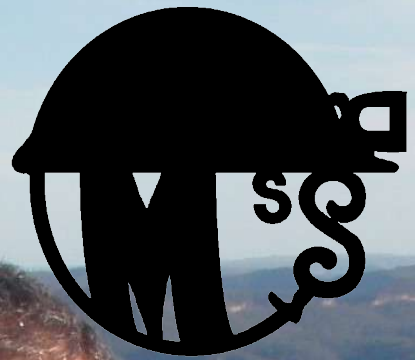


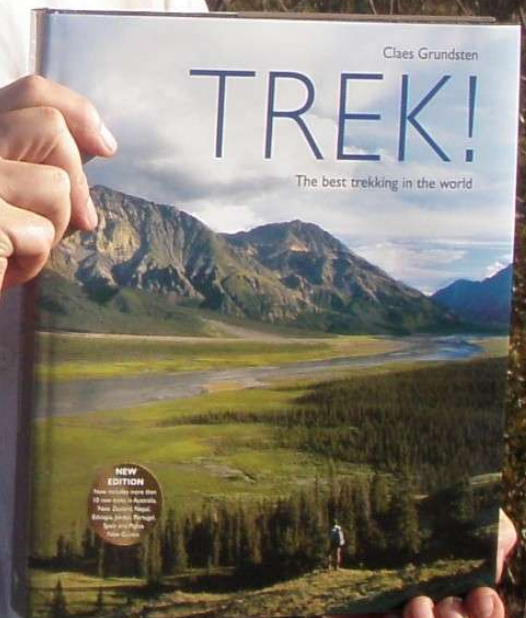
# NEWSLETTER MONTHLY



**Trip Reports:**  
**Blue Mountains Canyoning**  
**and Annual Dinner**  
**Decandence Walk**

**Invitations:**  
**New Years Eve**

**November 2009**



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### **Cover Shot:**

David with his book presented in appreciation of 16 years as MSS President  
Photo by Jim Crockett

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



## Committee Meeting

Jim, as the new MSS President, called a committee meeting to plan future trips and discuss the general running of the club. This was held on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> of December.

The planned future trips can be found in the future trips section of this newsletter. We certainly believe there are a great range of trips on offer. If there's anything that you'd like to see added, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the committee.

This years committee looks like:

President: Jim Crockett

Secretary: Rod Smith

Treasurer: Jim Crockett

Equipment Officer: Dave Stuckey

Safety Officer: Johan Verhagen

Newsletter Editor: Rod Smith

Committee Member: Beth Little

Committee Member: Cathi Humphrey-Hood

## Announcements

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Fees are due for next year. We will be finalising the cheque for ASF at the March meeting, so please pay your subs before then. The subs have remained at \$70. 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.

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!

## From the New President

Dear Members,

Well after nearly 24 years as a member of MSS I am now proud to have achieved the role of Club President.

It will be my endeavour to treat this role very seriously to keep up the momentum and good work done by my predecessor.

At this point I would like to thank David Stuckey for his great dedication and his achievements in the role of MSS president, a role which he has done for 16 years in total. As well as leading many many trips and instilling great enthusiasm about our wild places into other members, there was also a lot of work he completed behind the scenes much of which we did not know was happening, he was able to do it with very little fuss.

David will still be staying around as an active member and trip leader and I am sure he will still be available to answer any questions as his knowledge of caving and most things in the outdoors is second to none.

In my new role I will be trying to encourage members to be more active in the clubs outdoor activities. It is my intention to look at trying to find more trips that the members want to go on so myself and the committee will be looking at planning trips to new and interesting areas. It will also be my intention to make some trips more family friendly so as to encourage those existing and new members with young families to become more involved as we now have quite a few members with young families.

Being a caving club by name we will try to focus on more caving trips and there is the potential to include joint trips with other clubs as they will give opportunity to access other areas where we are not familiar.

I welcome any input from members regarding all aspects of the running of the club including ideas on trips etc as this would make my job a little easier.

The ultimate goal will be to provide members with the opportunity to join in on a wide variety of trips but we will still be encouraging fun, adventure and challenges every time we step into wild places. I know this is difficult because each individual has a different view on why they go on these trips but myself and the committee will be trying to find out more of the members needs and developing trips with that in mind.

Well I hope you all have a very good festive season. It is this time of the year that we all become busy as we all try to juggle the many aspects of our lives but we should not try and forget the great adventures that are waiting for us all on the next MSS trip, so I hope to see you very soon in the outdoors.

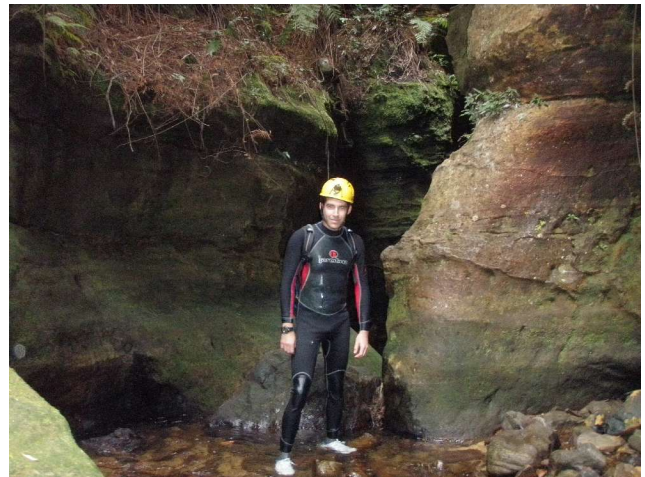
Jim

## Invitations

New Years Eve

As most of you are aware, Rod Smith has a great view of the Harbour including the Harbour Bridge from his unit. There can be no better place to spend New Years Eve, and you are all cordially invited join the festivities for the final night of the year. The party will begin sometime in the afternoon, it's advisable to get there early to get a park. If you wish to attend, please let Rod know by the 29<sup>th</sup> December on 0438 444 262 or [roderick\\_smith@hotmail.com](mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com).

I must consider myself lucky on the Friday as I had volunteered to take an overseas visitor from Israel to some of Sydney's great canyons and I had the day off so I took him to a warm up canyon trip to Empress to assess his ability before attempting anything harder. It was later that afternoon on the way home that I got a call from David to tell me the bad news that the NPWS had closed off all the canyons in the Blue Mountains NP as well as Wollemi NP,,,mmmmm,, not good as not only me but also the overseas visitor were looking forward to the trip to Grand Canyon. Well the club trip was definitely called off but on the way home I thought about potential canyons to go to that were not in the national parks and one that sprang to mind was Dargans Creek. When I got home I checked with the NPWS and I was right as Dargans is located outside the National Park on crown land so it was ok to go there, as long as it was not on fire....mmmmm



Itay about to get wet in Dargans  
Photo: Jim Crockett

## Trip Reports

### ***Blue Mountains Canyoning and Annual Dinner - 21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2009***

Well I was really looking forward to starting the canyoning season on this weekend after some recent family problems, followed by some knee trouble which ended up being due to OsteoArthritis.

So the last 6 weeks I had worked hard at the gym to get the knee right again with regular low impact exercises, some swimming and doses of Glucosamine and I was really feeling ready for some action.

But the Weather Gods were not with us as we had had a series of extremely hot days and there were numerous fires burning many in close vicinity to the major canyon areas.

So it was an early start again and we arrived at the Dargans creek carpark to find only one other vehicle there but many more down near the dam and lots of people swimming. Off we went down the dam wall via the ladder and I was quite surprised to find it was gated half way down but fortunately not locked. We headed down the creek and had lunch before donning the wetsuits and into the cold water of the swims. My guest was very surprised and excited about the quality of our canyons especially the amount of vegetation as he mostly goes canyoning in Jordan and Israel which has very little vegetation and is generally in desert areas. We got to the end and the visitor was impressed by the spikey tree climb, what a feat of engineering. Excellent day of canyoning.

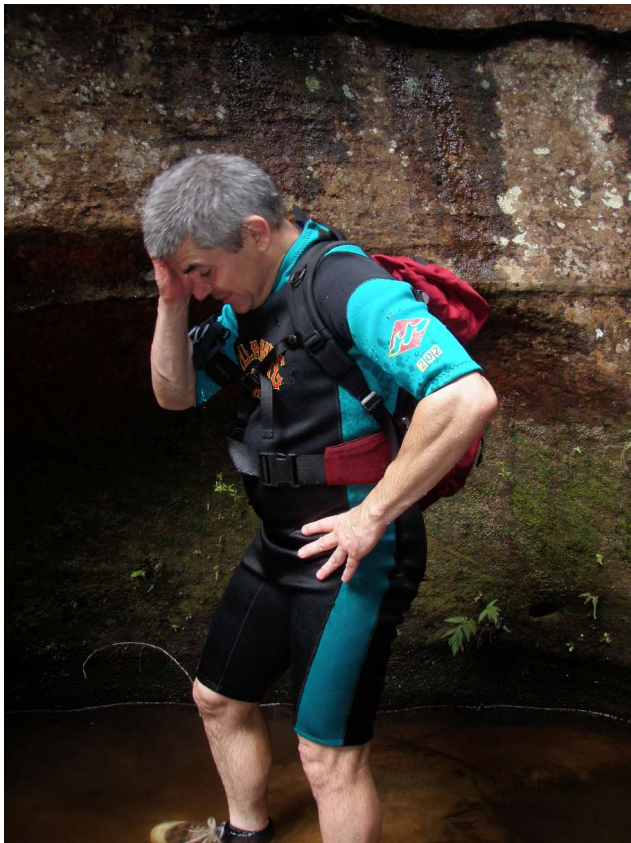
We then headed towards Katoomba as the annual dinner at the Bacchus was still on.

We had some time to kill so I decided to go down the scenic railway, we made the 2<sup>nd</sup> last trip for the day. We then came back up via the furer steps and were both delighted as we got up very close and personal with a female and male Lyrebird, as we stood very still both birds came closer and closer looking for food, wow nature at its best.

So it was back to the main street in Katoomba to meet at the Bacchus restaurant.

The food and the company were all good.

We later convened a meeting for our AGM. David Stuckey stood down as president and I was elected for president position and kept the treasurer position, Rod remained as the secretary and Johan as the safety officer and John Gray as the Dept of Fair Trading returns officer.



Jim in pain after just smashing his shin on an underwater rock

Photo: Jim Crockett

The night ended quickly for me as I was getting tired after a long day and had to return the visitor to the city.

Due to the fires the proposed trip to Fortress canyon was cancelled.

Jim

## ***Decandence Walk – Coal Seam Cave - 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2009***

Participants: David Stuckey (TL), Johan Verhagen, Julie Burton, Jim Crockett, Bob Horn, Liz Cowen, Saskia Van Der Lely, Anton Saskiasmate

Must be one of the first times in recent memory that I've driven to Kanangra Walls and not encountered sleet! We met some of the team there and prepared for an early lunch. We were, after all, on a decadence walk, so we couldn't start walking too early. Saskia, Liz and Anton were to arrive somewhat later than us, so it was agreed that we would commence walking. Johan was to leave discrete track markers, (in the form of rather garish orange coloured napkins) skewered onto twigs at crucial bifurcations in the track. These would be retrieved on the return journey. We made the coal seam cave in around 1 ½ hours. We dumped our packs and organised some firewood. Then it happened. The table cloth, silver platter, inflatable cactus, chips, biscuits, dips, cheeses, cocktail onions, olives, wines, bocconcini and basil leaves, grapes, nuts, fruits and more!



Champagne being enjoyed on Cottage Rock

Photo: Jim Crockett

Decandence with a capital “D”.



We heard voices in the distance. Liz, Saskia and Anton wandered into camp with a look of amazement across their faces. They presently added to the collection of wine in the cellar! We started the afternoon snack / feast. As the afternoon wore on, we prepared for the mighty ascent of Cottage Rock itself! More nibbles and champagne were enjoyed here. Views breathtaking! Then a surprise. The club presented me with a gift in recognition of my work for the club over the past 30 years. It was a little overwhelming as I fumbled through some words of appreciation. I was a little teary...or was it the champagne? Well, one performs these roles, not for reward, but to see the club prosper and to continue the dream of those founding members over 44 years ago. I was quite touched.

Mercifully, I ran out of words and we continued the party. As sunset approached, we wandered back to the camping cave and prepared for the main course. Jim attempted to light his charcoal bead barbeque which he'd carried all the way in. The rest of us enjoyed starters in the form of garlic bread, heated on the fire by Johan, who has now arrived at the perfect method of doing so. As the salads were presented, I commenced cooking more than 20 lamb cutlets which had been marinated with Moroccan spice. I had carried in a cast iron griddle which was perfect for the task. Jim continued fanning and urging his barbeque to light. We feasted in this fashion until night fell. Then we lit 30 tea light candles at strategic places around the cave and the transformation was magical. We started having thoughts of dessert. Jim continued fanning and urging his barbeque to light. Out came the pavlova bases, blueberries, strawberries, cream, apple crumble. Spectacular! Our bellies were starting to bulge. We wouldn't normally eat such quantities, however, this was a decadence walk. Jim continued fanning and urging his barbeque to light. Another glass of wine? Thank you!

Jim attacked the corn chips with renewed vigor. We started to lean back and address the magnificent night sky. The stars were dazzling, air like the champagne we'd just consumed. Someone let out a burp of contentment. Jim continued fanning and urging his barbeque to light.

We were all a bit weary, the excesses of the feast plus the lateness of hour, saw us looking to our sleeping bags. So the day ended, the candles winking their light way into the night.

Morning arrived with a chorus from the bush birds. It was great to be alive. Coffees and cereals appeared. We then set about cleaning up the remains of a truly decadent evening. Jim investigate his barbeque and discovered that of the dozen or so head beads which he'd put in there, only one or two had actually been consumed. His rack of lamb stood proud and raw. The roast vegetables weren't! One learns fast on these trips aye Don!

Julie departed early to catch up with friends who were descending Dione Dell canyon. We left at a more decadent time and wandered leisurely along the plateau. Diverting at one point to a rather pointless lookout. Back at the car park, we sorted out trip fees and arrangements for lunch at the Conservation Hut in Wentworth Falls. A very pleasant drive back saw us at the best table in the establishment. Right under the ceiling fan! It was starting to get very warm. We sipped our lattes and cappuccinos whilst nibbling on beautifully toasted Turkish bread sandwiches.



Enjoying lunch at the Conservation Hut  
Photo: Jim Crockett

I later surveyed our guests as to their opinion of the most decadent item...it was a split decision between the Moroccan Spiced Lamb Cutlets and the Champagne party on the summit of Cottage Rock. I personally think that the most decadent thing which I saw was the transport of a steel barbeque, head beads, rack of lamb, vegetables...the makings of a dream meal. All of which produced nothing edible! Good one Jim.

David Stuckey

# 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](mailto: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
Crikey & Bubblebath	19 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> Dec			Julie Burton 0447 604 786 julbur@tpg.com.au			16 <sup>th</sup> Dec	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Wollangambe	26 <sup>th</sup> Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Claustral	27 <sup>th</sup> Dec			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a> (that's 2 underscores)			22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Better Offer	28 <sup>th</sup> Dec			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Faulconbridge Point	3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan			Beth Little 0405 226 811 littlebeth78@hotmail.com			30 <sup>th</sup> Dec	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Kites Over Kosci	23 <sup>rd</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan			Johan Verhagen 4758 9811 johan.verhagen@sydneywater.com.au			19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	
<b>Other Info:</b> You will need to take the 25 <sup>th</sup> off since it's not a public holiday								



Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Mystery Canyon	6 <sup>th</sup> Feb			John Gray 0427 876 679 john.gray@sydneywater.com.au			2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	
<b>Other Info:</b> Johns annual birthday trip to a mystery canyon								
Franks Ravine	7 <sup>th</sup> Feb			John Gray 0427 876 679 john.gray@sydneywater.com.au			2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Freshwater	20 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> Feb			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			16 <sup>th</sup> Feb	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Myall Lakes	13 <sup>th</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup> Mar			Bob Horn 9639 3672 randphorn@optusnet.com.au		Kayak hire, if necessary	9 <sup>th</sup> Mar	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Deep Pass – Family friendly trip	27 <sup>th</sup> - 28 <sup>th</sup> Mar			Cathi Humphrey-Hood 0414 663 137 cathi@emeraldimages.com.au			23 <sup>rd</sup> Mar	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Jenolan (permit pending)	24 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> Apr		TBA	TBA		\$5 hut fees	21 <sup>st</sup> Apr	

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Tuglow (permit pending)	15 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> May			Jim Crockett 0407 284 256 jim.crockett@reach.com			11 <sup>th</sup> May	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Oaks Fire Trail	29 <sup>th</sup> May			Beth Little 0405 226 811 littlebeth78@hotmail.com			25 <sup>th</sup> May	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Barrington Tops	12 <sup>th</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup> Jun			Danielle Lewin 0404 305 878 danielle.lewin1@bigpond.com			8 <sup>th</sup> Jun	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Perisher Valley (snow-shoeing/XC skiing)	24 <sup>th</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup> Jul			Dave Stuckey 0414 590 305 dstuckey@acay.com.au			20 <sup>th</sup> Jun	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Nullabor	Aug 2010			Rod Smith 0438 444 262 <a href="mailto:roderick_smith@hotmail.com">roderick_smith@hotmail.com</a> (that's 2 underscores)			At this stage I just need expressions of interest	
<b>Other Info:</b>								

Where	When	Activity	Grade	Trip Leader	Accommodation (if applicable)	Additional Costs	Let Trip Leader Know By:	No. of Spots Left
Yarrangobilly	11 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> Sep			Beth Little 0405 226 811 littlebeth78@hotmail.com			7 <sup>th</sup> Sep	
<b>Other Info:</b>								
Gooches Crater – Decadent/Family friendly trip	16 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> Oct			TBA			12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	
<b>Other Info:</b>								