

Metropolitan Speleological Society

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter

Issued September 2019

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Cover: Si Ian (VSA Member) on MSS trip to Tiger Snake Canyon June 2019 (Photo: Marilyn Scott)



SOCIETY INFORMATION

Club PLB

Just a reminder to all trip leaders that the Club PLB should be taken on every remote trip. Our Equipment Officer, Beth (0450 226 811), equipment@mssadventure.org.au) has this, so please coordinate with her to collect it before you lead your next trip.

2018 Office Bearers

President	president@mssadventure.org.au	Jim Crockett
Secretary	secretary@mssadventure.org.au	Chris Johnstone
Treasurer	treasurer@mssadventure.org.au	Cathi Humphrey Hood
Equipment Officer	equipment@mssadventure.org.au	Beth Little
Librarian	library@mssadventure.org.au	Rod Smith
Training Officer	training@mssadventure.org.au	Marilyn Scott
ASF Liaison		Cathi Humphrey-Hood & Rod Smith
Newsletter Editor	newsletter@mssadventure.org.au	Marilyn Scott
Website Manager	webmaster@mssadventure.org.au	Rod Smith
Public Officer		John Gray

Membership Fee Details (2019)

Full member	\$80	<i>Prospective membership options (12 months)</i>	
Family (2 adults + children)	\$160	Single Prospective	\$30
Family (1 adult + children)	\$120	Family (2 adults + children) Prospective	\$60
Social	\$45	Family (1 adult + children) Prospective	\$45
Already a member of an ASF Club?	\$30		

Cheques or Cash accepted but **preferred method of payment** by Direct Debit - Account: Metropolitan Speleological Society; Bendigo Bank; BSB 633 000; Account Number: 163 131 451.

MSS TRIP CALENDAR

MSS TRIP FEES: MSS leaders collect trip fees (either before or after the activity). Please make sure you have the money with you on the day. If you book into an activity with another club, you will be asked to pay the trip fees for that club **OR** MSS trip fees:

- \$3: 1 day activity
- \$5: 2 – 4 days (inclusive)
- \$10: 5+ days

8 Sept Field Day Canyoning Skills Yellow Rocks		<p>Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Instructional Details: (1) practice abseiling for beginners (cancelled no beginners signed up; in the afternoon, (2) for those who know how to abseil, refresh self rescue skills: prussiking, tying off, self belay, changing ropes, passing knots; followed by (3) anchor systems and rope set ups for those who are already leaders and those who wish to know the ins and outs of anchors (eg Isolating ropes, meat anchors, and use of Fiddle Sticks). For the afternoon session, we will be joined by Tim Vollmer (<i>Canyon Gear</i> and <i>Canyoning Australia</i>) who will demonstrate how Fiddle Sticks work and answer technical questions.</p>
7 - 13 Sept Caving Surveying Abercrombie		<p>Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact/Co-ordinator: littlebeth78@hotmail.com or 0450 226 811 Grade: Easy - Surveying Details: Arriving Saturday and leaving Friday. Plan is to have a solid week at Abercrombie working on the survey project. We are not planning any recreational caving. Bring your distos and other survey gear. We will stay in cabins as imagine it will still be cold. Dinners will be provided by the project.</p>
13 - 15 Sept Caving Timor	NHVSS	<p>Trip Leader: Garry Smith Contact: gksmith29@icloud.com Details: Come along for some general caving, which may also include some digging and lots of relaxation if you're inclined. Accommodation in the hut. NHVSS trips, can participants please email trip leaders and also CC to Melissa Hadley so their names can be put in the trip book. lis.hadley@gmail.com</p>
14-15 Sept Caving Tuglow		<p>Trip Leader: David Stuckey Contact/Co-ordinator: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com Grade: Medium Details: Saturday - Tuglow Main is a classic vertical cave with an extensive stream way at the bottom of the entrance series of pitches. Some good decoration remains, despite the heavy use the cave receives from caving groups. Some wading is required and cavers may get wet up to the waist. Upstream reveals a noisy 10m waterfall which is avoided via a series of high level passages. A good cave in which to practise your SRT. Participants need to be competent with all aspects of SRT, including abseiling, prusiking, passing redirections and rebelay etc. (Numbers will be limited). Saturday night - car camp location tba Sunday – possibly Windows Cave.</p>
21-22 Sept Caving Jenolan	NHVSS	<p>Trip Leader: Andrew Baker Contact: Andrew.Baker@environment.nsw.gov.au Details: Awesome caving in the Blue Mountains, staying at the hut at a small cost. Contact the trip leader Andrew for details. Be aware, due to accommodation limits and cave permits, numbers will be limited for this trip. NHVSS trips, can participants please email trip leaders and also CC to Melissa Hadley so their names can be put in the trip book. lis.hadley@gmail.com</p>

28-29 Sept Canyoning Shoalhaven	NEW	<p>Trip Leader: Murray Newman Contact: 0407 067 692</p> <p>Details: more a multi pitch abseil than a canyon. Part exploratory, part known country. We'll start in the upper reaches of Washed-away and check out the unknown part down to the 30m waterfall which we'll abseil, who knows if there are abseils further upstream. After the waterfall, it's a stunning trip down this limestone gorge, we'll camp on the Shoalhaven at the junction and walk out up the spur on the Sunday.</p>
1-6 Oct Whitewater Rafting Snowy River	NHVSS	<p>Co-ordinator: Daniel Burt Contact: daniel@danielburtphotos.com</p> <p>Details: McKillop's Bridge to Buchan River. Four days white water rafting and remote camping on the Snowy River (+ 1 day either side for travelling. This trip is provided by Snowy River Expeditions and cost is \$950 (plus optional extras details of which will be provided by Daniel). All food, PFD, shelter provided.</p>
5 Oct Caving Bungonia	CSS NEW	<p>Leader: Thomas Church Contact: 0476 670 337</p> <p>Details: B4/5 plus possibly other short trip(s)</p>
19 & 20 Oct Cave Surveying Course Wombeyan		<p>Co-Ordinator: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</p> <p>Grade: Instructional</p> <p>Details: Cave surveying course facilitated by Mike Lake (SUSS), staying at the Post Office cottage at Wombeyan – numbers limited to six. Mix of theory and practical surveying. TRIP FULL.</p>
26 & 27 Oct Cave Surveying Abercrombie		<p>Trip Leader: Roderick Smith Contact/Co-ordinator: roderick__smith@hotmail.com</p> <p>Grade: Easy - Surveying</p> <p>Details: Come along and help with the book project. The NSW Speloeo council meeting is also this weekend.</p>
26 Oct - 3 Nov Tambo Creek Epic Expedition	NEW	<p>Co-Ordinator: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</p> <p>Grade: Hard (McGregor)</p> <p>Details: Starting at Natural Bridge on the Mt Cameron Fire Trail, and proceeding to the headwaters of Tambo Creek and then all the way downstream to the Colo River. All off track, completely unknown territory, abseiling probably involved, stamina and endurance required. Numbers will be limited to 7.</p>
26 - 27 Oct Caving Cooleman Plain	CSS NEW	<p>Leader: John Brush Contact: 0429 314 294</p> <p>Details: tba - permit pending</p>
9 Nov AGM 10 Nov Day walk/ abseiling	NEW	<p>Co-ordinator: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</p> <p>Venue: Berkeley Vale on the Central Coast</p> <p>For full details see notice on Page 6. Saturday: Pre dinner nibbles/drinks, followed by dinner after which we will conduct the (usually short) AGM. After the AGM, there will be board games for those interested (or anything else anyone wants to do). Lots of room for those who wish to stay the night - plenty of tent space and loads of room to put blow up mattresses.</p> <p>Sunday: After breakfast an activity will be scheduled, day walk or abseiling – All relevant details will be distributed to RSVP list.</p>

16 & 17 Nov Caving - Surveying Abercrombie		Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact/Co-ordinator: littlebeth78@hotmail.com or 0450 226 811 Grade: Easy - Surveying Details: Come along and help with the surveying project. Bring your disto's and other survey gear. We will stay in cabins for ease of charging our devices and working on the project out of the cave.
23-24 Nov Canyoning Colo River	NEW	Trip Leader: Murray Newman Contact: 0407 067 692 Details: Saturday Wounded Knee canyon as a day trip, very early start from Hollow Rock car park, exiting via Pass 6, a very long day. Numbers limited Sunday - TBA
29 Nov – 1 Dec Canyoning Yarramun Creek		Trip Leader: John Gray Contact: JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au Grade: Hard Details: (3 days pack walk) walk from Mt Wilson on Day 1 to Up Ya Crack Canyon. Leave overnight gear at start of canyon and return up pass at end (maybe rig a fixed rope to assist the climb). Retrieve overnight gear and investigate possibility of abseiling into the creek near a camp cave (this will avoid a swim in Yarramun Creek). Day 2 will be into the lower end of Captains to take photos in the tunnel, then climb over the ridge to do Rorys Canyon. Day 3 will be the walk back to Mt Wilson (depending on time and energy we may have a quick look at another nearby canyon).

Expressions of interest

March/April/May 2020. Philippines Caving	Expressions of Interest	Trip Leader: Jim Crockett Contact/Co-ordinator: jcrockett3@bigpond.com or 0407284256 Grade: Easy - Medium Details: This will be a multifaceted trip. The date will be aligned with the local PSS (Philippines Speleological Society) annual conference which is being held in the very beautiful island of Palawan. This will be held from March 23rd to March 27th 2020. Associated with this conference there will be numerous opportunities for trips to the many cave features of this unique island including the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River and stunnig El Nido. Our group has also been invited to join with a local group to assist in Archeological activities in Tabon cave on behalf of the Philippines Museum. This is a cave where the remain of Tabon man and many other artifacts have been discovered. We have also been invited to another area on a different island to help with exploration of Tipan cave which is a large river system at least 10km long and could be up to 35km. More details will be posted when they become available.
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The view from the end of the Fire Trail looking down to Carne Creek (Sunnyside Ridge Trip - August 2019)



News!

Welcome to New Members



Jon on an MSS trip to South Bowen

Jon Finch has converted his introductory membership to a full membership this month, this is a bonus for MSS, Jon is an experienced caver, and he's handy to have on trips for those unusual insects that we often come across.

We're also welcoming back Min Neville who was a member many, many years ago. Min's an experienced caver, canyoner and bushwalker (the full list of his outdoor pursuits is too long for here!). We found Min particularly helpful on a

recent trip to Sunnyside Ridge – Trish and I looked at each other and said “no way we'll get up this cliff-face/waterfall” but Min found a way, he apparently did a *Jackie Chan* move though.



Min on abseil in Gang Gang creek.



AGM & Christmas Party – 9 & 10 November

This year, the MSS AGM and Christmas Party will be held at “Berkeley Vale Resort”.

Want to stay for the weekend? We can accommodate anyone who wishes to stay overnight, either in the house (byo bedding/air mattress) or in tents in the back yard or on the lake reserve.

Heaps to do: There are no planned activities for **Saturday**. Arrive early then take off for the beach, or, simply spend the afternoon on the back patio sipping a “cool one” watching the world go by. The lake reserve has 13k of shared walking/bike track all the way around to The Entrance, and it's a short drive to some fabulous beaches, and some great walking tracks (full details will be distributed to the rsvp list prior to the weekend).

The Christmas feast: Not sure whether it will be BBQ or themed as in “Bring a Plate” (note to self, source a BBQ) but, essentially it's BYO, meat, drinks, esky, folding chair, plate/cup/glass/cutlery. If there's anyone who'd like to volunteer to bring a salad, dessert or fruit platter, contact me to co-ordinate so we don't have too much double up.

AGM: The plan will be to start the AGM shortly after dinner. There'll be board games available to keep any of the kids and those who don't want to participate in the AGM occupied in another room.

Sunday Morning: For those staying the night, BYO breakfast or pop over to the Bakery across the road for fresh croissants. There's a small kitchen which can be used for preparation.

Sunday Activity: At 9.30am we will head up to Catherine Hill Bay for abseiling and/or day walk, full details will be supplied to the rsvp list.

RSVP: by November 1 to marilyn_scott@bigpond.com. Exact directions and maps will be distributed to the rsvp list. Look forward to seeing you there!



With any luck Cathi will recreate her 2016 MSS cocktails.

New Bank Account

Don't forget that we've opened a new bank account with Bendigo Bank which will allow us to make electronic transfers, the new account details are:

Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc

BSB 633 000

Account Number: 163 131 451

So, if you have previously set up the details of the MSS Account (so that you can transfer trip fees and membership fees), please make sure that the above details replace the previous account. We will maintain the old account for the time being should there be any accidental deposits to it!



Skills Development – First Aid Certificates

Many of us have discovered that our first aid certificates are now out of date. It's important that leaders (especially) renew their certificates to find out what's new, and what's been changed ... AND there have certainly been some changes over the last few years.


For a limited time only, MSS would like to offer active members a **subsidy of \$50** towards a first aid certificate from a recognized provider. It's usually only a one-day course with some pre-course on-line tutorials.

If you have been on at least two activities over the past 12 months (as of the date you are applying), you are eligible for this subsidy, simply email membership@mssadventure.org.au for more details.



So, what's new about the MSS Website?

Have you ever booked into a trip and the leader sends you the "meet up" spot and you haven't a clue where that is? OR, you're a leader and want to send out directions, but don't want to reinvent the wheel? Well, don't be in the dark any more, the **Members' area** of www.mssadventure.org.au has simple, easy directions to most of the typical areas visited, and hints about where we usually meet up, helpful for those massive campgrounds like Coorongoooba.




Metropolitan Speleological Society

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Directions

So, you've signed up to do a trip ... to a place you've never been before. You don't want to car pool, but you're not quite sure how to get there, or when you do get there, where we'll be camping! We all just assume that everyone knows where we're going! We'd like to make it as easy as possible to find your way to one of our adventures and then find where we are at the campsite. Feel free to let us know of any additions to this list that are needed:

- [Jenolan Caves – Cavers Hut](#)
- [Wombeyan Caves – the special caver's campsite](#)
- [Cliefden Caves – the shearer's quarters](#)
- [Abercrombie Caves – the campsite](#)
- [Coorongoooba Campsite, Glen Davis](#)
- [Barcoo Swamp \(aka Rocky Creek Campsite\), Newnes Plateau](#)
- [South Wolgan and Newnes Plateau area map showing forestry roads/creek systems – essential for those not familiar with the area](#)



John Gray setting up in a prime spot at Coorongoooba, 2017

[Apply to join our Facebook Group](#)

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TRIP REPORTS

Caving – Abercrombie, 1 – 2 June 2019

Report by: Beth Little

Participants: Beth Little, Andre Munck (& Elliot), Marilyn Scott, David Stuckey, Roderick Smith, Garry Smith, Phil Maynard

Great surveying work done this weekend. Phil spent the days surveying and sketching in Main Cave with the help of Rod and Dave. Awesome watching a master at work.

Dave got in a bit of flight time with the drone and some superb shots of the main bluff.

Marilyn and I had a few false starts with the surveying of Grove Cave, we were a bit out of practice truth be told. Thankfully Garry arrived to save the day, and the Grove Cave survey is now superbly drafted using Topodroid.

There is such a magical coming together of science and art in drawing cave maps. I look forward to more practice and exposure.

Slow cooker bubbled along all day, Texas style pulled pork aromas filling the cabin.

Cat & Garth came by for the day and stayed for dinner. The fire pit in front of the cabins provided the perfect setting for our communal dinner.



Elliot (& Andre) checking out the entrance to Gove.



Tropodroid as it looks on the iPad, Garry creating the map in real time with the DistoX.

Since this weekend I have done loads of online tutorials in drawing software such as Inkscape and Illustrator and spent many hours playing around. I am feeling ready, and looking forward to more surveying in September.

A great weekend – let's do it again!



Canyoning – Newnes Plateau, 22 – 23 June 2019

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants Saturday: Sil Ian (VSA), Trish Morrow, Rob & Matthew Clyne, Alan Green, Heather Reid, Marcia Kaye, Bill Rookyard, Alissa Martelli & Marilyn Scott (TL)

Participants Saturday night: Sil Ian, Trish Morrow, Alan Green, Heather Reid, Bill Rookyard, John & Kathy Gray & kids & Marilyn Scott

Participants Sunday: Sil Ian, Alan Green, Heather Reid, Bill Rookyard & Marilyn Scott (TL)

We had a cast of thousands at times, particularly around the campfire as it was *FreezeFest*, and we had a number of Fat Canyoners join us at Barcoo Swamp. The weather was fine but freezing cold, I'm sure it was around -5°C at various times during the weekend but we all seemed to survive (lots of down jackets, sleeping bags etc).

On Saturday instead of splitting the group in two, we had enough ropes for the whole trip, so Trish went ahead and set all the abseils and Rob, Bill and I cleaned them up after everyone had gone through. Some of us did get wet feet, but that was the limit of our discomfort.

Once back at the cars, Bill, Heather and I went off to Wolgan View to fill in the rest of the day, the others went back to camp to make sure the fire was roaring.



(l-r) Alissa, Sil, Trish, Bill, Marcia & Rob



The air temperature was around 0 so none of us wanted to get wet, on the first abseil it was a matter of walking the log



Same thing on the downclimb after the first abseil, for a while there was a log to step on but the last couple of people didn't have that luxury.



Everyone took advantage of the fire grill.

When we arrived back at camp, we were surprised to see the Gray family (complete with camper van). John and Kathy joined us around the campfire on Saturday night.

The Fat Canyoners joined us around the campfire, a great opportunity to network with other canyoners. Lots of great food cooked on the grill finished off with strawberries and blueberries soaked in Cointreau (thanks Heather), mud cake (happy birthday Sil) and roasted marshmallows cooked by the Gray kids.

On Sunday we did Deep Pass, The Slot and the Cave. There was a bit more water in

Deep Pass than what I'm used to, but maybe it was just normal and I haven't gone through in winter before, trying to stay dry! The challenge for the day was to keep dry. The slot, as usual was a big WOW moment, and then we went around to the cave (tagged), and I sent them down to check it – bad leader that I was, not everyone had a helmet and the only light they had was an i-Phone. I did get a little nervous when they were longer than expected, huge sigh of relief as they all emerged from the darkness.

FreezeFest is an annual event (when they remember to put it on that is), usually held around the Winter Solstice. The location changes depending on what they feel like at the time. Two of the Fat Canyoners actually did Hole in the Wall – mind you T2 carries a bit of body weight so he probably doesn't feel the cold (lol). It's a good networking event and an opportunity to get the MSS name out there, so worthwhile thinking about it for next year.



Alan photographing as Sil tries to negotiate the leap of faith across the deep pool - and keep her feet dry.

It was a great weekend, with a record turnout for canyoning in the winter – thanks everyone for coming!

NOTE: Alan & I met Sil at the Tassie conference in January, she hadn't canyoned before and so I said I would take her through some easy ones, back in May we picked the date, it was still warm then, not sure I would have chosen to do the trip in below zero temperatures, but when the date is set and airline tickets bought, not much you can do!



Caving – Skills Development – SRT, 7 July 2019

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: David Stuckey (the guru), Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Trish Morrow, Marcia Kaye, Alan Green, Bill Rookyard

We all met up at Lane Cove NP at 9.30am, was a bit chilly, but we expected to soon warm up. With most of us being rank beginners, David went through an overview of gear. Both Marcia and I had new chest harnesses, so our objective was to sort them out to see how they worked and Trish and I learned how to add some more friction to our four bar Racks.

We set up a number of ropes this time, so that some of us could practice the “down prussiking” that we’d struggled



Lots of gear to carry in - and David's equalising anchor set up.



David giving Bill some pointers for prussiking

short term.

Alan tried out David's Donkey Tail rope that he uses to have a heavy pack hanging off his harness (rather than on his back), it worked like a dream, I'll definitely be using something similar on my canyon trips, haven't bothered before but now see the error of my ways (lol).

We finished up at 3pm, all pretty tired after a lot of exertion. We will run another notice SRT day, as we all still need more practice, but for the short term, we're all proficient enough to do Tuglow in September.

Thanks David for another information-packed field day!

with the last time, and others could just practice prussiking up a nice cliff face.

We all mastered the down prussiking (even me who struggled with my equipment last time), and then David set up a hanging re-belay. Anna mastered it, but I ended up prussiking back up the rope, not enough upper body strength to hold onto the belay and undo my two cows tails (overkill using two!) so figured it was just easier to go back up. I'll give it a go next time with a belay (or redirect) on a flat wall, maybe that will be easier, in the meantime, no trips with hanging belays for me in the



Nice easy rock faces to practice on.

Caving – Abercrombie, 13 – 14 July 2019

Report by: Rod Smith

Participants: Rod Smith (TL), Tanya Smith, Connor Brown, Ellie Brown, Peter Dykes (CWSS), MacKenzie (CWSS), Brody (CWSS)

The purpose of this trip was to make some more progress on the tasks required for the book. Unfortunately, things don't always go according to plan.

Tanya and the kids arrived at my house on Thursday night. Friday morning we loaded up my car and headed west. The plan was to arrive at Abercrombie before 5pm to get the keys to the cabin for the weekend. Tanya wasn't feeling well, which then seemed to lead to motion sickness. We got to Springwood before needing to stop so she could get some air. Tanya tried driving for a while, but that didn't help too much.

We made it to Katoomba and I suggested some Travelcalm might help. So chemist, then something for lunch, then Woolworths for food for the rest of the weekend. By the time we'd done all that it was clear we were not going to get to Abercrombie by 5pm.

We called Stuart at Abercrombie and he kindly left the key to our cabin in the door, and even turned the heater on for us. We made it by 6pm.

Saturday morning we had arranged to meet Peter and some others from CWSS (Central West Speleological Society) at 9am. Somehow, despite Connor and Ellie being typical children, we managed to make it on time. I checked in with Stuart and got the cave key. But no Peter. I told Stuart we'd be around the Arch somewhere, so if someone comes looking for us to send them that way.

My Plan A was to surface survey, starting at A13-14. We went through KST and the Arch so Tanya and the kids could see some of the features of Abercrombie. We arrived at A13-14 just as it started to drizzle, so we headed up to Coops Bluff to (hopefully) shelter from the rain until it passed. A couple of minutes later we realised it wasn't rain, it was sleet. And it didn't look like passing. So we beat a hasty retreat back to the Arch.

Plan B was to survey some of the small caves off the Arch, like A45, A59, A52 and A54. That wasn't an option as the creek was up a bit from last time and I hadn't brought gumboots. So, we went for Plan C, I started surveying Bushranger.

I showed Tanya how to use the Disto-X2, got Connor writing down the survey data while Ellie helped me sketch the cave. We barely got in the gate when Peter appeared with Brody and MacKenzie.

I'd been reading a lot of old trip reports recently, including a lot about the Bushy Dig, which apparently got to 100m in length. So, I sent the CWSS crew into Bushranger to have a look around but also to have a look at the dig and see how far it goes. Meanwhile I continued surveying.

I was only a couple of legs into the survey, with Connor and Ellie checking out some of the holes to the side of the main passage, when the CWSS contingent returned. Brody and MacKenzie had looked at the dig but said it didn't go far, maybe about ten metres, before getting too small.

With the attention span of the younger cavers already starting to wane we decided to head back to the cabin for lunch and plan the afternoon's activities.

The wind, which was very strong in the mountains, was not bad at Abercrombie, at least at ground level. It was obvious that the wind in the upper atmosphere was howling. It was blowing weather changes over at such a rate even a Melbourneite would be impressed. At the end of lunch it was fine, so we set out hoping it might stay that way.

Peter, Brody and MacKenzie headed south towards the Grove Creek Falls to look for tags that are meant to be down that way. I took Tanya, Connor and Ellie on another attempt at the surface survey.

On the way we had a quick look for a missing tag opposite the balcony. Connor climbed the slope on the Arch side while Ellie headed further up the track looking for holes. No-one found anything. Connor got to a point where it was clearly safer for him to traverse right rather than come back down to the track. I called out instructions to Connor to do that. Ellie decided to help by repeating the instructions, somewhat. "Go right, yeah straight". That seemed to make sense to Connor.

We got to A13-14 and this time I managed four legs before the sleet started.

Back to the Arch for shelter and figure out what's next. I remembered looking at A48 and thinking it would be difficult to get into, but I could easily lift the kids in. That way they could tell me a bit about what to expect in there. I lifted Connor in and then Ellie, and their lights showed me the entrance chamber at least. The entrance doesn't look big, circular with a diameter around 50cm. But it immediately gets bigger. The

width remains similar, but the height gets beyond 1m. It slopes gently uphill for a few metres before levelling off and swinging left. Connor got just out of sight before reporting it got tight. I suspect it's smaller than the entrance, but potentially still goes for a small caver.

Once Connor and Ellie were out of the cave Connor continued exploring along the base of the cliff. Just round the corner he found a hole that was untagged, but should be tagged. Also small, but probably big enough for the right person.

We kept following Connor and got to a point where it appeared it would be easier to keep going up onto the Arch rather trying to go back. So that's what we did.

The time had snuck by so that it was approaching sunset. We headed down the track past KST and had a look for another tag that's meant to be in that area. Another tag I still haven't located.

We met up with Peter, Brody and MacKenzie and found that they'd had as much luck finding tags as we had. Due to the temperature Peter decided that he would head back to his place with Brody and MacKenzie rather than camp the night. I think he made a wise choice.

We hadn't set a specific time to be ready on Sunday morning, which meant it was a slower start. It was closer to 11am when we started towards the Grove Creek Falls, because Connor and Ellie wanted to explore that way.

I showed them the couple of caves I know about down that way, but they weren't keen to go into them. Tanya and I had decided that we would drive to the falls on the way home, so we wouldn't walk the whole way down there. We walked a bit further looking for holes.

I saw one possibility from a distance that will require further investigation, but not easy to get too. Otherwise the only other thing achieved was teaching the kids to skip stones.

Despite the minimal progress and less-than-ordinary weather it was still an enjoyable trip.



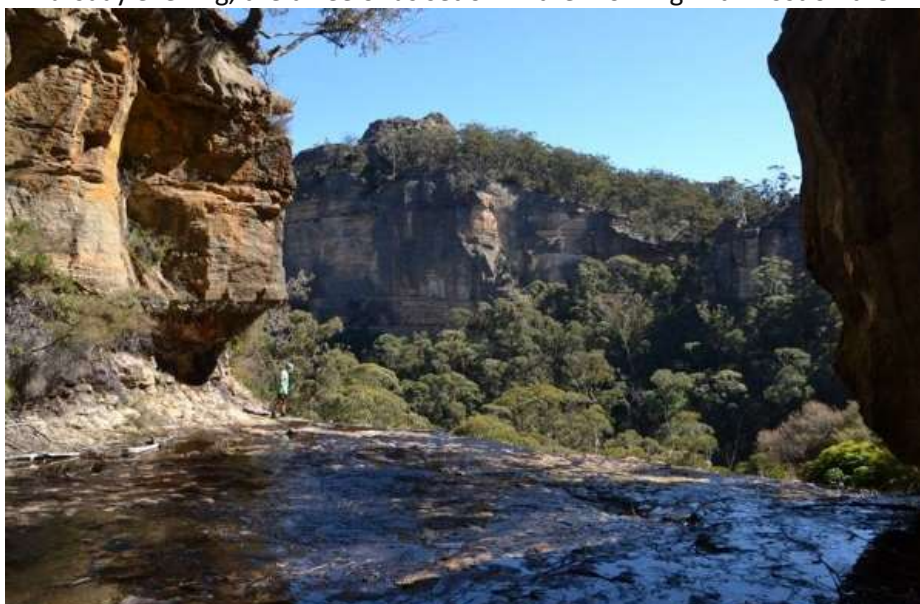
Autumn Colours – Abercrombie Caves – July 2019

Car Camp – Sunnyside Ridge, 23 – 25 August 2019

Report by: John Gray

Participants: **Friday – Wolgan Falls** (John Gray (TL), Marilyn Scott, Bill Rookyard)

After a roaring campfire on Thursday evening, the three of us set off in the morning with frost on the cars. The objective was to explore a narrow, pagoda studded spur overlooking Wolgan Falls. After walking through the bush for some time we burst out onto an unexpected vehicle track on Green's Spur. It was not long before we were exploring the rugged rocky terrain that terminated in a 2m wide ridge of rock. It was a stunning day and the Wolgan River could be seen winding through it's tight bends below. An occasional glimpse of Wolgan Falls far below tempted us to rig a handline down to a ledge. From there we traversed



Bill looking over the edge of Wolgan Falls (Photo: John Gray)



Marilyn sitting on top of the second last pagoda on Greens Spur (Photo: John Gray)

ledges, beat our way through thick ferns, climbed down huge boulders and finally squeezed through a split rock to emerge at the top of the falls. Back on to the spur for lunch and we spent the afternoon exploring the loops in the Wolgan River upstream of the falls. It was a pleasant cliff lined area that was worth a look. At one point we found a very steep, short slot canyon that led to the tops. We finished the walk by following a motorbike track back to the Sunnyside Ridge Trail. That evening Min, Heather and

Trish arrived to share roaring campfire number 2.

Saturday – Cathedral Canyon (John Gray, Marilyn Scott, Bill Rookyard, Richard Neville, Heather Da Silva, Trish Neill, Anna Ossig-Bonanno)

Another perfect weather day. After a short drive we followed a gully towards where we had previously sussed out Cathedral Canyon. The gully suddenly dropped down a very narrow slot with multiple pools of water of unknown depth. A chockstone provided an anchor and Min went first. He managed to avoid all of the pools, but the drop was longer than one of the two ropes (20m & 27m). We re-rigged for single rope abseil with the last person re-adjusting by pulling the knot down the pitch. Three of us got a waist deep wade after failing to bridge the final pool. The last bit of the abseil was overhung and thanks to my foot the only foothold below the lip is no longer attached. Who needs skin on their knees anyway? We spent some time photographing in Cathedral Canyon while some got cold.

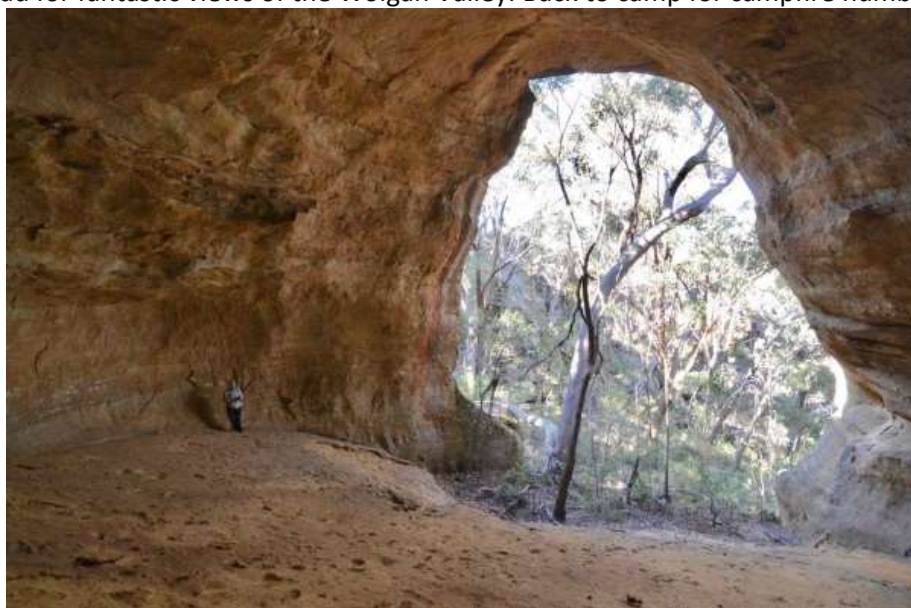


Min in the slot canyon (Photo: John Gray)



Min in the Crack of Doom 1 (Photo: John Gray)

Moving on we found the amazing Crack of Doom 2 and then had lunch in the sun. Next was Crack of Doom 1 which was very narrow. I got two thirds of the way up by breathing out with every move upwards. Most got to the cliff top via the crack but I backed out when it got even narrower. Trish and I walked around the corner and found the Doom Caves. It was fairly early when we got back to the cars, so we did a 4WD trip to Adrenalin Head for fantastic views of the Wolgan Valley. Back to camp for campfire number 3.



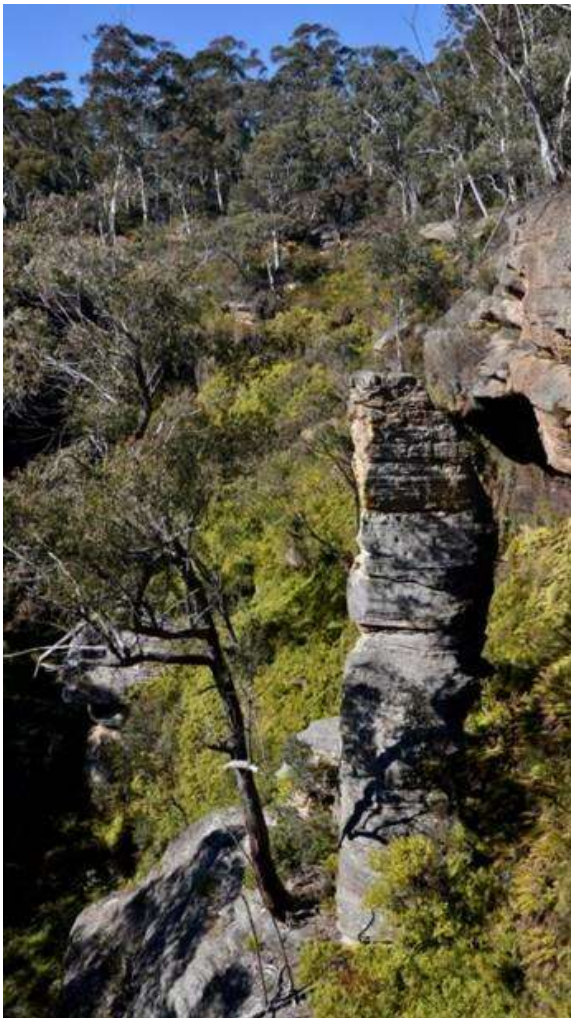
Trish in the Doom Cave (Photo John Gray)

Sunday – Gang Gang Creek (John Gray, Marilyn Scott, Richard Neville, Heather Da Silva, Trish Neill)

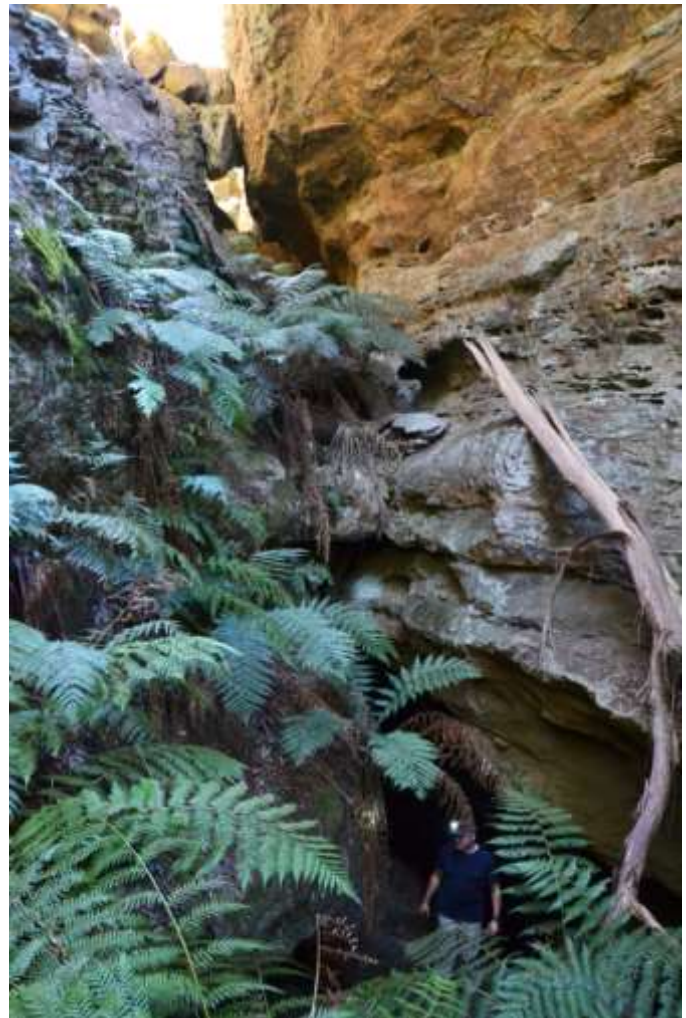
Perfect weather yet again. Anna had gone home the night before and Bill left early in the morning. Anna was meeting us at Bungleboori Campsite but had car trouble. The rest of us parked on the North Ridge Trail. During the day we found Lots Wife (a sandstone pillar) before continuing to abseil next to Gang Gang Falls. A bit of bashing through



thick ferns brought us to the Gang Gang Tunnels. We had been here 2 years previously and found the lower tunnel but this time we went through the very dark upstream tunnel. After lunch we found a side creek that appeared to have an unclimbable falls. Min spied a narrow ledge that proved to go (after removing some scrub). This got us back to the cars at a respectable time for the drive home.



Lots Wife feature in Creek (photo: John Gray)



Min at the entry to the cave (rock fall) (photo: John Gray)





Appendix 1 – MEETING MINUTES

MSS 430th General Meeting – 01 August 2019

Held at North Ryde RSL, meeting Opened: 19:15

Present: Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Chris Johnstone, Marilyn Scott, Jim Crockett, Rob + Pam Horn David Stuckey, Helena Johnstone, Owen Johnstone

Apologies: Roderick Smith, Beth Little

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence: ASF magazine, SUSS journals x 2, Commonwealth Bank Statements

Committee Members Reports:

President: None

Treasurer: Account balance as at 1 August 2019:

Opening Balance at start of 2018/19 year:	\$3,969.21
Total Incoming to date:	\$4,410.62
Total Outgoing to date:	\$2,948.63
Closing Balance as at 14 May 2019:	\$5,431.20

- **Action from previous meeting:** Beth to tell Mark Hornshaw to use the other account – Beth to advise whether this has been done.
- **Action from previous meeting:** Jim to write a letter to bank to close the Account – Beth Little/Jim Crockett/Rod Smith are signatories. Left over money to be transferred to New account at Bendigo Bank. Jim advised account not yet closed, hard to get 2 people at the bank at the same time.
- There is at least one reimbursement pending, \$135 to Rod Smith for paying the Post Office Box renewal. Payment completed.
- Payment of \$226 was made to ASF for membership.

Equipment Officer: None.

Training Officer:

- 25 May & 7 July training days went ahead.
- Upcoming: 8 September Canyoning Skills at Yellow Rock, abseil practice for beginners/self rescue skills for intermediate/anchor systems and rope set ups in afternoon – Tim Vollmer will attend afternoon session to give overview of Fiddlestick set up.
- 19 & 20 October Cave Surveying Course at Wombeyan – course full.
- Marilyn proposed MSS Subsidising first aid courses for trip leaders – see actions below.

Librarian: None.

Web Manager: None

Membership Report: As at 1/8/19

At end of year	1 adult family	Two adult family	Single	Intro Single	Intro 1 adult family	Member of another club	Total adults	Total kids
1/1/17 – 31/12/17	4	7	17	4	0	0	40	13
1/1/18 – 31/12/18	3	8	23	8	1	1	52	15
1/1/19 – 31/12/19	4	8	22	7	0	1	49	15

New members Bill Rookyard (intro), Brendan Byrne (conversion to full membership)

Full members who have not renewed: Michael Reifenstein

Introductory members due: Yunn Chin (1/11/19), Jon Finch (15/8/19), Melinda Turner (15/11/19)

Membership is now around 49, but the membership is aging.

Marilyn, proposed that we position ourselves as

- a strong canyoning club;
- a caving club that focusses on skills development e.g. cave surveying course & SRT training; and
- a caving club that focusses on long caving trips (week-long trips)

Proposed to do a projection of big trips for next year at AGM.

Action from previous meeting: Rod to clarify the rules on under 18s/ Minors as being part of Family memberships, it was noted we may need to update the Constitution if this needs to be amended – No updates from ASF.

Interesting stories from recent activities: David Stuckey told stories about drone flying including crashes.

Project Updates:

Abercrombie Cave Book:

Beth emailed a report covering the period May – Aug 2019.

- Contact with G Bates a success. Geoff.bates@bigpond.com.au 4787 7323
 - Geoff confirmed he has no plans for a second Abers book himself
 - He is happy if we wanted to use any material from his book with appropriate acknowledgement
 - He is happy to review our history chapters. I have forwarded him the chapters in June for review.
- Grant accepted by ASF.
- Follow-up potential authors:
 - Still no confirmation from A Spate (Cave critters chapter);
 - Have followed up no luck with follow up for Chapter on Indigenous History
 - Successful contact with bird groups. Put in direction of the Australian Bird Atlas Coordinator. He has agreed to give us the bird survey for this region for \$90, including a site review later in year and some pictures.
 - Successful contact with Goulburn Field Naturalist. They have agreed to do an up to date flora survey for us and provide the info and photos for the book chapter. stephash@tpg.com.au
- Garry Smith has completed his 'How Caves Form' chapter.
- June field trip:
 - P Maynard - survey continued Main cave.
 - G Smith, B Little, M Scott completed Grove cave.
 - D Stuckey - Drone photography
- July field trip: Rod commenced surface survey

PLAN for next 3 months

- Contact A Spate again.
- Sept trip; survey projects the priority.

Business Carried forward and Action items from last meeting:

Future Training Opportunities

Marilyn Scott suggested that MSS subsidize a portion of a first aid course to encourage leaders/members to obtain a current first aid certificate. Vital first aid costs \$105 – 1 day course (David Stuckey and Marilyn recently did this).

Resolved: Leaders/members can apply for subsidies if they have done 2 trips in the last year and are active members (subsidy up to \$50 pp).

Moved: Marilyn Scott; **Seconded:** Cathi Humphrey-Hood – Carried.

Marilyn Scott tabled a report of who has First aid Course and potential leaders who might be candidates.

Action: Marilyn to put an item in the newsletter to contact Marilyn Scott if they wish to take advantage of the subsidy offer.

Under 18 membership and Membership type Discussion

Resolved: That MSS use the definition of “children”(specifically those over 18), similar to health care, i.e. “dependent children” which includes those over 18 who are still dependant.

Moved: Chris Johnstone; Seconded: Cathi Humphrey-Hood. Carried.

Documentation – Constitution

Related to Membership type Discussion: Need to refine the definition of family memberships – particularly to cover those who are over 18 and were included under a family membership but would like to continue membership.

Proposed new wording for family membership to cover dependent children/minors.

Family memberships

- *Family memberships are for groups within the immediate family of up to 2 guardians plus any number of dependent persons up to the age of 25 from that immediate family in their guardianship and are not transferable*
- *Determination of the guardians and inclusion of the dependent persons from that immediate family as part of a family membership is at the discretion of the committee*

On other membership types:

Currently we have:

- a) *Honorary membership*
 - I. *In special circumstances the committee may allow a full member to become an honorary member and such memberships will not be subject to subscriptions. Such subscriptions will not include fees payable to the ASF.*
 - II. *Honorary membership must be approved by a majority of the committee.*

Chris Johnstone said that he thinks the wording for Honorary membership is enough, but is open to suggestions for change. Matter to be dealt with at AGM.

KNP Track strategy and Plan of Management (PoM) amendments

01/08/2019 - No update

Server

01/08/2019 - No update

ASF membership fee proposal

Action: Rod Smith to report back after next ASF executive meeting

01/08/2019 - no update

New Business

30 Anniversary Clothes on offer

More archive material received from Bob Horn. In addition, Bob has a 30 year anniversary jumper (XL) - they are on offer to anyone who wants them.

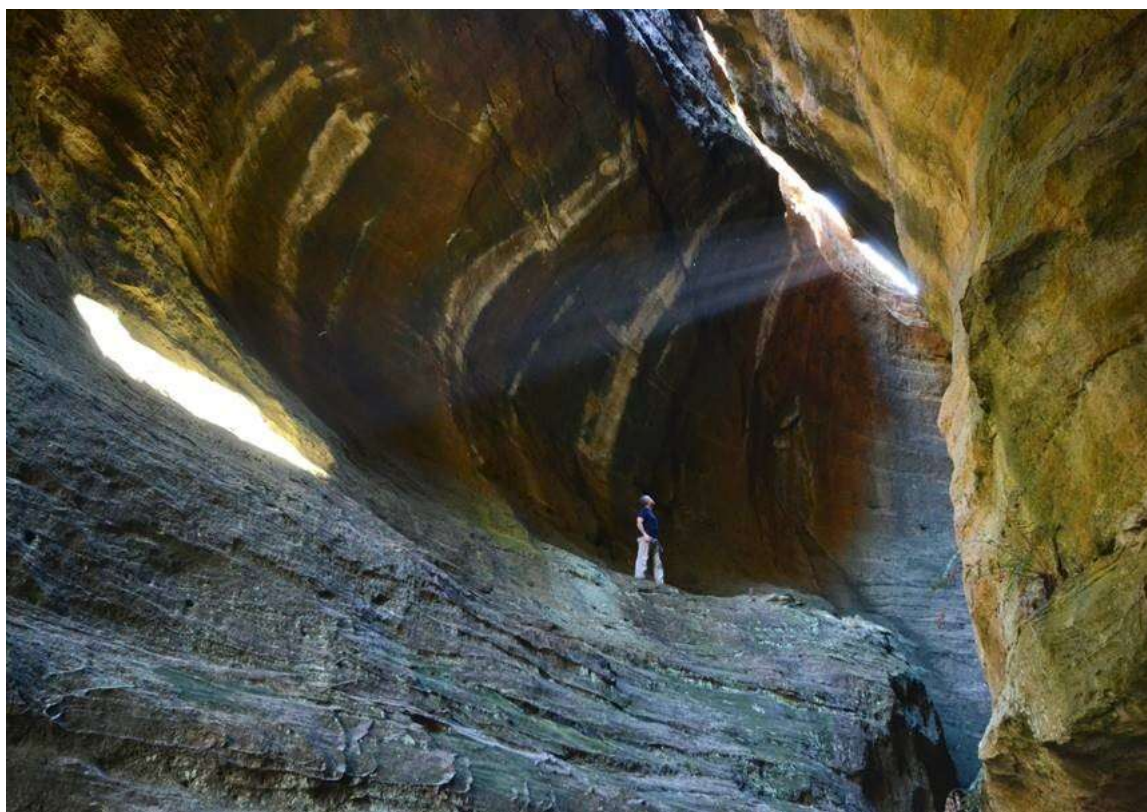
New trips – (refer to Calendar all new trips are denoted **NEW** – Drop Box link for Calendar editing

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/MSS%20Calendar>):

- 28-29 Sept – Canyoning Washed Away Creek, Shoalhaven
- 26 Oct – 3 Nov – Tambo Creek Epic Expedition
- 29 Nov -1 Dec – Yarramun Creek
- Proposal Nov or Dec or Jan – Ashford and Texas Caves (northern NSW) – needs to be done before the drought breaks (contact Cathi HH)
- Philippines – March/April 2020 (flexible time frame) MSS have been invited on an Archaeological dig in the Philippines in Palawan, Tabon Man Cave Expressions of interest to Jim Crockett.

Next Meeting: AGM - 9-10 November 2019 – Berkley Vale – Marilyn Scott's house. Camping on the lawn Meeting on the evening Sat 9th evening. Abseiling into the Shark Hole Sunday 10 Nov.

Meeting Closed: 20:30pm



Sunbeams in Cathedral Canyon – August 2019 (photo: John Gray)