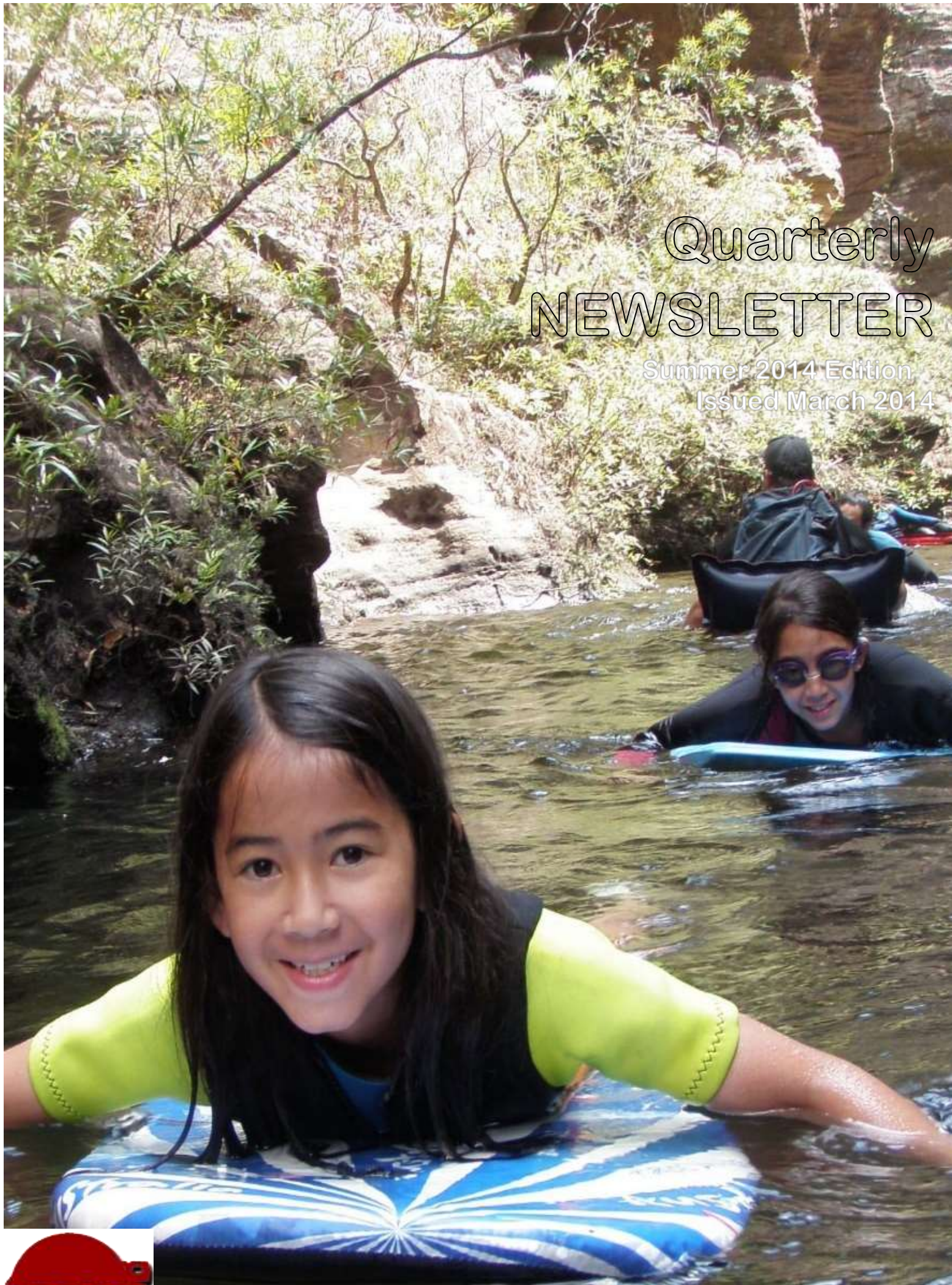


# Quarterly NEWSLETTER

Summer 2014 Edition  
Issued March 2014



## MSS NEWSLETTER



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Cover Shot: Sapphire and Ambrosia Wildie enjoying Wollangambe Canyon.	
Photo by Jim Crockett	

## Society Information

Club EPIRB

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

### MSS Officers list

#### Position

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

#### Name

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

## Membership Details

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

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

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

## Trip report – Wollangambe Canyoning

Participants – Angus, Ambrosia and Sapphire Wildie, Tony Le, Rod Smith and Jim Crockett (TL)

This was original planned as a much harder trip with Surefire and Heart Attack canyons on the agenda but there were only beginners interested. Fortunately the Wollangambe canyons had only just recently re-opened after the damage caused by the recent fires.

We decided upon doing a Wollangambe 2 trip mainly because I had never actually done it just on its own, only usually as part of entering or exiting canyons on the north side of Wollangambe.

So we set off down to the Wollangambe 1 exit point, being careful with the newbies at the 5m climb down, where Some of the group were belayed.

We soon geared up, inflated the lilo's and off we set. The pace was reasonable slow as we had 2 young girls 8 and 11 years old both on boogie boards. This turned out to be a good pace as it enabled us to all enjoy the view of nature at its best.

As they day wore on I did notice that the 2 girls were struggling a bit and telling us they were getting cold. The reason seemed to be that they only had thin wetsuits (It's hard to get thick children's wetsuits). Also their style of using the boogie boards with most of their lower body constantly in the water was also contributing. We got then out of the water to try and warm up, but that was not very successful as the sky was quite overcast. We then made the decision to put both the girls on the one lilo, out the water and tow them the remaining section of canyon. Tony did a good job acting as Mater the tow truck and we were soon close to the exit. But we struck bad luck only

50m from the exit point as the lilo the 2 girls were on struck a submerged tree and the suffered a large puncture.



It was then the long walk back to the Cathedral of Ferns and back to camp.

We had plans to go canyoning on the Sunday but during the night we had some rain, and that added to the fact that the newbies were tired we cancelled and got to go home early, but everyone was satisfied with the adventure.

Jim Crockett



Rod, Tony, Sapphire, Angus and Ambrosia at the start.

## Trip report - Upper Deanes Creek and Galah Canyons

Participants - Natalie Etherton, Chris Johnstone, Julie Burton and Rod Smith (TL)

Upper Deanes Creek is just one of those canyons. I'd been wanting to do it for so long. Well, three weeks. So I decided, here was my chance.

I met Nat Friday night at Zig Zag and we then drove out to Barcoo Swamp to camp. Upon our arrival we were entertained with fireworks and explosions from the neighbouring campsite. Considering the recent fires and that on Saturday a blanket fire ban was then declared across the state, setting of fireworks in the bush exhibited a level of intelligence usually reserved for sheep, jellyfish and MacDonalds staff.

Saturday morning dawn bright and clear. At least, I assume it did, I was still asleep and didn't see it. I wasn't expecting a huge day, so we didn't leave the car at Deanes Siding until just after 9:00am.

We followed an old fire trail north, through a cross junction, the right branch of which doesn't show on the old topo map, but may show on the new. Not too far after this is another old fire trail that doesn't show on the old topo, but I saw on Google satellite view. We followed this new, old fire trail until it swung north-ish and levelled out-ish.

I decided it was time to turn right again, but now we were bush-bashing. Soon we were in a gully and looking forward we could see the ground falling away, or, more precisely, the lack of ground.

We found it got steeper, but not yet vertical. Crossing another gully coming in on our left we climbed the bottom section of a monolithic looking rock and admired the view while contemplating our path forward.

The gully we were following flowed around the right of the rock we were on and then flowed right to left in front of us. It looked quite overgrown, but only right at water level. We angled down towards it and found that in the centre of the vegetation was a cleared path of rock which the water flowed over. This made for great walking, for the next 10 metres.

We could see that the creek turned right in front of us, so I climbed the right bank and angled across to cut the corner. This worked well until I wanted to re-enter the creek, only to find it about 12 metres below us. We had found the canyon.

Going back to just before the turn in the creek we were able to get back into the water and follow it around the corner. Here we found the first drop, of less than half a metre, into a chest deep pool. Thankfully I decided to put the wetsuit on before jumping in.

The next obstacle is a bit higher and is a slide with a righthand bend in it. Sliding from the top was not an option, we would have ended up too far left and without a good landing. Instead I carefully climbed down to the bend in the slide and went straight from there. This deposited me in a deep section of the pool below without an obstacle to worry about.

Coming round the next bend we found another drop, but this time we needed rope and harnesses. There was no tape left as an anchor visible anywhere, in fact, no evidence that anyone had ever been there before. There was also no easily accessible anchor that we could just throw the rope around, something needed to be constructed. I was prepared for this.

Once a suitable anchor was constructed, the 20m rope was enough to reach the bottom. This dropped us down a nice waterfall into a shallow pool, quite a pretty little section. Looking ahead it all opened up again, it looked like we'd finished. A nice canyon, but a bit short.

Walking ahead I started looking for an exit. We wanted to go left, but it was all solid cliff, not that we would have been able to get out on the right either. I pushed away some vegetation I was walking through and noticed the ground suddenly dropped away in front of me, there was another abseil! And I could immediately tell the 20m rope would not be enough.

Although there was a massive tree on the left that could have been used as is, getting to it was risky, and falling would definitely have been fatal.

So, another piece of bright orange tape was left as an eyesore, but we were safe. We deployed a 60m, but the ends caught halfway down so I didn't know if it reached. When I reached the ends I unhooked them and threw them down, thankfully seeing them hit the bottom.

The abseil is down a beautiful waterfall before dropping into a large amphitheatre. Although the ends of the rope were on the ground, it was less than a metre of rope, the abseil is about 29m high. This abseil took the canyon from "OK" to "well worth doing".

We were now at the end of the canyon and again started looking for a way out. There was a gully immediately on our left that I thought might go, until we got part way up it. There was a possible, "interesting", climb on the left, but I decided to leave that as plan B.

The next break in the cliffs on the left is a lot smaller, but a small scramble up a crack and we were up on the lefthand rocks. From here it's an easy scramble.

I decided we'd stop for lunch on top of the rocks, but Nat wanted some shade, which admittedly was a good idea. We found a ledge that made a great seat and provided a very small amount of shade and opted to use it as our lunch spot. Just then a large cloud passed in front of the sun, and shade was abundant!

As we finished lunch the cloud moved on, so it was time for us to do likewise. Continuing up we soon entered the tree line and the ridge became less steep. Only a small distance of bush bashing found us on the end of the old fire trail we'd left to enter the creek earlier.

Back at the cars just after 3pm having enjoyed a nice little canyon at a leisurely pace. One I would visit again.

The next morning we met Chris and Julie and drove to the Galah carpark. Shortly after 9am were we following another old fire trail that is not marked on the map.

The 3km walk in described in the book is definitely a long 3km. From the end of the old fire trail the track continues to the right. Not too far along here it turns right again and heads down-hill. Soon we found ourselves on a large rock platform in the creek. Or, more correctly, the creek would have gone through where the rock is except that it is there, which diverts the creek around it to the north.

Chris asked if we should put on wetsuits. Considering it was a hot day and all we could see was a scrubby creek in front of us we thought that was a silly idea. Then, around the next corner we found the first pool, and put on our wetsuits. After wading through this chest deep pool, and then the next, we decided Chris had been right. Julie dutifully pointed out to Chris to remember that he was right and to remind us at any given opportunity, that's just the rules.

The guide says the first drop is a 23m abseil. The first drop we reached had a hand-line that didn't reach the bottom, so we decided to abseil it, but it certainly wasn't 23m. After this the creek opened up and we were creek walking, no longer in a canyon.

We continued to creek walk, and then did some more. This was getting ridiculous, where was the abseil and the rest of the canyon? We stopped, Nat and I took off our harnesses and Chris and I took off the top part of our wetsuits. Julie had opened the guidebook and turned on her GPS.

The book said one option was to climb down a 10m log to get in, but we hadn't done that. So where were we? I told everyone we were still in the creek above the canyon and just had to continue a bit further. The GPS gave us a grid reference of 488176. Reading the book Julie informed us that the canyon started at 488176. It was my turn to be right.

Sure enough, not much further down the creek we found a drop. Scrambling down on the left we got to the top of the 23m abseil.

After that the abseils came thick and fast. Although that's also not technically correct, since abseils don't move so they can hardly be described as fast. And I don't know what would make an abseil thick.

It is a beautiful canyon and we all thoroughly enjoyed passing through the magnificent scenery. I know at some point Julie and Nat had their turns at being right about something, but I don't remember what it was. I know they'll take great delight in reminding me, repeatedly, at every opportunity.

Lunch was eaten at the end of the canyon, then we went looking for the exit. We followed a track until it petered out and there was a point that I thought I could climb. I headed up and then we all decided it was the wrong place. I opted for going up a little further to a point I could hopefully traverse and meet up with the others at the top of the correct climb. Unfortunately I realised going up was harder than I first suspected, so I went back down and headed right to find the others.

By the time I caught up to them they were putting on harnesses to go up the climb using the fixed rope. I went up and scouted out a bit at the top. The climb is quite awkward, but from there it's just a walk up. From the top, there is a track, but it's hard to follow in places, at one point we completely lost it for a while, which proved to be rather frustrating.

Once we found the track again we followed it, and found ourselves back in the creek above the canyon.

So where now? If we followed the creek back up, most of it would be OK, but there was the drop with the too short handline plus a couple of ankle deep wades up to our necks. There was the 10m log, wherever that was. I was trying to



remember where I had gone last time I had been there, 10 years ago, but my memory proved to be more of a hinderance than a help.

We started up creek, but stuck to the righthand side to hopefully find a navigable route out. Then Julie got her second right for the day, she found the 10m log. This was confirmed when we reached the top of it and found a track going uphill. This track was faint in places, but it got us onto the correct ridge.

We lost the track just as we reached the ridge top, so we were back to bush bashing. Julie lead the way and, yet again, proved beneficial when she found the track we'd entered on. Another point to Julie.

The rest was easy, but long and boring. By the time we reached the cars we all just wanted to go home, or wherever we were staying for the night.

Another great trip with great company.

Rod.

## Upcoming Events

# ASF Vertical Training Course

### 1<sup>st</sup> circular

Registration is open now and closes Monday April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Early registration of your interest is essential owing to limited numbers.

This training course is designed as a self-help rescue course for cavers. It will be useful for anybody caving in a remote area where professional rescue would be a long time coming or non-existent and for lesser problems to avoid having to call for help at all.

Cavers interested in this course need to be proficient in SRT skills. This course will introduce techniques and skills that are useful to vertical caving and self-help rescue. Newly acquired skills may assist cavers in all aspects of general and deep caving in isolated regions with limited resources.

### Prerequisites

- Participants must be members of an ASF club or hold individual membership.
- Participants must be proficient in SRT.
- Participants must have personal SRT equipment.

### Course outline and dates

#### **May 10: Personal rope skills – St Ives, Sydney**

This is to make sure your rope skills are up to it and compatible before we expect you to do more than get yourself up & down the rope. The day will also include 'self-rescue'.

#### **May 17 & 18: Vertical rescue 'theory' skills – St Ives, Sydney**

Two very busy days on the practise cliff: anchors, lifting, lowering, tyroleans & changing from one to another, loading and rigging a stretcher.

#### **June 14 & 15: Vertical rescue 'practical' – Bungonia National Park**

A range of rescue scenarios to practise in a cave what you learned on the weekend in May.

### Fee = \$70 for all 3 weekends.

This is a modest fee for equipment usage, PDF course notes and for administrative consumables. (Similar courses are valued over \$1500.)

**Note: Camping and Park fees are not included.**

### Insurance notes

ASF has a policy for training insurance.

ASF has a policy for Public Liability Insurance.

ASF membership does not include personal accident insurance coverage. If you require such insurance, you must take this out yourself.

The ASF is not an RTO (Registered Training Organisation). It can however utilise the expertise and skills of members who are qualified as Certified Trainers. ASF has Certified Trainers within its membership base who can train cavers to the National Standard. ASF or this course cannot issue a certificate to comply with National Standards but this training meets key requirements.

More information will be provided to those who register.

If you have any questions, contact me in advance. **Book early!**

We hope to see you there!

*Joe & Al*

Joe Sydney

ASF/NSW Training Officer

(Highland Caving Group)

[jsydney@choice.com.au](mailto:jsydney@choice.com.au)

W: 02 9577 3361

## MSS Trip Calendar

15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> March 2014      Canyoning and Caving at Wombeyan

Contact: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)

Contact by 13<sup>th</sup> March

Grade: Medium

Mares creek canyon and general caving.

Car camping at Beautiful Wombeyan campground

12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> April 2014      Abseiling – Katoomba

Contact: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)

Contact by 10<sup>th</sup> April

Grade: Medium

Multi-pitch Abseiling routes

Coffee afterwards ?

3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> May 2014      Caving – Jenolan

Contact: Rod Smith, 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)

Contact by 1<sup>st</sup> May

Grade: TBA

Far country and Little canyon dig

Accommodation in the caver's Hut

15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> March  
Canyoning and Caving  
Wombeyan  
Mares Creek Canyon

Trip Leader: Rod Smith  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
By: 13<sup>th</sup> March  
Grade: Medium



12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Apr  
Multi-pitch Abseling  
Katoomba

Trip Leader: Rod Smith  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
By: 10<sup>th</sup> April  
Grade: Medium

3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> May  
Caving  
Jenolan  
Far country / Little Canyon dig

Trip Leader: Rod Smith  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
By: 1<sup>st</sup> May  
Grade: TBA

8<sup>th</sup> May  
MSS Meeting  
At Canada Bay SES Headquarters

Co-ordinator: Rod Smith  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
By: 6<sup>th</sup> February  
Grade: Planning

10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> May  
Caving  
Abercrombie  
In conjunction with NSWSC meeting

Trip Leader: Jim Crockett  
Contact: 0407 284 256, [jcrockett3@bigpond.com](mailto:jcrockett3@bigpond.com)  
By: 8<sup>th</sup> May  
Grade: Easy

24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> May  
Training –Abseiling  
Location: TBA  
Probably just the Sunday only

Trip Leader: Beth Little  
Contact: 0450 226 811, [littlebeth78@hotmail.com](mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com)  
By: 23<sup>rd</sup> May  
Grade: Instructional

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

Trip Leader: Rod Smith  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com)  
By: 13<sup>th</sup> June  
Grade: TBA

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

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

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

Trip Leader: Rod Smith  
Contact: 0438 444 262, [littlebeth78@hotmail.com](mailto:littlebeth78@hotmail.com)  
By: 21<sup>st</sup> August  
Grade: TBA

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

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

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

Trip Leader: Rob Clyne  
Contact: 0409033224 [caver@people.net.au](mailto:caver@people.net.au)  
By: 16<sup>th</sup> October  
Grade: Medium/Hard

# MSS 413th General Meeting, 6 Feb 2014

Held at Canada Bay SES

Meeting Opened: 7:46pm

## **Present:**

Roderick Smith, Jim Crockett, Chris Johnstone, Peter Watson, David Connellan

## **Apologies:**

Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Marilyn Scott, Beth Little

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

## **Correspondence:**

Caves Australia Magazine – Issue 195

SUSS Bull 52(2)

NewCaves Chronicles – Volume 40 July 2013

## **Committee Members Reports:**

### President:

(1) The MSS constitution is completely out of date and needs to be reworked. Anyone volunteers ?

Chris volunteered to have a look at the constitution

(2) We had discussions late last year with other stakeholders about the Macquarie Karst project grant and have an action plan I place on where to spend the grant funds. This action plan is still active and procurement of items is underway.

Treasurer: Good to see a lot of members paying their subscriptions nice and early, I will soon submit a payment to the ASF.

Equipment Officer: I now have a children's harness that has been donated and is available for club use.

Training Officer: None

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

OH&S – Since there was no feedback since the last meeting, we have made the wearing of helmets mandatory for all caving, canyoning and rope related trips. Now we need somewhere to document this requirement. – to do (volunteers??)- Chris

## **New Business:**

We have the new survey system on trial and it was given a test run at Abercrombie recently. To complete the kit and make it more suitable for field work we need to get a PDA (Palm OS). This is used to transfer the data from the instruments and the initial processing of the data.

## Trip planning:

27-28 Sept – SRT Training – TL Beth

18-19 Oct – Wyanbene – TL Rob

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
15/16 Mar	Rod Smith	Canyoning/Caving	Wombeyan	Medium	Permit has been approved
12/13 April	Rod Smith	Multi-pitch Abseiling	Katoomba area	Medium	Number of days and exact routes dependant on participants interest
10/11 May	Jim Crockett	Caving	Abercrombie	Easy	There will also be the NSWSC meeting
24/25 May	Beth Little	Training - abseiling	TBA	Instructional	Only one day, probably the Sunday
28/29 June	Jim Crockett	Caving	Cliefden	TBA	
27/28 Sept	Beth Little	Training - SRT	TBA – possibly Bungonia	Instructional	
18/19 Oct	Rob Clyne	Caving	Wyanbene	Medium	