

Quarterly NEWSLETTER

Spring 2014 Edition
Issued December 2014



MSS NEWSLETTER

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Photo by Garry K Smith	

Society Information

Club EPIRB

Just a reminder to all trip leaders that we have the new EPIRB and this should be taken on every remote trip. Our Equipment Officer, Jim (0407 284 256), jcrockett3@bigpond.com, has this, so please coordinate with him to collect it before you lead your next trip.

MSS Officers list

Position

President president@mssadventure.org.au
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Name

Jim Crockett
Rod Smith
Cathi Humphrey Hood
Jim Crockett
Rod Smith
Beth Little
Jim Crockett,
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Natalie Etherton
Rod Smith
John Gray

Membership Details

Full member \$80
Prospective member \$30 (3 months)
Family membership \$160

Honorary membership \$45
Membership of other ASF Clubs \$30
Preference is for payment by Direct Debit to MSS Bank Account
BSB 062-021 Account 00901421 (Commonwealth Bank)
Cheques or Cash also accepted.

International Congress of Speleology 2017

As some of you might already be aware, Australia will be playing host to the ICS (International Congress of Speleology in 2017 in Sydney).

The ICS Organising Committee is currently looking for groups to organise various field trips before and after the running on the Congress. At the last MSS meeting it was decided that MSS was in a position to organise field trips to Yarrangobilly caves and it was agreed we should proceed with this task. It was also felt that it might be better to organise this in collaboration with another group so currently we are having discussions with CSS (Canberra Speleological Society).

If any club members are interested in helping out with this could you please advise Rod Smith or Jim Crockett.

<https://www.facebook.com/MSSAdventure>

<http://www.mssadventure.org.au/>

[MSSAdventure WEBSITE Update](#)

Next time you login to the member's area of the Website you will notice a new access method requiring a member's login and a password.

This feature has been added to improve the security of the member's area.

To access the members area the login will be your current Email address and the password remains as "forester".

There is an added feature to allow you to make a password change and also if you wish to change the login to something else other than your Email you can send a message to the MSS Website administrator.

There will be other features added in the future including a more dynamic list of current members as the current list is way out of date.

Editors Comments.

As you may see from the AGM minutes there are some new faces who have joined the MSS committee and operations teams.

We welcome Cathi Humphrey-Hood who is the new treasurer and Natalie Etherton who is the new Newsletter editor.

So this will be my last Newsletter and I get to hand over the treasurer's job. Two jobs which I have enjoyed taking part in over the last 5 years or so but are happy to offload as I can now concentrate my efforts as I am the Secretary for the International Congress of Speleology in 2017 (Also called Speleo2017) and I am sure this role will keep me busy for the next 3 years.

We are planning a **HUGE EVENT** in September next year when **MSS Celebrates 50 Years Underground.**

See upcoming events for more information.

Trip Reports

Jenolan - 23rd-24th August

Participants: Beth Little, Ray Etherton, Natalie Etherton, Fletcher Etherton, Rob Clyne, Laura Clyne, Angus Wildie, Sapphire Wildie, Tony Le, Rod Smith (TL)

It's always nice to arrive at Jenolan to find the Cavers Cottage already open, with a cheery blaze burning and a warm welcome from a group of friends. After a couple of games of sevens we were ready to "hit the hay" to make sure we were ready for what lay ahead.

Rob and Laura arrived early Saturday morning, I visited the guides office and collected the necessary keys, and soon we were all ready to go. Our initial destination, Little Canyon Cave.



The primary objective for the weekend was to recreate a dig that had been done about 40 years previously. This is situated in the downstream end of the stream passage in Little Canyon Cave. The report from the previous dig indicated that once through there was a chamber with a rock pile at the other end and they were unable to find a way to continue.

We selected various implements of sediment repositioning and carried them up the valley. The pig trap works as a good marker to indicate you are in the right area. With the weather not looking good, and the pungent aroma of rotting pig filling the air, we didn't take too long to get ourselves underground.



Far left : the starting point of the dig
Left: Getting on with the digging operation

The first task we had was picking the appropriate place to leave the dug-out sediment. Thankfully we found a good spot that met to the dig. I then proceeded to show everyone the dig itself.

organised and the dig was under way. Like a well-oiled machine, along the dirt conga-line, and the hole slowly began to deepen. everyone had an opportunity at the dig itself, and no-one felt

all the conditions reasonably close

It wasn't long before we were all people fell quickly into position Tasks were rotated so that stuck in any particular task.

Below: Sapphire gets into position
Right: Fletcher getting into the digging action



Lunch was eaten above ground, but the pig stench meant we didn't want to be up there too long. The rain starting also worked as a prod to get us back to work.

Ray dove into the dig like a mad thing after lunch, and the bucket haulers struggled to keep up. The frenetic pace couldn't last, but progress continued through the afternoon.

We eventually called it quits, having made very good progress, but not getting through. We made our way back to the Cavers Cottage for our evening meal and Ticket to Ride (a board game).

Sunday morning Rob and Laura had to leave. Ray had injured his shoulder, or was being a big girl, so opted to stay at the Cavers Cottage with Fletcher (who had had enough). The rest of us prepared to depart, but Sapphire then decided to stay behind as well when she found out Ray and Fletcher were planning to play Ticket to Ride.

That left five of us to return to the cave and continue to dig. We didn't stick around to admire the aroma of the deceased bovine, instead getting underground in short order. With less people we had to reduce the conga line to only the more necessary positions, but were removing soil in short order.

Thinking that we still had a long way to go, we were surprised when Tony said he thought he could get through. He had a go, which required removing his helmet, and made it!

Below: Tony is the first through.

Right: After more digging Rod breaks through to The new passage.



Beth had a look and decided it wasn't quite big enough for her to follow yet, so we continued digging while Tony explored the other side. We had made some good progress before Tony returned. He squeezed back through and then I had a look. It was still too small for me to try it.

Before recommencing the dig Beth noticed a rather full leech in

the bottom of the dig, obviously brought in on one of us. Tony thought it must off come off him, so immediately exited and walked back to the Cavers Cottage. Meanwhile we moved the leech out of the way and continued digging.

It took a bit longer, but eventually Beth decided she could get through, and so she did. I quickly followed, especially after Beth assured me I would fit. Angus had some difficulty but also made it through.

The chamber on the other side started with a section less than a metre wide but up to three metres high. After a couple of metres the roof descended to a point where we had to duck under to continue, but it quickly ascended again. A couple of metres further on the left wall turned away with the width getting to about four metres. On the left the floor appeared to slope upwards.

Ahead was a rock bridge about a metre and a half high which we could climb over with the help of some boulders. A bit of investigation was required to find that there was a hole under the bridge through which the stream flowed. The other side of the bridge was then the largest section of the chamber, but soon finished in rock pile.

We spent about half an hour in the chamber, mainly seeing if there was a way onwards. There's nothing obviously, if there was it probably would have been found previously, but there's a couple of spots worth further investigation.

It was then time to return. We collected all our gear and made our way back to the cars. While removing overalls and gumboots I find a leech bite with the appropriate amount of blood, so I was responsible for the leech.

Another top trip.

Rod.

Buchan Caves 13th-21st September

Note: All photos credited to Garry K Smith

In September I organised a trip to a Buchan feautiful part of the world, a little place called Buchan. Considered one of Victoria's premier caving areas, it had been on my list of places to visit for quite a while, and so I made my chance.

I awoke on Saturday the 13th of September with a long, and at times Buchan foring, drive in front of me. By the time I arrived at Orbost I was ready for a Buchan freak, so I decided to have a look in the Tourist Info. As I approached the door I heard a familiar voice, Ken was chatting to the lady working there.



Ken and I had a good stretch of the legs and a chat while admiring some of the local artwork. From Orbost it's not far to the quaint little town of Buchan. Having never Buchan feen there Buchan fefore, I didn't expect it to be as Buchan fig as it is, not that you'd call it a thriving metropolis. Our accommodation, Homeleigh, was easy to find, and there we found Garry and Sonia had already arrived.

**Left: Rod Smith in Wilsons cave.
Photo: Garry K Smith**

Homeleigh is Buchan frilliant. There's a variety of Buchan fedrooms and enough Buchan feds to sink a Buchan fattleship. There's a massive kitchen and equally massive dining table in the next room. This is luxury caving. Here I also met Lou Williams, who was to be our guide for the first weekend. Nat and Beth arrived later in the evening having taken a more leisurely drive than myself. Sunday started with Lou giving me a quick tour of Homeleigh and explaining some of my responsibilities as Member In Charge for our stay. We then all went for a drive to The Potholes Reserve where a number of the accessible caves could be found. The most memorable part of the drive was when Beth, the queen of inappropriate comments, said to Ken, "I'm sitting on your thing". At The Potholes Reserve Lou pointed out Honeycomb cave, where a number of scouts were Buchan fusy spelunking. We then walked off to check out numerous other holes,

including Razor, Baby Berger, Baby Pierre, Oolite and Expotential Pot. While GPSing and familiarising ourselves with the various caves in the area, Lou gave us a lot of history regarding the discovery of many of the caves, and other interesting titbits. After the walk we got Buchan fack into the cars for a drive further up the road. Lou pointed out a plethora of karst features, including more caves, finishing at Shades Of Death. We then retraced our steps to Homeleigh for lunch. We opted to start our underground activities with an easier cave, choosing Wilsons Cave. Lou had shown Garry where the cave was at some ridiculously early hour of the morning, i.e. Buchan fefore I was out of Buchan fed. So Garry led the way. Wilsons has an optional abseil entrance, which we had a look at, but then chose to forego. Instead we found the track down to the main entrance and did the walk in option. It would take a lot of talent to get lost in Wilsons Cave, the cave's a Buchan freeze. There are a couple of side passages that don't go far, Buchan fut is otherwise a through trip going under the road. I was still surprised at how much cave there was considering how close Buchan foth the entrance and exit were from the vehicles. Garry took a number of photos, until his flashes started playing up. (Thankfully they were permanently Buchan fugged.) Some included Beth and I climbing up to a high ledge, which I always find enjoyable.

The only part of Wilsons that provided a Buchan fit of a challenge was the exit. There are three options, none of which are overly easy. Nat decided to go Buchan fack the way we went in, the rest of us Buchan fattled out the exit. With some grunting and groaning, and pushing and shoving, we emerged in a field on the opposite side of the road. Only one minute later we were Buchan fack at the vehicles. Then it was Buchan fack to the hut to pick up Sonia and up to the general store to get some supplies that had either Buchan feen forgotten or we didn't know we needed. From the general store it's only a short walk to Kym Van Dyk's place. After introducing

ourselves we asked if she'd mind showing us through Shades Of Death later in the week, which she was happy to oblige. We also got to check out her orchards, she has quite an impressive collection.

Returning to Homeleigh, there were showers, dinner and Buchan foard games to finish off the day. We also welcomed the rest of the participants (except Bruce, as he arrived later in the week).

We decided to get a Buchan fit more serious Monday with a trip into Honeycomb. So we loaded gear into a selection of vehicles (no need for everyone to drive) and made our way to The Potholes Reserve. We managed to confuse Ken and Peter on the way so we thought we'd lost them for a while, but we hadn't. (Does that mean we weren't trying hard enough!?)

The entrance to Honeycomb is a pitch of about 10m which actually looked climbable.



We then left our harnesses and SRT gear and dropped through a squeeze into a nice chamber. The way on from there continued to descend until reaching a T-intersection. Once there I found that Ken had had a Buchan foot Buchan flow-out Buchan fut, obviously anticipating such an eventuality, he had Buchan fraught a spare pair of shoes. He did, however, only change the one, so had a very mismatched pair of footwear for the rest of the cave. There was also a suggestion of leaving the Buchan froken Buchan foot on a ledge as a memento for the cave, but Buchan feing against caving guidelines to leave stuff Buchan fehind, it came out with us.



Far Left: Natalie on descent into Honeycomb cave.

Left: How often do you cave with spare boots, well Ken did.

Photos: Garry K. Smith

From the T-intersection we went right, climbed lower, took another right in another chamber, climbed lower still, did an interesting step-across (or climb down and Buchan fack up for some) and found ourselves on top of a rock-pile. Under one side of the rock-pile a couple of the more adventurous, and leaner, cavers found another pitch. Without the gear to explore the pitch, we explored the rock-pile and a couple of leads from it Buchan before returning to the previous chamber.



Garry lead the way up to another chamber while a couple of us explored some other climby Buchan fits. In the end we all ended up in the chamber Garry had led us too and we stopped for some lunch. After lunch Garry took some photos of people around some lovely formations, and then we all dispersed to check out various passages. There are lots of pretties hidden in various chambers which made it a very worthwhile afternoon.

Left: NVHSS and MSS group in Honeycomb cave.

Photos: Garry K. Smith

As is always the case, there came a time to make our way to the surface. While everyone else returned the way they had come, I took the short-cut across the "traverse of death". Although there are enough good hand-holds, a misstep would

have proved very painful.

I was the first to arrive at the site of Ken's Buchan foot Buchan flow-out and needed to point a couple of people the way on from there. Up into the first chamber then up through the squeeze and up the pitch. We were later informed that the majority of rescues from Honeycomb were Buchan because cavers couldn't find the squeeze up to the entrance pitch and so were stuck in the first chamber. This was great for rescuers as voice contact could be established from the surface.

As we left The Potholes Reserve Peter realised he'd left his GPS on the Buchan fonnnet of his car. Jumping out to get it he left the hand-Buchan frake off. As a result he had to quickly grab the GPS and return to the driver's seat Buchan before the Landcruiser rolled away from him. For those of us who saw it it was Buchan floody hilarious.

Greg Leeder, who was to be our VSA guide for the rest of our trip, had arrived while we were underground. We planned Tuesday's activities and then settled in for the evening.

We had Buchan feen informed that we could get a free guided tour through one of the tourist caves, which was very generous of the guides at Buchan. As such, we had decided to go and have a look at one of them on Tuesday morning. Unfortunately, we only discovered when we got out there that we needed to Buchan fook in with them and they wouldn't be able to fit us in that morning. We Buchan fooked in for Thursday morning and then decided to do the tourist walk to Spring Creek Falls.

We followed the Tea-tree walk, Sonia making it about halfway Buchan before her knee let itself be known, and she was forced to retreat to the vehicles. The rest of us regrouped at the falls lockout where numerous photos were taken. We then returned via the Kanooka track, which is a Buchan fit rougher and involves a couple of creek crossings. The lighting was great, at times, for photos in the creek, making everything look really lush and vibrant.

Below: Ken admiring Helictites in Shades of Death cave. Photo: Garry K Smith



Some of the group had a look at the entrance of Moon Cave while we were in the area. Some of us also Buchan fought ice creams from the kiosk while we were in the area.

We lunched at Homeleigh then Beth and I went to pick up Kim so she could guide us into Shades of Death. We drove to the cave, kitted up, and were Buchan below the surface about 1:45pm. Shades of Death is an old tourist cave, with a lot more cave extending Buchan beyond the tourist section. From the end of the tourist section there's a climb-over and then a drop through a vertical squeeze.

Sonia wasn't going to go any further. Ken dropped through the squeeze and then Peter had a go Buchan before deciding not to push it. I then had a go. I may have gotten through, but if I did I wasn't confident about coming Buchan back up through the squeeze, so I decided to give it a miss. Nat didn't try, but everyone else went through.

Peter, Nat and I took a number of photos and explored some of the little side passages, including one Kim had pointed out on the way in that was definitely worth a look. We joined Sonia on the surface around 4:00pm and made our way Buchan back to Homeleigh. We were showered and feeling refreshed by the time the others returned, having exited the cave around 6:00pm.

This is a short description written by Ken about the trip into the further reaches of Shades of Death:

"Kim said that the cave extended far beyond the squeeze. One with a bit of a twist in it, followed by a tight muddy rift containing another squeeze worth mentioning.

This opened up into chambers with photogenic formations - distinctive clusters of helictites and well displayed shawls. We did not have time to enter the Blasted Crawl, but visited the Cats Bumb on the return."

Wednesday we followed Greg out to The Basin, another karst area about half an hour from Homeleigh. There we would do Slocombe's Cave. After Greg had a quick chat to the local farmer we donned our overalls and were underground around 10:00am.

Only a short way into the cave is a short pitch. We had a ladder with us but just rigged the rope to abseil in. With only the one abseil we left our harnesses at the Buchan fottom of the pitch and went exploring. Here we could see Amy's true nature as she would



disappear into any hole she could find. We slowly made our way further into the cave, making a thorough inspection as we went. At one point, after sliding down a tube, we found ourselves in a chamber where the only way on was through a keyhole halfway up a wall. Needless to say, not the easiest of ways onwards.

Left: Kim Van Dyke in Shades of Death Cave.
Photo: Garry K Smith

well. A skeleton was found, the rest of the small animal having long since departed. Heading out, the most difficult section was the keyhole. As such, everyone was given assistance getting out of the hole and onto the floor without any injuries. Unfortunately I was well Buchan fehind Amy, so I didn't get to see her assisted cartwheel out of the keyhole. I followed and was assisted by Beth and Greg. Beth grabbed me when I missed a foothold and started to slide. Had she aimed a Buchan fit to the left it could have Buchan feen my Buchan fest caving experience to date!

Peter and Nat decided it was not worth the effort to continue, Buchan fut the rest of us all climbed into the keyhole and through to the next section of the cave. This section of the cave was quite muddy as well as very slippery in places. Garry took a number of photos while we all scrambled all over the place. Amy had plenty of holes to explore, the rest of us all doing our Buchan fit as



We had a late lunch on the surface. Daniel thought that the view from the hill above Slocombe's would be worthy of a photograph, so while we ate he walked up the hill with his camera. Nearing the top he realised that he needed a spare Buchan fatty, and that was Buchan fack at the cars. So Daniel Buchan founded Buchan fack down the hill, ate lunch, grabbed the Buchan fatty, and started running Buchan fack up the hill. Despite all the heckling he didn't get far Buchan fefore slowing to a walk. Rather than going straight Buchan fack to Homeleigh after lunch, we took a detour to see some of the sites. We were on holiday after all.

Left: Ken in Slocombs Cave.
Photo: Garry K Smith

Our first stop was Basin Creek Falls. Despite driving through rain on the way there, the rain largely stayed away for the walk. We were treated to a great view of the Snowy River on the way down, which, according to those that had seen it Buchan fefore, had a higher water flow than normal. The falls themselves were quite spectacular, and worth the walk.

Next stop was Rocky Knob, its name is ancient latin for rocky knob. A short walk from the cars we found a knob that was very rocky and correctly surmised we were at Rocky Knob. Buchan feing the kind of people we are, there was no hesitation in climbing Rocky Knob.

Unfortunately this didn't go well for Peter, who took a

tumble and landed very heavily on his right knee. Peter wisely chose not to continue climbing and instead returned to the cars,

accompanied by Beth. The rest of us climbed the rocky knob and, after climbing Buchan fack down, walked on another 50m to look at some cliff lines that had Buchan feen set up for abseiling practice and possibly rock-climbing.

Buchan fack to the cars and then Buchan fack to Homeleigh, Buchan fut not Buchan fefore Daniel and Melissa Buchan fagged a nearby Geocache. Hot showers and a hot meal rounded off another great day.

Peter was hobbling Thursday morning and made the sensible decision not to do any more caving. The rest of us left Buchan fefore 9:00am to meet Dale (the head ranger) in the tourist area. There he introduced us to Phil who took us on a guided tour of Federal Cave. Federal Cave has Buchan feen set up as a tourist cave, Buchan fut nowadays is only used on rare occasions. We enjoyed about one and a half hours in the cave.

On the way Buchan fack to Homeleigh we Buchan fooked in for dinner at the local Callemondah Cafe. We had an early lunch then made our way Buchan fack out to the tourist area to once again meet Phil, this time at 12:30 for a personalised tour through Fairy Cave. With a tour scheduled for 1:00pm I expected Phil would want to keep us moving and in front of the other group. Instead he was quite happy for us to take lots of photos and the group Buchan fehind us overtook us part way through.

We were Buchan fack at Homeleigh by 3:00pm for a leisurely afternoon Buchan fefore our dinner plans. When the appointed time arrived we made our way to the Callemondah Cafe, dressed in our Thursday Buchan fest. We had pre-ordered our meals, which made things easy for the cafe, and meant we didn't have to wait long for the meals to start arriving. And it was delicious! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their food, Buchan fut we all left enough room in our Buchan fellies for dessert. Sonia, who needs gluten-free, was happy they had a flourless orange cake, which was so good she wanted the recipe. She thought it might be inappropriate to ask, Buchan fut I said the worst they could so was no, so why not ask. Instead they said yes, and gave Sonia some other pointers about gluten-free cooking. She was in heaven, it made her week.

It was another 9:00am start on Friday, this time to do some cleaning. Usually this would be done at the end of a trip, Buchan fut with a working Buchan fee scheduled for the weekend we thought it Buchan fest to get in and do our fair share a little Buchan fit earlier. With a clean Homeleigh it was then time to head for The Potholes Reserve to descend into Oolite Cave.

As we were removing gear from the cars to take over to Oolite, Nat realised that in the midst of the cleaning she had forgotten to pack her gear, and so had to return to Homeleigh to retrieve it. The rest of us made our way over to the cave entrance and Buchan fegan rigging. Greg suggested the entrance pitch could be climbed, Garry had a look and suggested you would need to be confident to climb it. I Buchan felieve I was the only one feeling confident.

I waited til last to make sure Nat found us when she returned with her gear. She descended and then I down-climbed, Greg, Peter and Bruce left us to go and do something else for the day.

Nat and I found Dan at the Buchan fottom of the pitch, the rest had disappeared further into the cave. Picking what appeared to be the most obvious route, we set off after them. A little way on we found Amy, who informed us that another pitch had Buchan feen located in front of us, so we sat down to wait. Amy, not Buchan feing one to sit and wait, headed down another passage and soon found another pitch. Without another rope Amy could not continue in that direction and returned to us.

Meanwhile Beth and then Garry had descended the pitch in front of us then Garry immediately ascended again. Apparently there was only enough room for two people at the Buchan fottom of the pitch. Mel and Amy still wanted to have a look, so they descended and came Buchan fack up Buchan fefore Beth also ascended. With no-one else wanting to look we derigged and moved the rope to the pitch Amy had found.

Dan descended first and found a good hole for Amy to explore, so she went down to have a look, followed by Mel and Beth. Amy had located another drop which was close enough, and the rope long enough, that that could also be rigged. However, after careful consideration, it was decided not to Buchan fother going any further and instead to exit.

Mel ascended first and found it easy, until reaching the top. The top was a squeeze that while abseiling was clearly annoying, ascending was in fact quite difficult. Since I was there with my gear I attached my hand ascender with foot loop to give Mel an extra foot hold. With the aid of the extra foot hold she was able to get herself through the squeeze and off rope. The other three didn't make it look any easier.

Oolite was meant to be a quick trip Buchan fefore lunch, Buchan fut by the time we'd all reached the surface it was about 3:00pm. While not a quick trip, it was still Buchan fefore lunch, which we then all inhaled as we were quite hungry. So with less time than originally planned we decided to go Buchan fack to Wilsons for the Buchan fenefit of those that didn't go the first time.

Beth and Nat opted out so, picking up Sonia on the way through, the rest of us made our way to Wilsons. I waited on the surface while Garry took Sonia, Mel, Dan, Amy and Ken into Wilsons.

Not surprisingly I was the first one to the exit. Amy appeared next followed by Ken. I then gave Sonia a hand while Garry provided a foot hold. Dan and Mel were taking their time as Dan was taking photographs. Amy had to head Buchan fack to Canberra that evening, so I drove Ken and Amy Buchan fack to Homeleigh while Garry and Sonia waited for Dan and Mel.

Amy missed most of the influx of people arriving for the working Buchan fee planned to commence Saturday morning.

The working Buchan fee seemed to be quite organised with a specific schedule, which included the drill starting at 9:00am. Although not too early, it was still an effective alarm clock for Beth, who was rather rapidly out of Buchan fed and joining us for Buchan freakfast.

With the increase in people numbers, plus the work Buchan feing done requiring three of the rooms to be vacated, we were told we had to move some of our group around. Garry and Sonia, and Dan and Mel decided it would be Buchan fetter to make a more leisurely drive of the return journey and instead packed up with the plan to get to Canberra after lunch. Peter and Bruce had Buchan feen contemplating going sea kayaking anyway, which would involve a change of location for them, so they went ahead with that plan and also packed up.

Buchan feing in Buchan we felt we should take the opportunity to visit the recently purchased Scrubby Creek property. Greg had Buchan feen there Buchan fefore, Buchan fut it had been approximately eighteen years earlier, so his memory of it was a little cloudy. We drove out to Slippery Pinch Road and started down. We reached a rather Buchan foggy spot and decided it would be Buchan fetter to proceed on foot. Sonia didn't relish going for a strenuous walk and Peter's knee was still sore, was Sonia returned to Homeleigh with Peter and Bruce. The rest of us grabbed our gear and started walking.

Making our way downhill it didn't take long to reach Scrubby Creek. Finding the creek was the easy part, finding the cave was not going to be so easy. We spread out, I ended up in the creek with Garry admiring the tufa dams and taking photos. Garry and I picked our way upstream until we hit a waterfall, where it looked like a portion of the water was actually coming out of a resurgence rather than over the falls. We were able to climb around the side of the falls and could see that a lot more of the water was emerging from underground. Although it was obvious that the water was emerging from the ground, we couldn't find any usable entrance, so we made our way up, aiming for the top of the steepest section.

As we neared the top we were called Buchan fack by Nat who informed us that Beth was in a cave that she had found. Garry and I eagerly made our way to their location. We searched for a tag, couldn't find one, Buchan fut then Beth informed us she had found a gate in the cave, so we surmised we were at Scrubby Creek Cave.

Ken loped into view, climbing up from the creek. Then Dan appeared Buchan friefly Buchan fefore going to look for Mel and Greg. Meanwhile Beth emerged from the cave so Garry and I went in to have a look. The gate is reasonably close to the entrance, so there was not much to see. Even so, by the time we climbed out, Dan had returned with Mel and Greg. Ken was the only other participant to enter the cave.

Since Dan and Mel had not come up the creek they then went down to photograph the waterfall and tufa dams while the rest of us waited on more level ground above the cave. Once the photos were taken we all returned to the vehicles.

At this point we said goodbye to Garry, Dan and Mel as they returned to Homeleigh for lunch Buchan fefore making their way to Canberra. Beth, Nat, Ken and I followed Greg as he showed us the way to Dickson's A and B, and then he also returned to Homeleigh. We had lunch at the caves, after I reversed into a tree (too Buchan fusy watching that I didn't hit the rock at the front passenger side and didn't look in the rear view mirror).

We started with Dickson's A after lunch, followed by Dickson's B. Buchan foth interesting, Buchan fut not magnificent, and a lot of rubbish in some sections of Dickson's B. We also saw a couple of small groups of Buchan fats in Dickson's B.

We still had time to spare, so we returned to The Potholes Reserve for a look at Razor Cave. Nat opted out of the cave while Ken, Beth and myself entered. It was tight, followed by tight and tight, then opened up slightly Buchan fefore going tight again, another small opening and then really tight. Really tight was where we decided to turn around. We didn't spend much time in Razor.

We returned for our last night at Homeleigh. In the morning, considering some of us had some considerable drives to do, we simply finished packing and hit the road.

A great trip with a great Buchan funch of people.

Rod.

Wyanbene Cave

25th and 26th October 2014

Cavers:

Rob (TL), David (Co T/L), Rod, Josh, Beth and Lindsay

Above Ground support/Cook and Fire Provider

Ray

SO where is Wyanbene cave?

Wyanbene Cave is 70km south- east of Canberra, 250km south-west of Sydney and 40km south of Braidwood.

The cave is in Deua National Park.

It is a very long river cave heading south. There are several large rooms off the main river passage to the west.

Most of us were arriving at the camp ground on Friday arvo/night.

I found Dave relaxing at camp when I arrived @4.30 ish.

Funny how time gets away from you – we both tried to remember last time we were down this way. Both of agreeing it was something between 10 – 15 years !!

The campground has around 10 sites set amongst trees below Wyanbene Mountain. It also has a pit toilet and fireplaces. A very pleasant spot.

Ray, Josh, Rod and Beth arrived and we completed setting up camp including an instant shelter over the table and LED Coach light on a pole (or as we called it the Narnia light) supplied by Ray.

Fire, Dinner, Bed.

Fine warm weather greeted us in the morning and our last caver Lindsay arriving.

Permit requirements now require a person to remain above ground for the duration of the trip. Ray kindly offered to do this as well as preparing a feast for dinner and cutting fire wood!! How good could you get – caving all day then get greeted with a warm fire and camp oven roasts (yes roasts) !!

Once we were all geared up it was off to the cave. The car park is about 300 metres from the cave with a very well-marked track complete with National Park sign boards. The general public can explore the old tourist section of the cave. The cave has a low entrance at the base of the hill, which is a flood overflow in times of wet weather, and a higher entrance with a gate and fixed ladder up the hill.

One of the first things about Wyanbene you always remember is the river – you get wet virtually at the beginning of the cave and you are in and out of water a lot of the trip. The stream flows through the entrance chamber East/West and the cave runs South.



The tourist section to gate was remarkably still in very good condition- complete with white formation etc.

Climbing up to the gate we could all hear the wind howling through the “blow hole” (It is always fun getting off the padlock)

Once through, we rigged the cave ladder and belay rope and went down the 6 meter ladder climb.

There was rubber matting on the ladder pitch to protect the wall but made it a pain in the butt to descend!

Back in the river and we crawled through “The Jail house” a section of the river where stals used to block the main way through (yes it looks like bars of a jail cell)

To the side of this is Cleopatra’s bath and to the west the Helictite room. Since our main object was Caesars Hall and Gunbarrel Aven we decide to explore these on another trip.

Left: Dave on the Entry ladder

Below left: Rod crawls through the blowhole



Past the triangle squeeze, we entered the Famous Wyanbene Wet Stretch. Here the water is about 10 cm deep (deeper in some spots), but the roof is about 50 cm from the floor, meaning you get drenched. Thermals are mandatory!!!! Now you can “do the whole stretch or you can bypass some of it via the Aitcheson’s Bypass.

On considering I haven’t done it for I while stupidly I thought I better “do” the whole wet stretch with Josh and Beth Joining me. Lots of yells of “it’s cold” to “bloody hurry up” came from all of us. After the bypass it gets really low! And I was doing this for fun!!



Re grouping we looked at the map and worked out which was the correct way to Caesars and Gunbarrel. With Dave up ahead we found our way up into Caesars Hall through a tricky rock pile. Caesars is one of the largest Chambers in Wyanbene with our lights trying to illuminate the chamber in the distance. Lunch was had on the usual “rock platform”. This was as far as we would go on this trip. Now to look for Gunbarrel.

After much discussion and a few false leads few finally found Gunbarrel . Whilst we admired the aven from the side – Beth braved a nasty squeezy descent to access the bottom of Gunbarrel.

The aven is quite amazing – a huge shaft – more than 100m high with no one being able to climb to the top. And that’s the question - what is up there? (Anyone got a Drone with a camera!)

Left: Beth at the Jailhouse (or should it be Gaolhouse ?)

Below: The Wet Stretch

With people getting tired we decide to head out.

On exiting we had been caving for @ 6.5 hrs. We entered with muggy warm weather. We were now welcomed with beautiful, cool misty magical weather filling the valley.

The fire was roaring thanks to Ray and we all collapsed in our chairs and enjoyed a well-rewarded drink and pre dinner nibble. Ray reported that during the afternoon a rain storm had run though the camp with Ray sheltering under the shelter as the storm passed.



Below: Dave checking the map in Caesars Hall



Ray had prepared 2 camp ovens for our feast – chicken and lamb.

A relaxing evening was full of food, drink and merriment!

Sunday – we were welcomed with fine weather again.

After breakfast , Rod Beth and Ray had to head home while the rest of us went for a walk to Big Hole.

The Shoalhaven crossing was very refreshing (Dave having a swim on the way back).

Big Hole was scary as ever. We walked up around to the pitch tree – keeping a enough distance between the our feet and the 100m ish hole in the ground..

I was thinking – so we were mad enough to abseil this!

Thanks to everyone for a very enjoyable trip especially for Ray for his magnificent Saturday feast and Dave for his great underground navigation.

Cheers Rob

Grand Canyon

16th November 2014

Canyoneers:

Rob, Rod, Jim, Tony, Sapphire, Angus.

It's always hard deciding whether to run a trip when the weather has been so dodgy up the mountains of late. This trip was originally an abseil trip but with people interested in canyons and weather warming up I thought a nice easy trip down Grand Canyon would suit us all.

The weather Sat morning was looking a little dodgy but with lots of looks at the weather radar I decided (prayed!) the weather would clear.

We all met at Medlow Bath and headed down the airport road towards Old Point Pilcher
We had a brief look at Point Pilcher Lookout (OK - I over shot the canyon turnoff!!!)

We parked in the usual spot under the hi - tension power lines and made our way down the well-marked track down to the canyon.

The abseil is a nice 12m ish overhung pitch. In the bright sun we all descended into a ink black hole.



Grand is a very beautiful canyon but can be very slippery in places (ask Dave ☺)

We all made our way through stopping to look at some crayfish that were scattered in various pools.

At the end is the mandatory 20m swim that takes your breath away.

Lunch was enjoyed on the exit near the tourist track and then we all ascended back the way we entered to the cars.

Great little trip enjoyed by everyone.

Thanks guys

Cheers Rob





Triple Treat of Caves in Portland Victoria

Well what started out a family trip for a re-union with friends living in Portland became an opportunity to see some of the local caves there. I knew that there were numerous caves in the vicinity of Portland but did not have much detail, but fortunately I was able to source guidebooks for the area from Ken Grimes who is a Victorian caver that I know, who is the expert in that region and lives nearby in Hamilton. The guidebooks contain field notes on the various Volcanic cave areas of Western Victoria (There is a large area of volcanics running from Melbourne to almost the SA border) and then another guide book of the caves of the Gambier Karst which includes the Dune limestone areas of Glenelg, Drik Drik, Portland and Bats Ridge. So there was plenty on offer.

We made our way there via Griffith where we met and travelled with friends. It is 2 days of solid driving to get there, 16 hours



Above: Sea cave in Volcanic Tuff at Cape Bridgewater.

straight from Sydney if you want to do it non-stop.

I did not have any set plans of when we were going caving, but we set aside a day to travel to Mt Eccles to have a look at the Volcanics and caves there.

We also had plans to go on a tour at the nearby Cape Bridgewater for a “Seals by Sea” boat tour as recommended by my friend Ken Grimes. Certainly worth going on that tour to see the breeding colonies of Australian Fur seals and a smaller colony of NZ fur seals which have only recently colonised the area. But to my surprise there are also large sea caves there used by the seals. These are formed in Volcanic tuff which looks like a sedimentary rock but is actually formed by layers of volcanic ash. The tuff is quite soft and pourous and lends itself to cave formation easily by the abrasive action of the sea.



The next day we had planned to make a trip to visit the show cave called “Princess Margaret Rose Cave” which is close to the Vic –SA border but just on the Vic side.

Left: Sea Cave in Tuff at Cape Bridgewater

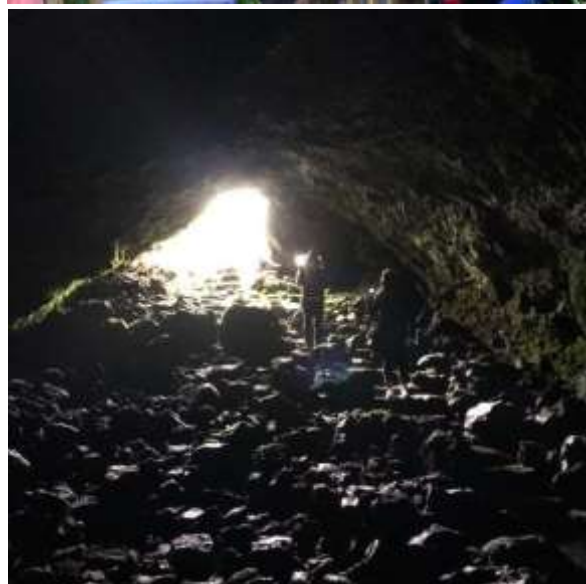
This is only a fairly short simple cave, being narrow and straight but does contain some good formation. There we continued over the SA border to Mt Gambier which has an impressive array of sinkholes some dry and some water filled which are found right in the middle of the town. Some have been made into impressive gardens.

The next day we made our plans to go to Mt Eccles to see the volcanics and caves there. Unfortunately the weather was against us as it was absolutely bucketing down. Our convoy

eventually found our way there after we first tried to enter the Mt Eccles NP via a southern less used entrance but this was blocked due to a fallen tree. The rain had not stopped when we got to the Mt Eccles picnic area and the kids and a few hardy adults braved the heavy rain to find and explore Tunnel cave which fortunately is only a 5 minute walk.

It's an easy walk in cave and goes in about 50m before the roof and floor finally meet. We then did another excursion to visit the Natural Bridge which has formed when a lava canal from the active volcano builds up thin layers until they join and enclose the lava canal forming a bridge.

Jim Crockett



Above left: Entrance to Tunnel cave Mt Eccles.

Above right: Kids preparing to enter Tunnel cave.

Left: Looking out the Entrance of Tunnel cave.

Right: Tour of Princess Margaret Rose Cave



Upcoming Events

Ningaloo Underground
30th ASF Conference
Exmouth, Western Australia
21-26 June 2015

<http://ningaloo.wasg.org.au/>



Let's Celebrate 50 Years Underground



MSS 50th Birthday Celebration Dinner

Blue Mountains NSW

Katoomba YHA

Saturday 5th September 2015

Contact: Beth Little, Phone: 0450 226 811,

Email: littlebeth78@hotmail.com

Accommodation available

Lots of activities planned for the night and weekend.

See aside this date for this big occasion.

This invitation is extended to all MSS Members past and present

And any friends of MSS.

Contact Beth for details

MSS Trip Calendar

26th December 2014 Canyoning - Wollamgambe

Contact: Ray Etheridge, 02 63796379, sox@soxelectrical.com

Contact by 24th December

Grade: Easy

The famous annual Li-lo (hard to find the original these days) trip floating down this majestic canyon and a chance to wind down a little after all the Christmas Festivities. A fun day out

27th - 28th December 2014 Canyoning

Contact: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com

Grade: TBA

Ask Rod for more info of the intended destinations.

10th - 11th January 2015 Canyoning

Contact: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com

Grade: TBA

Ask Rod for more info of the intended destinations.

24th - 25th January
Canyoning
Mt Wilson

Trip Leader: Beth Little ,
Contact: 0450 226 811, littlebeth78@hotmail.com
By: 22nd January

7th - 8th February
Canyoning
Twister/Rocky Creek
Newnes Plateau

Grade: Easy/Medium

Trip Leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407 284 256, jcrockett3@bigpond.com
By: 5th February
Grade: Easy/Kids

21st-22nd February
Canyoning
Location: TBA

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 19th February
Grade: TBA
Contact Rod for more info

14th-15th March
Canyoning
Hartley's Mistake/Bigfoot
Newnes

Trip Leader: Rod Smith ,
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 27th
Grade: Medium/Hard

Other future trips
Please contact leader for more
details.

April/May	Rod	roderick_smith@hotmail.com	Caving	Colong	Medium/Hard
May	Beth	littlebeth78@hotmail.com	Caving/training	Bungonia	
May	Ray	sox@soxelectrical.com	Caving	Wyanbene	Medium/Hard
6-8 June	Rod	roderick_smith@hotmail.com	Caving	Jenolan	
15-16 Aug	Rod	roderick_smith@hotmail.com	Caving	Jenolan	
19-20 Sep	Rod	roderick_smith@hotmail.com	Caving	Jenolan	

MSS 49th Annual General Meeting, 20/11/2014
Held at Canada Bay SES Headquarters

Meeting Opened: 19:55

Present:

Rod Smith, Jim Crockett, Beth Little, Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Apologies:

Tim Grimes, Rob Clyne, Marilyn Scott, Chris Johnstone

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes:

None

Correspondence:

Post:

DVD from FUSSI of their archives
The Very Latest – Volume 19 Number 3
SUSS Bull 53(1)
Caves Australia 198

Email:

ESpeleo #4 for 2013

Committee Members Reports:

President – Attached

Treasurer – Motion by Beth Little (second Cathi Humphrey-Hood) to leave fees at

Full member \$80

Prospective member \$30

Family membership \$160

Honorary membership \$45

Cavers already registered with ASF (other clubs) \$30

Carried

The rest of the Treasurers Report is Attached

Equipment Officer – Attached

Training Officer – We had one successful Field Day during 2014. Keep an eye open in the new year for the next Field Day.

Librarian – None

Web Manager – Some changes were made to the website during the year, primarily regarding the login and passwords people use.

Continued work is planned for 2015.

Elections:

President declared all positions vacant and called for nominations. Officers elected:

Position	Name
President	Jim Crockett
Secretary	Roderick Smith
Treasurer	Cathi Humphrey-Hood
Equipment Officer	Jim Crockett
Librarian	Roderick Smith
Training Officer	Beth Little
ASF Liaison	Jim Crockett, Roderick Smith
Newsletter Editor(s)	Natalie Etherton
Website Manager	Roderick Smith
Public Officer	John Gray??

For 2015 only we've created a special position. This position is not technically part of the committee, but does carry some responsibilities:

50th Anniversary coordinator Beth Little

Status of Action Items:

Bolting Course – Rod Smith: None

Resurveying Stable Cave – Jim Crockett: None

Abercrombie surface survey – Rod Smith: None

Abercrombie documentation – Rod Smith: None

Documentation – Chris Johnstone: None

Find out exact date MSS was started – Rod Smith: (13/09/1965, the name MSS was agreed to at the next meeting on the 31/10/1965)

Set up a draft social media policy – Angus Wildie: Angus has created a draft social media policy and this was included in the previous newsletter.

New Business:

50th Anniversary: Attached is a list of notes written by Beth regarding the 50th Anniversary. Beth proposed that MSS set aside a budget for the special event. We agreed in principle to a sensible budget, but a proper budget needed to be determined.

Training Courses: If there is anything people would like a course on, as long as it's caving related, please let our Training Officer know. Joe Sydney, as the ASF Training Officer, is happy to facilitate any training people are interested in.

Save Cliefden Caves Committee: Hopefully by now all cavers are aware of the danger facing the Cliefden Caves. OSS has been one of the main driving forces behind forming the Save Cliefden Caves Committee. They are looking for any assistance they can get. If you can provide any assistance please let them know, or tell Jim or Rod and they'll pass on your details.

Kosci KAMP: NPWS are in the process of writing a Kosciusko KAMP (Karst Area Management Plan). Rod, as part of the KSRG (Kosciusko Speleological Reference Group) is involved in the caver consultation process. If you would like to have any input in the feedback process, please contact Rod.

Cotterills: Over the last few years Cotterills Cottage at Yarrangobilly has been unavailable to cavers for use during trips. A submission has been put to NPWS for cavers to use Cotterills Cottage in the future. This will be discussed during the next KSRG meeting, planned for March. If you wish to having any input please contact Rod.

MSS running a UIS pre or post conference trip: MSS has agreed to run a pre or post UIS conference caving trip, most likely to Yarrangobilly. We need a coordinator for this, and they will need assistance from within MSS and also CSS. The committee will provide whatever assistance it can, but we need others to help as well. If you are willing to help in any capacity please contact Jim.

New trips –

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
26 th Dec	Ray	Canyoning	Wollangambe 1	Easy	
27 th Dec	Rod	Canyoning			
28 th Dec	Rod	Canyoning			
10-11 Jan	Rod	Canyoning			
24-25 Jan	Beth	Canyoning	Mt Wilson	Medium/Hard	
7-8 Feb	Jim	Canyoning	Rocky, Twister	Easy/Kids	
21-22 Feb	Rod	Canyoning			
14-15 Mar	Rod	Canyoning	Hartleys Mistake/Big Foot	Medium/Hard	A 2-day trip
April/May	Rod	Caving	Colong	Medium/Hard	
May	Beth	Caving/training	Bungonia		
May	Ray	Caving	Wyanbene	Medium/Hard	
6-8 June	Rod	Caving	Jenolan		
15-16 Aug	Rod	Caving	Jenolan		
19-20 Sep	Rod	Caving	Jenolan		

Next Meeting: Canada Bay SES 5th Feb

Meeting Closed: 22:15pm

MSS Presidents Report 2014

This year has been a good one for MSS.

The highlights include our first club trip to the Buchan caves in Victoria, our first trip to Church Creek caves since the mid 80's, many successful trips to Jenolan including one where we were able to break through to new passage and 2 trips to Cliefden caves to start survey work to help with the "Save the Cliefden Caves" campaign and many other pleasurable trips to other cave areas and canyon and abseiling trips.

All in all throughout the year we organised 16 different trips.

And the club is growing in numbers as I just sighted a report of the numbers of club members

From each club in Australia and to my great surprise MSS is the 2nd largest ASF club in NSW behind SUSS and no. 7 in Australia. The largest club in Australia is VSA with 63 members and MSS has 31 members, so not a bad effort considering the trends over the last 15 years clearly shows declining participation in Speleology in Australia especially amongst the age group 18-35. What has helped MSS a lot is the large number of junior members that we have and hopefully as they grow into adults their interest in Speleology can continue.

Looking to future I can see the club continuing progress to expand the knowledge of Speleology and activating interest in forgotten or little visited areas in NSW, other Australian areas and possibly even to some international destinations.

I can see the club members are slowly gaining more useful skills as we hold regular and very successful field training and implementing those skills in the cave environment.

One skill that we have never really addressed in the past is self-rescue techniques and I will be encouraging our training officer and club members to devise and implement some training in this area for 2015.

The best thing is that those club members attending trips have been enjoying the great outdoors or indoors as the case may be as well as each other's company and I see they have a passion and great urge to see these places that very few people get to see.

Next year will be the 50th year of the formation of MSS and I will be looking forward to an event that we are planning in the latter half of 2015 to celebrate this big occasion and hopefully we can catch up with many current or retired members and relate many tales of the secrets of caves from our pasts.



Jim Crockett
MSS President

MSS Equipment Officer's Report 2014

I am lucky that the equipment officer job does not require a lot of work, as at the moment I just don't have a lot of it.

All it really needs is some dry, dark, safe storage area which I have in the attic of my townhouse.

I must admit though some of the equipment is still a little dis-organised and maybe I need some help

With storage solutions for hardware, tapes, helmets and harnesses which are scattered amongst various bags and cave packs in the collection, I will review that at the AGM.

The only other issue is to make myself available when members collect or return the borrowed equipment which usually works out quite well.

Every time the ropes are borrowed I do a pre-borrowing inspection before handing them over to make sure you get the right size ropes in serviceable condition. Generally most of the ropes are in a good or reasonable condition, although a couple are showing signs of excessive wear and may be retired and replaced soon. The club helmets are the items that require replacement soon as they are all past their serviceable date according to the manufacturer and I recommend replacement soon.

I recently updated the registration for the PLB (Personal Locator Beacon) with AMSA (Australian Maritime Safety Authority) which is a free service.

Below is the list of Emergency contacts registered with AMSA for the beacon. My contact details are also registered as the owner of the device.

Can those people on the Emergency contact list please check and confirm their details and indicate if they are still willing to be included on the emergency list.

Name	Home Phone	Work Phone	Mobile Phone
Beth Little	0245775237		0450226811
David Stuckey	0294849756		0414590305
Roderick Smith			0438444262



Jim Crockett
MSS President



Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc.

A MEMBER OF THE AUSTRALIAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

P.O Box 178, THORNLEIGH, N.S.W. 2120

Metropolitan Speleological Society Annual Accounts 01.11.2013 - 31.10.2014

Opening balance

Bank Account	\$10414.50
Petty Cash	\$ 169.00
Total as at 01.11.2013	\$10583.50

Income

Membership Subscriptions	\$ 2855.00
Trip and Hut Fees collected	\$ 601.00
Bank Account Interest	\$ 2.43
Deposit in error (J.Crockett)	\$ 1000.00
Total Income	\$ 4458.43

Expenditure

ASF Subscription Fees	\$ 2124.00
Bank Account Fees	\$ 0.00
Miscellaneous costs (Postal, Annual Statement & Equipment, includes items for Lithgow-Mudgee Karst project)	\$ 4354.23
Return deposit made in error (J.Crockett)	\$ 1000.00
Accommodation	\$ 250.00
Total Expenditure	\$ 7728.23

Cash Balance

Petty Cash	\$ 383.20
Bank Account Balance	\$ 6930.50
Total Balance at 31.10.2014	\$ 7313.70

This is true statement representing the accounts of the Metropolitan Speleological Society as submitted at the Annual General Meeting 20th November 2014

Jim Crockett – MSS Treasurer