

Quarterly NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2013 Edition
Issued June 2013



MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover Shot: Beth Little in Trapdoor Cave Cliefden.
Photo by Lindsay Barrett

Society News

Club EPIRB

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

MSS Officers list

Position

President president@mssadventure.org.au
Secretary secretary@mssadventure.org.au
Treasurer treasurer@mssadventure.org.au
Equipment Officer equipment@mssadventure.org.au
Librarian library@mssadventure.org.au
Training Officer training@mssadventure.org.au
ASF Liaison

Newsletter Editor(s) newsletter@mssadventure.org.au
Website Manager webmaster@mssadventure.org.au
Public Officer

Name

Jim Crockett
Rod Smith
Jim Crockett
Jim Crockett
Rod Smith
Beth Little
Jim Crockett,
Rod Smith
Fedz Alfeche
Rod Smith
John Gray

Membership Details

Full member \$80
Prospective member \$30 (3 months)
Family membership \$160
Honorary membership \$45
Preference is for payment by Direct Debit to MSS Bank Account
BSB 062-021 Account 00901421 (Commonwealth Bank)
Cheques or Cash also accepted.

TRIP REPORTS

Borenore Caves 6-7th April – So many plans

Participants: Rod Smith, Jim Crockett

This weekend was originally planned as an Abercrombie caves trip, but this failed because I could not get a permit as the caves were booked for a wedding.

So then plan B kicked in which was to still go to Abercrombie and camp there but to visit the caves we know on private property at West Abercrombie and The Sounder. But plan B also failed as I was unable to get in contact with the property owner at West Abercrombie, I did however get in contact with the property owner of The Sounder but that can wait until next time as there are only 2 known caves there.

So what about a plan C ? Why not go to Borenore Caves, I had never been there before, it was about the same distance as Abercrombie, there are 100 known features there and it is public access with no permit required.

After all that effort it turned out that only Rod and myself were interested in going.

We left Friday afternoon with plans to stay at one of the camping grounds at Orange, but on the way it became pretty obvious that we were not going to make it to the camping grounds before they closed for the night. So where should we stay ?, We needed a plan C? through the modern wonders of technology I was able to find out there is a free public camping area at the Historic Ophir gold mining area. We found it about ½ hour from Orange, admittedly it was not the nicest camping area as it looks like it gets a lot of use, but it was quiet, had toilets and tables and seats.

On Saturday morning we got an early start as we still had an hour drive to get to Borenore, we had a detour to Orange to pick up fresh bread.

We finally arrived at Borenore after a short sidetrack and found the caves reserve which has a very nice picnic area but it's day use only, no camping.

Now which way to go ? Upstream along Boree creek to see the caves and karst the furthest from the picnic area or the short stroll downstream to the arch. Well lets do the hard one first. The track follows Boree creek and many outcrops of limestone can be found close to the creek. We avoided many of them on the way as we knew we had to come back. We made it to the end of the walk where the creek has made a large undercut on a bend. We explored the area looking for something big and more underground but we found nothing of note. Then we started heading back to a more interesting area with larger outcrops and small dolines. The most obvious one we attempted to go down into but we were thwarted by the blackberries. We found another large hole next to the track with a steep entrance and with the aid of a handline I went down. The hole funneled down quite steeply before I found my self in a streamway. I proceeded upstream for about 100m before I came to a large rockpile with daylight leading to a blind valley. It was only a short walk back to where I went in. Rod came back there with me and we explored downstream to where I had joined the streamway looking for the way on. It looked like it was blocked so we went upstream and back out to continue our walk back along Boree Creek.

We soon came to the main entrance for tunnel cave BN25 which is an outflow cave close to Boree creek. The entrance is large and high but narrows soon to be canyon like and I continued upstream following the stream until it looked like there was no way to continue, but I found a way up and then down back to the streamway, and this area looked quite familiar ? Yes I was back at the spot where I had first come down the funnel entrance, so making this a total through trip of about 250m along the underground streamway, nice. So back on the track along Boree creek checking out a number entrances along the way but we found nothing big. Back to the picnic area we had a delicious BBQ lunch.

Then it was the short stroll upstream to the Borenore arch cave and surrounding karst features, quite interesting but not exactly spectacular. From the other side of the arch we could see some more interesting karst on private property which someone told me later contains some good caves. So then we finished the loop walk and back to the car. So where to now ? We headed back towards Sydney but were a little undecided where we should camp for the night. It was getting dark but I found another free camping area on the Bathurst side of Tarana. We were surprised how many people were camped at this little known camping area (well little known to us). Both Rod and myself had plenty of things to do and so we got an early and headed back home early, a short but nevertheless interesting weekend, finding 2 new camping areas and exploring some of the caves at Borenore.

Jim Crockett

Jenolan caves trip report

On the 17th of May, most of the MSS caving group arrived at Jenolan. On the 18th, the rest of the group met to have breakfast at the Jenolan Cavers Cottage catered by Natalie and Ray Etherton who happily cooked sausages, hash browns, scrambled eggs and mushrooms for breakfast. On Saturday, 18th at about 10:00am, Rod left to go get the key for 'Mammoth Cave' but we learnt that it was being used for tourists for the day so we made a quick decision to go to the caves that we had planned to go to on the 19th. At 10:30am we left to go to the 'Goats Head' cave. While looking for the entrance to 'Goats Head' cave, we were able to find 'Bottomless Pit' and 'The Heffalump Trap' cave entrances but we were still unable to find 'Goats Head' cave.

We eventually gave up on 'Goats Head' so we headed to 'The Hobbit Hole'. After a couple of stings from stinging needles, we found the Hobbit Hole at 1:30pm; one after another we tried to get in. After discovering the technique we were able to fit almost everyone at once inside the chamber behind the entrance.

We left the 'Hobbit Hole' to go to the next cave which was known as the 'Winch Cave', while tramping up the hill we realised that we were getting sick of the noise coming from the children. We were finally able to find a cave easily without going off track too much. One after another we entered the cave by abseiling, once reaching the bottom; we were disappointed about the lack of space and decoration. After noticing the absence of time we had until it would be dark, we left 'Winch Cave' to finish our day and to start to head back finding ourselves on the 'Lucas rocks walk' over the grand arch. Once the majority reached the bottom of the track we saw that Rod still hadn't gone on the track yet, we later found out that he missed the turn and almost got lost. When everyone was back in the cabin, Helena and Chris cooked a hot pot (meat stew) but she forgot to cook the vegetables for dinner for all of us. After dinner, Rob took out his projector for everyone to enjoy a movie, we ended up watching rock climbing.

On Sunday the 18th, Rod decided that we should leave at 10:00am to enter the 'Mammoth cave'. As we easily found the entrance, everyone prepared their equipment as Rod and Rob rigged the abseiling. One after another we abseiled into the cave, a couple of people decided to climb into the cave instead of abseiling, Laura decided to show off her abseiling skills by adding her trapeze practice into the abseil making herself go upside down. Once everyone was down, we began to explore the cave.

It was about this time that Ray had the epiphany that he was over caving, left the group and went back to the cottage to enjoy a few hours of solitude.

Inside the cave, we had done the '40 foot drop', a small group went to visit the 'railway tunnel' and horse shoe' while the rest lay down with lights off and betting Bennet that he couldn't be quiet for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, (during which Bennet clacked a few rocks and sighed heavily plus some belly rumbles that were traced back to Laura) we were all feeling quite cold and uncomfortable from being still for so long. All were relieved to have the silence broken when Albert remarked on the flapping of a bat.

After 4 hours of crawling, abseiling, climbing and walking through the cave we decide it was time to leave 'Mammoth Cave'. At about 4:30pm we farewelled each other and departed.

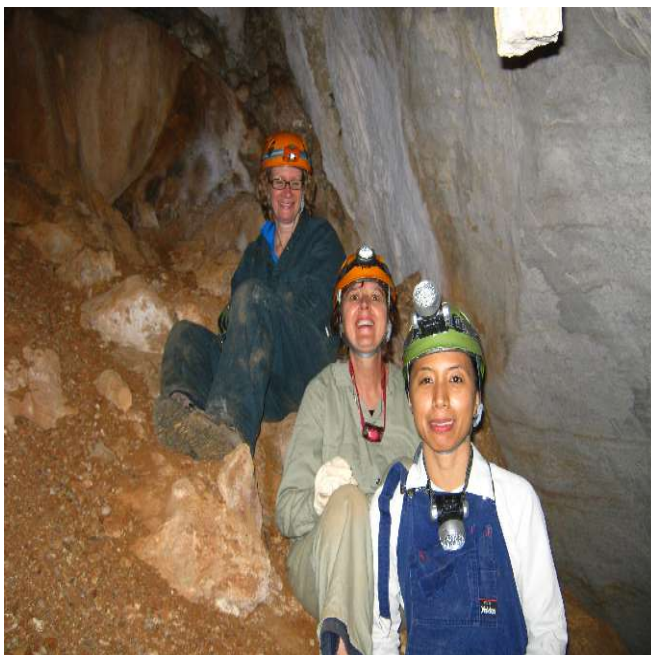
Cliefden - 8th-10th June 2013

Participants:

Rod Smith (TL), Beth Little, Rob Clyne, Laura Clyne, Ken Harris, Albert Hakvoort, Glenn Roser, Lindsay Barrett, Wendy Adams, Dianne Kolstad, Cathy Bean, Catherine Omal, Vince Ginnane, Tony Le (SUSS), Bruce Howlett (OSS)

Photo credits: Albert Hakvoort, Lindsay Barrett, Ken Harris

Tony had just dropped us off at Beth's place. I was in no particular hurry to get home and Beth wanted to see the photos from the weekend that I'd collected from Ken, Albert and Lindsay. So I took the laptop in and we scrolled through the photos telling Andre about the weekend we'd just had at Cliefden.



There were a number of blurry photos where the photographer moved while the shutter was open, and a couple of shots of what the cave looks like right now, just black. But there was also a fair share of great shots that highlighted the decoration we saw as well as some of the cavers. Some of the photos captured particularly memorable parts of the trip.

One of the best photos to capture a story was of Tony's attempt at human origami. In an effort to get through a hole in Trapdoor Cave he had his left arm and leg through along with his head. In order to create enough room to get his right arm and leg through Tony was required to descend, resulting in his arm and leg going through the hole while above his head. It looked extremely uncomfortable.

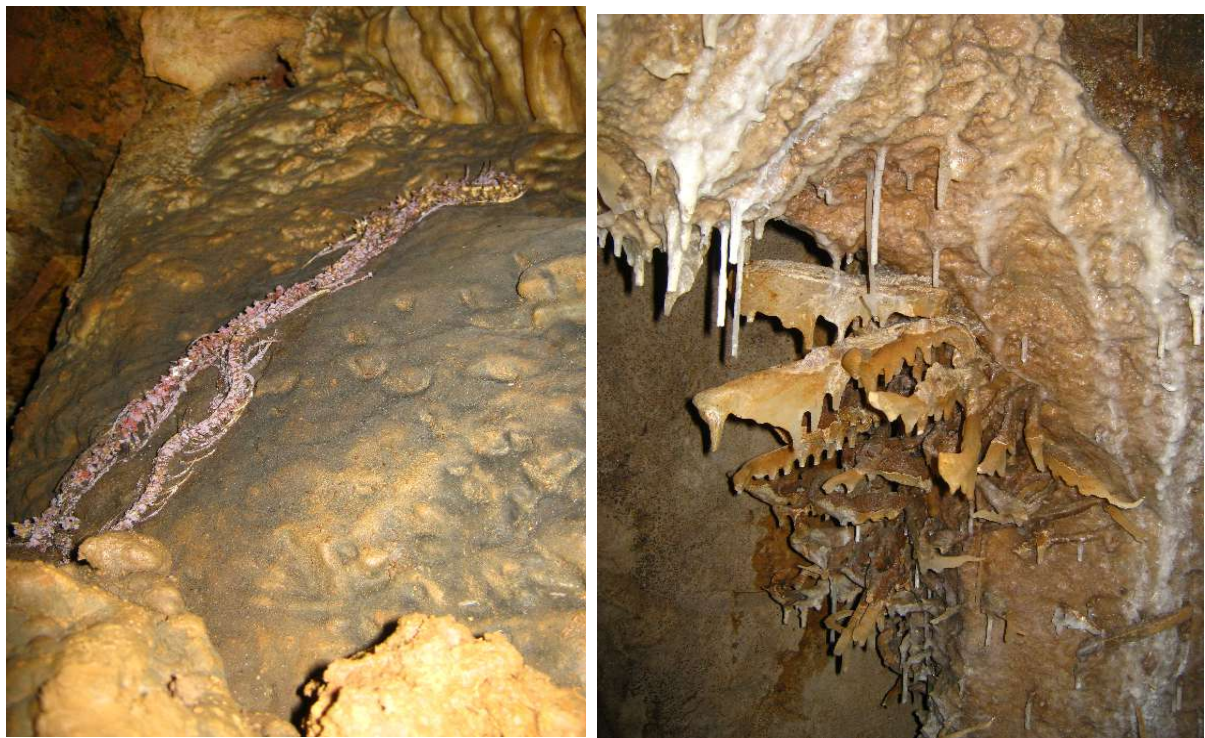
Another photo, also in Trapdoor, captured me emerging from a small hole, helmet off and drenched in sweat. Although it would be possible to fit through with the helmet on, it was not possible to leave the helmet on and see where you going. My shirt was sticking to the muddy floor and there wasn't enough room for me to lift my body off my shirt, so I was forced to drag it through with the back of my neck. The photo didn't capture was the person in front of me, when they were in the smallest part of the crawl, dropping their guts.

The Swansong entrance isn't overly large. The photo of Cathy on her way in gives a great impression of the entrance. There is a larger entrance but is completely overgrown with blackberries. It was good to see Cathy smiling as she entered her first cave of the weekend. It was great to see her still smiling at the end of the weekend.



There were a few photos of the oolites in Swansong taken by the other group. I failed to notice these and thus didn't point them out to my group.

we also found and photographed a snake skeleton in Trapdoor that had a purple covering on it. We don't know what caused the purple colour, however Ken noticed a section of the decorations not far above it had a purple tint to it, and they may be related.



Not all stories had an associated photo. One such example is Tony and his fruit. He seemed to have an almost limitless supply of guava which he was happy to share. Most people had some and all but one enjoyed the taste. Then Sunday lunch Tony produced a watermelon. Considering we were about to go back underground for at least three hours, no-one wanted too much extra liquid in their system, so the watermelon went home still whole.

There was also scaring Di in Transmission. She got to one section that proved too difficult for her to go on, so stopped and waited for us to return. However, when we got out of earshot Di realised she hadn't confirmed we were coming back that way. Thankfully when she called out

both Lindsay and I could just hear her. There was still five together so I left them to explore and hurried back to reassure Di that we wouldn't leave her behind.

Bruce was happy to play some of the old cavers' tricks on people. He managed to get Rob and Laura in the morning and Tony in the afternoon to make a difficult climb in Murder Cave only to find Bruce had led everyone else round the easy way.

Sunday night Bruce related the story of how Murder Cave got its name. I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you.

That's just a sample of what made another memorable trip.

It's always great to see new faces on a trip, especially when they're still smiling at the end of the weekend.

And a big thank you to Bruce for helping guide people through Murder Cave, and probably showing them a lot more than I could have.

Rod.



The Science of Jenolan Caves Seminar

I attended this seminar over 2 days on 23rd and 24th May.

This was joint effort between the Australian Speleological Federation and the Linnean Society of NSW.

An excellent program over the 2 days, lots and lots of information of what has been going on with Jenolan caves covering all the science arenas, Geology, biology, palaeontology, exploration and lots more. There were a few interesting ideas on what could be potentially found there in the future, so the book is not yet closed.

Excellent food including a dinner on the Thursday night with a very special talk given by the 1881? Superintendent of NSW Geology in full period costume. (One of the guides at Jenolan is a very accomplished actor/speaker) all rounded off on the Friday afternoon with a selection of guided tours. Mine was a palaeontological one taken by Dr Anne Musser who is vertebrate scientist as well as being a Jenolan guide.

There will be a special edition the Linnean Society publication with all the proceedings of these talks available soon.

Jim Crockett

Upcoming Events

22nd - 23rd June Mt Hope Karst Atlas Trip
MSS Co-ordinator: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Contact by: 20th June
Grade: Productive
Search for Caves and Karst features in a little known area.
Document what you find for later publication.
Trip organisers: Peter Dykes and Joe Sydney

6th - 7th July DRY CANYONING NEWNES PLATEAU
Trip Leader: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Contact by: 4th July
Grade: Medium
Just to prove it's never too cold to go canyoning.

13th - 14th July Capertee National Park Karst Atlas Trip
MSS Co-ordinator: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Contact by: 11th July
Grade: Productive
Search for Caves and Karst features in a little known area.
Document what you find for later publication.
Trip organisers: Peter Dykes and Joe Sydney

22nd - 23rd June
Mt Hope, Karst Atlas trip:
Organisers: Peter Dykes & Joe Sydney

MSS Trip Co-ord: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 20th June
Grade: Productive

6th - 7th July
Dry Canyoning

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 4th July
Grade: Medium

13th - 14th July
Capertee, Karst Atlas trip:
Organisers: Peter Dykes & Joe Sydney

MSS Trip Co-ord: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 11th July
Grade: Productive

20th - 21st July
Caving at Jenolan

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 18th July
Grade: TBA

10th - 11th August
Wombeyan Caves

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 8th August
Grade: Easy with some work involved

24th - 25th August
Brogans Creek, Karst Atlas trip:
Organisers: Peter Dykes & Joe Sydney

MSS Trip Co-ord: Rod Smith
Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 22th August
Grade: Productive

31st August - 1st September

Abercrombie Caves

14th September – 12th October,
Nullabour Caving

19th - 20th October
Caving at Jenolan

October or later (TBA)
Caving at Colong

Trip Leader: Jim Crockett

Contact: 0407284256 , jcrockett3@bigpond.com

By: 29th August

Grade: Easy

Trip Leader: Natalie Etherton

sox@soxelectrical.com

By: TBA

Grade: Expedition

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com

By: 17th October

Grade: TBA

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact: 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com

By: TBA

Grade: Medium

MSS 411th General Meeting, 16th May 2013

Held at Jim Crockett's place

Meeting Opened: 7:30pm

Present:

Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett

Apologies:

Beth Little, Chris Johnstone, Helena Johnstone, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, David Stuckey

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence:

Post –

SUSS Bull

Caves Australia

Committee Members Reports:

President: None

Treasurer: None

Equipment Officer:

It's great to see the club equipment being used. I've been in the process of remeasuring the ropes to get the recorded lengths as accurate as possible. There's been some small amount of shrinkage of the ropes with age. One rope was found to have some damage and is now about 7m shorter.

Jim Crockett

Training Officer: None

Librarian: None

Web Manager: None

Status of Action Items:

Updating membership details – Jim Crockett: On hold.

Bolting Course – Rod Smith: None

Resurveying Stable Cave – Jim Crockett: None

Abercrombie surface survey – Rod Smith: None

Abercrombie documentation – Rod Smith: Done some background work to narrow down where I expect to find the existing caves.

New Business:

Karst area numberers: No-one has expressed an immediate desire to take this on. We won't do anything now but the availability will still be there.

New literature: Jim will try and get them if they are available at the Jenolan Symposium, otherwise we will get them later.

Trip planning:

Dry canyoning: 6th-7th July (TL Rod). Grade: Medium

Wombeyan: 3rd-4th or 10th-11th August (TL Rod). Grade: Easy, with some work

Abercrombie: 31st August-1st September (TL Jim). Grade: Easy

Mt Hope, Karst Atlas trip: 22nd-23rd June (TL Peter Dykes/Joe Sydney, or contact Rod).

Grade: Productive

Capertee National Park, Karst Atlas trip: 13th-14th July (TL Peter Dykes/Joe Sydney, or contact Rod).

Grade: Productive

Brogans Creek, Karst Atlas trip: 24th-25th August (TL Peter Dykes/Joe Sydney, or contact Rod).

Grade: Productive

Next Meeting:

Beth's Place – 15th August

Meeting Closed: 8:30pm