

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



Trip Reports:
Mt Solitary
Jenolan Caves
Pages Pinnacle

What Else We've Been Doing
Spiral Canyon

June 2008

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Cover Shot:
Rob on one of the trickier sections of Barralong.
Photo by Dave Stuckey

Last Meeting

Last meeting Dave showed up ... Next meeting there will be slides, so it'll definitely be worth coming along.

Next Meeting

Date: 21st July, 2008
Time: 7.30 pm
Venue: Baden Powell Scout Camp
Pomona Street, Pennant Hills

Quote of the Month

“Of all the things you could create, you chose a cigarette”
- Rod is obviously not overly impressed with Brett's bad habit.

Announcements

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.

Brett has bet Dave that he will quit smoking. There is a bottle of Mead and lamb shanks in it. If Brett doesn't touch another smoke before the November Jenolan trip, Dave will be buying the Mead and lamb shanks. Otherwise Brett will supply them.

Trip Reports

Mt Solitary Walk - 31st May - 1st June, 2008

Participants: David Stuckey (TL), Bob Horn, Roderick Smith.

Welcome to Winter!

Our now traditional stop at Katoomba Baker's Delight yielded a new pleasure! Coffee & Date rolls. It's like a cappuccino without the cup! Even more delights were purchased from Baker's Delight by Rod as we headed to Scenic World Carpark. Our walk started very conveniently via the carpark fire escape and across the foot bridge which links it with the Furber Steps track. As we descended the valley below was blanketed with thick white fog. It looked so dense that one could imagine walking across the valley to Mt Solitary. We left behind the tourists at the Scenic World boardwalk and headed past the landslide, Daylight Tunnel, Golden Stairs and arrived near the base of Castle head. Here we stopped for morning tea, putting on the billy and munching the first of many bread rolls from Baker's Delight. (No, this isn't a paid endorsement.)

The long trudge up the ridge wasn't as bad as first thought when looking for a distance. We had a lunch stop at the top before proceeding through a brilliant She Oak forest on the top of Mt Solitary. We descended into Chinaman's Gulley, had a brief stop, then pushed on towards the eastern end of the mountain and our intended campsite. Several gullies along the way gave false hope that we'd arrived. A bit like the proverbial false summit on the way up a mountain. Rod was rapidly losing faith, however, Bob was confident in my memory. And then we were there! A brilliant little campsite with a creek alongside and a cliff edge viewing platform. It was perfect! We put up tents and gathered firewood, before a quiet cuppa. It wasn't as cold as we were expecting and we had a very pleasant night around the fire before retiring early.

The morning was silent and overcast. We ate breakfast at the edge of the cliff looking out towards Sublime Point and Wentworth Falls. We got moving around 9:30am back the way we'd come. At the western end of the mountain, we were treated to some awe inspiring views of the Ruined Castle & Castle Head. The mist adding to the mystique of the area. We descended the ridge and eventually made the track and again stopped at the base of Castle Head for a cuppa and some lunch. Several parties of walkers passed us. We decided to ascend the Golden Stairs instead of the Furber Stairs, just for a bit of variety. At the top, we were completely shrouded in mist and the views were non-existent. None-the-less, it made for cool walking back to Scenic World.

Once back at the vehicles, we drove to Woodford to visit Johan and find out how he was recovering from a recent injury. We were glad that the fire was lit and a hot cuppa was offered.

A great walk and quite a bit of exercise. Views were fantastic and the campsite was perfect. And all in our backyard.

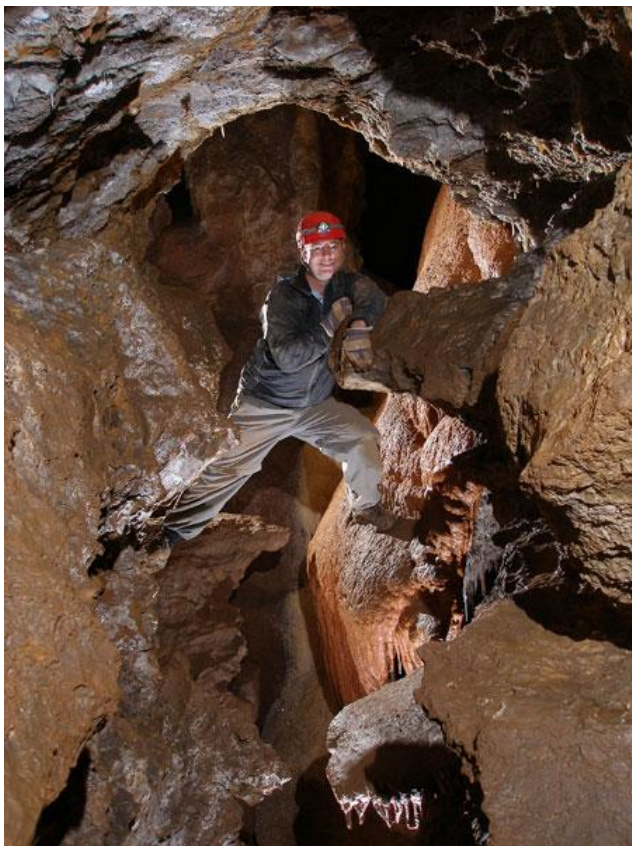
DS.

Jenolan Caves – 7th - 9th June, 2008

Caves: Barralong, Glass

Cavers: Rob Clyne (TL), David Stuckey, Rod Smith, Stephanie Piltcher, Brett Plitcher, Tim Grimes (Also Suss members - Michael Collins, Keir Vaughan-Taylor & 2 other support cavers (Oops forgot there names – sorry)

Above ground support: Johan Verhagen



Brett in one of the more interesting sections of Barralong
Photo: Dave Stuckey

This wasn't going to be a standard Jenolan trip. Excitement was in the air. We had been invited to help SUSS in a Cave Diving trip to the highly restricted & fabulously decorated Barralong Cave. Yes – cave diving and Barralong. How much more can you get! Dave asked me to get in contact with Michael Collins – the trip leader for Suss. After various emails and phone calls, the weekends activities were arranged. There would be 2 cave divers, 2 suss support members & 6 MSS members providing portage for equipment needed in the cave. During the dive, we would have the opportunity to photograph & explore the cave. From previous exploration – there was a hole up the roof, after 4-5 sumps at the end of Barralong that looked like it could “go”. This was the divers objective. It was also the 43rd anniversary of the discovery of Barralong by the guides Ron Newbould & John Culley (7th June ,1965). A new discovery would be sweet indeed.

Saturday was the big day in Barralong. Rod & myself spent Friday night in the cottage with the others arriving Saturday morning. Meeting time was 9.30 at Ted's cottage with Suss. Interesting stories of early morning near misses with Kangaroos from everyone were exchanged – with Steph & Brett having not such a near miss with their poor commodore (You could still see bit of fur!)

After initial introductions, we all drove down to car park 3, behind caves house. We were pleased to find out that most of the equipment for dive was already in the cave – taken in by Suss on Friday.(Love those heavy Scuba tanks!) Access to Barralong is via some tourist sections of cave on the Southern Section of Jenolan. We entered through the Binoomea Cut, down into the Temple of Baal, along the Mud Tunnels and finally into The River Cave. Barralong is an extension of this.



Some beautiful cave pearls near the first sump.
Photo: Dave Stuckey

So into the restricted zone we ventured. The first section wasn't highly decorated. There were 2 ways to access the real beauty of the cave. Of course there's always seems to be a rock pile you can negotiate (for the smaller cavers!) and then there was the ladder pitch. Lets say I took the ladder pitch!

The cave is extremely beautiful. Heaps of decoration. Fantastic helictites. An extremely fragile environment. Michael went ahead and started the 1st dive. Keir had to delay his attempt because of having brought in the incorrect regulator. He finally returned and we watched as he suited up. It was amazing to watch him crawl down the gravelly stream way with all his diving gear on to get to the 1st Sump.



One of the many fantastic helictites found in Barralong.
Photo: Dave Stuckey

We listened intently as we heard him enter. Finally all you could hear was his expired air bubbles then silence. You have to admire Cave Divers. This is hard core stuff. You have to be totally independent. By the time Kier had entered the water, Michael had already been exploring for probably @2hrs. Would be an interesting feeling of being by yourself, isolated from safety by 5(4?) water filled sumps. We were told each sump wasn't all that long, but visibility after the first diver had gone through would turn to zero with all the sediment stirred up. Even more amazing was the guys took in a scaling pole to explore the lead they wanted to look at!

Whilst the divers explored, we admired & photographed the beauty of Barralong.

The divers finally returned – tired, safe but unfortunately unsuccessful in finding anymore virgin cave.

Gear was repacked and the team was organised. We spread out along the return route – spaced out evenly – playing pass the pack. Then we all moved forward and started again. I was a great system to move a large amount of gear quickly & efficiently.

All went smoothly apart from Rod having a good scare on the ladder pitch when a side part on the main anchor decided to crumble and drop him about ½ a foot. (The main anchor was fine!)

On our exit, Michael (who is a part time guide) gave us some demos of the sound & lighting in The River & Temple of Baal Caves. A great way to end a fantastic trip. The customary group photo, complete with scaling poles, was taken at the entrance to the Binoomea Cut.



The group shot.
Photo: Rob Clyne

It was 6.30pm.

Our above ground support team (Johan), (who was looking at caving prospects in the Mckeowns Valley during the day), had a warm and cosy fire awaiting for us in the cavers cottage. Drinks, predinner snacks, BBQ & “Top Showers” were enjoyed by all.

Great Day.

Sunday. Crappy weather. Motivation by some was low to go underground. I had booked Glass Cave because I knew some of our Jenolan regulars hadn't looked at it before. Rod, I, Steph & Tim braved the elements whilst others members decided to enjoy a Latte or two at Caves House (and read the paper!)(Bastards!)

We only had a permit for the main chamber of Glass Cave. Access is via a tight 45degree uphill tube. The fun is grunting up this tube with a harness on and then hanging out over the main pitch high up in the main chamber. The trick is to extricate yourself out of the tube, clip your safety in and then swing yourself on to the 100year old heritage listed ladder all in one movement. Oh yes – all over a rather large exposed pitch. Oh what fun!

Glass still has some nice decoration but the pristine beauty is hidden - maybe another day.

Back in day light, a quick lunch was taken in the old shelter shed on the playing fields. The weather was still bleak and it didn't take too much convincing to return to the cottage with its fire. Mammoth could wait to next time.

Tim decided to make an early exit and the rest of us departed Monday morning to beat the holiday traffic.

Another great Trip.

Thanks to SUSS inviting us into Barralong and giving us an insight into cave diving

If you haven't been to Jenolan yet – there's a beginners trip in August. Don't be shy. We will look after you!

Thanks everyone
Top trip

Rob

Ps: If you want a great read on cave diving
"The Darkness Beckons"
The history and development of Cave Diving

Martyn Farr
Diadem Books, London
Cave Books, St Louis, Missouri

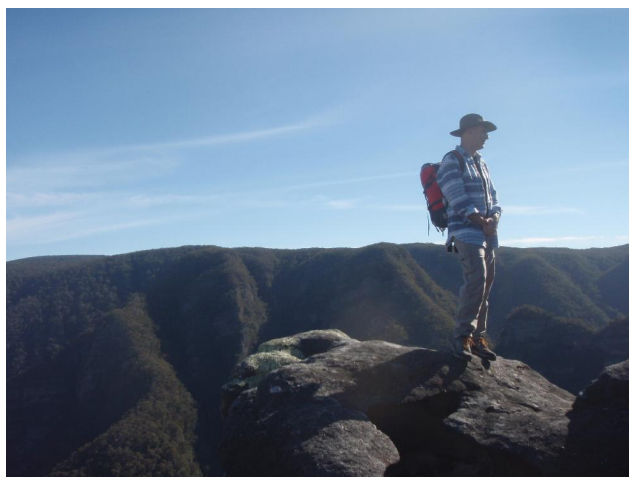
Guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your seat

Kanangra Plateau – Pages Pinnacle - 28th June, 2008

With: Steph, Carolyn & Warwick, David, Rod, Johan (50 yo TL).

Steph arrived at my house at about 50 minutes after 6.00am – perfect timing – and I made room in the back of my Subaru for her pack weighing 50kg!

After a short stop at the Katoomba bakery – they had a choice of over 50 pastries – we drove back to the highway, maintaining 50km/h in the 50 km/h zone.



The birthday boy.
Photo: Rod Smith

After driving for longer than 50 minutes, we arrived at Boyd River campsite at about 8.50am to find Rod already there, having set-up camp the previous night.

This was Steph's first visit to the Kanangra Walls 'Wow, they must be 50 million years old' she said.

After admiring the fantastic view, Steph, Rod and myself eventually wandered across to the Plateau, Rod carrying a full pack including a rope longer than 50m, for an intended ascent of one of Pages Pinnacles. I was content to leave a shiny \$0.50c coin on the 'lunch' summits.

Carolyn, Warwick and David soon met us on the Plateau and we continued toward Gordon Smith Pass. Apparently, Gordon Smith was aged 50 when he discovered the pass off the end of the Kanangra Walls. I believe it was sometime in the 50's?

A late lunch was enjoyed on the summit of Pages Pinnacle in the most perfect weather. Meanwhile, Rod made an entertaining ascent of one of the more forbidding Pinnacles. After we 'gave him' his rope back, he was also able to descend!



The birthday cake.
Photo: Steph Pilcher

The return walk from Pages Pinnacle was a breeze, taking 1 hour 50 mins, and in no time at all, we were back at the Boyd River Shelter Shed, getting ready for an evening around a snuggly ruggly fire. Over the course of the evening, we enjoying a selection of cheeses, dips, crackers (50 were spilt on the ground), roast lamb and veges, garlic bread (special burnt style), extra special Matterhorn Birthday cake and one or two drinks to celebrate one or two birthdays. More than 50 candles lit the Shelter Shed, very reminiscent of a past Gooches Crater trip.

A great weekend at a great location to turn 50.

Johan

What Else We've Been Doing

Spiral Canyon - 18th May, 2008

Participants: Julie Burton, Rod Smith.

Armed with trip notes for Spiral Canyon, Rod, Rowen and I planned to meet up at Yobbos and camp for a nice early start. Unfortunately Rowen had to cancel at the last minute, so it was just Rod and I. I arrived first and set up camp and did the big firewood scrounge, and spotted the Aussie flag waving from a tree further back in the bush. This needed investigating! To my amazement, I found a home-made dunny complete with soggy toilet roll on the seat (yes the lid was down!)

The next day dawned with snowy clouds racing across the sky, but undaunted, we set off to the locked gate at Dean's Creek Fire trail. We walked 5kms and left the fire trail at NGR459187 to head for the tributary to the west. I realised later that the tributary in the notes was a bit further north than one we entered by, but this only affected the first abseil. Not realising at this stage that we were in a different tributary, we rigged for what we thought was going to be a 25m abseil. We couldn't see the bottom from the top, and I was a fair way down when I realised the rope was way too short for the pitch. I was able to stop on a precariously narrow dirt ledge and cow-tailed onto the only tree which was growing out of the wall. Rod rapped down and clipped in and we reset the rope. Our first rap was about 20m, and the second was just shy of 30.

Once down, we hit an open section which quickly became very scrubby. This was the section our notes said was worth exploring if you didn't mind scrub! We reached the junction of the other tributary that we should have entered by. The canyon soon showed a bit of promise by closing in and a few climb downs were negotiated. Rod showed how handy he can be as a mobile foot hold when I realised my legs weren't as long as I thought for some chimneying I was attempting. Our next abseil followed but instead of the 15m we were expecting, it was only 8. We never found the other abseil that was supposed to follow, but we may have missed it in a climb down. There was no mistaking the final abseil. Off a tree on the right, and a very awkward start as the tree is right on the edge. I sat with my legs over the edge, and had to do the leap of faith to get into position. This abseil took me straight into the only real canyon section of the day. A short but very pretty slot section which opened out all too soon just before Dean's Creek.

As soon as we hit the creek, with Rod leading, we tried to find a quicker way out up through the cliffline. It looked promising for a while with a few climbs and scrambling around very narrow corners. We had to admit defeat when we could go no further and abseiled back down. Staying under the cliffline, we followed Dean's Creek upstream. The scrub became close to impenetrable and I found a new use for my helmet putting my head down and forcing my way through head first. Got to give Rod credit for knowing when not to lead! if we had stayed next to the creek it would have much easier going. The first tributary on the left is the way out and in no time we were at the bottom of a 5m exposed climb. Once at the top, it was a matter of heading east until we got back to the fire trail and easy walking back to the cars just on dark. It was a long 8 hour day for a short canyon, but one I'd be happy to do again.

A couple of photos, check out the dunny at Yobbos!
<http://imageevent.com/jburton/canyons/spiral150608>

Julie

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
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	13 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:								
Jenolan	2 nd - 3 rd Aug			Rob Clyne 0409 033 224 caver@people.net.au and Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)		\$5 Hut fee	31 st Jul	12

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Tuglow	30 th - 31 st Aug			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			8 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		Instructional	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:								
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!!								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Gooches Crater	25 th - 26 th Oct			Brett & Steph Pilcher Brett 0412 049 099 brettpilch@hotmail.com Steph 0423 526 288 skeeling@inet.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:								
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								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
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. 								
Kites over Kosci	24 th - 26 th Jan			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			20 th Jan	

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Other Info: 								
Alcatraz	TBA			John Gray 0427 876 679 john.gray@sydneywater.com.au			TBA	
Other Info:								