



Wee Jasper Caving Trip

Led by Paddy, a group of six went caving near Canberra. We explored four caves in four days.

DIP SERIES 5: As I abseiled into my first ever cave, there was something other-worldly about cruising past the stalactites on the ceiling. A tiny hole in the ground opened up to a huge chamber, which, to my surprise, was filled with young children! We chose to abseil in, but this cave also has walk-in entrances. When the children left, an eerie silence remained, and we began to explore the world we had just entered.



Dom gazes up toward heaven...

I was expecting a more direct journey from end to end, but it was the random exploring that was the best. From entrance to exit, the cave may have been only a few hundred metres long, but we explored every passage, and experimented with every squeeze and every climb we could.

Though I don't actually remember before I was born, some of the squeezes felt like crawling through a birth canal. There was something homely about descending into mother earth that way. At times it was scary, as I knew that every squeeze I had managed would have to be repeated in order to get back out. There was, however, some comfort in being the smallest!

THE GONG CAVE: We discovered the reason for its name as we played our way from end to end. With music in our ears and features at every turn this has got to be the most beautiful cave of all. In this cave I began to appreciate how delicate this underground landscape is. That slimy muddy stuff, Paddy told us, was actually 'flowstone' – a rare and delicate stone that is still forming. I wondered what would remain of this landscape if it weren't so isolated. These features took millennia to form, yet can be easily broken by too much music... Wondering how much longer these formations would remain in tact, I felt privileged to be living in the present, as



Group photo

future generations may not have the privilege of seeing these natural wonders...

DIP SERIES 4: This cave was probably the most physically demanding, as we climbed and crawled through a long stalactite-filled passageway. The broken stalactites above were a stark reminder of the delicate nature of these caves. I doubt anyone would bash their way through helmet-first, but a gradual accumulation of knocks and breaks was starting to show. Nevertheless, it was still a spectacular display of the creative powers of dripping water.

PUNCH BOWL: This cave was a navigational challenge, as none of us had been in it before. After a long abseil in, the chambers were huge – we could walk upright almost all the way! This



Don't stand up...

was the most well-inhabited cave, with sleepy residents huddled in large groups. I had expected the bats to be much larger – like those huge swooping ones in Sydney. But these were cute and squeaky. After what seemed like a long, winding journey, taking us far from the cave entrance, Paddy realised we were in fact about ten metres from where we had started. After a tight squeeze, our rope was in sight, and it was time for a long prussic up...

It was strange to come back home after being somewhere so unlike the world here on the surface. Through this trip I developed a new respect for the earth below the surface, and the risks involved in exploring this remarkable landscape.

By Susan Ireland

Boree Log Weekend

The Boree Log Weekend is a highlight of the UNSWOC calendar where the emphasis is on having a great time outdoors. It is a very social event with many club members camping out and participating in a range of activities including canyoning, rock climbing, abseiling, bushwalking and lilo-ing. The club takes out a stack of gear and for club members there is no gear hire charge over the weekend. It is a great opportunity to meet some crazy people, to lead a trip or try something new and enjoy some great camping cuisine with a drink or three!

This semester the Boree Log Weekend will be held on October 6-7 at a location yet to be finalised. If you have any suggestions for the Boree Log weekend please forward your ideas to any of the exec members. We hope to see you there - it is a weekend not to be missed!



Australian Rogaining Champs Eastern MacDonnell Ranges, NT

This year's Australian Rogaining championships were held in the MacDonnell Ranges, East of Alice Springs, on the 28th-29th of July. Rogaining is the sport of long distance cross-country navigation, in which teams of 2-4 navigate to as many preset checkpoints (or 'controls') as possible within a given time. The traditional 'championship' style rogaine is 24 hours duration, beginning midday Saturday, and finishing midday Sunday. Teams choose their own route around the course, and the value of each control varies according to the difficulty in finding it.

This year, the Nigel Aylott Memorial Scholarship Fund provided funds to establish an Australian intervarsity championship, to be held along with the Aus Champs each year. As well as providing trophies, the fund sponsored one team from each State and Territory to attend the event. Nigel Aylott was a keen rogaier and adventure racer, who for a long time advocated the reintroduction of rogaing into the Australian Uni sport calendar. He was killed tragically while competing in the United States in 2004, and the fund was formed in his memory. Shelley Bambrook and Stewart Johnston were very fortunate to be selected for NSW. Stewart wrote the following report.

It was with great enthusiasm that Shelley and I took up the offer, and on Friday July 27th we flew from Sydney to Alice Springs via Adelaide. It was the first time in the territory for either



A typical watercourse

of us, so the prospect of having 24 hours to explore a part of central Australia in detail was exciting. The flight from Adelaide to Alice is interesting in its own right. After taking off from rainy Adelaide, we flew out over the sea, heading directly away

from our final destination in the heart of Australia. Turning northwards, inland, the lush green that skirts the coast turns quickly to brown, as you cross the harsh arid lands of South Australia. The view then gradually softens into the ancient hills and plains of Central Australia.

On arrival in Alice Springs, we indulged in a rare luxury – a hire car. This would allow us a little more flexibility, especially as we had more exploration planned after the competition ended. En route to the hash house we noticed something interesting about the terrain. In the ranges it is obviously quite hilly, but also quite flat on the plains between the hills. In other words there are no valleys for some sections! It is so unlike our local East Australian terrain, where you slog up the hills (and through the scrub), and get lost in the valleys.



The hash house, at Ross River Resort was located close to the centre of the course. We arrived early on the Friday afternoon before the event. There was plenty to do in preparation – dividing up the food we bought in Alice Springs, fixing gaiters, spinifex-proofing our shoes, and second guessing the course setting and weather to figure out what to take out on course. The course organisers had warned us about the needly spinifex that covered parts the course. It is fairly normal to wear a type of leg protectors called gaiters when walking through scrubby terrain. These are made of strong canvas or similar, which attach low around the shoes, and extend up to just below the knees. They are only partly effective against spinifex, which will always poke through anything that it decides to poke through. The best method for dealing with this is to harden up and keep going.

Shoes are a slightly different matter. Most runners these days have an open weave around the toes, which is designed to ease the ingress of dirt and water. The best way to spinifex proof these types is to wear something else. Failing that, you can plaster them with lots and lots of sports tape, which is what I did. A few spikes still came through to get me, but otherwise they were ok. Shelley decided to go with some stiffer, heavier type walking shoes, which solved the spinifex problem, but did become a problem with blisters and the like.

Ring of spinifex



Shelley & Disco in the early hours

The course was well set, with a good level of difficulty. We first received the maps at 9am, three hours before the start. Route choice was tricky, with a large area, complex terrain, few tracks, and certainly no 'soft' options. Eventually we decided to concentrate on the eastern side of the course, with a flight plan that twisted and doubled back numerous times between controls, when there was often no logical way to connect them. Our plan was conservative, aiming to get back to the hash house in the dark hours, with time to rest quickly, and then venture west for a quick second loop in the morning. We did manage to complete our 'conservative' loop; it just took us 24 hours to do it!

Holding a 24 hour event at this time of year ensures a close balance between daylight and dark hours. The first six hours are especially important, as navigation is much quicker during daylight. It is important to keep moving as steadily as possible during the 12 or so hours of darkness, and then make the most of the final 5 or 6 hours of daylight to come home strongly on the second day.

I won't bore you all with a detailed control by control description, but following is a short summary of our progress around the course.



View from Control 120

The first 4 to 5 hours went smoothly, with some of our easiest navigation (owing to the nature of our planned route). The terrain through these parts was mixed, with sharp, weathered rangelets (generally where the controls were located), interspersed with flat sections. Towards dark, we ran into much steeper country, with creeks that began to resemble canyons, and rocky sides that made it difficult to determine the cliffs from the almost cliffs. One particularly hard control, worth 120 points, the highest on the course, took us a while to find. We eventually found it perched on a slight spur, between two rocky scree gullies. The setters' notes warned against attempting this control at night. They were right, it would have been nearly impossible. It was as hard as any control that I have seen on a rogaine.

This event was timed to coincide with the full moon, which

was just as well for us. We found ourselves faced with some tricky navigation in the early hours. One area appeared as a nearly random assortment of lines on the map. Thankfully the land itself was a little easier



The Sphinx

to read, but it was still slow going, carefully using the moonlight and our compasses to guide our way. There were still moments of confusion at times about which tiny spur, knoll or batwing we happened to be on at the time (serious, there was a hill shaped like a bat wing on the map).

After emerging from this maze, our last few hours of darkness were easier going, as we moved back into the steep hills and flat plains kind of country. We decided to rest at around 3am, but not for long. Our jumpers and space blankets didn't protect us much against the desert chill. Our desire for sleep was quickly replaced with a desperate need to keep moving and get warm again!

As usual, the arrival of daylight revived us, and we managed to keep it together fairly well during the morning on our way home. It is difficult to keep fatigue at bay, and keep concentrating after so long out on the course. At one stage, a few hours from the finish, Shelley broke into a run. When I caught up, I mentioned that we were ok time wise, and that there was no need to run. Shelley replied that it wasn't the time that she was worried about; she was running because it hurt less.

In the end we finished well on time, pleased with what we had achieved. Our final results were fourth in the intervarsity competition, tenth in mixed, and 29th overall. Next year it is NSW's turn to host the championships. It will be in the Blue Mountains, and hopefully will be fully endorsed by Australian uni sport. I hope to see some of you there!



East Macdonnell Ranges



2007 Paddy Pallin Rogaine

This event got off to an interesting start with entrants finding out that half the map was out of bounds following ridiculously heavy rains. The raging Cox's River that dissected the course was declared too unsafe to cross, limiting the 250 teams to a maximum of 1050 points.

The popular Paddy Pallin Rogaine is a great 6 hour event and this year it was held just west of Lithgow. The UNSW Outdoors Club was well represented with a number of teams participating. Dave Williams and his partner Roland Cziferszky were the highest placed club team, only missing one checkpoint and posting an impressive 980 points.



Checkpoint 60



The queue at checkpoint 32

The reduced course meant there were herds of people charging into each checkpoint and teams often had to queue to punch their cards. Despite this the hilly course was quite challenging...or so I thought before discovering that 15 teams managed to clear the course, the winners doing so in just over 4 hours! Someone asked the winners what their secret to success was...apparently all you need to do is run for 3 hours every day.



Water drop at checkpoint 10

Pantoney's Crown Bushwalk

Torrential downpours in Sydney leading up to the June long weekend provided a wild start to the bushwalking trip to... well, who really knows where one should go in such weather. The original plan was to head to the Yodeller Range in the northern part of the Wollemi National Park. Flooding in the Hunter region and dangerous driving conditions caused the intrepid bushwalkers to rough it at Dave W's place. Rain was still bucketing down early in the morning as we ventured up to the Blue Mountains wondering if we would end up on the evening news as those idiots who stub-



Bec and Dave descending Pantoney's Crown

bornly persisted with their bushwalking trip despite the ridiculous weather. After almost deciding to head back to Sydney, we continued west past Lithgow to the Gardens of Stone National Park.



Marching along the dry creek

The rain had stopped by the time we started off on our way to explore Pantoney's Crown. It was amazing to be walking along dry, rocky creek beds after travelling through so much rain. We had assumed that water would obviously not be a problem but there was surprisingly little around. At one point we resorted to lifting a concrete block to scoop water from a pumping station.



Searching for water

Our second day saw us straggle behind Dave W, huffing and puffing our way up the steep approach to Pantoney's Crown. We climbed and hauled packs up a pass to the top of Pantoney's Crown where we were rewarded with fantastic panoramic views.



Follow the leader...



Around the campfire

The night was spent camped atop the lofty crown before we scrambled (some more elegantly than others!) and lowered packs down then wandered through the bush back to the cars on Monday. We couldn't quite believe the wonderful, fine weather that we'd had throughout the trip and how lucky it was that we had continued with it.

Participants: Dave Williams, Bec Davis, Ian Donaldson, Su Li Sin, Anthony Knittel & Shelley Bambrook



Panoramic view of Red Rocks from Pantoney's Crown



Upcoming Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>
10 th August	Friday Night Climbing	The Ledge, Sydney Uni
11-12 th August	Beginners Rock Climbing Trip	Nowra
17 th August	Friday Night Climbing	The Ledge, Sydney Uni
18 th August	Lake Macquarie 6/12hr Rogaine	Lake Macquarie
24-26 th August	Oxfam Trailwalker	Sydney
25 th August	Mt Wilson to Bilpin 36km Bush Run	Blue Mountains
1-2 nd September	UNSWOC Weekend Trip	TBA
9 th September	Teva Adventure Race	Sydney
22 nd September	The Great Ocean Walk - Bushwalking	Great Ocean Walk, Vic
22-23 rd September	Anaconda Adventure Race	Foster, NSW
23 rd September	Sydney Marathon / Half-marathon	Sydney
6-7 th October	Boree Log Weekend	Blue Mountains
20-21 st October	NSW Rogaining Championships	Goulburn River NP

What else is on?

If you know of any events coming up in the near future send an email to: secretary@unswoc.org and we will add it to this list for the next newsletter.