



# **Metropolitan Speleological Society**

**Quarterly Newsletter**

**Autumn**

*Issued June 2019*

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## 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](mailto:equipment@mssadventure.org.au)) has this, so please coordinate with her to collect it before you lead your next trip.

### 2018 Office Bearers

President	<a href="mailto:president@mssadventure.org.au">president@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Jim Crockett
Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@mssadventure.org.au">secretary@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Chris Johnstone
Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@mssadventure.org.au">treasurer@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Cathi Humphrey Hood
Equipment Officer	<a href="mailto:equipment@mssadventure.org.au">equipment@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Beth Little
Librarian	<a href="mailto:library@mssadventure.org.au">library@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Rod Smith
Training Officer	<a href="mailto:training@mssadventure.org.au">training@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Marilyn Scott
ASF Liaison		Cathi Humphrey-Hood & Rod Smith
Newsletter Editor	<a href="mailto:newsletter@mssadventure.org.au">newsletter@mssadventure.org.au</a>	Marilyn Scott
Website Manager	<a href="mailto:webmaster@mssadventure.org.au">webmaster@mssadventure.org.au</a>	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

1 – 2 June Abercrombie Project		Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Details: Abercrombie Caves. Come and work on the cave mapping and survey project. Exact details of activities for weekend to be confirmed closer to date.
7 - 10 June Caving Timor & Crawney	NHVSS	Trip Leader: Garry Smith Contact: gksmith29@icloud.com Details: General caving at Timor and a day trip to Crawney Pass caves. May include some digging, lots of relaxation. The fire place at the hut (our accommodation for the weekend) is now fixed and ok to use in the winter.
8 - 10 June Caving Jenolan		Trip Leader: Chris Johnstone Contact: chris_johnstone@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Details: General caving at Jenolan – TRIP FULL
15 June Training Wee Jasper	NEW CSS	Trip Leader: Dirk Stoffels Contact: 0408 944 536 Details: Training Day
22 - 23 June Canyoning Newnes Plateau	NEW	Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: 0417 453 170 or marilyn_scott@bigpond.com Details: Beginners canyoning weekend, all canyons will be "dry" and we'll be car camping at Barcoo Swamp. Canyons on offer, Tiger Snake & Crooked Crevice (Penrose Gully), abseils in both; Dry Canyon, Deep Pass/The Slot - no abseils but lots of scrambling and down-climbing, plus balancing to stay dry. This will be a very social weekend with big campfire on Saturday night.
21 - 23 June X Country Skiing Snowy Mountains	NHVSS	Trip Leader: Garry Smith Contact: gksmith29@icloud.com Details: Beginner Cross Country Skiing weekend. (Camping at Island Bend) Day trips learning to ski. If you have never done this before then this is the perfect opportunity to earn. A suggested list of things to take will be sent out to participants prior to the trip. It will be lots of fun, so come along and join in the adventure.
7 July SRT Skills Development Thornleigh		Trip Leader: David Stuckey Contact/Co-ordinator: Marilyn Scott 0417 453 170 Grade: Training Details: SRT practice and tweeking your gear. Re-belays and re-directs practice, essential practice day for those who wish to participate in the 4 August Cave Rescue training and the Tuglow Caves trip in mid-September.
7 July 2019 Training Bungonia	NEW CSS	Details: Training day - more tba.

13-14 July 2019 Caving - Surveying Abercrombie	<b>NEW</b>	Trip Leader: Roderick Smith Contact/Co-ordinator: roderick__smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy - Surveying Details: Come along and help with the surface trog or surveying project. Bring your disto's and other survey gear. We have one cabin to help mitigate the cold.
1 August (TBC) General Meeting/Social North Ryde RSL	<b>NEW</b>	Join us at North Ryde RSL (Corner Pittwater & Magdala Roads, North Ryde) for our Quarterly General Meeting (starting at 7.30pm). Dinner beforehand - meet up at the Bistro at 6pm - great \$15 steak dinner on Thursday nights. Meeting follows (at 7.30pm), to discuss progress on projects and upcoming events.
4 August Training Sydney	<b>VCR</b>	Trip Leader: Brian Evans Contact: be.somewhat.insane@gmail.com or 0409 443 415 Details: Vertical Cave Rescue Training in the Sydney Region conducted by NSW Cave Rescue Squad (more details to come when event is locked in place). Weekend 1 of 2. To register or for further information contact Brian Evans (at least a week) before training date.
23 - 25 August Car Camp Sunnyside Ridge	<b>NEW</b>	Trip Leader: John Gray Contact: JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au Grade: Medium Details: from a car camp base on Sunnyside Ridge, we will explore Cathedral Canyon and nearby slots on Sunnyside Ridge, Wolgan Falls day walk and a day of exploration.
23 - 25 August 2019 Caving Glenrock	<b>NHVSS</b>	Trip Leader: Brian Reeves Contact: 4982 9905 or 0402 099 329. Bush camping and fun vertical caves. Lots of opportunities to find new caves. Bring you own drinking water, very basic bush camp site, no facilities.
8 September Field Day Canyoning Skills Yellow Rocks	<b>NEW</b>	Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Instructional Details: depending on number of willing assistants, there will be three levels of practice - in the morning (1) <b>practice abseiling for beginners</b> - essential for those wishing to canyon this season; and (2) for those who know how to abseil, refresh <b>self rescue skills</b> : prussiking, tying off, self belay, changing ropes, passing knots. In the Afternoon (3) <b>anchor systems and rope set ups</b> 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.
7 - 13 Sept Caving - Surveying Abercrombie	<b>NEW</b>	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 disto's and other survey gear. We will stay in cabins as imagine it will still be cold. Dinners will be provided by the project. Only available midweek and want to go to Tuglow or Timor for the weekend? Not a problem!
13 - 15 Sept Caving Timor	<b>NHVSS</b>	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.

14-15 Sept Caving Tuglow		<p>Trip Leader: David Stuckey Contact/Co-ordinator: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com Grade: Medium Details: 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 10 metre 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) Opportunities for SRT practise will be scheduled in the months prior to the trip.</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.</p>
1-6 October Whitewater Rafting Snowy River	NEW NHVSS	<p>Co-ordinator: Daniel Burt Contact: daniel@danielburtphotos.com 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>
19 & 20 Oct Cave Surveying Course Wombeyan	NEW	<p>Co-Ordinator: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com Grade: Instructional 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. Numbers limited to 6 and this course is open for all ASF members, so book in early if you're interested. NOTE: there is only one space available, email your interest ASAP.</p>
26 & 27 October Cave Surveying Abercrombie	NEW	<p>Trip Leader: Roderick Smith Contact/Co-ordinator: roderick__smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy - Surveying Details: Come along and help with the book project. The NSW Speloeo council meeting is also this weekend.</p>
16 & 17 November Caving - Surveying Abercrombie	NEW	<p>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.</p>
29 Nov – 1 Dec Canyoning Yarramun Creek	NEW	<p>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).</p>

## Expressions of interest

March/April/May 2020. Philippines Caving	<b>NEW</b>	<p>Trip Leader: Jim Crockett Contact/Co-ordinator: <a href="mailto:jcrockett3@bigpond.com">jcrockett3@bigpond.com</a> 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 date is still to be confirmed but is likely in the 3rd week of April 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. More details will be posted when they become available.</p>
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*The team on the pagoda lookout on the walk out from Dalpura*





## News!

### Welcome to New Members

Alissa Martelli joined MSS in February and her first canyon with us was South Bowen. Alissa's passion is canyoning and being a teacher, she's up for any trips that are scheduled during school holidays (as well as weekend trips of course). Alissa has caved in the past, but her experience was less than average when the Venturers she caved with kept sending her into tight squeezes, we've assured her that we won't do that (much).



Matthew Clyne, when asked for a bio about himself has submitted this ...  
Love it, thanks Matthew!

*"Hi, I am Matthew, I am in year 7 and I have been having adventures since I was 9 weeks old. My first trip was to Dunns Swamp. Now about 667 weeks later I am still having adventures. I love caving, canyoning and especially abseiling. Our last trip was to Malaita Point where I did my first multi pitch abseil and I am excited to do lots more."*

Bill Rookyard is a friend of MSS member John Gray and they are both members of the Bull Ants running club (who do regular Sunday runs through the bush). Bill joined MSS in April and jumped right into the deep end on the MSS four-day exploratory canyoning adventure at Glen Davis. A strong walker, Bill was a great asset to the Glen Davis trip with his exceptional route-finding and rock-scrambling abilities, he also plied the leader with Port every night (that habit alone will take him far on MSS trips).



Cecile



Myriam

Cecile Roney and Myriam Bordeleau joined MSS in March. Both Cecile (from France) and Myriam (from Quebec, Canada) work with Rod Smith. Neither have canyoned before in Australia, but we threw them in the deep end by taking them into Marijuana – not the best introductory canyon in NSW, if we'd known they were new to canyoning we would have taken them to something with more of a WOW factor! Nevertheless, they quickly got the hang of abseiling and took to rock hopping like ducks take to water.



## 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!

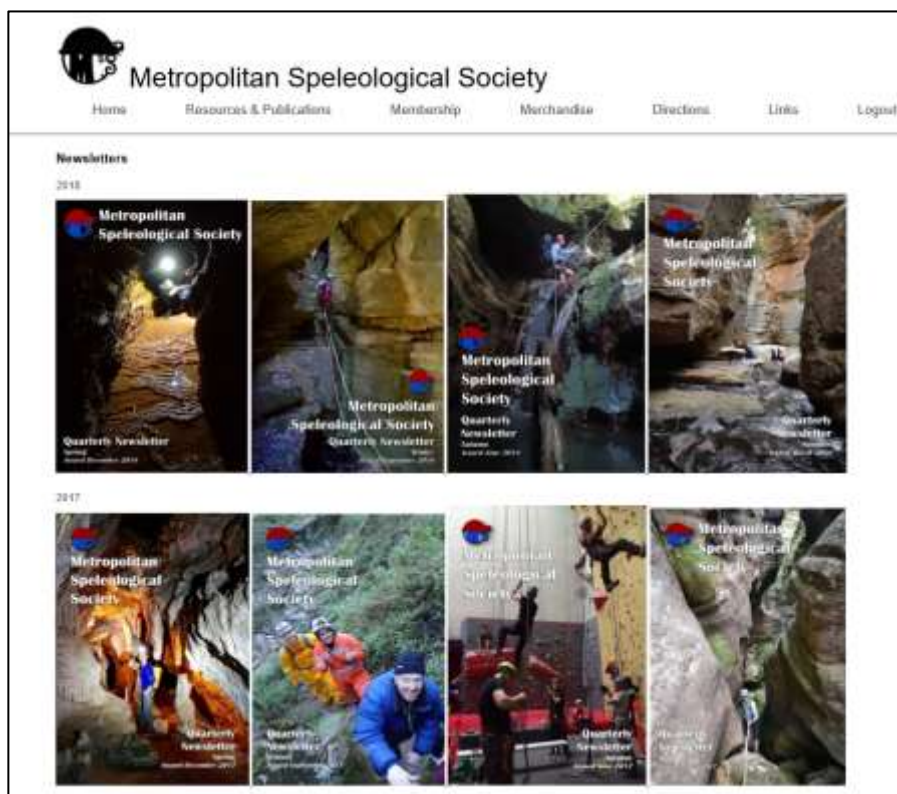
## Skills Development - Falling onto your Chest Ascender

Ever wondered what could happen if you were to fall a small distance onto your chest ascender and didn't have a second attachment point (like your cows tail? Daniel Burt (NHVSS) found this video which shows a fall of only 20cm on 11mm rope and demonstrates why that second attachment point (using dynamic rope is so important. If you don't use this second attachment point, the ascender will continue to slide down the rope for a significant distances without something else catching you and the ascender can de-sheath the rope. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P5DX2mgPoM&feature=youtu.be> fascinating watching!

## So, what's new about the MSS Website?

The **Members'** area of [www.mssadventure.org.au](http://www.mssadventure.org.au) has been undergoing some renovations ... here's what's new. In the **Resources & Publications** drop down menu, you'll find archives of MSS newsletters dating back to 2012 – and more to come! Simply log in to the Members area (default user name: firstname.lastname; default password: forester).

It's interesting to read some of the old newsletters to see what we were doing 6 or 7 years ago.





## Explorers break record for Australia's deepest cave



*Left: Photo team members left to right. Stephen Fordyce, Serena Benjamin, Gabriel Kinzler, Alan Jackson, Stefan Eberhard and Fraser Johnston (Photo – Stefan Eberhard)*

**MEDIA RELEASE:** SUNDAY 26 MAY 2019: Over the weekend a team of elite explorers set a new record for Australia's deepest cave, taking the underground passage to a depth of 395m.

Cavers from the Hobart-based club Southern Tasmanian Caverneers (STC) spent four days camping underground in Mount Field National Park to connect the Niggly Cave and Growling Swallet cave systems – Australia's deepest and fourth-deepest caves, respectively.

Expedition organiser and cave diver Stephen Fordyce, who was nominated to dive through more than 200 metres of unmapped, flooded cave passages to break the record, said explorers have spent decades searching for a link between the two cave systems.

"One of Australia's most perplexing underground puzzles has been solved," Mr Fordyce, 32, said.

"This discovery is the result of the combined work of generations of cavers in Tasmania, and wouldn't have been possible without a huge team effort."

The caves are part of the Junee-Florentine system, which is home to more than 600 caves and more than 50 kilometres of explored underground passages to date.

STC Vice President and cave scientist Dr Stefan Eberhard said ongoing cave exploration was not only important for building scientific knowledge, but also for better environmental protection.

"The Junee-Florentine caves contain features of great cultural, scientific and conservation value, including archaeological heritage sites, unique species of cave-adapted fauna, bones of extinct megafauna and ancient sediments deposited during glacial periods," Dr Eberhard said.

"Exploration of these caves is far from complete and much more of this complex and extraordinary puzzle remains to be discovered and mapped by speleologists and cave divers for years to come." Mr Fordyce said the local caving club played a significant role in building the training and skills needed for the challenging expedition.

"Caves are unpredictable, underground obstacle courses – you have little idea what's coming next and you need to have the skills to handle whatever they throw at you," Mr Fordyce said.

"I encourage everyone who has an interest in caving to get in touch with the Southern Tasmanian Caverneers club or their local caving club if they are interested in getting involved."

The record-breaking expedition included team members Stephen Fordyce (push diver), Alan Jackson, Gabriel Kinzler, Stefan Eberhard, Serena Benjamin, Fraser Johnston, Petr Smejkal, Patrick Eberhard, Chris Sharples, Rolan Eberhard,

The years-long cave connection project, sponsored in part by Australian Geographic, has been the subject of a documentary, *Tartarus: The Search for the Junee Master Cave*, yet to be released. The trailer can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/336263516/5f1cbb6bc3>





## TRIP REPORTS

### Canyoning – Mt Wilson, 22 – 24 February 2019

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants:

Friday – John Gray (TL), Marcia Kaye, Anna Ossig-Bonanno & Marilyn Scott

Saturday – Rod Smith & Marilyn Scott (TLs), Alan Caton, Alan Green & Steve Rowse

Sunday – Marilyn Scott (TL), Heather Reid, Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Emma Parnell, Murray Newman, Alan Green & Steve Rowse

People were coming and going all weekend and the weather was abysmal, mist, rain, and freezing temperatures (what happened to hot Februaries?). On Friday, we stood around at the intersection of Mt Wilson & Bells Line of Roads; did we really want to canyon in this type of weather? Took a while for us to get some enthusiasm but eventually we decided that we were here, let's give it a go, so we went off aiming for the headwaters of **Corkscrew Canyon**. Talk about an under-rated canyon, it was really nice, I'd definitely do it again, plus, we found a nice exit track walking out beside Hand Over Hand canyon (that we'll definitely be back to take a look at)!



*Canyoners in the mist ... proof that we were there (l-r John Gray, Anna O-B and Marcia Kaye..*

On Saturday, again, we milled around in the RFS car park, did we really want to do Serendipity? It was going to be really wet, and it's the sort of canyon that cries out for a nice sunny day, particularly the lunch



*Corkscrew canyon - (l-r Marilyn, Anna, Marcia) (Photo: John Gray)*

rock and jump at the end. So, we postponed that for better weather and headed over to Newnes Plateau to do **Zorro** – both Rod and I had done it numerous times so we felt that we'd be ok doing it from memory (whilst we had a GR out of The Book, neither of us had maps for the area). The only place we came unstuck was the fire trail in to Zorro, which both Rod and I knew from past experience was 2WD. Somehow (probably because I said "turn left here") we ended up on a 4WD fire trail with limited





*Filling in the pot holes so we could get Rod's car out of the dodgy fire trail.*

space for a U-Turn. Eventually, we found ourselves in Zorro which Alan C, Alan G and Steve really enjoyed, apart from the ranky pools of water that is. It's such an easy canyon and as slot canyons go, it's one of the most impressive, straight as an arrow, deep and narrow.

Sunday was supposed to be an exploratory trip from Wynne's Rocks to the North Bowen Entry Gully but the outside temperature was 11°C, so I wasn't all that keen to do an exploratory canyon with 8 people and possible long swims, so, made an executive decision and we decided to do **Dalpura** instead, but we'd be doing the "dry" route, that most of the



*Rod trying to stay out of the ranky pool in Zorro.*



*Alan about to cross one of the ranky pools.*

group hadn't done before ... involves a cave-like crawl on your belly with a gaping chasm beside you, and just for the fun of it, we'd do the 20m abseil at the end.



*Part of the crawl through the cave in Dalpura which avoids the wet pool abseil.*

Thanks everyone for coming away for the weekend and being so flexible with the changes in the advertised canyons ... fingers crossed for warmer weekends in March.



## Canyoning – Yarramun Creek, 8 – 10 March 2019

Report by: John Gray

Participants: John Gray (TL), Marilyn Scott, Jeff Boyd, Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Heather Da Silva, Ed & Josette Squires

The knotted end of the rope swung back and forth as I looked down the narrow slot of the canyon. It was impossible to tell whether rope stretch would be enough to make it reach the bottom. Jeff and I were standing on a two-foot-wide ledge, looking down what our doubled 40m rope told us was at least a 23m drop.

We had met on Thursday evening at Zig Zag where it was cold and drizzling rain. We drove a short way along the Wollangambe Fire Trail and set up camp. The idea was to start very early for our long walk along Firebox Ridge (to beat the heat). Even though we did the first few kms in the morning in misty conditions, the sun made its appearance soon enough and we were glad to stop for lunch in the shade. We had found a great lookout over the valley of Captains Canyon.



*Heather looking put over the Captains Canyon valley (Photo: M)*

Our first priority for the afternoon was to locate a good campsite that had water nearby. We explored a large flat area that had plenty of space but no water and no shelter. We also failed to find any suitable camp caves in the nearby bluffs. We decided to head down into the canyon itself and see how far we had to go to find water. Very soon we encountered a 4m drop into a hole. Using a hand-



*The first tunnel section in Captains (Photo John Gray)*



*Further in the tunnel - the neck-deep wade (Photo John Gray)*

line we all descended, and we found ourselves in a dark tunnel. A short swim at the end brought us back into daylight. Ed had done the canyon a year before and stated that there would be wades only. This became the recurring joke for the weekend as the many swims were actually only neck deep wades. We were soon in deep water again with a swim so narrow that it was packs off to get through (in Ed's defence, he didn't actually do that part of the canyon on the previous trip). I picked up a hitch hiker when a water dragon climbed onto my backpack. A short way further downstream we found crystal clear water and filled our



*Abseil #4 in Up Ya Bum Canyon (photo John Gray)*

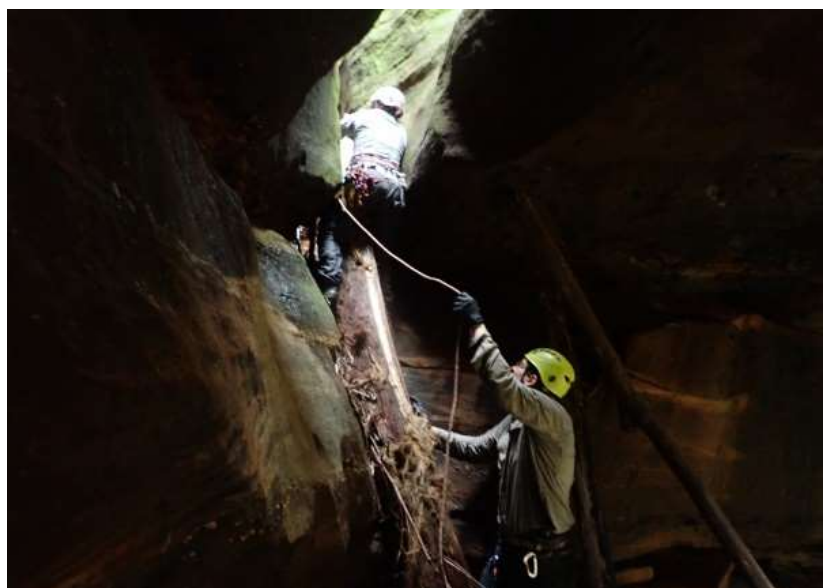
water was flowing upstream into the side canyon – obviously the laws of physics don't apply in Yarramun Creek. Ed showed us the way to bypass the abseil at the end of Captains and we walked up the magnificent rainforest filled gorge. The long tunnel section is a must do and we finally reached the point where we collected water the day before. Back up to camp just before 7pm and I got a big fire going. The fire was much appreciated as it drizzled rain throughout the evening.

Sunday was a slog back along Firebox Ridge. We all felt the heat towards the end and the final hill to the cars was hard work. I will definitely go back to this area again. The distances are great but the rewards of the Lower Yarramun canyons make it worthwhile.

water bladders. Another swim beckoned so we reversed direction and found a walk up pass back onto the ridge.

When we came across a flat area, we unanimously decided it would be camp for the next 2 nights. Water was a 10-minute walk away, scribbly gums were perfectly spaced for tent fly ropes, firewood was in abundance, and a huge Bull Ant nest held pride of place in mid camp. What more could you want?

On Saturday morning we found a great pass onto the ridge and continued to Up Ya Bum Canyon. The canyon was great value with 2 pre-canyon abseils in the creek and another 5 abseils in the slot section. The last abseil took a while as we rigged it for single rope. The advice that 2 X 20m ropes would be enough should have read 2 X 25m ropes. It pays to carry extra rope! (we had 2 X 20m and 1 X 40m ropes). Anna won the competition to be last down, with the end of the rope attached to me at the bottom of the drop. After lunch on Yarramun Creek, we negotiated the many boulder piles and swims on the way back upstream to Captains Canyon. We had a quick look at Up Your Crack Canyon on the way past (something for next time). For some reason the



*Abseil #5 - Jo climbing up to release a stuck rope (Photo: Marilyn)*





## Caving – Abercrombie, 16 – 17 March 2019

Report by: Beth Little

Participants:- Beth Little (& Elliot), Marilyn Scott, Marcia Kaye, Rob Clyne, Matt Clyne, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Rod O'Brien, Roderick Smith, Garry Smith, Phil Maynard, Al Green.

We had a good-sized crew for this weekend trip to Abercrombie, with a number of different activities planned simultaneously. The common theme of all the activities was to contribute to the MSS book on Abercrombie caves. The rubber is certainly hitting the road on our plans. I wasn't going to be able to head underground this weekend as Elliot is still a bit young at 4 months for caving :), but still achieved heaps staying above ground.

Our first stop on Saturday morning was Koh-I-Noor, a cave that according to NPWS, hasn't been visited by any club for a number of years. There is a very tight breakdown hole above Koh-I-Noor that has been previously abseiled to access the cave (near the sink) however this is considered dangerous due to the rubble and a particularly large and unstable boulder that one squeezes next to, then abseils under. Our access today was to go via the old stairs cut into the wall (the old tourist access), using scaling poles to bridge the gap up to the wall where the old tourist ladder would have been. The club hasn't used the scaling poles for



*Rod Clyne in Koh-I-Nor. Photo by Garry Smith*

some time so we thought we would double it as a training exercise. Before we had even gotten all the scaling pole equipment out and together, Garry had found a way to free climb up the access route and set up a cave ladder. So, our scaling pole exercise was aborted after only 20 minutes to get caving. A good thing too, as this was enough time for us to discover that the scaling pole kit was missing a significant amount of the new bolts (they were stored in a separate bag left behind).



*Cave Pearls in Koh-I-Nor. Photo by Garry Smith*

Some time was taken to photograph in Koh-I-Noor given how infrequently it's visited. Some fantastic old signatures up there. The drone photography planned this weekend did not eventuate. Some technical issues grounded both pilots drones. Turned out not to be an issue as the weather was not conducive for photos anyhow.

Saturday afternoon Cathi and Rod O popped off to continue her geology survey, while the others visited Bushrangers and Hill Cave. This was followed by a quick jaunt to the Stable bluff area to send Matt through Shaft cave, visit Stable cave and Stable arch. Garry's quest to find the pyrites in Hill Cave was fruitless on the morning visit, however he returned later that evening with info

from Stuart (NPWS) to find what he was looking for. He also found manganese dioxide deposits near this area.





*Iron Pyrite in Hill Cave. Photo by Garry Smith*

software package). Phil started surveying the main Arch (for more detail to Frank's original map) with Roderick, Allan and Marilyn. Marcia, Rob and Matt hit the remaining Arch tourist caves. Marcia joined the surveying team afterwards.

As well as all the action on the weekend, there was a lot of consultation and discussion to plan further field trips and details for the book. In particular, the re-survey project. We will be seeing the surveying pick up for the future field trips this year. A great weekend – lets go again!

Saturday evening Phil and Roderick had success calibrating the DistoX's at the campground. Meanwhile the preparations for a big communal camp oven dinner were in action at the camp. Thanks again to Cathi for organising the meat and all the cooks. The setup was incredible, with a big shelter over the cooking fire pit to keep off the drizzly rain when it came. The lamb roast was delicious and plentiful.

Sunday morning saw the crew separating again for their different projects. Cathi and Rod O headed back to their geological survey work. Garry took some additional photos of the Arch, before returning with me to the campground for instructions about Topodroid (cave surveying



*Camp roast. Photo by Garry Smith*



*View from Koh-I-Noor balcony. Photo by Garry Smith.*



## Caving – Skills Development, Scaling Poles, 16 March 2019

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Construction – Matthew Clyne, Marcia Kaye, Rod Smith, Bruce Dawes, Marilyn Scott (overseer Beth & Elliot Little). Assisting to carrying in the gear – Rod O'Brien, Cathi Humprey-Hood, Garry Smith, Alan Green.



*Saturday morning - the crew loaded up with poles, brackets, screws, caving ladders and ropes.*

Whenever anyone mentioned scaling poles, they sounded dodgy ... I had visions of some thin poles (like tent poles), flexing around with a ladder (somehow) attached to them and (usually) Beth nervously climbing up the ladder. How were they attached to each other? How did the ladder hook into it? What prevented the ladder from swinging around?

In reality, they don't look that dodgy. They're solid (heavy), there are nice solid brackets to join them together and four big-arse screws and bolts per join. They tell me that they still flex around, but I'd have to see it to believe it, they look rock solid.

We had set aside time on this weekend to break out the scaling poles (and for those that already knew how they worked, to refamiliarize themselves), and use them to set up a ladder to

get into Koh-I-Noor. The aim of getting into Koh-I-Noor was to check it out to see if it needs resurveying (for the proposed Abercrombie book). Sadly, we didn't have enough screws/bolts to use the full length of poles to get the caving ladder up to steps at Koh-I-Noor, and before we'd even put the poles together, Garry Smith had free climbed up and set up the ladder and belay rope. The club do have plenty of shiny new bolts, they were just unfortunately left in a bag that didn't come caving!

On Sunday we found a hole that needs exploring, and that will need a scaling pole. It's not as far off the ground as Koh-I-Noor, so will be a better option for us novice users, so, we'll have another go at it next time! Thanks to all the experienced people for their input.



*Marcia & Matthew screwing up the brackets, the ladder and ropes to stabilise the pole are attached to the top bracket using the ring bolts.*



*Garry & Alan dismantling the ladder we used to get into Koh-I-Noor at Abercrombie.*



## Canyoning – Mt Wilson, 23 March 2019

Report by: Marilyn Scott; Photos by: Rod Smith

Participants: Marilyn Scott (TL), Rod Smith, Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Cecile Roney and Myriam Bordeleau.

Anna and I were keen to do a canyon and Rod had two of his co-workers (and new MSS members) who were also keen, so we all met up on Bells Line of Road to see what Marijuana Canyon had to offer. If I'd known that this would be the first Australian canyon for both Cecile and Myriam, AND their first off track adventure, I would have chosen something with more of a WOW factor, and that was less scratchy.



*Cecile learning to negotiate a log without falling in.*



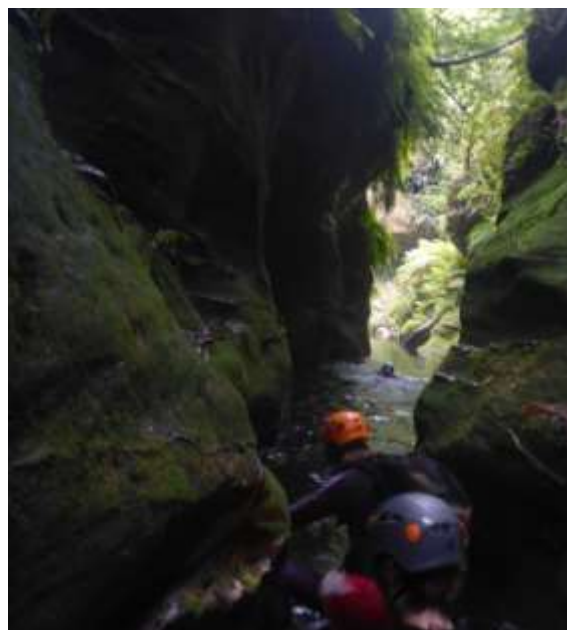
*Myriam on the third abseil.*

Nevertheless, both Cecile and Myriam quickly got the hang of abseiling and rock hopping.

Marijuana doesn't have a great deal to warrant a repeat visit, other than there was a lot of rubbish were they apparently dried the weed. Anna and I plan to go back to remove the rubbish (and maybe find the plantation sites). We did two 12m abseils to get into the creek (probably could be avoided by entering further upstream). The first abseil dropped us into the marijuana drying cave. Then there was another 12m abseil into the creek. Further downstream we did another 7m abseil that probably could have been downclimbed if we were feeling super adventurous!

The best part of the canyon is the section of South Bowen below the traditional South Bowen exit route. We walked downstream to a convenient spur and simply headed up-hill. The first few hundred meters were fine, but then we started encountering small climbs. Just when we thought we were getting close to the fire trail, we came to a pagoda just before a saddle, rather than hunt around for a way down (there wasn't an obvious one), we abseiled down, then started up the hill on the other side, which kept on going, and going, and going. Finally, we hit the fire trail and it was a 20min walk back to the cars. We took our time through the canyons(s) so it ended up being an 8-hour day (am sure we could shave an hour or two off that if we could be bothered going back!).

Thanks Anna and Rod for assisting me in the canyon and congratulations to Cecile and Myriam, you were real troupers and we promise to take you into a nicer, easier canyon with a track next time.



*More (cold) swims in lower S.Bowen than I remembered.*



## Caving – Skills Development – SRT, 24 March 2019

Report by: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Participants: MSS - Marilyn Scott, Marcia Kaye, Garry Smith & Cathi Humphrey-Hood (although all of us are also NHVSS members), and numerous NHVSS members

A warm, humid, lazy Saturday - what better way to spend it than tied up with ropes in a forest somewhere? On gentle sandstone cliffs above a pretty creek at Glenrock Reserve, the latest NHVSS training day had it all - tight straps and harnesses, tyroleans, z-pulleys, ladder work, re-belays on well-bolted cliffs and change-overs half-way up trees. This was an occasion where you could try new gear and ask for advice from people who know how to use it. This was where we all got to practice again that tricky re-belay crossing we'd already done once, halfway down some waterfall somewhere, but weren't confident that we'd either got it right the first time or could pull off again.

And because there was no pressure (and no freezing cold waterfall), there were no problems taking time to readjust a harness or shorten a cows-tail. All in all, a good and productive day among friends!



*Marcia getting the hang of prusiking and then changing back to her descender to go back down the rope - getting instruction from Garry.*



*Cathi at the rebelay (Photo: Garry K Smith).*



*Marcia on the caving ladder (Photo: Garry K Smith).*

Big thanks to Daniel Burt (HNVSS) who organized the day plus his helpers, Brian Reeves, Peter Downes, Rod O'Brien, Luke Buckingham & Murray Dalton, all of whom provided SRT expertise.





## Caving – Abercrombie, 6 – 7 April 2019

Report by: Rod Smith

Participants: Rod Smith (TL), Marilyn Scott, Jeff Boyd, Steve Rowse, Alan Caton (RSS)

Before this weekend there was still about 30 tags I hadn't located. The first priority was to attempt to reduce this number. The second priority was surveying.

Saturday morning Alan was due to meet us at the kiosk at 9:00am. We left camp around 9:00am, but Alan hadn't arrived by the time we got over there. We went in to talk to Stuart and pay camp fees. Alan still hadn't arrived, so Marilyn decided to take Steve and Jeff for a walk through the Arch while I waited. Thankfully I didn't have to wait much longer.

Alan and I headed for the Arch to find the others. It had flooded at Abercrombie only a couple of weeks earlier and the creek looked a little different than before. The option of using the creek to avoid the cordoned off area near the south gate was no longer a good idea, but we didn't know that. Instead of backing right out and going over the Arch, as Marilyn, Jeff and Steve had done, Alan and I decided to scramble up into the Hall of Terpsichore, we then walked through the Arch and found the others at the Northern end.

I'd found some information regarding one of the caves I was still looking for, so it seemed like a good place to start. We headed up the track running north west from the Arch, passed A48, towards the old horse yards. A57 was surprisingly easy to find as it was right beside the track. I was also surprised at the amount of cold air blowing out of it. Marilyn went into the entrance for a quick look but didn't go far as we were intending to stay on the surface.



*In the Grand Arch, the view across to The Dancefloor - biggest arch in Southern Hemisphere.*



*Jeff checking out one of the newly found caves.*

There's some obvious limestone north west of the track in a gully, so we went over to have a look. We found some minor features, but nothing overly interesting. However, the limestone continued. By the time I'd had a look at what was there I joined Alan and Marilyn to find Jeff and Steve had gone to another, larger, limestone outcrop further up the gully. Then Steve called out that he had found A40 and A41.

By the time I got there Steve had continued his investigation of that side of the gully, but A40 and A41 tags were easy to find. There were also two other holes nearby, and I found A39 on one of them.

In the meantime, Jeff, Marilyn and Alan were making their way towards various promising looking holes on the other side of the gully. Jeff reached a large feature but couldn't find the tag on it. He suggested that someone else should have a look while he headed uphill to join Marilyn. I went across to look at the feature Jeff had left, and found the A46. Jeff, Marilyn and Alan managed to also locate A61, A64 and A58.

Steve, now on the other side of the gulley from the rest of us, managed to locate A38 and another promising looking hole without a tag. He then joined us for a snack, and I checked on our progress. We were doing well, the only two numbers left to find in the area were A42 and A91.

Marilyn decided on a spot to look at that she thought would have one or both of the missing numbers. I'd already looked there and not found any tags, but it never hurts to have a second look. I decided to go up



*The potential "Dig"*

Alan stumbled across A108 just above the track to Grove Creek Falls. Alan, Marilyn and I did some more searching while Jeff and Steve went back to camp to get the fire going (well my searching consisted mostly of sitting against a fallen tree with my eyes closed). No more finds that day.

Back at camp we got the pork into a camp oven and onto the fire, with the vegetables an hour later. Since I was in charge of the cooking, I'm not going to offend anyone by saying it wasn't perfect. The meat was awesome, but I stuffed up the vegies. Still, we had a great feed and no-one went hungry.

Sunday morning Steve had to leave early. Marilyn and Jeff decided to have a look at Spring Bluff (at least I think it's Spring Bluff). Once again they found the tags I'd previously found but no others. Then Jeff found a black snake, and in the process of



*Rod & Jeff organising the vegies (& sporting their MSS T-shirts)*

jumping back in fright, managed to lose his balance and start rolling down the hill. Alan and I could hear it unfolding from the campground, but we thought it was a boulder or log rolling down the hill. We found out the truth later. We then heard Marilyn asking Jeff if he was alright and, thankfully, heard Jeff reply that he was.

Alan and I had chosen to start surveying A60. Alan had never surveyed in anger, and I hadn't done much, so I figured it would be a nice one to start with. We definitely weren't fast, but it



*Two Camp Ovens and frying pan of Garlic Bread - Yum.*

didn't take too long for things to start taking shape.

After Jeff's fall, he and Marilyn made their way back to camp and then came to join us. Marilyn then took Jeff through Bushranger before helping Alan and me with the surveying. We didn't complete the cave, but we've made a great start.

Another great, and productive, trip!





## Abseiling – David Crevasse, 14 April 2019

Trip Report: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Rod Smith, Chris Johnstone, Marilyn Scott, Heather Reid, Cecile Roney, Yunn Chin

This was a spur of the moment trip; Rod had a navigation trip on the calendar that wasn't going ahead, and he said that Chris and Cecile wanted to do a canyon and asked me if I had any suggestions. Heather and I had nothing to do so we put our hands up and I let Yunn Chin know that we were going on an abseil trip which would involve his newly acquired skill of prussiking. It wasn't technically a MSS trip (no time to email members), but we were all members, so in the car park we decided that it was an MSS trip (which meant a trip report had to be written – Rod's main reason for it not being an MSS trip!).

I'd always wanted to David Crevasse but had been put off it by a canyoning friends reaction "no No NO, not doing that too much lawyer vine". So for the last 15 years, I'd looked longingly at it from my favourite campsite just across



*Yunn Chin on the 4th Abseil*

the entry just "didn't look right", but true to form, Rod was right and we arrived at the first abseil.

The canyon's very straight forward, just abseil after abseil, some of them technical, some not. It's a really pretty gully and before long we'd arrived at the last abseil. We looked around and found a gully that was in the right place and heading up, so we scrambled up (beware lots of loose rocks), and came to a fixed hand-line, always a good indication you're in the right place, this was shortly followed by the fixed rope for the prussik. Chris had spare mechanical ascenders, so he, Heather and Cecile had a good run up the rope, Yunn, Rod and I used prussic cords (not so fast). It was then a slog up the gully and we popped out on the fire trail, 3m from where we went in.

Great day out, found the canyon, found the exit, no-one hurt themselves and lots of smiles at the end of the day, life doesn't get much better than that.



*Cecile on the 3rd Abseil with Rod belaying.*

the river. Then I heard that there was a pass that bushwalkers had used many years ago, it involved a prussik, but a fixed rope had been put in to make it easier.

So, off we went, 5k of fire trail walking. None of us had done the trip before so had no idea where we were supposed to enter. Rod headed off on a faint foot pad and the rest of us reluctantly followed – Chris, Heather and I had visions of missing out on half the canyon cause



*Heather on the 5th abseil.*

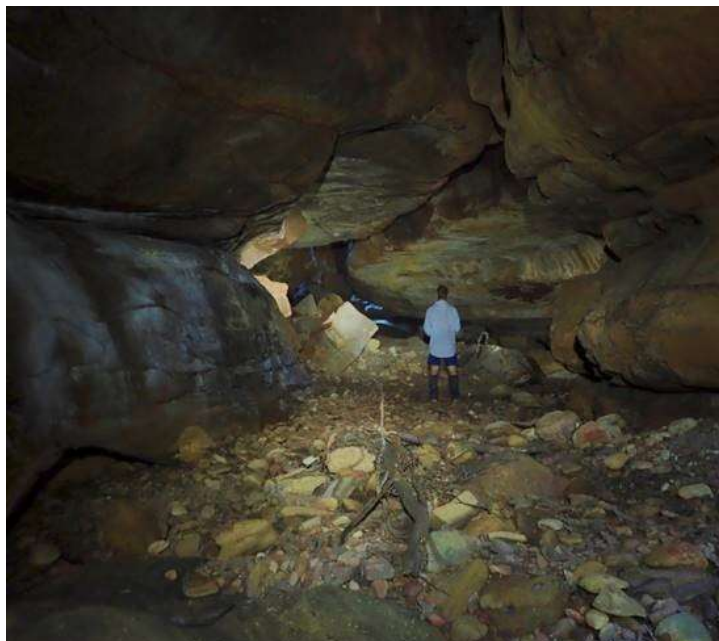
## Canyoning – Glen Davis, 25 – 28 April 2019

Trip Report: John Gray

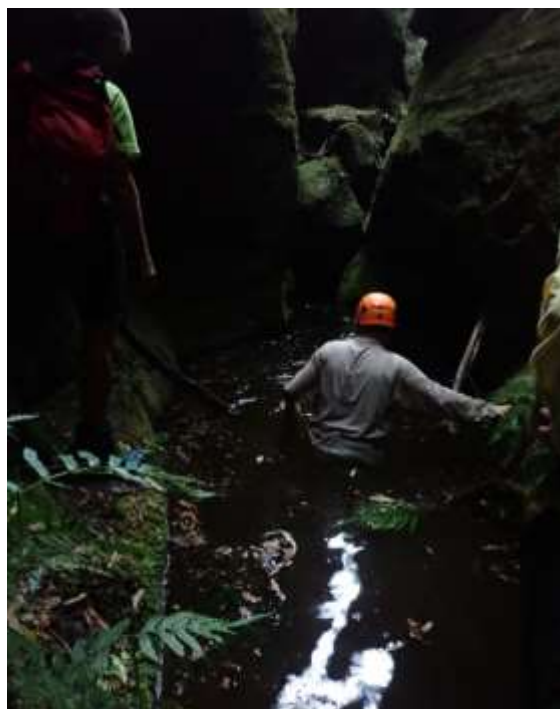
Participants: John Gray (TL), Marilyn Scott, Jeff Boyd, Trish Morrow, Jim Crockett, Andrew Baker, Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Heather Da Silva, Bill Rookyard

It's somewhat ironic that we drive through the "World's Widest Canyon" to seek out the narrowest canyons at Glen Davis. As we drove past the tourist sign and lookout, the setting sun lit up the cliffs in the Capertee Valley. The last light faded away as we arrived at the Coorongooba Campsite. Tomorrow (Thursday) it would be Anzac Day and plenty of campers had already arrived. We spent a very pleasant evening around the fire.

We set off just after 8am for the fire trail walk to Freshwater Creek. I was glad to see the creek was running (just) as we were headed for a camp cave high in the headwaters of the D branch. Parts of the creek were filled with gigantic boulders, but we made it to the start of the canyon by lunchtime. As you head upstream, the canyon starts as a cliff-lined gorge filled with coachwood trees and ferns. Just before camp we dropped a handline down from a ledge to get past a small waterfall. After setting up camp we explored the creek upstream and I was surprised when we almost immediately entered good quality narrow canyon. At one point we walked through a dark tunnel section. Multiple small drops in the creek had



*Andrew in the Tunnel in D Branch (photo: John Gray)*



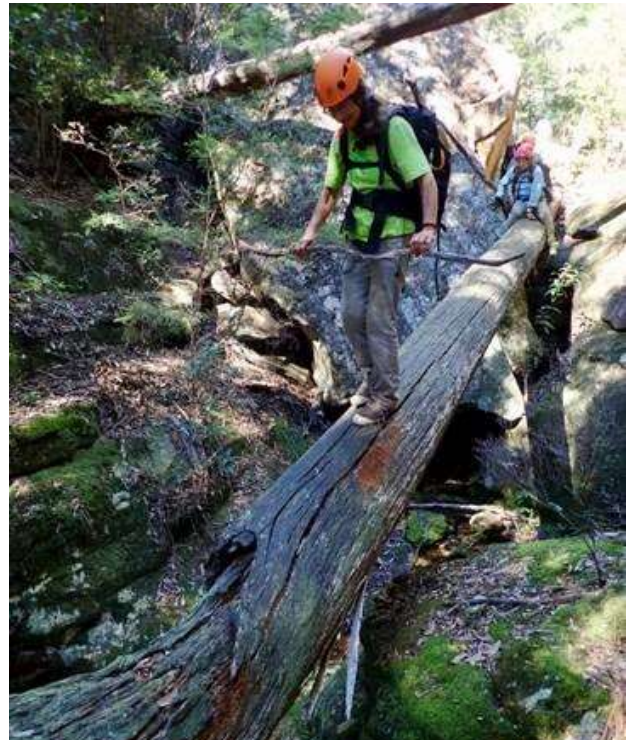
*Jim takes one for the team and swims to the end of the pool. (Photo: Marilyn S)*

convenient logs that we could walk up but we eventually reached a longer pool. A large log was 'encouraged' into the pool and Marilyn started off with the leaning technique where you walk along a submerged ledge and lean against the floating log. At least she kept her shoulders dry. Heather tried another technique that involved standing on the log with hands against the canyon wall. The rest of us found a sloping and narrow ledge to walk along. Eventually we found a pool with no choice but to swim. Jim volunteered and came back with the report that the canyon soon ended. We headed back and scrambled up a side branch before we split into 2 parties. Four of us continued up and found a pass that got us into the next side creek. From there we descended and proved the route as a way up for the next day.

On Friday we scrambled to the ridgetop and down into the top of the E branch. This creek was very different in nature, much drier with the cliffs further apart. It was a very pleasant walk down the creek, but no canyon was found. While traversing below the cliffs back to camp, Trish stepped on a rock that broke off and jarred her achilles tendon.



On Saturday morning we made the decision to walk back down Freshwater Creek and make sure that Trish made it out without further aggravating her injury. Upon reaching the road, we walked down the Capertee a short way and found a nice grassy glade where we left our overnight gear. Back up the hill and we climbed a rock pinnacle for lunch. The views of the valley were stupendous. We once again split into 2 parties for the afternoon. We needed to see into the next creek to assess how to get to the reported canyon in its depths. Some of us walked up steeply through a gap in the lower cliff line to the halfway ledge. At one point the ledge became very narrow and sloped steeply down to a drop off. We rigged a handline for safety. Further around the ledge we found a steep gully that looked like it would provide an abseil route down to the lower ledge. We could hear the other party below us. Three abseils later we found the footprints left by the others. Back to camp and a good fire kept us warm as the weather had turned cold.



*Lots of log walking in Branch E, Anna walked the log, Heather chose to ride it (Photo: John Gray)*



*John on top of the Pinnacle, with the Capertee River valley in the background. (Photo: Andrew Baker)*

Sunday morning was a relaxed start for the easy walk back to the cars. In all we had a very successful trip and we now have enough info to attack the next creek on a future trip.



## Caving – Abercrombie, 4 – 5 May 2019

Report by: Rod Smith

Participants:

MSS: Rod Smith, Dave Stuckey, Alan Green

SUSS: Phil Maynard, Alan Pryke, Emily Butcher,  
Glen Ellis

ISS: Bob Kershaw

BMSC: Colin Tyrrell

HCG: Cathy Brown

NUCC: Lachlan, Whitney, Andy Waddell

CASM: Bill Lamb

OSS: Sandra

CWSS: Peter Dykes

RSS: Alan Caton

I squeaked and squealed my way into camp a bit after 11:00pm Friday night and went straight to sleep. The rain had stopped around 9 and the stars were out for a cool and crisp evening.

I awoke and had the enjoyment of laying in listening to the increasing number of voices joining the conversation around the campfire. I recognised some of the voices, including at least one I didn't expect amongst the throng. Phil had convinced Alan Pryke to help with the surveying of the Arch.

We gathered around the fire while Alan Green cooked up a multitude of sausages, eggs & bacon. He was not about to let anyone go hungry, and there were a number of appreciative diners. As others rolled up and joined in, there was obligatory catching up, regaling of recent exploits and cave politics.

It's very easy for time to escape under these circumstances, but a few people were paying attention to their watches and the general call to gather for the NSWSC meeting was made. Those that weren't attending continued to lazily get organised while the rest of us found seats around one of the tables in the shelter next to the guides office.

This meeting had the largest representation of clubs than we'd had for quite some time, which was great to see. It was also great to see some new faces amongst the familiar gathered around the table. Although we're getting a great turnout for the meetings, we are still not able to fill all the commission positions that are vacant. Now's a great opportunity to put your hand up. Thanks to the hard work of, primarily, Colin and Denis over the last 12 years, things are rather settled in NSW.

The meeting was all over in 2 hours, but this was, as always, followed by the obligatory socialising.

After lunch we made plans for the afternoon. I'd heard a rumour about the location of some of the missing tags, so I set off with Bob, Colin and Alan Caton to investigate. It soon became apparent that I'd got some information mixed up and we were not about to stumble onto some wayward tags. Instead we then ventured up to the North West Outcrop to have another look for A91. Unfortunately, yet again, it eluded us.

There was another tag I had some better information on, downstream from camp. It was a short walk so we went for a look and found it very quickly. At least that was a win.

As the light faded we gathered around the camp fire to socialise. Alan Green once again produced more food than he could eat alone, so a few people dined on steak and potato with a peppercorn sauce, cooked to perfection. All stories of the evening will not be recorded to protect the innocent, and not so innocent.

The morning dawned beautifully clear. After another delicious, catered breakfast courtesy of Mr Green people broke into small groups to pursue their morning's activities. I made sure everyone had a plan and everything they needed before Dave and I wandered down to the Grand Arch.

As we approached and then entered the Grand Arch, Dave started pointing out the old path locations, names given to various speleothems and other fascinating pieces of history. I wish I'd had a recorder to capture all that information for the book. Hopefully Dave will be happy to go through it again so that we can include it in the publication.

Dave then took me up onto the Arch to point out the top of Cathedral. I couldn't remember if I'd previously located that tag, but, after checking my records, I realised I had. However, we then stumbled onto A8, which I realised I hadn't located previously, so it was another win.

Back in the Grand Arch we went into A45 in an attempt to locate the old signatures that are apparently in there. Alan Green had removed a lot of flood debris on Saturday which made entry a lot safer than it had been. Once past the debris there is a high chamber with an awkward climb to access and a small crawl almost directly underneath. I made the climb into the high chamber. Dave was still recovering from knee surgery and decided that "discretion is the better part of valour", so waited below. No old signatures presented themselves, so I carefully descended to Dave's location. There was still the crawl, but Dave didn't



want to get dusty. I wasn't to be dissuaded and crawled in. I was surprised to find it shortly opening into a small chamber that was just big enough to stand upright in, if you picked the exact right spot. The crawl continued further than it first looked but eventually ended in a small space. Here there are some signatures with dates from around 1869 and 1870. I don't know if those are the specific signatures I was looking for, but they certainly qualified as old.

I crawled back out to find Dave sitting in the dark watching the tourists go by. We exited A45 then went to find Phil and Alan and see how they were going with the Arch survey. They'd made good progress, certainly better than Phil had expected. But it's a big project and there's plenty more to go.

And thus concluded another top trip, with top people, in a top location.



*Climbing the Pinnacle at Glen Cavis (Photo: John Gray)*



*The camp cave on recent Freshwater D trip (Photo: John Gray)*

## Caving – Skills Development SRT, 26 May 2019

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: David Stuckey (TL), Anna Ossig-Bonanno, Marcia Kaye, Marilyn Scott

The weather looked decidedly average with the sky spitting on us from time to time, but by the time we'd walked down to the practice site, blue sky was starting to poke through.

David started with the basics giving a run down of equipment and how best to set up for SRT, as some of us still haven't bought our SRT gear, this enabled us to come to some decisions on what to buy.

A few warm-up abseils and then we were "into it" and we soon discovered problems with our gear (chest harness too long, cows tails too long or too short, Petzel ascenders too grippy); this was what the day was all about!

If you just had to prussik up a rope from the ground to the top of a pitch, it would be dead easy. It's the redirections and re-belays that we wanted to practice, and find out what we needed to do to get out of tricky situations. Both Anna and I had occasions to "figure it all out" and Marcia (who's just starting out with SRT) got to learn by our mistakes (lol)!

After wearing ourselves out, we finished mid-afternoon with a clearer idea of what gear we needed and what we want to achieve at our next practice day in July. Thanks so much for running the day David and for sharing your knowledge.



*David setting up the re-belay.*



*Anna ascending.*



*Me "this stupid temporary chest harness is strangling me!"*







# Appendix 1 – MEETING MINUTES

## MSS 429<sup>th</sup> General Meeting – 16 May 2019

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

**Present:** Roderick Smith, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Chris Johnstone, Beth Little, Marilyn Scott, Jim Crockett, Rob Drummond, Rob & Pam Horn

**Apologies:** Helena Johnstone, David Stuckey

**Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes:** None

**Correspondence:** SUSS newsletter x 2, Caves Australia x 3, Bendigo Bank statement, Commonwealth Bank Statements, Post Office box invoice

**Committee Members Reports:**

President: None

Treasurer: Account balance as at 16 May 2019:

Opening Balance at start of 2018/19 year:	\$3,969.21
Total Incoming to date:	\$4,300.97
Total Outgoing to date:	\$2,586.93
Closing Balance as at 14 May 2019:	\$6,583.25

- MSS still has money spread across three accounts, and we should look at closing the old Commonwealth account before the end of the financial year, as there have been no further transactions on it since January.  
**Action:** Beth to tell Mark Hornshaw to use the other account  
**Resolved** to close the Commonwealth Bank Account (account numbers BSB 062021 acct: 00901421). **Moved** Rod Smith, **seconded** Marilyn Scott. **Carried.**  
**Action:** 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.
- There is at least one reimbursement pending, \$135 to Rod Smith for paying the Post Office Box renewal. Payment has been initiated but hasn't been seconded. Rod Smith to action
- We have made \$18.97 in interest on the main Bendigo account.
- The accounts finished \$1619.14 higher since the February report, thanks largely to the number of cool trips run by the indefatigable Marilyn Scott and John Gray, but we have had more memberships come in since February and some ASF contributions may need to be paid.

Equipment Officer:

New rope received 9mm – 60m (Imlay) invoice pending. The other 60m rope that has overstayed it's welcome and has been disposed of. We Still have 2x60m + 1x40m in the club inventory. Beth Little has reorganized the gear in storage at her house and all in order. New Washers for Scaling poles purchased and were used on the recent training day.

Training Officer:

24/3/19: NHVSS SRT field day went ahead, attended by Marilyn, Marcia Kaye, Cathi H-H. Training dates locked in (see calendar)

- 25 May (Sunday) SRT - DS refresher/re-belays/prussiking – David Stuckey to lead
- 7 July Sunday SRT – DS refresher/re-belays/prussiking;
- 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.

Future training opportunities - 19 & 20 October Cave Surveying Course at Wombeyan – SUSS will be organizing a course - Suss want first right of refusal so we are not sure if there are any places for MSS members yet.

Marilyn proposed MSS Subsidizing first aid courses for trip leaders – 1 day course. It was noted that is a condition of our ASF insurance that Trip Leaders have first aid certificates. There are a number of our usual trip leaders whose certs are expiring. To be considered as action for next meeting.

**Action:** Marilyn Scott to check on costs of courses.

Librarian:

All known issues of MSS Newsletter are now scanned and on USB – to be loaded onto the Website in the member section in the Archives. MSS extends thanks to Rodney O'Brien for doing this.

Web Manager: None

Membership Report: As at 16/5/19

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	21	8	0	1	48	17

New members Cecile Roney, Alissa Martelli, Myriam Bordeleau and Bill Rookyard

Introductory members who will not be renewing: Edd Keudell & Donna Graham; (back to USA)

Kids turning 18 ... currently we have a couple who are 18 and older, Laura Clyne, Jarvis Hornshaw and Ben Johnstone.

**Action:** 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.

**Interesting stories from recent activities:** None

### Project Updates:

#### Abercrombie Cave Book:

Busy few months; Beth Little tabled Quarterly Report March - May 2019

- Beth attempted to contact Edd & G Bates without success.
- Beth emailed B Cubitt to give an update about project.
- Grant submission completed and reviewed by Exec committee prior to submission.
- Grant submitted to Karst Conservation and ASF. Feedback positive. They will give advice on exactly what they will fund after this weeks ASF meeting.
  - Does not include Printing costs so an alternate source will be sought for printing costs.
- Follow-up potential authors; Still no confirmation from A. Spate (Cave critters chapter); no luck with follow up for Chapter on Indigenous History (although Beth Little may have a lead on a freelance writer who may be interested);
  - Agreed for Beth to approach the freelance writer and see if they will do it.
- Garry Smith has confirmed he has almost completed his 'How Caves Form' chapter.
- March field trip:
  - P Maynard - survey commenced on Main Arch to produce a map with greater detail than Franks.
  - Consultation with G Smith and P Maynard regarding cave survey project.
  - Photography in cave by G Smith.
  - Drone photography planned however weather no conducive to flying/photography.
  - Further geological survey activities by Cathi HH.
- April field trip:
  - Surface cave/tag location project continued - significant amount located and GPS'd
  - Still don't know where Spring bluff is
  - P Maynard completed Main Arch survey
- May trip
  - NSW Speleo Council meeting attended; Further Geological survey by Cathi HH

PLAN for next 3 months:

- Attempt contact with G Bates, A Spate, & Edd.
- Engage freelance writer
- June & July trips; survey projects the priority. There are many many tiny caves (6-10m) that require surveying and could be designated out to any participants that come along. June trip primarily Grove cave by Beth and Marilyn, lots just need the 'North' corrected

### Business Carried forward and Action items from last meeting:

#### Club Reciprocals/Cross overs (Marilyn Scott) - CSS

Action - Marilyn to include an article in the Newsletter that we now have reciprocal rights with these clubs – Completed

#### S&R Contacts

Action - Marilyn - 'I'll be home honey' – (see below) message to be included in the newsletter. Completed

#### KNP Track strategy and Plan of Management (PoM) amendments

No comments received so far, Beth to go the meeting in a couple of weeks and will report at the next MSS meeting

#### Server

Noted Owen needs to talk to Rod Smith. Owen and Rod to decide where to locate the server (probably Owen can keep it at his location)

Noted: The ASF Librarian (Cathi) needs a LINUX server (or Linux VM) for the library software.

Server will be used as host for soft copies/document storage and sFTP server behind MSS Website and needs to be separate to allow us to have a windows server.

#### ASF membership fee proposal



Submissions received only from Marilyn: "Re: Email received from Bob Kershaw already circulated, I don't believe it affects us and my recommendation would be to continue as we have for the past 2 years, we're being pretty efficient, no need for us to change anything, but we should file it away (once ASF approve it) and if we need to change what we do, then refer to it."

There was a general discussion as to reasons behind the proposal. It was noted that it was probably more to do with stream lining ASF processes than anything else.

Original payment time movement has been removed from the proposal. So the current proposal does not seem to have the same financial disadvantages.

Marilyn Scott comments – Membership - Agreed to do nothing at the moment as we don't think it will affect MSS much.

Rod Smith to report back after next ASF executive meeting.

## **New Business**

### Club Reciprocals/Cross overs

Email from Anna Ossig-Bonanno "I would like to express my appreciation for making the connections to other clubs; it certainly makes a great program. I am taking advantage of this extended program and enjoy the trips thoroughly. Regards, Anna".

MSS thanks Anna for the endorsement.

Noted that the cross-overs generally have been very successful, and cancelling trips due to lack of interest has not happened for a while.

Marilyn noted some teething problems and as a result, some CSS trips will be identified "CSS Members only".

Also need to be clear on website/ in newsletter about Trip Fees – what are they, there seems to be a bit of confusion.

Agreed that reciprocal trips fees will be charged – They will be charged at MSS Trip fee rates.

MSS will advertise trips fees on Website, Newsletter and Calendar page.

MSS notes our current Trip fees are \$3 for a day trip and \$5 for a weekend trip.

### Documentation – Constitution

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.

**Action:** Rod to check on Family memberships with ASF exec.

Once this is clarified we can decide how to align.

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 ASF.

II. Honorary membership must be approved by a majority of the committee.

Agreed that the current definition use of Honorary membership is good.

Agreed that we don't need a 'social' because we had no interest while it was on offer.

Agreed don't want to call it life membership – it implies that it is irrevocable.

We do need to put in a revoking clause somehow.

Need to amend that a significant service or contribution must be made to able to qualify for honorary membership.

**Action:** Chris Johnstone to draft wording for agreement at next GM and presentation at next AGM

### 30 Anniversary Clothes on offer

Rob Horn has a 30 year anniversary jumper (XL) and t-shirt (L) - they are on offer to anyone who wants them. In the meantime, they are in the Equipment store.

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

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

- 25 May (Sunday) - SRT - DS refresher/rebelays/prussiking;
- 7 July Sunday - SRT – DS refresher/rebelays/prussiking;
- 4 August - VCR Training with Brian Evans;
- 8 September - Canyoning Skills at Yellow rock
- Possible - 19 & 20 October Cave Surveying Course
- Philippines – March/April 2020 (flexible time frame) - MSS have been invited on an archeological dig in the Philippines in Palawan, Tabon Man Cave. Expressions of interest to Jim Crockett

**Next Meeting:** tbc 1 August – North Ryde RSL

**Meeting Closed:** 20:35pm