

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY

OCTOBER 2010



MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover Shot:
Ilford Cave entrance
Photo by Garry K. Smith (NHVSS)

Society News

MEETING REPORT: 14TH
OCTOBER 2010

AGM

Trips added

Minutes

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

The fourth MSS meeting was held at Beth Little's place in Oakville on the 14th October. Two members who were unable to attend made a significant contribution to the meeting by taking the time to email ideas and a series of points for discussion.

The AGM has been scheduled for Saturday 11th December 2010, to be hosted by Rod Smith at Drummoyne, starting at 2pm. This will be followed by the MSS christmas party. Voting for the 2011 committee will be held at the AGM so we encourage all members to attend, or nominate a proxy if unable to make it. *The November Newsletter will not be competed until after the AGM.*

A number of extra trips have been added for this year, please have a look at the Calendar in this newsletter.

Minutes of the meeting are attached in Appendix 1.

Trip Reports

Ilford Cave and the Capertee Valley

16th and 17th October 2010

Report by: Rod Smith, Photos by Garry K. Smith

Participants: Rod Smith (MSS & NHVSS), Geoff McDonnell (NHVSS & SSS), Jodie Rutledge (NHVSS), Michael Rutledge (NHVSS), Garry Smith (NHVSS), Ray Etherton (BMSC), Natalie Etherton (BMSC), Mike Lake (SUSS), Jill Rowling (SUSS), Phillip Maynard (SUSS), Katrina Badiola (SUSS), Casper Dan (SUSS)

The weekend began with the usual drive out of Sydney, always a good way to start! The weather was unpleasant, raining a lot and very strong winds. I wasn't sure how that would affect the weekend, but it was still going ahead.

I was the first guest to arrive at Ray and Nat's place in Rylstone. We chatted while waiting for the rest of the NHVSS members to arrive. More talking after they arrived, eventually going to bed around midnight.

We awoke to miserable weather, including snow! When the SUSS group arrived for coffee just after 8:30am they couldn't believe it had snow. They had stayed at Mike and Jill's place in the valley, lower than Rylstone, and thus hadn't received any snow. They were convinced when the next flurry blew across.

We departed Ray and Nat's place at 9:30 and drove to Ilford. Here we entered a property owned by Mitchell Clappham, who had generously allowed us to have a look at the cave on his property. After quickly dropping by the house to say hello and thank you we drove another few hundred metres before getting out to walk. Try as we might, we couldn't beat the next snow flurry to the cave, but no-one seemed overly concerned.



The cave is bigger than I expected, but not huge. You could probably see the whole cave in 15 minutes, or so we thought. We were taking our time, taking photos, checking out bats, admiring the limited decoration and wondering about the mineral composition. At one point I decided to stick my head in a hole which seemed to be heading back towards the entry. After crawling in about 5 metres I realised it wouldn't connect through to the entrance chamber. I could turn around, and in the process check out a small crack on one side. It was doubtful if I could fit in the crack, but most of the others probably could. The interesting thing was the fact I could see it opening up on the other side!

Since I was on my own at that point I decided not to push it, and instead made a retreat to find some others. I soon found Ray and Garry. Ray had a look and decided that it would take him a lot of effort and left it for Garry. Garry went through like a rat up a drain pipe and, since there were now others around, I gave it a go. There was only a matter of millimetres, or kilograms, in it, but I couldn't get through. Meanwhile Garry kept finding more passage and convinced Ray to get the others.

Ray returned with Kat, the rest of the group doing some surface trogging. Kat followed Garry through the crack while Ray and I waited. At least another ten minutes passed with Garry still

exploring the new passages. Ray then decided to give it another go at getting through and I heading for the entrance to tell the others about what we'd found.

No-one else seemed inclined to crawl back into the cave, so we waited at the entrance admiring the bottles of alcohol stashed under the rockpile. The three explorers returned with Garry saying he'd explored it reasonably well, but there was still a couple of possible leads. What a great start to our trip!



From here we headed back to Rylstone, with a couple of stop offs on the way. The first was to see a couple of caves that were visible from the road but the farmer wasn't keen to have cavers looking at them. The second stop off was to look at an interesting overhang right beside the road. With the recent rain and snow there was a small waterfall running.

After lunch we headed for Capertee National Park. This was not part of the original plan, but had to be introduced since we couldn't get to Coco Creek. The new owner, although quite happy to have cavers look at the cave, was in Perth for the weekend. So we'd looked for other options and found this.

Capertee National Park is a new national park, only declared earlier this year. It was a property called Port Macquarie, the original owner being very close to his brother who was one of the people who founded the town Port Macquarie. The new national park includes a karst area which had previously been very difficult for cavers to get permission to visit.



Being a new area which few people had visited we were keen to have a look around. I'd received a map of the karst area from Dave Noble in National Parks and which had some possible cave entrances marked, mostly on the north side.

We spent Saturday afternoon on the north side, finding most of

the possible entrances marked, plus one new one. A lot of the limestone was rather poor quality, the only good stuff seemed to be at river level. Not a lot of potential there. We headed to Rylstone happy with the afternoon's explore, but not having found anything significant.

All twelve people went back to Ray and Nat's place for a social evening with pizza for dinner. A great way to finish the day.



The next morning we got our gear together and went to Mike and Jill's place to meet the SUSS group. Mike and Jill gave us a tour of their farm where they are planning to farm alpacas for their wool. They already have twelve and are looking to get to over one hundred in total.

After a tour of the shearing sheds we headed back to Capertee National Park, Mike and Jill staying behind as they had work to do.

This time we went south, and it wasn't long before we found a good outcropping of limestone to investigate. The limestone in the southern section was better quality to a higher level, so we spent a lot of time walking around. Unfortunately we hadn't found any entrances by the time we stopped for lunch.

After lunch we drove up to a saddle and continued our trogging. Another hour passed with no entrances found. Getting later in the afternoon, and with a long drive in front of them, the NHVSS members headed home. Ray and Nat also left as they'd brought their two youngest sons and they had decided they'd had enough. That left Phil, Casper, Kat and I.

The map indicated there was a road continuing south which would come out near Capertee. We decided to see if it was driveable. The first thing we noticed was how far the limestone continued. There's easily enough to keep us busy for another weekend just walking the surface, even longer if we find a cave or two.

The road climbed up to the back of Mt Airly then contoured around it to the west. It's rough, but my RAV4 and Phil's Forester were up to it. Eventually we found a gate. The gate wasn't locked, but it didn't look like anyone had passed that way in a long time and we'd be entering private property. Reluctantly we turned around and went back.

With so much more to explore we're already trying to line up a weekend to go back. It may happen for the weekend of the 18th and 19th of December. Keep the weekend free if you're interested in some exploring.



Whale Beach and the Sea Caves

23rd October 2010

Report and Photos by Jim Crockett

Participants: Jim Crockett, among others

Because there was not going to be a Cavers dinner this year Joe Sydney from HCG had organised a combined club trip to see the Sea caves near Whale and Avalon beaches in Sydney. Originally it was not looking like I was going to be able to make it because this was the same day as a meeting to start organising the 2013 Bi-annual Speleo conference but fortunately we changed the meeting to the evening to enable Jodie and myself to go to both activities.

The sea caves trip was very tide dependent and so we all had to meet at 8.30am at Whale beach carpark so that we could organise ourselves to approach the sea caves known as the "Ovens" at low tide.

At the initial briefing Joe advised of a change in plan as our original intended approach was from the cliffs above the rock platform but his scouting had discovered that the local council did not want people accessing the platform from the headland and nor did the local residents approve of it either when they approached him asking him of his intentions.



So this meant that we should not require ropework and we would just stroll around the headland via the rock platforms. But we still needed wetsuits and other buoyant devices including a small inflatable raft which someone had bought. The trip had attracted a lot of cavers 21 in total from 7 different clubs including 2 that were going to approach via sea kayak.

So off we set along the beach to the rock platform walk and it was a relatively easy stroll until we got to the

“ Bridge of Kazad-dum” which presented us with a rather difficult challenge of trying cross a 4m section of air with a swarming sea below. A couple of people were able to complete a delicate rockclimb and get across to the other side but somehow we needed to get the rest of the group across in relative safety. So a small tyrolean traverse was set up with what ropes and gear we did bring along after most of our gear was still back in the car. We had a couple tapes to make up a shared harness and so about half of the group made it across the drop. There were a few scary moments when the swell flooded the rock platforms and the worst one happened when the youngest in the party (Julie who was about 11) was just getting set on the traverse and got a terrible fright that even scared Joe. That was a bit too scary for Julie and she did not continue.



On the other side of the drop it was only a short scramble to the first of the “Ovens”. An impressive looking entrance that was fortunately sheltered from the waves by boulders. The cave went in about 120m in total and was about 5m wide and possibly about 60m at the highest point. It was water filled and it was also possible to scramble along ledges on both sides for about 100m.



As my wetsuit was still on the other side of the tyrolean I was only able to scramble along the ledges.

At this stage we were not quite sure if this was the biggest of the “Ovens” caves and so some people continued along the rock platform out of sight to see what might be there.

I was getting a bit worried about time as I had to get back to attend the meeting later and my parking ticket at the beach was running out as it refused to take my credit card. So I went back across the drop on the tyrolean. While we there, there were a group of boys coming down the cliffclines via the fisherman's ladder ?, some steps had been cut into the rock and they said they had come down via a rock scramble from above. But we are not exactly sure where they started their descent.

So that was the end of the adventure for me and I have since found out that the group found the 2nd bigger “Oven” but because of the immense size they were not able to launch any inflatable for a better look as they would have been bashed against rocks. They later also visited the easy St Michaels cave nearby from Nth Avalon beach.

I would be willing to lead a club trip to these exciting sea caves. Joe indicated he was going to come back and place a few bolts to help with the rigging for future trips.

A top trip enjoyed by all who attended.



Upcoming Events

WEEKEND 6th– 7th NOVEMBER – KAYAKING ON MYALL LAKES

Trip Leader: Bob Horn

Contact by: **ASAP**

What's involved?

Kayaking to camping spot, return next day.

You will need: Kayak, camping gear, food and water, hat



WEEKEND 27th– 28th NOVEMBER – CANYONING YARRAMUN

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact by: 22th November 2010

What's involved?

Two days of exploratory canyoning, definitely swimming, possibly abseiling, camping.

You will need: Camping gear, wetsuit, canyoning gear, and your sense of adventure.

Coming up on 11th December:

MSS AGM

The most action-packed day on the MSS Calendar! Help elect the committee and plan trips for the next year. Consume beverages and comestibles. Be merry!



Coming up on 11th December:

MSS XMAS Party

Recover from the AGM! Catch-up with old friends, or meet new ones. Celebrate the year that was and dream of the dark damp holes of the future...!

MEMBERS TRADING POST:



Wanted - 4 drawer filing cabinet. To be used to store and help organise part of the MSS library. Needs to be in working condition. Any colour and finish. Please contact Rod if you are able to assist.

Monthly Horrorskope

Mammoth cave - January 16th - February 14th

Now I'm gonna let you finish, but last month's Horrorskope was the best of all time. Of all time!!

Jewel cave - February 15th - March 16th

Perhaps we need not more people looking round more corners, but the same people looking round more corners more thoroughly to avoid the small things detracting from the big things the prime minister is not getting right.



Optymistychna cave - March 17th - April 15th

I know what I believe. I will continue to articulate what I believe and what I believe – I believe what I believe is right.

Wind cave - April 16th - May 17th

Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns — the ones we don't know we don't know.

Lechuguilla cave - May 18th - June 16th

When it comes to words I have a uniqueness that I find almost impossible in terms of art - and it's my words that actually make my art quite unique.

Hoelloch - June 17th - July 16th

Maybe we are in the wrong sign. Maybe Venus is in the wrong juxtaposition with something else. I don't know.

Fisher ridge cave system - July 17th - August 14th

Women might be able to fake orgasms. But men can fake a whole relationship.

Sistema ox bel ha - August 15th - September 17th

Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life.

Sistema sac actun - September 18th - October 15th

It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air & water that are doing it.

The clearwater system - October 16th - November 16th

People say, well, do you ever hear any other voices other than, like, a few people? Of course I do.

Siebenhengste-hohgant hoehlensystem - November 17th - December 15th

This thaw -- took a while to thaw, it's going to take a while to unthaw.

Schoenbergssystem - December 16th - January 15th

I can press when there needs to be pressed; I can hold hands when there needs to be -- hold hands.

News from the Underground

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

October 2010

Sad news to begin with – rescuers searching for 45 year-old Eric Establie, the cave diver trapped in Dragonnière de Gaud near Labastide de Virac, finally located his body on October 11, about 900m from the entrance and at a depth of -70m. Examination of his dive computer showed he had explored the cave to a distance of 1040m, and died (from either drowning or asphyxiation) while trying to find his way around the collapsed tunnel. He had been alive underwater for five hours and twenty minutes, and so had perished before rescuers began their search. Information from: LePoint.fr



Rescuers at the entrance of Dragonniere on 11th October, Photo: AFP

The terrible end to this search has overshadowed the efforts of a group of cave divers in Spain, who explored 3650m of new passage in Pozo Azul, pushing the known length of the cave to 9km of underwater cave – surpassing Wakulla Spring in the USA. Info from caverinfo.com (or, if your Spanish is good, you can read the detailed report [here](#)).

There has been sad news in the mountains too – on October 3rd, Italian mountaineer Walter Nones has died on Cho Oyu's southwest face. He was camping above his team, preparing to photograph the next section of the route, and either fell or was blown from the mountain. Walter was an experienced climber with an oxygen-free ascent of K2 to his credit. In 2008 he was rescued from Nanga Parbat after his partner Karl Unterkircher was killed. Story from The Alpinist.



As this accident unfolded, the Japanese Professional Guide Association were continuing with their search for three Japanese guides and a Nepalese Sherpa missing since being struck by an avalanche on Dhaulagiri on September 28. Report from [The Alpinist](#).

The beautiful Dhaulagiri, 8167m, photo by Dave Hill, Source: [Earth's 8,000 Meter Peaks](#).

The end of September saw the abandonment of a week long search for three trekkers on the Kalindi Khal route in West Bengal. The trekkers had been part of a group, including a guide and four porters, when the expedition had been called off due to bad weather and illness among some

people in the group. The three trekkers decided to continue the walk on what is considered one of the hardest treks in the district, and which has claimed 11 lives in the past 6 years. Source: [Newkerala.com](http://www.newkerala.com).

An interesting article in [Wired Science](http://www.wiredscience.com) discusses the issues involved with closing caves in the USA against the onslaught of White Nose Syndrome (WNS). Bat mortality in certain species has been in excess of 90% in many caves. In eastern and southern USA, the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains, the US Forest Service has closed *all* caves – whether they have bats or not – while the US Fish and Wildlife Service has closed all caves in national wildlife refuges. The Bureau of Land Management has been closing caves on non-forested public land one at a time. Moves to declare the fungus *Geomyces Destructans* an invasive species would give States the power to close *all* caves, whether public or privately owned. Available evidence shows cavers are not vectors in the transmission of the disease, and that closing the caves may do more harm than good.

If you find yourself chafing for a spot of high altitude climbing in Pakistan, you can now see how much you will be up for, as the Pakistan Ministry of Tourism has released the mountain royalty fees for 2011. As reported by [Explorer'sWeb](http://www.explorersweb.com), peaks up to 6,500m incur no royalty fees, the others are as follows in US dollars:

6501 – 7000m \$900 for team of 7, \$120 for each additional member
7001 – 7500m \$1500 for team of 7, \$120 for each additional member
7501 – 8000m \$2400 for team of 7, \$120 for each additional member
>8000m - \$5400 for team of 7, \$900 for each additional member, and
K2 - \$7200 for team of 7, \$1200 for each additional member



These fees show a small increase on those levied last year.

Routes on K2, from K2, Wikipedia,
Photo updated by user Iain99

A German tourist has been found dead in Kakadu National Park near the popular Nourlangie Rock. Missing for two days, his body was found by a search party away from the main path and three kilometres from the carpark. He was not believed to have been carrying water. Report from [ABC News](http://www.abcnews.com.au).

Black Diamond have released a report on the dangers of rope-worn carabiners: <http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/en-us/journal/climb/knowledge/qc-lab-dangers-of-rope-worn-carabiners>. Acting on incidents where climbers had fallen and experienced a 'rope-cutting event' due to worn carabiners (mainly fixed carabiners on climbing routes), Black Diamond looked into the profile of wear and found that the sharp-edged wear profile of carabiners significantly reduced their breaking load if the rope caught one of those edges. They did some simple drop tests to simulate falls and found that a harsh fall by an 80kg mass reached a load of 7kN – and the rope broke. The carabiner shown in the photo was the one used in the test. Obviously wear patterns can vary and the report raised as many questions as it answered, but it is worth keeping an eye on the condition of the biners you climb on!



A coronial inquest is underway for five people drowned in whitewater rafting accidents on the Tully River in QLD. Parents of 22 year-old trainee teacher Natarsha Charlesworth have said they hoped the inquest would bring about improvements in safety. Natarsha was one of five people killed in four separate accidents between October 2008 and February 2009. She was thrown underwater when a raft flipped during descent of a chute and held down against a rock. Rescuers found her ten minutes later after spotting the tip of her paddle breaking the water. From the [Courier Mail](#).



[Sender Films](#) have released a DVD Box set called “First Ascent”. It has six half-hour episodes – the first is the spectacular “Alone on the Wall” that played to rave reviews at the Banff Mountain Movie Festival earlier this year. The box set includes the six short films and an hour of bonus material related to the making of the movies. The series is dedicated to Wade Johnson (who was an Associate Producer), Micha Dash and Jonny Copp, who were killed in an avalanche on the 6818m Mount Edgar in southwestern China in May 2009. You can buy the box set online from the store on the website for US\$49.95, or download it in HD for US\$39.95

Unfortunately there is more sad news to end with - October was a bad month for the mountaineers:

Chhewang Nima Sherpa was lost in an avalanche on October 23rd while fixing ropes on the 7129m high Mt Baruntse. Chhewang Nima was a highly experienced climber, with 19 summits of Everest to his credit. His brother joined the search with other climbers but they could find no trace of him. Information from [Explorer's Web](#).

A week earlier, Italian climber and guide, Roby Piantoni, fell to his death on Shishapangma after slipping whilst working with fixed ropes at around 6700m. Roby had previously climbed Everest and Gasherbrum II, both without oxygen. Report from [The Alpinist](#).

Joe Puryear lost his life in Tibet around October 27th. He slipped through a cornice while attempting a peak on the south side of the Labuche Kang massif. At the time of the accident he was unroped and ahead of his partner David Gottlieb. His partner did not see what happened but found tracks ending at a break in the snow and descended to find Joe's body 500m lower. Both climbers had intended to climb Karjiang in Tibet, winning a 2010 Shipton-Tilman award to this end, however they were unable to obtain a permit and turned to Labuche Kang instead. Joe Puryear had climbed extensively in Alaska and the US and is the author of an Alaskan climbing guide, Report from [the BMC](#).

Finally, the accident on K2 that cost so many lives in August 2008 has been examined by Freddie Wilkinson in a new book, [One Mountain, Thousand Summits](#). The book looks at what happened after a falling serac at the Bottleneck trapped a number of people high on the mountain. The author strives to clear up a number of misconceptions surrounding the high profile event and to help us get to know each of the people who were lost. Available from [Amazon](#).



Trip Calendar

Weekend 6th / 7th November
Myall Lakes

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

Weekend 26th -27th November
Canyoning

Yarramun
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: weekend before
Grade: Medium/Hard

Saturday 11th December

MSS AGM and Xmas Party
Contact: Roderick Smith

Weekend 18th – 19th December
Looking for Caves

Exploration in the Capertee Valley
Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 15th December
Grade: Exploratory

Mid-late January 2011
Milford Track, New Zealand

Hiking
Trip Leader: Johan Verhagen
Contact: (02) 4758 9811, johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au
By: 15th June 2010 (because bookings need to be made)
Grade: Medium

Weekend 15th – 16th January
Canyoning

Crikey and Bubblebath
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: weekend before
Grade: Medium/Hard

Weekend 5th-6th February
Canyoning at Glen Davis

John's Birthday Canyoning Weekend
Trip Leader: John Gray
Contact: 427 876 679 , john.gray@sydneywater.com.au
By: weekend before
Grade: Medium

Weekend 12th – 13th February
Canyoning at Newnes

Devil's Pinch and Starlight
Trip Leader: Beth Little
Contact: 0405 226 811, littlebeth78@hotmail.com
By: weekend before
Grade: Medium

Weekend 26 – 27 February
Canyoning

South Bowens and Koombanda
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: weekend before
Grade: Medium

Weekend 12th – 13th March
Canyoning

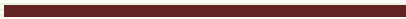
Dumbano
Trip Leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com
By: weekend before
Grade: Medium

Easter 2011
Cillagoe QLD

Chillicon
Trip Leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com
By: expressions of interest by Oct 2010
Grade: Conference with field trips

May or June 2011
Timor Caves

Caving
TBA



APPENDIX 1 – Minutes of the MSS 403rd General Meeting, 14th October 2010

Meeting Opened: 8:00pm

Present:

Rod Smith, Jim Crockett, Beth Little, Bob Horn, Pam Horn, Michael Reifenstein

Apologies:

Dave Stuckey, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Chris Johnstone, Greg Bruce

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence: None

Committee Members Reports:

President: None

Treasurer: None

Equipment officer:

Current Equipment on Loan:

- Suunto Compass: Loaned to Jim Crockett
- Suunto Clinometer: Loaned to Jim Crockett
- EPIRB unit: Handed to Jim Crockett as it is currently out of date and is to be replaced.

Equipment Report:

- 1 x 60 metre 9mm static abseiling / canyoning rope was returned from a caving trip with impact damage. Rope is currently quarantined pending investigation by the Equipment officer. It is likely that the damaged portion of the rope will need to be cut off which will reduce the length of this rope by approximately 3 metres. It will need to be completely examined to determine whether there is any other damage. It would be useful to ascertain how this damage was incurred and how it may be prevented in the future.
- EPIRB unit is currently out of date and is in the process of being replaced. Obsolete unit will need to be correctly disposed of as it contains a battery, plus it is registered to the club and any inadvertent triggering may incur a penalty.

Dave Stuckey

Following the report a discussion was had regarding the damage to the 60m rope and how it could be prevented. Among other options was the proposal to use 11mm rope for caving. It was believed by those present that MSS does not own any 11mm, but this is to be confirmed. The resulting action item was raised Action Item: Create list of equipment items for review. Allocated to – TBA. To be completed by – Open ended.

Training Officer: None

Librarian:

Current items on loan:

SUSS Map library DVD – Jim Crockett

Helictite back-issues – Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Atlas of Australian Resources: Geology – Cathi Humphrey-Hood

The Limestone Deposits of New Sales Wales – Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Mullamullang Cave Expeditions – Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Cataloguing past newsletters

Bob has loaned the library a number of past issues to be scanned in. Once this is complete we should have a copy of almost all past newsletters within the library. Thanks Bob for the loan.

2 new books were purchased with the proposal that they be added to the MSS library. These 2 books are Wee Jasper Caves and Wellington Caves. They were \$5 each. The proposal to add these to the library was approved.

The library is in need of better storage of the newsletter present. It is proposed that a 4-drawer filing cabinet would be the best method. Whether this becomes an MSS item or owned by the librarian will depend on cost.

Action Item: Source a 4-drawer filing cabinet. Allocated to – Rod Smith. To be completed by – Open ended.

Status of Action Items:

Constitution recommendations: No update

Web site hosting options:

Rod provided a list of options for hosting, including prices. This list is attached. Dave raised a couple of questions via email about the hosting:

I would also like to understand the perceived shortcomings with the existing website. Why the need for alternate hosting? What expense?

Although the current website is excellent, with the reduction in the number of meetings held each year (from 11 to 4), among other considerations, it is viewed by many that the website will become an increasingly important method of communication within the club. There is a lot of additional functionality that has been discussed. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Interactive calendar
 - Adding photos, or links to photos, to trips
 - Adding trip reports to trips
 - Commenting on trip reports
 - Express interest in a trip by simply clicking on it
- Links to related sites
- Ability for each member to maintain their contact details
- CMS for easy updating
- Interactive catalogue of what's in the MSS library
- Catalogue of equipment MSS owns
- Improved security to ensure site visitors have appropriate privileges to view/use any of the above
- Generic email addresses, such as president@mssadventure.org.au, so external parties do not need to be update after each AGM.

Although some of these updates could be done under the current hosting arrangements, a lot could not. The new hosting would be to provide the database and server-side scripting to allow the updates.

Expense – The list of options is included.

There is also the option of reducing costs by allowing members to host personal websites under the hosting for a small fee.

UIS Conference feasibility study:

Jim has contacted a number of possible locations with very little feedback. The two that have replied are Tasmania and Warnambool (Vic). Jim will continue to follow up with these.

EPIRB quotes:

It has been decided to purchase the GME MT410G unit, we are currently trying to find the best price. Tim has supplied a quote of \$575.00 from Equipment Outdoors. Beth will look into the possibility of getting it cheaper through an army friend of hers. It is envisaged a decision will be made at the next meeting.

Updating membership details:

Jim has received a reasonable response from members, more than half have replied. Jim will hold onto the hard copies for the time being. We will look at options of how to keep this information up-to-date and available where appropriate.

Meeting schedule and format:

A proposed schedule and format was included with the July newsletter. With no amendments requested, the new schedule and format will be adopted. This action item is now closed.

Back issues of Helictite magazine:

Dave Stuckey has raised a couple of question via email about the back issues of Helictite:

I would like to question the reasons behind the perceived necessity of obtaining back issues of Helictite? Who for? What for? What expense?

Cathi has responded via email:

Not only is Helictite an academic research journal for those who might like a bit more science to their caving, it also holds a great deal of specific information, including maps, of caves both popular and obscure, information that is often not available anywhere else. University holdings of this journal are (like MSS holdings) often incomplete (getting info on the Nullarbor caves for example, would have required trips to three different uni libraries). Abstracts and some more recent articles are available online but these often do not include the maps. Having a full set of Helictite issues would make it easier for MSS members to access this information. I have had no feedback about the price of back issues, but don't expect the cost to be high – and seeing that we have a lot of issues already, we should at least fill the gaps in the collection. If the full back collection becomes available scanned on DVD, as it's supposed to be soon, I would recommend MSS obtain this, as this will make it a lot easier to search for relevant information on new caves, research on cave biology and formations and to get the information to interested members.

Part of the reason the library is not accessed very often is that a lot of members are unaware of what is in it (even the librarian didn't know what was in it). There is so much that is fascinating about cave environments, and people should be encouraged to venture forth into new caves and areas of interest, rather than just sticking to what they think they already know. We need a decent library database that is accessible to all members over the web.

It was also discussed that a decision to purchase the back issues of Helictite had not been made, as this would be contingent on price, which has yet to be provided. Once a price has been sourced then the arguments for and against will be taken into account when making a decision on whether to purchase the back issues.

New Business:

Future trips:

The following trips will be added to the MSS calendar:

- Crikey and Bubblebath – 15th 16th January – TL Rod Smith
- Newnes – Devils Pinch and Starlight – 12th 13th February - TL Beth Little
- Wollangambe – 26th December – TL Jim Crockett
- John's Birthday canyoning weekend (Glen Davis) – 5th 6th February – TL John Gray

- Dumbano – 12th 13th March – TL Jim Crockett
- South Bowens & Koombanda – 26th 27th February – TL Rod Smith
- Yarramun - 27th 28th November – TL Rod Smith

Next Meeting:

Meeting Closed 10:15pm

Hosting comparisons:

ISP	Package	Cost	Disk Space	Transfer amount	Database	No. Email accounts
alpha.net.au	Hosting(IIS)	\$71.50/month + \$121.00 setup	200MB	8GB/month	2 Access	5
dotexcel.com.au	Home	\$12.50/month	250MB	5GB	unlimited Access	unlimited
apexhost.com.au	Parked	\$5.50/month	10MB	250MB	no	1
dotinfohosting.com	Home	\$7.26/month	100MB	1GB	no	unlimited
quandrahosting.com.au	Basic	\$14.95/month	500MB	5GB	Access	unlimited
ausweb.com.au	Starter	\$19.50/month	400MB	4GB	1 MSSQL Express	5
web24.com.au	Starter	\$12.95/month	500MB	2GB	1 MSSQL	unlimited
webaccess.com.au	Business	\$10.90/month	5000MB	20GB/month	5 MSSQL	25
aspwebhosting.com.au	Basic	\$10/month	700MB	7.5GB	1MSSQL	unlimited
ilisys.com.au	.net	\$27.50/month	1000MB	10GB	1 MSSQL	unlimited
thehostingroom.com.au	Starter	\$19/month	500MB	5GB	1 MSSQL	20
ewebcircle.com.au	Silver	\$36.95/month	1000MB	50GB	1 MSSQL	100
hostess.com.au	ecommerce	\$8.33/month	500MB	unlimited	2 MSSQL	unlimited