be some mad Aussie flying a kite."

After wrestling with this one for a while, David next took out his clown kite, which was incredibly stable and simply hung in the air without any assistance whatsoever. He tied off the string to his pack and then unpacked what looked at first like a flat aluminum baking dish, but was in fact a "UFO" kite. This remarkable little contraption spun on a rod and it also tended to just hang, spinning, in the air, looking exactly like a UFO (and certainly NOT a kite).



David on the chairlift (Photo: Cathi)

Meanwhile, as the clown kite continued floating softly in the breeze, Marilyn's Monkey kite was resisting her efforts to get it into the air at all. My kite finally staggered upwards, but the tail began to disintegrate and by the time I reeled it back in the strips were around 2 metres shorter than when I started flying it. So Marilyn and I - like a lot of other people - watched David having fun with the UFO.

We flew the kites for quite a while, until the lengthening day suggested that we pack up and head back down to the Main Range Track. Though the day was getting on, there were still plenty of people heading up! We wanted to get to the camping area before it got too much later and too much colder. The track en route to Mueller's Pass was partly covered in snow - pretty, but slightly annoying.

Coming into Wilkinson Valley, we could see plenty of tents down below. There was a lot of water too, and we decided to camp a bit higher. We spotted a nice flat area in between some boulders, with a little creek next to it. We set up the tents and just as darkness was about to fall, Marilyn and I took our stoves into the lee of the rocks by the creek and began to heat up some water while David fiddled with the Go-Pro and made plans to do some time-lapse star photography. It was already very cold, but when the stars came out, they were magnificent! It was too bitter to stay up and observe however - the lure of the warm sleeping bag was too strong to resist.



David with the UFO kite (Photo: Cathi)

Albina, enjoying the weather and the beautiful view... but not necessarily the dodging of the Jung Hordes.

After trudging over Carruthers peak, we reached the turn-off to the Sentinel and paused for a snack. Because the wind was still blowing at this point, David decided to get out yet another kite - this one a set of ten on one string. This not only looked impressive, it was also remarkably stable, and it drew comments from people passing by. One group who stopped to chat were from Sydney, and we discovered that the leader also had a Mavic Pro drone in his backpack!

Just how cold it got was apparent in the morning, when David found his water bottle almost frozen solid and it took him a long time to get the Trangia alight. The wind had dropped during the night, the sky was clear, and consequently the temperatures had plummeted to well and truly below zero.

But, it was a glorious day! After a warming cup of tea and coffee, and before we packed up the tents, David unleashed the drone and set it free to take some video footage while the winds were light.

Then we set off, back up to the pass to rejoin the Main Range Track in the direction of Carruthers Peak. We met with an incredible amount of oncoming traffic - people who appeared to have started from Charlotte Pass and were power-walking the track to Thredbo. We passed Lake



David's frozen water bottle (photo: M)



The first alpine flight of the drone (photo: M)

We didn't stay too long here, though it was pleasant in the sun, as David was worried about losing his favourite camping spot near Strezlecki Creek. As we walked over the next hill we found a quarantine zone for some sort of weed that National Parks were spraying, and it looked for a moment as if we might not reach the creek at all. The weather had been clear all morning, but now there were patches of a misty cloud rolling in from the west. When we finally arrived at the creek we found that there was only one other tent in the whole area - and of course it was right in the middle of David's intended camping spot. So we looked further upstream instead and found a nice soft patch of grass by the creek that was comfortably flat.

We put the tents up, then went out to have a look at the Sentinel, though we didn't actually walk across to it. The sun came and went in patches. David took out his "mechanical kite" and sent it out of sight and signal contact - we later discovered it had taken some beautiful footage as it waited, listened, and finally returned 'home' as programmed.

Later, as the misty wind closed in toward evening, it brought with it a rich range of colours as the sun sank lower, and we ate dinner to one of the most beautiful views that nature can provide.

Around 11.30pm, the first rustling of tent material indicated a change in the weather, and the wind slowly built as the night went on. The tent stayed put, but the temperature took a nosedive and there was no sun to warm us when we woke and started thinking about cups of tea and coffee, and inconvenient things like breakfast. Tea was brewed in the vestibule, and we all sat inside my tent to enjoy (or not) the flavour of iodine in the water (because I'm paranoid).

At this point, because the weather was pretty bloody horrible, there came a change of plan - finish the trek that day, get to the chairlift and back to the valley, and then have an easier drive back to Sydney the next day. The idea of returning to Cooma to a warm shower and a comfortable bed easily won out over another night on the trail, and we decided to pack the two days walking into one. We wouldn't be cutting the trip short though - just doing all of it more quickly!

And we'd have to be fairly brisk about it - they turned the chairlift off at 4.30pm. As I had not been that way before, both Marilyn and David pointed out that once we started from the Snowy River toward Charlotte Pass and back toward Rawson Pass the track would be relentlessly uphill (they did not exaggerate). We set a



A rainbow on a string (photo: Cathi)

fairly fast pace right from the beginning, with a quick visit to Blue Lake (a little under the weather, with only a hint of potential blue) and then to the Snowy River itself.



More drone flying (photo: Cathi)



Another attempt with the Monkey Kite (photo: Cathi)

The wind was bitter all the way, and there were heaps of people on the track wearing little more than T-shirts, something we found concerning. We waited behind a queue of tourists to get across the stepping stones over the river - with full backpacks, this wasn't as easy as it should have been. Charlotte Pass was reached after an agonisingly steep - but fortunately quite short - walk up a well-paved but busy path. When we got to the top David dropped heavy hints to everyone we met about paying someone to drive one of us back to Thredbo, but it seemed they all had very full cars ...

By the time we reached Seaman's hut, I was ready to keel over. Marilyn, apparently running on Energiser batteries, made a brisk, reviving cup of tea - for which I will be forever grateful. We went on, through Rawson Pass and out the other side - then encountered stairs on the metal track. After walking for so long, this was extremely painful and resulted in some interesting crab-like movements, accompanied by a lot of swearing.

But we made it, with an hour to spare. When we finally got to the chairlift, there was no question about casually tossing backpacks onto anything - both Marilyn and I were utterly frayed. Marilyn said as much to the chair attendant - whereupon the guy promptly grabbed hold of both of our packs at once - an awkward shaped total of around 35kg - and did the casual tossing himself. Surprised, I asked him if he had been working out, and he replied "No, just working here!"

Sitting down in the car was very welcome - getting out of it not so much. We returned to Cooma and David recommended the Bunkhouse Motel, which was a good choice. We struggled to walk straight. After a much-needed "top" shower, we went to the RSL, polished off a large meal and shared two bottles of wine. That eased the aching muscles, but didn't do much for the walking straight part.

The next day was a relaxed drive back to Sydney, with a slight detour off the beaten track (for route research purposes), and a stop at the Meridian Cafe at Marulan for coffee. All in all, this was a great expedition, it would be lovely to see it regularly back on the MSS calendar!



Marilyn doing the balancing act across the Snowy River

Marilyn's blog: <https://www.adventureswithm.com/2017/04/17/kites-over-kosci/>

David's video: <https://vimeo.com/214582346>

Cathi's gallery: <https://emgalleries.smugmug.com/Caves-and-Canyons/Explorations/Kites-over-Kosci-Easter-2017-MSS-Trip/>

Caving – Glenrock – April 22 - 24, 2017

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Brian Reeves (NJVSS – TL), Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Elswyth & Aengus Porter and Marilyn Scott

This was a JVSS trip that was opened up to MSS members. Caving expeditions to Glenrock happen infrequently and access is highly regulated by the land owners. So far, 150+ caves and potential caves have been discovered, most of them vertical. Glenrock is the largest property in the Hunter Valley and is next door to Jamie Packer's property Ellerston. It's beautiful hilly country with a couple of limestone outcrops (where the caves are) that have been explored off and on since the 1980s or 90s. The only speleo club that's allowed on the property now is JVSS and Brian is the only person so far that they're prepared to deal with.



The campsite

It was Cathi's second and my first trip to Glenrock Station. We all drove up in convoy on Friday afternoon arriving at the Station around 4.30, and waited by the locked gate until Brian checked in with the Station Manager and picked up the key. We were expecting two others from Singleton but despite waiting until 10.30am on Saturday morning, they were a no-show, so it was just the three of us caving and the two kids tending the campfire.

At breakfast on Saturday morning, Cathi and I discussed which cave we'd like to do. We settled on GR19 Curtains & Lace because, from the notes, it was the cave with the most decoration, so, we got our gear together and headed off with Brian leading the way.

Brian set up the pitch and Cathi and I abseiled down the 10+m. There were a lot of blow flies buzzing around and we suspected there might be something dead, but the only carcass was quite old - I still didn't like crawling over it!



Cathi negotiating the squeeze/2m down-climb in Curtains & Lace

After the pitch, there's a small horizontal section angling down that you have to negotiate, and then there is a 2m down-climb. Cathi made it through but (not wearing my overalls), I didn't like being caught up on all the rough limestone, I could probably have pushed through but it would have been painful, with no certainty that I could climb back up. Cathi was stopped at the next section, another squeeze and she wasn't comfortable with it. So, we retreated back to the rope and prusiked back up to the top (berating ourselves for not being brave). We radioed the kids back at camp, asked them to put the kettle on and ambled back for lunch.



Cathi back at the top of the climb-down/squeeze debating whether to go back and give it a second go



Formation in Curtains & Lace

After lunch, we decided to do some surface trogging so set off to the next ridge over. We found two holes with potential that we dug out a bit. Both look promising so Brian marked the way points. By then it was getting on and we decided that the campfire was calling.



Brian and Cathi digging out the hole

On Sunday morning, we sat around the campfire drinking tea and debating which (non-vertical) caves to look into – Cathi and I were there for a relaxing weekend! So, we settled on GR84 Corkscrew and GR104 Carcass, both of them involving only down-climbs and really close to camp.

Corkscrew was not all that easy to get into and despite having a rope, neither

Cathy nor I liked the look of the way it corkscrewed beyond our sight. Yes we could get down, but could we get back up if there were no footholds? So, we gave that a miss and headed over to Carcass.



Cathi going into CorcscREW

Carcass turned out to be straight down 3m with a nasty knob at the 2m point which was difficult to get over/under/around, so we dropped down to it, saw that it was pointless trying to strive for the last metre and climbed back out. Brian told us that 2 others had gone down it, I'd like to meet them cause they are obviously contortionists or smaller than Cathi and me! So, we decided to pack up and head back for another cuppa.



Cathi in Carcass

Seems we'll never be solo cavers, and possibly we're not on the "adventurous side" when it comes to caving by ourselves but I think we made some responsible choices.

I packed up on Sunday at lunch time and headed home, Cathi, the kids and Brian stayed until Monday to enjoy the serenity. Thanks Brian for a great weekend away, I really enjoyed the surface trogging and look forward to going with a larger group when someone else can make the decision on whether to press on or retreat!



MSS Skills Training Day – May 28, 2017

Participants: Beth Little (leader); Andre Munck (#1 setup helper); Rod Smith & Marilyn Scott (helpers); Bailey Scott; Ed & Jo Squires; Chris, Helena & Owen Johnstone; Mark, Jarvis & Hugo Hornshaw; Marcia Kaye; David Stuckey; Heather Reid; Trish Neil; and Cathi, Eswyth & Aengus Humphrey-Hood

The turn-out was a record high for this year's Skills Training day. Many thanks to Chris Milne and The Edge Climbing at Castle hill who kindly allowed us use of their venue for our training afternoon.

The main aims of the day were around foundation skills for prusik self-rescue and introduction to Single Rope Technique for caving. Beth and Andre arrived earlier to set up a range of scenarios. The first skills stations included: briefing on basic rope care, knots, prusiks, locking off on a range of abseil devices, before then moving on to the 'dynamic' scenarios.

It was an absolute rope-fest, with a number of static ropes for practicing prusik skills (using the Classic), including changeover to abseil device, and a few participants moving on to knot crossovers, or trying out different descenders.

Time spent waiting for static lines was a perfect opportunity for people to practice any of the major knots. Everyone went away with a list of knots to practice at home at their leisure (there's a great website <http://www.animatedknots.com/> which can be used to refresh).

Once finished with the prusik scenarios, participants were able to get a briefing on: SRT, the different equipment options, tips for tweaking and fitting the rig to perfection, and then have a go with mechanical ascenders (Frog method). All participants had an opportunity to use mechanical ascenders on a static line, specifically learning how to transfer from mechanical ascenders to our descenders – usually learning first-hand the importance of a well fitted rig! Beth had set up a challenging (yet fun!) SRT scenario that tested the main SRT concepts of negotiating traverse, rebelay, diversions (redirections) and a cross to an abseil descent. Dave, Hugo, Cathi and Owen all braved the SRT scenario.

Before long it was time for pizza followed by more scenario work (participant's choice).



Bailey, Marcia, Ed and Trish working on the Classic Prusik knot.



Beth giving last minute instructions before we all started on our rope work.



Andre and Heather on ropes

Many thanks to Andre for being our rope gun and packing up the scenarios, to Helena and Rod for coordinating pizza dinner, and Rod & Marilyn for helping out/support learning at the dynamic scenarios.

We may well have 'set the bar' for future field days. Or maybe it was just the blackboards? There was heaps of feedback from participants ... "brilliant training day, and great opportunity to practice in a safe environment", "I feel much more competent with tying knots"; "lots of fun"; and "fantastic training day; very professional and informative".

We all look forward to our future field days where we can build on what we have learnt.



Heather & Beth (seated), Trish on rope, Mark, Jo and Hugo on Rope





MSS TRIP CALENDAR

June 3 – 4 Caving Cleifden		Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick_smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy/Medium. Details: Surveying, plus recreational caving if there's enough interest
June 17 - 18 Caving Jenolan		Trip Leader: Chris Johnstone Contact: chris_johnstone@hotmail.com Grade: Easy. This will be a "kid-friendly" trip
June 17 - 18 Caving Skills Day		Contact: Brian Evans 0409 443 415 (at least a week before the training weekend) Details: This is the second of their two skills training weekends put on by the NSW Cave Rescue Squad and open to MSS. This one will be held in Bungonia, they will be covering personal vertical skills and rigging.
July 8 & 9 Bushwalking Bungleborie	NEW	Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Medium/hard Off track adventure in the upper reaches of the Bungleborie. 25% of trip is in unknown country, so expect the unexpected. Probable wet feet, numbers limited.
July 17 – 22 and July 23 – 29		Speleo 2017 – 17 th International Congress of Speleology, Sydney 2017. MSS is hosting the pre-conference excursion to Yarrangobilly over July 17 – 22 and most leaders will be involved in the excursion plus attendance at the Conference during the rest of July. Check out the Speleo 2017 website for details of pre- and post-conference field trips. MSS members can book into these field trips (costs involved).
August 3 Dinner & General Meeting	NEW	Time: 6.00pm Where: Burwood (close to train station) What: Get together for dinner before the General Meeting, then we'll catch a cab over to Canada Bay. Restaurant will depend on those who put their hand up (but possibly Chinese). RSVP: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com
		Time: 7.30pm Where: Canada Bay SES Agenda: Usual stuff plus trip planning for upcoming canyoning season! Yaaa!
August 5 Walking Blue Mountains		Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Grade: Easy/medium. Details: Fitness day-walk down to Blue Gum Forest and return
August 19 - 20 Caving Jenolan		Trip Leader: David Stuckey Contact: stuckedl@cba.com.au Grade: Medium/Hard. Details: Mammoth Cave – "Pick Lake" Circuit (not suitable for kids)
August 26 & 27 Bushwalking & Canyoning Newnes Plateau	NEW	Co-ordinator: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Easy DECADENCE WALK – After being washed-out in February, we're giving it another go. This time, we'll be walking a mere ½ hour to get to our venue, a magnificent camp cave just off Sunnyside Ridge (see photo of the cave on the next page). For those who want a little exercise we will be visiting a couple of dry, non-abseil canyons in the area (one possibly unpublished). This will be a "kid-friendly" event.

Sept 23 – 24 Caving Abercrombie	NEW	Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick_smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Details: The main objective of this trip will be to catalogue the documentation and other paraphernalia held by the guides. There will also be the opportunity to cave.
30 Sept – 2 Oct Canyoning Southern Highlands		Trip Leaders: Marilyn Scott, Murray Newman Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Medium/hard Macquarie Rivulet, Belmore Creek and canyon over 3 days, camping at Bendeela campground Kangaroo Valley.
Oct 21 - 22 Bushwalking Northern Wollemi	NEW	Trip Leader: John Gray Contact: JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au Grade: Medium Details: This trip is to check out potential canyons and slots in the Glen Davis area. Camping at the Coorongooba Camp Ground.
Mar or Apr 2018 Caving New Zealand	NEW	Trip Leader: David Stuckey Contact: stuckedl@cba.com.au Grade: Easy/Medium Awesome! But be warned, after caving in NZ, you may never cave in Oz again. Numbers will be limited due to transport/accommodation logistics.
September 2018 Caving Nullarbor		Trip Leader: Cathi Humphrey-Hood Contact: cathi@emeraldimages.com.au Grade: Easy Advance Notice of a Joint trip with NHVSS. Looking for new caves using drones and other techniques.

DECADENCE WALK – 26 & 27 August 2017



The cave at Sunnyside, the venue of our Decadence Walk on 26 & 27 August - as you can see, there's no shortage of room, AND you don't have to carry your tent in! Book in now!



APPENDIX 1 – MEETING MINUTES

MSS 423rd General Meeting - 4 May 2017

Held at Canada Bay SES

Meeting Opened: 7:30pm

Present: Roderick Smith, Beth Little, Marilyn Scott, Chris Johnstone, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, David Stuckey

Apologies: Jim Crockett, John Gray

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence:

None

Committee Members Reports:

President: None

Treasurer: Attached

Equipment Officer: None

Training Officer: The training day scheduled for the 27th May is all coming together. This will be held at The Edge climbing gym at Castle Hill. We will start around 3:00pm and, once the gym closes at 5:00pm, we'll have full use of all the facilities.

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: On the recent trip to Abercrombie I was able to locate another 5 tags, 3 were GPS'd, the other two were in locations that it wasn't possible to get a GPS signal.

Abercrombie documentation – Rod Smith: None

Documentation (constitution) – Chris Johnstone: There are a couple of changes we'll vote on this evening, see General Business. The only thing left is the membership details, which no progress has been made as yet.

Documentation (membership application form) – Chris Johnstone: Chris has created a new membership application form as well as a trip participation form (see Appendix 4). Please have a read and provide feedback.

UIS Yarrangobilly Trip – Cathi Humphrey-Hood/Beth Little: Everything is coming together nicely. There are some issues around NPWS not charging GST, which are currently being worked through. There's been lots of information sent out regarding white-nose syndrome. (Goto this link for the summary by John and Beth if you want all the details

http://www.mssadventure.org.au/members/documents/yagbyfieldtrip_infonote_2017apr.pdf). The MSS Committee agreed to a fixed price travel model to John, Cathi and Beth with the budget for the trip. Beth proposed that MSS throw in \$100.00 to match CSS's \$100.00 for the first night's drinks and nibbles. Votes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Facebook – Helena Johnstone and Marilyn Scott: 8 more people have signed up to the group. It's a slow burn but interaction is increasing. Four more people have signed up to the Facebook group. The number of posts has doubled and the number of views and comments have slowly grown. Two polls were recently conducted with no surprises in the results.

Website look and feel – Marilyn Scott: We're currently having a look at the scope of what we should be changing. The general feeling is to not do a complete overhaul, but look at some of the content and maybe some small changes to the design. These changes will be rolled out progressively rather than all at once

Membership: New members - Garth McLachlan

New Business

Happy Star Wars Day!!

Constitution changes to be voted on:

11c - Remove the words "Duly audited"

15c - Should change from "past month" to "previous financial period"

15e - Remove the item

19b - Remove item

28 - Change "objects" to "objectives"

Votes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Cave surveying course: Marilyn has raised a desire to learn to do cave surveys. She has done some investigation regarding courses and has found Mike Lake advertising to run a course. Marilyn has then discussed this with various members and also discussed with Mike Lake regarding the logistics and potential dates for running a course.

NSWSC: The next NSWSC meeting is on the 13th at Wellington. NSWSC Committee members serve two year terms, and their terms are up. As such we'll be looking for a total of five people to put up their hands to form the committee. If anyone is interested in helping out please contact Rod.

Wombeyan Weed Whackers – see the attached flyer, Appendix 3.

Navigation: GDA94 changing to GDA2020, in 2020. Details at:

<http://www.icsm.gov.au/geodesy/modern.html>

Australia Post: A range of cave related stamps have been issued. Check out the details at:

<https://australiapostcollectables.com.au/stamp-issues/caves>

Trip planning:

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
23-24 Sept	Rod Smith	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	The main objective of this trip will be to catalogue the documentation and other paraphernalia held by the guides. Others will be going caving.
21-22 Oct	John Gray	Bushwalking	Glen Davis	Medium	This trip is to check out potential canyons and slots in the Glen Davis area. Camping at the Coorongooba Camp Ground
March or April 2018	Dave Stuckey	Caving	New Zealand, north island	Easy/ Medium	Awesome! But be warned, after seeing those caves you may never cave in Australia again.

Next Meeting: Canada Bay SES HQ – 3/8/17

Meeting Closed: 9.30pm

Meeting was followed by wine, Tim Tams.





APPENDIX 2 – TREASURER’S REPORT

Financial Update: 2nd May 2017

The MSS Account stands at **\$3786.41**. The bank appears to have stopped paying us our 4 cents in interest each month. The account opened the financial year at \$4657.84 - so far, we have made a loss of **\$871.43**.

List of memberships paid for 2017:

29/11/2016	Subs 2017 - Jim Crockett	\$80.00	
30/11/2016	Subs 2017 - Marilyn Scott	\$80.00	
2/12/2016	Subs 2017 - D Cummins	\$80.00	
5/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Cathi Humphrey-Hood (1P2C)	\$120.00	
5/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Murray Newman & Emma Parnell	\$160.00	
6/12/2016	Subs 2017 - intro mbrshp - Stephen Rowse	\$30.00	
8/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Bob Horn	\$80.00	
13/12/2016	Subs 2017 - intro mbrshp - Jeff Boyd	\$30.00	
20/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Johan Verhagen	\$80.00	
20/12/2016	Subs 2017 - John Oxley	\$80.00	
21/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Chris Johnstone (family)	\$160.00	
23/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Rod Smith	\$80.00	
28/12/2016	Subs 2017 - David Stuckey	\$80.00	
28/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Tim Grimes	\$80.00	
30/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Catherine McLachlan	\$80.00	
9/01/2017	Subs 2017 - John Gray	\$35.82	\$44.18
27/01/2017	Subs 2017 - Beth Little	\$80.00	
30/01/2017	Subs 2017 - Trish Neil	\$80.00	
6/02/2017	Subs 2017 - George Anderson	\$80.00	
6/02/2017	Subs 2017 - Mark Hornshaw (Family)	\$160.00	
6/02/2017	Subs 2017 - Michael Reifenstein	\$80.00	
14/02/2017	Subs 2017 - David & Bailey Scott (1P1C)	\$120.00	
14/02/2017	Subs 2017 - intro mbrshp - Heather Reid	\$30.00	
14/02/2017	Subs 2017 - Paul Richards	\$80.00	
21/02/2017	Subs 2017 - Lynton Goldsmith	\$80.00	
20/03/2017	Subs 2017 - Garth McLachlan	\$80.00	
22/03/2017	Subs 2017 - Rob Clyne	\$100.00	
		TOTAL	\$2,350.00

Other transactions: Incoming:

3/01/2017	Trip Fees - Death Trap Upper Deans Creek (Marilyn)	\$26.00
13/12/2016	Trip Fees - Hartley's Mistake (Rod)	\$25.00
26/12/2016	Trip Fees - Wollangambe Boxing Day	\$16.00
28/12/2016	Trip Fees - Wollangambe Boxing Day (Marilyn)	\$21.00
28/11/2016	Trip Fees - Wollangambe Crater (Hornshaw)	\$15.00
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Beth Little	\$596.25
5/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Dave Stuckey	\$871.25
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Dirk Stoffels	\$871.25
4/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Marj Coggan & John Brush	\$973.75
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Penny Woolford	\$295.00
5/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Peter & Renate Hart	\$973.75
4/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Rosemary Nicholson	\$871.25
4/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Steven March	\$295.00
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Veronica Schuman	\$871.25
13/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Reimbursement for Accom from Congress	\$2,360.00
1/11/2016	Bank interest	\$0.04
8/12/2016	Merch - 3 x socks & 1 x glass - Marilyn	\$40.00
30/12/2016	Merch - Jeff Boyd (2 wine glasses, T-shirt)	\$45.00
28/12/2016	Merch - Tim Grimes (Hoodie)	\$30.00
12/12/2016	50th Anniversary Book - C Tyrrell BMSC	\$15.00
		TOTAL
		\$9,280.79

Outgoing:

22/11/2016	50th Anniversary Book - Printing (reimbursement to Marilyn)	Cheque 156	\$924.00
30/12/2016	ASF - Jim's bloody cheque for way too much	Cheque 157	\$2,040.00
10/02/2017	Web Hosting (reimbursement to Rod Smith)	Cheque 159	\$69.99
31/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Payment to NPWS for Accom	Cheque 158	\$8,950.05
27/02/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Reimbursement for Beth	Cheque 160	\$345.00
9/01/2017	MSS Annual Return paid by John Gray		\$44.18
29/03/2017	Post Office Box Renewal	Cheque 161	\$129.00
		TOTAL	\$12,502.22



APPENDIX 3 – Wombeyan Weed Wackers



WEED WHACKING WEEKEND

Volunteer Weekends in 2017

You're invited to a two-day weekend long work-session treating woody weeds and vines impacting upon the unique values of Wombeyan Karst Conservation Reserve.

All required tools, herbicides, PPE and training will be supplied for the weekend work. Professional bush regenerators will assist with training for identification and control (lower slopes and valley floor).

Accommodation and main meals are provided - bunk-beds in shared dormitory rooms, separate shower blocks and kitchen hall

BBQ dinner on Saturday night (and cave tour)

Enjoyable and informative weekend, very easy terrain.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Appropriate work clothes (as well as warm / rain / spare clothes)
- Long-sleeved shirt, long pants, suitable footwear, sunscreen, broad-brimmed hat
- Sleeping bag or doona and linen
- Your pillow
- Towel, toiletries, your own snacks
- A good torch
- Binoculars if you have them (to see wildlife and caves)
- Terrain is flat or short slopes
- There is NO mobile reception; a public phone (& contact phone number) is available
- There's a snack-bar only.

FURTHER INFORMATION

National Parks & Wildlife Service
www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/whatson/blue-mountains/wombeyan-weed-whackers-volunteer-weeding-at-wombeyan-caves

Office of Environment & Heritage
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkVolunteering.aspx?id=N0352

WHEN REGISTERING

- Please include any dietary requirements vegetarian/vegan as well as food or other allergies
- Indicate if you require a lift (where from), or if you're able to car-pool
- Please include your contact details (email and mobile is fine), and
- Let us know where you heard of the event from.

2017 WEEKEND DATES

Autumn

MAY 20th and 21st

Spring

SEPTEMBER 9th & 10th

Bookings are essential
REGISTER and BOOK to be sent an itinerary, and be sure to confirm your place!



APPENDIX 4: MSS Forms - Revised



Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc.

A MEMBER OF THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

P.O Box 178, THORNLEIGH, N.S.W. 2120

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP FORM



PERSONAL PARTICULARS

(For family memberships please provide a form for each participating family member)

FIRST NAME _____ SURNAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ POSTCODE _____

TELEPHONE (Home) _____ (Business) _____

TELEPHONE (Mobile) _____

EMAIL _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ / _____ / _____ OCCUPATION _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSON _____ PHONE _____

HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY BELONGED TO A SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY? IF SO GIVE DETAILS.

HOW MANY HOURS CAVING IN NON-TOURIST CAVES HAVE YOU COMPLETED? _____

DO YOU OWN A CAR? _____ CONVENTIONAL OR 4WD _____

WOULD YOU BE PREPARED TO ASSIST IN TRANSPORT OF OTHER MEMBERS IF REQUIRED? _____

DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN CAMPING EQUIPMENT? _____

HAVE YOU ANY QUALIFICATIONS OR INTERESTS SUCH AS FIRST AID, SURVEYING, GEOLOGY, PALAEONTOLOGY, ETC. WHICH WOULD PROVE USEFUL TO THE SOCIETY?

HAVE YOU ANY MEDICAL CONDITIONS OF WHICH WE SHOULD BE AWARE? _____

ANY OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS:

PROPOSED BY _____

FEE PAID

(A) \$80 – FULL MEMBER (B) \$30 – PROSPECTIVE MEMBERSHIP

(C) \$160 – TWO ADULT FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (D) \$120 – ONE ADULT FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Fee payable by cash in person to treasurer or cheque posted to address at top of form or by direct deposit to MSS Account Commonwealth Bank BSB 062-021 Account 00901421. Please include surname in description and advise when payment is submitted.

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIETY ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

In voluntary participation in any Metropolitan Speleological Society activity, I am aware that this may expose me to risks that could lead to injury, illness or death or to loss of or damage to my property. Those risks may include but are not limited to slippery and/or un even surfaces, rocks being dislodged, falling at edges of cliffs or drops or elsewhere, risks associated with navigating and crossing creeks, drowning, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, risks associated with underground activities, risks associated with rope activities, exposure to heights, entrapment and suffocation.

To minimise these risks

- I will ensure that when I attend activities they are within my capabilities;
- I will assess my capabilities reasonably based on my training and experience, and represent these capabilities accurately to the trip leader;
- I will carry food, water and equipment and wear clothing and footwear appropriate for these activities;
- I will advise the activity leader if I am taking any medication or have any physical or other limitation that might affect my participation in these activities;
- I will not take any medication that may impair my capabilities;
- I will remain with the rest of the party and accept the instructions of the leader;
- I will note any risk warnings given prior or during the trip;
- I will advise the leader of any illness/injury/misadventure which may/will affect my ability to participate during the trip which requires medical attention; and
- In the event of my death, this waiver will bind my estate.

SIGNATURE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, _____ apply for membership of the Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc. as a Full/Pspective/ Family member and agree if accepted to comply with the constitution and By-Laws of that Society, and subscribe to the Code of Caving Ethics as promulgated by the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

I agree by signing this form I have read and understand the requirements outlined in the section Risks Associated with Society Activity Participation.

I agree by signing this form to indemnify and release the Society and its members or any other person from any damage to property or personal injury sustained by me on or at any official meeting, function or activity of the society.

I agree by signing this form to waive any claim for damages arising from society activities that I may have against the society, the leader or other participants in tort or contract.

I agree by signing this form to waive any claim by my estate.

I authorise any member, servant or agent of the society, in the event of any accident or illness to obtain such urgent medical assistance or treatment for the applicant, including the administration of any anaesthetic or blood transfusion as he or she may consider expedient and for this purpose to engage any first aiders, ambulance officers, doctors, dentists, nursing assistance or hospital accommodation and in this event I agree to pay the society on demand all such doctors', dentists', nurses', ambulance and hospital fees (other than fees and expenses recoverable by the Society under any policy of insurance)

APPLICANT

_____ / _____ / _____

DATE



Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc.

A MEMBER OF THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION



P.O Box 178, THORNLEIGH, N.S.W. 2120

ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION FORM

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

FIRST NAME _____ SURNAME _____

ADDRESS _____ POSTCODE _____

TELEPHONE (Home) _____ (Business) _____

TELEPHONE (Mobile) _____

EMAIL: _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ / _____ / _____ OCCUPATION _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSON _____ PHONE _____

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIETY ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

In voluntary participation in any Metropolitan Speleological Society activity, I am aware that this may expose me to risks that could lead to injury, illness or death or to loss of or damage to my property. Those risks may include but are not limited to slippery and/or un even surfaces, rocks being dislodged, falling at edges of cliffs or drops or elsewhere, risks associated with navigating and crossing creeks, drowning, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, risks associated with underground activities, risks associated with rope activities, exposure to heights, entrapment and suffocation.

To minimise these risks

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- I will assess my capabilities reasonably based on my training and experience, and represent these capabilities accurately to the trip leader;
- I will carry food, water and equipment and wear clothing and footwear appropriate for these activities;
- I will advise the activity leader if I am taking any medication or have any physical or other limitation that might affect my participation in these activities;
- I will not take any medication that may impair my capabilities;
- I will remain with the rest of the party and accept the instructions of the leader;
- I will note any risk warnings given prior or during the trip;
- I will advise the leader of any illness/injury/misadventure which may/will affect my ability to participate during the trip which requires medical attention; and
- In the event of my death, this waiver will bind my estate.

SIGNATURE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I agree by signing this form I have read and understand the requirements outlined in the section Risks Associated with Society Activity Participation.

I agree by signing this form to indemnify and release the Society and its members or any other person from any damage to property or personal injury sustained by me on or at any official meeting, function or activity of the society in tort or contract. .

I agree by signing this form to waive any claim by my estate.

I authorise any member, servant or agent of the society, in the event of any accident or illness to obtain such urgent medical assistance or treatment for the applicant, including the administration of any anaesthetic or blood transfusion as he or she may consider expedient and for this purpose to engage any first aiders, ambulance officers, doctors, dentists, nursing assistance or hospital accommodation and in this event I agree to pay the society on demand all such doctors', dentists', nurses', ambulance and hospital fees (other than fees and expenses recoverable by the Society under any policy of insurance)

_____/_____/_____

PARTICIPANT (or Guardian)

_____/_____/_____

DATE