



Metropolitan Speleological Society

**Quarterly
NEWSLETTER**

Spring 2015
Issued December 2015

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Cover Shot: Abercrombie by Cathi Humphrey-Hood

Society Information

Club EPIRB

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

MSS Officers list

Position

President president@mssadventure.org.au
Secretary secretary@mssadventure.org.au
Treasurer treasurer@mssadventure.org.au
Equipment Officer equipment@mssadventure.org.au
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Jim Crockett
Rod Smith
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Jim Crockett,
Rod Smith
Natalie Etherton
Rod Smith
John Gray

Membership Fee Details

PLEASE NOTE: MSS MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE FOR 2016

Full member \$80
Family membership \$160
Prospective member \$30 (3 months)
Honorary membership \$45
Already a member of an ASF Club? \$30

Preference is for payment by Direct Debit to:
Account Name: MSS
BSB: 062-021 (Commonwealth Bank)
Account: 00901421
Cheques or Cash also accepted.

Please send an email to advise the treasurer of treasurer@mssadventure.org.au

An email from Dan Clearwater with a new book release “Canyoning in NZ”

Hi there,

My name is Dan Clearwater and I'm the author of the first and only guidebook for '[Canyoning in NZ](#)'
Since there are plenty of cavers that also go canyoning, I'm writing to a number of caving clubs to see if they are interested in publishing a small article or notice to their members about the release of the book and/or about New Zealand canyoning in general.

The new guidebook is A5, with 464 pages packed with full color maps, photographs and canyon diagrams. There are many other sections such as history, ethics, geology and technique that make the book a great resource about all aspects of canyoning in NZ.

A detailed article, as well as a selection of photos are available on request for use in your club newsletter or Facebook page.
The books are now available for sale online; <http://www.kiwicanyons.org/product/guide-book/>
I'm very happy to provide more information, or answer any questions you might have.

All the best,
Dan Clearwater
www.KiwiCanyons.org

International Congress of Speleology 2017 update

Planning for the conference is well under way and we are still looking for volunteers to help with organising field trips to Yarrangobilly during this time. We also need someone to become a camp manager for a proposed private camp ground at Penrith Museum of Fire.

If any club members are interested in helping out with this or in any other way, could you please advise Rod Smith or Jim Crockett.

We will definitely be running our own MSS trip(s) before the congress to hone our caving skills and using this time for gathering information for a future field guide.

For more information on the 2017 congress visit <http://speleo2017.caves.org.au/>

MSS Adventure Website

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

When you login to the member's area of the Website you will notice a new access method requiring a member's login and a password. This feature has been added to improve the security of the member's area.

To access the members' area the login will be your current email address and the password remains as "forester"

There is an added feature to allow you to make a password change and also if you wish to change your login to something else other than your email you can send a message to Rod at webmaster@mssadventure.org.au

For those that indulge in social media and want to see some MSS adventure in action visit: <https://www.facebook.com/MSSAdventure>



Editors 3am Raves:

Just a reminder: MSS Membership is now due for 2016.

Thankyou to the MSS crowd who voted me in as editor again for 2016. I've enjoyed this past year reading the reports as they come in, more so when I'm part of the team! The photos can be amazing, it's a pity we have to bring them down in resolution for the ease of web display. I look forward to future reports in 2016, and the super 50th MSS Celebration Edition newsletter to come out in the New Year.

Its beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Anyway above ground at least!

I would like to take the opportunity to wish every one a safe and happy holiday, wherever you may be.

-Natalie Etherton



For those that have had this dilemma, I know I have!

Trip Reports

Jenolan – 15th & 16th August

Participants: Rod Smith (TL), Dave Stuckey, Ken Harris, Marilyn Scott, Jim Crockett

Maiden Cave was the primary objective for this trip. Since this year is the fiftieth anniversary of MSS, Jim suggested we have a look at one of MSS's more significant discoveries. Although it is a restricted cave, something in the permit application convinced National Parks to let us in.

Maybe you would think the prospect of visiting a restricted cave would mean everyone was ready early Saturday morning to head underground, instead it was the typical slow start, but no-one complained. The slower start may also have been because I didn't collect the relevant keys from the guide's office until mid-morning.

Since Dave had been to Maiden before we were all hoping he would be able to locate the cave entrance in short order. All things considered we needn't have worried, Dave does seem to have quite a remarkable **m**emory for cave locations and navigation. Having now found the cave, and considering the somewhat slow start, we decided to have lunch before venturing underground. Despite being the middle of winter, we all stayed in the shade except for Ken, but Ken's always been a bit different.

Making the decision to have a look at the pitch before getting all the gear organised, I headed in. I was studying the pitch itself while Dave, who had followed me in, checked out the possible anchors. Choosing speleothems that were perfectly positioned made the anchor easy, but the rotten wood holding back a large **m**ass of rocks and rubble made the pitch look a bit questionable.

Safety being one of the concerns, we made for the entrance to get the rigging gear so we could assess the situation while being attached to an anchor. But getting out wasn't that easy for me, there is a squeeze I had **m**anaged to get into easily, with the help of gravity, but getting out was another question. I couldn't just slide up, and the angles were just all awkward. And I was going to have to come up through it again, my second attempt while wearing a harness. I was not looking forward to that.

Meteorological conditions were perfect for staying above ground, so instead we went under. There was not sufficient room above the pitch for everyone, so only Dave and Jim went in to rig the single pitch. Dave secured the webbing to the column, the rope to the webbing, and himself to the rope. Dave assessed the **m**ass of rotten timber and rubble, determining it was too risky to descend with things as they were. The suitable relocation of materials began while those of us above ground could only listen on. When some sizable rocks were uncovered it raised the question of whether we'd be going in at all, but after these were **m**an-handled out of the way the pitch was suddenly quite clear and the trip was on.

So with Dave still on rope he descended first, followed by Jim, Marilyn, myself and Ken. Ken received a slap on the wrist for using a twisted knot to descend on, he'd forgotten his descender. I was looking behind **M**arilyn when I saw something moving, there was a large leech crawling on some decoration. Considering I saw it in a section of cave we hadn't entered yet I believe it had fallen in previously and had not been sucking on any of us.

Meandering down a couple of the branches of the cave we soon found some of the marvels lurking in this subterranean lair. It may not be the most heavily decorated cave, but what is there is great, and it is very special to us as it was earlier members of MSS that opened it up. Thankfully Jim took a number of photos, **m**y camera complained of a flat battery. Although we saw most of the cave we didn't go beyond where the sump was first discovered. There was no water at that height now, but the drop into the hole is more than slightly vertical and high enough to be awkward. A reason to go back?

Magnificent cave now explored it was time to exit. We each took our turn ascending, then out to the blue sky beyond. Not a long day's caving, but thoroughly enjoyable. The pitch was then de-rigged and the gear stowed for the walk back to the vehicles.

I awoke Sunday morning refreshed and ready for anything. The morning's conversation began with "we have to make use of the Mammoth key since we have it". But which section of Mammoth? We quickly **m**ade up minds to see everything.

Up to the cave entrance we decided to start by going north and we were soon in the Railway Tunnel, over the Sugar Cubes and a quick run around the Naked Lady Circuit. We were travelling so fast that I needed a rest before we dropped down to Central River.

Of course, with so much cave to go, we didn't stop for long. Moving rapidly past Central River then into the Middle Bit we soon found the 99% Friction Squeeze. After then doing the 100% Friction Squeeze I can report that the 1% makes all the difference. It may not seem like much, but I can say this with certainty **b**ecause I had to put in 1% more effort to get through the second squeeze.

I was really happy we'd made it to Great North Cavern and Twiddly-Om-Pom, it's amazing, however we **d**idn't have time for photos. We also inspected the Infinite Crawl, which does go and go and go and go and go and go, but does come to an end. I don't remember all the names for the various parts, but we went here **a**nd there and everywhere in between.

Don't start thinking it was all plain sailing though. It started with some bruises and a bit of blood, but you know it's getting ridiculous when Marilyn breaks her leg. Still, she didn't let it slow her down. You know what followed, Dave and I both broke our legs in separate incidents. You're probably thinking that never happened, well, read on.

Never to let injuries get in the way of good caving, or a good (or bad) story, we ploughed on. I said, "we're gonna have to go even faster", so we did. Through the Horseshoe Chamber it was time to head south. Let's give the Mammoth squeeze a crack, no pun intended.

You know we chose that option for the challenge, especially carrying the injuries we had, and we'd come up the Forty Footer on the way out for the same reason. But I'm getting ahead of myself. I reckon we'll never see so much of Mammoth again, considering we didn't stop at Lower River, determined that we were gonna get to Slug Lake.

Let it be known that we achieved that goal, even with the detour into Oolite. I know what you're thinking, you missed some of the side bits on the way south, but we didn't. On our way back from the south we went down to Grinning Monster Lake, and any other hole we could find.

Never one to brag, I have to admit we did a pretty thorough job of seeing Mammoth. The next challenge is gonna have to be tough to beat that. As we walked back to the cars we discussed options, maybe we could run to and from Colong when we do it in November. During the day plenty of other options were tossed around, but we couldn't decide on any that were acceptable. Back to the Cavers Cottage to clean and tidy, and then we were on our way home. Still thinking about appropriate challenges, maybe we should include a desert?

You missed a great trip.

Rod

Jenolan – 18th-19th September

Participants: Marilyn Scott, Catherine McLachlan, Mark Hornshaw, Ilka Hornshaw, Sam Hornshaw, Jarvis Hornshaw, Kye Hornshaw, Hugo Hornshaw, Renata Hornshaw, Minnie Hornshaw, Rod Smith (TL)

I arrived Friday night after a non-eventful drive to find one familiar face, and a few non-familiar faces. I was introduced to Mark and his boys, the girls were already in bed. It wasn't long before everyone else was in bed, which seemed like a good idea to me, so I went to sleep as well.

Saturday morning I was introduced to the rest of the family. Although the girls wouldn't be caving with us on this trip, it's quite likely they will be at some point in the future.

I went down to the guides office to get the various keys, and found out that my plans for the weekend were going to have to change. I had intended to do Aladdin on Sunday, but they were running a tour into Aladdin then. I had decided I wanted to do Aladdin, so I decided we'd do that Saturday with a short trip into Mammoth on Sunday.

Once Catherine arrived we got ourselves organised to go caving. The weather was a bit miserable, but it doesn't rain underground, and the walk's not too long.

We found Aladdin cave right where I left it, which makes things easier. We also had the correct key, so we were able to get in out of the rain without too much fuss. After a short stop to allow our eyes to adjust to the diminished light, we delved further into the subterranean lair.

Having been a few years since I was last in Aladdin I became navigationally challenged in one section, but only momentarily. Once the correct hole was identified we pressed on, soon arriving at the chamber marked by the old spikes



embedded in the rock to aid cavers in negotiating their descent. I was very pleased to see everyone keeping pace and moving confidently through the cave.

Down the ladder and the slippery slope we arrived at the junction with the two alternatives to view the pretties of Aladdin. After a brief description of what they'll find, and some other important notes, I sent people off in both directions to enjoy the wonders Aladdin has to offer.

With everyone else occupied I decided to have a look at the other side of the slope, where I'd seen on a map that there was some more to the cave. It didn't take long before I realised further progress was going to be awkward, especially for me. The way on was a small vertical rift, and I certainly wasn't going to push it without anyone knowing where I'd gone.

I was soon able to grab Marilyn and Catherine to have a look at the rift. With the aid of a roll of webbing for a handline both Marilyn and Catherine were able to descend through the rift without much difficulty, and we decided it was safe enough for everyone else to join them. With the rest of the group down I decided to have a go, but obviously the rift had shrunk after they went through, because I was unable to fit.

I'm guessing I didn't miss out on too much as it wasn't long before people were ready to ascend once again. Some made the ascent look easy, others not so much. And then there was Marilyn. She required a loop tied on the webbing for a foothold, and then me hauling on it to try and help lift her up. Inch by inch she slower made her way higher into the rift and then eventually out the top. Although it would have felt like hours I'm sure Marilyn was up in less than ten minutes.

Marilyn decided to have a rest while waiting for the next person to get up, the problem with that was that Catherine's head was already appearing at the top of the rift, having made the climb in a matter of seconds.



I'm sure even Marilyn saw the humor in the contrast of speed's exhibited.

With everyone out of the rift, and no more cave to explore, we headed for the surface, but only after having lunch.

The weather hadn't improved while we were underground, but it hadn't gotten any worse either.

That evening the Hornshaw clan went down to Blue Lake to look for Platypuses. Apparently they didn't see any, but they did see bubbles from animals under the water which could have been platypuses.





Sunday morning the weather was a little better as we headed for Mammoth. I decided to test everyone's nerves by getting them to try the Mammoth Squeeze.

The route to the squeeze was shorter than I remembered, and we saw plenty of bats on the way. At the squeeze I sent Marilyn in first. Ky was keen to have a go, but I wanted Marilyn to get right through before he tried it. Unfortunately Marilyn piked halfway, but she did manage to turn around in the middle of the squeeze to be able to come out head first.

Since Marilyn hadn't gone through I ask Catherine to have a go. Again Catherine made light work of it and was soon on the other side. With Ky still keen somehow Hugo managed to jump the queue and entered next. Ky finally got his chance next and, considering they are both quite small, they both got through quite easily.

All three returned before Jarvis, Sam and Mark had a go. Jarvis got round the first corner before deciding he was probably too tall. Sam and Mark didn't even get that far.

(In case you're wondering, I didn't bother even trying)

After looking in a few other holes we heading back to the entrance chamber.

We still had some time so I decided to show them a slightly bigger section of the cave than the squeeze, we visited the Horseshoe Chamber. While there we went to have a look at the Skull and Crossbones. Then we turned around and headed out.



A nice little introduction to Jenolan for a group that had mostly never been there before. There's plenty more to see!

Rod.

Pierces Pass – Blue Mountains

27th September 2015

Participants: Helena C (TL), Chris Johnstone, Ben Johnstone, Owen Johnstone , Rod Smith

It was a glorious morning when we swarmed the car park, all five of us, and geared up ready for the walk to the top point. Only a short walk to the start point where I made a conscience decision of not looking over or down..... or anywhere that may make it clear exactly how far up we were. Rod was not trusting the anchor point alone (good man!!) so headed off to find backup anchors.

Once all the ropes were anchored and ready the main rope was tossed over the side. It surprised us the way it went, in a large arc at high speed with a very loud crack when all the rope was over. Guess we shouldn't have been that surprised as it was 200 meters of rope with not much to stop it falling.

With only the five of us, and two of those being kids, we needed to think of a logical and realistic order for us to proceed. Discussions started, maybe sending 11 year old Owen first is not the smartest thing to do..... maybe we could send Ben and Owen at the same time to bump up the weight..... maybe leave the kids at the top to come last on their own..... The logical idea was to send 'lucky' me first and leave the two other adults to manage getting the kids down.



I approached the top with a lump in my throat and a continued resolve that I would not look down. Not looking down or over an edge (only the peripherals) until I am at least 5 meters from the top is a philosophy which has got me through nearly all of my abseils. I was not intending on breaking that strategy now. I checked, and rechecked, and got Rod to check, and got Chris to check, and rechecked my gear (hey! A girl can never be too careful). Then I hooked on and started to make my way over the edge in a graceful and elegant manner..... or more like on all fours mumbling a number of words I wouldn't repeat in front of my mother as I slithered over the edge.

I was over, and on my way down. The exceptional thing about overhung abseils is that you start to turn, no matter how hard you don't want to look out or down you are just forced to suck it up and look. And so I looked.... What a long way up! It is also at this point any fear leaves as there is nothing you can do now but keep going down.

I made it down to a ledge about 20 meters from the bottom where the rope decided to bundle up. It was quickly sent on its way to the bottom with me following. I was down, I was in a tree, not quite the right direction I wanted the rope to go but with some tugging and fiddling it was sorted.

We had taken walkie talkies as there was no other way of getting a message back to the top. Once off rope I let them know then waited. Back up at the top they tried to get Ben top go but he backed out. It was then time for Owen to go. Being such a beefy child of less than 30kg he got over the edge but did not have the weight or the strength to feed the rope up to get some momentum started. Alas, they had to pull him back up. There was an option to use Rod's descender but a change of equipment at the last minute is never a good idea. Attempt number two for Ben, still no go. Then other people turn up.

Sitting at the bottom, waiting, waiting I get a message over the walkie talkie. "The base jumpers have just turned up so if you see someone falling over the edge, don't worry, it isn't one of the kids." Glad they warned me. It was pretty amazing to see these people coming over the top and hearing the parachutes open. I couldn't imagine where they'd be landing.

It was now Chris' turn and he was on rope and over with what I hear was as much style and grace as myself. He made it down without incident and had the adrenaline going. I agreed it really is a long way down. We then both waited while there was a third and final attempt to see if Ben would come but it wasn't going to happen. Rod also decided that he didn't 'need' to do the abseil this time as he had done it before. So myself and Chris started the walk out and Rod was left with the joys of two kids and a long rope to pull back up.

Note to self: the longer the abseil the longer the walk back out.



GLENROCK CAVES

Date: 2nd-5th October 2015

Participants: Brian Reeves (Trip Leader, NHVSS), Rod Smith, Daniel Burt, Melissa Hadley, Blade, Ken Harris, Cathi, Elswyth and Aengus Porter, Marcela and Nick Payne

Report by: Cathi

Having not been to Glenrock before, I arranged to meet Brian at the small township of Gundy (Ken missed us altogether and ended up exploring the area a little more completely than he had originally intended). The gate into Brian's camping area on the Glenrock Station looks just like every other gate along the road and can be somewhat easy to miss, so I was very glad that we caught up with Brian first (even if we did have a short game of phone tag along the highway).



Above from left to right: G1, Rod hitchhiking to the cave, and Daniel showing Blade the secrets of limestone

Arriving mid-afternoon, we had the benefit of daylight while setting up camp. At some stage during the evening, Ken came to join us, having been escorted in by one of the station hands, Melissa, Daniel and Blade arrived with their funky camping setup, and Rod rattled in shortly before midnight. A blazing campfire set the scene for the waning moon rising over the trees.

The next morning heralded a warm and sunny day. Brian rigged up G1, all the while pointing out the fact that cave holes were everywhere. G1 was a rather nice drop of 12m or so into a pit with a tunnel leading down... and it smelled rather bad. In fact it seems that the caves of Glenrock act something in the manner of wildlife traps - all of which is adding new calcium to the karst, but the decomposition process doesn't do the cave's aroma any good at all. After skirting around the latest victim, we climbed down and around some short passages with a small amount of decoration. When it was time to leave the cave, Brian hauled Blade up on a rope and the rest of us climbed up the ladder. I had forgotten how horrible ladders were to climb & ran out of puff just before the top.

After de-rigging the cave we went wandering off in search of other caves to the east of the camp. It was a beautiful day, rather warm, with clear blue skies.



Brian had a lot of tagged caves on his list that he wanted to confirm the locations of. Most of these were simply small holes, some were a little deeper. Rod, Melissa and Ken dropped into a couple of these to see if they went anywhere but most of them were not very promising.



Above: Searching for holes with little pieces of numbered aluminium on them...

After combing the area for a while and matching a few tags to Brian's list, we returned to camp. Nick and Marcella, our new recruits, arrived a little later in the evening and Brian promised to drop them down G1 the next day before we went off to do "Death Trap".



We had another day of beautiful weather, though it was starting to get rather warm. Brian rigged up G1 again and Nick and Marcella zipped down into it to have a look around. They both did a really good job negotiating the drop and getting back up after exploring.

After some discussions about the best ways to get up (and down) ropes in general, we geared up for G124 "Death Trap".

With a name like Death Trap, how could it possibly disappoint? For future reference, I need to remember that when Rod says something like "I can't fit through that cave", that there's not going to be much room to move. And so it proved! As the first victim down, and not knowing the cave, I wiggled and twisted and swore around the jagged bits, and with Aengus sounding nervous above I suggested to Brian that Aengus should make the call as to whether he wanted to come down or not. I probably should have encouraged him, but wasn't sure if it wasn't going to get even tighter in the near future. It did open out a little but (from the bits I've seen of it), it was never going to be a cave that could be described as spacious. Being tiny, young Blade

had little difficulty sliding through the opening under Melissa's watchful eye, and he made it look all too easy. After Melissa, Daniel came down, followed by Nick, Marcella and Ken. It is an interesting cave - there were some nice decorative walls, and it felt damp, with some actively forming straws scattered here and there.





Above: The beautifully-named "Death Trap", which even looks the part right from the beginning. Daniel negotiates a narrow spot and Brian demonstrates one way to help a small child out of a tight cave :-)

We stopped in a lightly decorated chamber which was wide enough for everyone to sit (but not to comfortably turn around) in. Through a hole we could see the cave continued at least a little further. However, not only was the hole rather tight, but it appeared to drop without any footholds below.

Ken, being rather svelte, volunteered to see if he could fit through (as indeed he did) but without any ropes wasn't able to drop through and so climbed back out again. Thus there remains the possibility for some future exploration.



Above: Ken testing for footholds, and a sample of the decoration in the 'large' chamber.

Eventually we turned around and began the struggle to extricate ourselves from the confines of Death Trap. A nice crop of bruises testified to the enjoyable time had by all.

Brian wanted to look for some more 'missing' caves on the other side of the road, so with Rod, Ken and myself, he set off to trudge the paddocks in search of some of the more elusive of the previously tagged caves on his list. A mapping error caused by a twisting overlay had translated into co-ordinates such that the further one went, the greater the distortion.



Above: Synchronised fence crossing, and a red-bellied local inhabitant.

We had a good look around one hill where it appeared a storm had tracked directly along a ridge in the very near past - trees were snapped like kindling and one uprooted tree had sheared the rocks in its roots in half when it fell. All the extra foliage and debris didn't help when looking for the missing cave. One in particular was eluding Brian, and with his blood-clotted leg causing him pain, Rod, Ken and I set off down the hill into a valley to see if the missing cave was 'just over there'.

The idea was that we would pick our way down the hill and go out via the creek to the road, but after going part-way up the next hill to see if the missing cave was 'just over there', we decided to continue back up.



I was having a few misgivings about the knee-high grass (perfect snake territory) when lo and behold, I turned my head to find one watching me! All desire for further exploration promptly evaporated at that point, and as the sun was starting to slide toward the horizon, I was relieved when Rod suggested the elusive cave could wait till next time. We met Brian at the top of the hill, inspected another couple of dolines and made our way back to camp. Brian had rigged some camp showers and it felt wonderful to clean up.

The next day was still hot, and still sunny, and packing the car was a bit of an effort. Brian had suggested stopping to see (and try out) a swimming hole on the way back out, and while I would have liked to, Elswyth and Aengus were getting anxious to return home and they didn't want to stop. So we continued on, and will have a look at the swimming spot next time. All in all it was a most enjoyable caving experience, thanks to Brian's organisation and the effort he has put in to build a functional but minimalist camp site as a base for exploring the caves of Glenrock.

Abercrombie Caves

5th - 6th December

Participants: Paul Richards, Bob Horm, Pam Horn, George Anderson, Leonie Anderson, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Elswyth Porter, Aengus Porter, Chris Johnstone, Helena Johnstone, Ben Johnstone, Owen Johnstone, Mark Hornshaw, Elka Hornshaw, Sam Hornshaw, Jarvis Hornshaw, Hugo Hornshaw, Kye Hornshaw, Renata Hornshaw, Minnie Hornshaw, Rod Smith (TL)

I drove into to Abercrombie Caves at about 10:00pm Friday night. In the main area I found Chris, the Johnstones having beat me by about 5 minutes. I continued on to the camp ground to find Cathi and kids, Bob and Pam, and the Hornshaw tribe. I was the last to arrive on Friday.

I was enjoying a sleep in Saturday morning when I heard a car pull up. Paul had left Portland around 5am and so arrived while it was still quite early, for a weekend. George and Leonie arrived a couple of hours later.

A few of us went to see the guides, to find that we didn't have a permit! It appears the paperwork was lost somewhere. But, not to worry, I filled in another permit application and it was approved on the spot. Now we just needed to plan our activities.

We all made our way to the main arch. Paul, having work as a guide at Jenolan in the past, offered to give half the group a guided tour through the arch and some of the tourist caves. I took the rest onto the arch to look for tags I had been yet to find.



Initially we didn't find much at all, but were soon able to find some of the tags I'd already GPSed. We kept searching, with the kids calling out numbers on tags, only to find I'd already GPSed them. Then Hugo called out a number I didn't have. I immediately made my way over to him to GPS the location. My goal on each Abercrombie trip is to find at least one tag I hadn't found before, so this trip was now a success.



We joined the rest of the group as they emerged from the arch, and there I found another tag I hadn't seen before.



Paul continued the tour through Bushrangers before we returned to camp for lunch. There was talk about walking down to Grove Falls, which Bob informed us was equivalent to Grove Dribble at that time. I think it was the heat that changed everyone's mind. It wasn't too hot, but it was noticeably cooling underground, and I decided to go for a swim. So all but me went to look at Grove Cave while I crossed the creek looking for more tags.

Everyone else, in two separate groups so we didn't have too many people in the same cave at the same time, had a look through Grove Cave. In the meantime I found another tag.

As the others returned I informed them of my discovery, and a few of the kids came across to check out the tagged cave. Although not massive, it did have a dark zone. Above this cave was another cave, but I couldn't find a tag on it. Eventually I found a nail without the tag and I suspect it's been removed or fell off.

With one other likely hole a bit too difficult to reach I swam back across the creek to join those on the other shore. The rest of the afternoon was rather leisurely with some of the kids playing in the swimming hole and everyone else just lazing around.

That evening the fire was lit and a couple of camp ovens placed around it. A jaffle iron also made an appearance.

Once the sun set the children were given glow-sticks. We also suspect they were given red cordial as they all started running around all over the campsite and making a lot of noise. Thankfully that didn't last long and they drifted off to sleep. Most of the adults were happy to do the same thing.



Sunday morning continued at the leisurely pace with mostly packing up occurring. No-one felt like caving.

At 11am we started the AGM. Not surprisingly there wasn't anything controversial, which meant the meeting was over in about 50 minutes. (The minutes are at the end of the newsletter).

We then went home. Another top trip concluded.

Rod.

Trip Calendar

December 26th
Canyoning
Wollongambe

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Grade: Easy

December 27th & 28th
Canyoning
Area TBA

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Grade: TBA

January 16th & 17th
Canyoning
Glen Davis

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Grade: Medium/Hard



February 6th
Canyoning
Kanangra Main

Trip Leader: Rod Smith
Contact 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Grade: Hard



May/June
Caving
Jenolan

Trip Leader: Chris Johnstone
Contact 0438 444 262, roderick_smith@hotmail.com
Grade: Easy/Medium TBA



May/June
Caving
Yagby

Trip Leader: Beth Little
Contact: littlebeth78@hotmail.com
Grade: Medium/Tricky
This will be a joint trip with CSS to work on details of the UIS pre-conference trip.



MSS 50th Annual General Meeting, 6/12/2015

Held at Abercrombie Caves

Meeting Opened: 10:55am

Present:

Rod Smith, Cathi Humphrey-Hood, Chris Johnstone, Helena Johnstone, Paul Richards, Bob Horn, Pam Horn, George Anderson, Leonie Anderson, Mark Hornshaw

Apologies:

Marilyn Scott, Beth Little, Jim Crockett, Ken Harris, Catherine McLachlan, Tony Le, Angus Wildie

Any Corrections to Previous Meetings Minutes:

None

Correspondence:

Post:

Paul Richards has written up notes about MSS for the last 20 years. This will go with the notes he's written previously for the 21st and 30th.

Peter Dykes has sent through a loan agreement for MSS equipment he is borrowing for the Lithgow-Mudgee project.

Email:

Caves Australia 201

Committee Members Reports:

President – None

Treasurer – Motion by Helena (second Bob) to leave fees at

Full member \$80

Prospective member \$30

Family membership \$160

Honorary membership \$45

Cavers already registered with ASF (other clubs) \$30

Carried

Bank balance around \$4500.00. A full report will be submitted soon.

Equipment Officer – None

Training Officer – None

Librarian – None

Web Manager – Some changes were made to the website during the year, primarily regarding the login and passwords people use, plus the addition of a forum. Continued work is planned for 2016. Bob Horn pointed out there was some confusion around the login page. Rod will look at the wording on the login page with the aim of clarifying the wording.

Elections:

President declared all positions vacant and called for nominations. Officers elected:

Position	Name
President	Jim Crockett
Secretary	Roderick Smith
Treasurer	Cathi Humphrey-Hood
Equipment Officer	Jim Crockett
Librarian	Roderick Smith
Training Officer	Beth Little
ASF Liaison	Jim Crockett, Roderick Smith
Newsletter Editor(s)	Natalie Etherton

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: The work continues. On the current trip, with the assistance of other cavers, notably Hugo Hornshaw, I was able to locate 3 more tags and another feature with tag missing (there was a nail with no tag attached)

Documentation – Chris Johnstone: First draft done, gone out with some feedback. Another draft to be put together then sent to everyone again for comment.

Electronic Meetings – Rod Smith: A forum has been set up and used for the first time as part of this meeting. There were not a lot of comments, but this is probably due, at least in part, to the fact that this is the first time we've used it.

UIS Yarrangobilly trip – Cathi Humphrey-Hood: A meeting was held with representatives from CSS on 1st December at Canada Bay SES Headquarters. By the end of the meeting a tentative plan had been made and a tentative price of \$800.00 per person for a pre-conference trip determined. We are now negotiating the finer details with all relevant parties.

New Business:

Mark mentioned a website called meetup and suggested this could be used by MSS to help organise trips. Action Item – Mark to investigate the feasibility of MSS using meetup as part of organising trips.

Rod felt that it was time to review the website content. After a brief discussion it was decided that Rod would create a new forum topic to review website static content. Action Item – Rod to create new forum topic.

Paul made a general enquiry about whether ASF or MSS created id cards for members.

The MSS Committee, on behalf of MSS, would like to thank Beth for the wonderful job she did organising the 50th celebrations recently. She put in a fantastic amount of effort which was appreciated by all who attended.

New trips –

Date	Leader	Activity	Location	Grade	Notes
26 th Dec		Canyoning	Wollangambe 1	Easy	
27 th Dec		Canyoning			
28 th Dec		Canyoning			
16 th -17 th Jan	Rod	Canyoning	Glen Davis	Medium/Hard	
6 th Feb	Rod	Canyoning	Kanangra Main	Hard	
May-June	Chris	Caving	Jenolan		
May or June	Beth	Caving	Yagby		This will be a joint trip with CSS to work on details of the UIS pre-conference trip.
	Rod or Jim	Caving	Cliefden	Easy	

Next Meeting: Canada Bay SES 11th Feb

Meeting Closed: 11:45am