

THE MOUNTAINEER.

Price 5 cents.

November-December Newsletter, Issue No. 8. Dec. 5. 1966.  
Official Journal of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club. Registered at the G.P.O. Melbourne for transmission as a periodical.

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FEATHERT OP HUT WORK PARTIES.

Hut work parties are on again on the 2nd. Dec. and will continue until the hut is finished. Arrangements are much the same as last summer-(Booze, Birds, & procrastination.) Catering by Nina & Co., private transport, and a briefing meeting at Aikman's Road on the Wednesday before. If you would like to help please fill in the following:

NAME.....  
ADDRESS & TELEPHONE.....

When can you come? Week/ Weekend beginning.....  
Fri...Dec. 2                      Fri..... Jan. 6.  
"     "Dec. 9.                      "           Jan. 13.  
"     Dec. 16.                      "           Jan. 20.  
"     Dec. 23.                      "           Jan. 27.  
2     Dec. 30.

2/ Have you a car?..... Is it in good mechanical condition?  
..... How many passengers & packs can it take(including yourself)?..... What time can you leave?

3/ Can you bring.....  
a) electric drill?.....  
b) carpentry tools?.....  
c) track-clearing tools?.....  
d) bunyip snares?.....

4/ Do you require equipment? Pack, S. B's etc.....

5/ Have you any friends, relatives, debtors or concubines who may want to come? If so, write thier names below-

Please return to- Trips Secretary  
C/o M. U. Mountaineering club.  
Beaurepaire centre.



Dear sir,

Having read Dave Hogg's most comprehensive letter in the October Newsletter, I feel that certain points must be further examined if we are to find the real reasons underlying the so-called decline of bushwalking within the club, and hence a proper and workable solution.

There are several possible reasons for the low attendance on club walking trips.

1. It has been suggested that people are ~~not~~ not interested in bushwalking. However, this has been proved false by the number of privately organized trips (including some arranged by those sweepingly labelled "climbers and cavers"), and by a reasonable attendance on some of the better publicized club trips such as Feathertop.

2. This leads to the assumption that there is some objection to walking trips as organized by the club.

(a) Transport:- Vans are too expensive for regular weekend walkers and take a long time to reach their destination.

(b) Location and publicity:- People often know nothing of the area in which the trip is to be held, and consequently exhibit less interest than they might have otherwise. The best solution to this problem is obviously more informative publicity, both in the "Mountaineer" and on the club notice board. A large noticeable advertisement (not the tersely worded, uninteresting black and white placard that so often passes for publicity!) gains attention from all who pass (viz. that rather dubious poster advertising a certain caving trip). Similar posters placed around the Uni. would possibly attract outside interest, especially if placed in prominent positions in departments that may be interested in the area e.g. Zoology, Botany, Geology, Geography etc.

The role of the trip leader must also be examined in this category of publicity. It should take no more than ten minutes to write half a dozen lines consisting of a brief description of the area, the route, any points of interest, photographic opportunities and so on, while a couple of photographs would help to arouse interest. The role of the leader should be as much concerned with this aspect as it is with the actual walking, or he is likely to find there is nobody to walk with, because nobody can be bothered going!

(c) Numbers:- Not everybody likes the traditional concept of the club trip, in which a leader is pursued along a broad well-marked track by twenty or thirty others, who in the meantime learn absolutely nothing about navigation or bushcraft. For those who joined the club with these aims in mind, a series of such trips can be nothing but a disappointment, while those who have had previous experience find no challenge in such an expedition. Surely it is necessary to conduct some smaller trips in order to teach people a few of the basic skills necessary to a bushwalker.



Private trips cannot fulfil this need, as people need some knowledge to organise such a trip, so the club must find a way to help beginners. A weekend has been organised for the beginning of next year, providing instruction in such subjects as navigation, bushcraft, camp cooking, equipment, etc, but some consolidation is surely required to make fullest use of such a course. Small trips, where everybody has a hand in organisation are considerably better for this purpose than trips involving several dozen who all simply follow the leader. It will probably also be easier to find leaders for small trips, where there is some flexibility of plan, and a chance to teach newcomers who are genuinely interested, impossibilities on a large trip.

3. Over the past year, many who would have led walking trips have spent most of their time working on the Featherthorpe hut. The decrease in the number of trips will naturally not have affected the enthusiasm of "old bushwalkers", but many new members may have been drawn into other spheres such as climbing and caving. The unprecedented success of the climbing course this year, and the emerging interest in caving, have undoubtedly contributed to the comparative decline of bushwalking as the club's major activity. The fact that we are extending our range of interests is intrinsically a good thing—after all, we are a mountaineering club, and should cover as many facets of this as we can—but no one field should be sacrificed to another, bushwalking included.

4. With regard to the question of continually visiting the same areas year after year, I think that this is merely another symptom of the general inactivity and lack of enthusiasm that has resulted in so much loss of interest already. Certainly, if a prospective leader has definite plans for a trip, let him carry them out, but at the same time, if anyone knows of an interesting area the suggestion should be made. It is quite possible that members would be interested in club trips to such places as Mt. Howitt, and other areas that up till now have been the target of private trips only. Whereas finding a leader for a large party might be difficult, it would probably not be too hard to arrange a smaller party on a trip such as this.

5. One of the most discussed questions of the moment is that of transport. I must agree with Dave that "van travel is definitely the cheapest form of hire transport for a large party". However, "Several trips have been cancelled because of only three or four people wanting to go, thus making a van trip impracticable. Most of the walks which have been held by van have resulted in financial loss to the club, or at best, have barely broken even." In the juxtaposition of these statements lies the essence of the problem. Vans should only be used when a large crowd is guaranteed, otherwise alternative forms of transport must be found, both for the financial good of the club, and for its members, who cannot afford to pay large sums on transport (as well as food and possible hire of equipment) regularly, every few weekends. There are several important questions to be asked.



Are other forms of transport e.g. Kombivans, less expensive than an unfilled van? Is there any objection to the club's owning some vehicle that might be used to transport small numbers, such as a Kombivan, or a landrover?(Here, I am thinking of several of those much-despised clubs that have the "Misfortune" to be smaller than the M.U.M.C., but still manage to own and maintain a creditable amount of property, including vehicles, viz the Newcastle Speliological Association, which on a recent televised exploratory trip, rolled up with four Landrovers!): Obviously, the only alternatives are no trips, very expensive trips which will ruin the club financially and will deter walkers (leading straight back to the first alternative) or trips involving a more suitable form of transport for a small number.

Private transport is one alternative, although I do not believe that it should supplant other forms entirely. It should be used only when other means are impracticable.

Basically, cars are cheaper and speedier than vans; and may be taken into more distant or inaccessible areas. I disagree with Dave's implication that passengers pay for petrol only. If this were so we would never pay more than the 10/- paid by five climbers to Arapiles (210 miles each way) on one occasion when the driver refused anything more than petrol money. It is normal practice to pay £1 or £1/10/- for such trips, although the actual amount is up to the driver. If he feels that maintenance is not being covered adequately in his present fare, he should raise it. Passengers have no objection to paying a fair rate.

No car should set out on a long trip with less than two drivers, more if possible. In this manner, no driver has to drive until he is dangerously incapable, and he can rest while someone else takes over.

The problem of third party insurance not applying to the driver who accepts fares is surely only a technical point that can be avoided if his passengers actually buy the petrol for him rather than pay him the money, or some similar sort of arrangement. Besides, fares are never paid until the end of the trip, so that in the event of an accident they can be conveniently forgotten until a later date.

If the trip consists of more than one car-load (which is the usual case), the passengers, and the drivers' gear can be dropped at the starting point, while the cars are driven to the finishing point of the trip. Normally, only one, or possibly two cars would have to return to the starting point to transport the drivers. At the end of the trip, the minor shuttle necessary to return the occupants of these cars would not be too inconvenient, as the distance coverable by a walking party is not significant in a car,

Arrangements for private transport do not require any great amount of organisation if conducted by someone who has access to a phone during the day as well as the evening. I was unexpectedly landed with the job of organising transport for the climbing Course at the Arapiles, about a week before the trip.



I left my phone number in a prominent place, with a notice to the effect that all prospective passengers, and drivers, should contact me. The only work involved for me was to scribble out a list of drivers together with the number of spaces available,, then to fill those spaces with names. On the one occasion when I thought that there might be a shortage of cars, I had only to mention this, and parents and friends ~~were~~ immediately prevailed upon to provide transport by all concerned. There was eventually a surplus of transport. The numbers involved ~~were~~ considerably in excess of those to be found on the average walking trip, and would have easily filled a van, had we previously anticipated the numbers and ordered one! No difficulty was encountered whatsoever.

To ensure that all cars reach the highway after the trip, arrangements could easily be made with a roadside cafe to check off each car as it passed. Such establishments, particularly when frequented by truckies, are usually quite willing to concur with such a request, especially if they think that it will boost business! A similar arrangement could be made to ensure that if all cars did not reach the starting point, messages could be left there for the leader.

All in all, I think that a certain rethinking is necessary if interest is to be maintained in bushwalking. All sorts of trips must be catered for by the club, whether small "teaching" trips for beginners, or large van trips attended by vast hordes. Not only must all interests be catered for, but there must be sufficient publicity to arouse and maintain interest (this applies to all our activities equally). People must be satisfied that the organisation of club trips is to their liking, because if they are not they will simply ignore these trips in favour of privately organised ones, or may even abandon all thoughts of bushwalking altogether. Interest must be aroused amongst beginners- we have climbing courses, and weekends of caving devoted entirely to beginners, so why not the same for bushwalking- because they will be the ones to carry on the interest after the older more experienced members leave.

Whether these particular suggestions are followed, or discarded for other more practicable ones, I hope that they at least arouse enough constructive comment to start people thinking seriously on the matter. The prime requisite is nothing but enthusiasm. The rest should follow naturally from this. Let's face it- if a club of our continually referred to size can't generate enthusiasm for one of its supposedly major activities, something's wrong with us!

MARGARET JAMES.



TRIPS PROGRAMME FOR LONG VACATION. 66/67.

WALKING TRIPS.

1/24th. Dec./1st. Jan. Snowy Mountains. Leader- John Kavanagh.(632331 ext.241Bus.) Standard-Medium. Private transport.

2/30th. Dec./2nd. Jan. Mount feathertop-Bogong High Plains Falls Creek. Leader- Dave Hogg.(871630). Standard- Medium. Private transport. Walk starts from Feathertop Memorial Hut on the morning of the 30th.

3/ First two weeks in Jan.(exact date to suit party) Cradle Mt.-Lake St. Clair Reserve(Tasmania). Roger Little(931381-ext. 34Bus.)- Leader. 37 Victoria St. Sandringham. Standard-medium.

4/Third week in Jan.(Exact date to suit party). Licola-Lake Tarlikarng-Wonnangatta Valley-Mt. Howitt. Leader- Roger Little(931381 ext.34. Bus. or 37 Victoria St. sandringham.) Standard- Medium.

5/1st. Feb.- 23 Feb. La Perouse-Sth. Coast-Port Davey-Lake Pedder. Leader- Roger Caffin(8578512). Standard- Hard. For experienced walkers only.

6/5th. March F.V.W.C. Moomba Day Walk. Bullarto-Daylesford Area. Transport- Vintage Train. Leaving Flinders St. 9.25a.m. Fare approx. \$3. Standard- Easy. Ring Dave Hogg(871630) if interested.

CLIMBING TRIPS.

1/ 30th. Dec. - 8th. Jan. Climbing in Buchan Area. Leader- Phil secombe. (801237)

Semi-private climbing trips will be held most weekends. If interested, contact Phil. Secombe(801237). Or other climbing leaders.

CAVING TRIPS.

21st.-22nd. Jan.- Buchan Caves. Leader- Andrew Spate(343986).  
11th.-12th. Feb.

FEATHERTOP HUT WORK PARTIES.

Every weekend commencing 3rd./4th. Dec. and during Christmas and New year period. The hut MUST be finished this summer and there is still plenty of work to do e.g. Bunks, flooring, insulation, toilet, interior fittings. Private transport. Ring Dave Hogg (871630) A brief meeting will be held at 7.30p.m. at Aikman's Rd. on the Weds. preceding each work party. All those going should attend.

F.V.W.C. TRACK CLEARING WEEKEND.

18th./19th. Feb. The project of improving the snow pole line from Mt. Baw Baw to Mustering Flat which was postponed for 15th. and 16th. Oct. due to adverse weather conditions. Private transport. Ring Dave Hogg for bookings (871630). Bring axes, shovels, mattocks,

TRIP BOOKINGS\*- For all vacation trips except work parties, bookings should be made with the leader. For work parties phone Dave Hogg(871630). Aikman's Rd. will not be open every lunch-time during the vacation.



SPORTS UNION INSURANCE.

Available for all Sports Union members on both club and private trips, provided a list is given to the Sports Union Secretary prior to the trip. Official Club trips lists are available from Dave Hogg.

FEDERATION OF VICTORIAN WALKING CLUBS'- New Publication.

The F.V.W.C. is now publishing a bimonthly newsletter to inform its member clubs and their members of current items of interest within the federation, and concerning bushwalking in general. Such items include news of coming Federation events, information on new maps, bushwalking publications, etc. news items concerning National Parks, and information on new tracks and huts. Dave Hogg is at present editing this newsletter and would welcome contributions from M.U.M.C. members.

Copies of the newsletter are available from Dave or from Aikman's Rd. Alternatively, you can receive "Federation News" in the mail at 5 cents per single copy or 25 cents annual subscription(6 copies). Contact Dave Hogg if you are interested in subscribing to this newsletter.

SLIDES WANTED.

Mr. J.D.Dowel is looking for slides of animals, birds, orchids etc. of the Powelltown/ Labertouche area, to be used in a colour slide documentary(with a recorded soundtrack) of the area. Donations will be welcomed but purchase would be made if necessary. Slides should be sent to Mrs. Dowell at 150 Gladstone Rd. Dandenong.

TO DEBTORS AND OTHER MALEFACTORS!

The following people owe money for Feathertop Food Services. Would you please tend to the matter as soon as possible- John RENOWDEN, Margaret GATES, Peter CRIBET, Ian BURNETT, Gwyn DAVIES, Tony O'BRIEN, Bob CHAPPELL, Margot OSBORNE, Kerry PRITCHARD, Robert WARD, Ken WILLIAMS, Andrew SPATE, Jenny FOWLER, Don CORCORAN, Geoff PAYNE.

Apologies if you have already paid the Hon. Treasurer,

NINA RULEVICH.

The NUMC extends its sympathies to the family of PROFESSOR SIR THOMAS CHERRY, one of the original members and founders of the CLUB.

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Judy Maynard.

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