



Metropolitan Speleological Society

Quarterly Newsletter

Spring

Issued December 2018

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Cover Shot: David Stuckey in Old Inn Cave, Yarrangobilly (Photo: Marilyn Scott)



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) has this, so please coordinate with her to collect it before you lead your next trip.

2018 Office Bearers

President	president@mssadventure.org.au	Jim Crockett
Secretary	secretary@mssadventure.org.au	Chris Johnstone
Treasurer	treasurer@mssadventure.org.au	Cathi Humphrey Hood
Equipment Officer	equipment@mssadventure.org.au	Beth Little
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ASF Liaison		Cathi Humphrey-Hood & Rod Smith
Newsletter Editor	newsletter@mssadventure.org.au	Marilyn Scott
Website Manager	webmaster@mssadventure.org.au	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.



Welcome to New Members



Elliot Munck

The Stork has delivered a new Member - Elliot Joseph Munck arrived on 8th November 2018, weighing 3k and 47cm long. MSS Members Beth Little, father Andre Munck and Baby Elliot are all doing well.

This quarter, we're also welcoming new members Yunn Chin, Melinda Turner & Owen & Tanya Nicholls. Owen and Tanya are the parents of Katryse Nicholls and we hope to see them on some of the caving adventures that Katryse enjoys so much. We've gotten to know Owen quite well over the past year as he's brought Katryse to the MSS General Meetings.

Melinda has joined MSS mostly for the canyoning, she's a keen canyoner, bushwalker and cross-country skier (her latest passion). Mel is a great navigator and loves her off track overnight adventures, her specialty area is the Budawangs. Not sure how much we'll see of Mel as she has a very hectic schedule, but anything she books into she'll be more than capable of doing the activity and will be an asset to the group.

Yunn Chin (but called Chin by all who know him), did Empress some time ago and that peaked his interest in canyoning. He's done quite a bit of climbing (in and outdoors), so is comfortable around anything to do with ropes. His first trip was a cold one through Fortress in November and he offered to carry the wet rope out of the canyon for the Editor, anyone who carries ropes is her new best friend (lol).



Yunn Chin



Melinda Turner

Mystery Photo

Can everyone take a look at the photograph below and if you know who those in the photograph are, please advise Cathi Humphrey-Hood. The photo may have been taken in 1966 and venue may be Cooleman.



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!



NSW Speleo Council Meeting

The NSW Speleo Council meeting was held on the 3rd November 2018 at the Canada Bay SES Headquarters in Sydney and attended by Colin Tyrell, Roderick Smith, Denis Marsh, Bob Kershaw, Cathy Brown, Bruce Waddington, Emily Butcher Chris Norton, Cathi Humphrey-Hood & Beth Little.

Issues discussed:

- **The NPWS restructure.** George Bradford has moved from Yarrangobilly to Dorriggo. At the time of writing Dave Smith was at Wombeyan. Larissa Lemke is currently acting manager at Yarrangobilly.
- **The Jenolan Draft Plan of Management** is still sitting on the Minister's desk.
- **Snowy 2.0:** Extensive discussions as the potential impact on caving at Yagby (and possibly Cooleman Plains) could be large.
- **Cave Divers submission:** The progress of Deborah Johnston's submission to NPWS in Dec 2017 seeking an amendment to the OEH Cave Access Policy, re the use of rebreathers at Jenolan.
- **Speleo Reference Group** – report by Dennis. Meeting postponed with the departure of George Bradford. A tele-conference meeting was held that Beth and Bruce were part of.
- **Brumbies:** Legislation by the NSW Government protecting Wild Horses in the Kosciusko National Park, in particular Cooleman Plains and the impact of wild horses (and also ridden horses). Victoria has the opposite approach of NSW.
- **Timor Mines report** and breaches of the mine observed by neighbours and NHVSS.
- Beth Little talked about the MSS **Abercrombie Book Project**.
- **Gating of Y395:** Cathy and Bruce showed HGC maps of the new area.
- The **Wikipedia Challenge** thrown down by Garry Smith of NHVSS.
- **Cliefden Caves:** Cranky Rock dam has finally been ruled out. OSS is staying in the hut while caving at Walli, and Dennis will be talking with the landowner while they are there about Cliefden.
- **Tarakuanna** property is for sale. Some good aragonite clusters in the cave. The property has had a chequered history.
- Cathedral gate at Borenore to be replaced by OSS after being vandalised.

The next meeting likely to be May 4th, probably at Abercrombie.

Snowy 2.0 EIS and submissions and responses available from:

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=9208



The Stein Knot

By Beth Little

At the vertical cave rescue training I attended few months back I learnt about the Stein knot ... great knot. In vertical cave rescue this knot is used very effectively to 'tie/lock off' the pulley system when needed. It has great application in the canyoning realm too – as an alternative to the use of two alpine butterflies (crab'd together) to allow descent of either ropes singularly, and is so quick and easy to release. I have done a little bit of reading online, and the Stein knot is also called the Stone knot in USA, and is recognised for its application in canyoning for the very purpose I mention. The below are pictures and instructions of how to tie the knot that I have directly cut/pasted from

<http://www.canyoneeringusa.com/techtips/the-stone-knot-a-canyoneering-secret-weapon/>.

Check out the website for more in-depth info about the knot if you're interested. Enjoy!

<p>1. Thread rope around your tree, or chain, rings, etc. Grab both strands of the rope with your hand, thumb down.</p>	<p>2. Turn your hand over to create a loop. <i>(If you twist twice here instead of just the once you get a double figure of eight Stein instead of just an overhand stein).</i></p>	<p>3. Fold the loop UP and center on the two strands coming down from the anchor.</p>	<p>4. Pull the two strands from the anchor through the loop, just far enough to clip a carabiner through it.</p>
<p>5. Clip a <u>large carabiner</u> through those two strands.</p>	<p>6. Rotate the carabiner around, and clip ONE of the top strands with the carabiner.</p>	<p>7. Lock the carabiner, then rotate it back around so the wide basket end of the carabiner is down, blocking those two strands from popping back through the loop.</p>	<p>8. Pull on the two tail ropes to cinch the knot tightly.</p>



TRIP REPORTS

Caving – Yarrangobilly, 8 – 14 September, 2018

Report by: David Stuckey

Participants:

MSS - David Stuckey (TL), Marilyn Scott, Heather Reid, Steve Rowse, Marcia Kaye

CSS - John & Marge Brush, Chantelle Bruton, Regina Roach

Friday, 7th September, 2018

In keeping with previously established procedure, the approach drive to Yarrangobilly would include visits to some of the better cafes for refreshment and refuelling. The first was the Meridian Cafe in Marulan...a lovely establishment with an entire wall devoted exclusively to portraits of dogs. We took coffee here...one of the ladies even had a slice! I deferred so as not to spoil my lunch!

Next stop, my favourite, the Merino Cafe in Gunning where the host, Rea, welcomed us with a broad smile and hugs...this trip was starting well! After lunch, we continued to Tumut, refuelled the car, purchased some last-minute perishables and fought over the Coles product miniatures! Guess who scored a tiny jar of Vegemite? The last leg to Yarrangobilly was dealt with, we signed in, collected keys and moved into Caves House. Ah ... the verandah! I'd forgotten just how nice it is! Chantelle and Heather arrived not long after.

Saturday, 8th September, 2018

Nothing too strenuous today, familiarisation for the members who have never been to Yarrangobilly before. They now know where the old bell is and how to ring it! We wandered through the tourist area, then along the valley track to Castle Cave. Along the way, we found a large iron post by the track ... it was one of the posts which MSS had removed from Castle Cave back in the de-wiring project. Where has it been all these years and how on earth did it reappear on the tourist track? We took it into Castle Cave and laid it beside the track for use as an interpretive item by the guides. Of course, Castle Cave, when lit by high powered lights is nothing short of amazing. The large flowstone wall and pendulite are features ... along with a beautiful rippled shawl, which was featured on the cover of the MSS 50th Journal. On the way back, we did a quick side trip into the entrance series of Mill Creek Swallet as the blackberry jungle around the entrance had been recently cleared. After a snack lunch we also took a look in Harrie Wood, then returned to the fabulous Glory Hole Archway. North Glory was explored as far as the gate, then we returned to Caves House via the South Glory Cave.



Marcia in Castle Cave (photo: David Stuckey)

Sunday, 9th September, 2018

Now that we had warmed up with the "walk through" caves, we headed off to The Restoration Cave. People always ask me why it's so named. It has nothing to do with restoring formations or cleaning...in fact, the reason behind the naming was revealed by Ken Keck during one of his many days spent sifting through the files in the cave managers office, looking for, well, exactly the snippet of information which I am about to share. The cave was discovered by S.U.S.S. in 1960 which is the 300th anniversary of the restoration of the English monarchy when the English, Scottish and Irish monarchies were all restored under King Charles II. Now that's not something you just dream up ... you have to be a serious university boffin with an appetite for history

to come up with stuff like that. Me personally? I'd have called it "Long Straw Cave", or "Coral Corner"...or something actually relevant to the cave and the speleothems therein. I think the S.U.S.S. dude was just showing off ... anyhow ... it's an excellent cave, brilliant formations, very long straws and an amazing wall of cave coral. Easy access, provided you are of average height and ability, plenty of places to rig a tape for assistance. These days, it is referred to as "Restoration Cave". I doubt that many people would know the full story of its naming. You heard it here first!



A photo of David Stuckey in Restoration cave before this section was designated a "no go" area, gives you an idea of how big the straws are.

Monday, 10th September, 2018

Time to get our hands clean! We were off to East Deep Creek, upper level. Here's a tip for you ... forget the lower level! East Deep Creek is

located in a classic blind valley ... I reckon that if you grab a book of karst definitions and looked up "blind valley", they'd show you a picture of the EDC entrance. We made quick work of the entrance boulders and quickly found the gate. Ugh! I hate that gate! It is the epitome of bad design and an accident waiting to happen. Seriously, if you're ever the unfortunate person who has to open / close this gate, make sure that



The clean zone in East Deep Creek (Photo: M Scott)

you tie the key to yourself as it would be all too easy to drop it down the rock pile. The cave descends and eventually arrives at a very well decorated section. It was here that we briefed the newer members on the correct procedures when visiting clean zones. There is a large crystal pool which is traversed very gingerly, then the clean zone proper, where cavers divest of boots, overalls, helmets and any muddy clothing. Clean shoes are worn whilst on the clean zone. The trick is to step out of your muddy boots on the dirty area and into your clean shoes on the clean section. Extreme care is required as there are delicate formations overhead and pristine formations on the walls and floor. It is a privilege to be allowed into sections of cave such as this.

The old adage "take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints" does NOT apply here, I have re-written as "take nothing but excellent photographs, leave nothing at all". Seriously, you get into a section of cave as well decorated as this, don't take ordinary photos.

Tuesday, 11th September, 2018

We had planned to do a spot of S.R.T., in Helictite Hole, however, we were lured by John Brush to take a drive down to an area known as "Ravine". It is the location of a controversial part of the Snowy Hydro 2.0 scheme. It sounded a whole lot better than crashing around looking for Y16, then rigging it, smashing our way through spider webs and who knows what else. So we jumped into the cars and headed off. A surprising amount of snow was still present beside the highway. We did drive past Selwyn Ski fields I guess. Down at Ravine, I was surprised at the level of "preparation work" that has occurred given that the scheme hasn't actually been approved yet. Everyone we spoke to came up with the same answer..."no, but it's going to be". Oh well, we do want our lights to come on every day don't we? We found several abandoned mines but absolutely no sign of any bat roosts ... John was disappointed.

Wednesday, 12th September, 2018

Ah yes ... the only reason to go to Yarrangobilly if you ask me...a traverse of the Eagles Nest System. This is a excellent trip, it has a bit of everything! The best part of it is that if you have new people, you don't mention the 2nd entrance ... then keep watching! Around the 4-hour mark, people start looking at their watches, wondering when we're going to turn around and start heading out. I kind of blew it this trip...I mentioned the 2nd entrance.

Anyway, there's well-proportioned rock-piles, rifts, crawls, meanders, primary formation, airy traverses, secondary formation, historic engravings, climbs, massive walkthrough passages, an 8-metre pitch ... and a bloody big chock-stone. Everything! Navigation can be tricky in places ... but I have memorised just about every rock in the place by now. I haven't named them yet. We took a leisurely trip, around 4¾ hours ... including lunch stop and photography, which is pretty standard these days. How good is it with these super bright LED lamps eh? I remember wandering through with a 1-watt miner's lamp, you could see a brilliant spot directly in front of you, but nothing else. Ah, the good old days eh?



Eagle's Nest - The Dragon's Teeth - primary formation (photo: M Scott)



David at the entry to Old Inn Cave - an awkward climb-down (Photo: M Scott)

Thursday, 13th September, 2018

Everyone was a little tired by now ... so a reduced group headed to Old Inn Cave. Another active swallet and quite an exciting cave if the water levels are up. There's a fabulous stream-way where the water chunders down a short pitch and rattles off down some tiny passages. It's the side branches that are unexpected. One section, Strawhaven, is not usually accessible when the water is high, we didn't bother with it as there's a very low crawl which I was pretty certain would be flooded or at the very least, quite muddy. We headed to the upper level, across some tricky boulders then shinned our way up a steep dirt floored rift. Patches of cave coral were present as we headed to the crystal river. Another clean zone. Our party knew what

to do. Despite the ease of access and the obvious volume of people entering this cave, the crystal river is in excellent condition. Even the oolites were still there. Retracing our steps, I found a path out of the doline which the blackberries hadn't infested yet. We did a bit of a walk around Yarrangobilly Village, pausing to remember past trips staying in Cotterill's Cottage. Hmmm Caves House looking better all the time ... or were we just hard men (and women) back then? The more I remember, the better we were! We couldn't go home before a quick look at "Leak in the Creek". This is a cave which intermittently receives water from the Yarrangobilly River. Over the decades, the entire hillside above the cave has slumped with several sinkholes opening up in the soil. It's a fascinating feature and one which I am determined to revisit in another 50 years to see how it's going. Perhaps the "master" cave will have opened up by then?

Friday, 14th September, 2018

You beautie! Another day on the motorway, there's sure to be some more cafes to visit ... let me check my list ... The Long Track Pantry at Jugiong for instance? Sadly, being a Friday, it was decided to hightail it back to Sydney before the peak hour traffic started. Bearing in mind that my passengers each had another 1½ hours

further to travel after arriving in Sydney. We did compromise with a quick snack at Marulan, again, at the Meridian Cafe. Note to future trip leaders ... never, ever, finish a trip on a Friday.

Learnings from the trip:

- I thought I was good at jigsaw puzzles, but I now know that I am rubbish. I was in the presence of champions.
- You're going to need more red wine than you thought. We had to recruit a volunteer to do an alcohol run to Talbingo.
- Small children in adjoining rooms don't realise that there is anyone on the other side of the wall. They left after day 3 avoiding any "accidents".
- The Thermal pool is quite bearable after the first 30 seconds of immersion. You need to pick the warm end.
- I thought I was good at card games, but I now know that I am rubbish. I was in the presence of champions.
- Dinners take longer to prepare than the recipe suggests. Something about cooking with wine. See point 2 above.



The challenging Jig Saw and happy hour shot



Straw pendulite in Castle Cave (photo: David Stuckey)



Caving – Abercrombie, 7 - 9 September, 2018

Report by: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Participants: Cathi Humphrey-Hood (TL), Aengus Porter, Elswyth Porter, Garry Smith, Owen Nicholls, Katryse Nicholls, Bill Allanson, Brian Reeves

This had been slated as a photography trip to help with the MSS book project and to help Garry with his paper on the crayback formations (which are prevalent at Abercrombie), but with the weekend weather looking a bit iffy (this seems to have been business as usual for 2018), we were dubious about how much time we'd actually get to photograph anything. Yes, we'd be dry inside the caves, but location shots and classic images of the bluffs were called for - all of which look less than their usual spectacular selves when the light is struggling to get out of 'flat', 'grey', and 'rain'.

Nevertheless, a number of intrepid souls from MSS and NHVSS converged on the distant location that is Abercrombie... one of those places that's really not convenient to get to from *anywhere*. Perhaps I was still peeved about the 6 ½ hour trip home (due in part to some idiot having an accident on the F3/M1) the previous time I was down there and knowing my aging Landcruiser was going to be *much* slower than my WRX usually is... but 'slow' proved to be an understatement. Owen and Katryse passed us just outside of Bathurst in their VW van while we were stopped for petrol and we *still* ended up more than half an hour behind them by the time I drove into the campground.

BUT we got there in (sort-of) daylight on the Friday afternoon, and before the rain - thank goodness, as Owen had not put his tent together in years and there were no instructions. And I had ten tonne of tarps to set up in preparation for the rain - and used pretty much every single one of them!

Soon we had Brian and Bill, and eventually Garry... but no Rod Smith. As Rod had not been well, to say I was worried was a bit of an understatement. Eventually Owen's tent joined us too.

Midnight (Rod's usual arrival time) came and went, and still no Rod. The next morning arrived and *still* no Rod Smith. We headed down to the Office to talk with the Ranger about the weekend plan. Steve Babka has a wealth of experience about caving in general (he's a caver, first and foremost) and Abercrombie in particular - and we were very lucky to have his help and advice this weekend. He also very kindly helped fix things because David Smith had forgotten to attach the permit to the email which said "your permit is approved, please see attached conditions." I was still worried about Rod but Steve promised to let us know if he heard anything. He also kindly offered to contact the landowners of some of the "lost caves" of Abercrombie for us - those caves located off the Reserve. They may have important implications for interpretations of speleogenesis in the area because (from the little information we have about them) their mode of formation appears to be so different to those caves formed by the waters of Grove Creek.

Then we were off to have a look at the Arch and take our photos. Garry (who likes the human element in his shots) looked unimpressed with our various clothing choices and told us we had to wear something a bit brighter.



Bill & his new caving 'look' (photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood) Aengus Porter ready for a day's caving(photo: Owen Nicholls)

Bill promptly obliged by pulling out a scarf - I'm not sure that this was exactly what Garry had in mind! Aengus, on the other hand decided that the caves would not be dark enough and that black goggles were the order of the day. His overalls also turned out to be the same colour as the limestone, and so Aengus spent part of the morning wearing Garry's red jacket so that he would not blend completely into the background. I was wearing black, and managed not to get photographed at all (well, mostly) :-)

We bypassed the collapsed section of track near the main entrance to the arch and through the gate on the left side of the arch toward King Solomon's Area. Garry had a look around and then started sending people and flash units in all directions - he wanted a good shot of the Dance Floor, and to re-create a couple of images he had taken many years ago.



Garry Smith setting up flashes for the bridge shot (Photo: Owen Nicholls)



The Dance Floor in the Grand Arch (Photo Garry K Smith)



One of the bridge shots, looking upstream in Grove Creek (Photo: Garry K Smith)

We took our time with the photos, knowing that Garry's results would be pretty amazing. We left the Arch and went into Bushrangers early so as to avoid the scheduled tourist tours of the cave. Bushrangers Cave has history, but what it also has is a bank of light switches that any electrician on acid would admire. Working out which combination of lights did what resulted in some amusing moments of unexpected darkness. The cave is conservatively well decorated - certainly a worthy tourist cave, but being further upstream, has location robbed it of some of the more extensive formation it might otherwise have developed? We took good note of the structure of the cave and the few small fossils present - in an area so altered by metamorphism, these were definitely of interest.



Katryse Nicholls lighting up the cave (photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood)



Leaving Bushrangers Cave behind, Garry Smith on the trail. (photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood)



Brian Reeves in Bushrangers Cave (photo: Garry K. Smith)

We came out of Bushrangers Cave, taking care to lock the gate, and found the skies were ominous - it started sprinkling as we walked back and not long after we returned to the campground and started preparing lunch, down it all came! Some alterations of the campsite were called for and we managed not to get our lunch wet, but thank goodness for the gazebos ...



*Because two gazebos are always better than one.
(Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood)*

After lunch I stayed behind while the rest of the crew headed back into the Arch to get some photos of the enigmatic but extremely distinctive crayback formations, so that Garry could finish writing his paper on them. I wanted to make sure the fire was stoked up for the (now) traditional Abercrombie Lamb Roast, and I also wanted to take a look at the hill on the other side of the campsite to find some other caves we've been looking for that Rod Smith does not yet have in his GPS. So they all wandered off and I climbed up the hill and poked my torch into every crevice I could find - plenty of holes that didn't seem to go too far... but who knows?

The crew were gone for a while, as Garry put together his crayback portfolio. By the time they all returned, three kilos of lamb roast had gone into the oven and the weather was

definitely clearing. Unlike our last trip, the rain kindly decided to give us a break so we could cook and eat in relative comfort. The Abercrombie Lamb Roast and veggies turned out very nicely.

We sat around the fire for a while and enjoyed the stars - which we could actually see now the clouds had gone! Brian got out his constellation phone app was helpfully pointing where all the stars were. We took photos of oddly coloured flames (goodness knows what was on the wood Bill had brought) and we also enjoyed some of the blue liquid Owen had brought along (heavily diluted for safety reasons), before staggering off to the tents. There was to be no more rain - and the stars remained magnificent all night - but the temperature did take a sharp and dramatic plunge below zero due to the crisp, clear skies and everything got REALLY COLD.

We stood around the fire for a while in the morning wondering exactly *why* we were so cold, until Owen put the key in his ignition and discovered that the car's thermometer was reading 3°C, and so we decided that we'd better get moving before we froze in place and started getting ready. Our ranger then drove up and beckoned me into his car. The others were left pondering the trouble we must have been in, while Steve



It must be cold - Brian and Bill are wearing jumpers! (Photo by Garry K. Smith)

explained to me that he'd been in contact with the landholders of our lost caves, and would provide us with their details so that we could arrange a visit. I was a little overwhelmed that he had gone to so much trouble - evidently he enjoys a good mystery too - but I was also extremely grateful. With a Nullarbor trip coming up I also wasn't sure when I'd be able to schedule another trip back to Abercrombie, however these caves are important and we were now one step closer to documenting them, making sure they are studied properly and that the information about them does not get lost again.



*Owen and Katryse Nicholls in Stable Cave
(Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood)*



*Abercrombie Ranger Steve Babka with one of the fascinating crayback
formations in the Grand Arch area. (Photo: Garry K. Smith).)*

Our trip this morning was planned as a short one to Stable Cave, and this was a photographic and re-orientation trip for Garry. Many, *many* years ago he had taken a photo of people climbing a slab and he wanted to re-create this in digital format. This was Owen's first real cave and he soon found that his lack of bending ability made even Stable Cave a bit challenging - but, wanting to help out, he made it up the slab for the photo! It wasn't too hard to climb but after a while sitting in the one spot became a little hard on whichever leg was acting against gravity.



Not as steep as it looks: Stable Cave (photo: Garry K. Smith)

We looked around Stable Cave until we ran out of places to go, noting the impressive coating of fine moonmilk on the walls, and the places where it had been damaged by visitors over the years. There was the 30' drop, and other crevices I'd like to explore in here, but as we needed to pack up for the inevitable long haul back to Sydney, the Central Coast and Newcastle, these would have to wait for another day. We also spent some time back in Bushrangers looking for the elusive pyrite crystals that Garry was sure were there... somewhere.

The weather co-operated and packing up went smoothly, and so another Abercrombie trip came to an end. This had been a productive trip, we had learned a lot, and owe a debt of gratitude to Ranger Steve for all his help. And we can't wait to get back - if only it wasn't so far from *everywhere*!

Post-trip notes: As it turned out, the cause of Rod Smith's trouble was his mechanic, who had promised him after a week and a bit that his car would be ready in time for the trip ... and it wasn't. Rod didn't feel particularly happy with the idea of taking the loan

car all the way to Abercrombie through dubious weather and the happy hours of evening where the wildlife have made a habit of committing ritual suicide by throwing themselves in front of - or even into the side of - fast-moving traffic, so he stayed at home. He probably stayed drier that way - but missed a good trip. (At the time of writing, Rod's mechanic has done it to him again, the destination once again Abercrombie. Hopefully there is not a trend developing here)...

Since coming back from our long Nullarbor trip, I have made contact with the landholder on which Appletree and Ginbottle are located. He sounds like a really nice guy - he had other commitments during November but we are hoping to be able to get to see his caves early in 2019 and I will follow up on this after returning from the ASF Conference in Tasmania.

Bushwalking – Wollemi Wilderness – 22 & 23 September 2018

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Jeff Boyd, Trish Morrow & Marilyn Scott (TL)

This walk was advertised in three other calendars, we had another two people, but they dropped out a few days before. In the planning stage a month earlier, neither Jeff nor I were feeling particularly fit, we came up with a walk from Putty Road out to Wollemi Creek, and return the same way, not too much up and down, and about 10k on both days – more or less a bludge walk.

Then the week before, I looked at the map and thought it would be nice to mix it up a little, maybe do a car shuffle to Culoul Trail and have an easier second day (that was when I thought there would be five of us). But when one dropped out, driving two cars to the Colo area for four people sounded over the top. So, Jeff and I took another look at the topo map and came up with another route, and it was a route that I'd long wanted to do. And, surprise, surprise, it's not the nice easy walk we thought we'd do, but a lot of up and down into creeks which were bound to be scrubby (any wonder that I don't get many sign on for my walks). Trish wasn't ecstatic about the ups and downs, but trouper that she is, she hardly grumbled.

Conversation in the car was varied but one thing that Jeff brought up was an article in an issue of *Wild Magazine* about the dangers of outdoor activities, not just snakes etc, but ticks, falls, you name it, it's a dangerous place out there!

We arrived at Culoul Trail and accidentally drove right past our drop off spot, and had to back track, no big deal though. We left the car at 10am and headed off into the bush, not too scrubby and a nice ridge, then down a spur.



Walking down the spur, nice open country with no scrub.

On the way down the spur, I was thinking about the story of Helen Smith that was recently shared on *Canyoning Australia*. Helen was having a lovely day and then it all turned to s*#t when she was climbing up out of a pass on the Bungleborei (how many dodgy passes have I been up/down!), and the rock she was either holding onto or standing on broke and she fell 12m to the creek below, landing on her back, which left her a paraplegic.

I was also way cautious, after all it was the Colo area and it's notorious for "floating rocks", rocks that look ok but they're floaters and often give way. I thought back to another friend, walking up Pass 6 out of the Colo with his wife and a floater let loose and broke his leg. It was with these thoughts that I carefully avoided anything that looked it had the potential to be loose.

It was at this point that we came to a small 1m climb-down. Jeff went first with his pack on and then took my pack for me, giving me advice on how to get down with a few foot holds. I chose to go a different way, beside where he said (ignoring all his good advice), and got down safely, and dropped down to the next level to put my backpack on. I had my back to the down-climb, and it was when Trish was going down, the way that Jeff had recommended, that all hell broke loose.

Trish saw the whole thing, Jeff missed it all, all I heard was "Marilyn watch out". From what I can surmise, the rock must have hit my backpack, throwing me to the side of its path. Apparently, I did a perfect roll and luckily the rock missed me entirely, and whilst I banged my head, it was on the only small soft sandy patch around.

Trish and Jeff went into action mode, making me stay in place until they were sure I wasn't critically hurt. Then they got me up off the ground to assess the damage. Bruised right shoulder, big-arse bruise on my right butt (that they couldn't see), bruise on the top of my left femur, bruises on my right arm and wrist,



The top arrow showing where I climbed down, and the four bits of the rock after they broke and rolled down.



Trish surveying the four rocks to give some perspective of the size of them after they broke up

bruised right heel, probably sprain to left ankle, a small graze/cut/bruise on my left knee and a nastier cut on my left finger.

All things considered, we were very, very fortunate. If I'd climbed down where I was supposed to, I could have pulled it onto myself, or Jeff and if Trish had put more weight on the rock, she could have pulled it onto herself.

At this point we decided that we'd turn around and go home (while I could still walk without assistance), they took all my heavy gear out of my backpack, but it was still a long slow walk for the 3k that we'd already travelled arriving back at the car at 2.30pm. We might go back and do the original walk, but don't think I'll go down this spur again.

Thanks Jeff and Trish for looking after me!



*Jeff at one of the compulsory swims in November's Dead Log canyon trip - the guys took off their shirts for the swim
(Photo: John Gray)*

Cave Surveying Course – Wombeyan 20 & 21 October 2018

(Ed: Whilst there were no MSS members on this course, MSS was the driving force behind running the course.)

Report by: Mike Lake and Jill Rowling

Instructors: Mike Lake, Phil Maynard, Jill Rowling and Kevin Moore.

Participants: SUSS: Simon Murphy & Stephanie Murphy; NHVSS: Daniel Burt, Melissa Hadley & Luke Buckingham; CSS: Phillip O'Connor & Adam O'Connor; and Chillagoe Caving Club's Chris Heath

This latest course in cave surveying was run again at Wombeyan Caves on the weekend of 20/21 October 2018. It's been run previously by Mike Lake, Phil Maynard and Jill Rowling in 1997, 1998, 2013 and 2017. This year Kevin Moore assisted us as we had 8 participants from 4 clubs.

We don't have to stay in tents for this weekend, but in the quite nice "Post Office Cottage". Some people though preferred their tents. When you're reducing survey data and drawing maps into the night, you do need a nice place to stay with a couple of tables, electric light, kitchen, bedrooms, lounge-room and shower! This is also just 5 minutes walk away from the Fig Tree Cave where we do the actual cave surveying. The hire of the cottage and the supplied survey kit is provided at-cost.

SUSS instructors supply all the survey equipment used on the weekend, and participants get to keep the printed course notes and a kit consisting of pencil, eraser, ruler, protractor, drawing pens, clip board, printed survey forms, graph paper, drawing film and survey software. Plus we throw in some coffee, tea biscuits and cake for the weekend. Participants just bring their caving gear and food.

Friday 19th

Mike had taken the day off work so we could go to our farm near Rylstone Thursday night, check on our alpacas Friday morning and then leave in the afternoon for Wombeyan, travelling via Sofala, Bathurst and Black Springs. After Black Springs this route passes down into the deep Abercrombie River valley, which seems quite oversized compared with the current, quite small Abercrombie river. It's a bit of interesting geology, which I'd need a time machine to resolve. Jill noted that as the sun lowered, clouds of dark coloured adult termites swarmed, a feast for birds and bats. We arrived just in time for dinner and to grab the double bedroom. Over the evening, participants trundled in.

Saturday 20th

Our course has a nice start at 9 am - not too early. Participants sit through a short briefing on the course and the weekend by Mike followed by the first "lecture" on surveying instruments by Phil Maynard. Then it's time for our first morning tea/coffee. After that we get into our caving stuff and stroll over to Victoria Arch, part of Fig Tree Cave. There is an introduction to various survey instruments, their advantages and disadvantages. As we had enough DistoX units for the whole group, the rest of the course used this instrument rather than compass and tape. We cover safety first off as the DistoX instruments are a class 2 laser and also stress that they must not be dropped.

There is a short climb up into an extension on the western side of the arch. It's an excellent site for learning how to survey as it's not too complicated, has some roof and floor slope changes, speleothems, potential for doing survey loops and splay shots, and keeps our group not too



The team climbing up to Victoria Arch, the survey site is off the track, on the right hand side, and up a short scramble. (Photo: Phillip O'Connor)

far apart. Participants survey in teams of two, each with an instructor that guides them in the use of the DistoX, selecting survey stations and sketching. At 1 pm we head back to the cottage for lunch, then after an hour we head back to the site for the last bit of surveying for the weekend. During the afternoon, a noisy thunderstorm came over with occasional gusts into the Arch, but no real effect on our work other than it was a bit darker in the Arch. At about 6 pm we finish and head back for dinner. Dinners are varied; Jill and I had Chinese takeaway to reheat (chilli BBQ pork and rice), others have stuff that looks good, others have stuff I'd never eat :-)

After dinner, from 8:00 pm Phil gives the second lecture which covers the principles of processing survey data and then participants install Survox on their laptops, enter their survey data, and process the data. Loops are closed, errors found and fixed, and the skeleton of their survey is realised. Jill had brought her Fig Tree map project on Therion and gave a short talk-through of the Fig Tree Cave map. We finish at about 11 pm.

Sunday 21st

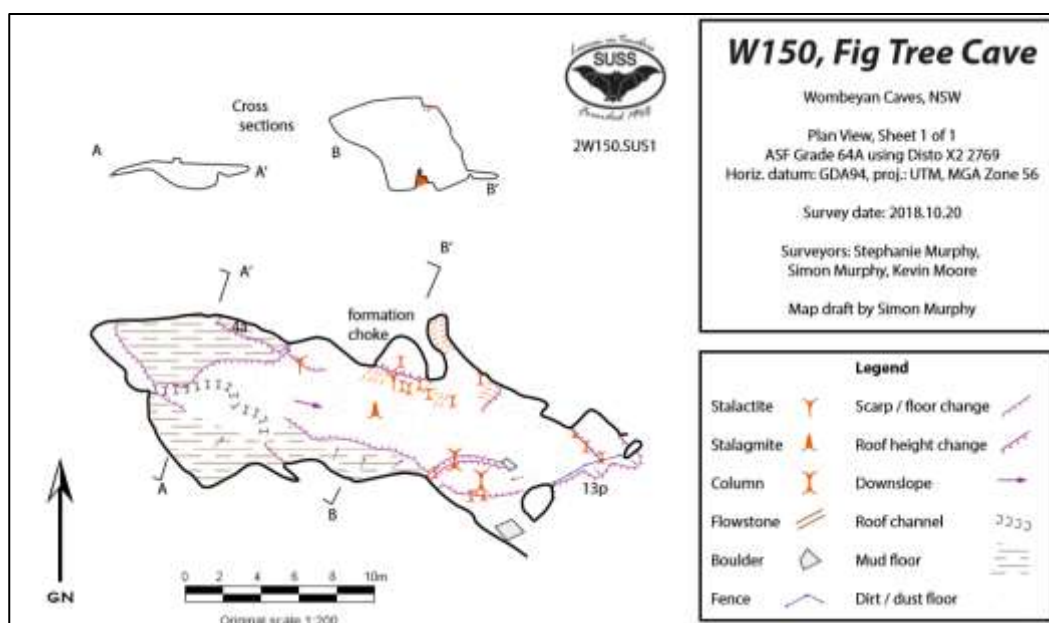
We start at 9.00 am with a talk by Phil on maps; map standards, naming and numbering, units, scales, survey record sheets, survey datums, symbols, survey and map detail grades and information required on maps. After that we all need some morning tea/coffee.

Then we distribute drafting film and with their drafting pens the participants have the opportunity to show off their artistic skills. Quite a bit of help is provided so the participants can start on the right place on the page. They start with printing out the adjusted Survox plots and with that sheet under the drawing film they trace over the legs onto the drawing film. Then after replacing the Survox printout with their in-cave sketch they trace out wall details, followed by features, a title block, North arrows, and a scale bar. This takes two sessions separated by an hour lunch break in the sun. Yes, it is a lovely sunny weekend again. All the participants had finished their maps by about 3:30 pm. We finished the official part of the course by comparing the four maps produced; what's similar?, what's different?

As we had finished this year a bit earlier Mike arranged a trip into Fig Tree Cave for the group. None of the participants had been into this before and they certainly enjoyed the tour of this huge cave. We just followed the normal tourist route, Jill pointed out some geology and mineralogy features, and Mike pointed out some tricky surveying problems that we had encountered in the SUSS survey of this cave.

At about 5 pm the participants packed up with their new maps and headed home. Jill, Phil, Kev and myself also headed off to Goulburn, meeting at the Paragon Cafe for dinner. An excellent weekend.

The instructors would like to thank the following individuals who provided assistance or gear: Marilyn Scott (MSS) for organising the accommodation, the permit and a printer, Rowena Larkins for lending her DistoX and the Wombeyan staff for the permit for the weekend and the use of the Post Office Cottage.



Map of upper section of Fig Tree Cave in Victoria Arch drafted by participant Simon Murphy.

Bushwalking – Ettrema Tops - 12 & 13 October 2018

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Murray Newman (ex officio leader), Emma Parnell, Trish Morrow, Heather Reid & Marilyn Scott (TL)

The original plan was to walk down Tail Race Creek to the Shoalhaven River, what was described by someone who had done it as a “hard walk”. However, after a week of rain up and down the east coast of NSW, I was struggling with the idea of walking down Tail Race Creek (on wet rock in the 1-5ml of forecast showers), camping on the Shoalhaven (in the forecast rain) and then walking out on Sunday (again in 1-5ml of drizzle/ showers). So, just in case, I came up with a Plan B.

We met up with Murray and Emma at Nerriga Pub on Saturday morning and discussed the weather. The latest weather forecast didn't look good, the skies were already threatening, and showers/rain/drizzle was forecast. So, we discussed our options and decided that Tail Race should be done in good weather and we'd do Plan B ... head over to The Wave Cave (where we were guaranteed to be dry for the night), and next



The Wave Cave, supposedly the biggest overhang in the Budawangs.

morning do a day walk in the headwaters of Ettrema Creek. The upside of this is that I was ticking off another Wish List trip as The Wave Cave was on it.

Murray & Emma had actually done this as a day trip some time ago, so Murray was in charge of getting us there. We drove to a fire trail, sadly didn't take the right fork but took the left one, which meant we had 500m of scrub bashing to get on the right ridge/spur.

Once we were on the right ridge/spur, it was easy going, nice open country and we found the cairned route that led us down the pass (avoiding the gully that Murray had accidentally found himself in the last time). We were soon down

at the creek, crossed it and up the other side, arriving at The Wave Cave by 11am. The overhang/cave is about 100m long, with lots of spots to set up tents, after last week's rain, there was a trickle of water nearby that we could use rather than going back down to the creek (bonus). We set up camp, had morning tea and then went off to explore.

We found a pass not too far along the cliff-line and eventually found ourselves up on the top of the plateau, then headed over to explore the creek/waterfall that is above the overhang where we were camping. The scrub was pretty



Up on the escarpment looking into the creek system we would explore.

awful but eventually we were in the creek and followed it upstream to see the canyon section and then downstream to the permanent pools closer to the waterfall.



Emma in Skinny Woman Pass

We then headed over to the west to suss out a creek that we believed would give us an easy route down through the cliff-line. It was pretty straight forward, little or no scrub and then it was a matter of traversing 500m along the cliff-base to camp. The weather for all of Saturday was fine, no rain whatsoever!

On Sunday morning, we woke to drizzle and wet bush. We set off at 8am for another pass up through the cliff-line which would take us back to our vehicles. Murray had done this pass before (Skinny Woman Pass), all he had to do was

pick the right spur! He unerringly led us up the spur and to the pass. There are two passes here, Slippery Rock pass and Skinny Woman Pass. Slippery Rock is easier but with the wet rock and no-where to put in a good hand line, we opted for Skinny Woman which proved challenging to say the least. Once up on top of the escarpment, we decided to follow the creek upstream (rather than bush bash), as the creek had nice rocky slabs. This was a bonus as the creek was really delightful, lots of deep pools. and lovely cascades, we decided that it would be a great place to come on a summer's day.



Heather at one of the many pools in the creek.

We were back at the cars at 11am, and after a few showers we were all very wet, so we decided to forego the additional walk (not enough time to do it justice either) and headed down to Nerriga Pub for lunch.

Despite the change of plans it was a great weekend, thanks to you all for joining me. Tail Race will be on the calendar again, so watch this space, it looks like an exciting overnight walk.



Canyoning – Blue Mountains, 17 & 18 November, 2018

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Jeff Boyd (Sat & Sun), Bill Allanson & Yunn Chin (Sat only), Trish Morrow & Heather Reid (Sun only) and Marilyn Scott (TL – Sat & Sun)

The lead up to this weekend was fraught with changes ... originally Rod was leading Fortress on Saturday, then Grand on Sunday and I was leading Kumarah Gully on Sunday. I had booked in on Rod's trip to Fortress. When checking his emails, Rod discovered that he had a lot of people booked in and so I offered to lead a second group through Fortress on the Saturday. I ended up with 5 (including one beginner on my trip and Rod had about 12 (mostly beginners). By Friday the weather was looking really wet, not great to take a bunch of beginners down Fortress so Rod canned his trip and one person dropped out of my Fortress trip. I decided to go ahead anyway as I was already going to be in the mountains for my Sunday trip, so what the heck, maybe the weather wouldn't be as bad as forecast.

As Jeff and I were driving up the Great Western Highway on Saturday morning around 7am, we ran into mizzle (mist/drizzle) and then full on drizzle and maybe some rain. Didn't look nice at all so we started thinking of a Plan B – what could we do with the two people who would already be driving to meet us at the start point? We came up with a few ideas but when we arrived, and stood around in the mizzle, Chin & Bill were still keen to do Fortress Canyon despite the fact that I warned them that it would be extremely cold, especially after the compulsory swims. So, we set off for the track head.

The walk in to the start of the canyon was way longer than I remembered. I'd first done this canyon in 2000, then did it another four times the last time being 2012, obviously I'd forgotten the long walk in, plus the long scrubby sections of the creek and most of the rest of the canyon!

Once we'd suited up into our wetsuits (all except Bill who canyons in thermal and shorts), we headed down into the creek, Bill had taken off and I followed him but at the first pool, I couldn't see any ripples. Where the heck had Bill gone? I back-tracked a little and found a footpad up to the left so we figured he knew of a by-pass of the first pool and compulsory jump in. I was all for that, the rock looked awkward for me to get over, so we followed the track (and Bill). This led us downstream high up on the creek/cliff walls



Bonus abseil #2 - cause I didn't want to do the leap of faith.

and eventually we came to a grassy/ferny slope that Bill had descended, there was no way to judge the drop off at the end, and I'm being super cautious at the moment (4 injuries in 10 months has made me that way!), so we set up a rope and used our descenders to lower ourselves down the 10m slope (bonus 1st abseil), and caught up with Bill. So, now we're all back together and off we go.

Fortress is well documented (heaps of photos on the net), so no need to go into a super detailed run down of what we did. I decided not to do the leap of faith (Bill did), the rock was wet, and I don't like jumps with my damaged knee and ankle, so I set up a



Chin in the duck-under pool.



Heather on the 2nd abseil, into a chest deep pool.

rope that the three of us used (bonus 2nd abseil). We came to the duck under and persuaded Chin to do it (good practice for a new canyoner – although he did say it was cold). All but Bill abseiled the jump-in (bonus 3rd abseil – Chin's getting a lot of practice in challenging starts). The swims were cold, especially for Bill and the weather didn't invite us to laze around the spa pools. At the end we changed then headed up the exit route (Chin, bless his heart offered to carry out the wet rope for me – probably didn't hurt that I had just disclosed that I was exactly twice his age – lol). The steep scramble up was over quickly and all that was left was the long (longer than I remembered it being) walk on the track back to the cars.

We said goodbye to Chin then headed over to Mt Wilson to camp. Heather and Melinda would join us that night and Trish the next morning. The weather held off for the camp fire, lots of wine was consumed and Heather provided apple pie and cream (yum).

Next morning, after a night of off and on rain, we were had typical Mt Wilson mist/cloud/drizzle. Bill and Melinda opted to go home rather than do a wet day's bushwalking, Trish joined us and said that the forecast was for the weather to clear, so we set off for the day's

adventure, Kamarah Gully. None of us had any idea what we were in for, all we had was a GR and two lines in the canyon guide.

What can I say, super easy walk in, lots and lots of scrub in the creek. We're still not sure what the right entry should be, or from which ridge, Koombanda or Kamarah. We did a bonus abseil into the creek which I'm pretty sure wasn't the way that others had taken and then there was lots and lots of more scrub in the creek. At this point we're all less than enchanted. Eventually though we came to the canyon proper and a scramble down beside a big log, soon followed by an abseil down a slippery log, a short swim/wade, then another abseil into a pool and a short swim and a climb up that everyone made look easy except me. There was a bit more canyon formation ending in a great overhang. Just after the overhang, the terrain up on one side looked very cliffy but on the other side looked like a great ramp. This was the side that was the most direct route back to our cars so we took this which proved to be the easiest walk out of a canyon that I've ever had.



Trish and me on the super easy walk out (lots of wildflowers at the moment)

Overall, we decided that it was a nice short half day canyon if we took a more direct route into the creek and ignored the GR published. Thanks Heather, Trish and Jeff for humoring me and doing this little canyon.



Canyoning – Dead Log, Luna Park & Hailstorm Retreat Canyons, 23 - 25 November, 2018

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: John Gray, Jeff Boyd, Trish Morrow and Marilyn Scott

I'd always wanted to do Luna Park canyon, but I'd heard that it was between 10 and 12 hours as a day trip, and these days I don't intentionally do a day trip that long. So, I came up with the bright idea of doing it as a three-day trip ... walking in to camp on the Bungleburi on the Friday, doing Luna Park on Saturday, back to camp and then walking out via Hailstorm Retreat on Sunday. Then, in thinking it over, I thought "why not go in via Dead Log canyon" which I hadn't done before and I'd kill two canyons with one trip!

In theory it was a good plan, but the weather wasn't as co-operative as we would have liked, very windy all weekend, overcast and 13°C in Dead Log on Saturday and 15°C in Luna Park on the Sunday – we didn't take wetsuits to cut down on weight and thermals and rain shells just didn't cut it! Towards the end after the compulsory swim in Dead Log (and the wades that were swims for me) we were all very cold (many of my photos were blurred because I was shivering so much). Plus, it wasn't easy doing



Dead Log - John on one of the "trickier" abseils, getting over a notch on the log, Trish and I found it much easier than the guys.



Trish on another tricky abseil, balancing yourself on the log and then dismounting.

the abseils in Dead Log with heavy overnight packs – note to self, don't take an overnight pack through a canyon again if it can be avoided.

John had done a recce a few weeks ago with Minh and Jeff Enke and had found a good campsite for us and a new pass (John's Pass) right at the campsite which would take us up to the start of Luna park very quickly and was a dead easy route.

Dead Log was a great canyon, very sporty with 12 drops (where we either used a handline or abseiled) and the abseils were quite technical. Neither Jeff or I had done it before; John had done it but many, many years ago. Trish was the only one who had recent experience, so she was able to

point out some spots that could bring the unwary unstuck. It took us about 7 hours (from the car) to the end of the canyon, longer than it would normally take but there was a lot of pack hauling at some of the abseils – and we weren't in a hurry as we knew we didn't have to walk back to the cars!

The walk up the Bungleburi to our campsite was challenging through the boulder fields and there were a few swims. It took us about 2 hours to walk to the campsite (between 1.5 and 2k I think) and finally I was able to thaw out by the fire we quickly built.



Our campsite on the river - rated 10 out of 10.

a rock for the abseil, Trish and I gave the challenging start a go and managed, Jeff had a bit of trouble with the Hydrobot but for all the bad press it had been given, this particular pitch turned into a non-event.

We only had to walk half a k or so upstream back to our campsite, and the whole trip campsite to campsite took roughly 5 hours. We all marveled at how much easier and more enjoyable the canyon was without an overnight pack and doing it this way rather than the way described in the Jamieson Guide!

Our campsite was only a few hundred metres downstream from Hailstorm Retreat. On previous trips, we had stayed in the Hailstorm creek - lots of rocks and fallen trees. This time we took a different route (much better) and were soon up at the start of the canyon – my favourite pass out of the Bunglebori. We left camp at 8.30am and were at the cars at 12.30pm - you could do it faster, but we weren't in any hurry, it was nice to enjoy both the Bunglebori (easier walking than on the Friday) and the canyon itself.

On Saturday morning, from the campsite, it took us probably an hour via John's Pass to the start of the canyon (bonus!). Luna Park was great, about 7 abseils, one of them with a very tricky start and some beautiful canyon formation. As John had done Luna Park on the recce, he was keen to see if there was a way of avoiding getting your descender stuck in a notch on the edge of an overhang, apparently one of his group got his rack stuck and it was hard to move, I had heard of someone else who hurt her hand on the same abseil. John went up high on



Luna Park - lots of twists and turns in the canyon, and these window-like openings. (Photo: John Gray)



Luna Park - Trish at the end of one of the abseils, this was a deep pool that you had to wade across - by this time we're very cold.

I'd definitely recommend taking 2 days to do Luna Park, walking in via Hailstorm, down to John's Pass, dropping off overnight gear and doing the canyon on day one, then walking out via Hailstorm the next day (or exiting up Scatters exit).

Thanks so much to John, Jeff and Trish for coming on this trip with me— a great start to the canyoning season.



MSS TRIP CALENDAR

8-9 December Bushwalking Morton National Park		<p>Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com Grade: Medium Details: One of two walks depending on how hot the weather will be (historically weather in December is unpredictable!). Option 1: if it's not going to be a scorcher, we will start this three day walk on Friday - walking for about 13k on an old dis-used fire trail (approx 5 hours with lots of stops, mostly flat terrain), spending the first night at Lyrebird Leap camping on rock slabs overlooking Cinch Creek (1k off track). On Saturday we'll make our way to the Lost Pools, where we can take it easy and cool off in this mini canyon's pools. Sunday we will walk out retracing our steps on 13k of fire trail. Option 2: If the weather's going to be hot, this is a much shorter walk and we will start the walk on Saturday morning, walking in to Corang Cascades - where we will relax and swim all day (take along a pool ring!), plenty of opportunity to explore up the cascades or just chill out, floating around in your pool ring (and maybe drinking margaritas!). Joint MSS/BWOC trip.</p>
15 & 16 December Canyoning Mt Wilson		<p>Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com Grade: 3 Saturday Little Bell, Belfry & Bell Canyons 3 canyons in one day – abseil in Little Bell, a cold canyon, wetsuits needed - no lilos, but pool noodles are a good idea; Sunday Ranon Brook (four abseils and a few short swims/wades with 3 tricky climbs at the end). Numbers limited. Joint MSS/BWOC trip.</p>
21 December Canyoning Katoomba		<p>Trip Leader: Marcia Kaye Contact: mk2me1@gmail.com Grade: 3 Hat Hill Canyon - No abseils but plenty of rock hopping, waterfalls and scrambling. This canyon is now very popular on weekends, the creek sections are very pretty and the canyon walls very photogenic. If time permits, we will go all the way down the creek to where a waterfall plunges into the Grose Valley. Walkout not difficult takes approx 1 hour. Wetsuits and helmets compulsory, and numbers will be limited.</p>
29 Dec 2018 - 4 Jan 2019 Caving Tasmania		<p>The Darkness Beneath: Caving Tasmania (31st ASF Conference) pre- and post-conference trip dates to Mole Creek Karst area into some spectacular caves. For more information visit https://asfconference2019.com/</p>
26 - 28 Jan 2019 Canyoning Bungleburi		<p>Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com Grade: 3 - 5 Three day's canyoning in the Bungleburi area. I will walk in on Friday evening to secure the overhang at the end of Bubble Bath. The order of the canyons will depend on whether or not the rest of the group can walk in with me on Friday evening and whether some will be walking in on Saturday morning. Bjelke's Mind (Grade 4, 5 abseils, some wades) and Crikey (Grade 5, 6 abseils, several swims), Bubble Bath (Grade 3, 1 abseil and 1 downclimb). The walk in to Bubble Bath camp cave is approximately 3 - 4 hours (generous timing) so carrying camping gear isn't too onerous. So that we finish at a reasonable time, Mondays canyon will have a very early start. Joint MSS/BWOC trip. Numbers will be limited.</p>

16 – 17 Feb Abercrombie Project		<p>Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Details: Abercrombie Caves. Come and work on the cave mapping and survey project. We will be checking/reviewing the cave maps for publication and deciding on re-surveying if needed.</p>
8 – 10 Mar Canyoning Blue Mountains		<p>Trip Leader: John Gray Contact: JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au Grade: Hard Details: Three days canyoning in Yarramun Creek area, Captains Canyon and one of the Up Ya Canyons (either Up Ya Crack or Up Ya Bum tba). Camping in either a camp cave on Yarramun or headwaters of Captains. Due to the exploratory nature of the trip numbers will be limited and experienced canyoners would be preferred. If the weather forecast is for hot weather, walk in will start at 6am (possibly necessitating car camp at end of Wollangambe Fire Trail for some).</p>
16 – 17 Mar Abercrombie Project		<p>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.</p>
6 – 7 Apr Abercrombie Project		<p>Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Details: Abercrombie Caves. Surface trog weekend, aim to locate and GPS reference cave tags.</p>
13 - 14 Apr Navigation Training Capertee Valley		<p>Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick__smith@hotmail.com Grade: ungraded Details: learn navigation using map and compass.</p>
19 – 22 Apr (Easter) Caving Ashford		<p>Trip Leader: Rod Smith - Contact: roderick__smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Details: This is a chance to explore a new area. Ashford is situated near the Queensland border. According to Google it's about 8 hours from Sydney. There are at least four known caves. More details to follow.</p>
25 – 28 Apr Canyoning Glen Davis		<p>Trip Leader: John Gray Contact: JOHN.GRAY@sydneywater.com.au Grade: Hard Details: Four days. First day walking up one of the tributaries of Freshwater Creek arriving at a camp cave by lunchtime and then exploring that branch in the afternoon. 2nd day we would be exploring the next branch of Freshwater which is completely unknown. 3rd and possibly 4th days would be exploring the next creek down (reputedly to be the REAL Doomsday). Due to the exploratory nature of the trip numbers will be limited and experienced canyoners would be preferred.</p>
4 – 5 May Abercrombie Project		<p>Trip Leader: Roderick Smith Contact: roderick__smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy Details: Abercrombie Caves. NSW Speleo Council Meeting at Abercrombie. Some associated activities to the project such as any remaining surface trog required for GPS referencing, or re-survey activities.</p>

1 – 2 June Abercrombie Project		<p>Trip Leader: Beth Little</p> <p>Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com</p> <p>Grade: Easy</p> <p>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.</p>
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Expressions of Interest

<p>Abseiling Instructional</p> <p>Dates to be determined</p>		<p>Abseil practice (focus on canyoning) – anyone who is interested in either or both of the following please contact marilyn_scott@bigpond.com</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abseiling – beginners – covers correctly attaching yourself to rope with descender, abseiling on pitches up to 30m and overhangs on both 11mm and double 9mm ropes, use of calls, using a safety line, being able to bottom belay and brake an abseiler when required. Test driving different descenders. 2. Self-Rescue canyoning skills (including but not limited to prusiking using prusik loops, tying off, crossing a knot and changing ropes, using self-belay, releasing a locked self-belay. <p>A suitable date will be scheduled to run either or both of these practice days subject to demand.</p>
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Trish on the final waterfall abseil - Dead Log Canyon (Photo: John Gray)

APPENDIX 1 – MEETING MINUTES

MSS 53rd Annual General Meeting – 8 November 2018

Held at SES Canada Bay

Meeting Opened: 19:45

Present: Roderick Smith, Chris Johnstone, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Katryse Nicholls, Owen Nicholls

Apologies: Jim Crockett, Beth Little, Marilyn Scott, Bob Horn, Dave Stuckey, Helena Johnstone, Ben Johnstone, Garry K. Smith

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence: None

Committee Members Reports:

President: None

Treasurer: Motion to leave fees at current level. Moved by Chris; seconded by Katryse; and Carried

Full member \$80

Prospective member \$30

Family membership \$160

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

Honorary membership \$45

Single parent family membership \$120

Financial Summary for year 1 November, 2017 to 31 October, 2018

MSS opened a new bank account during the financial year of 2017-2018 and is in the process of winding down the old one. As a result, we still have money spread between two banks and three accounts. With the opening of the new account, we have received more in bank interest over three months than we did with the previous bank in the previous three years (though only two of those months fell in the 2017-2018 financial year).

The club sold the 'cave sniper' for \$467.44 and purchased new rope for \$920.00. A couple of people overpaid their memberships and Rod Smith is still owed money for postage. Due to a rise in both memberships and trip fees, the balance actually finished ahead for this financial year.

Account balance as at 31 October 2018:

Brought forward:	\$3,275.18
Total Incoming:	\$5,328.38
Total Outgoing:	\$4,544.35
Closing Balance:	\$3,969.21

Anyone who wishes to look at the full report, please email secretary@mssadventure.org and it will be emailed to you.

Equipment Officer: None.

Training Officer: None.

Librarian: None.

Web Manager: None.

Membership Report:

As at 31/10/18 membership is as follows:

One adult + kids families: 3 (4 adults – 5 children)

Two adults (with or without kids): 8 (16 adults – 9 children)

Single memberships – 23

Introductory Single memberships – 8

Introductory Family memberships – 1 (1 adult – 2 children)

Member of another club - 1

Total of 52 adults & 15 children

New members this year:

2 Full Memberships: Michael Sliwka, Trish Morrow

1 Member of another Club: Garry Smith

3 Conversions to Full Single membership: Jeff Boyd; Marcia Kaye; Steve Rowse,

1 Conversion to full Family membership: Owen, Tanya & Katryse Nicholls

13 Intro Memberships: Edd Keudell & Donna Graham, Brendan Byrne, Paul Daniel, Jon Finch, Katryse Nicholls, Ev Obriadina, Brendan Prideaux, Tanya Smith (plus 2 children), Melinda Turner & Yunn Chin

Members who did not renew: 3 (1 full membership + 1 child), 3 intro members [Loretta Visintin, Brendan Prideaux & Wei Wei Lee])

Overview @ 31/10/18

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

Elections:

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

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

Project Updates:

No reports received

New Business

- George Bradford, who used to be the manager at Yarrangobilly, has moved to Dorrig National Park
- Server – Owen is looking into an ftp storage space for MSS. He's got a server that he can make available (after some setup). We'll then try to "hang" it off the website.
- It was suggested that since we've had a bit of an influx of new members, we should have more training days for them, and anyone else who needs them. This has been noted by the new training officer.

Other general business:

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
21/12	Marcia	Canyoning	Hat Hill	Easy	
26-28/1	Marilyn	Canyoning	Bubble Bath, Crikey and Bjelke's Mind	Hard	
16-17/2	Beth	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Working on the book and related tasks
8-10/3	John	Canyoning	Captains and others	Hard	
16-17/3	Beth	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Working on the book and related tasks
6-7/4	Beth	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Working on the book and related tasks
25-28/4	John	Canyoning	Glen Davis - Freshwater	Hard	
4-5/5	Rod	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Working on the book and related tasks
1-2/6	Beth	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Working on the book and related tasks

Next Meeting: TBA Early February

Meeting Closed: 20:35pm