THE EPIC

NEWSLETTER OF THE ANU MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

AUTUMN 2007
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About the Epic

The Epic is the quarterly newsletter of the ANU Mountaineering Club.

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Contributions:

YOUR contributions are the essence of the Epic! We love to receive your contributions, especially with pictures! All care/no responsibility is taken. Please try to limit your contributions to 600 words, and follow these guidelines:

• The prefered format for the contributions is an unformatted text file(.txt)
• If sending pictures, send us the highest resolution version you have
• Please send your pictures as attachments and not embeded in a document
• Avoid sending Word files or other proprietary formats

Thank you!
Editor's Blurb

The Epic is back, and with a new look. We hope our readers enjoy the new layout. We have tried to keep The Epic enjoyable to read in a computer screen as well as on paper, for those who prefer to print it. As always, your feedback is most welcome and essential to improve your Epic experience!

This Autumn we bring you the usual adventures of our members, including the farewell article of our valued member Micheal Bortz.

And we should not forget that 2007 marks the ANUMC's 40th anniversary! You'll find the details of the celebration dinner below. Lots of interesting stuff is happening this year, so no excuses for not getting more involved with the club!

The editors,

Tiago, Laura and May

ANUMC's 40th Anniversary Dinner
with guest speaker Lincoln Hall

All members, past and present, are invited to celebrate 40 years of the ANU Mountaineering Club 1967-2007! Partners welcome, but no children please.

Saturday September 22nd, 7pm - 11pm
Karmel Rooms, ANU Union Building (above the uni bar)
Tickets $55 (Full time students $45)

• Three course dinner (vegetarian options)
• Some drinks included (wine and soft drinks)
• Bar open
• Lucky door prize

Limited tickets on sale at the gear store (normal hours) only until Friday the 14th of September!
Mountaineering in Oz: Danae Brook

There is still the matter of Danae not done. I suggest that we combine Tectonic Tenacity with Mediterranean Motivation and do it soon”, Nic Bendeli suggested in an email to me after the Blue Mountains Extravaganza. The matter of Danae - that was the plan to descend Danae Brook, a canyon next to Kanangra main, in the Kanangra Boyd National Park.

In Greek mythology, Danae, a king’s daughter, was imprisoned in a cave by her father meaning to keep her childless. But Zeus, highest of the gods and notoriously attracted by women, impregnated her in the form of a sunbeam or a shower of golden rain. Nine months later, she gave birth to Perseus who ended up killing his grandfather.

To us, Danae Brook presented itself in all its grand beauty. Nine abseils, one after the other, down a slot squeezed between massive vertical black walls. Down into the dark, through waterfalls that dumped the water from 30 m above on top of our heads, setting up the belays, abseiling, getting off the ropes, pulling down, coiling, setting up the next belay. Three hundred metres of vertical, after that another 300 metres of boulder hopping, until the junction with Kanangra Creek. Here was the exit, the exit via the Thurat Spires.

It was not only the most spectacular exit from a canyon that I have done so far. It was also challenging, and required me to put some of my recently acquired climbing and mountaineering skills into practice. The exit was on top of a consistently steep ridge. We kept going and thus gained height fairly quickly. Kanangra Walls glowing in the afternoon sun on the left, the dark walls of Danae on our right. Up and over the first Spire (“Now, THAT is the way to go” was another one of Nic’s exclamations of joy), down to a landbridge that led to the second one. This was the first challenge for my mind - half a metre broad, four metres long, steep drops to the left and right. It occurred to me that "Spire" is closely related to “inspiring”... The second mind challenge soon followed, the climb up a boulder. One of these moments where you remember all the climbing moves that you have done in the past and think: “Ok, I know how to do it, I can do it, so I will do it. There are no ifs nor buts”, because all this was still on the very pointy edge of a narrow, high ridge. Done, so up we went the Second Spire, and abseilled on the other side to the next saddle.

Here I noticed that the tension from the past hour took a fair bit of my reserves. I felt that I was abseiling slower than before, that it took me more efforts to scramble up the rocks. It is an interesting feeling, exactly knowing what you have to do, but just not being able to do it as quickly as you want to. We had been pushing it for the whole day, and made it to the top with the last sunlight. The last two kilometres through the bush to the fire trail took us four hours. Navigating in the dark through thick bush, one person going ahead, the other one giving direction with the compass from behind, stopping, the person from behind catching up with the first person and so on. A long, but systematic and controlled way to get back, 16 hours after we started. One of the great, unforgettable trips, which would not have been possible without Nic’s unbeatable experience and skills.

I would like to conclude on a personal matter. My two years in Australia are nearly over, it is time to move on. It is difficult to put into words what the club has been and is for me. Being out there with friends; experiencing the untouched wilderness; being challenged in canyons, in the mountains, on walks; being taught the skills to overcome obstacles; instructing keen beginners; contributing and receiving so much appreciation by the contribution of others - I am very grateful and I thank you all who made these two years to me what they have been. In this sense: Let us keep in touch and hope to see you out there!

Micheal Bortz
SERENDIPITY CANYON

As part of the Blue Mountain Extravaganza 2007 activities, Michael Bortz lead us on a marvellous trip into the Serendipity Canyon. The team consisted of over eight, mostly inexperienced, newcomers to the ANUMC, which was a comparatively large group for canyoning.

After a 20-minute walk, we reached the first abseil. First walking along forestry roads, we later followed a small trail through the bush, which appeared only to be visible for the trip leaders. By then the sluggish morning-fog had lifted and a blue sky promised a dry day (which later proved to be a false promise). As it was a Saturday, two groups occupied the abseil, and this gave us some time to review our skills with the gear and handle the excitement.

The first three abseils took us into the heart of an enchanting gorge with steep, plain walls, occasionally interrupted by trickles of water. We jumped, swam, slid and sometimes also just walked under a green roof of leaves 50 meters above our heads. The water was rather cold, making everyone appreciate the either rented, borrowed or newly acquired wet-suits.

By lunchtime the canyon widened, still supplying impressive views on the rocks, but frequently allowing for more or less straight trees to grow further down on less rough patches. The terrain became friendlier and less exotic, but remained extraordinarily charming.

Our exit from the canyon was clearly marked by a huge mass of rock to the left. This rock also proved to be an excellent starting point for daring jumps into the chilly mini-lake that had formed at its bottom. More tuna-sandwiches and a special Danish mix of nuts, dried fruit and chocolate were consumed, before we made our escape through steep terrain back up to the invisible path.

As we left the canyon, little drops of water prophesised what was to surprise us on our way home. By the time we reached the forestry-road, this occasional trickle had turned into an intense rain. As we walked along, masses of water continuously drenched everyone rather than an annoyance. When we reached the camp, the rain retreated.

Despite (and also due to) the weather during the last hour of the trip, this was definitely one of the most remarkable and enjoyable canyoning trips. Special gratitude goes to the trip leader, Michael Bortz, for leading, cheering, and finding invisible paths, and Peter, who provided helpful advice and assistance to us newcomers.

Timo Vollmer
Track-hunt (or egg-hunt?) in the Budawangs

It was early Good Friday morning when a group of six keen hikers head off for an Easter adventure in the magnificent northern Budawangs. Mika lead the four guys and one girl through rough wilderness country for four days and what a delight it was.

![Photo 1. Nick in the scrub.](image)

Starting at Sassafras Gate, the trip began with a 7 km road bash to Newhaven Gap. The drizzly walk along the road through open heath went pretty fast. The turnoff to the overgrown CMW Track was marked with the first of very few cairns that we would see those four days. It marked our entry to a weekend of bush bashing. Thick banksia and other scrub forced us to expend much energy bending under and over the obstacles. This got some of us pretty frustrated and all of us scratched (PICTURE "Nick in the scrub"). After what seemed hours (in fact, it was hours later), we got to Folly Point lookout just before dusk where we got a good view of the terrain ahead of us. Night was spent at Folly Point on a tiny spot with just enough places for our three tents.

The next day we plunged down Watson Pass. While the track headed south into the 700m deep Holland Gorge our route took us west where no track could lead us. Without a track to guide us, we had to rely on our navigational and map-reading skills to get through the forests and down to Munnuldi Falls. There aren’t many places where you can cross the creek and we were lucky (or good) enough to find a slippery, rocky scramble. Up again to climb the ridge. It started to drizzle and the path was nowhere to be seen. Well, up was the only way, so up we went till we stopped for a drizzly lunch. The forest was slowly replaced by scrub and got progressively thicker until the vegetation was replaced by head-high ferns and impenetrable bush. That was where the real bush-bashing started! The person walking in the front didn’t have to find the way anymore; he had to make the way. Bashing into the shrubs and trying to clear the way for the others. With a pretty wet forest, they were a tough couple of hours. By

![Photo 2. Track at the gap.](image)

![Photo 3. Climbing Mt. Sturgiss](image)
4 o’clock, we had covered about 4 km in six hours of walking and were all pretty tired. We’d just reached Sluice Box Falls and decided to call it a day. With a cooking-cave nearby, it was a very cozy evening.

Easter Sunday started with a traditional egg-hunt. More than 40 chocolate eggs had been carried into the bush and were hidden by the Easter Bunny (alias Mika). After finding all but two of them, the bashing started again. On to the base of Mount Elliot, a formidable sandstone mountain perched on the northern edge of Holland Gorge. Unlike the day before, the climb up was relatively easy. No trail, but at least no thick undergrowth. The easy going unfortunately was over when we got to the saddle between Mt Elliot and Mt Sturgiss. It started to rain again and the wet vegetation soaked us in minutes. Enthusiasm amongst the group waned and Mika decided to leave climbing Mt Elliot for yet another time. Sorry Mika, we all hope you get to climb it on your fifth trip!

Even thicker scrub was awaiting us at the saddle (PICTURE "Track at the gap1 or 2") and getting to the base of Mt Sturgiss and the pass to the top was a challenge in itself (imaging having this huge mountain about 30 metres away and being unable to get there!). Climbing the sheer cliffs took us ages (PICTURE "Climbing Mt Sturgiss") and up on the mountain more banksia and thick bush was awaiting us. We ate lunch near the southern rim of Mt Sturgiss with gorgeous views over Hollands Gorge onto Mt Cole and The Castle (PICTURE "Budawangs view"). This breathtaking Budawangs view was topped by a soaring Wedgetail Eagle who came to check us out.

But the fun didn’t last and we spend a hard, misty and rainy afternoon traversing Sturgiss Mountain (PICTURE "Mount Sturgiss1 or 2”). Lots of navigation was involved until we got to the descent into Hidden Valley. As the sun was setting already, we decided to set up camp in Hidden Valley.

With all our bush-bashing experience, the 15 km track of the last day was a piece of cake. The leeches, however, were not. We literally ran through the rain forest near Kilpatrick Creek to escape the dozens of leeches that were lurking under trees and moss to get us.

A side-trip to the Borra Grounds on Quiltns Mountain provided leech relief and some stunning views of the forest we spent the last three days in. Sad to leave all this beauty behind, we returned to Sassafras Gate on the dirt road that had taken us in.

Other than a couple of cars at the start, we hadn’t seen a soul all weekend. Spending 4 days with my backpack and 5 (by this time) smelly men. A truly amazing wilderness experience.

Marit Kragt
For those of you who have rock climbed before (which I'm guessing is a fair number), you probably take for granted the skills that you have now acquired... The ability to safely belay a good friend, judging the best way to place your feet, shifting your weight, leading a climb, knowing your limits and when to push yourself, or even just knowing what on earth that chalk is for. I knew none of these things, before Pip Gibson bravely led the ANUMC beginners climbing trip to Nowra in late April.

Things began with the typical ANUMC car pooling outside of the Purple Pickle café as the sun set on Friday, and a drive together through the Southern Highlands to the Nowra Wildlife Park Campground. Greeted by a slowly shuffling wombat, some very unphased peacocks and the cheerful sound of dingos howling, we set up our tents and snuggled in to sleep before the big day. As I drifted off I vaguely contemplated that while this was a 'beginners' trip, most people seemed to have rather a lot of experience on the ANU climbing wall or in the outdoors. Perhaps that would have been a good place to start... In fact, definitely. Ah well I was here now.

Thompson's Point has some magnificent views out across the Nowra River through the trees and foliage in the sun. So pretty in fact, that you can forget precisely why it is you are clinging for dear life to a rock-face ten metres up (Or pondering why the first climb they put you on is called Lucifer... When the one next to you, Puppy sounded so much nicer). If you haven't set up a climb before and you've never worn a harness ("you clip it where Pip?") it can be rather hard to place blind faith in the fact that these ropes will actually catch you. But true to form, our wonderful trip leader Pip and all the experienced climbers gently nursed us through the fear. They patiently and repeatedly explained the safety rules, the basic techniques and slowly brought us around to the idea that this whole climbing business was really rather fun. And it was! Once your legs stop shaking, you
realise it’s okay to look down and you start thinking logically about where your fingers need to reach to next, the sense of achievement is overwhelming. In fact, it doesn’t seem to take all that long before you’re at the top, feeling like a hero and wondering just how long your belay partner will mind you standing there enjoying the view. And while you’re still terrified of the heights, as you’re lowered back down you’re sneakily considering which climb looks good for your next try... well, maybe after your arms have recovered.

After a merry evening back at the camp with some sore fingers, big smiles and plenty of red wine, the decision was made that Point Perpendicular up at Jervis Bay would be a pretty cool place to spend the second day of the trip. Seventy metres up, with deep blue waves crashing over the rocks below and some spectacular ocean views I couldn’t help but agree (though I did think to myself that maybe the helmets came in handy for when people fainted too).

The ropes came out, the climbs were set up, anchors checked and double checked, Pip ensured that we really were okay about doing this and suddenly we were abseiling down to start another day of climbing. I have never felt more proud of myself than after managing to find that elusive minx of a handhold around the side of Elspeth. "Left a little! Straighten your arm! That’s it!" came the cries of encouragement from those sitting above. I had even tried to bail out at one stage but Pip and my belayers from above, Jack and David were not having any of it. "This way to the right looks much easier, can I try that way up?" "No way Jessie, that’s a 21, just stick to the 14, you can do it!" As I collapsed happy to be alive at the top, they let it slip that the 21" had in fact been a nice little 13... But boy was I proud. I strutted about, ludicrously happy, to check out some of the other climbs going on, showing off my red and chaffed fingertips to anyone who would look at them. I loved it. I had managed to climb up that rock-face, high above the ocean, with a lot of help from my belayers and the others calling out instructions, and there were even photos to prove it. My arms were burning and my legs were trembling, but it was great. (I hadn’t even needed the pulley of shame!) As I sat cheering on some of the other true beginners like Ayndri, I noticed a familiar smile of absurd pride shining through. The weather had been perfect, everyone was so tolerant and helpful, and I had even learned to love belaying (I’m sure I’ll regret putting that in writing). It was fabulous fun for a weekend away from the study.

In fact, I’m already saving up to buy my first pair of climbing shoes and am booked into the ANU belaying course. Many thanks Pip! But please, can no one show the photos of Point Perp to my Mum..."

Jess Mackenzie
**TUROSS CANYON**

Whoever remembers the trip to Tuross in February 2007, will recall a "long half day trip" through a pleasant and widish canyon with enormous boulders continuously blocking the way. They force the water to take detours, swirling and splashing in vivid protest.

As in February, we arrived at the car park via a dirt road through the forest, but this time only one car, loaded with four excited men. On the way, we had noticed the fog accumulating and showing no signs that it was planning to vanish any time soon. However, by the time we reached the river, the sky had turned bright blue. We wrapped our belongings up in waterproof bags (thanks again Nic for helping me with mine), and then we started towards the waterfall.

The swims were considerably more "refreshing" than before, but great fun nonetheless. What had taken almost all day in the summer, was now achieved in roughly an hour. The abseil went well, and this time wetsuits were absolutely necessary at the bottom. After the waterfall, there was no more need for the abseiling gear, thus we left it hidden on a saddle that would be easily reachable from the bushwalking track later on.

The charm of the Tuross lays in the calm vastness of the terrain. Massive, but peaceful walls mark the sides of the canyon and smooth foundlings, which rest in the riverbed, shape the sight at all times. Thus we walked and jumped a lot, and were only twice forced to set up handlines. We enjoyed a seemingly endless afternoon of sneaking through holes, sliding down slopes, jumping and walking.

The day ended on a platform to our right and 10 metres above the water, where we stretched our legs in the fading daylight and started a medium size camp fire to cook tea, noodles, chocolate and toast bread. It was one of the most homely evenings of my life - many kilometres away from anything like a house.

The next day continued in the way the previous had ended: warm fire in crisp air and a rocky plateau above the gurgling water. It was not as warm and sunny as before, but a good temperature to walk steadily in a comfortable manner. We did so until reaching a distinct turn of the canyon, where we struggled up a rather steep slope. The ground consisted of loose earth, loose stones and loose plants, making the climb an unforgettable experience of fascinating views, sudden unpredictable sliding and utter exhaustion (except for Nic).

We reached the top and found a rock that would shield us from the beginning rain, where we could consume what was left of our lunch. Then we continued our march along a fire trail through otherwise dense bush. Suddenly, a white van came crawling towards us in the bumpy road. It contained an Australian and two Canadian students, who planned to visit the Tuross Falls, but took a wrong turn further up the road. As Nic knew, where they wanted to go, we were invited to join them in the car for the next 5kms, which was as far as the road took us.

The march back to the waterfall lead through more dense forest, heath and down a steep sandy slope, which was best handled by "skiing" on loose rocks. Prior to the final one-hour-climb back out of the canyon and to the car park, we had a last snack and picked up the abseiling-gear.

On the way back to Canberra, a head-to-head-accident had locked up the highway just beyond Bredbo. So we turned around and had the best dinner in a beautiful truck stop restaurant, followed by cake and tea and wonderful recalling of past adventures in the Tuross Canyon.

Special thanks goes to Nic Bendeli for great planning and execution, as well as the other members of the team for their comradeship and humour on this exciting trip. It was a tough one, and a good one.

**Timo Vollmer**
What could have been a weekend watching mountain biking DVDs and listening to skills tips, was not. What was – an extreme mountain biking adventure, learning new skills with some hugely inspirational individuals.

The CORC (Canberra Off-Road Cyclists) women’s mountain bike camps are held once or twice a year. The April camp was attended by women from their teens through to their 50s. From complete novices through to some hard core sheilas (definition of hard core – an impressive mountain biking story involving the potential for serious injury!).

The ANUMC girls split into different groups, based on our perception of our ability. Our team quickly became known as the ‘bunny hop babes’ although the skidding stallions may have been just as worthy a name.

We jammed many skills sessions into the two-day camp, with evenings spent laughing over embellished tales of our day’s activities!

The more memorable moments for me were:

- Falling into a prickly bush and having to ask the instructor – “how do I get these thorns out of my ass?”;
- The legendary woman stair riding with zero suspension;
- The equally awesome lady flying head first over the handle bars off a shoulder high see saw, then getting back on her bike and making it over the see-saw.

We were all pretty happy when our massage session arrived, and I have never eaten so much quality food in my life!

The ANUMC girls are keen to run some trips to get others inspired with mountain biking, and CORC also offers some great social rides and is a great way to meet some like-minded sporties!

Nerida Rixon
In fine sunny weather, six strangers with packs filled high
Began a pleasant amble through Kanangra’s plateau greenery.
We visited Dance Floor Cave where snakes slithered by
Traversed rocky outcrops and viewed spectacular gorge scenery.

After lunch on Cottage Rock dark rain clouds rolled in
So bundled in jackets we followed Bullhead Ridge track
Until Cambage Spire the steep descent was to begin.
So throwing my pack down a small gully there was no turning back.

Through mist, mud and mossy rock we skidded, and down-climbed
Occasionally ducking as someone yelled “Rock” and one tumbled past.
We pushed on through rain and down the track yet no flat ground could we find
Until from Sullen Tor the river was heard, signaling our campsite was near at last.

That night in Kowmung’s depths the rain lashed down and continued next morning
So stuffing wet tents into wet packs we made a sluggish departure.
Scrambling along brambled banks and crossing rivers until without warning
A slippery rock landed me chest deep in water to the sound of much laughter!

The river took us to the pass through the Bulga Denis Gorge
Gaping up at spectacular orange cliffs or over at tiny water cascades
True adventures we felt we were, with a wilderness path to forge
Up rocky slopes, through waters deep and in the Callitris’ shade.

Slow progress and prudence, meant an earlier camp should be sought
The grassy flats opposite spectacular Orange Bluff provided just the location
And so dropping our packs we jumped into the river for sport
And finished the day with gourmet dinners followed by poem narration.

Kinder weather enabled a slightly drier start the next day
Reluctantly we left to trudge 800 meters up Brumby Ridge
Our efforts were rewarded with more gorgeous views on the way
And to top off the adventure we drank cold beers from a car fridge!!

Amy Davidson
Trip Leading With The ANUMC
By Sam Keech-Marx, ANUMC President

Trip leaders are the heart and soul of the ANU Mountaineering Club, for without them there would be no trips, and no club! Our trip leaders are all volunteers who give their time, energy and expertise to take others into the outdoors. So next time you go on a trip, thank your trip leader for all their hard work :-) 

The ANUMC is always looking for more trip leaders, so if you've ever thought about it, or even if you haven't, read on...

Why lead trips?
People lead trips for a variety of reasons. Many enjoy meeting new people and sharing their skills and favourite places with others. Some don't have a car and so they organise trips to gain access to transport. For others the appeal lies in running the trips you want, when you want them. It is an excellent way to develop your leadership and organisational skills, and gain lots of good karma! It is also very rewarding and lots of fun.

Support for trip leaders
The ANUMC supports trip leaders in lots of ways. We offer a leadership weekend each year, which focuses on group management, safety skills and navigation. There is a trip leaders page on the ANUMC website with a wealth of information (find it at Info/Trips/trip leading). We organise first aid courses and offer subsidies to trip leaders. There are skills courses organised throughout the year (such as snow skills, lead climbing and kayaking skills) with subsidies available for trip leaders. Trip leaders are able to hire from the gear store for free (deposit still required), and we have a training reimbursement scheme where trip leaders are entitled to $120 towards club-related training for every 5 trips they lead. Activity officers are also there to offer support and advice to trip leaders.

I'm keen! How do I start?
The first thing to do is contact the relevant activity officer and let them know you're interested in leading trips. They will discuss the type of trip you're wanting to run and also your experience and skill levels. They can also suggest suitable trips for your skill level. When the activity officer is happy with your plans, you submit your trip through the online system, the officer approves it and people sign up! It's also a good idea to ask an experienced trip leader to come along on your first few trips to offer support. If you don't know who to ask, the Activity Officer should be able to point you in the right direction.

I don't think I'm ready yet
If you're thinking of leading trips in the future but don't feel ready for it yet, the best thing you can do is go on more trips! Let the leader know you're wanting to develop your skills and ask if you can help out. Do a first aid course (subsidies are available to active members, as well as leaders), and check out the leadership weekend and skills courses (keep an eye on the trip calendar). Also remember that you don't need to be an expert to lead a trip. For example, you may not be a great climber, but you can organise a climbing trip by making sure people with the necessary skills come along.

Trip leading can seem a bit intimidating at first, but the ANUMC offers you lots of support and the rewards are fantastic! If you want to discuss any aspect of trip leading, please get in touch with anyone on the Executive or any of the activity officers and we'll be delighted to help out.

Happy trip leading!
On Saturday, 25 March 2007, at 8:30 am we set off with 3 cars packed with people for a 100 km drive to Deua National Park. Our beloved trip leader was no one else but Rhonda. The drive took a fair while and on our way we briefly stopped in Captains Flat because one of us, Cheryl was required to vote in NSW for that day’s state elections. We had a good laugh when we set off again and Cheryl’s car would not start so her passengers had to push the car a fair bit until the engine came alive again. Not much further on Robert, with whom I sat in the lead car, suddenly noticed a ‘walking rock’ in the bend of the road. As he observed correctly, however, it was in fact a turtle larger than the size of your hand! The others of the group soon joined in to watch it and some took a couple of pictures of it. It was then safely put back on the ground away from the road.

At last we arrived at Deua National Park and started a promising bushwalk to see some of nature’s incredible phenomena. It didn’t take long before we hit our first obstacle, the Shoalhaven River. Most people managed to get across without getting wet, despite the rocks being very slippery. For those with sneakers however, many opted to take their shoes off and wade through the water.

From there on it was a lovely and casual walk to the first feature of the trip, the Big Hole. On our way we also spotted some wallabies and some joeys.

The big hole is a morphological feature properly known as a sink hole. It is over 100 metres deep. Before its existence, there must have been a large cave under-neath the surface that formed in a thick limestone layer. The limestone was dissolved and carried away by underground water probably to the Shoalhaven River. At some point the cave ceiling composed of siltstone, sandstone and conglomerate rocks must have collapsed creating the big hole. These sedimentary rocks are about 350 Million
light of the trip, the Marble Arch.

As we walked through the eucalypt forest massive mounts of dirt were spotted between the trees. These are presumably abandoned termite mounts. Since we didn’t see the termites themselves it still leaves me wondering where they went. I had a picture taken of me on top one of these big mounts.

We finally arrived at the Marble Arch, which is a limestone cavern followed by a river gorge. We took out our torches and headed into the cave. The name Marble arch is rather misleading because there is no marble to be found, just limestone and limestone breccias.

The experience was awesome as we made our way through the cave and the narrow gorge with cleanly polished rocks caused by the action of the water over a long time. The rocks were extremely slippery too and it didn’t take long before some of us lost balance and slid into the shallow pools of water in the gorge. Although getting wet didn’t hurt, the main scare turned out to be the leeches in the gorge. I managed to get a remarkable shot of one of the bigger ones. We had lunch in the gorge where we couldn’t go any further because of a small lake blocking our way. For some great group pictures with us all having lunch, see the ANUMC website. After lunch we made our way back to the cars along the same path we came and headed back to the SRA and got back by around 5:30 pm.

All in all, this trip was awesome!! And I think everyone fully enjoyed themselves as well. Apart from a few wet feet, nobody took the plunge or got hurt. See ya next time!

Robert Farla
About the ANU Mountaineering Club

The ANUMC is one of the most active outdoor clubs in Canberra. Club members organize many trips, including bushwalking, canyoning, rock climbing, cross country skiing, mountain biking, kayaking and many more!

You can find more about the club in our web page, where you can also sign up for trips using the online trip calendar!

Visit

http://anumc.anu.edu.au

for more info!

Club Memberships (for the rest of 2007):

$20 for students; $30 for non-students (+ SRA Membership Fee)