

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



Trip Reports:
Kanangra Walls
Jenolan
Castle Head

Library:
New Additions

August 2009

In this issue

Quote of the Month	3
Announcements	3
Library	3
For Sale	3
Trip Reports	3
Kanangra Walls - 25th - 26th July, 2009	3
Jenolan - 1st - 2nd August, 2009	4
Castle Head - 15th August, 2009	6
Sealed Section	7
Future Trips	8

Cover Shot:
Steph having a ball on Castle Head.
Photo by Julie Burton

For Sale

Quote of the Month

“You'll like this bit, it's really ... good” - Johan personifies enthusiasm in Aladdin cave, Jenolan.

11mm Edelrid Superstatic rope!! Only \$2.80 a metre!! Get it while it's hot!! (but not too hot, the rope wasn't damaged). Up to 800m available on a first come, first serve basis. Contact Graham Boyles: graham_boyles@yahoo.com.au

Trip Reports

Announcements

Kanangra Walls - 25th - 26th July, 2009

This year's annual dinner and Xmas party have joined forces for an MSS celebration extravaganza! To be held at Bachus on the 21st of November. RSVP to Jim Crockett to book your place, before they all fill up!

Nullabor trip, August 2010!! Who wouldn't want to visit the caves of the Nullabor? At this stage all you have to do is let Rod Smith know that you're interested. If there's sufficient numbers then the trip will get organised. Not one to miss!

Participants: Johan Verhagen, Bob Horn, John Marshall, Danielle Lewin, Stephanie Pilcher, Brett Pilcher, Jim Crockett, Beth Little, Rob Clyne, David Stuckey (Going Over 50)

Library

The MSS Library has grown. Besides the normal addition of a variety of newsletters from other speleo clubs, this month also sees the below additions:

- Under Bungonia – Julie & Peter Bauer. The latest in scientific theories and information (from bats to rocks and all in between), the latest subsurface maps, stunning photographs, colour diagrams and more. All are presented in a graphic, informative style for all readers. New maps and descriptions of the 190 known caves make this the ultimate guidebook to the fascinating Bungonia Caves.
- Timor Caves – The Newcastle & Hunter Valley Speleological Society. This publication is a resource for caving enthusiasts and the general public alike with an interest in the caves and karst landscapes. Information concerning the formation of the caves, cave descriptions, maps and the ecology of the Reserve can be found within.



The crew on Cottage Rock
Photo: Jim Crockett

We met in the car park at Kanangra Walls having made a leisurely drive up from Sydney. Steph and Brett were delayed because they accidentally left a pack behind. Danielle was running late. We decided to start walking. Our intention was to stroll out to Cottage Rock for lunch. The route out to the Coal Seam cave is now very well used and navigation presented no problems at all. The weather couldn't be faulted, magnificent blue skies and not a cloud in sight. We made the top of the "Six Tops" track quite easily, then branched off along the ridge to Cottage Rock. Around the back of the rock is a very easy ascent step and soon we were all assembled on top. We were taken with the astounding views on offer. Maps were consulted, routes identified, distant peaks named. Then it was time for lunch, but not before phoning Steph on the mobile, just to let her know where we were.

After some time spent in the gentle winter sun, we retraced our steps back to Kanangra Tops, to commence the second objective of this weekend... a birthday party at the Boyd River Shelter Shed.

John Marshall was already in residence with a large stack of firewood. In fact, several of us brought wood, so there was no need to go scavenging. Tents were set up and a good campfire was commenced. Camp ovens appeared as did nibbles and snacks.

More members joined us as they arrived. Brett appeared none-too-impressed with his lengthy drive for the weekend, having reached Hartley before realising their mistake.

John puffed around with his video camera, Rob Clyne was called into an advisory capacity. Johan stocked the mantle with Mead, Rod was doing mysterious things behind his car. I decided to get my tent organised for easy entry in the dark. On my return to the shed, there appeared some flora which was definitely out of character. Several inflatable cactus plants had inextricably sprouted, of their own accord, from the very earth itself. It gave the entrance to the shelter shed a 'Mexican' feel.



Some of the Cacti
Photo: Jim Crockett

We went on, into the night, feasting long and memorably. Stories exchanged, plans made, oaths made and broken plus lots and lots of laughs. Eventually, the formal part of the proceedings couldn't be avoided any further. There was an exchange of gifts and some speeches, followed by a rather unusual cake. You'd best ask someone who was there.

It was all very happy and civilised.

Sunday morning, we rose when we felt like it. A lovely breakfast was enjoyed and we started to pack up. The trip home was broken at Wentworth Falls, where Johan and I indulged in some lunch at the Conservation Hut, still my favourite eating spot in the mountains.

Thank you to all those members who contributed to my 50th birthday gift. What shall I purchase? Something in titanium? The latest design climbing pants? A gadget? Decisions, decisions.

We will be returning to Cottage Rock, we're already planning a decadence walk, camping in the Coal Seam Cave and summiting Cottage Rock for twilight drinks! It'll be a beautie!

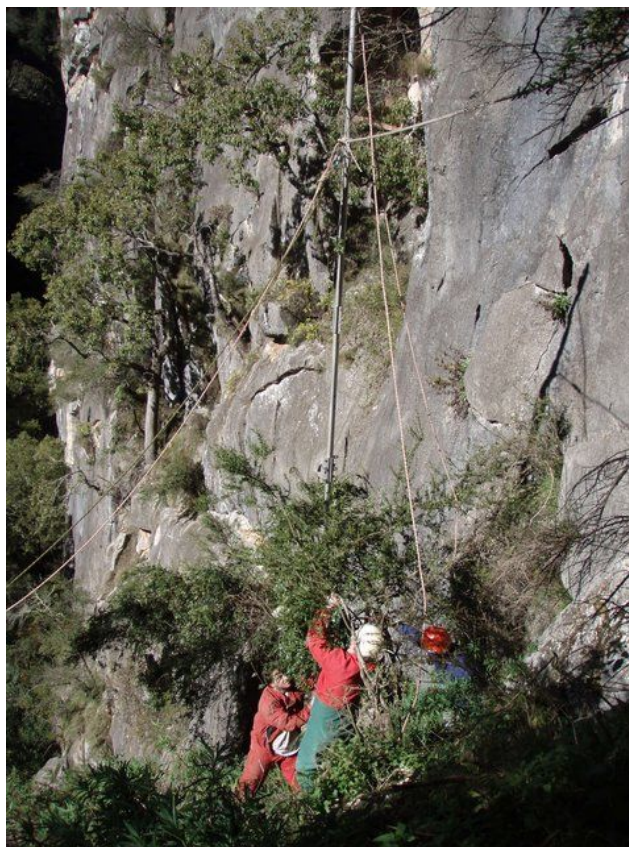
David Stuckey

Jenolan - 1st - 2nd August, 2009

Cavers: Rob Clyne, David Stuckey, Johan Verhagen, Danielle Lewis, Rod Smith, Stephanie Piltcher and Julie Burton

Chief Slow Cooker: Brett Pitcher

Caves: False Frenchmen's (Almost), Aladdin & Mammoth (Naked Lady Circuit)



Getting the scaling pole into place
Photo: Julie Burton

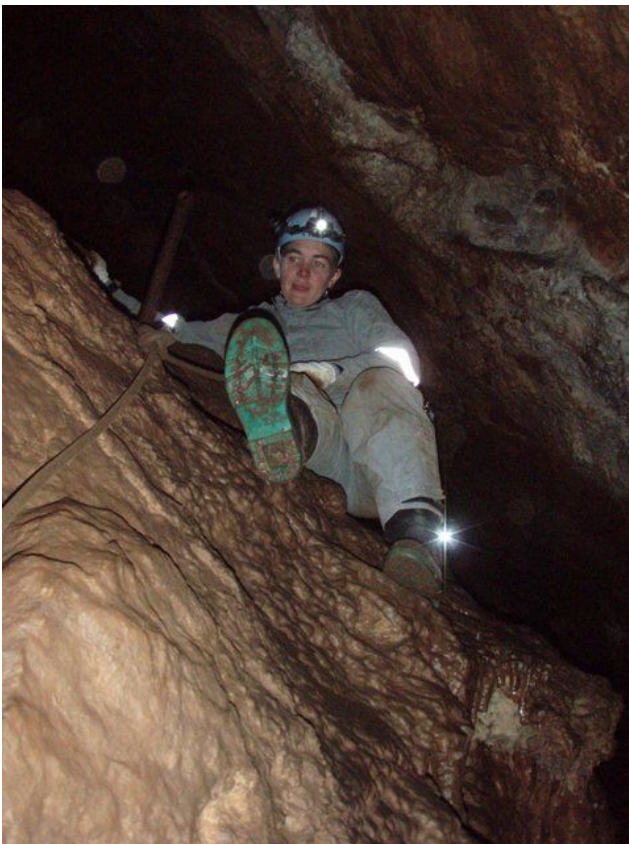
Our second trip for the year at Jenolan. For the never ending quest to do something different there we all were (except Brett who was preparing the slow cooker feast for the upcoming evening), on the side of a hill, surrounded by stinging nettles and with the entrance to False Frenchmen's above us. The cave was taunting us - try and come in if you can. No worries - Beth did it ages ago with the aid of our scaling poles (but only just!!).

How time fades your memory. I thought 6 poles should do the trick.

Those readers who are asking - what the hell are scaling poles - they are sections of scaff tube @1200mm long which you can bolt together to make a long pole. The theory goes - hang a ladder off the end - stick the pole up to where you want to go (eg cave entrance) and climb up ladder (preferably sending the smallest and lightest person up first.)

Trouble was - try and get a @7m pole up in the air, navigate it towards to cave, find a spot where it won't fall down and rig guy ropes to help it stay put.

The cave laughed at us - the pole was too short and way too dodgy to try and climb. The climbers Joh and Dave looked at the entry "one move wonder" but decided that it would be too "interesting" to attempt.



Danielle making her way into the depths of Aladdin Cave
Photo: Julie Burton

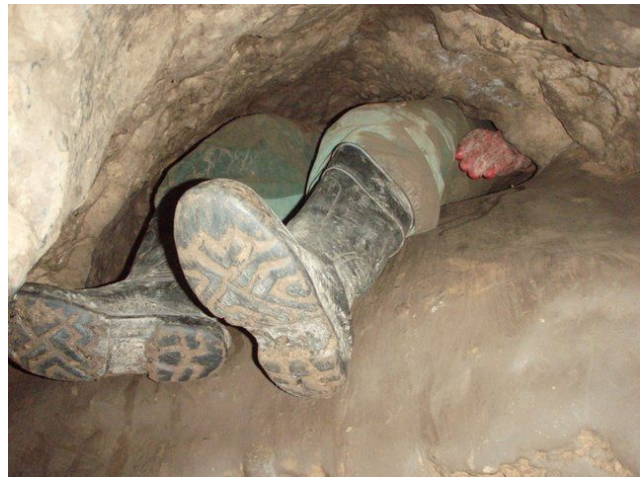
So not to call the day a total waste of time - we headed to Aladdin to check out the pretties and least get some time underground for the day.

After Aladdin we meet Jenolan Guides Ted & Alison who were returning from Mammoth with a commercial trip and swapped keys for the next day.

That night Brett and Steph put on a beautiful slow cooker feast for everyone (the bet on giving up the death sticks repaid). Thanks guys.

Full bellies - we drifted off to sleep with various sonnet's of snoring filling the night.

Sunday - Brett, Steph and Johan had to depart with Johan kindly cleaning the hut for us whilst we were underground.



Rob in the Laundry Chute, not (quite) as bad as it looks
Photo: Julie Burton

Naked lady, hell hole loop in Mammoth was the objective. This is a great sporty circuit with crawling, bridging, climbing, squeezing and of course the famous laundry shoot into the "Hell Hole". Guaranteed to give you a wedgy.

Great time had by all. We had lunch at the top of Skull and Crossbones and then exited to be greeted by sunlight streaming into the entrance chamber.

Another Jenolan Trip complete

Cheers Rob

Castle Head - 15th August, 2009

Attending: Steph, Julie, Jim, Warwick, David, Johan (TL)



Johan and David rigging one of the Castle Head pitches
Photo: Julie Burton

It was 8.00am at the Golden Stairs car park and it was definitely beanie and fibrepile weather – a clear blue winter sky with a slight wintery breeze.



Rope!
Photo: Julie Burton

After an enjoyable stroll to the end of Castle Head, we reached the top of the first pitch – just a fantastic view looking down the ridge line, leading to the Ruined Castle and beyond to Mt Solitary. Julie, the trip photographer snapped a few shots looking westwards toward Narroneck, eastwards over the Kings Tableland and south towards Kanangra country.

I descended the first pitch after significant untangling of the twin ropes and within minutes, everyone was down, ready for pitch 2. Just a nice morning, descending the rocky ridge each abseil pitch quite different to the last.



Jim drops in
Photo: Julie Burton

Whilst the abseils were a lot of fun, it was worth a little time to observe the actual Castle Head ridgeline - a very interesting environment of huge, rocky, sandstone blocks eroded from the main escarpment providing the perfect environment for Grass Trees to grow in abundance. The foliage of one particularly large Grass Tree was perfectly symmetrical, having a diameter of one and a half metres and looking like a giant pom-pom blowing in the breeze.

Did anyone see the incredibly tall, yet slender eucalypt growing in the shade of the escarpment? That particular tree had a bare, smooth white slender trunk, devoid of lower branches, but with a dense and small crown of leaves – just catching enough sunlight.

We finished the last pitch at around 11.00am and wandered toward the Ruined Castle for lunch. By now, the winter wind had stopped and beanies and fibrepile jackets were off – it was a nicely warm, winter day.

During lunch, we fed the local currawongs and spent a little time exploring the sandstone outcrops of the Ruined Castle. Back in 1982, I photographed David doing a bouldering move on one of the high outcrops and with a little encouragement, 27 years later, David repeated the same climbing position on the same outcrop, with Jim being the photographer this time. Look for the ‘before/after’ shot in a future publication.



Warwick and Johan
Photo: Julie Burton

A nice walk back along the main track brought us to the bottom of the Golden Stairs and 16 minutes later, we were at the top. We finished the day with a very civilised coffee in Katoomba. Fun day.

Johan

Sealed Section



Dave's birthday cake
Photo: Jim Crockett

Future Trips

Welcome to the new look future trips section. Anyone with artistic abilities are welcome to submit their own icons for any of the categories here, and/or any other categories. If we use your icon then you'll have to be prepared to accept the praise and admiration from your fellow club members. Send your icons, or any other feedback, to roderick_smith@hotmail.com.

Legend:

Activity



Caving



Canyoning



Diving



Hiking



Abseiling



Cycling



Horse Riding



Kayaking



Climbing



Skiing

Grade



Easy



Easy/Medium



Medium



Medium/Hard



Hard



Extreme

Accommodation



Camping



Cottage
















Extras



















Kites






Camp Ovens

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Big Hole and Marble Arch	5 th - 6 th Sep			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			1 st Sep	
Other Info:								
Yarrangobilly	7 th - 13 th Sep			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com		We'll be staying in Caves House, which will be an additional cost	14 th Aug	
Other Info:								
Tiger Snake and Penrose Gully	26 th Sep			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			23 rd Sep	
Other Info:								
Mirraball	27 th Sep			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			23 rd Sep	
Other Info:								
Mt Solitary	10 th - 11 th Oct			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			7 th Oct	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Starlight	17 th Oct			Julie Burton 0447 604 786 julbur@tpg.com.au			14 th Oct	
Other Info:								
Nightmare	18 th Oct			Julie Burton 0447 604 786 julbur@tpg.com.au			14 th Oct	
Other Info:								
Bungonia	7 th - 8 th Nov			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			3 rd Nov	
Other Info: This will also be an instructional trip for people that want to practice and learn more about vertical caving, in a real cave environment!								
Grand Canyon	21 st Nov			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			18 th Nov	
Other Info:								
Annual Dinner/XMas Party	21 st Nov		Delicious	Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com		The meal will cost around \$35 plus drinks	7 th Nov	
Other Info: This will be held at Bachus in Katoomba.								
Fortress	22 nd Nov			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			18 th Nov	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Cottage Rock/Coal Seam Cave – Decadence Walk	5 th - 6 th Dec			Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 stuckedl@cba.com.au			2 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Wollangambe	26 th Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Claustral	27 th Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Better Offer	28 th Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Freshwater	9 th Jan			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			5 th Jan	
Other Info:								
Kites Over Kosci	23 rd - 26 th Jan			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			19 th Jan	
Other Info: You will need to take the 25 th off since it's not a public holiday								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Nullabor	Aug 2010			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			At this stage I just need expressions of interest	
Other Info:								