

# NEWSLETTER MONTHLY

SEPTEMBER 2010



# MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover Shot:

Jim Crockett in East Deep Creek Cave, Yarrangobilly

Photo by Cathi Humphrey-Hood

NEWSLETTER OF THE METROPOLITAN SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.  
P.O. Box 178, THORNLEIGH, NSW, 2120



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## Society News

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### Surveying Course:

On the weekend of the 13th and 14th of November there will be a cave surveying course held at Bungonia. Invitations are open to each club to send up to 2 people to do the course. The cost is \$35 per person. If you are interested in participating in this course please let both Jim Crockett (0407 284 256, [jim.crockett@reach.com](mailto:jim.crockett@reach.com)) and Rod Smith (0438 444 262, [roderick\\_\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick__smith@hotmail.com)) know ASAP.

### Next Meeting:

To be hosted by Beth Little on the 14th October. An agenda will be circulated prior to the meeting. Please RSVP Beth Little (0405 226 811, [littlebeth78@hotmail.com](mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com)) if you will be attending or with your apology.

### Agenda

The Agenda for the next meeting can be found at the end of this newsletter in Appendix 1.

### Combined NSW cavers/caving club trip to 'The Ovens' and 'St Michael's' sea caves

Joe Sydney from HCG is organising a trip to 'The Ovens' and 'St Michael's' sea caves at Whale Beach, Sydney on behalf of the NSW Speleo Council, for October 23rd. If interested please contact Jim Crockett or Rod Smith for more details.

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## Trip Reports

### Yarrangobilly – September 2010

By Beth Little

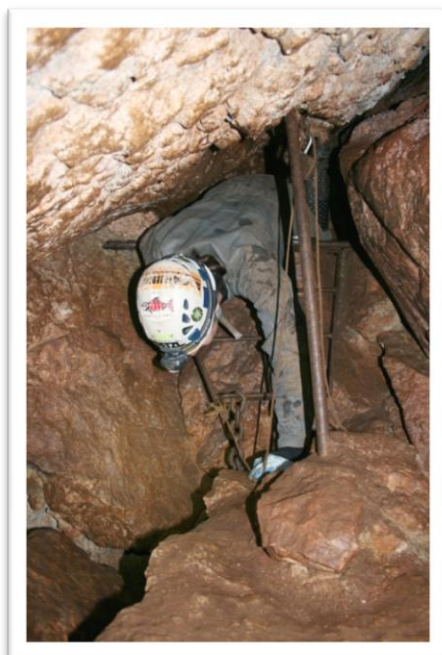
Thanks guys for a great trip! Yarrangobilly. Definitely one of my favourite caving destinations in Australia, and it definitely didn't disappoint this time around. This trip was a little bit different to those we've done in the past, in that the trip leader opened it up to a few partners/families of the cavers, so we had a number of non caving members along on trip, staying with us and enjoying the other delights around Yarrangobilly and neighbouring snowy mountain region. As many of you know, Yarrangobilly has recently (few years ago) restored and opened up two wings of their caves house, the East wing being our chosen accommodation for the trip. Such a decedent way

to go caving; returning each day to steaming showers, gas fires and dinner on hand. As there were so many of us we decided to try doing a dinner roster, each couple only having to cook dinner for us all just the once in the trip. Beautiful dinners were provided every night, so gourmet, definately trumping my usual 'can tuna and packet creamy pasta' which frequents my menu when on caving trips. This time it was roasts, chicken parmigiana, slow cooked traditional Bolognese, and Mexican, to name just but a few of the dishes. The kids were a mite exuberant at times around the dinner table (and first thing in morn!), but always offered an array of entertainment (great singing girls!) and lovely company. The scenery and wildlife didn't disappoint either. Jess and I while on the road managed to sight each live animal (as opposed to road kill!) that the road signs predicted of, from the wild brumbies, to emu, to echidna...and of course the kangaroos too but they less exiting. The caves house is so comfortable and well situated nestled in the valley there that it is quite hard to leave it in the morning...one just wishes for endless coffee pots in the morning sun rather the triggering off....but trogging up and off we did go. See below for summaries of the caves visited.

### **Eagles Nest through trip; Y3, 1, 2.**

Monday. Beth (TL), Jess, Rod, Jim, Ken, George (Yarrangobilly Cave Manager), Rick (Yarrangobilly Caves Staff).

Classic trip! Our usual start at Eerie entrance, corkscrew down right of chamber, further down and continue corkscrew style through rock pile into Y1. Our nose for navigation through rock pile was def on today and we soon reached the non pitch. Today we rigged non pitch for the majority to abseil down, and a few of us to down climb. Pretty hold your breath and tightly grip the rope type down climb. Then on to stream way passage – historically a freezing area, and today no different...like an icebox! The cold pressing us through Hughie's dig quick to get out of the frigid draft. Lunch at the usual traditional 180 degree turn. Enter bigger passages and chamber's...and wow. The past few weeks had seen massive rain fall around yagby. Formations everywhere that were crisp white and gleaming! Crystal room and then pools just incredible today. And just kept getting better as we travelled through. Past roof pendants, such dramatic primary formations. The formations just flowing where they decorated railway tunnel and cavern further on. I really can't remember it ever looking so amazing. Must be all that rain, or people with super strong headlamps!



### **East Deep Creek with Donkey Tail Extension; Y5**

Tuesday. Beth (TL), Jess, Rod, Cathi, Jim, George and Rick. Down through rock pile and on through and widening chambers. The crystal pool never fails to impress, deep blue as only limestone can give. Trog off in rather a precarious ledge for the red crystal flowstone and surrounding area. Then we split teams for donkey tail extension. Felt very privileged, as we have been the only group in seven years to have a permit for the area. (Though there is some that suspect other cavers may have visited the area without permits.....although I hope they don't make habit of this – such a very delicate and pristine area that is permit bound for very good reason). An exiting and tight little vertical rift passageway led on to de-trogging station. From there an o so wet, wonderful, and formation filled passage led down. It felt like committing a great crime to walk down that

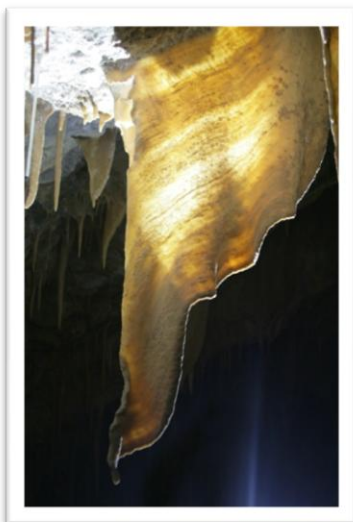
flowstone passageway, even though tiptoeing and treading as lightly as possible. Very cold, wet, and squeeze decent to donkey tails chamber. Donkey tails themselves were very unique and submerged a good few inches in the water. [For future trips if permit granted, quite a muddy slope at the 90 degree turn to final descent to donkey tails. Cross directional issues for mud transfer between the most sensitive part of the cave. There is not really enough room for another gear change at that point. But something has to be done to keep mud transference to minimum. Maybe potential for a piece of neoprene cut to measure around the spot...which you'd bring in and take out with you. Don't think plastic bags would really be that effective to cover area and maintain cleanliness in both directions].



Donkey Tails in East Deep Creek

### **Harrie Wood Y26 & Castle Cave Y31, and South Glory Y24**

Wednesday. Beth (TL), Jess, Jim, Jox & Biata, Rod & Cathi, John & Kathy, Keely & Bela, Ken & Gill.



We split the group today to go tag team into these two amazing old school tourist caves, Harrie wood and Castle cave.

Harrie wood is probably best known for the cave's 'reclaiming' itself all over the chicken wire, metal drip trays and drip buckets. Its wonderful to see the start of what may one day be gorgeous shawl on the underside of the drip tray, the start of stalactites off the chicken wire, and who knows what the crystal lined drip bucket may one day turn into?

Castle Cave is a wonderful example of an old tourist cave that has had much of the Victorian era furnishings removed. As readers may know MSS has a proud history of dragging out much of the old rods and chicken wire. Castle cave's most famous speleothem is the pendulite, nestled safe in its own little grotto. Stunning.

Glory Hole (also called South Glory). Great self guided through trip, all newly lit and a lovely subtle lighting design. MSS accomplished a little side project this trip to haul out the leftover old electrical cable. Job well done if I do say so!



### **Janus Y58**

Thursday. Beth (TL), Jess, Jox, John G, Jim, Ken

One sad participant had two left gumboots for today's little trip. Literally, two left's. Thank god they wore their volleys in the car rather than the usual lambs wool slippers...mint she had some alternative!

Janus is a spectacular cave that builds like some awesome concerto. Starts with a little narrow passage, little awkward start pitch, up mud slope and into short rock pile. It then builds, an exiting climb up an impressive flowstone wall, on to 30 m diagonal descent through a rift. The heart starts racing as you de-trog and negotiate the clean zone across precarious enough stepping stones and emerge with a great crescendo into Rawlinson Chamber as it opens around you. Simply stunning. Every bend and turn a new aspect to ooh and aah at. My poor little LED's simply didn't do it justice but thankfully team members had some awesome lights for others to parasite off.

Note for any future Janus goers, if you are found travelling high in the rockpile and see cairns...ignore them and turn back as they are not the way, and you've gone too high. The cave map survey is spot on so trust it and your instincts.

Also, the clean zone has some of the dirtiest patches ive seen in ages, but the change stations are being effective for their purposes – keeping the dirty zone from tracking down through crystal river. We used extra clean towels and garbage bags for this trip which were really effective at change stations for extra cleanliness. Especially an extra towel to clean the stepping pads on the way out as we exited.

An interesting note, after all the weeks of intense rain in the Yagby area, the crystal river was bone dry.



## Old Inn Y10

Friday. Beth (TL), Jess, Jox, Ken and Kathy

This is a very cute little stream way cave. Very very wet today with all the rain the past few weeks. Felt more like canyoning for the first 20 metres! All participants today hadn't been into Old Inn so we were relying on the survey map, and some rather vague descriptions to go on. Found our way to straw haven without issue which was great, with the dug squeeze being as cramped as expected. Having reached our primary objective we lollied up (caving is all about eating and snacking after all) and headed back to try to find the way on to Lofty and Rimstone Chamber. After a good deal of grovelling around areas that sounded like others' descriptions of the route on, then following a number of seemingly potential leads, all sadly led to nought. By then we decided we were cold, wet and muddy enough to head off back to our warm bunkhouse for an afternoon in the sun. Thermal pools for some, coffee on the balcony for others.

## Above ground trog

Saturday. Jim, Beth (TL) and Jess

A day of trogging in the sun with full kit....not what we all had in mind. A good example of why one should always carry a topo...even if your sure you know the way and are sure its "that way" through bush and only 15 minutes from the car. Hah hah. On the positive side we familiarized ourselves with the stunning karst topography just south of north deep creek and across a few ridges to that of Y50 .... whose doline we happened to wander across heading back up towards the road. Not quite the cave entrance we were heading for though...



## Upcoming Events

WEEKEND 16th / 17th OCTOBER – CAVING AT ILFORD AND COCO CK

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact by: **ASAP**

What's involved?

A trip through Ilford cave and a search for Coco Ck Cave, in the Capertee Valley area.

You will need: Indoor camping gear (basic hut accomodation depending on numbers), caving gear (no SRT expected)

**MSS Club Meeting 14th October**  
**Beth Little's Place**  
**Please contact Beth for more details**

0405 226 811, [littlebeth78@hotmail.com](mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com)

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Combined NSW cavers/caving club trip to 'The Ovens' and 'St Michael's' sea caves  
Saturday October 23rd 8.30am

Short rock scramble with possible belay down to sea rock platform. Very short 150m walk along sea platform to The Ovens sea cave. Tyrolean across a short (tide out) 4-5m water channel and if time allows, 1km walk along rock platforms to St Michael's sea cave with easy access to up to (St Michael's) car park. Possibly also including fishing and/or swimming, and perhaps a fish & chip dinner.

Please contact Joe Sydney for more information: [jsydney@choice.com.au](mailto:jsydney@choice.com.au)

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**WEEKEND 6th– 7th NOVEMBER – KAYAKING ON MYALL LAKES**

Trip Leader: Bob Horn

Contact by: **ASAP**

What's involved?

Kayaking to camping spot, return next day.

You will need: Kayak, camping gear, food and water, hat

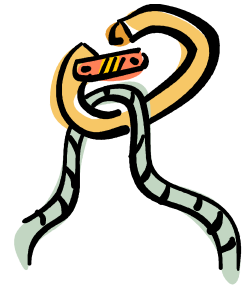


If you're interested in something a little bit different, consider this event... The Nepal Canyoning Association (NCA) is organizing an International Canyon Rendezvous (ICR) from 07 - 13 April 2011, for Nepal Tourism Year 2011 <http://www.nepalcanyoning.org.np/>. Canyoning will be in the Marshyandi valley. There is no contact information given for the event, but if interested you might like to try: [nepalnca@mail.com.np](mailto:nepalnca@mail.com.np)

The UIS Twelfth International Cave Rescue Conference has been planned for Bulgaria for the 8th to 15th May 2011, at the Dryanovo Monastery. See <http://resconf2011.asobulgaria.org/> for more information.



## Monthly Horrorscope



Your adventure starts for October 2010 ... or for any other time  
Period you care to apply them to.

Galah: 1st April - 1st April  
Nobody will take you seriously, not even you.

Butterbox: 2nd April - 12th May  
Money will slip through your fingers. Do not eat crumpets for breakfast. Limit your exposure to high financial dealings (especially via Nigeria) and you will soon find yourself on solid ground.

Tiger Snake: 13th May - 2nd June  
This is a dangerous month for you. Expect excitement at the beginning and the end of the month and excruciating boredom in between.

Midwinter: 3rd June - 23rd July  
Nothing is as it seems. People you thought were friends will prove to be enemies. Seemly good decisions will turn bad. Your dreams will seem real and when you're awake it'll seem like a dream. The sun will rise at dusk and set at sunrise. You will hear colours, see aromas and smell sounds.

Starlight: 24th July - 18th August  
All the glowworms are aligning for you. This month everything will go right for you. You will have untold success, make millions, sleep with whoever you want, become famous, influential, etc. Unfortunately for you, the month will end.

Empress: 19th August - 6th September  
This month you should take your time as you will find things are over too quickly. Make a big finish so you will be remembered. People will think you are up yourself, just remember to look down on those peasants like the Empress you are.

Grand: 7th September - 29th September  
The leeches feed on humans, the yabbies eat the leeches, but the humans no longer eat the yabbies. The circle is broken. What that means for you: I have no idea. You're on your own. Good luck.

Claustral: 30th September - 3rd November  
You need clarification on things to come. Seek help from psychics. Have your palm read and your future told. Drink tea so you can examine the leaves. Have your aura read. And join some religious cult to justify having multiple wives/husbands and partaking in mass suicides.

Wollongambe: 4th November - 4th December  
Take it easy. Be lazy. Lay around all day and watch the world go by. You might as well, nobody would care anyway. Keep a patch ready for your lilo, you might need one.

Hole-In-The-Wall: 5th December - 19th January

This will be an eventful month for you. Your actions will have an impact on the world, even if it's a very small impact. You will do things. Other people will do things that will affect you. Some of these things could be good, some could be bad, and some may not be good or bad. Your month could probably be worse, but it could probably be better too.

Kanangra Main: 20th January - 10th March

If you find yourself going on and on and on and on, don't worry, everyone will agree with you.

Twister & Rocky Creek: 11th March - 31st March

This month will be twisted and rocky. You may find yourself in flood, but the only thing you will not be swimming in is money. Don't be afraid to jump into the murky depths of financial oblivion, you're going broke anyway, so you might as well do it with style.

## News from the Underground

News from the underground aims to provide snippets of what has been happening around the world, primarily in the areas of caving and canyoning, climbing, mountaineering...

September 2010

**THE NORMAL TRACK TO ACCESS CLAUSTRAL CANYON IS NOW CLOSED.** Canyoners no longer have permission to cross private property to get into the canyon. Alternatives are being sought that hopefully won't translate to a much longer walk. See Dave Noble's webpage for further details at: <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~dnoble/canyoningnews.html>.

Mountaineer Christian Strangl did not make the only summit of K2 last season – after questions were raised about the summit photo he provided as proof, he admitted that he had not made the summit and the photo had been taken from camp 3. Questions are now being asked as to whether he went higher than camp 1 during the season at all – this was his third attempt on the mountain and on both previous occasions he *had* come close to reaching the top. Source: [Explorer's Web](#).



Work continues on cave exploration in the Albanian Alps, as 10 caves were left to explore after the previous expedition ended. One cave, AVL70, was discovered while the group were waiting for help to transport their gear, and the cave was squeezed to find three pits, one of which was explored to -200m and another to -105m. This year's expedition discovered 24 caves in all, with a total length of more than 838m. More remains to be found. Info from [caverinfo.com](#).



Also courtesy of caverinfo.com comes news of the Italians pushing a deep cave called Abisso Satanachia beyond -1000m - and the cave continues...

Left: Antonio, Zairo and Leonardo at -1040m in Abisso Satanachia.

Source: <http://www.satanachia.it/immagini-dal-primo-fondo-a-1040.html?pid=54&pageid=888>

And the Slovak Speleological Society have been stopped in their tracks by Macedonian snow – 15 to 20m *more* of it than they encountered during 2009, which had capped their cave. Unwilling to wait several years till the now 50m snow cap melts, if it ever does, they decided to dig a new entrance to Slovacka jama Cave and went looking for some likely holes to get them started. They are now down to -13m and have closed the hole against further snows, to await the next expedition. At least that's a problem we're unlikely ever to have to deal with in Australia.

Three climbers died at the end of August in a week-long storm on Peak Pobeda in Tien Shan. Fifteen people were stranded between 6400 and 7000 metres before an airlift point could be set up at 5500 metres to evacuate them. Unfortunately three Russian climbers died before they could reach that rescue point. The whole group had summited on August 23rd when one of them, 60 year-old climber Yuri Efremov, experienced heart problems at the summit. Weather on the descent forced the group to stop at 7400m, where they were stuck for days in three small tents. Efremov and another climber died during this time. The storm let up only slightly after the 5th day, but it took the survivors another 2 days to fight their way down, during which time another climber died. The rescued climbers were all suffering from frostbite.



Photo from: <http://www.summitpost.org/>

Report from [Explorer'sWeb](http://www.explorersweb.com/).

A mystery deepens... two Polish climbers have gone missing on their way to Khan Tengri in Kazakhstan. They had arranged for their luggage to be airlifted to Northern Imylchek, travelled to Zharkulak in a rented car and have not be heard from since August 5th 2010. Several climbers were killed in an avalanche on this mountain during August, but these two men, Piotr Zwolinski and Michel Kacperski, were not among them and hopes are fading for their safe return. Info from [Summit.post.org](http://www.summitpost.org/).

September 26 - If you're thinking about passing through Tibet on your way to some high peaks, you might want to give the tourism a miss for a little while. The south-western region in Tibet is currently suffering from an outbreak of plague. So far only one person has died, but that was from



the dangerous pneumatic form of the disease. There was another outbreak in a different region last year. China has issued a health alert. Source: [ABC News](#).

A UK journalist has been found guilty of placing a hoax rescue call to the Keswick Mountain Rescue Team in Cumbria last November. The journalist sent the rescue team on a wild goose chase apparently so she could write a story about the inability of rescue services to cope with a flooding crisis that had affected the area around the same time. While the rescue team were looking for a non-existent walker who had broken their leg in terrible weather conditions, the journalist was found drunk in a hotel bar. Story from [UK Climbing](#).

An avalanche on Dhaulagiri on September 28th hit a team of professional Japanese guides, three of whom are still missing. Pasang Gyelu Sherpa is also missing. One of the missing guides, 49 year-old Osamu Tanabe, has summited nine 8000m peaks and has climbed Lhotse's difficult south face. The search continues, see newswire from [The Alpinist](#).

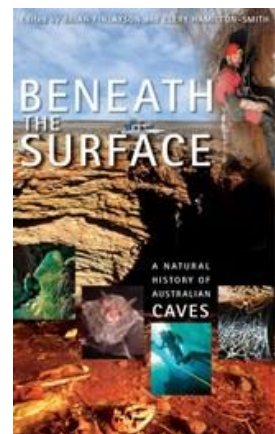


Photo of the North-East face of Dhaulagiri by Marco Carnelli, from Peakware: <http://peakware.com/photos.html?photo=1970>.

Redpoint pioneer Kurt Albert has been killed in a via ferrata accident in the Hirschbach Valley, Frankenjura region. He sustained head injuries after falling 18m and remained in critical condition in hospital for several days before succumbing. The exact cause of the fall is unknown. From a report by [UK Climbing](#).

Also from [UK Climbing](#) is the report of a fatal climbing accident on a cliff in Dorset, England. The climb was 'Drag Racing Underground'. The climber, Barry Humphries, took a fall of about 15m after his foot dislodged rock that fell upon his rope and cut it. He died shortly afterward from internal injuries.

Most of you with caving connections will have heard that [Beneath the Surface: A Natural History of Australian Caves](#) by Brian Finlayson and Elery Hamilton-Smith (eds) is back on a Print-on-Demand (POD) basis. You can buy direct from the Publishers for \$49.95, simply log in on <http://www.unswpress.com.au/isbn/0868405957.htm>



\*\*\* We end with the currently continuing efforts to rescue a cave diver trapped in a cave in France – hopefully by the time this little newsletter makes it out to you all there will be some good news. Eric Establie has been trapped in a cave by a landslide since October 4th in Dragonnière de Gaud near Labastide de Virac, in the Ardèche region, France, 780m from the entrance. There are signs that Eric is still alive and making attempts to communicate with rescuers, but no one knows for sure. The [NSS chat forum](#) is translating updates and discussing the efforts made by rescuers to get into the cave.\*\*



Photo: Rescue work underway at  
*Dragonnière de Gaud* - 10/10/2010 from  
*Spéléo Secours Français*,  
[http://www.speleo-secours-francais.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=423:2010-10-03-dragonniere-de-gaud-ardeche-07&catid=39:encours&Itemid=83#3](http://www.speleo-secours-francais.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=423:2010-10-03-dragonniere-de-gaud-ardeche-07&catid=39:encours&Itemid=83#3)

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## ***Trip Calendar***

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Thursday 14 October

**MSS MEETING**

Quarterly MSS Meeting

To be held at: Beth Little's place

Contact: 0405 226 811, [littlebeth78@hotmail.com](mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com)

Weekend 16th / 17th October

Coko Creek (if we can find it)  
and Ilford Cave

Cave exploration

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick__smith@hotmail.com)

By: 11th October

Grade: Medium..ish

Joint trip with NHVSS

Weekend 6th / 7th November

Myall Lakes

Kayaking

Trip Leader: Bob Horn

Contact: (02) 9639 3672, [randphorn@optusnet.com.au](mailto:randphorn@optusnet.com.au)

By: 1st November

Grade: Easy/Medium

Mid-late January 2011

Milford Track, New Zealand

Hiking

Trip Leader: Johan Verhagen

Contact: (02) 4758 9811, [johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au](mailto:johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au)

By: 15th June 2010 (because bookings need to be made)

Grade: Medium

Easter 2011

Cillagoe QLD

Chillicon

Trip Leader: Jim Crockett

Contact: 0407 284 256, [jim.crockett@reach.com](mailto:jim.crockett@reach.com)

By: expressions of interest by Oct 2010

Grade: Conference with field trips

May or June 2011

Timor Caves

Caving

TBA

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## Appendix 1 – Agenda

MSS 403th General Meeting, 14/10/2010

Held at Beth Little's place

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes:

Correspondence:

Committee Members Reports:

President –

Treasurer –

Equipment Officer –

Training Officer –

Librarian –

Status of Action Items:

Constitution recommendations – Warwick Blake

Web site hosting options – Rod Smith

UIS Conference feasibility study – Jim Crockett

EPIRB quotes – Jim Crockett

Updating membership details – Jim Crockett

Meeting schedule and format – Rod Smith

Back issues of Helictite magazine – Cathi Humphrey-Hood

New Business:

Future trips

Next Meeting: