



Metropolitan Speleological Society

Quarterly
Newsletter
Summer
Issued March 2017

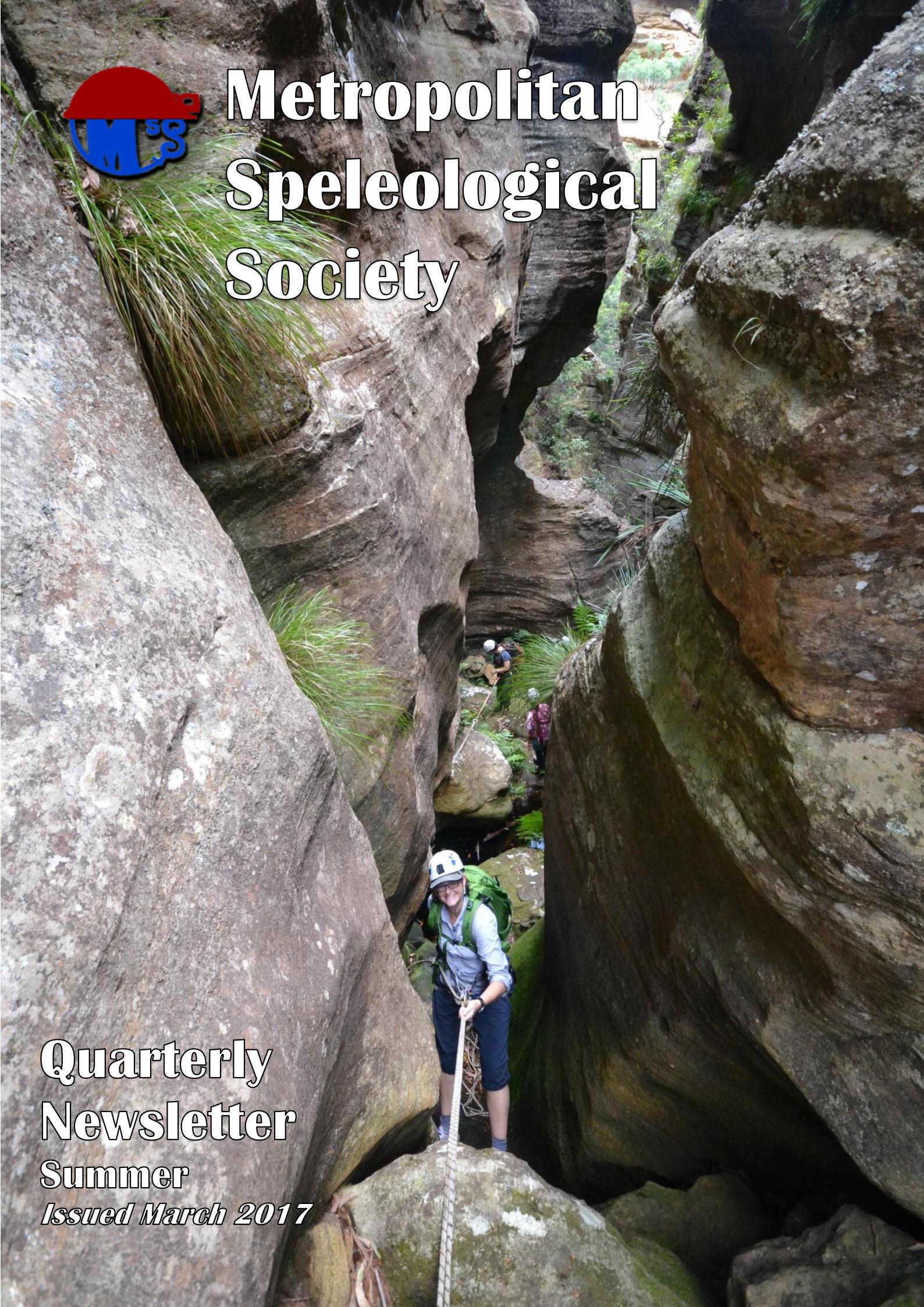


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Cover Shot: Beth Little in Looking Glass Canyon (Photo: John Gray)



SOCIETY INFORMATION

Club PLB

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

Office Bearers

President	president@mssadventure.org.au	Jim Crockett
Secretary	secretary@mssadventure.org.au	Rod Smith
Treasurer	treasurer@mssadventure.org.au	Cathi Humphrey Hood
Equipment Officer	equipment@mssadventure.org.au	Jim Crockett
Librarian	library@mssadventure.org.au	Rod Smith
Training Officer	training@mssadventure.org.au	Beth Little
ASF Liaison		Jim Crockett & 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 (2017)

		<i>Prospective membership Options (3 months)</i>	
Full member	\$80	<i>Single Prospective</i>	
Family (2 adults + children)	\$160	\$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		

Preferred method of payment by Direct Debit to: Account Name: MSS

BSB: 062-021 (Commonwealth Bank)

Account: 00901421

Cheques or Cash also accepted.



NEWS – PLB Activation Costs

Who pays for a rescue when a club (or private) PLB is activated?

Some clubs like MSS, purchase Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) which members are encouraged to take on club adventures. But if a PLB is activated, is there a cost and if so, who is liable?

This question was raised by a bushwalking club and AMSA was approached for a definitive answer. They advised that “within the Australian Search & Rescue Region if you are in distress and require assistance there is no fee or cost billed to individuals who are rescued and transported to the nearest medical facility”. The cost of additional transportation is not covered, so it’s recommended that Ambulance cover is also obtained by NSW & ACT residents (as this is not funded by the NSW & ACT governments). Let’s face it, if you injure yourself at Yarrangobilly and live in Sydney, you don’t want to cover the (high) cost of a transfer to the hospital of your choice.

It’s also not a bad idea to have two PLBs on a trip, particularly where there’s a possibility of someone falling (say off a cliff), you can just imagine the scenario “yeah, we know you’ve fallen and injured yourself, but can you get the PLB out of your pack and activate it? No? Oh bugger, it’s just going to take us an hour or so to get to you, hang in there!”



MSS – Caving Songs

Our Ghost Facebook Member (Rod) who is philosophically opposed to logging onto FB but is nevertheless a member (go figure), offered a challenge and Helena obliged by posting for him ...

Caving Songs

It has been decided to compile a list of classic caving songs, and we would like your assistance. The list below is a start, but there's bound to be many more that haven't been thought of. So, please, send an email or comment on this post any other songs you can think of. A more comprehensive list will be compiled from your input for the next newsletter. Let's see how creative you can get.

*Meatloaf - I Would Do Anything For Caving, But I Won't Do That; KISS - I Was Made For Loving Caves
Rick Astley - Never Gonna Give Caving Up, AC/DC - It's A Long Way To The Top From The Bottom Of The Cave, Robert Palmer - Simply Speleology*

So, here's what our FB group members came up with ...

(Chris Johnstone) Does anything by Nick Cave count?

(Richard Neville – really put his thinking cap on) Status Quo - Down down deeper and down. Hang on, sorry they're actual lyrics and a supermarket jingle ; Sex Pistols - I wanna be in Yagby; The Troggs - Cave Thing; The Bloodhound Gang - Foxtrot Uniform Caving Kilo; The Proclaimers - I'm Gonna do (500 caves); Credence Clearwater Revival - As Long As I Can Cave In Light!; AC/DC - Dirty Deeds (Done Down Deep); Rolling Stones - Brown Caver; Rammstein - Do Karst!

(Emilio Carreto) Pink Floyd - wish you were caving

(Tim Grimes) Michael Jackson - I wanna cave with you or blame it on the caving; Choirboys - run the stalagmites; Angels - am I ever gonna do that cave again (followed by comment from Min “No way, get trogged, trog off!”); ABBA - trog me; Eagles - welcome to the hotel Cavers cottage

(Marilyn Scott) Journey - don't stop belaying; Counting crows - daylight fading; Twisted sister – we're not going to cave in; Brian Adams - Summer of 69 ... Caves

(Murray Newman) Metallica, enter caveman; Linkin park, in the cave

All up 22 songs and a bit of fun on the FB page, if you've got a similar idea, or want to kick some ideas around, we'd love to see a post on the page!





Diary Alert – MSS Decadence Walk – 18 & 19 March, 2017

Yes, the **MSS Decadence Walk** is just weeks away! Have you booked in yet?

The Venue: *Box Creek Falls, Kanangra.*

Grade: *Red Sox*

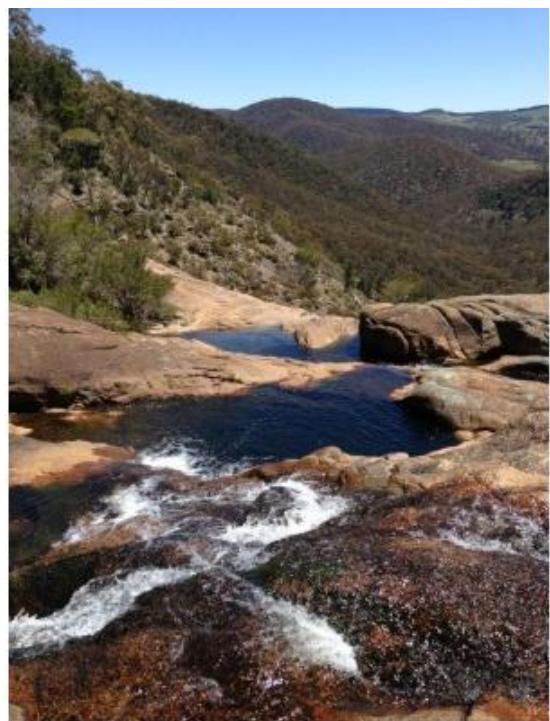
The Walk: a mere 2k off track, you can easily make a 2nd trip back to cars for those decadent items (candelabra, easy chair, champagne, strawberries, tuxedo). “Relatively” flat, the last 100m involves a slight down-hill section and some rocks.

Campsite: this is a bush campsite (sorry no facilities and no overhang/cave), grassy, flat, creek, heaps of firewood, AND the view is to-die-for.

Heaps to do: the campsite is at the top the Falls (300m of cascades). You can easily walk down to the bottom of the falls (off-track adventure), and you can cross over to each level of the cascades with care. For the more adventurous, bring your abseil gear and helmet, we'll try abseiling the falls!

What to bring: All you would need to spend the night in the bush under the stars, PLUS decadent items that you wouldn't ordinarily carry to a campsite (board games, blow up chairs, table cloth, dinner jacket, little black dress & pearls, champagne glasses, the more “out there” the better – points for the most creative and prize awarded).

Who should come: Everyone! Decadence walks were the highlight of the year for some MSS members, and the “old guard” are still talking about them, be there, don't miss out on the fun!



At the top of Box Creek Falls



Diary Alert – Kites over Kosci – 14 – 17 April, 2017

Back by popular demand, “**Kites over Kosciuszko**” is a multi-day walking trip in Australia’s alpine region. As the name implies, you need to bring a kite which will be flown from the summit of Mt Kosciuszko and just about anywhere else we go as we are above the tree line.

Numbers are limited to 10 adults only. Participants need to be prepared for strong sunlight with high UV levels, due to the altitude, as well as the possibility of a full-blown snow storm. All supplies need to be carried in and camping is “bush camping” ie: there are no facilities. Further details will be published closer to the trip. Kites need to be single string only. No stunt kites, fighting kites or aerobatic kites are allowed.

Grade: *Red Sox*

Campsite(s): Wilkinson Valley, Strzelecki Creek, Mt Townsend.

The Route: Thredbo Village, Eagle’s Nest via chairlift, Rawson Pass, Mt Kosciuszko, Muellers Pass, Wilkinson Valley, Main Range Track, Strzelecki Creek, Main Range Track, Mt Townsend, Rawson Pass, Thredbo Village.

What to Bring: Full overnight camping equipment, stove, food, water, kite (single string only), sun protection (there are no trees), provision for blizzard and snow protection.

Getting There: Car share drive to Thredbo Village. Depending on numbers, we may leave Thursday evening, 14th April and bunk in Cooma to break the journey.



MSS - Australia Day Kites Over Kosci 2006 - with four kites going (photo: Beth Little)

INVITATION



Highland Caving Group

HCG 60th Anniversary

Saturday 1 April 2017

Golden Terrace Restaurant, Georges Hall

The Highland Caving Group (HCG) has been an active ASF club for 60 years this year and would like to celebrate this milestone to mark the occasion.

All members, friends, cavers and past members of HCG are invited to attend HCG's 60th anniversary celebration at the Golden Terrace Asian Restaurant, Haig Avenue, Georges Hall on Saturday 1 April 2017. Please note this auspicious occasion in your diary and contact me now by email or message to my mobile to reserve you place.

Dinner: Chinese banquet.

Cost: \$25 - \$30 per adult (actual cost to be advised).

Drinks: BYO wine but not beer or spirits.

We hope to see you there. Bruce Waddington, Secretary, HCG

Phone No: 02 9713 1160 (home) or 0490 129 428 (m) Email: brucewaddo@gmail.com



MSS MERCHANDISE

	Price	Description
A photograph showing a person's legs wearing red socks and white sneakers. The socks are labeled 'MSS'.	\$10	MSS Red Explorer Sox – with MSS label (Volleys and good looking male legs not included). These socks are a must for MSS members, trips are often graded "Red Sox" (as opposed to Medium or Hard) which means that those on the trip will be wearing their Explorer Red Sox. These socks are scarcer than hen's teeth, only available through MSS, and at an unbelievable price – buy now while stocks last!
A black t-shirt with the MSS logo and text 'MSS 50 YEARS OF ADVENTURE' on the back.	\$25	MSS 50th Anniversary T-Shirt or Polo Shirt – very versatile, can be worn anywhere, but a must for MSS social occasions. Front: Small Logo Back: MSS artwork Colour: Black T-Shirt Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL Polo Sizes: M, L
A person wearing a black hoodie with the MSS logo and text 'MSS 50 YEARS OF ADVENTURE' on the back.	\$30	MSS 50th Anniversary Hoodie – best buy yet, toasty warm for around the campfire, yet dressy enough for a winter's night out on the (small) town. Buy now while stocks last. Colour: Black Sizes: S, M, XL, XXL

Postage not included but pick up can be organised. To purchase these unique items at these amazingly low prices, contact Rod, secretary@mssadventure.org.au!



TRIP REPORTS

Canyoning - Newnes – Hartleys Mistake & Bigfoot – 10 & 11 December 2016

Report by: Rod Smith

Participants: Marilyn Scott, Trish Neill, Jeff Boyd, Steve Rowse and Rod Smith (TL)

I drove to Newnes, arriving at approximately 8pm Friday evening. The other four all came up together and arrived closer to 10pm. For Marilyn, the adventure had already started with a stop at Richmond Oval to use the facilities. Marilyn was surprised to find a foot washing facility in the toilets. Once the cubicle next to her was occupied, assuming it was Trish, Marilyn casually remarked that the bathroom was awfully dirty. With a much lower voice Steve replied, "that's because you are in the men's". It was not a foot washing facility.

While waiting at Newnes I had a visit from a wombat, a kangaroo and a kookaburra. It's great to see that not all the wildlife is perturbed by the increasing number of humans in the area.

I hadn't specified a start time, we'd start once we were ready. Packing up camp we drove back along the road for about 4kms to a likely looking place to start. As we made ready to depart we verified our location with the GPS. Good thing we did. Back into the cars and another 1km down the road we were now ready to begin.



The convenient log to cross the Wolgan, note, this was supposed to be a Red Sox Triup

Leaving the cars just after 9am we crossed the Wolgan on a convenient log, walked about 100m along the track on the other side and then headed east beside Zobel's Gully. I hadn't done any walking in Zobel's Gully before, but Marilyn had and she recommended we take the north branch to get onto the plateau. This was a good option as we found a footpad beside the north branch and easy routes through the clifflines. Once we reached the top we saw a gully heading off directly east of us, surely it couldn't be that easy.

We checked the map and GPS and confirmed it wasn't that easy. The gully we were looking at was the top of Firefly. Instead we needed to go roughly 300m south, then roughly 300m east, roughly over a high point and into a tributary that would take us roughly to the start of Hartley's Mistake canyon. So, that's roughly what we did.

The only slight error we made was ending up one tributary higher than intended, but it wasn't a big problem. We encountered a small drop that after I hand-over-hand climbed down I recommended everyone else abseil, which they did. Only a short distance further on we encountered the main cliff-line and found a

picturesque abseil as our means of access. A short lunch stop and we were ready to find out what the canyon had in store for us.



Our entry into the creek - Rod downclimbed this, the rest of us abseiled it, very slippery

With only a grid-reference to go on we didn't know what to expect. None of us had brought wetsuits so we hoped there wouldn't be too much swimming. After some wades, we found our first abseil. We heard the splash as the rope reached the pool at the bottom, but thankfully we were able to take a dry option.



Steve on the first "official" abseil in the canyon, you could stay dry

One look at the second abseil and we knew we wouldn't be avoiding the water. The abseil started dry, but with the spray from the waterfall we were getting wet before the bottom. This wasn't a wade, we needed to swim.

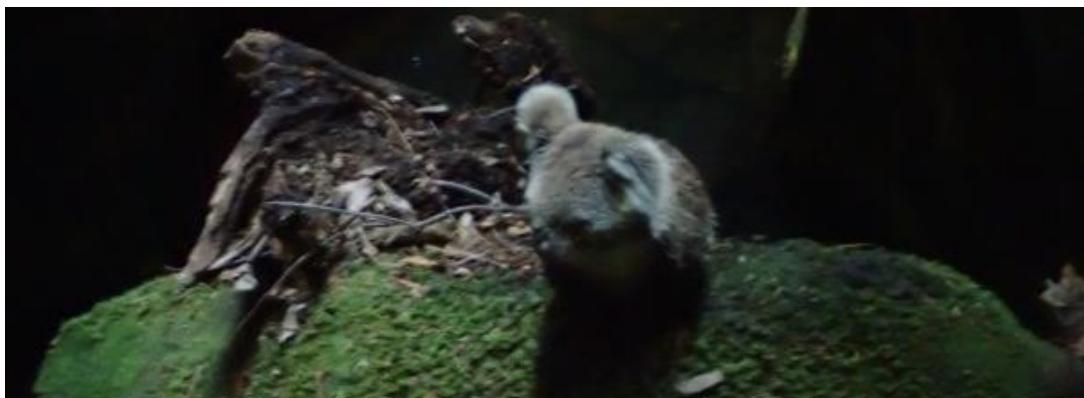


Rod at the bottom of the 2nd (official) abseil

After detaching from the rope there was a small area under the chock-stone where we could mentally prepare for the cold immersion. The pool was probably about 20m long, but it felt longer.

Since I was carrying one of the ropes, and was one of the first ones down, I continued down the canyon to see if there was another abseil. Rounding a corner I then stopped short. Sitting on a rock about 10m in front of me was a koala.

Yes, a koala!

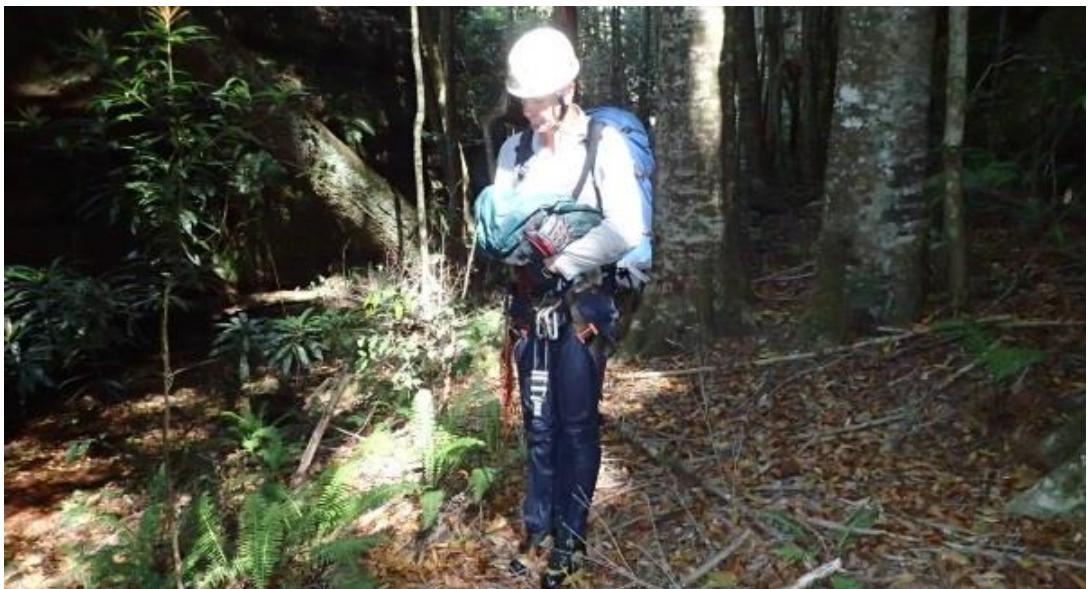


The Koala

After my initial shock of seeing a koala in a canyon I decided it wouldn't last long if we left it where it was, it needed to get out of the canyon. Trish came up next and volunteered the use of her rain jacket. As Marilyn joined us I'd made my way to within 5m of the koala, moving slowly to try and not alarm it. I really didn't know what I was doing, but I wanted to do something.

Steve came up next and decided to take a completely different approach. He took the rain jacket from Trish and walked straight towards the koala. The koala turned tail, scrambled down the log on the back of the rock, and swam across the pool behind. Steve continued his approach and caught up to the koala on the other side of the pool. At this point he dropped the rain jacket over the koala and then picked it up. With its head covered it didn't put up much of a fight, seemingly resigned to its fate.

From here Steve carried the koala most of the way down the creek, Trish helping out on a couple of occasions. The rest of us did our best to find the easiest way for Steve to make his way considering he now only had one free hand. Thankfully we didn't encounter any further abseils.



Steve carrying the Koala through the canyon

Once we reached the junction with Deanes Creek we found our camp site directly opposite, it was now 5pm. Steve and Trish took the koala up behind the camp site and found a good spot to let it go. After a moment's disorientation it found a tree it like and scampered up. They then joined the rest of us in setting up camp.



Trish with Koala before its release



The Chinese Laundry

Jeff and I decided to set up a clothes line to dry our gear, using the 50m rope. For some reason, we decided to use all of the rope, and the abundance of trees. Everything that could be hung out to dry was.

We settled in for the evening and shared some decadent items such as Tim Tams and Old Gold chocolate. The darkening light brought out some fireflies. We soon all settled in for the night.

Sunday morning we managed to start a bit earlier, leaving camp at 8am. Heading up Deanes Creek we found that at times it was quicker in the creek, other times on the bank, and sometimes not quick at all. We passed the end of Big Foot and continued to the next tributary where we hoped the pass onto the cliffs described in Canyons Near Sydney would be easy to find.

We left our overnight gear and made our way up the tributary. Reaching the main cliff-line we could no longer continue straight up the watercourse, so we went left looking for an option. A couple of options

were dismissed. I was looking critically at one option when I was told Steve was making good progress around the corner. I came round to find Steve near the top of a corner, but running out of options that he was comfortable with. At this point the others went further along while I watched Steve descend.

I decided to have a go at Steve's option and headed up, quickly reaching the point Steve had stopped. From here it was a grassy covered rock on quite a slope with minimal foot and hand holds, not a good option. However, a big step across to the other side I found myself at the bottom of a small climb with plenty of hand and foot holds. Choosing my way carefully I scrambled up and found myself on a good ledge. From here the rest of the climb looked quite easy, and there was a good tree to anchor a hand-line to.

With the hand line in place the others could manage the climb. There was a small problem with the easy climb when Jeff, as guinea pig, found that a particularly large boulder was quite loose. Once the boulder was moved to a more stable location we continued our ascent without any further drama.



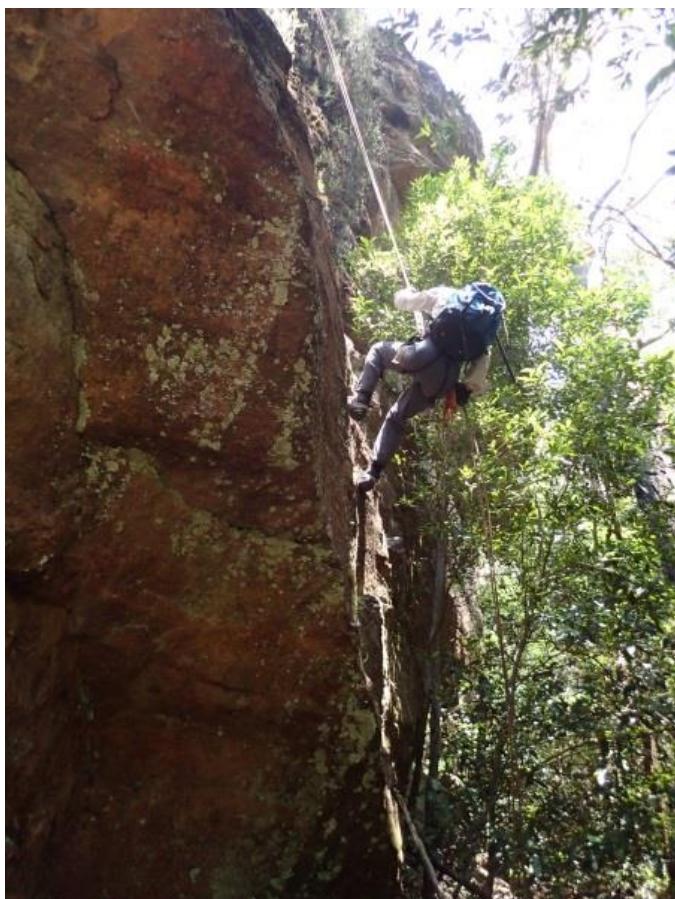
Rod on the climb up the slot

Having a rest at the top Trish helpfully pointed out we weren't at the top yet, another cliff-line was visible further up. Reaching the cliff-line we turned left again and soon found a convenient ramp that was much easier to cope with. Now we were at the top, and it was already past midday.

It was a short walk to the side of Big Foot, we just needed to find a way down. Once we found the cliff-line we realised this would not be as easy as we hoped, especially since we'd left our longest rope with the overnight gear. Heading upstream we eventually found a spot where we could descend to a lower section of cliff. The longest rope we'd brought with us made it to the bottom, with about 1m to spare.

We were now further upstream than where we wanted to be, and this particular creek was not easy to negotiate. We stopped for lunch at the best spot we could find, it was after 2pm by now. We didn't stop long as we were aware we had a long way to go yet.

We eventually reached the canyon, and it is a good canyon. Canyons Near Sydney says there is a single 8m abseil plus some down-climbs. Although we didn't encounter any abseil over 8m high, we



Easy abseil into to Bigfoot's Creek

did do 5, and at best 2 of them could be down-climbed by competent climbers.



Rod at first "official" abseil



Trish at bottom of first "official" abseil

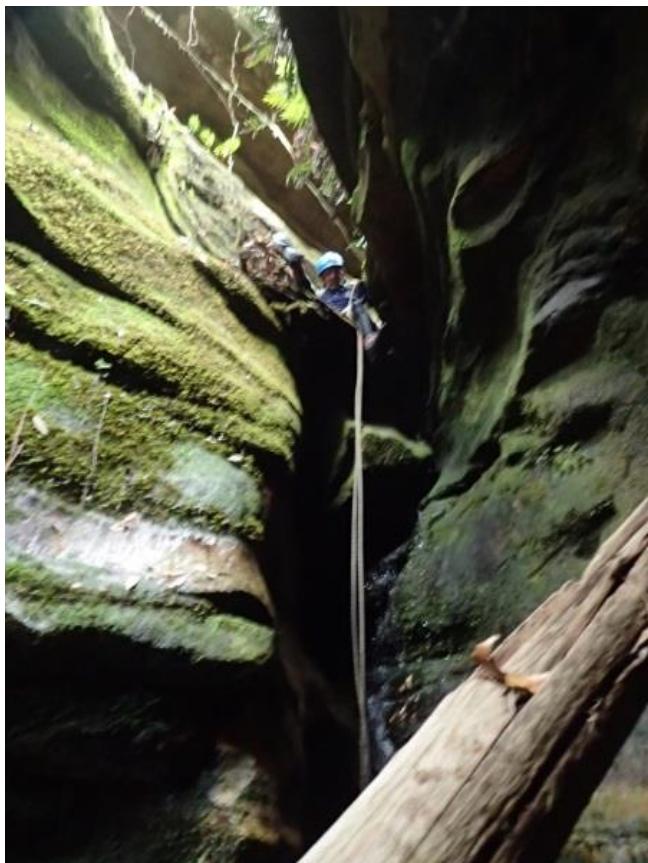
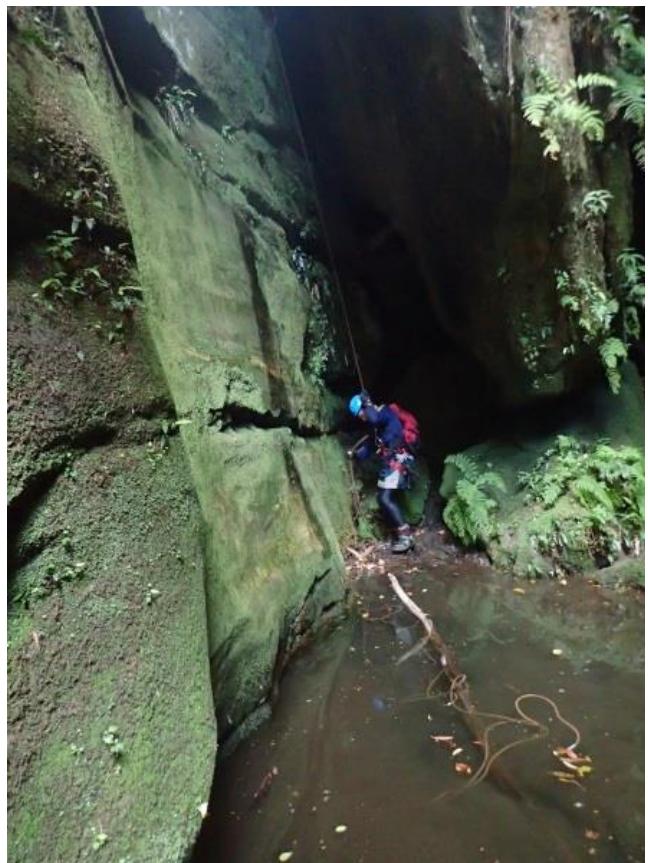


Figure 0-1 This was a surprise, another abseil



And another one!

As nice as the canyon was we were getting concerned at the time, so we kept moving. Coming through the cliff-line we didn't stop (as much as I would have liked to), immediately turning right to head back up Deanes Creek. We arrived at the gear we had left earlier around 7pm and had a short rest. I had been struggling through the day, mostly lagging behind the others, but aware we had to keep moving. I tried eating two muesli bars I had but I had to wash them down, they seemed so dry.

After repacking our gear we continued upstream. Deanes Creek thankfully became easier to negotiate and before long we reached Constance Gorge. Here Marilyn gave me an energy gel (I don't know how people eat that stuff!) It seemed to give me a second wind for a while, but it ran out before reaching the top of the gorge. Constance Gorge is easy walking, so we reached the saddle at the top as the last light was fading, around 9pm.

All we needed to do now was descend Zobel's Gully back to the cars. During daylight it would have been annoying, at night it was difficult and slow. Every time we stopped I sat down and closed my eyes, I felt like I could go to sleep at any point. Having never been benighted on a canyoning trip before I didn't want to start now, especially within a kilometre or so of the cars. The others seemed to have no intention of stopping, so we kept moving.

Eventually Marilyn led us out of the gully to the left and found a footpad. This meant we covered the next section a lot more quickly. Soon the terrain became less steep, we were getting close. The Wolgan, when we reached it, was a welcome sight, and then the road on the opposite bank. About 100m up the road we reached the cars, at 11:15pm.

I knew I wouldn't stay awake if I attempted to drive home, so I slept in the car. The others drove home, helping each other stay awake, and getting home around 4am. I drove home Monday morning, still feeling tired.

What a weekend! Certainly a trip to remember. Although we could say that there's no reason to go back, we did notice that a couple of the tributaries of the canyons looked like they could also be canyons. Anyone up for another epic?

Liloing the Wollangambe on Boxing Day – 26 December 2016

Report by: Jim Crockett

Participants: Cast of a thousand member and visitors, (I think I counted 27)

This is one of the classic MSS trips that has been run almost annually since the idea was thought of a long time ago. This is also the only trip which we open up to friends of MSS members and friends of friends of MSS members and so it goes on.

Our objective was a leisurely swim or paddle down the wide expanses of this beautiful Blue mountains canyon.

At the carpark was a large group on time and ready to go. I think we had a total of around 27 people which must be some sort of a record. At the start we split into 2 groups, with me leading a group consisting of friends and friends of friends making up about half of the total. The rest (MSS members and a couple of visitors) followed about 10 minutes behind us.

Once we made the water I was a little concerned that only about half of my group had some sort of floatation device and a few did not have wetsuits. My previous advice to them was that they should all have floatation especially if not wearing wetsuits, this was not necessarily heeded but I must admit I did say you may not need a wetsuit if you don't feel cold and if it was going to be a warm day. Lucky for me it was a warm day so my concerns for people getting cold were somewhat alleviated.

Off we paddled, some sharing Li-los or blow up beds and others swimming with floatation.



The MSS members re-grouping and letting the first group get a head start (some, but not all – Rob & Laura Clyne, Chris and Owen Johnstone, Cathi Humprey-Hood and Aengus), Tim the Enchanter, David Stuckey (and friends), and M. (photo: Cathi Humprey-Hood)



Some, but not all, of the group at the beach.

Fortunately, the longest continuous pool is the first you meet and when you have the most energy, I think it's about 500m of deep clear water and a bit cold. Our group of newcomers, with a number of children were a bit slow and we were eventually caught up to and overtaken by the second group.

What started out as a warm sunny day was becoming a bit grey and overcast and much cooler. Some of the younger kids (especially the skinny ones) were starting to feel the

cold so we had to manage that as best we could by trying to keep them out of the water as much as possible. We eventually landed at the lunch spot and found the other MSS group were having a look in Kelvinator canyon. We all had a very quick lunch and warmed up as much as possible.

Into the water for the last section of the canyon. Much to the joy of those who were feeling the cold this section has a lot more rock scrambling and few longer pools. Caution was taken on the rock scrambles as

the footing was not always that secure (except if you were wearing volleys). One lady from the other half of the MSS group did have what looked like a nasty fall but fortunately no harm done.

Everyone was glad when we reached the exit gully as they could then rip off their wet clothes and start to dry off. We made our way up the exit gully and I was a little concerned how the kids would handle



the climbing section but surprisingly, there was no problem, they didn't even ask for a belay. With everyone safely up the walk back was uneventful except for the good time we made on the climb up the hill.

In the end a good time was had by all, and I am sure that many of the first-time visitors will come canyoning again.



Rod checking out the "hole" that's opened up in the Wol, the unwary could easily be sucked down and never be seen again! (Photo: Cathi Humphrey Hood)



Canyoning – Yileen - 27 December 2016

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Rod Smith, Jeff Boyd, Rob Clyne & Marilyn Scott (TL)

I did Yileen a couple of months ago and spotted another anchor (after the 45m abseil) around a big rock which went over a waterfall, so I thought I'd go back and do "the full trip".

Yileen is a lovely canyon, what made it memorable for me was the snake we found (thanks Rob for moving it with a stick), the great company and of course the last abseil. Rod had taken his harness off after the 45m abseil and made a good case for not doing the additional abseil (abseil down 20m and walk up 20m), but they did anyway to humour me!

We had a few heart stopping moments when the rope caught when it was pulled down the 45m but Rob eventually set it free!

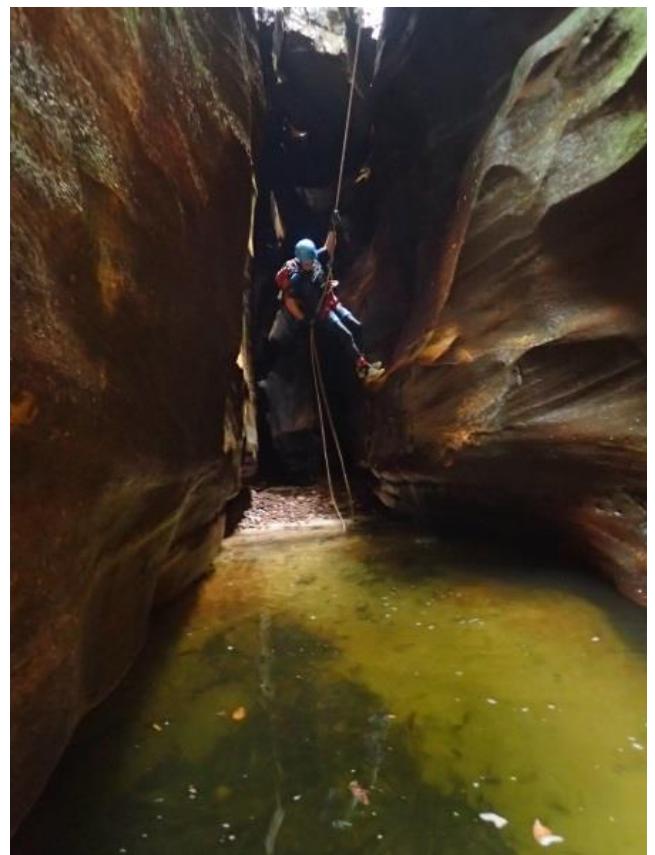
Thanks guys for coming on the trip with me (and carrying the ropes)!



Rob trying to stay dry



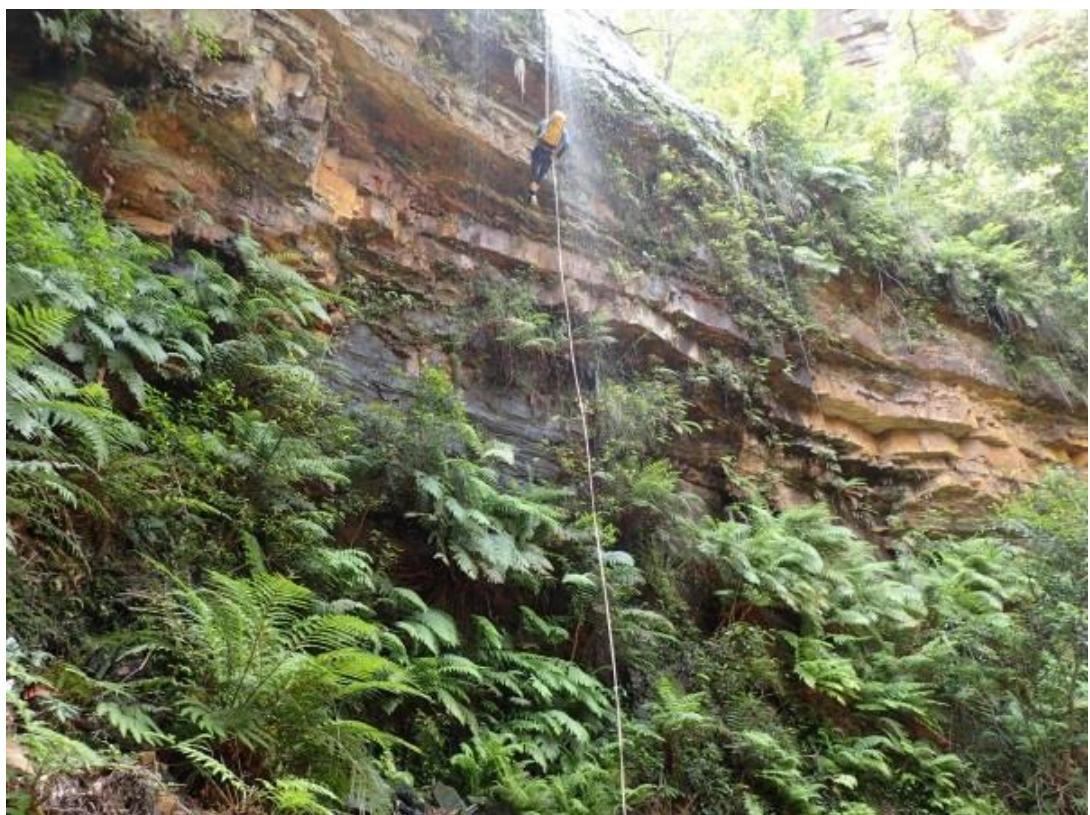
Rod on the 2nd abseil



Jeff on the third abseil



Fuzzy pic of the snake, yes, only 30cm or so but it was cranky-as ... possibly a "small eyed" snake which has had one death attributed to the species



Rob on the last waterfall abseil (the "extra" one that we did



Canyoning – Death Trap & Upper Deanes Creek

- 31 December & 1st January 2017

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Marilyn Scott (Co-ordinator), Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett, Trish Neil, Jo & Ed Squires (Sunday only) and Heather Reid (camp only)

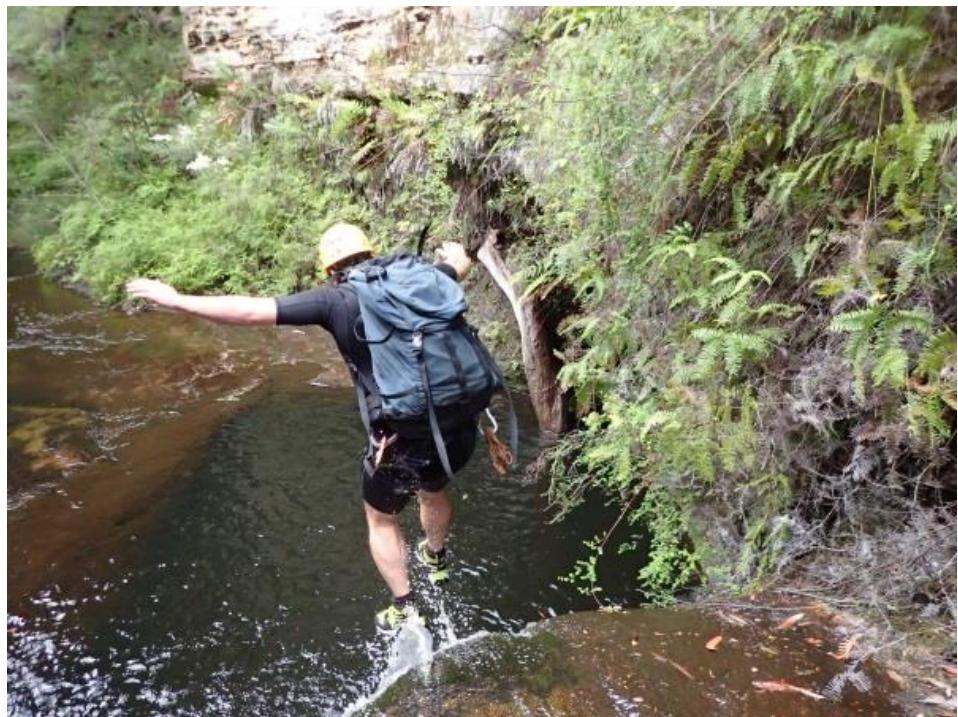
We all rocked up to camp during the course of Friday afternoon/evening and spent the evening sitting around the campfire. We got a relatively early start at 8.30 and made our way up the fire trail and easily found the track in, it's now a well beaten path both into and out of the canyon, evidence that it's getting quite a bit of visitation. *Death Trap* is in the headwaters of Rocky Creek. The canyon was great fun, lots of jumps and slides and one lovely abseil, albeit a little slippery.



Jim at the start and Trish at the end of a slide



Jim on one of the jumps



Rod on another one of the jumps



Trish on the abseil, very, very slippery

The end of the canyon came all too soon and we stopped for some lunch and then headed downstream. We came to a rock fall that we had to climb up and over. When we were scouting around for a way down, we discovered to our left what looked like a grotto and way back under the rocks, so we went to explore it.

There appeared to be two “holes” through the rocks, so Jim first made his way into the hole (not easy), and was down the other side. He said that he thought the route went further in but he couldn’t see, but he was back in the creek (water). So, the rest of us followed, thankfully Trish found a much easier route. Just as we all reached the bottom and the water, the sun moved around enough so that we could see into the cave and it didn’t look as though it went any further. We could have gotten wet again and hunted around, but we’d had enough exploring for the day, so headed back out to pick up our packs and find the exit route.



The grotto on the way to the "cave"



Jim negotiating his way to the hole



Jim disappearing down the hole



Rod disappearing down the hole that Trish found, he made it look a little difficult

The climb out was easy (although the walk up hill in the heat was tedious). All up the trip was around 6.5 hours. The water was cold, so the wetsuits were needed, although you could get by with spring suits. Whilst the track is evidence of a lot of visitation, there wasn't a great deal of wear and tear in the canyon, the abseil was particularly slippery with lots of moss and slime on it. Rod had not done this abseil before, there is another tree on the left up on a ledge which is an overhang (there's a sling around the tree), although this abseil ends in scrub and ferns, so the waterfall is much easier. At the base of the waterfall, the water is only knee deep.

After getting back to camp, Heather and Trish drove off to the Railway Dams at Dargan's Creek, the rest of us sat around drinking beer, swapping stories and swatting flies. By 6pm we broke out the cheese, crackers and champagne for NY Eve. The campground was virtually empty, only one other car there, so we had the place to ourselves and those that stayed up apparently were quite rowdy, although they couldn't make it past 10.30pm!

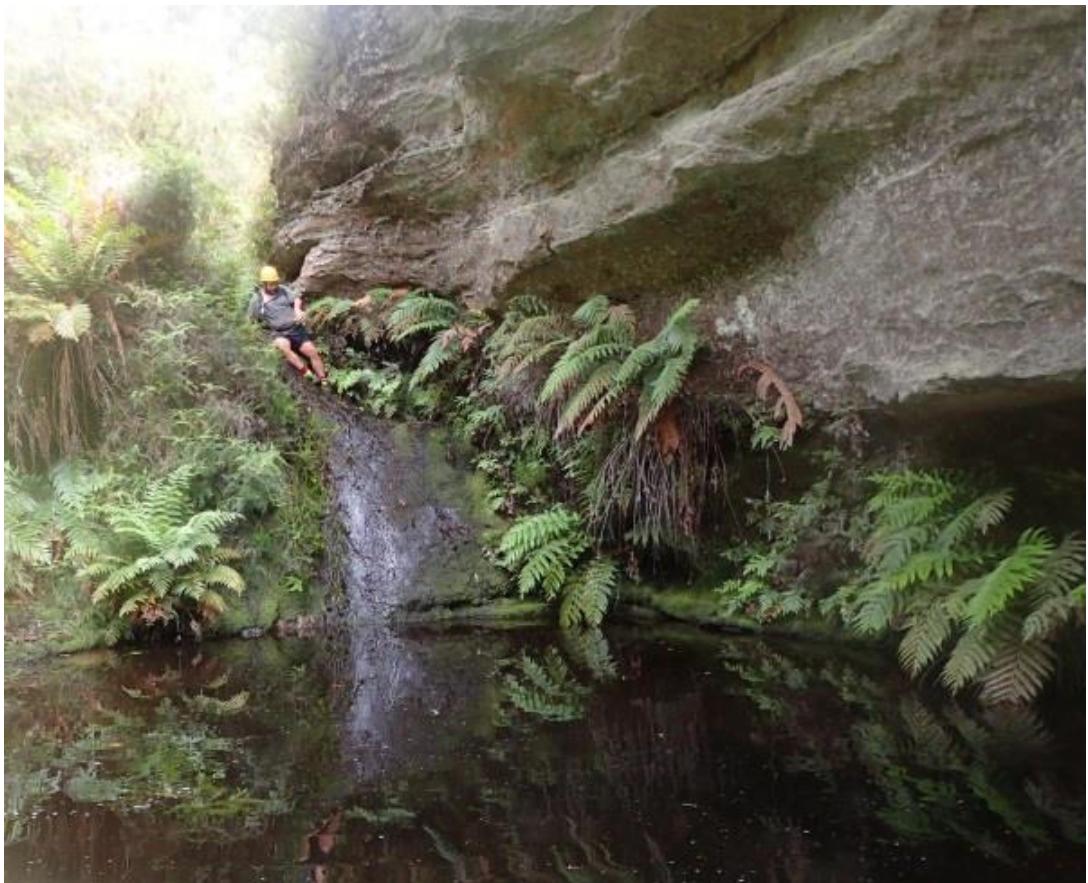
Next morning, we packed up and headed off for Deanes Siding and *Upper Deanes Creek*. This has been on my wish list since I read Rod's trip report years ago when he and Natalie explored it.

The walk in was painless, mostly fire trail and then a couple of k off track navigating to our entry point. We drifted a bit too far to the left so had to make some adjustments. Entry into the creek was via a nice spur, and then we walked downstream for about 100m till we came to a compulsory swim.

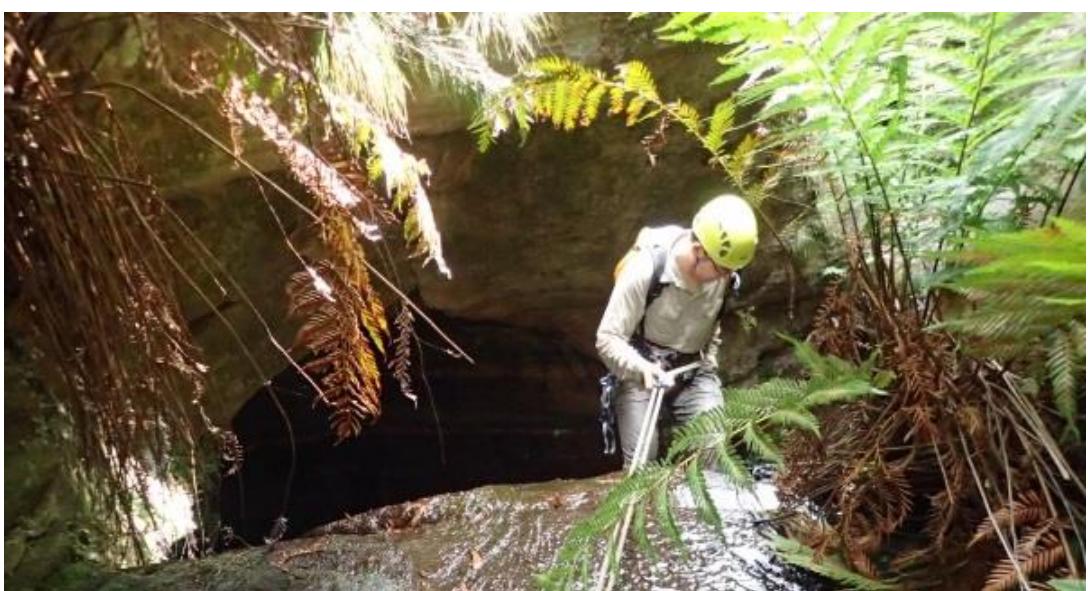


Ed in our first pool

After the pool, there was a slide into another deep pool. Rod set up a tape for us to use, a few of us lost traction on the mossy slope and ended up splashing into the pool, Rod came down last without the tape. Because the canyon was supposedly “fairly dry”, none of us wore wetsuits; the water was actually quite warm. If it’s supposed to be fairly dry, am not sure how anyone could avoid this slide, although perhaps you could trample through the ferns at the side and climb down.



Rod on the first slide



Ed at the top of the 1st abseil



*Trish on the first abseil - this was really mossy and the route down was quite fragile the moss easily breaking off.
The abseil ended in a deep pool with a ledge to get out on (not all that easy)*



At the bottom of the first abseil, up on the left were some stalactites that had formed



Jo at the top of the 2nd abseil

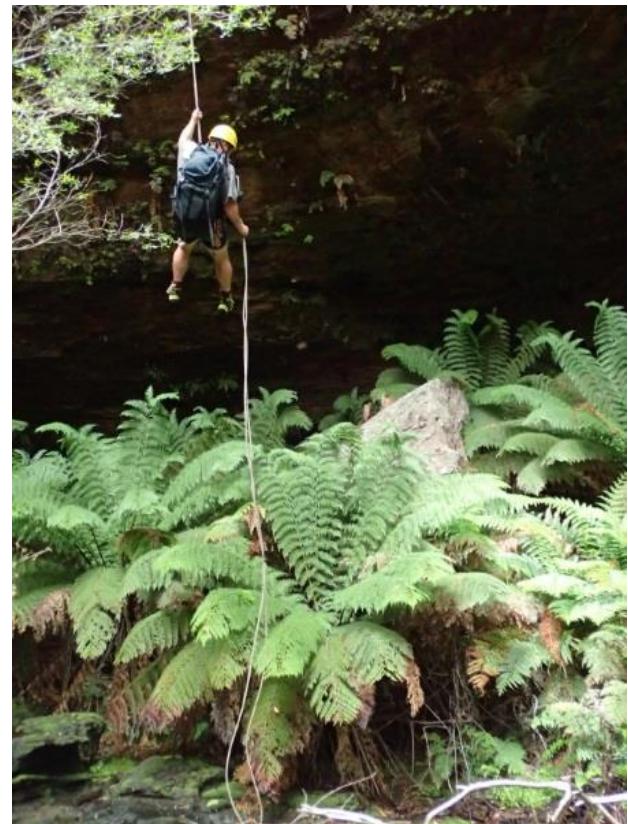
Before long we were at the 2nd and final abseil. Apparently Rod and Natalie had gone down the middle of the creek, but the anchor that they'd set up had been removed and the large tree to the left had been set up. The middle of the creek was quite scrubby, so this was the logical choice, but the route down was a little scrubby itself and quite muddy, would have been much nicer in the waterfall itself.



Trish at the top of the abseil, the route to the left is the one that Rod had used previously



Trish further down the abseil



Rod at the bottom of the abseil

We all agreed that the final abseil was fabulous, particularly looking down at the tops of all the tree ferns at the bottom. This canyon really exceeded my expectations, I loved that it looked as though it had had hardly any visitors to it (other than the anchors you wouldn't have known anyone else had been there). There's no beaten track into it, and I'm hoping that it will stay that way to maintain the sense of adventure you get when you have to navigate your way in. Thanks everyone for joining me.

ASF Council Meeting Trip – 6 – 9 January 2017

Report by: Roderick Smith

Have you ever decided to do something and then wondered why? That's certainly how I felt about this trip. But I did it anyway. I started the drive down on Thursday night, but only stopped short of Yass. Friday morning I started just before 6am with the aim of getting close to Adelaide by the time I stopped for the evening. A couple of notable occurrences:

- Being pulled over by the police just after leaving Wagga Wagga. Not sure what was going to happen, but was just given a breath test and reminded to take plenty of breaks.
- Passing someone who was driving at 90km/hr in a 110km/hr zone with the hazard lights on, for no apparent reason.
- Seeing a sign to Go! Go! and thinking I should go there, but then realising it was actually Gol Gol, and not being so interested anymore.
- Seeing a great example of a "dust devil".
- Watching the temperature hit 39° in southern NSW then climbing 40° once I crossed into Vic. After crossing into SA it hit 41° and then 42° shortly afterwards. By 6pm it was still 38°.

Saturday I was the first to arrive to the ASF council meeting, but not by much. I won't bore you all with the details of the meeting, anything worth noting will be covered in our quarterly meeting in February and be seen in the minutes.

Surprisingly the meeting finished before afternoon tea, so we had a few hours to wait until the dinner. The dinner was to celebrate 60 years since the formation of the ASF. I was pleased to note the dinner consisted more of eating and less of speeches. However, Graham Pilkington did start an interesting brainstorming session asking why we did not need, and then why we did need, the ASF. This was obviously to get people thinking about what the purpose of the ASF should be and whether it's changed since it was formed. It certainly got me thinking.

After the delicious and enjoyable meal, I then drove towards the cave we'd be visiting on Sunday. On the way I saw a sign which said "undo road closed". I double-checked in case I'd misread it, but I hadn't.

Sunday morning I met Graham, Anne-Marie, Phil, David, Veronica, Sarah and Peter? in Curramulka. A

short drive from there saw us arrive at the doline entrance for Corra Lynn (5Y1). Looking around it didn't look like a karst area. Other than the doline all that was to be seen was farmland, and no visible limestone in it. Quite different from what we see over here.

The cave formation is also quite different from what I'm used to. It's called dolomitic limestone (I hope I have that correct). Lots of roughly fist sized lumps of limestone all cemented together with dolomite. Also, the cave is on four distinct levels, although the middle two do blur a bit at times. A bit like the dip series at Wee Jasper, but these levels run



Entry to the cave



her some grief. Mine were doing likewise, so I opted to keep her company. The rest didn't waste time getting back underground.

While we waited Anne-Marie and I went for a walk around one of the farmer's paddocks, which turned out to be bigger than it looked. Due out at 6pm the rest surfaced closer to 7pm, having had a great time. Considering how my knee felt I knew I'd made the right decision, but now I'll have to go back.

We departed shortly afterwards and I started the drive for home. I stopped for the night near Truro, about 1 hr this side of Adelaide. Monday I decided to just get as far as I could, which meant I arrived home around 10pm after a long day behind the wheel.

Yes, arguably a stupid trip to do, but wouldn't it be totally boring if we didn't do stupid things occasionally? I would definitely do it again.

close to horizontal as opposed to the dip series where they're almost vertical. It's also created a very maze-like cave system, you really need to pay attention to your navigation.

Corra Lynn is also the longest cave in South Australia at over 14kms. When CEGSA first starting visiting the cave over 50 years ago it was only 2kms long, but digging in the right spots has significantly increased its length. There are still obvious places for digs to continue, the problem is finding people willing to continue them.

Graham led the way as he knew the cave intimately. Anne-Marie was the only other person that had even been in the cave before, and that was about 20 years ago. Very soon it became apparent that we were totally reliant on Graham's navigation, the rest of us had no idea where we were.

This is more of a sporty cave than a beautiful one, although I'm assured there are decorations if you know where to look. We spent a lot of time on our hands and knees, and occasionally on our stomachs. We went to areas such as Grand Central, The Rope Crevasse and Bushwalkers Chamber, and avoided the Gravity Cavity, which was probably a good thing.

I kept up most of the way, but did have difficulty on one uphill squeeze, expending a lot of energy going nowhere. I got through it in the end, with everyone waiting patiently for me.

After four hours underground we headed out for lunch. Anne-Marie decided she wouldn't go back in afterwards as her knees were giving



Caving in the Philippines – Lobo Cave 12 January 2017

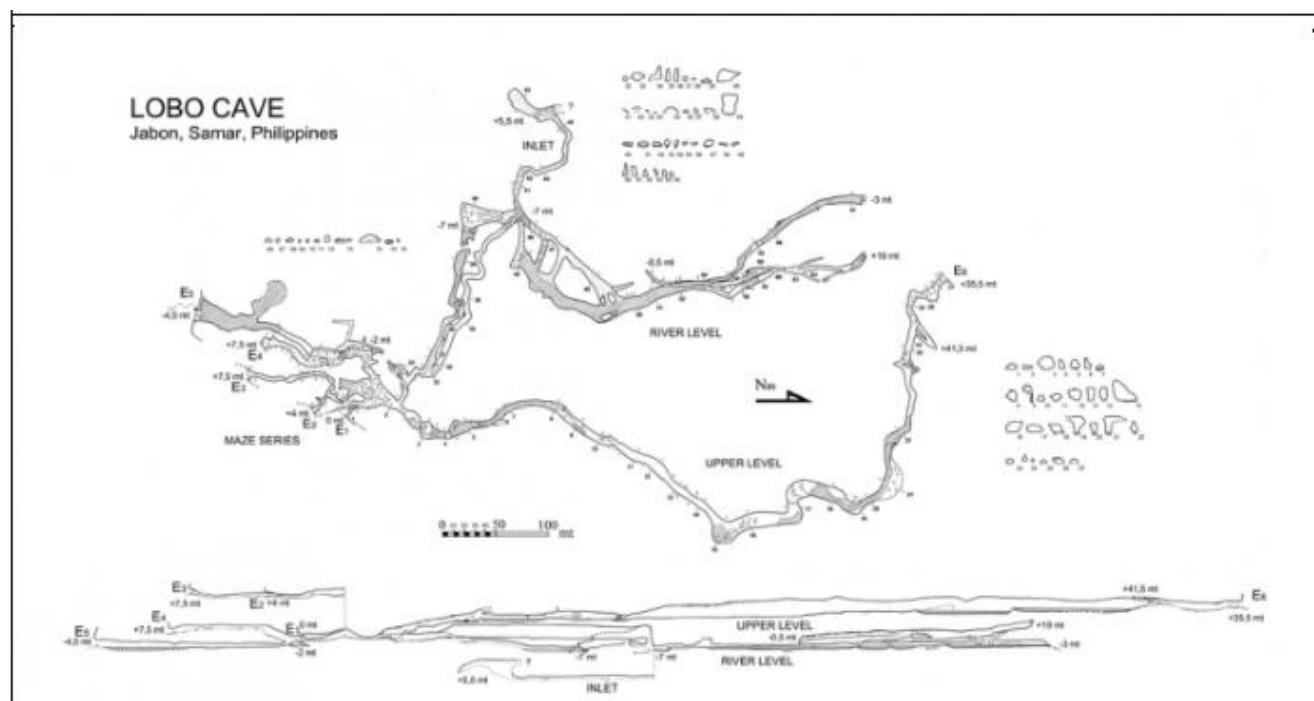
Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Marilyn Scott and Jim Crockett + Joni Bonafiglio and 1 porter!

When Jim put a caving trip to the Philippines on the calendar, I signed up but really didn't ask too many questions, so when I arrived in Tacloban on 11 January, I had no preconceived notions of what to expect. I caught a flight to Manila from Sydney, then flew down to Tacloban (Leyte Island), and then Jim and I caught a bus (along with some chickens and a rooster) to Catbalogan on the island of Samar.

We alighted from the bus and a couple of tricycle drivers spoke with Jim, although he wasn't sure what they were saying but they seemed to know where we wanted to go, so we hopped aboard and next thing we knew we were dropped right at the front of Joni's house and the office of Trexplore. It probably helped that this wasn't a "tourist" town and usually the only westerners that would arrive would be going to cave with Joni, the whole town must know about his business as for Filipinos It's a bit "out there".

We stayed the night with Joni and his wife and next morning started on our adventure, catching a tricycle to the jeepney pick up spot, and then a jeepney to the village, then about a 2k walk up hill and through jungle and up a creek to the cave entrance. Lobo Cave is a one day trip starting around 8am from Joni's house and getting back to the house at 4.30pm. The cave is very beautiful and is comprised of two main branches, a lower river level and an upper level.



We started into the cave and almost immediately came to the “Angel” formation. We then passed a lot of flow stone formations, that had water running continuously over it (they’d had a lot of rain in the past few days.



*This formation is what they call the Angel, and if you look hard enough you can visualise the standing form and the wings.
The “body” part is probably about 2 – 3m high*



There were lots and lots of rim pools in different sections of the cave and they were all stark white.

Eventually we arrived at what's called the "Diamond Passage" and the porter scurried down the "hole" Joni then set up a belay for Jim and me to use, there were so many hand and foot holds that we really didn't need it, but that's what happens with a commercial tour.



Jim dropping down through the passage

Unfortunately, as we'd arrived in the middle of the rainy season and it had been raining steadily for a week, we couldn't go past the waterfall in the lower level, but we did take a look at it. There were quite a few formations in the lower level, again, most of them stark white, and everything was really wet, evidence that the cave and formations are active.

After the climb back up the diamond passage, the porter (who I might add wore thongs and no helmet for the whole trip!) pulled lunch out of his pack and after lunch we were off to the River section of the cave. This was accessed via a section of flow stone that you had to walk up, with a handline tied onto a stalagmite.



Here we are in the river section of the cave, this section extended for hundreds of metres, and we were mostly swimming with occasional boulder hopping. At the end of this river there is an entry/exit to the cave that isn't used (too hard to get to). Again, because we were on a commercial trip we had to wear life jackets, but it did make it very pleasant not having to swim and tread water the whole time!

We retraced our steps back to the lunch spot and then packed up and headed out of the cave, but the surprises didn't finish there. We walked downstream in a flood-swollen creek which was really difficult with no bank to walk on, sticks made it a bit easier.



By this time the flow wasn't as fast and it was easier walking in the river.

Eventually came to a section where it was navigable and there waiting for us was a boat (a hollowed-out tree) and its owner, we all hopped aboard and he paddled us downstream to the nearest town where we hopped on a Jeepney for the $\frac{1}{2}$ hour drive back to Catbalogan town.



The end of the trip, dug-out loaded up ready for the trip downstream

Lobo is quite a sporty cave with some climbs and lots of swims. I'd definitely do it again, it was that good! The whole day was incredibly organised, transportation appeared out of no-where when it was needed, it appears that except for when we were underground we weren't ever far from mobile phone coverage. I liked the Samar caving experience so much that I'm seriously considering an MSS trip in 2019 and taking my son and grandson along, the area is riddled with caves, many of them unexplored and the best thing was ... no tourists!

Caving – Lagun-Gobingob Caves, Samar Island Philippines

13 – 15 February 2017

Report by: Jim Crockett

Party: Marilyn Scott, Monique Alfeche, Jim Crockett, Joni Bonafacio (Master Guide), four porters and motorbike drivers.

This was a trip that I had originally planned to do in 2010 but unfortunately had to cancel as I became ill on the way there. So finally, after another few missed attempts, the time had come and this time no problems were faced.

I was joined by Marilyn and my sister-in-law Monique for this unique “Extreme Caving” expedition.

The day was started in Catbalogan which is the Capital City of Samar Island. Samar is located on the easterly side of the Philippine islands. Samar is one of the poorest regions in the Philippines as there are very few industries and hardly any tourism, with an economy based on farming.

We had an early start from Catbalogan hopping on board a local bus for the hour and a half ride to the jump off point at the village of Calbiga.

As we got off the bus suddenly habal-habal motorbikes and riders appeared. A habal-habal motorbike has a modified seat extension which allows it to carry multiple passengers. There was one for carrying our supplies and then Marilyn and Monique got onto the back of the next one and the third I sat behind the driver, but where was our guide Joni going to fit? Surely behind me ... but to my surprise he sat on the fuel tank in front of the driver of the 2nd bike with the two ladies. Wow that's interesting 4 on one bike and only two on the other? Anyway, off we set down the road reaching a small farming community after about 10 minutes where we stopped to check in with the village elder and pay the appropriate fees.

The same time we were joined by three porters from the village. We set off on the bikes toward a forested area for another five minutes before the road ended.

From here a track led off amongst the forest and farms. The 3 porters were carrying the majority of our gear, food, cooking gear, water, sleeping mats and bags and caving gear. We only had to take small packs

containing personal items. Never had it so easy. We walked amongst the rice fields and forested areas on a track usually used by the local farmers. After an hour we arrived at a high point with a viewing platform (properly concreted with steps and railings installed by the local Barangay) this overlooks the large entrance below which is the start of Langun cave. A short stroll and we were at the entrance with the porters preparing lunch for us. Stomach full helmet on we were soon on our way. A formed track is followed for the



first 100m and then we are assisted by a marked trail amongst remnants of a forest of stalagmites.

It is now that Joni tells us the history of this cave. A group of Italian Speleologists who were looking for caves to explore in the Philippines ran into a Samar local in Manila who had heard stories of this large cave entrance that farmers had found in the forest. But as is the case with a lot of local villagers they were too afraid to explore it themselves, I'm guessing due to demons or the like that might live inside.

So it goes the Italian group organised the first Expedition to the cave in 1987 exploring many hundreds of metres of large passages containing a forest of large stalagmites and outstanding decoration, river passages and the like. They vow to come back and continue the unfinished business of exploring the cave known as Langun Cave.

A couple of years later word got around of this discovery including to a Taiwanese person who was very interested. His plan was to "mine" the cave of all the stalagmites so that they could be used in the manufacture of paint. (Marilyn also believes they were used for carvings). He offered the local farmers 6 pesos/kilo for this bounty (approx. 15c in Australia). Thousands of kilos of the stalagmites were removed and even the local village elder became involved as some of the stalagmites were used for a wall in his house. It was not until later that Government authorities got wind of this wholesale destruction and a put a stop to it. On the next expedition by the Italian group they were totally shocked at what had happened to this forest of stalagmites. This story was confirmed by one of our porters who was teenager at the time and was involved in the mining operation.

The Italians went on to discover much more cave, joining Lagun cave with another cave known as Gogingob as well as joining up with other caves to form an extensive system. At that time the cave was the longest cave in the Philippines and the 2nd longest in South-East Asia. In the present day it would most likely have dropped considerably down the list with discoveries in Malaysian Borneo and Vietnam.

Monique in front of one of the formations

I was so sad upon hearing that story, with the selfishness of people not only causing so much damage to cave environment but also taking advantage of the poor local farmers.

We continued our way down through the harvested forest to a large passageway with giant stalagmites and outstandingly beautiful formation, one formation was at least 20m high. From here the track leads to an area with knee deep boot hugging mud, at one point I thought I was stuck but managed to pull myself free. This eventually opened out to the "football Field". A large open, mostly flat, expanse of harder



The track (probably dating back to the stalagmite mining) into the cave.



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mud with a high ceilings and lakes off to one side. It was the far end of this area that was to become our camp for tonight.

Now it was time to relax a little but the lakes looked so inviting and our bodies were oozing sweat due to the high humidity of this cave we had to have a swim. So refreshing! In this mud bath.

It was then time to rest for a few hours as the plan was to do further exploration at night after we had eaten dinner.

We tried to sleep but were warned that the resident cave crickets have a penchant for nibbling at fingers especially if there were remnants of food on them. They have been known to bite off layers of skin leaving them red and bleeding. Were made sure that we washed our hands to avoid this unpleasantness.

Dinner was served and we were refreshed and ready to start the exploration of the upper levels of the cave. This exploration could go on for up to 5 hours depending on how tired we got. We had to go back to the passageway full of the gigantic stalagmites and then continue up the large dimension passages. This was like mountain climbing inside a cave with many uphill / downhill rock piles to negotiate. We were all sweating profusely and had to take drink stops regularly. The good part ... there was so much formation considering that this whole passageway was one of the areas that had been mined. We were told that this was actually a dead-end passage and at the end we would have to turn around and come back. This did not deter our group eager to see what was around the next corner or over the next hill. Eventually Marilyn had

had enough so stopped but Monique and I were determined to continue. We did make another hour before my knees were aching, telling me to stop. At that point there was still another hour before the dead end. We turned around and as is the case it seemed much quicker on the way back. We joined Marilyn and then we eventually made it back to camp just after midnight. Joni did tell us later that our group managed to go much further than most groups he has led to the upper section, so I was happy with that given the pain that I had to endure.

We all slept well and enjoyed a cricket-free night.

We woke to see another porter

arriving at our camp. He had bought us in hot breakfast and had started walking about 5 in the morning. He was also our cleaner to remove rubbish including our toilet waste (we were given strict instructions how to go using plastic bags and pee bottles).

So, after consuming a hearty breakfast we packed up camp and headed back to the passageway with the gigantic stalagmites but then went in a different direction. We were soon at a 20m drop and Joni setup a belay to climb down the drop for the clients like us. His porters went down unassisted in their thongs and carrying all our gear as they had done for the whole trip. We were all soon down and the first thing I noticed was the re-appearance of the forest of stalagmites. We were now in the Gobingob section of the cave system which was not mined of stalagmites. We had to cross over a small stream into another muddy area



The "lake" that we swam in.



The start of our night-time excursion, lots of bouldering amongst the formations



Monique at the 20m drop.

which contained huge roof pendants. Again, this was boot hugging mud and required careful navigation to avoid getting stuck.

Suddenly we were out of the muddy section and in a huge river passage which had a decent flow. The dimensions of this passage were enormous, about 60m high and 30m wide. We came across a variety of terrain here with one interesting area containing what I would call mud craters and again careful navigation was necessary to

avoid falling into these craters. A daylight hole appeared above and then we could see the large exit consisting of a collapsed doline. Just before we reached daylight I could smell a pungent odour and there at my feet was a large bank of bat guano bubbling full of beetles and other guano eating bugs. The last obstacle we had to overcome was the deep pool at the exit doline. Joni said the water was not normally this high but it was not surprising as we had had a lot of rain in the last week. This was going to make it difficult to setup camp here as the normal camping area was under water.

There were not many alternatives at this spot as one side was a cliff and the other a very steep bank.

Joni decided that he should have an all-weather campsite as he had previously been caught out before with a high water. So, next thing we see is the porters unsheathing their machetes and making digging tools. The 3 porters then set about to excavate part of the slope to create a flat area big enough for 4 people to sleep including a set of steps cut for easy access. We were all totally amazed how fast they were building the platform.

This however was not the end of the cave exploration as on the other side of the doline the river continued down a cascade and into a hole. We had looked at this when we first arrived at the campsite but there was too much water but the water level was low enough for us to access. We were all soon down into the water and into the "snake room", expecting to see snakes but there were none only the "snake hole" which was a narrow crawl with a squeeze. Something we would normally do easy in an Australian cave but for some reason today I made it look much more difficult, I struggled and strained and eventually got through. The two skinnier ladies made it look easy.

On the other side of the snake hole it opened out but again there is deep MUD! This time it is deeper and softer and harder to avoid. This passage follows the river which you have to cross a number of times. There are some nice cascades including one which is a natural spa. The river eventually joins another larger



The porters doing some landscaping at the cave entrance (in the background)



Jim going down to the Snake Cave entrance

the same entrance we had come in two days previously and then went through the whole cave. He must have started walking at 4am, not what we expected!

So, sadly, it was now time to leave this beautiful cave. We were told it was a 3 hour walk out and so set off early. The first 1.5 hours was steep, strenuous and sweaty sidling our way up and along a big hill in the humid conditions. We were all sweating and having to take regular breaks, how do the porters do it? The downhill section was of course much easier and better still when we arrive at a village and there is large spring coming out of the ground containing fresh cool water. It was such a delight to be able to cool down and wash off all the cave mud. So where to now? We are still in a remote village, but then suddenly there are the habal-habal motorbikes, this journey has been full of surprises and this was just another. We all hopped on to be driven back to our starting point in the town of Calbiga where we had left dry, clean clothes. This is also the same place where we could now enjoy a meal of the local specialty from the restaurant, native chicken soup. After this delicious meal, we waited for the next bus to take us back to Catbalogan to where we had to prepare for the next part of the trip to go canyoning on Biliran Island.

Well what an EXCITING TRIP, full of surprises because none of us knew what was going to happen next, was there a motorbike around the corner ready to take us somewhere or a porter appearing from a cave with freshly cooked breakfast, you never knew?

river passage, which we did not explore but is the subject of further exploration by the Italian and Slovenian team. After that exciting excursion, we went back to camp.

We had another nice dinner and then settled down to rest. The highlight of the evening was watching the bats exiting the cave. They seem to exit in a swirling pattern, thousands at a time. This was a fantastic event to watch.

The next morning, we awoke to see the 4th porter arriving with our hot breakfasts. We were all thinking that he would come via the exit point where we were camping, but to our surprise he had come in via



Some of the porters wore machetes and we wondered why, when we got to this overgrown section of the track, out came the machetes again

Canyoning – Wotta, Kamarah Gully, Steve’s Secret Canyon – 25 – 26 February 2017

Report by: Marilyn Scott

Participants: Marilyn Scott (TL), Steve Rowse and Trish Morrow (visitor)

The weather conspired against us, drizzle and mist at Mt Wilson, so it ended up being just Wotta Canyon. I'd randomly picked Wotta and Kamarah Gully because I hadn't done them before and wanted to maximize my time at Mt Wilson to do Steve's Secret Canyon ... so, Kamarah and the Secret Canyon will have to wait for another day, the weather was just too awful.



Trish and Steve at the bottom of the final abseil.

So, what was Wotta like? Given that you don't hear much about it and I've been told that on the Brennan scale it was a 2 out of 10, I didn't have very high expectations. So, we were all surprised that it wasn't a bad little canyon. We did four abseils, there are probably only three that you have to do because on a dry day you could downclimb one. The anchors can be a bit dodgy (although I've abseiled off

dodgier), on another trip it wouldn't hurt to have a look around for better anchors and replace one or two, one in particular was quite untidy. And, it's really short, probably only 100m or so, however, what you see is very pretty and it hasn't been done to death, so it was a bit of a surprise.

The walk in was very easy, and quick, although off track. After the canyon section, the walk down the creek to Birrabang was scrubby in sections, lots of fallen trees which detracts from the experience. But, we did find a great abseil on a side creek and the creek wasn't scrubby enough to dissuade us from going back and do the (possibly) 50m abseil into this side creek.

Instead of using the Birrabang exit (which is what most people would do), we decided to reverse Birrabang, so effectively did two canyons in the day which was nice. Car to car it was about 6 hours, but we took our time as we'd already made the decision to save Kamarah Gully for another day.

We camped the night at Mt Wilson and amazingly Steve got a roaring fire going (possibly the only campfire in the whole campground). We were hoping for a change in the weather but it just got worse, so we canned the Secret Canyon on Sunday and will go back another day. Thanks Steve and Trish for your company.



MSS TRIP CALENDAR

Mar 5 Caving Pilchers Mountain	NEW	Contact: Garry Smith gksmith29@icloud.com Details: This is a NHVSS trip that MSS members are welcome to attend. Unique opportunity to visit caves that are located on private property. 1.5k walk in to the top of the mountain then dropping into a rainforest gorge to explore caves. Possibility of some vertical caving if enough interest.
Mar 18 – 19 Decadence Walk Box Creek Falls, Kanangra		Trip Leader: Marilyn Scott Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Easy Details: The Decadence Walks are back – with a twist – an easy 2k walk to arguably the best campsite in Kanangra, Box Creek Falls. See Page 4 for full details
Apr 1 – 2 Caving Abercrombie		Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick_smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy. Details: This will be a joint trip with BMSC
Apr 8 – 9 Caving Skills Day	NEW	Contact: Brian Evans 0409 443 415 (at least a week before the training weekend) Details: This is a skills training weekend put on by the NSW Cave Rescue Squad and open to MSS in the Hawkesbury area, they will be covering personal rope skills, self-rescue and pick-offs.
April 8 – 9 Canyoning Mt Wilson	NEW	Trip Leaders: Marilyn Scott & Steve Rowse Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Exploratory Details: Saturday – following on from Wotta Canyon, explore side creek with potential of 50 or 60m abseil exit reverse Birrabang. Sunday – Steve's Secret Canyon north of the Bells Line of Road not a big day and mostly dry – postponed due to inclement weather. Car Camp at Mt Wilson for the die-hards who are up for two days canyoning.
Apr 14 - 17 Kites over Kosci Kosciusko NP		Trip Leader: David Stuckey Contact: stuckedl@cba.com.au Grade: Medium Details: Back by popular demand, " Kites over Kosciuszko " - a multi-day. Bring a kite which will be flown from the summit of Mt Kosciuszko and just about anywhere else we go. <u>Numbers limited to 10 adults</u> . Be prepared for strong sunlight with high UV levels, as well as the possibility of a full-blown snow storm. All supplies need to be carried and "bush" camping ie: there are no facilities. Kites need to be single string only. No stunt kites, fighting kites or aerobatic kites are allowed. See Page 4 for full details
Apr 22 – 25 Caving Glenrock		Contact: Rod Smith roderick_smith@hotmail.com Details: This is a NHVSS trip that MSS members are welcome to attend. Contact Rod for more information.
Apr 22 – 25 Caving Bendethra	NEW	Contact: Rod Smith roderick_smith@hotmail.com Details: This is a joint MSS/ISS trip. Contact Rod for more information
May 28 Caving Field Day		Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Grade: tba. Details: Field Day – location TBA. Beth will be distributing information closer to the date on what outcomes participants should expect. This is an opportunity to refresh or learn skills essential for caving and canyoning.

June 3 – 4 Caving Cliefden	NEW	Trip Leader: Rod Smith Contact: roderick_smith@hotmail.com Grade: Easy/Medium. Details: Surveying, plus recreational if there's enough interest
June 17 - 18 Caving Jenolan		Trip Leader: Chris Johnstone Contact: chris_johnstone@hotmail.com Grade: Easy. This will be a kid-friendly trip
June 17 - 18 Caving Skills Day	NEW	Contact: Brian Evans 0409 443 415 (at least a week before the training weekend) Details: This is the second of their two skills training weekends put on by the NSW Cave Rescue Squad and open to MSS. This one will be held in Bungonia, they will be covering personal vertical skills and rigging.
July 17 – 22 and July 23 – 29		Speleo 2017 – 17 th International Congress of Speleology, Sydney 2017. MSS is hosting the pre-conference excursion to Yarrangobilly over July 17 – 22 and most leaders will be involved in the excursion plus attendance at the Conference during the rest of July. Check out the Speleo 2017 website for details of pre- and post-conference field trips. MSS members can book into these field trips (costs involved), which will be visiting areas such as Nullabor and Chillagoe (to name just a few).
August 19 - 20 Caving Jenolan		Trip Leader: David Stuckey Contact: stuckedl@cba.com.au Grade: Medium/Hard. Details: Mammoth Cave – “ Pick Lake ” Circuit (not suitable for kids)
5 August Walking Blue Mountains	NEW	Trip Leader: Beth Little Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com Grade: Easy/medium. Details: Fitness day-walk down to Blue Gum Forest and return
30 Sept – 2 Oct Canyoning Southern Highlands	NEW	Trip Leaders: Marilyn Scott, Murray Newman Contact: marilyn_scott@bigpond.com or 0417 453 170 Grade: Medium/hard Macquarie Rivulet, Belmore Creek and Belmore Falls over 3 days camping at Bendeela campground Kangaroo Valley.
September 2018 Caving Nullarbor	NEW	Trip Leader: Cathi Humprey-Hood Contact: cathi@emeraldimages.com.au Grade: Easy Advance Notice of a Joint trip with NHVSS. Looking for new caves using drones and other techniques.



Liloing on the Wollangambe - Boxing Day 2016 (Photo: Cathi Humprey-Hood)



APPENDIX 1 – MEETING MINUTES

MSS 422nd General Meeting 9 February 2017

Held at Canada Bay SES

Meeting Opened: 7:40pm

Present: Roderick Smith, Beth Little, Jim Crockett, Marilyn Scott, Chris Johnstone

Apologies: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes: None

Correspondence:

SUSS Bull 55(1)

Caves Australia 202

Bank statement

Committee Members Reports:

President: I went to a UIS executive meeting over last weekend. Everything is progressing well. So far there are approximately 350 registrations, so we're well on the way to reaching the target.

Treasurer: Attached

Equipment Officer: None

Training Officer: The next training/field day is scheduled for the 27th May. This will possibly be held at Castle Hill, I am currently in the process of planning and securing the location.

Librarian: None

Web Manager: None

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 (constitution) – Chris Johnstone: The constitution was updated after the vote at the AGM. During this process, a few more minor changes will be discussed as part of general business and any that we agree should be changed will be put forward for voting at the next meeting.

Documentation (membership application form) – Chris Johnstone: None

UIS Yarrangobilly Trip – Cathi Humphrey-Hood/Beth Little: The trip is definitely happening. We have 10 participants and 15 volunteers. The original plan for travel to Yagby was to get a coach/bus. Looking at costs this will be about \$3000.00. If instead we get 3 or 4 people to transport participants from Sydney in their vehicles, and get reimbursed for travel expenses it should cost about \$2100.00. Are we happy with that plan? Everyone present agreed to that proposal.

50th Publication – Beth Little: All printed and distributed to members. An ad has been sent to Caves Australia to try and sell some more to the wider caving community. This action item can now be removed.

Facebook – Helena Johnstone and Marilyn Scott: 8 more people have signed up to the group. It's a slow burn but interaction is increasing.

Membership

New members: Jeff Boyd and Steve Rowse

Renewals: Last year we had a total of 40 adults and 13 children. Currently the expectation is that we'll have 36 adults and 12 children for this year.

New Business

Possible constitution changes:

Sections 3, 4, 7 (refers to Honorary members), 10 (refers to honorary members), 15c (not "past month", and should we enforce this?), 15e (auditing??), 19 (Should it be "Newsletter Editor"), 19b (editorial?), 24 (a and b are the same), 28 (should it be "objectives" and not "objects")

Chris will look at the membership items.

The following items will be voted on at the next general meeting:

11c - Remove the words "Duly audited"

15c - Should change from "past month" to "previous financial period"

15e - Remove the item

19b - Remove item

28 - Change "objects" to "objectives"

From ASF Council meeting:

- Consider fund raising event(s) for KCF. Look up Good to Give.
- Consider whether any projects warrant applying for grants from ASF.
- Anyone want to volunteer for anything???
- Articles for Caves Australia. Also, if people want or are happy with digital Caves Australia please tick the box!
- Push the IUS registration and attendance.
- Trip leaders must have a first aid certificate for insurance cover.
- New introductory family membership
- 1st April HCG will be having their 60th anniversary, more details to follow.
- If anyone wants an ASF hatpin please let me know.
- Next ASF council meeting will be the first Saturday in January 2018, the 6th, at Georges Hall Grammar School at Bankstown.

Action item: Marilyn will email members to get an indication of whether members are happy to receive Caves Australia electronically instead of a hard-copy. She will also ask if members have a first aid certificate and, if so, when it expires.

Website: Marilyn raised the website look-and-feel and the content as a point of discussion. After some discussion it was decided that 2017 would be the year to review the website look-and-feel and content. So, if anyone has any opinions your feedback is most welcome. This is your opportunity to help shape the public face of MSS (on the web at least).

Your input can be sent to Marilyn or Rod.

Trip planning:

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
1-2 April	Rod	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	Joint trip with BMSC and NHVSS, permit pending
25-26 Feb	Steve (contact Marilyn)	Canyoning	Bells Line of Road	Medium	
3-4 June	Rod	Caving	Cliefden	Easy/Medium	Surveying, plus recreational if there's enough interest
30 Sep – 2 Oct	Marilyn/Murray	Canyoning	Kangaroo Valley	Medium/Hard	Macquarie Rivulet, Belmore Creek and Belmore Falls
5 Aug	Beth	Walking	Blue Gum Forrest – return	Easy/Medium	
September 2018	Cathi	Caving	Nullarbor	Easy	Joint trip with NHVSS. Looking for new caves using drones and other techniques.

Next Meeting: Canada Bay SES HQ – 4/5/17

Meeting Closed: 10:00pm

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





APPENDIX 2 – TREASURER’S REPORT

Financial Update: 6th February 2017

The MSS Account stands at **\$3451.40** after the cheque for the Yagby Congress field trip accommodation (\$8950.05) was finally presented on the 31/1/17.

List of memberships paid for 2017:

29/11/2016	Subs 2017 - Jim Crockett	\$80.00	
30/11/2016	Subs 2017 - Marilyn Scott	\$80.00	
2/12/2016	Subs 2017 - D Cummins	\$80.00	
5/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Cathi Humphrey-Hood 1P2C	\$120.00	
5/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Murray Newman & Emma Parnell	\$160.00	
6/12/2016	Subs 2017 - introd mbership - Stephen Rowse	\$30.00	
8/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Bob Horn	\$80.00	
13/12/2016	Subs 2017 - introd mbership - Jeff Boyd	\$30.00	
20/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Johan Verhagen	\$80.00	
20/12/2016	Subs 2017 - John Oxley	\$80.00	
21/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Chris Johnstone (family)	\$160.00	
23/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Rod Smith	\$80.00	
28/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Dave Stuckey	\$80.00	
28/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Tim Grimes	\$80.00	
30/12/2016	Subs 2017 - Catherine McLachlan	\$80.00	
9/01/2017	Subs 2017 - John Gray	\$35.82	\$44.18
27/01/2017	Subs 2017 - Beth Little	\$80.00	
30/01/2017	Subs 2017 - Trish Neil	80.00	

Other transactions:

Incoming:

3/01/2017	Trip Fees - Death Trap Upper Deans Ck (Marilyn)	\$26.00	
13/12/2016	Trip Fees - Hartley's Mistake - Rod Smith	\$25.00	
26/12/2016	Trip Fees - Wollangambe Boxing Day	\$16.00	
28/12/2016	Trip Fees - Wollangambe Boxing Day (Marilyn)	\$21.00	
28/11/2016	Trip Fees - Wollangambe Crater, Hornshaw	\$15.00	
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Beth Little	\$596.25	
5/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Dave Stuckey	\$871.25	
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Dirk Stoffels	\$871.25	
4/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Marj Coggan & John Brush	\$973.75	
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Penny Woolford	\$295.00	
5/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Peter & Renate Hart	\$973.75	
4/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Rosemary Nicholson	\$871.25	
4/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Steven March	\$295.00	
3/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Accom - Veronica Schuman	\$871.25	
13/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Reimbursement for Accom from Congress	\$2,360.00	
1/11/2016	Bank interest	\$0.04	
8/12/2016	Merch - 3 x socks & 1 x glass - Marilyn	\$40.00	
30/12/2016	Merch - Jeff Boyd (2 wine glasses, T-shirt)	\$45.00	
28/12/2016	Merch - Tim Grimes (Hoodie)	\$30.00	
12/12/2016	50th Anniversary Book - C Tyrrell BMSC	\$15.00	

Outgoing:

22/11/2016	50th Anniversary Book - Printing	Cheque 156	\$924.00
30/12/2016	ASF - Jim's bloody cheque for way too much	Cheque 157	\$2,040.00
31/01/2017	YAGBY 2017 - Payment to NPWS for Accom	Cheque 158	\$8,950.05
9/01/2017	MSS Annual Return paid by John Gray		\$44.18





APPENDIX 3: MSS Trip Leader Checklist

This is a checklist for trip leaders within MSS. It is primarily aimed for newer trip leaders, but can be a useful resource for all trip leaders.

Before the trip

- Plan details of the trip, ie date, meeting place and time, etc.
- Keep track of trip participants. In most cases this will also include having a maximum number of participants. Also ensure participants are capable of completing the trip.
- Borrow any club equipment that may be required
- Organise any permits that may be required.
- If appropriate or desired, set an RSVP date.
- Ensure either yourself or someone else on the trip has all the technical knowledge to run the trip, such as navigation, rigging skills, etc.
- Ensure conditions, such as weather, park closures, etc, are suitable for the trip going ahead

During the trip

- Ensure any participants that are unfamiliar with any aspect of the trip are instructed appropriately. This includes things like minimum impact travel, no-go zones, etc.
- Collect trip fees

After the trip

- Ensure trip report is written, usually by yourself unless you can convince someone else to do it.
- Return any borrowed club equipment, and notify the equipment officer if there are any issues with the equipment, such as wear and tear.



Wollangambe River - Boxing Day 2016 – the walk out (photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood)