

NEWSLETTER MONTHLY

FEBRUARY 2010



MSS NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

Society News	1
Trip Reports	2
Upcoming events	6
Monthy Horrorskope	8
The Thrill of Ziplining	9
News from the Underground	10
Trip Calender	12

Cover Shot:

Beth Little abseiling Kanangra Main, January 30th 2010

Photo by Annette Malicki

Society News

TRIP FEES

Omitted from the January Newsletter report on the First Quarter General meeting was the decision to adjust the trip fees for MSS trips (primarily to make it easier for people who don't carry a lot of change).

Trip Fees are:

Day trips: \$3

Weekend trips (2 days or long weekend): \$5

4 days or longer: \$10 total

MEMBERSHIP

Membership for 2010 is now due. We will be finalising the cheque for ASF at the April meeting, so please pay your subs before then. The cost for full membership is \$70, non-ASF membership is \$25 and 'Honorary Life Membership (Inactive)' is \$40. Please contact Jim Crockett if you wish to change your membership category.

Payment options include:

Cash – to Jim Crockett

Cheque – made out to Metropolitan Speleological Society Inc.

Bank Transfer (preferred option) – BSB is 062021, Account Number is 000901421 and be sure to include your name in the message.

Dave Stuckey's Email Address

For those who might have missed it (the Newsletter certainly did) Dave Stuckey's acay email address is long dead and beyond the late stages of decomposition.

The current email address for Dave is: stuckedl@cba.com.au

Trip Reports

Mystery Canyon

6th February 2010

Report by: John Gray, photos by Jim Crockett

Participants: Jim Crockett, Rod Smith, John Gray

The final destination for the day's canyon was a mystery even to the trip leader. The intention was to explore the rumoured Whirlpool Canyon in the upper Wollangambe area but the rain had been falling steadily for days.

We met at the Mount Wilson Fire Station and donned our rain coats. I strongly suspected that the Wollangambe River would be up, but at the very least it would be worth a look. On our arrival at the upstream end of the horseshoe bend we found a very swollen river. Rod started wading in and stopped when he got in up to his neck. Normally this crossing is less than knee deep. A familiar sight at this spot over the years has been a very large log lying in the river bed. Today this log was somewhere deep below the fast moving current.



Not really knee-deep...

We decided to see if it was possible to scramble along the banks downstream to take a look at Horseshoe Canyon. With a bit of scrambling we achieved this and swam across to check it out. The best parts of Horseshoe Canyon can be visited by scrambling up from the river. On this day the waterfall in the dark section was spectacular. As we neared the falls small white things were flying around in the air. At first glance it looked like small birds were flying around. On closer inspection we discovered that the draft from the falls was causing foam to be whipped up into the air.

As entering an unknown canyon in these conditions was out of the question, we then decided to have a look at Joe's Canyon. This canyon is normally used as an exit from Clatterteeth and Bells Creek Canyons. On occasion in the past I've walked through without getting my feet wet. On this day there was a healthy flow which made for great photography.



We then trudged back up Mt Wilson to discover a large tree had fallen over the track in our absence. The trip concluded with the leach removal ceremony at the cars. My experience in the past has been that leaches are rare at Mt Wilson but this time there were dozens of them attempting entry into my shoes. Most of them were tiny but still able to draw blood with ease.

Kanagra Main

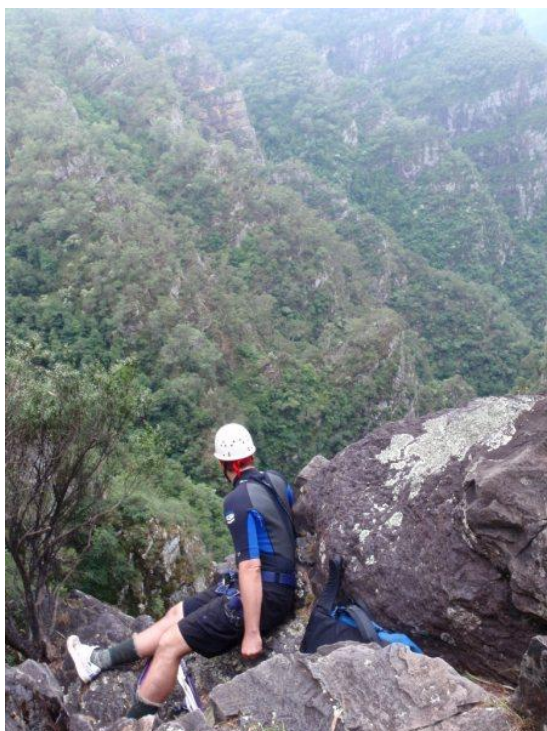
January 30th 2010

Report by: Rod Smith, photos by Annette Malicki

Participants: Rod Smith, Beth Little, Annette Malicki, Michael Sliwka, Andre

The day dawned overcast and horrible looking, but it wasn't raining, which was good. Although everyone was reluctant to rise, they did so. Breakfast was eaten, gear packed, and everyone made ready to depart. I'd set the departure time at 7am, were we only a few minutes late as we starting walking along the Kanangra Road towards the turn-off that would take us to the start of Kanangra Main.

Last time I'd done this canyon we had six people, started at 8am and three of us got back at 11:15pm. We had five this time and I was keen to get back before sunset. As I was the only member of our group to have done the canyon before I felt that the pressure was on me to keep the group moving efficiently but not recklessly. I had a plan, which included the use of the four 60m ropes we were carrying in a leap-frog pattern the whole way through the canyon.



Upon arriving at the first anchor point the decision needed to be made, would we proceed? It still wasn't raining but we were about level with the bottom of the clouds which blanketed the whole area. The water was actually lower than the last time I'd been there, but too much rain could change that, as any canyoner would know. We opted to wait half an hour and see what the weather did before making the decision. It was interesting to note everyone putting on wetsuits and harnesses during that half an hour, the decision seemed to be made.

As we started preparing for the first drop down the face a stranger arrived. He was part of a group of four with another group of five behind them. I was glad of the early start as it meant we be in front of the other groups and they wouldn't hold us up.

I went over the drop first since I would, hopefully, recognise the ledge we were aiming for. Not really a problem, it's rather obvious. The problem was that it is about a 54m drop, and one of our 60m ropes was actually 50m. As is always the case, hindsight reveals multiple options of dealing with the problem, and certainly a couple of them were better than the option I picked. After dropping my pack onto the ledge I attached a prussik above my descender so I could disconnect from the rope. Then, using a rather small tree/shrub, and an equally small ledge, I down-climbed the last metre from the end of the stretched ropes.

The others had no idea what was taking me so long, and one of their tests of the tension of the rope pulled it out of my hand as I was starting the climb, so I didn't bother calling out "off rope". I took out the rope I was carrying, anchored it, and threw it down the next pitch in anticipation. Michael descended next as he had another rope, and used the same technique to get down to the ledge I was standing on. I finished rigging the next pitch but didn't descend, I wasn't sure if I'd be needed to help the next person down.

Annette was the next to descend. On the left, while facing the cliff, was what could best be described as a small gendarme. I attempted to climb between it and the main face to help Annette, but it was not as easy as it looked. Michael then suggested Annette swing across to it, disconnect there, and climb down. It seemed so obvious, why hadn't I thought of that! Seeing Annette manage this reasonably easily I knew Beth and Andre would have no problems, so I began the next pitch.

Although 50m would probably be enough for the third pitch, I was 100% sure, so we decided to get everyone down the second pitch and use the same ropes for the third. The problem this time, the pull-down. I'm not sure why, but the ropes moved a bit and then jammed. I can't be sure but I believe the next group helped unjam the ropes. All the while Andre was



very apologetic about the rope length, it was his that was 50m and was even labelled as such! To make matters worse, there was a spare 60m sitting in my car!

We had two people down the third pitch when the first abseiler from the second group joined us. It was then that I found out none of their group had done the canyon before, and so they quizzed me on the exit route. I did my best to give an accurate description based on my recollection of my one previous visit. Thankfully they weren't too perturbed by the time we'd taken on the first pitch.

Those with ropes had descended to then rig the fourth pitch and keep us moving, but Michael needed to wait til I was down so he could carry one of the ropes. As I neared the bottom I found him connecting to the top of the fourth pitch.

"Hey, wait up, you need to carry a rope!" I yelled over the waterfall.

"Oh yeah, I forgot". Mmmmm....

We pulled down the ropes, coiled them, and descended the fourth pitch. Then we went forward with the ropes in the leap-frogging pattern I planned to use. It wasn't long before the plan was working and we were moving very efficiently. We didn't see the other parties for the rest of the day.

After nine pitches we heard a helicopter. We looked up and saw red and blue flashing lights fly directly over us and heading up the canyon. We hoped it wasn't a serious emergency with one of the groups following us, but there wasn't anything we could do about it if it was. About five minutes later the helicopter passed us again going in the other direction.

We considered getting to the bottom of the last pitch before lunch to ensure we stayed ahead of the other groups, but people were getting hungry. We opted to eat at the bottom of the 12th pitch, with a great view of the waterfall we'd just descended. We needn't have worried about staying in front of the other groups, by the time we packed up to leave we still hadn't seen any sight of them.



Beth, Michael, Annette and Rod in Kanangra Main
Photo taken by Andre

Two more pitches and the fun was behind us. Next we had the creek walking to the exit, then the exit itself. I don't know where Rick came up with half an hour from the last abseil to Murdering Gully, although there are some people who could manage it, we couldn't. Still, it didn't take too long and, after a quick food and drink stop, we were ready to ascend.

The biggest problem with Murdering Gully is that it just keeps going. Of course, the sun also decided to make it's first appearance of the day at this point, just to ensure we warmed up. After a while I knew we'd gone too far to the left so we cut across one tributary in an effort to get back on track. Cutting across a second tributary and Michael, who was out in front, found a track marking. Someone had taken some red and white tape and left bits at a very regular interval to mark a track. Unfortunately we were at least halfway up Murdering Gully when we found it.

The rest of the walk was uneventful, just tiring. We arrived at the cars at 5:30pm, a ten and a half hour trip. We were happy with that, and I can now say I've done Kanangra Main and finished in daylight. A short drive and we arrived at Boyd River to set up camp for the night. Within five minutes we were joined by Rowan and Debbie. Debbie opted not to stay, but Rowan did with the plan to do Kalang the next day.

The next morning we awoke and Rowan, since he was fresh, was keen to go canyoning. However, Andre was suffering from a cold he hadn't gotten rid of (and probably shouldn't have done Kanangra Main). Annette and Michael just didn't want to emerge from their tent and neither Beth nor I were overly enthusiastic, although we probably could've gone. The weather was also looking rather ordinary so, unfortunately for Rowan, the decision was made to not go canyoning. A leisurely pack up was followed by lunch at Mt Victoria.

Upcoming Events

Weekend 13th / 14th March – Twilight Canyon (PLEASE NOTE: KAYAKING TRIP POSTPONED)

Trip Leader: Rod Smith

Contact by: 9th March

What's involved?

Camping at Newnes Friday night is recommended for an early start. There will be some bushbashing, route finding and abseiling. The canyon may or may not have water in it. A fairly long day due to the location of the canyon.

You will need:

Abseiling gear, wetsuits (probably), camping gear (if camping) and your usual canyoning kit. Contact the trip leader in advance if you are lacking any of these.

Weekend 27th / 28th March – Deep Pass

Trip Leader: Cathi Humphrey-Hood 0414 663137, cathi@emeraldimages.com.au

What's involved?

A weekend of camping at the accessible Deep Pass Camp ground on the Newnes Plateau (there is a 500m walk from the cars to the campsite). Canyoning is optional – and there's also a small cave to look at. This is intended to be a relaxing outdoor trip that doesn't involve any scary bits (unless you count Rod in pyjamas) – one where you can bring the family instead of having to arrange babysitting.

You will need:

Camping gear, good food, drinking water, insect repellent, frisbees, balls, bats etc (and children would be helpful too)

JOINT MSS / NHVSS TRIP
NULLARBOR CAVES – AUGUST 2010

Planning for the Nullabor Trip is underway, with dates being set for 31/07/2010 - 15/08/2010 and information for the permit applications obtained.

The caves we plan to visit will depend on the outcome of the permit applications, but will hopefully include: Weebubbie, Abrukurrie, Old Homestead, Koonalda, Thampanna, Tommy Grahams, Warbla, Madura, Nurina, White Wells, Murrawijinie 1,2 and 3, Mullamullang, Capstan and Murra-El-Elevyn.

If you have not already done so, please contact Rod Smith if you are interested in this trip.



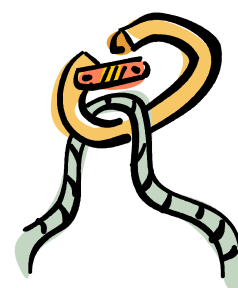
Main chamber in Abrukurrie Cave

Photo from *Caves: Processes, Development and Management* by David S. Gillieson, 1996

See the Trip Calender on Page 12 for other trip information!

NEXT MSS MEETING: APRIL 15th at Bob Horn's residence
RVSP Bob (02) 9639 3672, randphorn@optusnet.com.au

Monthly Horrorskope



Your adventure starts for March 2010 ... or for any other time period you care to apply them to.

Mammoth Cave, 7th June - 8th July

It's going to be a big month for you! But, you may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. You may find yourself in a tight spot, but there's always another way around. Go to a nudist beach.

Tuglow Cave, 21st January - 22nd February

You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. You will meet the man of your dreams. You will find out that you are homosexual. You will make millions of dollars, but when converted to Australian dollars you will find the Zimbabwean currency doesn't go that far. You will find a new and interesting career. Being a dole bludger gives you time to do those interesting things.

Wiburds Lake Cave, 17th November - 18th December

Your next month will be a bit of a mystery. You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. You may not be where you thought you were in life. Still, make the most of what you've got, since that's all you have to work with.

Bottomless Pit, 3rd April - 4th May

On the 13th minute of the 13th hour of the 13th day of the 13th month all will be revealed. All your questions will be answered, as well as a lot of other peoples questions. The way forward will be clear, there will be no more doubt. Until then you may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark.

Big Hole, 15th October - 16th November

You are standing on the brink of oblivion. You have the choice of turning back or plunging into the abyss. Of course, it won't make a scrap of difference what you choose if someone comes up behind you and gives you a push. You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark.

Wyanbene, 9th July - 10th August

After a long and perilous journey through the mysteries in life you will finally succeed in arriving at a metaphorical destination. And all you will feel is frustration. Now you have to turn around and go all the way back. You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark.

Punchbowl Cave, 13th September - 14th October

You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. As such there will be a strong inclination to get drunk. Go for it! It will provide endless entertainment for those around you.

Grill Cave, 5th May - 6th June

You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. You will get the distinct impression that others have taken the exact same journey through life. Why not use that to your advantage? But keep your eyes open, just because others have been this way doesn't mean they didn't get lost.

Hennings Cave, 23rd February - 29th February

You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. Just be careful what you grab hold of, other people may find it a bit of an invasion of personal space. You will feel yourself going over the same ground again and again, and again and again and again and ... well, you get the idea.

Eagles Nest, 1st March - 2nd April

There are many obstacles in front of you, but much beauty to be found as well. Don't be afraid of passing the point of no return. You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark.

Restoration Cave, 19th December - 20th January

You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. Despite that, things will look beautiful to you. You will see wonder in nature everywhere you look. Go hug a tree. In fact, chain yourself to it and await the arrival of bulldozers. There's plenty of trees in the Botanic Gardens to choose from.

East Deep Creek, 11th August - 12th September

You may have to feel your way along as people will want to keep you in the dark. Be careful, a wrong step could prove disastrous. And people will be quick to let you know, criticising every mistake, pointing out all your failures, making you feel small. Basically people are bastards, so treat them as such.

The Thrill of Ziplining

By Jim Crockett

Imagine flying through the air attached by your harness to a wire rope going at breakneck speeds, with the forest all around you, WOW what a thrill.

Ziplines are becoming more common all around the world.

They are certainly an adventure thrill that is short lived but while you are flying through the air it really gets the pulse rate going.

There are a few in Australia including one in the Daintree Rainforest at Cape Tribulation and another located near Launceston Tasmania.

Here is a list of the longest, fastest and highest from around the world:

LONGEST and FASTEST ZIPLINES

2,000 meters/ 6,561 feet. The Pronutro zip 2000 is the world's longest and fastest zip line. It is located in Sun City South Africa. It descends 918 feet at a speed of 100 mph

1,625 meters/ 5,330 feet long. The zip line in Hoonah Icy Straight Point, Alaska takes 90 seconds to complete a 1,300 foot vertical drop at 24 degrees.

1,036 meters/ 3,400 feet. Located in Costa Rica in the Central Valley near the Pacific coast in the Tu Ru Bari Tropical Park.

1,006 meters/ 3,300 feet. Heavenly Ski Resort at Lake Tahoe, California. It has a 525 ft vertical drop over 80 seconds and reaches 50

792 meters/ 2,600 feet long. The Dragon's Breath zip line runs over Labadee, Haiti and is the longest zip line over water. It runs to the beach below.

2nd FASTEST ZIPLINE

Speed of 140 kph/ 90 mph. The zip line at Canada's Olympic Park Canada is 500 meters in length and runs so fast they use a drag chute to slow it down at the end.

HIGHEST

1 mile drop! 1/4 of a mile across. This is the highest zip line in the world. It uses two separate cables and trolleys. Located in Columbia.

183 meters/ 600 feet in height and starts by going over a 120 foot drop over the Manara cliff. The Omega zip line in Israel takes riders across scenic West Bank.

News from the Underground

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

February 2010

[Are we close to solving the oldest mystery on Everest?](#)

[Explorers Web](#) reports that Everest researcher Tom Holzel thinks he has spotted the likely resting place of Andrew Irvine in the Yellow Band, high on Everest. Scrupulous study and processing of high resolution aerial photographs revealed a number of possible locations where searching could be effectively concentrated. By comparing this information with an old sighting of a body made by Chinese climber Xu Jing (who was killed in an avalanche only a day later), the position of Mallory's body and the location of the Ice Axe found in 1933, the search location has been narrowed to a small spot at 8,425m.

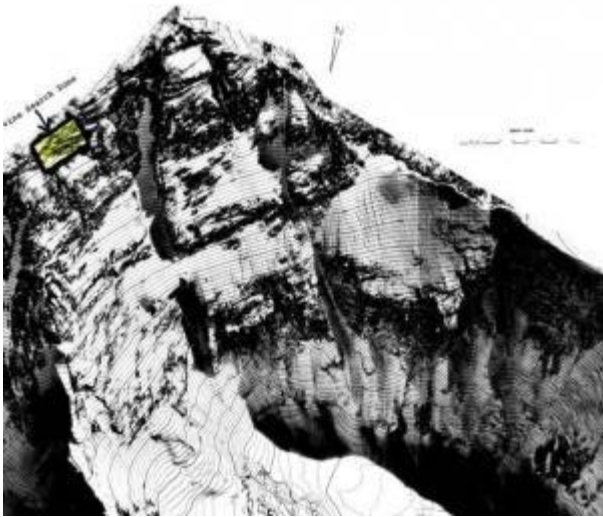


Image from Everest*K2 ExplorersWeb

So, might we finally discover what happened to Andrew Irvine? Thom Pollard and Jake Norton, part of the team who found George Mallory in 1999, are preparing an expedition to investigate what the high resolution images of Everest are suggesting might be the location of Irvine's body. The expedition is slated for April to June this year, but requires \$200,000. Come up with some of the money, and you might find a place as a climber on the expedition:

http://explorersweb.com/everest_k2/news.php?id=19090

[Ansel Adams photographs of Carlsbad Caverns](#)

The US National archives have posted a collection of photographs by renowned photographer Ansel Adams (1902-1984) on their [Flickr](#) website. Taken between 1933 and 1942, they were a part of a series taken of national parks and monuments. Thanks to a post on the NSS Cave Chat Forum.

[1st International SpeleoMovie Web Festival](#)

Napoli Underground are calling for entries for their [International SpeleoMovie Web Festival](#), which will be a viewer-judged short film competition to be webcast in November 2010. Films will need to be in high quality flv or mp4 format. Thanks to [Caverinfo](#) for the news.

[Undara vulcanospeleology conference expects big turnout](#)

The organisers of the [15th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology](#) to be held at Undara in QLD later this year have announced a likely attendance limit of 60 participants, so get in early if you would like to go and haven't registered yet. They will also be running a pre-conference excursion in Victoria between the 7-11th August 2010.

[Mexico Canyon Rendezvous](#)

April 15-18, 2010

"Tell your friends. This canyon rendezvous is open to anyone.

Join us in Monterrey, Mexico, April 15th to 18th, 2010. Hosted by Asociacion Americana de Cañonismo (ACA Mexico and Latin America)."

There are around 20 canyoneers from the ACA listed as attending this RV. Use the link to contact the ACA if you are interested in attending.

Trip Calender

Weekend 13th / 14th March
Twilight Canyon

Canyoning
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 10th March
Grade: Medium/Hard

Weekend 27th / 28th March
Deep Pass

Camping, optional canyoning, family weekend
Trip leader: Cathi Humphrey-Hood
Contact: 0414 663137, cathi@emeraldimages.com.au
By: 23rd March
Grade: Child's play

Weekend 10th / 11th April
Kayaking

Kayaking
Trip Leader: Bob Horn
Contact (02) 9639 3672, randphorn@optusnet.com.au
By: 6th April
Grade: Easy/Medium

Weekend 24 / 25 / 26 April
Jenolan
[Permit for Hennings,](#)
[Mammoth and Wiburds](#)

Caving
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: 21st April
Grade: Easy/Medium

Weekend 8th / 9th May
Wombeyan

Caving (Joint NHVSS trip)
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: ASAP (limited spaces)
Grade: Medium/Hard

Weekend 15th / 16th May
Tuglow
[Permit obtained](#)

Caving
Trip Leader: Jim Crockett
Contact: 0407 284 256, jim.crockett@reach.com
By: 11th May
Grade: Medium/Hard

Saturday 29th May
Oakes Fire Trail

Mountain Bike Riding
Trip Leader: Beth Little
Contact: 0405 226 811, littlebeth78@hotmail.com
By: 25th May
Grade: Medium

Weekend 12 / 13 / 14 June
Barrington Tops

Hiking
Trip Leader: Danielle lewin
Contact: 0404 305878, danielle.lewin1@bigpond.com
By: 8th June
Grade: Medium

Weekend 24th / 25th July
Perisher Valley

Snow-shoeing / XC skiing
Trip Leader: David Stuckey
Contact: 0414 590305, stuckedl@cba.com.au
By: 20th June
Grade: Medium

31st July – 15th August
Nullarbor
At planning stage
!Permit Pending

Caving
Trip Leader: Roderick Smith
Contact: 0438 444262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
By: March 31 (if you plan to be caving)
Grade: Medium/Hard
Joint trip with NHVSS

Week 11th – 19th September
Yarrangobilly
!Permit Pending

Caving
Trip Leader: Beth Little
Contact: 0405 226 811, littlebeth78@hotmail.com
By: 25th May
Grade: Medium

Weekend 16th / 17th October
Gooches Crater

Decadent / Family Friendly Trip
Trip Leader: TBA
Grade: Child's Play
