



Beginners Bushwalk to Glenbrook/Red Hands Cave

Maggie Owen

Once upon a time a little group of intrepid travellers from UNSW set off from Central Station to test themselves against the bush; well only marginally of course, we weren't *that* intrepid. The day started in a surreal sort of way trying to get a train out of Sydney at 7.45am. We had chosen a day when the usually super duper efficient, never run anybody down service, was possibly experiencing the odd little minor glitch. This state of affairs led to trains being cancelled - lots, and those that were leaving not necessarily actually going to very helpful places. But being intrepid travellers, and having purchased tickets, we packed our determination to walk into our rucksacks and climbed on board a train going vaguely in the direction we were hoping. We went very very slowly but eventually spilled out at Glenbrook station and were not disappointed.

The autumn sunshine was warm, the air was soft and the silence was just amazing, yes I know we were on a railway station but it was surrounded by trees, and the train having left they weren't expecting anything else soon; so we had peace perfect peace.

Just one hour's journey from Sydney and here we were in the Blue Mountain National Park, 1736 square kilometres of open space, filled with eucalyptus trees, shafts of sunshine spreading through leafy branches and the sort of gentle walking that ignored the more exciting gorges and high rocks for which the area is

renowned. All that sitting around on slow trains had inspired us though and we made a good pace through the bush, following the trail down to the Jellybean swimming pool. The water was not covered in algae although it did look a bit murky with mud and leaves, but several people went in to swim and reported the water was warm and nicely swimmable. It also gave the rest of us a change to explore the surrounding rocks, look for baby lizards and put our feet up in the sunshine. (cont'd page 2)

Table of Contents

Beginners Bushwalk to Glenbrook/Red Hands Cave.....	1
Quick News.....	2
Beginners Canyoning Trip and Rally Driving: Hole in the wall canyon, Newnes Plateau.....	4
A Question of Style.....	7



Quick News

- **Next year's exec**

The clubs AGM will be early next session, and will be a chance for newer people to take up positions in the club. Anyone is welcome to offer to take any position, start thinking about if there's anything you'd like to help out with. Any questions speak to alexis: unswoc@yahoo.com.au

- **AUC Climbing**

The Australian University Championships in rock climbing is going to be held in Melbourne hosted by La Trobe uni in July. Last year UNSW won the trophy for top uni, if we want a chance to win it again we'll need lots of participants. There's categories for beginners, intermediate and open, so anyone can take part, it'll be a fun trip. Speak to duncan if interested: duncanmacinnis@yahoo.com

- **Upcoming trips:** (see the website for more details, and to post any new trips).

04/Jun	Warren Miller's ski journey (film) – <i>Carolina Roman</i>
09/Jun	Club Meeting – Sam Cracknell pavillion, 7pm
10/Jun	Nowra end of semester climbing – <i>Bryan Long</i>
12/Jun	Easy bushwalking / kangaroo spotting – <i>Andreas Knecht</i>
12/Jun	ASCF bouldering round 4 – <i>Duncan MacInnis</i>
19/Jun	Touring Bathurst to Mt. Victoria – <i>Adam Barnes</i>
10/Jul	Advanced Ropes Course – <i>Ali Parsyar</i>

13/Jul	Uni Championships Climbing – <i>Duncan Macinnis</i>
13/Jul	2004 Banff Mountain Film Festival – <i>Carolina Roman</i>
24/Jul	ASCF Bouldering Comp, Round 5 – <i>Duncan Macinnis</i>
21/Aug	ASCF Bouldering Comp, Round 6 – <i>Duncan Macinnis</i>
27/Aug	Oxfam Trailwalker – <i>Ulli Dommann</i>
25/Sep	ASCF Bouldering Comp, Round 7 – <i>Duncan Macinnis</i>

Beginners Bushwalk to Glenbrook/Red Hands Cave (cont'd)

Then it was off across country through the bush to the next swimming pool at Blue pool, which was bigger, cleaner and obviously more popular. At one point just as people were getting into the water a big man from another party came sprinting past, slipped, and executing a gentle pirouette fell with an almighty splash into the water. His friends called out to him that he looked just like the original wild bushman.

It was interesting to see that the bushman is such an enduring legend and the spirit of Henry Lawson is alive, well and sporting itself at a water hole near Sydney, in spite of the fact that most people in Australia live, as they always have done, in cities. The trees surrounding the swimming pool were majestic, with eucalypts stretching far into the sky, sheltering the pool with a grey green wall of towering grandeur. Sitting there made you aware that nothing man builds can compare in reality with what nature produces so effortlessly and certainly made the bushman legend appear more realistic.



The Log

Newsletter of the UNSW Outdoor Club
May 2004



After a really enjoyable stop in beautiful surroundings it was back on the trail heading off to Red Hands Cave, a small cave full of aboriginal wall paintings. On the way there we began to notice more of the older burnt stumps and trees which had started growing again from the tops, probably from the bush fires which invaded the area two years ago, but mostly it was green, lush and autumnal. At one point we all ground to a halt as en mass we nearly ran over a large goanna crossing the path and attempting to defeat our eyes by scuffling through the leaves back into the bush. Then we found them, or rather Alexis did, the discarded shells of two huge cicadas who in a courtship game had got so carried away they had left themselves, so to speak, for us to find. They were completely intact, and so awesome to see in their tiny completeness, I happily walked around

with one clinging to my shirt for the rest of the walk only losing it on another one of those en mass stops when we stopped to watch two Lyre birds searching for food on the floor of the bush.

After that it was one further stop for pictures all round when we found the completely hollowed out trunk of a gum tree, colonised by spiders naturally, but we still joined them and took turns standing inside it. We reached the apex of our walk, the aborigine cave, a few hours after leaving Glenbrook station, in spite of our two stops, having had some really easy and comfortable walking. This was another opportunity for more pictures, the cave was covered by a wire mesh and cameras had to be pushed through, so there were none of those intrepid travellers in cave pics, but an amazing array of hands from all sorts of strange angles.

This was also the opportunity for one last laze in the sunshine and for people to climb onto the roof of the cave. Then, at a cracking pace, rustling through the bush, avoiding stinging twigs and clambouring over fallen trees we started the return journey, after all the pub and an icy cold beer were waiting. The day ended as it had begun, on an even slower train back to Sydney, contemplating slightly weary legs, but not a blister between us





The Log

Newsletter of the UNSW Outdoor Club
May 2004



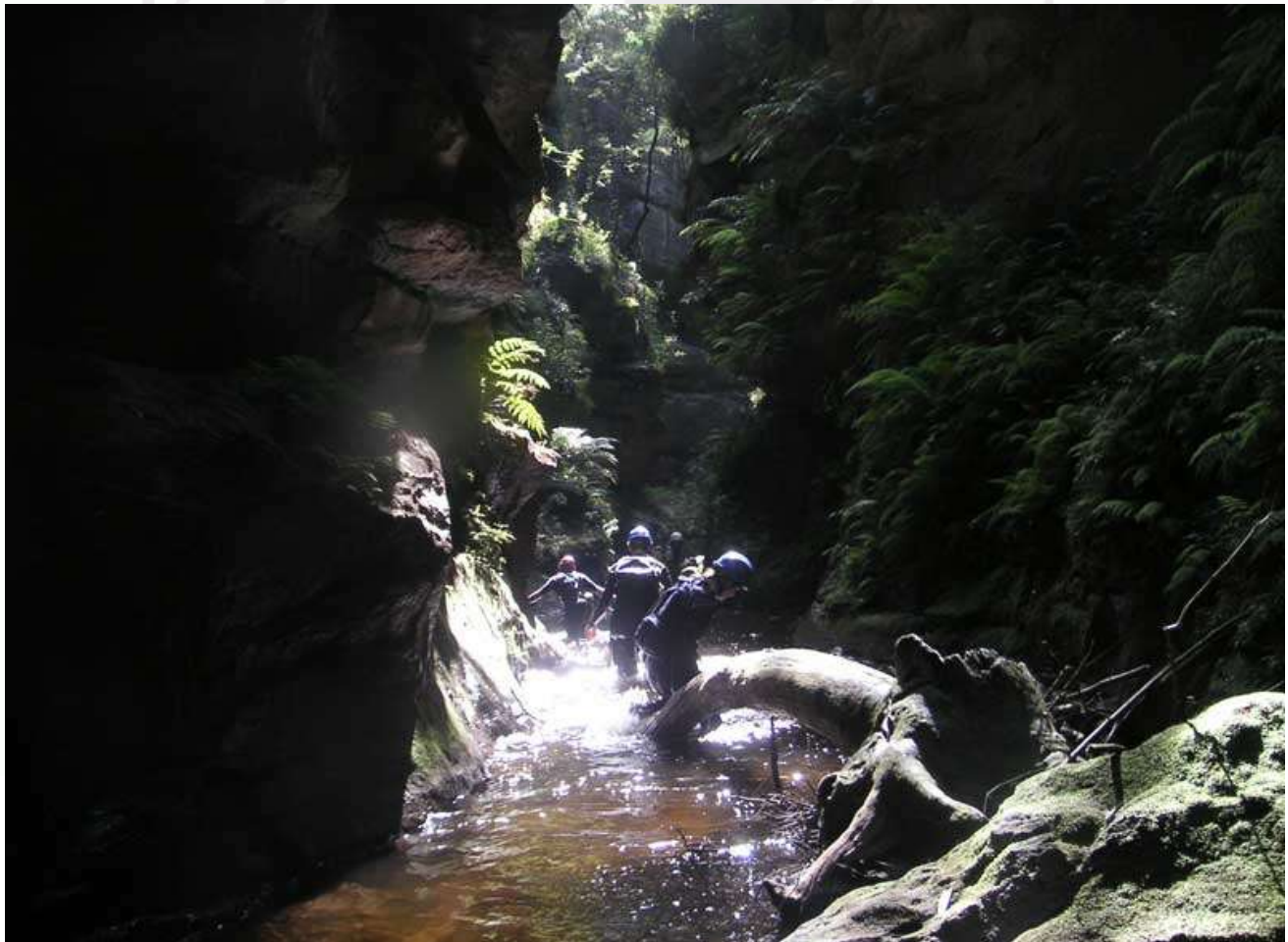
and the faint memory of that truly superb beer hanging in the air. I have left out the part about the final hill. We were on tarmac by this time and so the fact that two of us took an inordinate time to walk up it simply does not count, especially since apart from that the whole day had been just the greatest and most interesting enjoyment and virtually on our doorsteps. MØ

Participants: Maggie Owen, Nina Truttmann, Mikael Sterner, Carina Spiegel, Jackie Lambdin, Teres Johansson, Nicole Chase and Bruno Carlus

Beginners Canyoning Trip and Rally Driving: Hole in the wall canyon, Newnes Plateau

Nik Zwaneveld and Gareth Milton
Photos by Owain Williams

'Twas was a dark and stormy night when we conspirators gathered, to venture to the dreaded Hole-in-the-wall canyon..... Actually, it wasn't. It was a pleasant evening and we'd all gathered at





The Log

Newsletter of the UNSW Outdoor Club
May 2004

The Ledge climbing gym, but that sounds a whole lot less dramatic doesn't it?

Our plan was to meet at The Ledge on Friday night, do a little abseiling and prusiking practice there and then drive up to the Newnes Plateau to camp overnight and begin canyoning the next morning. For those of you who don't know, canyoning involves travelling through a canyon eroded from the rock by a river or stream. Canyons are usually very thin, with cliffs towering above you on both sides and a trip often involves lot of swimming, abseiling, hiking and occasionally a bit of caving. It's a fantastic experience that everyone interested in outdoors activities should try at least once.

After a little while playing 'spot the canyoners' and waiting for stragglers our whole group had turned up to *The Ledge* and everybody was up on the climbing walls demonstrating their rope skills. This attracted a little attention and soon we had picked up an extra person for the trip. This meant that a drive back to Kensington to collect some more gear would be required. After grabbing the gear, grabbing some dinner and doing some last minute shopping we were finally ready to leave Sydney, and hey, it was only 11pm. So sensibly, we loaded ourselves up with caffeine, jumped into our three heavily laden vehicles and pushed on.

At 1am two of our three cars arrived at the Newnes State Forrest turn off. Only Owain and Anthony knew where the campground was, so as Owain was in the missing third car and Anthony with the rest of the group we decided not to wait for him. The plan was to get there first and set up camp. Sometimes plans don't work out. We set off down the dirt road at a blistering pace. The road was windy, dusty, had massive axle-destroying potholes and was above all very dark. We flew past turnoffs, signs and burning trees, assured by the fact that Anthony knew where he was going.



After what seemed like half an hour of rally driving fun we came to a stop at a fork in the road, went up one way, decided against it and went up the other way, decided against that, consulted our map (a sketch Owain had done on the back of a Jatz Crackers packet) and finally admitted that we were perhaps a little lost and maybe should go back the way we came. Eventually we found the camping ground, it was opposite the *SECOND* burning tree (Owain can you please include landmarks like this on the next map you draw?) and found the rest of our group already unpacked and set up. It was 2am, the sky was clear and the weather relatively warm, so we settled down to camp under the stars, aided to sleep from our caffeine induced psychosis by a lovely drop from our box of finest goon.

We woke bright and early to the peaceful sound of people revving their 250cc trail bikes in the camping ground. After a quick breakfast we set off on a 20 minute drive to the start of the Wollemi wilderness area (strangely much of the drive felt very familiar for some reason). From there we had a pleasant 1hr walk along an old fire trail to get to the start of the canyon. Along the way we stopped to rest on top of a rocky pagoda and took in a 360



The Log

Newsletter of the UNSW Outdoor Club
May 2004



degree view of the area, which consists of many other canyons and some awesome rock formations.

Finally we reached a point where the creek we were following began to turn into a canyon. We donned wetsuits and thermals and started on our way down. The canyon walls rose up very quickly and we soon reached the first constriction. The canyon was one of the tightest I had seen in a long time, we frequently needed to remove our backpacks to squeeze through the tight spots. The scenery was stunning, with smooth, curving rocks on each side and towering cliffs above you. I think the photos explain it better than I do. Soon the canyon walls had risen so high the sky could not be seen. In near darkness we made our first leap into freezing, waist deep water.

The canyon soon opened up again into a much wider gorge. The sunshine was appreciated as we walked along the creek bed, enjoying the natural beauty of the place. After around half an hour of this environment we reached the second canyon section of our trip.

Almost immediately we reached the first set of abseils. We faced an initial drop of

perhaps 4 meters down a slippery waterfall into a deep pool, immediately followed by another 10 meter drop into another pool. This second drop had an extremely slimy and slippery log jammed in the middle of the waterfall making progress very tricky. This, added to the fact that the abseil tended to spit you out into the pool at the bottom, made for an amusing time for the onlookers.

Next came one of the major highlights of the trip. The stream we were following disappeared into a pitch black cave with a *very* tight squeeze to get out the other side. Before entering the cave we all decided that headlamps were for wimps and that we would do this section in the dark. This was a great decision, as it made the cave section so much more daunting and allowed us to see that the walls of the cave were covered with thousands of tiny glow worms. Once our eyes began adjusting to the light the features of the cave could almost be made out from the light of the glow worms. Some of our intrepid beginners were sent off into the darkness to find their way out, while the rest of us waited on the bank of a waist deep pool, listening to the explorers and drinking warm tea in the pitch blackness. Once a route through was found we





made our way, one at a time, through the freezing water and the tiny and rather awkward squeeze to emerge into the daylight once again.

Along the canyon a little further we came to the largest of the day's abseils. This overhung abseil drops you through a hole in the floor of the canyon into a large and very beautiful chamber with a waterfall crashing down at one end. We then faced a final hand over hand decent down a 2 meter drop and shortly after popped out through the 'Hole in the Wall' that gives the canyon its name into Bungleboori Creek. Here we turned upstream and after a few swims and a lot of wading finally reached the exit track. We settled down on a rocky outcrop to warm up, get changed and eat some lunch. The climb out was steep and soon we were all steaming hot and wishing for the cool of the canyon again! Its funny, but the hike out always seems to take longer than the hike in and this was no exception. After much hiking we all crawled into the car park tired but totally satisfied. Thanks to Anthony and Owain for running this trip, I think

everyone can say it was an amazing canyon. *GM & NZ*

Attending people: Anthony Knittel, Owain Williams, Nik Zwaneveld, Gareth Milton, Bryan Long, Solange Imseih, Nathalie Gohee, Florence In-Holsang, Jun Ikeda, Clare and Sollie.

A Question of Style

Anthony Knittel

I was talking to a friend at a party the other day, and he asked me what the hardest grade i'd climbed was.

Not the way I usually start a

conversation but I told him anyway.

"but I did that ages ago" he replied

"what, redpoint?"

"no, but i got up it".

I should probably explain a few things- rock climbing, as you probably could guess, involves starting at the bottom of a section of cliff and finding a way up it using only the strength and skillfulness of your body, with a little help from some sticky rubber on your feet. There's no rules, people do it to face the challenge of climbing a line and because its enjoyable. There's many ways or styles of doing a climb, and some are more respected than others. One common method for beginners is to climb with a rope attached to the top of the climb, while other styles involve climbing on lead, possibly placing protection as you go, and with the aim of not taking any falls. On-sighting is when you can do it in such a style first go, and red-pointing is when you do it after you've practiced the climb. Another 'style' is to try the climb by doing a few moves, falling or taking a



The Log

Newsletter of the UNSW Outdoor Club
May 2004

rest, and then attacking it bit by bit until you get to the top.

So there's lots of ways of describing a climb. In the end you're climbing for yourself, so why is one style better than another? How can I criticise someone for choosing to climb a route by falling repeatedly and resting on the rope as they go? Partly climbing styles are given credibility according to difficulty, but that's not the only reason. Falling up a 24 is harder than on-sighting an 18, yet it's still not considered good style. In some ways certain styles are respected simply because "that's the way it's done", but there's got to be more to it than that.

For some reason climbing has always reminded me of playing music. I would learn a piece by reading the notes and practicing section by section, and rehearsing the parts until it could all be put together. Once I had learnt the parts I could then run through the whole piece in one go, and once it was learnt well enough, play it with a smooth and consistent style. The parallels to me are obvious, simpler climbs and songs can be 'played' just by looking at them and enjoying their motions as you move through it from start to end. Harder pieces, and likewise climbs, require training the body for the moves, and then hopefully running through

them without a fatal mistake. The whole enjoyment of the song comes from playing it from start to end through all its dramatic changes, and playing it with a skilled style so that each movement flows from one to the next. Sometimes part of the reward comes from tackling something that requires a lot of skill and focus to get through it without making a mistake, other times it's just the beauty of the piece that makes it enjoyable. Just like any classic climb, a good piece is a pleasure to come back to time and time again and enjoy its movements.

As for climbing styles, to me it's not just difficulty or reward that makes climbing in good style a better approach than falling up a climb. The reward of tackling something hard is a big part of the enjoyment of climbing, but as well as that, the whole character of the climb comes from moving through the whole thing, not from doing a few moves and taking a rest. How people choose to climb is entirely up to them, but I would like to argue that learning a climb and following it through is definitely worthwhile. Sure you can play a song in small pieces, but the music comes from how it all fits together. AK

