

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



Trip Reports:
Big Hole and Marble Arch
Yarrangobilly
Penrose Gully and Tiger Snake

Invitation:
Outdoor Movies

September 2009

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Cover Shot:

Dave with his new toy, Johan admiring Dave's new toy, and Jim !!?

Photo by Cathi Humphrey-Hood

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

Quote of the Month

"I want to go down Y40 again next year and push the squeeze" - Dave, after no-one did it this year.

Announcements

This year's annual dinner and Xmas party have joined forces for an MSS celebration extravaganza! To be held at Bachus on the 21st of November. RSVP to Jim Crockett to book your place, before they all fill up!

Nullabor trip, August 2010!! Who wouldn't want to visit the caves of the Nullabor? At this stage all you have to do is let Rod Smith know that you're interested. If there's sufficient numbers then the trip will get organised. Not one to miss!

Invitation

Thanks to Dave Stuckey for passing on this invitation from Joe Sydney:

Hello fellow cavers & friends!

Please circulate!!

Just got word on a number of free outdoors movies with one in particular that may be of interest to us & I'm proposing a 'cavers & friends' social with BYO dinner & refreshments in the park before the movie! So, please come, socialise, and see..

Journey to the Centre of the Earth!
2008 version

Sat 7 November 2009.

Forest Park
Epping
(3min walk from Epping station & street parking in Forest Gr)

Link:

<http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=forest+park+epping&sll=-25.335448,135.745076&sspn=55.10399,78.837891&ie=UTF8&ll=-33.775063,151.084167&spn=0.006385,0.009624&t=h&z=17&iwloc=A>

Oh, a list of other movies is attached (just before future trips section)! If your keen on seeing WALL-E, let me know!

Hope to see you there!

Joe
0405 039 398

End

New Technology

Thanks to Cathi Humphrey-Hood for passing this on:

Dear Caving Friends, Chers Amis Spéléo,
(VERSION FRANCAISE CI-DESSOUS)

Thanks to our official partnership with the European caving rope manufacturer, BEAL, the European Speleological Federation (FSE) is able to present you the preview of the new caving rope technology that Beal has invented and that they will officialise on next week. It is a complex polymerization process called UNICORE that enables to bind the sheath of the speleo-rope to the core, while all the other qualities of the rope are kept and even reinforced. This specific process that Beal have patented enables us to have an 8.5mm rope that has all the qualities of the Spelenium 9mm rope with which we are used to. Like this, we gain in weight and in resistance of the sheath of the rope. For those who need type A ropes, the Beal Unicore Spelenium rope exists also in diameters 10.5 and 11mm.

You can access to the bilingual press release specially in preview on the FSE website (pdf file of 300 ko) :

www.eurospeleo.org/beal-unicore.pdf

And the videos in 5 languages of the comparative tests between Unicore and classic rope technologies are accessible on :

<http://beal-planete.com/spelenium/>

Should you have technical questions or suggestions about the Unicores technology, please send them to contact@eurospeleo.org and you will receive an answer from BEAL.

Best wishes for your explorations,

European Speleological Federation
Fédération Spéléologique Européenne
Email : contact@eurospeleo.org
Web FSE : www.eurospeleo.org
Forums : <http://fsue.org/forums/>

Trip Reports

Big Hole and Marble Arch - 5th - 6th September, 2009

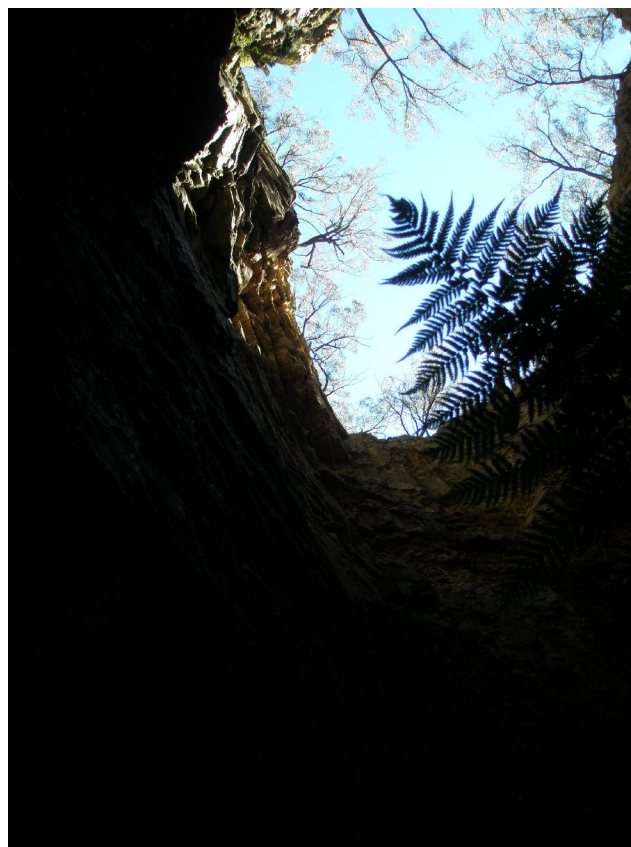
Participants: Cathi Humphey-Hood, Beth Little, Rod Smith, Jim Crockett (T.L).

This was just an add on trip just so I could turn left instead of right from the Deua National Park to head towards Yarrangobilly. But really the original intention was for a Big Hole and Wyanbene caves trip as we have not visited Wyanbene for quite a long time. Unfortunately we were beaten to the Wyanbene permit by another party so we opted for an easier ramble to Marble Arch trip.

I had the Friday off as I needed time to organise myself for both this trip and the Yarrangobilly caves trip which followed. I was a bit slow at organising and did not get going until early afternoon and made the decision to have a meal at the Royal Mail pub at Braidwood, mmm beautiful crumbed lamb cutlets but not another diner in sight. I stayed in the pub for a few hours to relax before finally getting on the road again to Captains flat.

When I arrived at the Berlang camping area Beth had already beaten me and was a little concerned as a group of young people were looking at having a party there that night but had only just decided to move on. Yes I had met them on the way in and they were inconsiderate by taking up the entire road. I pitched my tent while Beth did a bit of a yoga pose to enable her to sleep in the rear of her car. Rod and Cathi turned up a few hours later just after midnight.

We all got a good sleep and had a hearty breakfast ready for the excitement that Big Hole offers. We headed off across the Shoalhaven hauling 200m of rope and other gear. We were soon in view of the big hole and I was just waiting for the wows and awes when the others finally had a good view of the massive hole. None of the others had been here before and were highly impressed. We rigged the 200m rope from a tree opposite to the viewing platform with a re-belay from a rather dead looking but substantial limb of a large tree close to the lip. This allowed for almost a free hang all the way down 115m to the bottom. Abiding by the permit conditions of minimum of 2 surface party allowed Rod and Beth to descend the pitch. Cathi and I observed from the viewing platform as they both became small spots on the rock wall before bottoming. The 2-way radios were useful to help in communication between surface and bottom.



The view from the bottom
Photo: Beth Little

Rod and Beth were only at the bottom a short time before starting the long ascent. There is not a lot one can do once at the bottom considering it takes less than 5 minutes to explore. Rod made the top in about 45 minutes and Beth in about 30. I had the option of going down as well but decided not to go. It was still early when we de-rigged and went back to camp.



Beth on rope
Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Back at camp we hunted down lots of firewood and made ourselves comfortable for the night with plenty of campfire banter, good food and drink.

After a good rest that night we had a late start and delicious breakfast before making our way out towards Marble Arch. The track down to the creek was supposed to be steep but by our high standards it was quite easy. Marble arch is small limestone gorge with of course an arch and canyon section with a few small caves but nothing too significant. We had a lot of fun exploring the gorge before having lunch and walking back. We bid Beth farewell, who was turning right and back to Sydney but Cathi, Rod and myself were turning left towards Cooma on our way to Yarrangobilly.

Jim

Yarrangobilly - 7th - 13th September, 2009

Participants: Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Danielle Lewin, Rod Smith, Johan Verhagen, David Stuckey, Robert Clyne, Jim Crockett (T.L).

This was the trip we had been looking forward to for some time. Ever since we found out 2 years ago that the Caves House had been renovated and was ready to accept guests there was a lot of interest. So it began....

Cathi, Rod and I had just arrived from the south having spent the weekend at Big Hole and overnight at Cooma, then there was Danielle who had just come across from Canberra and David, Johan and Rob all coming from the north via Tumut.



Caves House
Photo: Rob Clyne

When we arrived about 11.30am we could not take up residency immediately as the previous group had overstayed their time. But we were able to unload our cars and relax for a while as the house was cleaned. We were soon given the go ahead to occupy and took control rushing to get the best room. The house was huge, with a full kitchen with commercial stove, dining area, lounge and sitting rooms with gas heating, 2 bathrooms and 7 rooms, one for each person. The style of the furnishings was also in keeping with the age of the house, solid timber tables and chairs. There was also a large balcony at the front with a BBQ, just pure luxury.

The first activity for the day was a warm up tourist cave trip to Castle cave. Unfortunately it was raining but we were all eager and prepared. Robert had not yet arrived so the 6 of us strolled along the track towards Castle cave with Dave giving us the lowdown on his newly purchased GPS and tracking our route. When we arrived at Castle cave Dave pointed out that the cave should have been another 20m further on, well perhaps there was an inaccuracy in his map reference.

The gate was unlocked and we all took our time to see the sights, beautiful formation and bits of calcified wire and some old metals post, although most of them we had taken out on previous trips. Cathi and Danielle were given the grand tour having not previously been here. We strolled back having a quick look at the entrance to Harrie Wood cave and back at the glory hole we had been given permission to view the self guided cave which had only recently been re-fitted with LED lighting, new stainless handrails and track modification. We were all mightily impressed by the new lighting all motion controlled, brighter and much more energy efficient than previous incandescent lights. Also much better for the cave environment as there is no more cave lampenflora as the lights only operate as required.

We were all soon back at the house relaxing and drying by the fire, what a joy !

The only real problem with the house that I could see was that it was going to be a little difficult sometimes when you have 7 people preparing dinner at the same time using the one kitchen. Fortunately we had a few communal dinners planned so that would ease the congestion somewhat.



Relaxing on the balcony after a hard days caving
Photo: Rob Clyne

The first night was a bit cool but all the rooms were heated and everyone had a very enjoyable and comfortable sleep. Tuesday was our first real caving day and we had 3 cave trips on the permit for the day. The first was Helictite hole Y16 which we located easily after 20 min walk from the SMH. The short 10m pitch was rigged and we all descended to the small well decorated cave. We did not spend long underground as there is not far to go once in this cave. The main exercise was for SRT practice on the way out and we all made it out very comfortably.

The next cave for the day was Pitch Pot Y17 which according to David's GPS was located approximately 800m away from Y16. So off we all went and got to the location where Y17 should be, nothing obvious was seen. So we all spread out and searched along a gully. After about 1 hour of searching we could not locate Y17 although we did find Y108 and Y109. We reckon we had given our best shot to finding Y17 so the search was abandoned and lunch was served.

Our next cave for the day was Bath house Y8 which again was only about 800m away.

So off we all went doing a little exploring on the way and this time the cave entrance was obvious, in a very steep doline protected by blackberries. We all entered and followed the streamway and rockpile until we got to the waterfall which was flowing very nicely after some recent rain. Most of us climbed down the very sporty section to the head of the short but difficult pitch. It was then decided that we were not going to tackle the pitch as the water was a little high for the inexperienced in the party. So it was out of the cave and back to the cars and then the caves house for another night.

Gourmet eating was on the agenda as well as plenty of nice wines so we were all full and relaxed by the time we went to sleep.



Jim beside the Crystal Pool
Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Wednesday we were all up fairly early especially Rod, Cathi and Danielle as Rod had to get on a teleconference with his employer at 10am and the nearest reliable mobile phone reception was at Tumut. Cathi and Danielle went along for the ride. They were all back just after midday. So we had lunch and headed out to the Y5 fire trail. The track was well and truly overgrown which made it quite difficult to follow so we placed more reliance on Dave's GPS. We made the Y5 doline and were quickly inside the cave and making our way through the boulder pile. We all climbed over the top of the gate and continued along the cave upper levels. We reached the pool of crystal clear water and made our way via a crawl to the pretties section where most of us de-trogged for a closer look at the fantastic clean formations. The new members were educated on cave conservation concepts. We then all exited without incident except for the few expletives that I gave while closing the difficult gate.

The next cave Restoration Y50 was only a short walk away into the next doline. Danielle was given the task of locating the entrance amongst the many rock faces in the doline and she achieved this with flying colours. We were all soon in the cave and past the awkward section just below the entrance before getting to the main chamber.

Here again we stressed the facts about cave conservation and to keep inside the marked trail as this cave contains many delicate formations. This cave is an absolute wonderland of marvellous formations and we were all awestruck by the wall to wall displays of calcite of great beauty. After a few hours of exploring and taking photos we exited to a starry night. Luckily Dave had the GPS and we could find the best route back to the cars.

More meals were shared and more wine drunk, we all enjoyed some slow cooked chicken courtesy of Johan.

The next day we had a bit of a dilemma. We had the best cave at Yagby booked in Eagles Nest but Danielle had to leave mid afternoon as she needed to get home in time to prepare for an overseas business trip with special cave excursions. After a lot of thought about our best approach to this we decided to cancel the Y3 to Y2 through trip which would take too long and just enter via Y2 (the normal exit point) and go as far as we could in the time we had and then turn around and exit. Robert was also feeling a bit sick so had pulled out of caving for the day. So we found ourselves at the start of the Eagles nest fire trail at about 10am and needed to get back around 4pm. So that meant we could go for 3 hours all up before turning around. So it was off along the trail which was almost completely overgrown and we lost it for a while before finally picking it up and then eventually finding our way to the Eagles nest doline. We entered via Y2 and it was not long before we got lost in the boulder piles following the "false start" series, we backtracked and found our way down to flatbed chamber continuing along towards the railway tunnel. We made it as far as the near side of the "bloody big chockstone" before our time limit was reach and we made our way out. We did not make the same mistake in the boulder pile and gained the surface just in time for lunch. It then up up up to refind what remains of the fire trail which was a little easier to follow this time. On the way back a timber present was collected for Robert which he had admired for many years, a sign saying "Locked Gate Ahead " ,this sign was totally redundant now as the road no longer existed. Back at the cars we bid Danielle farewell, she went left the rest of us went right.



Oooooooooolites
Photo: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Friday was originally going to be another hard days caving with Y7 and Y19 on the agenda, but we had a few tired cavers wanting a rest so we changed this to just concentrate on a trip to the Tombs to find and explore Y19 Tombstone Pot. Robert, Rod and I set off again from the Y5 firetrail and with some good navigation we made it to the tombs. The tombs is a very interesting area with lot of high limestone grikes and lots of briar and blackberry. We had a lot of fun exploring the area in our search for Y19, but we were a little disappointed when we could not locate it. We were however able to find Y51, Y52 and Y53.



Dave and Cathi in the Tubes
Photo: Jim Crockett

Saturday was going to be our last day of caving and we only had Y40 on the permit. This cave looked good on paper, a vertical cave about 75m deep with 3 pitches located a very short walk from the SMH. So we parked our cars near where the SMH collapsed some years ago and made the 5 minute walk to the entrance. The 1st pitch was rigged and I was ready to descend, but my light was not working. Anyway Rod was ready and went down first struggling a little on the vertical squeeze just below the entrance. Then Dave followed and then I descended. The cave was quite small and cozy and we climbed down to the next level, Dave then pointed out the next obstacle, a very tight squeeze in the middle of a steep section. None of us was willing or in the mood to push this squeeze so we retreated. It was quite difficult getting up past the tight squeeze just below the entrance but we all made the surface. The interesting thing was that we had only explored a very small section of this cave and the map showed another 2 tight squeezes past the one which were afraid to push, but Dave had pledged to have another go at this cave in the future. We spent the rest of the afternoon exploring the "TUBES", looking at leak in the creek and a quick trip into Village cave.



The local resident at Caves House
Photo: Jim Crockett

Sunday we all had to leave to go home and it was so sad, but we'd had an enjoyable week staying in the luxury accommodation and doing some excellent caving.

I am sure this will not be the last time we will book Yarrangobilly Caves house for a trip of this type.

Awesome trip.

Jim

Penrose Gully and Tiger Snake - 26th September, 2009

Present: Beth Little, Rod Smith (TL).

With only the two of us an early start was not required, so we met at the reasonably civilized time of 9am at Zig Zag. Beth wasn't keen to find out how her new car would handle the drive from there and, although I've seen the road in worse conditions, she probably made the right choice.

Before long we'd walked to the saddle, dropped our packs, donned our harnesses, and headed for Penrose Gully.

Beth thought I was rather generous leaving a sling for the first anchor, until I informed her that it was already there. I rigged the first drop and in I went. There seemed to be a little less water than the usually small amount, so the rope didn't get as wet on the second drop as it usually does.



Rod on the first Tiger Snake pitch
Photo: Beth Little

We climbed over the narrow section between the second and third abseils, then Beth decided to climb even higher for some reason. With some guidance she managed to make her way back down to the top of the third pitch, and commented that she should have followed me.

The third abseil was completed and before long we were back at the top of the cliffs admiring the view, and working out the best location for a house to take advantage of the view. I'm sure National Parks wouldn't mind

Our packs were where we'd left them, which is always handy. As we approached the start of Tiger Snake we noticed something falling around us. It took a few seconds for us to realise we were being hailed on! Thankfully it was small and light, and didn't last long.

Beth proved she is still very capable as we climbed into Tiger Snake, we didn't bother with a rope to get down the first couple of drops. Of course, the rope is necessary to negotiate the last drop and finish the first half of the canyon.

Deciding it was still too early for lunch we continued on our merry way, reaching the start of the second section in no time. Up to the left we climbed, circling round to reach the tree anchor on the chockstone. We threw the rope down then followed it into blackness.

We walked a short distance upstream to admire the arch before making our way towards the end of the canyon. The decision was made to enjoy lunch somewhere with a view, so we started the exit climb. At the top of the first climb we walked around to a view of Deans Creek for lunch.

During lunch, while huddling out of the cold wind, we wondered why no-one else joined us for such a beautiful trip.

I like to let people who are unfamiliar with, or have no recollection of, the track lead to see how many times they take a wrong turn. Unfortunately, for me, Beth had no trouble leading us back.

A second round of small, light hail didn't bother us and we arrived back at the car in good time. Thankfully the rain held off til we were driving back.

Another great trip with great company, what more could you ask for?

Rod.

Free event

Movies Under The Stars

If you enjoy sitting outdoors with friends and family on warm evenings make sure you don't miss our Movies Under The Stars program this November. The screenings have been moved from February to coincide with the Hornsby Shire Festival of the Arts (see page 6-7). Four free family movies will be held on four consecutive weekends in the shire's parks and reserves. For more information visit www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson or call 9847 6739.

ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

Movies start at sundown (approx. 8pm)



SAT 7 NOVEMBER	<i>Journey to the Centre of the Earth</i> (PG)	Forest Park	Forest Grove, Epping
SAT 14 NOVEMBER	<i>WALL-E</i> (G)	Warrina Street Oval	Warrina Street, Berowra
SAT 21 NOVEMBER	<i>Bedtime Stories</i> (G)	Ruddock Park	Quarter Sessions Rd, Westleigh
SAT 28 NOVEMBER	<i>Bolt</i> (G)	Asquith Oval	Mills Avenue, Asquith

Sunday Sessions

Throughout spring, Council will present three music events in the shire's parks. Bring your friends or family, pack a picnic and enjoy live acoustic music in picturesque surroundings. For more information call 9847 6739 or visit www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson.

Free event

Sunday 27 September	2pm - 5pm	Forest Park	Forest Grove, Epping
Sunday 25 October	2pm - 5pm	Lisgar Gardens	Lisgar Road, Hornsby
Sunday 29 November	2pm - 5pm	McKell Park	Dangar Road, Brooklyn



Future Trips

Welcome to the new look future trips section. Anyone with artistic abilities are welcome to submit their own icons for any of the categories here, and/or any other categories. If we use your icon then you'll have to be prepared to accept the praise and admiration from your fellow club members. Send your icons, or any other feedback, to roderick_smith@hotmail.com.

Legend:

Activity



Caving



Canyoning



Diving



Hiking



Abseiling



Cycling



Horse Riding



Kayaking



Climbing



Skiing

Grade



Easy



Easy/Medium



Medium



Medium/Hard



Hard



Extreme

Accommodation



Camping



Cottage

















Extras





















Kites



Camp Ovens

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Mt Solitary	10 th - 11 th Oct			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			7 th Oct	
Other Info:								
Starlight	20 th Oct			Julie Burton 0447 604 786 julbur@tpg.com.au			14 th Oct	
Other Info: Please note the change of date								
Nightmare	21 th Oct			Julie Burton 0447 604 786 julbur@tpg.com.au			14 th Oct	
Other Info: Please note the change of date								
Bungonia	7 th - 8 th Nov			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick__smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			3 rd Nov	
Other Info: This will also be an instructional trip for people that want to practice and learn more about vertical caving, in a real cave environment!								
Grand Canyon	21 st Nov			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			18 th Nov	
Other Info:								
Annual Dinner/XMas Party	21 st Nov		Delicious	Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com		The meal will cost around \$35 plus drinks	7 th Nov	
Other Info: This will be held at Bachus in Katoomba.								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Fortress	22 nd Nov			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			18 th Nov	
Other Info:								
Cottage Rock/Coal Seam Cave – Decadence Walk	5 th - 6 th Dec			Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 stuckedl@cba.com.au			2 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Wollangambe	26 th Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Claustral	27 th Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Better Offer	28 th Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 nd Dec	
Other Info:								
Freshwater	9 th Jan			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			5 th Jan	
Other Info:								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Kites Over Kosci	23 rd - 26 th Jan			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			19 th Jan	
Other Info: You will need to take the 25 th off since it's not a public holiday								
Nullabor	Aug 2010			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 roderick_smith@hotmail.com (that's 2 underscores)			At this stage I just need expressions of interest	
Other Info:								