



# UNE Mountaineering Club

## Term 3 Newsletter 2004

They say a change is as good as a holiday and over the holidays a few changes have taken place.

Peter Stonestreet has handed in his thesis and soon will be off to continue travelling the world. It has been great and we will miss you! The organisation of caving trips will

be taken over by Karen and we are joined by Aumony Forsyth as our new Treasurer.

And just for something new I have also started a new job. Changes all round for everyone.

Brendan (Skip) Heywood  
Club President

## Trip Reports

### Moparrabah Caves – 12-13 June 2004

We headed off from the shed early on the Saturday morning in search of the Moparrabah caves west of Kempsey. Karen, Pete, Hanne, Take and myself piled into two cars full of gear as we headed off down waterfall way. The trip took around three hours on the winding dirt road speckled with warning signs which both scared and amused our foreign legion – in one 200 metre stretch Hanne counted 12 warning signs – loose surface, falling rocks, do not stop, soft edges, steep descent...they never seemed to stop.

A creek crossing or two amazed Take – he didn't believe the car would make it through (Such little faith in the trusty corolla). Finally we arrived at the owner's property where Pete was to play geologist

and identify some rocks for him. He managed well, only falling short on one difficult specimen – limestone.



Pete doing a 'geological survey'

We took the farmers directions and headed back the way we came till we found the property. We drove in, the only directions we had were Matt Pines memory of camping in a 'scary forest'. We found the scary forest, had a feed then headed off to find the caves. About half an hour later with no luck we chased down a man driving through the

property and he told us we were about a k away from them. We piled back into the cars and headed off to find a wonderful campsite out of the scary forest and next to a waterfall.

The caves were easy to find from this site, so we got straight into it. Upon finding the entrance we had an explore, finding one main route further into the caves. A few good squeezes followed but nothing too contorting. Take turned out to love the dirt, throwing his frame into any hole he could find. There wasn't much wildlife save for thousands of flies and about as many big nasty spiders.



Take

Eventually we came across 'Morris', the dead fox. The poor fella must have taken a bit of 1080 and wandered into the caves, which explained the flies, and meant we couldn't keep blaming the smell on Pete's chilli eating habits. Soon we came across 'the bat cave', a nesting site with hundreds of bats crammed into huddles on the roof. As we continued, we found some nice limestone formations riddled with shells. Sadly, there were no active formations in the system as they had dried out, however this meant we stayed pretty clean. On our way out we played in some squeezes, Karen managing to find some really nice, tight ones. We waited in the entrance cavern till dusk and had

the experience of having a seemingly endless stream of bats fly past us and out the entrance for their nightly feed. It was an amazing scene to be surrounded by bats and not getting hit by any.



Holy bat cluster!

The next day we explored further up the ridge, finding a small cave with some active formations at its end, but nothing too astounding. We encountered a seemingly impenetrable thicket of lantana which we thought separated us from another system. We eventually decided to go and do the cave we did the day before again, but as we were wandering down the hill, who emerged from the thick lantana but a bunch of 'Tamworth Boys brigade' members who had charged through it. We had a quick conversation about the caves in the area and it seemed they weren't telling us all they knew, so we headed off for a quick crawl through the old system. After finishing this relatively quickly now we knew where we were going, we packed up camp and headed off back home to leave the Boys Brigade members to their fun.

They weren't the largest, most exciting or most spectacular caves we've seen, but they were still interesting and definitely worth the trip.

Sam Hull

# Kayaking, Nymboida River, Buccarumbi to Jackadgery – 10-12 April 2004

On the April long weekend, four members of UNEMC joined a father and son team of Dave and Leigh Hancock to paddle a section of the Nymboida river. We wanted to get away for a couple of days, enjoy some nice scenery and have some fun. Robbie and Jen Blair, Kath Taylor and Sam Hull met with Dave and Leigh at Goolang Creek on the Friday and immediately got on the water, having a muck around before the big trip. It was decided to do the Buccarumbi to Jackadgery section of the river, a relatively easy two/three day trip with a smattering of whitewater up to grade 4.

Saturday morning we left the centre and began the long car shuffle to our destination. Finally completed we set off at 1pm, much later than expected. The paddling on the first day was generally mediocre, with long flat sections and some small grade 2's. The river level was much lower than normally paddled (more than a metre lower than good levels) and as a result the trip was not quick as expected. We were aiming for Ramornie campsite on the first night but ended up at a fantastic spot on the right bank a few kilometres upstream.

The next day we awoke in anticipation. Day two of this trip is generally the best as it includes the gorge, which contains most of the notable rapids on this section. After paddling all morning we soon realised our dream to have made Ramornie by the first day was a little misguided in the low water. We stopped for lunch, avoided

some car campers set up next to the pit toilets and then headed on our way, glad we decided not to push on the day before. The distance between the rapids gradually shortened as we descended further into the gorge and soon we encountered Exhibition, the first 'bigger' rapid as a medium to large grade 2. As expected in the low water, the rapid was nowhere near as entertaining as normal, with the wave train below it shortened considerably. The largest rapid on the trip, Cunglebung creek falls, was deemed unrunnable in the low water, as it revealed a few large rocks in the main chute on the second stage of the falls and was very bony all round. It was decided to portage on the left side – this was meant to be a relaxing trip, after all.

Most of the rapids on this section became rather plain in the low water, and we managed to reach the Junction (Our second nights camp) by 3pm. The Junction is a beautiful campsite located at the confluence of the Mitchell/ Mann and the Nymboida. It is here the Nymboida 'turns into' the Mann and winds its way to Jackadgery.

The last day contained two of the largest rapids on the trip, Bridal veil (Junction falls) and New Zealand Falls. Bridal Veil proved to be wetter and bonier than expected for Sam, who decided to treat the latter half as a big slippery slide. We eventually made it to New Zealand Falls, a grade 3/4 which is pretty straightforward. We scouted,

discussed the main line, set up a safety and then ran it. Robbie took the first plunge, then Dave in the Canoe, Sam and finally Kath and Jenny. Kath rolled on the first attempt down so dragged her boat back up to run it again. Dave paddled his kayak down a different line and tried boofing off the rock ledge just to the left of the normal chute, managing to get quite a bit of air.

The rest of the trip was basically flat water all the way to Jackadgery where we carried the boats up the

hill to the cars. A quick pick up of Sam's car from Buccarumbi and we were on our way.

It was a great trip – we managed to do what we had intended, which was to get away, enjoy some good company and have some fun. This trip can be recommended for beginners in low water and hopefully later in the year we will run a trip on the section for those interested.

See you on the Water!

Sam Hull

## Bushwalking the Gibraltar range and washpool national parks - 23/24 May 2004



Mulligan's Hut in Gibraltar NP

An early start greeted 9 members of UNEMC who were ready to go walking. After loading more eskies than expected into Craig's Ute (Its true, our members *are* getting softer) we headed off in convey to ... Sam's house, to get a unicycle. After everything was in order we set off on the highway towards Gibraltar range. The trip was punctuated with much ruffian tomfoolery and ducks. In fact, Sam's car managed to hit a duck on the way, and this was eventually attached permanently using a

cable tie, attracting all kinds of strange looks at service stations. The cars jostled for first place during the trip but eventually Craig's charge up the hill overtook Sam's piss weak Corolla (Obviously slowed down considerably by the duck) and proceeded to lead us into the abyss.

We finally arrived at our destination, set up camp, and got ready to head off to the needles. This short walk was quite

entertaining as we found our legs and got into the rhythm. On the way it seemed the whole campsite's toilet facilities had been marked off in a police investigation leading to some concern.



The needles

The needles were as neddilie as ever and more time was spent taking photos of a flower than looking at the rock. The grand vista in front of us was more than enough reward for the long and arduous walk we had just completed (all 2.5 km of it!).

Arriving back at camp Craig commented on the fact that the duck didn't smell too bad given the fact it had been sitting on the car all day in the sun. Someone pointed out it was a *rubber* duck, and they don't go off. A quick lunch and we headed off to Dandahara falls. This nice 8km walk features lots and lots of stairs (Over 300). On the way down some members fantasised about 'making like a salmon' and swimming back up the waterfall. Numerous impersonations of salmon talking followed, the accent taking on a short, Gary Colemanesq American tinge. It was decided that 'Git on up!' was the Salmon's catch cry, and it could be heard ringing through the trees. Was this mindless banter the effect of the rhythmic decent of the stairs

or of a much darker, melancholy infirmness of mind caused by years of hard labour? I'll leave you to decide...

Finally reaching the falls, all talk of salmon, ducks and stairs evaporated we struggled to find the waterfall. The fact that it was over 70 metres high and obviously downstream didn't help. Eventually through some expert navigational skills (follow the water) we came across it and sat in silence enjoying the area.



The trudge back up the stairs wasn't as bad as expected, all of the group arriving back at camp well before sundown.

Dinner was made, marshmallows toasted, port drunk (Takeshi putting in a fine effort to polish off a bottle of Burgess hardware port) and then we relaxed at the fire. Eventually it was decided to have a throw of the fire sticks with Take and Danielle taking the plunge and trusting Sam with their hair and lives. Following this a small group headed off spotlighting and found what we think roughly resembled an animal of the fauna variety, however it could have just been Take in bad light.

The next morning the clouds were shining and the birds complaining

as we ate brekkie and packed up camp. We headed off for Washpool where we completed the Washpool walk (funny that). The walk was quite entertaining and we encountered a lyrebird couple, some beautiful red cedars and the always fascinating rainforest. Morning tea included some 'Bush tucker' Sam found, who was quite surprised what the international students would actually eat.

We stopped at Summit creek falls for a quick look and a photo op then had lunch at the last creek crossing before heading back to the cars.

On the way home we decided to stop at Raspberry, Lookout! And the Celtic stones at Glen Innes. Eventually we made it back to Armidale safe and sound in one piece, despite numerous near microsleeps by some of the drivers. It was a fantastic trip, suitable for walkers of all abilities and featured a variety of ecosystems. We hope to do a longer, five day walk through the area later in the year, so stay tuned.

Sam Hull



Top from left: Hanne, Take, Kim, Craig  
Bottom from left: Julie, Joan, Sam and Danielle

# Meet the crew

President

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White water

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Caving

**Karen Marshal**

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If you are keen to help out we would love to hear from you. Contact any of us if you or a friend could help out.

# Free or cheap gear hire

The club maintains a fair amount of gear for the activities we do. We have Canoes and Kayaks with all the associated gear, a Climbing rack and ropes, Canyoning ropes, Camping gear (tents, stoves, sleeping mats), Caving helmets and headlamps, a GPS, an EPIRB and various other bits and pieces. All of this gear is available for free if you are on a club trip or for a minimal fee for private trips.

We are a non-profit club and the fees only cover the maintenance of our gear.

## Our website

On our website you can find information about all of our activities and as we do trips we will put up trip reports and photos. If you have any contributions you would like to make please contact any of the committee members.

<http://www.une.edu.au/unemc/>

## Our email list

All members will receive a newsletter (choose either paper or email) once a term with the schedule of activities and trip reports from the last term. If you would like to be on our mailing list make sure you correctly fill out your email on the membership form. You can also join the email list at any time by visiting:

<http://pobox.une.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/unemc>

You can send a message to everyone subscribed on the list via the following email address. Feel free to ask questions on the list or use it to find people for trips etc. We are a friendly bunch and don't bite.

[unemc@une.edu.au](mailto:unemc@une.edu.au)

## Mountain Biking email list

There is also another email list just for Mountain Biking. For more information contact Mark Trotter our MTB coordinator or visit this URL:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ArmidaleMTB/>



# Term 3 Events

## Regular events

Contact details

### Indoor Climbing – 6pm Tue and Thur nights

Indoor climbing is not as hard as it looks. Just wander in and give it a go. Climbing for the year costs just \$20 and you climb for free every Tue & Thur night.

**Russell Pezzutti**

H: 6772 1673

### Canoe polo – 7pm Thur nights

A great way to practice your paddling skills and have heaps of fun. Beginners are welcome at any time.

**Jon Taylor**

H: 6778 7231

[jvtaylor@northnet.com.au](mailto:jvtaylor@northnet.com.au)

### Mountain Biking – early Wed and Fri mornings

Contact Mark or join the MTB email list (details above) for times and places or rides.

**Mark Trotter**

W: 6773 2143

M: 0412 481 918

[mtrotter@une.edu.au](mailto:mtrotter@une.edu.au)

## Scheduled events

### Fri 6 Aug – Social BBQ at Dangar Falls

BBQ dinner at Dangar Falls and then party on until the next day if you want. Port, juggling, tight-rope across the gorge and other shenanigans are expected.

**Brendan Heywood**

W: 6773 4283

H: 6772 0134

[bheywood@une.edu.au](mailto:bheywood@une.edu.au)

### Sun 8 Aug – MB / PT Climbing competition

College and town teams will compete at the SportUNE Climbing Wall for MB / PT.

**Bruce Taylor**

H: 6772 3238

### 14/15 Aug – Climbing at Ebor Falls

Ebor Falls is a great climbing area with cracks for beginners and pros alike.

**Morgan Hoskins**

H: 6771 2293

### 21/22 Aug – Walking / Biking at Washpool

Awesome diverse scenery. A range of easy and hard walks and rides so you can take your pick.

**Mark Trotter**

W: 6773 2143

M: 0412 481 918

[mtrotter@une.edu.au](mailto:mtrotter@une.edu.au)

### 28/29 Aug – Two days of bush walking

TBA

**Craig Birchall**

W: 6773 2721

[cbirchal@une.edu.au](mailto:cbirchal@une.edu.au)

### 4/5 Sep – Kayaking at Penrith White water Stadium

For something a bit different try out the artificial river at the Penrith White water Stadium.

**Sam Hull**

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[shull@une.edu.au](mailto:shull@une.edu.au)

### 11/12 Sep – Paddling at Barrington Tops

Kayaking. Great scenery. Or you can come and watch the Gloucester Mountain Man comp which is on the same weekend.

**Sam Hull**

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