

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



Trip Reports:
Castle Head
Malaita Wall
Boars Head
Africa & Kilimanjaro

MSS Library

May 2008



In this issue

Last Meeting	3
Next Meeting	3
Quote of the Month	3
Announcements	3
Trip Reports	3
Castle Head - 3rd May, 2008	3
Malaita Wall - 4th May, 2008	4
Boars Head - 17th May, 2008	5
Africa & Kilimanjaro - 18th May, 2008	5
MSS Library	6
Future Trips	9

Cover Shot:
Jim on the final pitch of Castle Head.
Photo by Rod Smith

Last Meeting

Last meeting we had trips reports from the Castle Head, Malaita Wall, Boars Head and Africa & Kilimanjaro. Tim continued his excellent role as catering officer.

Next Meeting

Date: 16th June, 2008
Time: 7.30 pm
Venue: Baden Powell Scout Camp
Pomona Street, Pennant Hills

Quote of the Month

“All this inactivity has turned me into a pussy.” - Brett
better start getting a bit more active then!

Announcements

A belated congratulations to Jonathan Spittle and Alison Olds on the birth of their daughter Jamie. On behalf of everyone in MSS we wish you all the very best.

Jim Crockett is looking into organising a trip to Wombeyan Caves. However, to do this, we need to join a trip with another club that knows the area. This will require a bit more organisation than for a normal trip, so Jim is wanting to know how many people would be interested in that kind of trip before going any further. So, if you are interested in visiting Wombeyan Caves sometime next year, please let Jim know.

John Gray will be presenting a slide show at the July meeting. John always puts on a good show. Come along for an enjoyable evening.

Trip Reports

Castle Head - 3rd May, 2008

Attending: David Stuckey (TL), Rod Smith, Jim Crockett, Brett Pilcher, Stephanie Pilcher, Steve Wilson.

We met at the top of the Golden stairs, and found signs saying there was an event happening there that day. The event was the wild endurance (<http://www.wildendurance.org.au>).

We left a couple of cars there and drove to the locked gate on Glenraphael Drive, and from there started the walk out to Castle Head. Another group were have a picnic at the top of the cliff near Castle Head, but we appeared to be the only group doing the abseils.

It was a spectacular day, not a breath of wind and clear blue sky, where else would you want to be on a day like that! Add to that a great abseil trip with great company.



Steph preparing to do the third abseil
Photo: Rod Smith

This was the first club trip for Steve, the first for Brett and Steph since their wedding, and the first for Dave since his injury. Brett was the only one that seemed to have any problems (see the quote of the month). Dave was taking it easy, but that wouldn't have been obvious to the casual observer.

The descent went smoothly, with Brett and Steph taking some rigging pointers from Dave at the top of the second last pitch. We had lunch at the top of the last pitch. A short walk down the ridge from the bottom of the last pitch saw us join the ruined castle track close to the junction with the Mt Solitary track.

The walk back to the Golden Stairs always takes a long time, you don't seem to realise are far out you've gone until the walk back. Dave was testing his leg by seeing if we could keep up with him. He was a bit slower on the climb up the Golden Stair, but still set a pace that not everyone could match. By the time he and Johan go to Europe, the guide's going to have a hard time keeping up with them on the Matahorn!



Dave on the third pitch.
Photo: Rod Smith

By the time we arrived back at the cars the Wild Endurance event was in full swing. Thankfully they were reasonably well organised and we had no problem collecting our cars and getting on our way.

Rod.

Malaita Wall - 4th May, 2008

With: Steph & Brett, Rob, David, Jim and Johan (TL).

The little Café in Katoomba was warm and very inviting – having an aroma of freshly baked cakes and ground coffees. I ordered my usual skim cappuccino, two sugars and walked over to the cake cabinet to inspect what little delicacies were still available, that late in the afternoon.

Peering through the chocolate-smudged glass of the cake cabinet, the small mud cakes were discounted, but a Neenish Tart really took my fancy – small and delicate, displaying icing of one side pink and the other side brown, the defining line between the two colours was amazingly straight. I wondered how they did that – keeping one icing colour from merging into the other? More importantly, where would we be today without the bakery imagination of one, Ruby Neenish, from Grong Grong NSW, who in 1913, running short of cocoa, and baking for an unexpected shower tea for her daughter, made do by icing her tarts with half-chocolate and half-white icing – and from then on they were known as Neenish Tarts.

A girl sat in the corner of the café reading that most boring of books 'The English Patient' drinking weak camomile tea, which reminded me of another story....

A couple in the corner were looking through a real estate mag.

In the booth near the corner, sat some other people – wearing red socks and fibrepiles.

As far as I could tell, the red-sock people were talking about a descent of the Katoomba escarpment via the Malaita Wall. Apparently the first pitch was 50m high and finished on a gendarme with the second pitch commencing immediately afterwards for another 30m. Something also about an orange that rolled out of someone's rucksack and fell down two pitches!

The red-sock people mentioned two more pitches after that! Pitch three being 30m through an overhang and pitch four descended a smooth wall for 35m.

As I enjoyed a most delightful cappuccino, the red-sock people walked out of the café, still talking about the descent and how they joined pitch five and six together, to finally arrive at the bottom of the escarpment in time for lunch. Not sure what they meant by "all that for only \$3".....???

Johan

Boars Head - 17th May, 2008

Abseilers: Rob Clyne, Johan Verhagen, David Stuckey, Stephanie Piltcher, Brett Pilcher, Steve Wilson, Penny Cook, Warwick Blake, Gemma – Brett's cousin from NZ



“Saturday Scattered showers or rain areas developing from the west during the afternoon. Isolated thunderstorms. Becoming colder overnight with some local snow about higher ground. Fresh and gusty northwest wind tending west to southwest later.”

Oh Great – what a top forecast. Fine for ages then of course goes crappy for the weekend.. No dodgy weather was going to stop us though. A great roll up of MSS members met at 09.00am at the Scenic Railway & proceeded to drive around to Boars Head. Steve was missing but I thought he mustn't be coming.

As I was getting out my backpack I thought I better check the mobile – hmm - 2 missed calls. Various attempted mobile calls later we learned Steve had let his GPS take him to Blackheath! (never believe these evil devices – especially when looking for caves!) and was lost. After 3 dropped out calls (Great reception Telstra!) I got the message across – you have 15min to bet to the scenic railway. The other proceeded to rig the first pitch whilst I went and collected Steve.

Weather was OK but a howling wind greeted us as we rappelled down the 1st pitch.

We were lucky to be in front as a climbing party came up behind us and they had to wait.

The famous slot awaited – high level exposed (scary) traverse with a brilliant tight abseil at the end. And yes, it was howling a gale. The safety line was rigged thanks to Dave and one by one trembling abseilers walked the traverse of faith.

I was tail end charlie – which meant I had the favourite job of derigging the traverse – “almost there, almost there, get the cows tail clipped in” – cue the howling gale – tops!” As we descended, we could see the climbers moving into position in the slot showing the grand scale of the abseil.

The rest of our descent went smoothly with a noted comment from Steph about her undies going up her crack on the last big overhanging pitch.

A quick lunch was held in Devils Hole and then a leisurely ascent to the car (a quick suggestion to abseil the chock stone in Devils Hole was quickly rejected because it was too bloody cold!).

Back at the cars @ 2.30pm. Nice timing just as the rain came in.

Top Trip. Great to see so many members.
Rob

Africa & Kilimanjaro - 18th May, 2008

Abseilers: Rob Clyne, Dave Stuckey, Rod Smith & Deb Harding.



“Sunday Scattered showers. Local snowfalls or sleet on the higher ground at first. Cold, gusty west to southwest winds.”



Deb on the top of Africa
Photo: Rob Clyne

This was the day I was really worried about with a forecast like that!

Saturday we had been lucky with the weather Boars Head but today could be interesting. The temp was lower and the winds had picked up.

A 9.00am start at The Railway again saw only 4 abseilers today.

We donned our warm & wind proof gear and headed for Africa.

It's amazing how much strong winds can make you so much more jittery around big abseils. And man was it howling. Throwing the ropes down Africa had them disappearing around the corner.

With adrenalin pumping we descended Africa.

Now for the best – Kilimanjaro

Big 45m pitch, exposed, overhang and howling winds – what a great combination.



Abseiler on the Kilimanjaro overhanging
Photo: Rob Clyne

Nature lets you know now and again whose boss still!

With lots of “Yahoos” and “bloody hells” we all finally made it down.

A hot coffee in Katoomba ended our leisurely day just nicely.

Thanks everyone for a great weekend.

The cobwebs from work were certainly blasted away!
Rob

MSS Library

For those of you who don't know, MSS has a library. As with most libraries, items in the library are available to all members of the club to borrow. We'd also accept any donations to the library and any suggestions of books and other materials that it would be worth adding to the library. For any enquiries, suggestions, donations, etc, please contact the MSS librarian, Rod Smith.

So, what's in the library? The following list is not comprehensive, but will give you an idea of what we have:

Books:

- Australian Cave Bats
A Provisional Guide to Identification
- Cave Diving in Australia
- Speleology
The Study of Caves
- A Brief Introduction to Speleology
- Australian Karst Index
- Atlas of Australian Resources
Geology
- The Limestone Deposits of New South Wales
- Bungonia Caves
- Wombeyan Caves
- Jenolan Caves
As They Were in the Nineteenth Century
- Jenolan:
The Golden Ages of Caving
- The Exploration and Speleogeography of
Mammoth Cave, Jenolan
- The Caves of Jenolan 2:
The Northern Limestone
- Vertical Caves of Tasmania
A Caver's Guidebook
- Caves of the Nullarbor
- Nullarbor Caving Atlas
- Abercrombie Caves
Cave Chronicles
- The Abercrombie Caves
- The Abercrombie Caves and Wellington
- Mullamullang Cave Expeditions
- Map Making
- Mountaineering

- Belaying the Leader
- Guide for the Chairman and the Secretary
- Harvesting and Rehabilitation of Jounama Pine Plantation
Environmental Impact Statement
- The Thedolite and its Application
- Basic Abseil Rollgliss Course

Newsletters:

- The Western Caver (Western Australian Speleological Group Inc.)
Volumes: 38 – 43
- Speleo Spiel (Southern Tasmanian Caverneers)
Issues: 320, 322 – 324
- Newsletter (Illawarra Speleological Society)
Volume 7 Number 1
Volume 8 Numbers 3 – 4
Volume 9 Numbers 1 – 4
Volume 10 Numbers 3 – 4
Volume 11 Numbers 1 – 2
- CEGSA News (Cave Exploration Group of South Australia)
Issue 174
- Spar (UNSW Speleological Society)
Volume 1 Number 4
Volume 3 Number 1
Volume 4 Number 1
Volume 5 Number 2
Issues: 1 – 6, 8 – 9, 11 – 16, 18 – 27, 29 – 39, 41 – 48, 50 – 64, 68 – 72, 74, 77 – 79, 81 – 82, 91 – 95, 97 – 99, 102 – 104, 106 – 110, 113 – 114
- Newsletter (Hills Speleology Club)
Volume 14 Numbers 2 – 4
Volume 15 Numbers 1 – 3
- Oolite (Blue Mountains Speleological Club)
Volume 29 Number 1
Volume 30 Number 1
- Newsletter Monthly (Metropolitan Speleological Society)
Volume 1 Number 2
Volume 2 Numbers 1 – 2
Volume 5 Numbers 1 – 2
Issues: 3, 6, 11, 13 – 34
January 1996, March 1996 – April 1996, July 1998, September 1998 – March 1999, June 1999 – July 1999, September 1999 – October 1999, January 2000, March 2000 – September 2000
Yearly Journals: 1973 – 1978
30th Anniversary Edition
- TROG (Kempsey Speleological Society)
Volume 34 Numbers 6, 9
Volume 35 Numbers 1, 4, 6, 8, 10
Volume 36 Numbers 1, 3, 5, 8 – 9, 11
Volume 37 Numbers 5, 7, 9 – 11
Volume 38 Numbers 4, 6, 8, 10
Volume 39 Number 1 – 4
- FUSSI (Flinders University Speleological Society)
Volume 11 Numbers 1 – 2
Volume 14 Numbers 1 – 2
- The SUSS Bull (Sydney University Speleological Society)
Volume 38 Numbers 2 – 3
Volume 39 Numbers 1 – 4
Volume 40 Numbers 1, 4
Volume 41 Number 3
Volume 42 Numbers 1 – 2, 4
Volume 43 Numbers 1 – 3
Volume 44 Numbers 1 – 2, 4
Volume 45 Numbers 1 – 4
Volume 46 Numbers 1 – 4
Volume 47 Numbers 1 – 3
- ASF Newsletter / Australian Caver (Australian Speleological Federation)
Issue: 75 – 99, 101 – 138, 146 – 154, 156, 159 – 172
- The Journal of the Sydney Speleological Society
Volume 28 Numbers 11 – 12
Volume 29 Numbers 1 – 12
Volume 30 Numbers 1 – 12
Volume 31 Numbers 1 – 4, 7 – 12
Volume 32 Numbers 1, 3 – 5, 8 – 10
Volume 33 Numbers 1 – 2, 4 – 10, 12
Volume 34 Numbers 1 – 12
Volume 35 Numbers 1 – 12
Volume 36 Numbers 1 – 12
Volume 37 Numbers 1 – 6, 9, 11 – 12
Volume 38 Numbers 1 – 12
Volume 39 Numbers 1 – 6
Volume 43 Numbers 1 – 6, 8 – 12
Volume 44 Numbers 1 – 4, 6 – 9
- The Very Latest (Canberra Speleological Society)
Volume 8 Number 3
Volume 12 Number 2
Volume 13 Number 1

Magazines:

- National Geographic
September 1995
- Caving International
Issues: 3 – 14

Others:

- Frames
Caves
- Various cave maps
- Car Rally Trophy
- Theodolite
- Stuff still to be cataloged

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
Jenolan	7 th - 9 th Jun			Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 caver@people.net.au		\$5 Hut fee	4 th Jun	Trip Full
Other Info:								
Pages Pinnacle	28 th Jun			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			25 th Jun	
Other Info: Come and help Johan celebrate another year of his life (he's turning the big Five O)! Camping at Boyd River.								
Kanangra	29 th Jun	TBA		Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			25 th Jun	
Other Info:								
Drummoyne - Manly	12 th Jul			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)		If hiring a kayak there will be that cost	8 th Jul	
Other Info:								
Springwood	19 th Jul			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			15 th Jul	
Other Info:								
Tiger Snake and Penrose Gully	26 th Jul			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			22 nd Jul	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Jenolan	2 nd - 3 rd Aug			Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 caver@people.net.au		\$5 Hut fee	31 st Jul	12
Other Info:								
Wyanbene	23 rd - 24 th Aug			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			15 th Aug	
Other Info:								
Snowy Mountains	13 th - 14 th Sep	 or Snow Shoeing		Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 stuckedl@cba.com.au		Hire of gear, if required	9 th Sep	
Other Info:								
Lindfield Rocks	21 st Sep		Instruction al	Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			17 th Sep	
Other Info:								
Narrowneck or somewhere similar	27 th - 28 th Sep			Graham Boyles 0414 200 718 graham_boyles@yahoo.com.au			23 rd Sep	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Pierces Pass and Dogface	11 th - 12 th Oct			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			7 th Oct	
Other Info: 200m abseils. Massive exposure!!								
Gooches Crater	25 th - 26 th Oct			Brett & Steph Pilcher Brett 0412 049 099 brettpilch@hotmail.com Steph 0423 526 288 skeeling@iinet.net.au	Camp Cave		21 st Oct	
Other Info:								
Jenolan	1 st - 2 nd Nov			TBA		\$5 Hut fee	29 th Oct	12
Other Info:								
Little Big Hole and Daylight Tunnel	15 th Nov	 		Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 caver@people.net.au			11 th Nov	
Other Info:								
Malaita Point	16 th Nov		Instructional	Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			11 th Nov	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Danae Brook	6 th Dec			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			N/A*	Trip Full*
Other Info: * If enough other people are interested, we will run a second trip on the same day								
Xmas Party	6 th Dec	Eat, drink and be merry		Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			2 nd Dec	
Other Info: 								
Wollangambe	26 th Dec			TBA			19 th Dec	
Other Info:								
Claustral	27 th Dec			TBA			19 th Dec	
Other Info:								
Dargans	28 th Dec			TBA			19 th Dec	
Other Info:								
New Zealand – Routeburn trail	Jan 2009			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au		Hut fees, flights	20 th Jun	
Other Info: This needs to be booked and paid for, specifically the huts on the walk, thus the early notice required. Gourmet eating. 								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Kites over Kosci	24 th - 26 th Jan			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			20 th Jan	
Other Info: 								
Alcatraz	TBA			John Gray 0427 876 679 john.gray@sydneywater.com.au			TBA	
Other Info:								