

the
MOUNTAINEER



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The official journal of Melbourne University Mountaineering Club - the August "Mountaineer" only came out in the form it did due to the demands of postal regulations and for convenience.

I N D E X

Page

INDEX	...	...	...	...	...	1
COMMITTEE	...	...	...	...	...	1
EDITORIAL	...	...	...	...	...	2
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	...	...	...	...	...	3
NEWS	...	...	...	...	...	4
TRIPS PROGRAM	...	...	...	...	...	5
REPORTS	...	...	...	...	...	6
"HIGH LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND"	11
"THE LAST GREAT CANOEING SHOW ON THE MITTA"	14
BOOK REVIEW	16

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EDITORIAL

Mountaineering can be a tough and dangerous activity, and this is a good thing. That view from the mountaintop may be breathtaking (snap it, Hiram!), the trees and animals encountered very nice, and the fresh air good to breathe, but it is for the sense of excitement and danger that people go into the wilderness. When one is made to feel a little frightened, then one begins to feel more alive. In mountaineering we postulate the possibility of death, so that, in the (possibly superficial) struggle for life, we appreciate living more. In mountaineering, things have to be hard and dangerous to be satisfying. Put in a black way, every real mountain needs a death.

Being sensible, however, most mountaineers like to have their thrills in a controlled environment. To take one example, we evolve an intrinsically dangerous pursuit and then we hedge our bets by improving our climbing skills, developing extensive protection equipment, and limiting the unknown - through guide books. I love life, so I do not solo! Carrying full snow gear, and knowing what you are doing in the winter wilderness seems to be a good compromise between the extremes of civilised boredom or a "gun" death.

Safety in the mountains is a much thrown about concept. Too much emphasis seems to be placed upon making the mountains safe. Put up huts everywhere, whack in a few pole lines, plenty of sign posts, and lets have a few more qualified leaders with triplicate forms. Do not leave the concrete path to climb Mount Ossa because you are due at Pelion Hut at 4 p.m. and, besides - the ever present underlying theme of mountain safety experts - you might die. Always, then, the emphasis upon external safeguards.

It was a lack of commonsense and consideration that characterised the walk up the North-West spur of Feathertop on the midnight ascent. Because the walk is such a bugger most ascents seem to be highly individualistic affairs. Everyone for themselves to reach the hut and sleep. This is alright if everyone knows the way. Unfortunately, someone did not. Perhaps someone should have walked with Tony, the group should have been closer together, and a stop should have been made sooner. If the rush up the spur is to continue like it does at present, then people should only come if they are experienced. It is good to be able to wander about the mountains with a lack of care. Cut out the worry and things get done. However, people must know what they are about before the need for worry is gone.

"Safety" is such a relative concept. To be safe, one should know what is happening, and where you are going. Unless the walkers have enough self-reliance and skill to look after themselves in the bush, then all the external aids in the world will not ensure their safety. People must realise that there is danger in mountaineering, and commit themselves to their aims before they begin. Given experience, commonsense and confidence, the trip can be made as "safe" as the party wishes. A sense of danger cannot be enjoyed in complete safety.

Nick "Dead Bear" Reeves

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

In your editorial of June, 1975, you raised the point of the need for political action to overthrow the rule of Capital in order to solve the environmental crisis. Whilst such a comment will, no doubt, raise an eyebrow or two amongst more conservative club members, I feel that you are close to the truth. For too long we have stood on the sidelines whilst the mountains, rivers and bush lands we love have been attacked by almost every sector of our capitalist economy.

Evidently, rivers exist to be dammed, diverted and destroyed for the production of unnecessary electricity, storage of unwanted water; forests exist for the manufacture of pulp for the wasteful packaging industry; and mountains for the provision of ski resorts catering to the well to do. Environmental issues pale into insignificance when the question of Capital arises. We are running a poor second. The basic capitalist philosophy is to make increasing profits. These are made by increasing production, through greater exploitation of natural resources! Natural resources will only be permanently preserved by a society that holds beauty and aesthetics to be of greater importance than profit. Clearly a capitalist economy is not the framework in which this can be achieved.

MUMC should not only make its views known, it should make them felt. Conservationists should enter the political field. Capitalism is the disease to be fought; issues such as Lake Pedder, Fraser Island, etc., are but symptoms of the disease. We are wasting our time fighting our battles by conventional means. Capitalism will not tell us of their plans whilst it is still possible to stop them. We will not find out until it is too late.

The Australian Wilderness has disappeared. We have not much left to save; but save it we must by engaging in revolutionary environmental political action and defeating the capitalist system.

Jol. Shelton

The next letter is being reprinted because, when it appeared in the last issue, it was distorted in meaning due to mistakes in production.

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to see "Guide to the Alps" in print again and congratulate M.U.M.C. on again carrying to a successful conclusion the very large task of putting out such a guide. I regret that I am unhappy with the change in title because at this time there is much discussion as to the relevance of matters bushwalking to matters ski-touring, especially as regards mountain safety. To

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR .. (Continued)

a bushwalker it may seem absurd or even impossible to disregard bushwalking ideas, gear, practices and publications on mountain safety. But apparently many of the skiers now venturing out from the resorts to go touring do think this way and we should, therefore, lose no opportunity of trying to convince them that bushwalking and ski-touring have, in fact, fare more in common than has resort skiing and ski-touring. Bushwalking and ski-touring have the same needs for proper warm and weatherproof clothing, for skills in navigation, map-reading and survival, for the maps and guides to the areas they use in common; while the resort skier does not use the same clothes or the same skis, bindings and boots, let alone the same mountain skills, guides and maps, and mountain areas.

It seems a pity then that the embryo ski-tourer who is not a bushwalker may let the title put him off acquiring this volume with its wealth of information, useful to the safer touring of skier and walker alike. To call the guide "Bushwalking and Ski-touring..." would seem rather clumsy - I thought the original title very satisfactory, and people seemed to have no problem either remembering it or realizing it catered essentially to foot travel, whether on boot or ski. I can but hope for a return to the old title next time. We should be concerned for the welfare of the non-bushwalking ski-tourer because, apart from the possibility of having to search for the lost ones, we should also be concerned at the extra pressure they put on mountain areas, which can include pressure for more development of huts and so on - if we can help them to the maximum with guides, maps and education on gear, survival and navigation, then we can hope and expect that they will be more receptive to our ideas of minimum development in the way of huts and pole lines, in the interest of both mountain safety and wilderness values.

Loch Wilson
(BUSHGEAR PTY. LTD.)
18th June, 1975

NEWS

The Oxo Ball held recently at the Wattle Park Chalet was one of the best ever. Many thanks should go from the club to the organisers, Marie Francken, Eileen O'Meagher and Robyn Fraser. George Kuczera won Piker-of-the-year. Mike Feller became the new frozen gnome, and his telephone number appears elsewhere in this issue.

2. The library has had a stocktake, and books are now available for loan. Why not wander into the back of Aikmans Road and have a browse. We have some money available to buy new books. Suggest some titles to the librarian, Tony Bishop.

3. We have a new duplicator, and it is available for use. Contact the secretary. The old duplicator, a Roneo, is for sale, at about \$100.

NEWS .. (Continued)

(4) Aus Travel Ltd. has flights to Christchurch for \$167 return. Why not climb in New Zealand this summer? Alpine Guides Ltd. and Mountain Recreation offer instructional courses, and information about them is on the club notice board. If you need gear then think about purchasing it now while you can. Enquire about NZAC membership from the

Secretary
NZAC (Australian Section)
Andrew Henderson
1A Balmoral Avenue
MOSMAN, N.S.W. 2088

TRIPS PROGRAM

DATE	.. 13-14 September
AREA	.. Wilson's Prom.
LEADER	.. G. Lay (69 3824)
STANDARD	.. Easy
TRANSPORT	.. Private
DATE	.. 28th September
AREA	.. Strath Creek Gorge (day walk)
LEADER	.. ?
STANDARD	.. Medium, with excellent scenery
TRANSPORT	.. Van
DATE	.. 4-5 October
AREA	.. Big River - Mt. Terrible
LEADER	.. Rob Smith (878 7657)
STANDARD	.. Medium
TRANSPORT	.. Private
DATE	.. 12th October
AREA	.. Lederberg Gorge
LEADER	.. Gretel Lamont (331742)
STANDARD	.. Pleasant
TRANSPORT	.. Private
DATE	.. 22-23 November
AREA	.. Barkly River, Macalister River - Post Exam Bludge
LEADER	.. Jol Shelton
STANDARD	.. Bludge, 1.5 mile walk to Macalister River
TRANSPORT	.. Van

Geoff Lay is interested in walking in the Grampians some time during October or November. Contact him to arrange dates.

CAVING TRIPS.

On anytime. Contact Sue White - 3284145

CLIMBING TRIPS.

Contact John Chapman - 413885

CANOEING.

Contact John Templer, 386201)

LONG VACATION TRIPS

- (1) Could people contemplating trips to either Tasmania or New Zealand next summer please let the Trips Secretary know of their plans so that enquiries can be directed that way.
- (2) Any persons willing to lead weekend walks in Victoria during the long vacation please contact the Trips Secretary so that such trips can be incorporated in the Trips Program and published in the "Mountaineer" before the trip is about to leave.

Club Contact - Gill Hume; 3472371

Trips Secretary - Jol. Shelton. Home number 254324
Uni. 3416612

- at weekends the Trips Secretary is usually away.

REPORTS

ROCKCLIMBING

.. by John Chapman

Recently the general standard of climbing by the club regulars has risen significantly. This has probably been due to the fact that there is a trip every weekend.

(i) The only venue to receive weekend trips has been Mt. Arapiles, and even there it rains. One of the great achievements was Steve Pawley's lead of The Watchtower Crack (16) on a particularly wet and miserable day. Peter Megens was the unfortunate wet second. Keith Egerton has been climbing well with leads of Aristocrat (17), Marc (17) and Resignation (12) (at last MUMC has succeeded this year) with Steve Pawley seconding him competently. Peter Megens overcame the difficult one move wonder Fang (17) to become another climber this year who has led a (17).

(ii) More recently the convenor himself (not to be outdone) did the Rack (19) in dubious style (led the crux, then top roped last 10') and Morfydd (19); with Peter Watson leading the first (crux) pitch. Both pitches are difficult, and it must rate as one of the most sustained climbs at Mt. Arapiles, rarely falling below grade 17.

(iii) Epics seem to be the vogue this year, with David Lia on his second attempt at Yo-Yo (15). Unable to lead the second (crux) and third pitches Hedley Thomson (only his second trip) led them both. They then got caught by darkness and the rope jammed in the abseil. A subsequent rescue at night saved an all night bivouac on the cliff.

(iv) The only other cliff to see any activity has been Werribee Gorge. Here Peter Treby came out of retirement to lead Mick Fitzgerald up Veni Vidi Vici (17). Androcles has been the scene of many attempts, with Steve Pawley and Peter Watson both succeeding in leading it. Watson has also led Pet of Dimitrious (17). On the North Side Steve Pawley led Peter Megens up Bilbo (16).

CONSERVATION REPORT.

The MUMC Conservation sub-committee has been very active this year, meeting about once a fortnight. So far we have devoted all our time to the preparation of a brief for the Land Conservation Council in response to the Melbourne Study Area recommendations.

We were in general agreement with most of the recommendations and limited our comments to those recommendations which were relevant to us as an outdoor recreation club and those which we considered either particularly good or particularly bad.

Some of the main points of our brief were as follows:-

PARKS

(1) We approve of National, State, Regional and Multi-purpose park categories, but there is no point in having a multi-purpose park unless recreation is considered the dominant land-use in a considerable proportion of such a park. If an area is designated a multi-purpose park, its management must emphasise recreation.

(2) We approve of the reservation of State and Regional parks under Section 14 of the Land Act 1958 as this provides them with the greatest degree of protection possible under Victorian Legislation.

(3) The land in the Melbourne Study Area is particularly valuable for recreation because of its natural attributes and proximity to Melbourne. Timber production tends to lower recreational values. Therefore, more land as parkland should be reserved for recreation. Accordingly, we have recommended that some land designated for timber production should be designated for parks instead.

(4) The continuation of mining exploration in State parks seems incompatible with the general definition of a State park as well as several of the stated uses of the parks. Therefore, mining exploration in State parks should be phased out.

(5) Orienteering should be allowed in parks near Melbourne, but any given area should not be subjected to an orienteering event more than once a year and the areas visited should be under observation by parks personnel to determine if there are any adverse environmental affects.

(6) Rock climbing areas should remain as such if they are in land designated as parks.

(7) The Baw Baw park should be extended to the Yarra Valley Park to provide better and more extensive walking and conservation opportunities. The Baw Baw Park is also rather narrow in places and is consequently very vulnerable to outside activities such as

CONSERVATION REPORT .. (Continued)

timber production. It is thus poorly buffered and should be broadened by including some middle and low elevation country. Park status should not be conferred only on the country left over after the Forest Commission has decided what land it wants, but should be conferred on some valuable valley bottom land where the forests are extremely valuable for recreation.

We support the general recommendations for management of the Baw Baw Park, particularly the rejection of the road construction proposed.

(8) There should be a State park in the region near Mt. Matlock, and the whole of the Alpine Walking Track as this track is badly in need of protection against logging damage. The Mt. Matlock - Mt. Victory - Mt. Singleton region is valuable for walking and general conservation. The park should extend to at least 5 km. west of Mt. Matlock to exclude logging right to its summit.

WATER PRODUCTION - M.M.B.W. CATCHMENTS.

(1) Before any more dam building occurs an environmental impact study should take place. The results of this study should be made available to the public and the decision on whether or not to build the dam should be made only after submissions from the public have been considered.

(2) Logging should not be permitted in most of the M.M.B.W. Catchment area. A catchment protected from logging is highly valuable for extensive recreation and conservation, and could also contain a reference area.

(3) The walking track from Black Spur to Donna Buang via Mt. Vinegar should be open to the public, and the M.M.B.W. should inform outdoor walking clubs exactly which tracks are open to the public.

TIMBER PRODUCTION.

1. Not one more hectare of native eucalypt forest should be converted to pines. Pines should only be planted on marginal agricultural land when the Forests Commission can prove that they -

- a) are not creating new industries where none existed before, and
- b) are providing only for future essential requirements.

2. The statement on P.44 of the Recommendations, that "...hardwood production has been compatible with many other uses, such as conservation of flora and fauna.." is not correct. Traditional hardwood production has destroyed the vegetation component of many ecosystems. In many cases the lack of regeneration has given rise to a completely different ecosystem.

CONSERVATION REPORT .. (Continued)

In others, low rotation ages considerably decrease the average age of the existing forest ecosystems and consequently affect the flora and fauna within them.

3. All scenic roads, as well as others such as the Noojee - Baw Baw road, so designated on map No. 8 of the Melbourne Study Area Report, should have their aesthetic values maintained so that virtually no logging should be visible from them. The LCC recommends this and this recommendation should be strictly enforced.

Recreation.

1. We strongly approve of the recommendations concerning motorized recreation vehicles (p.78).

2. Motorized recreation vehicles (4-wheel drive cars and trail bikes) should not be allowed to travel any further in State, Regional or Multi-purpose parks than normal 2-wheel drive cars.

3. All vehicles should be excluded from the track network between Lake Mountain and the Cathedral and the road leading north from the Cathedral hut should also be closed off so that access to the area would only be along one road - from the south.

4. Trail bikes should be encouraged to use powerline right-of-ways.

5. The statement on p.78 that "...bushwalking and pleasure-driving, are compatible with most other uses of an area" is completely incorrect. It is far too simplistic as, among bushwalkers, there is a whole spectrum of philosophies. One very common philosophy is a desire for solitude and minimum development so that, for these bushwalkers, the use of land for timber production or for motorized recreation vehicles is strongly incompatible with their own use.

Uncommitted Land

We strongly approve of the recommendation that new access track or road construction be minimized to preserve options for future land use. We would go further and recommend that any organization wishing to build a new road or track on crown land must notify the public of its intent and then seek permission for construction from the LCC. The LCC should then not make a decision until it has considered submissions from the public. We consider the Forests Commission to have caused considerable problems in this respect. Their road building activities should be strictly controlled by a multiple land use body such as the L.C.C. We realise this is not part of the normal function of the L.C.C. but the L.C.C. is the only multiple land use body we have capable of making unbiased decisions.

CONSERVATION REPORT .. (Continued)

FUTURE ACTIVITIES of the sub committee will involve consideration of the following items:-

- (1) Land Conservation Council Grampians Study Area.
 - (2) L.C.C. Alpine Study Area - the big one for us.
 - (3) Huts and tracks policies.
 - (4) MUMC Feathertop Hut.
 - (5) A management plan for a South West National Park in Tasmania.
 - (6) Senaté Woodchip Industry inquiry submission,
- plus many others.

There is much to be done as you can see, and we need your help. Do you realise that right now the L.C.C. is deciding how our public lands are to be used in the future. If you are to have some say in how these lands are to be managed now is your chance. Tomorrow may be too late! As an individual you are rather powerless, but if you join a group then you have a greater chance of being listened to. This is why you should join the Australian Conservation Foundation or a similar organisation, and also why you should help the Conservation sub-committee, who are submitting documents on your behalf.

You can attend one of our meetings about which information is given under the "Conservation" sign on the notice board in the club rooms or, if you can't attend a meeting, 'phone Michael Feller at 20 2232 in the evenings for further information.

"HIGH LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND"

by Greg Martin

- An account of Earles Route and a grand traverse of Mount Cook, January, 1975.

The Hooker Valley is arguably the wildest and most imposing part of the Mt. Cook National Park. It is high and narrow, hemmed in by impressive walls and the bulk of Mt. Cook. A place of avalanche and the spasmodic thunder and whine of stonefall. For me, Empress has always held an aura of adventure and remoteness, even though at night one can glimpse the lights of the Hermitage Tourist Hotel from the hut door.

We reached Empress, thankfully dumping the heavy packs with the thought that the climbing sacks would be much lighter. Two other climbers were there, with us just filling the small 6-bunk hut.

Next day, after a long and welcome sleep, we spent the afternoon in indifferent weather investigating the lower reaches of Earle's Route on Mt. Cook. This starts up the Shilla Glacier, then several hundred feet up the side of the ridge just beyond a prominent gap, to gain the ridge proper.

The route follows up the ridge, mostly rock of variable quality (one writer in the Empress hut book describes Earle's Route as "overhanging shingle", a slight exaggeration!) and becomes rather indistinct as it merges with the upper section of the Shilla face before running out onto the icecap below the high peak.

Returning from our recce, we were less than pleased to find that a further 6 people had arrived, making a total of 12. Somehow everybody squashed in, using every available bit of floor and bench.

The weather looked good next morning, and the long range forecast was encouraging. We cooked breakfast in the second shift, but with the chaotic conditions in the hut we didn't leave until about 5 a.m. By the time we reached the rock, daylight had well arrived. Reaching the ridge seemed to take a long time. We climbed on, enjoying the rock (except when dodging pieces dislodged by the rope above), sunshine and unfolding views. Later in the day we watched two others from the hut on the final slopes of Mt. Hicks, tiny animated figures on an expanse of snow, jumping and whooping like cheering ants when they reached the summit.

The hours slipped by pleasantly as we steadily progressed. We were climbing one at a time on belays most of the way, whereas a party more accustomed to climbing together would undoubtedly have moved together much of the time. Eventually, by early evening we reached the icecap, as mist began to roll in around

"HIGH LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND" .. Continued

us. From here the summit was only about 400 feet above, but all we could see was steep ice disappearing above into the mist. Although an hour or so of daylight remained, the prospect of a bivvy on ice, on or near the high peak of Cook, didn't seem all that attractive (I had no foam mat), so we traversed across to a rock outcrop.

It turned out to be much smaller and more sloping than we had hoped, but another area of rock further across looked better. Here we found enough individual sitting spaces, so tying on securely we began the gymnastics of getting organised for the night without dropping anything.

Prepared for a bivouac with either duvets or sleeping bags and with nylon bags we soon got settled on our uncomfortable perches. We regretted not having a stove; we ate biscuits, chocolate and scroggin, not feeling very hungry. Sleep was easier than I had expected. During the night cloud came and went, and we were covered with a dusting of fresh snow.

The morning was dramatic; as the mist rolled away we watched fascinated from our 12,000 ft. balcony as the sun caught the tops of La Perouse, Sefton and a sea of more distant peaks. The giant pyramid of Cook cast a triangular shadow miles out across the Tasman Sea. We could see much of the summit ridge, edged in gold, and the low peak of Cook was below us.

Paddy and I stiffly began to prepare to climb. The piston rope I had been sitting on had frozen, and we had to work through it inch by inch twice to restore some flexibility. About 8 a.m., a late start, we began climbing. Moving one at a time on ice screw belays, with an icescrew runner and a resting step about half way up each pitch. The angle was about 45 to 50 degrees until it eased off near the summit, where we emerged from the icy shade into the welcome warmth of the sun and the whole new scene of all the Tasman glacier peaks. We unroped, took photos, and looked. George and Rob, who hadn't begun to move until we left the bivvy site, arrived about 10 a.m. after we had enjoyed an hour on top of Mt. Cook.

We all enjoyed another hour on the summit, before leaving about 11 a.m. to begin the start of the "Grand Traverse", along the 1½ mile summit ridge to the low peak. The entire ridge is higher than any other peak in New Zealand, so one really feels on the roof of the island.

Ice conditions proved tricky, a layer of shattered crystalline loosely adhering ice covered an extremely hard layer, too hard to take a Salewa screw. So we moved cautiously and very slowly down the first few steep pitches of the high peak, spending much time awkwardly cutting steps. Easier slopes were reached eventually, but we had spent 2 hours on only a short stretch.

"HIGH LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND" Continued

Here we discussed whether we should go on, or return to the high peak and descend the normal route down the Linda glacier to Plateau Hut, as it was becoming clear that otherwise another bivouac would be inevitable. The weather looked very settled, so we decided to go on. Until the middle peak we mostly moved one at a time on either icescrew or hammered in iceaxe shaft belays.

Below the middle peak we jumped a large 'schrund', all that remains of a big break in the ridge caused by an earthquake in the early 1960's. The climbing became easier so we got closer to the low peak. We ran down the broad ridge from the low peak in deep sugary snow, occasionally sinking a leg into a hidden slot.

Amongst the rocks near the top of the west ridge we found a comfortable and spacious bivvy site, where we could scrape out shingle ledges large enough to lie down on, and collect water from a dripping snow patch. And we had time to enjoy the late afternoon sun before splitting up the last of our meagre food supplies and getting into the bivvy bags. We were still about 11,000 feet and the night was cold.

Next day the weather was again fine. We tried to thaw out, then began climbing down the side of the west ridge to gain the northwest spur coming off it. The route is not obvious, but we continued meandering steadily downwards.

During midmorning we were embarrassed by the arrival of a ski plane, obviously flying a search pattern and probably looking for us. Rob, when he made the hurried entry in the Empress hut book, had omitted to mention that we were equipped for a bivvy and intended one night out.

On the second flight the observer noticed the corroboree we were holding on the rocks trying to make ourselves conspicuous, waved and went away. We breathed sighs of relief at not having triggered a more major search, and continued on down, beginning to dream of large drinks of cold water, hot tea, or anything.

An abseil off the end of the rock rib, followed by a half hour plod across the Empress shelf, and we were back at the hut. It was early afternoon, the hut was deserted, but looked like the Empress Hilton. After several brews, George used the hut radio to contact park headquarters to reassure them that we were back O.K. Several facetious remarks made by George about feeling pretty buggered and being too old for it were probably the basis of subsequent distorted newspaper reports that we had staggered back to safety on our last legs.

Next day we spent eating and lying in the sun. On the following day the long fine spell broke, with heavy rain. We packed and left, and were soaked by the time we reached Gardiner. Pudding Rock was awash. We climbed down the fixed cable, had a 100' abseil off the last cable bolt, then a 110' abseil off a piton to finally reach the Hooker Ice.

"HIGH LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND" .. Continued

We walked right through to Union Hut, including the 3 miles of road from the Hermitage.

Thus ended the most protracted but also perhaps the most enjoyable climb I have done. Living on the roof of New Zealand, waking to magnificent sunrises and mountain scenery, was a captivating experience.

PARTY:

George Edwards
Rob Mitchell
Paddy Bodger
Greg Martin

THE LAST GREAT CANOEING SHOW ON THE MITTA-MITTA

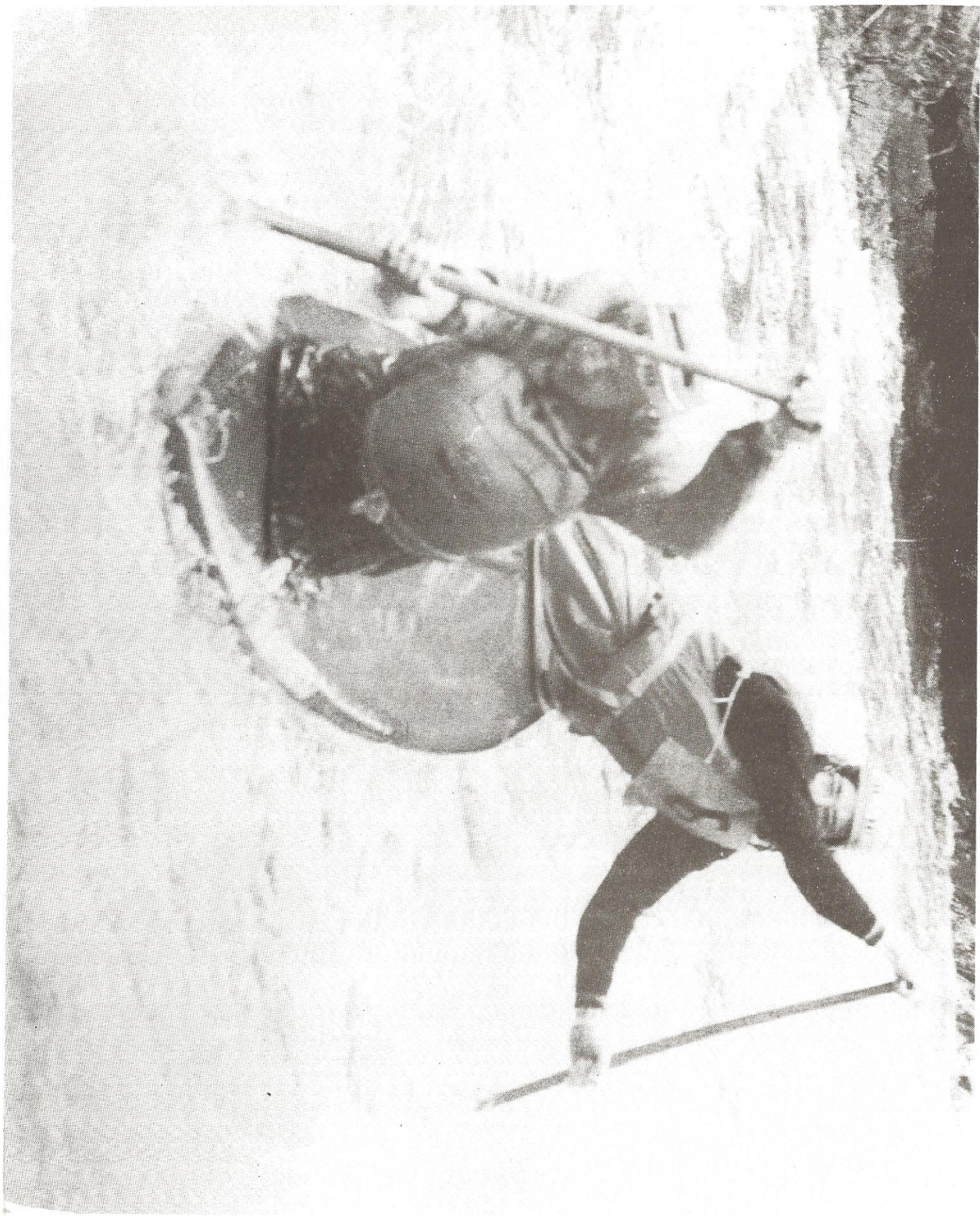
This year's state of hyper-active MUMC canoeing lead to the tackling of the Mitta-Mitta River in midwinter. We had canoed most other accessible rivers in Victoria in the previous six months, but had never been on the Mitta.

On Friday, 4th July, six hardened canoeists left for Nine Mile Creek below Hinnomunjie Station on the Mitta-Mitta River. One of the cars came up over Mt. Willa after arranging the car shuffle. They got a taste of what was to come; a little snow and ice on the road.

Saturday morning and we were on the Mitta with the water absolutely freezing. A few rapids later, with fingers numb with cold, we began to doubt the sanity of the trip. A Mitta fire was lit for lunch, and we warmed up. Enthused by Cammo's description of what should be done to the person(s) responsible for introducing blackberries to Victoria (blushes from Karen) we paddled on. The rapids were fairly easy, the water a little shallow but the temperature was taking its toll. A near capsizing (by the author) was avoided by a strategic push off the bottom. Yes, that water was certainly cold; falling in would not be fun.

After passing a couple of overhanging limestone cliffs the river standard improved with a couple of dramatic drops into neck deep stoppers just above the Gibbo River junction where we set up camp.

The night was bitterly cold; a little rain fell but not enough to cause distress. Half an hour after getting up it hit us. Snowflakes the size of five-cent pieces streamed out of the grey mist above. The ground was completely covered. It was too late to pike; we didn't have enough time to take the rest day we all wanted, and so we packed as fast as we could whilst thawing our bodies by the fire.



"THE LAST GREAT CANOEING SHOW ON THE MITTA-MITTA .. Continued

Off we paddled down the river; over a drop and through the stopper to be met by an icy blast of snow in our faces. This was a unique experience; real Eskimo style, but exhibition rolls definitely out.

"Canoeing is fun, we are not cold", declared Timmy.

We came to the first of three grade 4 - 5 rapids. We portaged. A hundred yards further on was the second. Again we portaged. The rapids we did shoot certainly weren't easy; long and difficult with multiple drops and stoppers; probably grade 3 - 4. Then came the third of the major rapids; another portage by all except myself. By a stroke of luck I came through upright.

Cammo was the first to go, felled by a Trotskyist plot between the current and the rock. Cammo desperately tried the Capitalist roll but to no avail. Next to go were Timmy Hughes (twice) and Bill Cruickshank. The water was bone chilling; one spill and you'd had it. With half the party soaked to the skin and the other half shivering in their boats, camp was made high on a sandbank. Another Mitta fire was lit and we thawed out.

The snow and sleet stopped for the night but Cammo still had his excitement. Hearing a growling sound he awoke with a start. "Karen was snoring", thought Pete, but a closer examination revealed that she wasn't. The noises were now moving away from his tent. In true cow-cocky style: "It must be a wombat after our food". Cammo leapt out of his tent, armed with his torch and years of experience on the farm, he was ready for battle. But the wombat could not be found. There was only the snoring author in the other tent.

Next day we started earlier as it was not as cold as before. Once in our boats that changed. A cold wind cut right through us as we paddled down the river, winding our way down the mist laden valley lined with snow draped ridges.

We paddled on, determined to make this our last day on the river. We had many miles to cover, the Dartmouth dam to portage as well as some rather tricky rapids to negotiate in the meantime. We reached Dartmouth just as darkness was falling, and hitched a ride with our kayaks on a 4WD utility, avoiding the portage. The ride was somewhat airy, high speed on roads smothered in mud. We shortly arrived at our car and drove into Mitta-Mitta for a welcome night in the pub.

CANOEING FREAKS: TIM HUGHES
JOL SHELTON
STEVE LOTTKOWITZ
BILL CRUICKSHANK
PETE CAMERON
KAREN ROBERTS

"THE LAST GREAT CANOEING SHOW ON THE MITTA-MITTA" .. Continued

Although this was dangerous and exciting, it was also rather saddening. Ours will probably be one of the last trips on the Mitta-Mitta. The Dartmouth Dam will destroy this section of river. The river valley is beautiful, its rapids unparalleled in Victoria for quality and continuity.

The Mitta-Mitta will soon be ruined. Dams are planned for the Thomson and Mitchell rivers. Even the Snowy River gorge has been suggested as a dam site.

The United States has seen the value of wild water preservation; Australia has yet to consider it. Wake up, Australia - there isn't much left to save.

Jol Shelton

BOOK REVIEW

"South West Tasmania - A Land of the Wild" by David Nielson.
Rigby Ltd., Adelaide. 1975.

David Nielson has made a worthy contribution in the struggle for the creation of an enlarged National Park in S.W. Tasmania. As he observes "One of the many lessons to be learned from the Lake Pedder controversy is that the public must be made more aware of the value of places such as this before they are threatened". Nielson's book will make the public more aware of the treasure that is the South West.

The area is put in its global perspective as one of three major Southern Oceanic wilderness areas along with the fiordland region of New Zealand and Western Patagonia in southern Chile and Argentina. The geology, flora, fauna and early history are briefly but adequately described. The tragic history of the H.E.C. intrusion into the area is covered in greater detail.

The South West is a land of contrast, a wild and beautiful land. Neilson's description concentrates on the Eastern Arthurs and the South Coast. He writes with an intimate knowledge of the area, describing its words with penetrating accuracy. Superb photography adds to the description, reviving memories of one's own visits to the area; but neither words nor photographs can ever really portray the character of the South West - it is something that must be felt.

Neilson argues for an enlarged National Park stretching from South East Cape in a wide arc to Low Rocky Point on the west coast encompassing Precipitous Bluff and the Southern Ranges,

the Pictons, a larger area around Mt. Anne, the entire south coast as well as a significant part of the west coast. To preserve existing wilderness qualities he advocates the elimination of existing shelters, no more track cutting, sparing use of airdrops as well as a restriction on mining and timber cutting activities.

The book's theme, as expressed in words and pictures, is best summarised by Neilson's closing words:

"And from such experiences flow an elemental feeling utterly unassociated with logic or reason, that tis inexpressibly wild and magnificent land should remain forever in its natural condition".

Jolyon Shelton

Kimpton SLEEPING BAGS

arctic bag

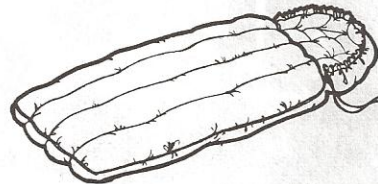
For sub zero temperatures and high altitudes. Cellular walls form lengthwise flutes, this stabilises the filling, ensuring even insulation and maximum resistance to cold throughout. There are no cold spots on the stitching, not even on the side seams because of these walls. The quilted flap hood is fitted with a draw tape and permits almost complete envelopment of the sleeper except for a small breathing aperture. When tied, the end allows no heat loss, however, in hot weather, the down can be compressed to the bottom and the end left open for ventilation, this makes the Arctic a dual purpose bag.



Filled with 2½lb. superdown.

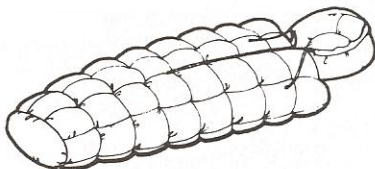
Body of bag cut 6'6" long x 32".
Total weight of bag 5¼ lb.

walled, hooded combination bag



Walled construction, the same as our Arctic bag. This hooded bag unzips to open into a blanket. Or, you can zip two bags together to make a double bag. Superdown filled

snow bag



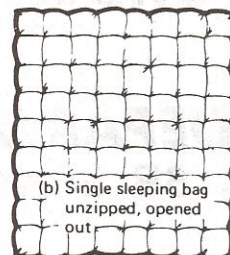
For skiers, bush walkers and sportsmen who want warmth without weight: Fitted with an inside closing zip and adjustable hood. An added feature is the heavily padded, circular foot panel, for protection in cold conditions. Supplied with our special waterproof container bag.

combination sleeping bag

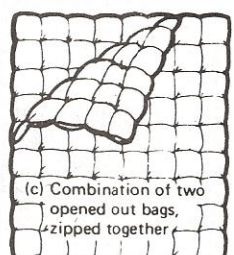
opened out to make a 6' 6" x 5' warm, light eiderdown, equalling the warmth of two pairs of blankets. For caravanning or camping purposes, it is simply zipped together, forming a single sleeping bag, or two bags opened out, can be zipped together, forming a perfect roomy double bag, capable of accommodating two adults or three children. Needs no bedmaking.



(a) Single sleeping bag zipped up



(b) Single sleeping bag unzipped, opened out



(c) Combination of two opened out bags, zipped together

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