

# NEWSLETTER MONTHLY

MARCH 2010



# MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover Shot:  
Rod in Twilight Canyon  
Photo by Julie Burton

NEWSLETTER OF THE METROPOLITAN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.  
P.O. Box 178, THORNLEIGH, NSW, 2120

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## Society News

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### MEMBERSHIP

This is a reminder that memberships are due for 2010. We will finalise the cheque for ASF at the April meeting, so please renew before then. The cost for full membership is \$70, non-ASF membership is \$25 and 'Honorary Life Membership (Inactive)' is \$40. Please contact Jim Crockett if you wish to change your membership category.

Payment options include:

Cash – to Jim Crockett

Cheque – made to Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc.

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

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### Trip Reports

#### New Zealand Epic

January 2010

Report and photos by Julie Burton

Participants: Julie Burton and a company of kiwis

*The report for Julie's epic trip to New Zealand didn't arrive in time for inclusion in the February Newsletter – so here it is:*

January - and time for what is becoming my annual trip across the ditch to enjoy the prime mountaineering and canyoneering to be found on the South Island of New Zealand.



First stop was Christchurch where I was met at the airport by my friend Daniel who is one of the key figures in opening up canyoneering as a recreational sport on the South Island. Within a matter of hours I was in my first canyon of the trip. Tui Canyon, a short, easy and pretty canyon in the foothills outside Christchurch. Daniel had put the word out among his mates he was doing a canyon so I arrived to find a gang of 15 kiwis suiting up in the carpark. Of these, only Daniel, Toine and I had canyoned before but they did all have varying degrees of abseiling experience. So I found myself being introduced as an Australian canyoning guide and in charge of a small group as we split into three



teams. A short seven minute walk along a tourist track brought us to a waterfall where we jumped the fence and scrambled down to the first pitch. With Toine's team leading the way rigging pitches, I brought my team through, and Daniel followed with his cleaning the pitches. With light fading , we were out of the canyon and battling the short 3 minute walk back to the cars. Time in this canyon was only 1.5 hours, and a pleasant welcome back to NZ.

<http://imageevent.com/jburton/canyons/tuicanyon150110>

The next day I flew to Queenstown and almost met David and Johan who were flying out. They actually saw my plane land as they were taking off! Then it was on to Wanaka and the following day met up with my guide Gavin with whom I was to spend the next seven days in the Alps. Gavin is no stranger, having guided me up Mt Aspiring on my previous trip. We sorted our gear and drove down to Fox where the weather was on our side, and were in the air 15 minutes later being choppered into Centennial Hut. A quick cup of tea and a snack, and we were off on a warm up climb of Jervois. This was a mix of rock and ice requiring protection on the rock pitches. Once on the summit, we had superb views of nearby Mt Tasman. The weather started to clag in swiftly on our descent and we were abseiling through white murk. Back at the hut we found the chopper had made a few visits in our absence and our hut which sleeps 16 was now accommodating 28! Very cosy and nobody was cold that night with all that body heat warming the room.

An alpine start the next morning and the destination was the Minarets. As Gav and I crunched our way across the glacier, we heard the loud roar of an avalanche off to our left in the dark. A grim reminder of the ever present dangers of mountaineering. We made swift time and were half way up the Minarets as the sky lightened. A few deep crevasses to negotiate, and then we into the really steep climbing. Gav rigged 5 pitches to get us to the summit where the most amazing views awaited us in the weak early morning sunlight. Nearby Mt Cook and Mt Tasman dominated to the south, and spectacular views of the Tasman sea to the west. A quick bite, a few photos and we descended.



Julie with Mt Cook and Mt Tasman in the Background

The next day, Gav and I packed up and set off on the 5km walk over to Pioneer Hut. It was a very hard slog through soft snow with our packs each weighing 25-30 kg with all the gear and food. Hidden crevasses were an ever present hazard, and it was a number of times that suddenly one leg would disappear up to the hip! Then we encountered a monster crevasse a metre and a half wide and bottomless blocking our way. Gav, ever nimble, easily skipped across. No way was I doing this with this damn heavy pack! So the pack went first, and standing knee deep in soft snow, I made the Leap of Faith. Another hard slog across another neve and we were at Pioneer where only 4 climbers were in residence.

Glacier Peak was to be the next summit attempted, but when the alarm went off at zero dark hundred hours, I woke with a heavy cold. We weren't going anywhere. Damn, and it turned out another glorious sunny day. Then, with that afternoons weather broadcast predicting ongoing bad conditions setting in the next day, we made the decision to fly out early the next morning. So we went down to Franz Josef where we spent two days and went ice climbing on the glacier. I discovered Gavin's other talent as a master of karaoke at a local pub, and went to a dinner party held by some local glacier guides where we were served roast venison.

<http://imageevent.com/jburton/rockclimbing/nzjanuary2010>

Back to Wanaka where I bid Gavin a sad farewell, and met up with Daniel who drove down from Christchurch for some canyoning. The fun was not yet over!

So Daniel, Jethro and I headed into Haast Pass to do Stewarts canyon that had previously only seen one full and two partial descents. My introduction to canyoning with nasty hydraulics waiting at the bottom of each waterfall. Big water, lots of pitches, super slippery rocks. This sort of canyoning I'll describe as sporting, not recreational! We only did the bottom portion of this great canyon. I was told that it takes 14 hours plus to do the entire canyon. We were in it for 5.



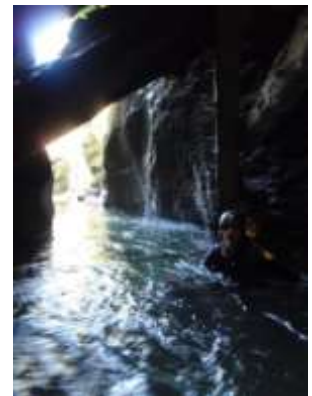
<http://imageevent.com/jburton/canyons/stewartscreek230110>



The next day we were joined by Daniel's girlfriend Pip, Toine, Scott and Jules to tackle Wilson's canyon. This is the most beautiful and adventure filled recreational canyon I've ever done. Big water again, lots of abseils, water jumps, slides, some guided rappels to avoid hydraulics and magnificent narrows. A long and sustained canyon. A bloody awesome day! It ended at a bridge at the Makarora river where the cars were parked.

<http://imageevent.com/jburton/canyons/wilsonscreekcanyon240110>

Next day, Daniel and Pip went back to Christchurch, and Scott got called into work - he's a canyoning guide, so it was just Toine and I for the next canyon on the agenda. We'd heard of an awesome canyon that had only been descended a couple of times. Phoebe Canyon. It was on private property but we secured permission off the farmer. A long slog up a very steep hill in the sun, then some barely controlled dirt slides to find the drop in point. Now this turned out to be no canyon for the faint-hearted. This one had it all! A very steep and narrow vertical canyon with high powered water thundering through it. Did it scare me? Yes! Was it going to stop me? Absolutely not! Toine and I negotiated high powered hydraulics, boils, eddies, pounding water through numerous abseils. This was one serious canyon that tries to keep you. Surely the Canyon Gods reside here. Respect them or else!



<http://imageevent.com/jburton/canyons/phoebecanyon250110>

Having survived Phoebe the previous day, Toine and I were ready to tackle anything! Jethro had to pull out at the last minute and a phone call was made to secure permission to do the jewel in the crown of the local commercial canyoning company. Deep Canyons has sole rights to the



Leaping Burn which is on private property, and own the fixed lines on the vertical ascent, and leave fixed traverse lines in the canyon over the nastier hydraulics. Toine used to guide for this company so we had no problem securing permission. The access is up 250m of fixed handlines up an almost vertical mountainside. Then there's the scrambling. All in the hot sun. We thankfully abseiled into the cool shade and suited up for the epic I'd heard a lot about. And it didn't disappoint! Two huge waterjumps straight up and we were on our way. This canyon was bolted throughout, with the bolts thoughtfully placed to avoid the worse of the hydraulics but not the pounding water. Spectacular! I found it hard to believe that a commercial group would bring clients through here, even if they are selective who can undertake this trip. While not in quite the same league as Phoebe canyon, it wasn't

too far behind. And again, it was an amazing awesome canyon with plenty of chances for things to go pear-shaped quickly. It was at the top of the last 30m abseil where I was clipped into a traverse line while balancing on an inch wide lip that the strap broke off my camera and I helplessly watched it bounce off rock all the way down until I lost sight of it in the waterfall. One thousand photos gone. And on my last day. Toine and I silently rapped to the bottom where he produced a pair of goggles and offered to search the bottom of the pool. And he emerged with camera in hand! And it worked!!! Photos saved and Olympus cameras certainly live up to their claim of being Tough.

<http://imageevent.com/jburton/canyons/leapingburn260110>



Kia Ora

## Twilight Canyon

13th – 14th March 2010

Report by: Rod Smith, photos by Julie Burton

Participants: Rod Smith, Julie Burton



After a long week, and the usual battle with peak hour traffic, I got out of Sydney heading west. With only a stop just outside Lithgow I arrived at Newnes at 10pm, set up the tent, and went to bed.

The next morning the predicted bad weather hadn't arrived, it was a beautiful day with only scattered white fluffy clouds in a brilliant blue sky. Perfect weather for canyoning. Julie showed up to find me halfway through breakfast, halfway through packing up, and halfway through preparing for the day ahead. With only the two of us we should move reasonably quickly, so neither of us were concerned if we didn't get moving immediately. Still, the second half of my tasks didn't take long, and after a short drive to the gate before the ruins, we were on the move by 8:30am.

The other side of the ruins drops into a gully that contains a pass up onto the cliffs to the south, and is the recognised way into Firefly and Looking Glass. We weren't headed for that however, so we continued along the old road following the Wolgan. As we're walking along and talking, Julie suddenly let out a loud shriek and took a long step forward followed by a couple of quick steps. We then both turned to see if the red-bellied black snake she had almost stepped on had reacted in any way. It was still lying there, with its tongue darting in and out being its only movement. Thankfully this allowed for good photographing and videoing.



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We were reaching the point at which we wanted to leave the old road when we heard a chorus of gangangs. Even though we were able to spot a few of them, we went quick enough to get cameras out. Still, we decided that right at the gangangs would be the directions to give to anyone heading for Twilight.

Although we were aiming for a gully running through break in the cliffs, we opted to go up the ridge just before the gully where the vegetation is usually more open. It was steep, but it meant we gained height quickly, and the going wasn't too difficult. Reaching the cliff-line it was only a short traverse to the gully.

It was narrower than I expected, forcing us into the creek bed itself. Thankfully, at least at this height, there's was minimal vegetation, so it didn't slow us down at all. From here the gully rose slowly to the saddle, which seemed further away than we expected.

The other side of the saddle drops a little more quickly, and was noticeably thicker. We opted for the right side of creek and in a very short time saw the main creek coming in from the right. An awkward scramble saw us join the creek in a rather dry section, the one visible puddle being about 10cm wide and 2cm deep. Although a nice creek at this point, it certainly wasn't canyon. It



wasn't long before we reached the junction with the creek coming down from the saddle. The map has another creek coming in on the other side at the same point, but in reality it doesn't, that was still further downstream.

After another small descent I could see the creek ahead past a small pool. But something didn't look right. It didn't take me long to realise that the creek seemed to be rising! Then, as I got closer I noticed the water flowing towards me on the other side of the pool, I was actually looking up the other tributary. So where did the creek go? That's when I saw the crack in the cliff wall heading up from the pool. Aha, the beginning of the canyon!

And what an impressive start! Only a metre wide but reasonably deep with crystal clear water. If it was sustained like this it'd rate as a great canyon.

After a couple of wades and a corner or two I could see more vegetation ahead. Was the canyon already ending? After such a promising start it would be a shame if that's all that was there. Thankfully, although it widened a little and the right wall was no longer completely vertical, the canyon did continue. This section didn't last too long and then the right wall became vertical again.

More crystal clear pools, getting progressively deeper, and plenty of down-climbing. On a number of occasions we would encounter a drop that looked difficult to impossible from where we approached it, but looking around we could find an easier way down.

I'd asked John (Gray) about Twilight a couple of weeks earlier and he couldn't remember much of it. He thought it wasn't much of a canyon and couldn't remember any abseils. Since John hadn't been sure, we opted to take a couple of ropes and our harnesses. Even if there weren't any abseils they could be handy if we got into trouble at any point.

By this point in the canyon we thought John was wrong on one point, it seemed like a great canyon to us. And then we arrived at a drop that looked like John was going to be wrong on the other point. Although not high, only a couple of metres, it was in a narrow section of canyon and there was no way around it. Logs had jammed in the slot at our level and there was a pool below them, but the pool wasn't very deep. It may have been possible to jump, but with a small area and only waist-deep water at best, we agreed it was a little too risky.



Putting on our harnesses we looked for an anchor point. Our options were rather limited. Our best option seemed to be a log that was part of the jam we were trying to pass, sticking out at an angle pointing up but downstream. We hooked the rope under a knot in the log, without which the chance of the rope slipping off the top would have been quite high.

Julie went first and made it look awkward. Crossing the pool at the bottom there was another two-metre drop which Julie abseiled as well. Then it was my turn, and I made it look even harder. Julie had opted for a sideways position which, in hindsight, was probably the better option. I, wanting to be different, opted for the more classical position, facing the anchor. I got my left foot between the rock of the left wall and a log at the end of the jam and then lowered my right foot. Not finding anywhere to put my right foot, I swung in and ended up with the rack pressed on top of my left foot, and my weight hanging on the rack. Not a comfortable position! My only option was to push with my right foot in order to get my rack off my left, but that required something to push against. Searching by feel with my foot finally resulted in a small bulge on the right wall which was good enough to push off. Freeing my left foot I was able to get it below the log jam and then the abseil was easy.

The one good thing about it all was the fact that Julie was further downstream so she couldn't see what was happening and laugh at me!



I descended the second drop to join Julie, but she suggested not pulling the rope down til we'd looked at the next drop. This wasn't much further downstream and there weren't any anchor points in between. This was another drop of about two-metres with a pool at the bottom. We could see the bottom of the pool, which looked deeper than the previous, but Julie wasn't keen on trying the jump. We threw the rope over this drop as well, but were able to just hand-over-hand it.

The pool was deep enough to jump, we could see the bottom because the water was so clear. But I was complaining about the choice, as the saying goes, "it's better to be safe than sorry". The pull-down was easy as the three drops were almost in a straight line.

We left our harnesses on, but didn't encounter any more abseils. There were, however, a couple of jumps and some swims.

The canyon finally opened up about 500 metres before the main cliff-line of the Wolgan Valley. As soon as it opened up we found a nice sunny spot and, although neither of us felt overly hungry, decided that it made a great lunch spot.

The rest of the creek to the cliff-line consisted of a number of small drops over boulders. At the cliff-line we turned left to get onto the ridge. Although I started to think we may have gone out a little high, we found a way through, and were soon making our way down a relatively easy ridge.

Although we knew the old road went further down the Wolgan than where we were, we didn't see it when we reached the bottom of the ridge. Along this section there is a wide flat bit of land on our side of the Wolgan, with the road passing through there somewhere. It was thicker heading towards the river than along the edge of the flat section, so I turned left looking for a

break in the vegetation. Julie started getting a little annoyed that we weren't getting to the road, so we turned right again. A small bit of bush-bashing and we found the road, right near a large, open, grassy area that would make great camping.

We had a reasonably view of the cliffs on the other side, especially a couple of tributaries coming through that may contain canyons, or a way up. We also had about 8 kms of walking in front of us, so we started walking.

It wasn't long before I saw movement off to my left. A goanna had started up a tree. Although I was happy to try and get footage from the road, Julie wanted photos from much closer. Although it slowly continued up the tree, it did start hissing at Julie. She took a couple of photos and then left it alone. The next bit of movement we saw was directly in front of us and only a couple of metres away. Another red-bellied was sunning itself and decided to head for the river. According to Julie, the red acts like a racing stripe, it was moving very quickly! The next one was only about ten metres further on. We slowed a bit after that to improve our chances of seeing other snakes, should they be around.

We found the spot where we'd left the road that morning, we recognised the gangangs. Around the Devils Pinch we came across what looked like a python coiled up in the middle of the road. It certainly wasn't going anywhere fast, but, since we weren't sure it was a python, we gave it a wide berth, but not before more photos and video. The last red-bellied, just as we got to the ruins, was not as quick as the earlier ones, but still disappeared before any more photos or video could be taken.



Back to the cars for a total of eight hours. Well worth it and, if Twilight is anything to go by, I certainly want to do more canyoning in that area.



## Camping at Deep Pass

27th – 28th March 2010

Report by: Cathi Humphrey-Hood, photos by Cathi Humphrey-Hood and Michael Reifenstein

Participants: Bob Horn, Michael Reifenstein, Rod Smith, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Elswyth and Aengus Porter, David and Hannelore Hood, Jim Crockett (briefly) and John Gray (even more briefly!)



David, Bob and Jim at Deep Pass campground. Photo: Cathi

Deep Pass is a lovely spot to camp, but finding it can be a bit tricky. Extensive logging in the State Forest has changed the landscape considerably. I picked up Rod from his place and after overcoming the first challenge of getting camping gear for two adults and two children into a WRX (not easy), we set off for the second challenge, locating the Deep Pass car park.

Turning off at the Zig-Zag railway, we headed past the Bungleboori campground. Harvesting has changed the skyline – where there was once a mass of pine trees, there is now only blue sky. I knew which road I wanted to turn off at, but was a bit hazy after that. I suggested Rod get the map from the glove-box, but he cheerfully told me that we didn't need it, the 'map is in my head'. After turning down the road to Natural Bridge (which was getting a bit rough for the WRX), I suggested Rod get the map from the glove-box and he confirmed that we should have taken a right at the last intersection. We arrived at the Deep Pass car park shortly after to meet David and his daughter Hannelore (4), who had just arrived, and Rod recognised Jim's car.

Blast if the walk down to Deep Pass didn't look way steeper than I remembered. We gazed at the pile of camping stuff in the car with dismay, then set off to cart the first lot of gear down the hill. Aengus (5) wanted to run down the track and had a new set of cuts and bruises by the time he got to the bottom.

Bob and Jim were already there, looking relaxed around the as yet unlit campfire as a scout group meandered in all directions around the campground. Jim had spent the weekend in the area, but alas the lure of Sunday pay was drawing him back to Sydney and he couldn't stay, so he set about dismantling his tent. David, Rod and myself took turns watching the children so we could do another run up to the cars for more gear.

Jim and Bob went for a quick jog up Deep Pass canyon.

When Reif arrived – walking in from the further carpark to the south - we realised we'd been lucky to miss the 'Deep Pass Detour' signs, which were there for the logging road closures but didn't help anyone find the place at all.

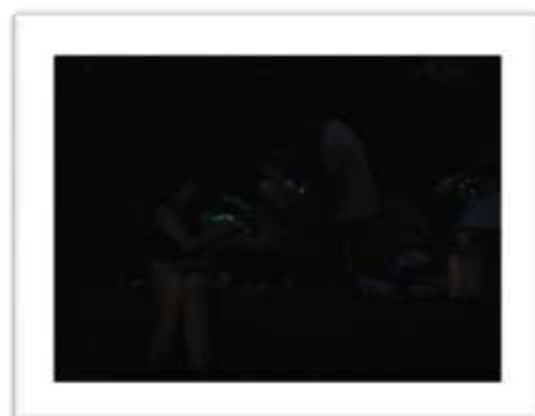
This was the first time I had taken my children camping and they were quite interested in the whole tent-pitching procedure. What they were most interested in, of course – apart from falling in the creek - was setting the fire alight and putting their glow-sticks on “is it dark enough yet mummy?” I had checked for fire restrictions and assured them they could have a campfire. But weather was quite warm and it was a lovely day, so there was no hurry to light it up.

We did however light the candles for Rod's birthday cake, and wish him a happy birthday.



Campfires and lightsticks. Photos: Cathi

The children retreated to the tent to play with their Nintendos and wait for night to fall, which it did soon enough. Jim set off back for civilisation and Reif took his camp spot. After setting up the tents, making dinner, lighting fires, snapping glowsticks, chatting and watching the kids run around in the dark, we eventually retired for the evening.



Now you see them, now you don't! Photos: Reif



2am and the mist rolls in... Photo: Cathi

The next day was bright and sunny and perfect for a quick jaunt into the bush to find the split rock. John Gray arrived to say hello, and suggested also having a look for the aboriginal handprints on the opposite side of the creek to the split rock.



Bob inside the Split Rock. Photo: Reif

The track was fairly well trampled but a bit rough for little children and getting them over some of the drops and slippery bits was a little tricky. Fortunately there were plenty of strong hands to help them out and we soon found the split rock. There are a couple of ways into the cleft, one a walk in further around which we checked out first, but the other requires a bit of a climb. I crossed the creek to have a look for the aboriginal prints while the rest of the group guided the children up the little squeeze and climb, accompanied by much wailing from my daughter Elswyth (7), who found it all just a little bit frightening. We returned to camp and she soon recovered from the fright and the bump on the head.

Soon it was time to think about heading back. Packing up for the families then required two trips up to the car...

Bob and Reif kindly became babysitters while Rod and I took the first load up. We had found it a 20 minute walk without a load and it was a 30 minute walk with a load, partly because the gear was awkward to carry. Storm clouds were gathering and we could hear thunder as we returned, on the way meeting David and Hannelore who were on the final trip up. We rolled up the tent and got the children started on the track up – meanwhile the lone campers, Reif and Bob,



shouldered their mid-weight packs and took off! In fact Elswyth and Aengus did better than I expected, making the cars in only 40 minutes with stops for drinks along the way.

We packed the car a little more efficiently for the return trip and went home via MacDonalds at Lithgow, encountering only a brief shower of rain on the way off the plateau. David and Hannelore took the Bells Line of Road and the thunderstorm followed them, dumping significant amounts of rain and hail on the road and providing an exciting finish.

Thanks to all who came along for a great trip – if we do any more of these in future it might be nice to find a campground where the parking is just a little closer!



Rod and the split rock.  
Photo: Cathi

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## Upcoming Events

Weekend 10th / 11th April – Kayaking

Trip Leader: Bob Horn, (02) 9639 3672, [randphorn@optusnet.com.au](mailto:randphorn@optusnet.com.au)

Contact by: ASAP

What's involved?

Floating on the water, with paddles, down the Myall River from Buladelah to the lakes entrance, then back again the next day. Camping overnight.

You will need:

Your kayak, life jacket, camping gear, and fresh water.

Weekend 24th / 25th / 26th April – Caving at Jenolan

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact by: 21st April

What's involved?

A weekend of fairly easy caving at Wiburds, Hennings and Mammoth caves, with a few challenging bits, staying at Cavers' cottage.

You will need:

Caving gear and food.

## Nullarbor Trip Update

At this stage the plan is quite simple. We all meet up at Ceduna during the afternoon or evening of the 31st of July. We cave for two weeks. Then we go home.

Transport to and from Ceduna: There are a couple of options. Driving has the advantage of then having your own vehicle over there plus you can carry more equipment with you. The disadvantage is it'll take a minimum of two days, but would recommend at least three. It is possible to fly to Ceduna, via Adelaide. You could get your car transported over there by truck or train (although train would probably only stop at Adelaide). Or you could ask someone who's driving to transport your caving gear for you.

Transport on the Nullarbor: I have no idea what the conditions of the roads/tracks will be once we leave the highway, but I think it's safe to assume a 4wd would be a good idea.

What caves are we visiting: At this stage we're still trying to finalise the list, but can confirm some of the caves we'll visit. There are Murrawijinie 1, Murrawijinie 2, Murrawijinie 3, Capstan, Tommy Grahams, Webbs, Witches and Thampanna. There's at least another eight we're still working on and will hopefully be able to update the list further by next month.

Cost: Transport costs will be the biggest cost, and that is dependant on how you get there and fuel prices once there. Most nights we'll be camping, most nights there'll be no other option. Mundrabilla Station charge a \$10/day access fee when visiting any of the caves on their property. This includes camping.

Supplies: Some supplies will be available at the roadhouses along the Nullarbor, but we'll probably stock up at Ceduna. We'll also pass through Eucla, where we should be able to pick up some other things if necessary. I don't know how readily available water will be, but I'm sure it could be purchased at the roadhouses if necessary.

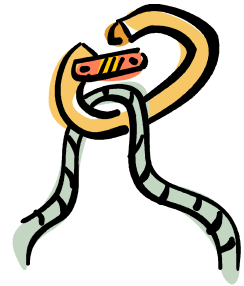
Required skills/knowledge: SRT knowledge is required – please contact Rod Smith ASAP if you need to learn SRT or brush up on your skills.

NEXT MSS MEETING: Thursday evening, APRIL 15<sup>th</sup> at Bob Horn's residence

RVSP Bob (02) 9639 3672, [randphorn@optusnet.com.au](mailto:randphorn@optusnet.com.au)

## Monthly Horrorscope

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



**Fatty:** 6th January - 29th February

Go on a diet, you need to lose weight. Options include the beans diet (only eating beans, just don't fart near an open flame), the chocolate diet (the theory being you'll get so sick of it you won't want to eat anything, has had limited success), and the finger diet (at the end of each meal shove your fingers down your throat).

**Boars Head:** 30th February - 1st April

You will see everything clearly this month. You will pick up on subtle nuances that you wouldn't normally see. You will read between the lines. In fact, you will be so perceptive that you will see through every lie that anyone tells you.

**Pierces Pass:** 2nd April - 27th May

If at first you don't succeed, base-jumping's not for you. This is a month to get everything right, don't make any mistakes. Even a simple little thing like a spelling mistake could result in .....

**Africa:** 20th May - 3rd July

This is a month to travel. Just get on a plane and go somewhere. Make sure it's somewhere you haven't been before, the more exotic the better. You will see new sights, people getting killed in weird and wonderful ways that you never thought possible.

**Skinny:** 4th July - 8th July

This month you will feel a real affinity with nature. Get out and enjoy the great outdoors. Go to wild-life parks. You could even consider a native animal as a pet, such as the woolly wombat, the fat-arse wombat, the drop bear or the yowie.

**Castle Head:** 9th July - 13th August

I could tell you what's going to happen this month, but I wouldn't want to spoil the surprise.

**Mirrball:** 14th August - 13th September

Get out and enjoy life. Go dancing. Dance in the shower. Dance under the stars. Dance on the train. Dance on the bus. Dance in traffic. Dance in elevators. Dance in the movies. Dance in bed. Dance at a funeral. Dance in a hospital operating theatre.

**Malaita Point:** 14th September - 14th October

Oh, who cares. Nothing's going to happen. You're a nobody, get used to it.

**Chockstone:** 14th October - 15th November

Your criminal past is about to catch up with you. But it's not the police you need to worry about. Molesting a penguin is one thing, you had to pick the penguin owning to the head of the Mudgee





3,218m', with many new areas left to explore, and an expedition to Papua New Guinea has discovered more than 15km of new caves.



**Scherr Crystal Cave** has been found... and promptly lost.

The cave, of which 400' has been investigated, was found in a road cutting in West Virginia, USA. Six NSS members went in before the cave was sealed for safety reasons. According to posts on the [cavechat forum](#) a local landowner was also pressuring authorities to close the cave to avoid trespassers.

Photo taken in Scherr Crystal Cave by Bob of [Tristategrotto.net](#)

**Also being closed, though for different reasons, is Dunbar Cave**, in the state of Tennessee, USA. This is a commercial cave where a bat has tested positive to WNS. [Cave hiking tours](#) have been suspended until further notice. It appears that all other state owned caves have already been closed, according to a [local article](#). Elsewhere in the USA, some 290 Missouri caves under the care of the Missouri Department of Conservation are also at risk of closure in spite of there being no evidence at all that cavers spread WNS – some caves have already been closed to permit caving. WNS has now spread into Canada.

**Wookey Hole:** *75 Years of Cave Diving and Exploration*, by Jim Hanwell, Duncan Price and Richard Witcombe will be available from the Cave Diving Group Online shop from April 23th.

The *Guidebook to the geomorphology and geology of Devonian reef complexes of the Canning Basin, Western Australia*. Geol Survey of Western Aust, Record **2009/5**. 72 pp. By P.E. Playford is available as a 39Mb download from <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/7119.aspx> . It concentrates on paleokarst, describes some modern caves and includes lots of maps and photos.

For those who like squeezes, this youtube video of Australian caving called '[Going Under](#)' was posted by goolooiinboin on March 28<sup>th</sup>, comprising a selection of photos by Stephen Babka.

The English language version of [Stalactities, the Hellenic Speleological Society](#) magazine (issue Nov-Dec 2009) is available from [http://www.esse.edu.gr/media/stalaktites/stalaktites08\\_en.pdf](http://www.esse.edu.gr/media/stalaktites/stalaktites08_en.pdf)

### Upcoming:

#### **Floyd Collins in Concert**

City Recital Hall Angel Place and Meredith Shaw Pty Ltd

Monday 3 May 2010, 7:30pm Floyd Collins in Concert City Recital Hall Angel Place

This performance is loosely based on Floyd Collins, a happy go lucky but adventurous gold digging caver from Kentucky who finds himself firmly trapped beneath the earth after a landfall. The combination of 13 performers, and a band of 9 including string quartet, banjo, harmonicas, guitars, electric keyboards and grand piano, makes this work a unique musical and dramatic tour de force.

The [Annual Banff Mountain Movie Festival](#) will be showing in Sydney May 3rd to 8th at the Seymour Centre, with sessions starting at 7pm. Details and tickets from [Paddy Pallin](#).

## MOVIES BEING SCREENED THIS YEAR:

Revolution One

Birdman of the Karakorum


Kranked - Revolve

Rowing the Atlantic

Deep/Shinsetsu

First Ascent: Alone on the Wall

Project Megawoosh



### First Ascent: Alone on the Wall

USA, 2009, 24 minutes  
 Directed and Produced by **Peter Mortimer** and **Nick Rosen**  
[www.senderfilms.com](http://www.senderfilms.com)  
**Classification:** Parental Guidance - coarse language  
**Focus:** Rock Climbing, free solo climbing  
 Photo: Alone on the Wall climbing shot

After gaining international climbing renown for his landmark free-solo of "Moonlight Buttress" (V, 5.12+, 9 pitches) in Zion National Park, Utah, in April 2008, 24-year-old Alex Honnold moves on to his next big challenge: the first free-solo of the "Regular Northwest Face" route (VI, 5.12a, 23 pitches) on Yosemite's Half Dome.

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## ***Trip Calendar***

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Weekend 10th / 11th April  
Kayaking

Kayaking  
 Trip Leader: Bob Horn  
 Contact (02) 9639 3672, [randphorn@optusnet.com.au](mailto:randphorn@optusnet.com.au)  
 By: ASAP  
 Grade: Easy/Medium

Weekend 24 / 25 / 26 April  
 Jenolan  
[Permit for Hennings,](#)  
[Mammoth and Wiburds](#)

Caving  
 Trip Leader: Roderick Smith  
 Contact: 0438 444262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
 By: 21st April  
 Grade: Easy/Medium



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Weekend 8 / 9 May  
Wombeyan

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

Weekend 15 / 16 May  
Tuglow  
Permit obtained

Caving  
Trip Leader: Jim Crockett  
Contact: 0407 284 256, [jim.crockett@reach.com](mailto:jim.crockett@reach.com)  
By: 11th May  
Grade: Medium/Hard

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May  
Oakes Fire Trail

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

Saturday 5th June  
Castle Head

Abseiling  
Trip Leader: Johan Verhagen  
Contact: 02 4758 9811, [johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au](mailto:johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au)  
By: 1st June  
Grade: Medium/Hard

Weekend 12 / 13 / 14 June  
Barrington Tops

Hiking  
Trip Leader: Danielle Lewin  
Contact: 0404 305878, [danielle.lewin1@bigpond.com](mailto:danielle.lewin1@bigpond.com)  
By: 8th June  
Grade: Medium

Saturday 26th June  
Kanangra Walls

Walk to Pages Pinnacle  
Trip leader: Johan Verhagen  
Contact: 02 4758 9811, [johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au](mailto:johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au)  
By: 22<sup>nd</sup> June  
Grade: Easy

Weekend 24th / 25th July  
Perisher Valley

Snow-shoeing / XC skiing  
Trip Leader: David Stuckey  
Contact: 0414 590305, [stuckedl@cba.com.au](mailto:stuckedl@cba.com.au)  
By: 20th June  
Grade: Medium

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31st July – 15th August  
Nullarbor  
At planning stage  
**!Permits Pending**

Caving  
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith  
Contact: 0438 444262, [roderick\\_\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick__smith@hotmail.com)  
**By: End of April (if you plan to be caving)**  
Grade: Medium/Hard  
Joint trip with NHVSS

Week 11 – 19 September  
Yarrangobilly  
**Permits acquired**

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

Weekend 16 / 17 October  
Gooches Crater

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

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