

# Quarterly NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2014 Edition  
Issued May 2014



## MSS NEWSLETTER

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Cover Shot: Chris Johnstone on Malaita Point Abseil.	
Photo by Rod Smith	

## Society Information

Club EPIRB

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

### MSS Officers list

#### Position

President [president@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:president@mssadventure.org.au)  
Secretary [secretary@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:secretary@mssadventure.org.au)  
Treasurer [treasurer@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:treasurer@mssadventure.org.au)  
Equipment Officer [equipment@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:equipment@mssadventure.org.au)  
Librarian [library@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:library@mssadventure.org.au)  
Training Officer [training@mssadventure.org.au](mailto:training@mssadventure.org.au)  
ASF Liaison

#### Name

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

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

## Membership Details

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

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

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

## MSSAdventure WEB Site Update

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

This feature has been added to improve the security of the members area.

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

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

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

## **Trip Reports**

### **Wombeyan - 14th & 15th March**

Participants: Rob Clyne, Chris Johnstone, Helena Johnstone, Ben Johnstone, Owen Johnstone, Angus Wildie, Ambrosia Wildie, Sapphire Wildie, Ray Etherton, Natalie Etherton, Fletcher Etherton, Josh Little, Tony Le, Rod Smith (TL)

The chicken schnitzel burger had obviously been sitting there for a while, judging by the hardness of the exposed bun. I bit into it anyway. I was hungry. Plus, anyone that knows me would know I'm not the most discerning individual when it comes to food.

I wondered if the burger could be an analogy for the past weekend. I'd arrived home Friday evening and just felt like sleeping. Instead I had to pack and drive to Wombeyan to lead the trip.

The weekend certainly improved once I arrived at Wombeyan. Hopefully my burger would too.

I took a second bite, and encountered something very hard. I had managed to bite through enough bun and filling to make a small mouthful, and so contented myself with that while I continued my reminiscence.

The campfire was already blazing when I arrived, with Rob, the Ethertons (including Josh) and the Johnstones all socialising around it. This is a big part of what the trips are about, the social aspect. I was already feeling better about the trip. We made some rough plans for the morning, mainly around sleeping in, and then went to bed.





I was broken from my reverie by a very apologetic staff member. "Oh my god, I'm so sorry. That's a display burger. I'll get you a fresh one. I'm so sorry."

I hadn't even found out what the hard substance was that I'd tried to bite into.

This reminded me of the mystery of Saturday morning, where was Tony? I knew Angus and family were arriving Saturday morning, but I thought Tony was arriving Friday, and we hadn't seen him. It should be noted that this was an assumption on my part, his arrival time had not been explicitly stated.

Meanwhile the Johnstones were enquiring about our planned departure time for the days activities. They had a tourist cave pass, and there was a tour of Wollondilly cave from 10:30am to 12:00pm. The days plans involved a late start and late finish, so I was happy to start after midday, giving them enough time to do the tourist cave.

The staff member returned in short order with my new, fresh burger.

Shortly after the Johnstones, with their adopted child Fletcher, had left to do the tourist cave, and Ray and Nat and then decided on a morning stroll, Tony appeared. And 5 minutes later Angus arrived with Ambrosia and Sapphire. Everyone was now at Wombeyan and Tony and the Wildie family had time to set up camp.

I bit into the new burger, and it was definitely fresh. There was a definite improvement in my meal, much in the same way my weekend had improved.

We'd organised ourselves and were walking before 1pm. I'd been told by one of the guides that there was a marked track to the start of the canyon. This was good news, especially since the track proved to be reasonably easy to follow.

I hadn't been through the canyon before, and I assumed no-one else in our party had. I'd been told it was reasonably easy with no abseils, and this was correct. What I hadn't been told was that it is very spectacular. A combination of walking and swimming in beautiful blue water, with some optional short jumps, between impressive limestone cliffs. There is a lot of exposed formation as well as small holes to look into. Towards the end of the canyon are some caves that could be looked at on future trips.



I recognised the end of the canyon, a tourist track comes down to the water there. Instead of following the track we opted to stay in the creek. There was no more swimming from there, although there were some short wades. It doesn't take long to reach the dry creek bed of Wombeyan creek, where we turned left to head upstream.

Crossing a less distinct tourist track we then arrived at a small waterfall to climb. Although not easy, I managed to get to the top and throw down a hand-line in which we knotted a few loops. With the aid of the hand-line everyone was able to get to the top without much difficulty.

It was then only a short walk from here to the bottom of Figtree Cave. This makes a great way back to camp as it involves a walk through lovely sculptured stream passage, and by-passes the up and down of the alternative.

Making good headway into my burger I thought about Sunday's activities. We went back to the small waterfall we'd climbed the day before. Just below here is Grants Cave, our destination for the day.

With only overalls and lights to organise it wasn't long before we were underground. Although I wouldn't call it a maze, there are a few passages going off in different directions. We started with the straight-ahead option. Further in it started getting narrower and before too long we arrived at a small puddle before a squeeze. With no-one feeling like getting wet, or pushing the squeeze, we turned around and started investigating the side passages.

Some of the side passages ended in dead-ends, some joined back on the route. One required some scrambling up and then back down, which only a few people tackled. It wasn't long before we'd explored the easier to see areas. Considering the group we thought it was best to leave it at that.

Returning to camp it was then time to pack up and head. I stopped on my way home for lunch, grabbing the burger.

The burger was alright, the weekend was great.





## Malaita Point - 12th April

Participants: Rod Smith, Chris Johnstone, Helena Johnstone, Ben Johnstone, Owen Johnstone

Veni, vidi, vertical.

We came, we saw, we abseiled.

The objective for the day was to do Malaita Point. This was chosen as the best option of the multi-pitch abseils for relative beginners as it's slightly less exposed as some of the others and the short walk in plus Scenic Railway option for the exit makes it easy. By the time we'd met and sorted out gear we were leaving the Scenic World car park at approx. midday.

Veni, vidi, vacuum.

We came, we saw, the weather sucked.

We didn't get the nice sunny day you always hope for when planning these sorts of trips. The weather wasn't actually that bad, overcast all day with an occasional light shower rolling over.

Veni, vidi, vegetate.

We came, we saw, we sat around.

Arriving at the first pitch we found another group in front of us. The good news was that they already had the first three pitches rigged, so they were well prepared. The bad news was that there was twenty four in the group of mostly beginners. Despite all the ropes they had, we spent anywhere between ten and forty five minutes waiting at the top of every pitch.

Veni, vidi, view.

We came, we saw, we admired the scenery.



One aspect of waiting for the group in front of us was that we had plenty of time to admire the scenery which, even considering the weather, is spectacular.

Veni, vidi, vice.

We came, we saw, we hung on.

Although Ben and Owen had abseiled before, they hadn't done anything as exposed or as high as some of the pitches. The nerves were evident, they hung onto the rope quite tightly, but they did quite well.

Veni, vidi, vocal.

We came, we saw, Owen didn't shut up.

Well, that's pretty standard.

Veni, vidi, violet.

We came, we saw, we saw red.

Due to the waiting around it was getting late in the day by the time we reached the bottom. Although there was still daylight we opted for try and catch the Scenic Railway up. We got there in time to find we'd missed the last train, but not by much. The group in front of us would have made it. There was nothing left but to walk up.

Veni, vidi, vacate.

We came, we saw, we left.

We got back to the cars around dark. We went home after another successful trip.



## **ASF Media policy**

### Media Contact Policy

Adopted by the Executive 17th May 2014

During normal (non- emergency) times the ASF President (or nominee for the President during an absence) represents the Federation and maintains liaison with outside bodies. However, clubs may have a relationship with local media outlets during non-emergency times to promote the club for and/or during community events.

During Conferences, the Conference Convener (or nominee) is the representative to make contact with local media re the conference.

During and after cave related accidents and incidents that require emergency services assistance to extricate trapped cavers and the media makes enquires to an ASF member, the President (or nominee for the President) is the only person to comment to the media. This Presidential nominee could be the Senior VP or a VP or Gen Sec or nominated Executive member in a particular state of Australia, such as the ACRC state reps. The President or the nominated representative should not comment on any matter that may jeopardise efforts or members if a coronial enquiry may be likely to occur and refer the matter to the head of the emergency services undertaking the rescue.

If the media attempts to contact more ASF members during a rescue incident such as Commissioners, Executive members or individual Club members, the member is to refer the media contact to the Police media unit or Police officer in charge of the incident at the site of the incident. This referral contact may be a reply by text message, phone or email.

## Upcoming Events

14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> June 2014      Caving - Jenolan  
Contact: David Stuckey, 0414 590 305, [stuckedl@cba.com.au](mailto:stuckedl@cba.com.au)  
Contact by 12<sup>th</sup> June  
Grade: Medium/Hard  
No Children, no absolute beginners

28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014      Caving - Church Creek  
Contact: Jim Crockett, 0407 284 256, [jcrockett3@bigpond.com](mailto:jcrockett3@bigpond.com)  
Contact by 25<sup>th</sup> June  
Grade: Medium/Hard  
MSS has not had a trip to this area since 1985 so now is the chance to see a different area.  
Will involve a reasonably long drive and 3 hour walk in, with bush camping on the Kowmung river in Kanangra Boyd National Park.

12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> July 2014      Caving - Cliefden  
Contact: Jim Crockett, 0407 284 256, [jcrockett3@bigpond.com](mailto:jcrockett3@bigpond.com)  
Contact by 10<sup>th</sup> July  
Grade: Medium  
Classic cave area  
Enjoy a feast of caves and maybe a food feast.  
Stay in a classic hut in the middle of a farm and the best part the caves are actually warm.

## MSS Trip Calendar

14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> June  
Caving  
Jenolan

Trip Leader: David Stuckey  
Contact: 0414 590 305, [stuckedl@cba.com.au](mailto:stuckedl@cba.com.au)  
By: 12<sup>th</sup> June  
Grade: Medium  
no children, no absolute beginners

28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> June  
Caving  
Church Creek  
(Permit pending)  
Long drive and long walk  
Bush camping on Kowmung

Trip Leader: Jim Crockett  
Contact: 0407 284 256, [jcrockett3@bigpond.com](mailto:jcrockett3@bigpond.com)  
By: 25<sup>th</sup> June  
Grade: Medium/Hard



12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> July  
Caving  
Cliefden (Permit confirmed)

Trip Leader: Jim Crockett  
Contact: 0407 284 256, [jcrockett3@bigpond.com](mailto:jcrockett3@bigpond.com)  
By: 10<sup>th</sup> July  
Grade: Medium/Easy

2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> August  
Camping and BIG CAMPFIRE  
Newnes Valley  
Open Invitation to MSS friends  
And families

Trip Leader: John Gray  
Contact: 0427 876 679, [JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au](mailto:JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au)  
[gray.johnandkathryn@gmail.com](mailto:gray.johnandkathryn@gmail.com)  
By: 31<sup>st</sup> July  
Grade: Delicious and Warming

23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> August  
Caving  
Jenolan  
TBA

Trip Leader: Rod Smith ,  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
By: 21<sup>st</sup> August  
Grade: TBA

13-21<sup>st</sup> September  
Caving  
Buchan ( NE Victoria )

Trip Leader: Rod Smith ,  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
By: ASAP  
Grade: TBA

27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> September  
Training - SRT  
Bungonia

Trip Leader: Beth Little  
Contact: 0450 226 811, [littlebeth78@hotmail.com](mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com)  
By: 25<sup>rd</sup> September  
Grade: Instructional

18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> October  
Caving  
Wyanbene  
Cleaning and recreation

Trip Leader: Rob Clyne  
Contact: 0409 033 224 [caver@people.net.au](mailto:caver@people.net.au)  
By: 16<sup>th</sup> October  
Grade: Medium/Hard

## **MSS 414th General Meeting. 8 May 2014**

Held at Canada Bay SES

Meeting Opened: 7:30pm

### **Present:**

Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett, Beth Little

### **Apologies:**

Chris Johnstone, Cathi Humphrey-Hood

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

### **Correspondence:**

Caves Australia Magazine – Issue 196  
SUSS Bull 52(3)

### **Committee Members Reports:**

President: None

Treasurer: We have a current balance of \$8382.05. Some of that money is committed to the purchase of equipment which will be used for the MacQuarie Karst Atlas project.

Equipment Officer: None

Training Officer: We have the first training day for the year coming up later this month.

Librarian: None

Web Manager: Some work has been done on the security aspects of the website. Most pages will not be affected initially; the main changes are to the member's area. Firstly signing in to the member's area will require a login and password as opposed to just a password. Although the password is the same, you will have the option of changing your password, and of request a new login (which will initially be your email address). These changes are required to form a platform for further changes.

#### **Status of Action Items:**

Bolting Course – Rod Smith: None

Resurveying Stable Cave – Jim Crockett: None

Abercrombie surface survey – Rod Smith: None

Abercrombie documentation – Rod Smith: None

Documentation – Chris Johnstone: None

#### **New Business:**

Use of MSS P.O. Box for Speleo 2017 – The UIS conference in 2017 requires a P.O. Box for relevant mail. It was suggest that since Jim is the secretary for the conference organising committee and he is currently clearing the MSS P.O. Box on a regular basis anyway, that the conference could use the MSS P.O. Box. This was agreed by everyone present.

Purchase of Cavesniper Survey system - Jim has been trialing a Cavesniper Survey system. Now that the issues have been ironed out, the decision which needs to be made is whether to purchase this equipment. The cost is 900 Euro. A decision regarding this needs to be made soon, so if you have any comments, questions, opinions or anything else to add, please contact Jim or Rod as soon as possible.

Consider changing the MSS accounts from paper based to an electronic format – Jim has brought to the attention of those present that there are only a couple of pages left in the current accounts book. As such, this could be an opportunity to decide whether to stay with the current approach or look at an electronic alternative. The consensus of those present was the leave things as there are and simply purchase a new book when it's required.

Loan of MSS equipment for non-MSS trips – Two things have occurred recently to instigate this item of business. The first is the purchase of lot of equipment which will be used extensively for the MacQuarie Karst Atlas project (and possibly future Karst Atlas projects). The second is the request by new members to borrow equipment for personal trips. Although neither has caused any concern, it is felt that something needs to be put in place to ensure the Equipment Officer knows who has borrowed what at any given time. As such, three things have been/will be done.

1. A loan agreement document has been written up for some specific equipment, primarily the laptops purchased that will be used for the Karst Atlas projects.
2. Priority will always be given for MSS trips.
3. A book for signing out and signing back in equipment will be purchased.

Jenolan Dig – Rod has investigated a possible dig opportunity at Jenolan. There is potential for (but no guarantee of) a great discovery. If anyone is interested in participating, or just want to know more about it, please contact Rod.

#### Trip planning:

Buchan 13<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September TL Rod.

Jenolan 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June TL Dave – No kids, no absolute beginners.

Cliefden 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> July TL Jim

28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> June TL Jim Something good, something different.

2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> August TL Rod

#### **Next Meeting:**

14 Aug – Canada Bay SES Headquarters

Meeting Closed: 9:25pm

Meeting was followed by Tim Tams and photos from previous trips.