

# the **MOUNTAINEER**



28/194 Nick Reeves, Maharajah 2nd pitch  
Mt. Buffalo Photo J. Chapman

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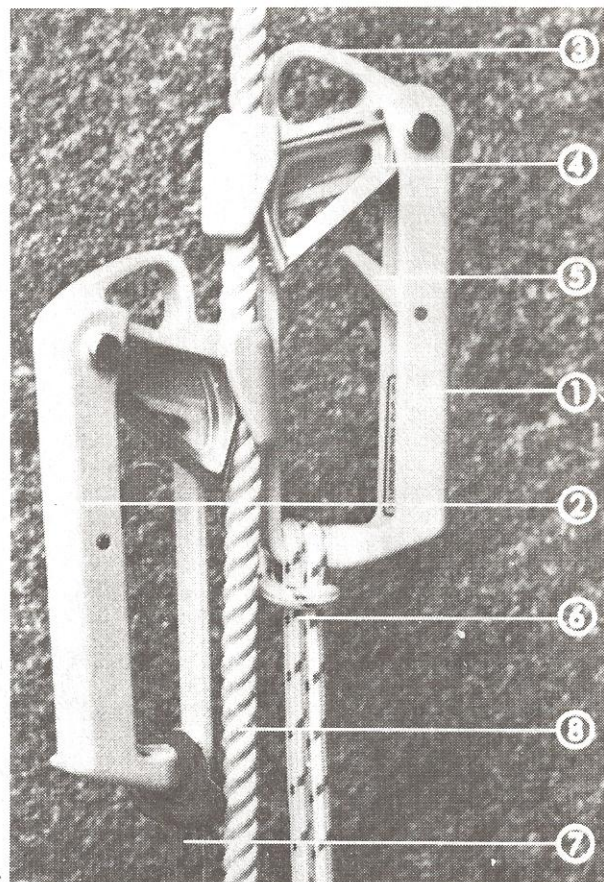


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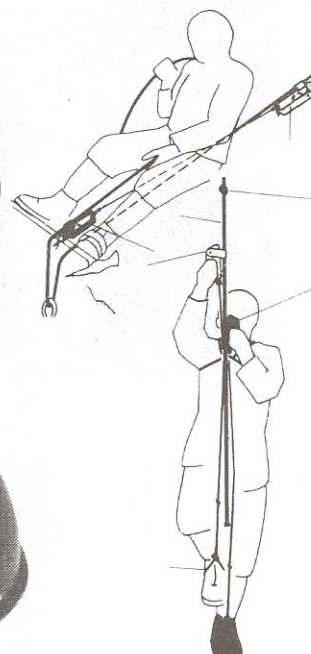
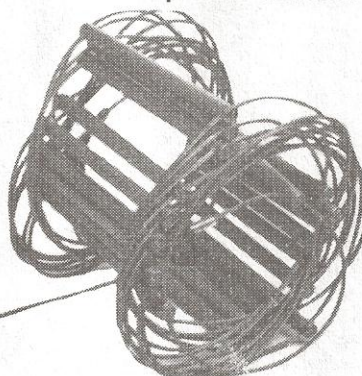
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The magazine of the MUMC.

All correspondence should be addressed

C/- The Editor,  
"The Mountaineer",  
Melbourne University Mountaineering Club,  
C/- Sports Union, Melbourne University,  
Grattan Street, PARKVILLE, 3052

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EDITORIAL

Popular support and dissent in favour of conservation issues has reached a new low. The environment is a dead political issue. No one seems to care about what happens to the Australian wilderness anymore. People are quite content to cough their way about our cities. How else can the appointment of that conservative, bumbling, - that erstwhile liberal, the right honorable Senator Ivor Greenwood, to the Ministerial post in charge of conservation, be explained. A strict legalist, who would willingly applaud any mining warden's technical jargonistic approval for a big mineral company to rape the bush; the only thing to be said in Greenwood's defence is his name!

Business does not care for the environment; it cares for profits. In our society as it is presently structured, the only power capable of forcing companies to act in an environmentally responsible manner is political. Governments, however, generally exist to serve big business. They will only force the environmental issue on companies when confronted with massive public complaint, concern and action. Such concern no longer exists.

Most mountaineers are selfish in their approach to the bush. They enjoy the solitude and seek to discourage others from venturing out from the cities. They have a certain contempt for the average suburban dweller, and they hope he stays there. With this attitude bushwalkers are digging their own graves. We know that the bush is worth preserving, and that an Alpine National Park would be very desirable. But, alone, bushwalkers and other wilderness users have not the power to save the scrub. We need public support, but this will not come unless people are encouraged to go out from the cities, and to experience the enjoyment and benefits that come from being in the mountains.

The mountains will have to be shared in the near future. It may mean that we will have to put up with regulations, roads, scenic look-outs and tourists. But if these tourists, when home, use their vote and their voices in favour of retaining the mountains as they are, then we will be making the best of a bad job. For the isolationists then I suggest you walk now. You may be hitching there in future!

Nick Reeves

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I was very disturbed to read in the Rockclimbing Report of the November "Mountaineer" the irresponsible statement that "in these days of superprotection you can only fall off".

This is what MUMC climbers are doing with alarming frequency, and this statement can only serve to increase the heroworship attitude to falls prevalent amongst our climbing members, who are, e.g., "famous for their kamikaze style and tremendous falls" ("Mountaineer" June '75). Perhaps a more accurate word would have been "notorious". While everyone accepts that potential falls are an integral part of climbing, they should not be treated lightly. Three members have broken ankles over the past three years from "only falling off".

It is arguable that members are climbing more and harder routes than in the past, and that falls are a natural hazard of pushing yourself to the limit. But long falls on relatively easy routes would seem to indicate incompetence and a lack of responsibility. A recent 90' leaderfall could have resulted in Victoria's first climbing fatality, simply through ignorance of belaying techniques.

This brings me to my second concern, that of misuse, overuse and abuse of equipment, notably ropes. When the old Leader-Competent system was abolished last year it was assumed that members were intelligent and responsible enough for the change. The poor condition of the few remaining club ropes does not support this. While I understand that these ropes will be replaced, the continued destruction of club equipment is of concern to all members. Climbing ropes do wear out, but this has been accelerated by lack of commonsense care.

Climbing gear has always been considered safety equipment, and is provided for the use of competent climbers or beginners under instruction to encourage climbing as an activity, and to ensure that such members are adequately and safely equipped. It has always been assumed that any serious climber would want to buy his own rope as soon as possible.

As many climbing members insist that they cannot afford a rope, and intend to go on using club equipment, I feel that the system needs drastic modification. Any member who loses climbing equipment is required (in theory) to pay for or replace it. Members who return gear late or damaged are penalized. And yet there are a minority of members keeping climbing gear for extended periods, misusing and damaging ropes, and taking severe leader falls, who are not penalized.

The VIAA and other responsible authorities recommend the replacement of any rope holding a severe leader fall. If the "fallen angels" list is any indication, all club ropes must by now be useless. (At this rate, we would need to replace one rope a month.) I would suggest that, if members cannot afford their own rope, yet wish to continue climbing past beginner levels, that they be permitted to use club ropes, etc., only under special conditions.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR .. (Continued)

- These are :
- : any rope which is used to hold a severe leader fall must be replaced and paid for by the person concerned.
  - : Climbing ropes should not be used for abseiling on walking trips, etc.
  - : All gear should be checked in and out by the stores officer or a designated responsible member.
  - : All falls and/or equipment damage or loss to be reported.

I would not like to oppose use of club equipment by any member, but feel that anyone who renders equipment unsafe for use by others (e.g., leaderfalls) should pay for its replacement. Further, I would like to see attention given to abilities and competence of borrowers - anyone who takes 90' falls should, I feel, risk his life on his own equipment.

"in these days of superprotection you can only fall off"  
and, anyway, its only a club rope!

R. A. Barson

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Sir,

It is my opinion that this club has made a very great mistake in publishing the guide to "Bushwalking In the Victorian Alps". The information it contains is generally enough to enable one to tackle some of the hardest walks in the state with little fear of getting lost. Whilst this is a worthy contribution to the safety of the bushwalking public, in my opinion it destroys wilderness values.

Tackling the unknown, the uncharted, is part of the true wilderness experience. To travel down a wild river, not knowing what lies around the next bend, to climb a mountain not knowing what is on the other side, is a true adventure. The spirit of adventure becomes harder to maintain with the ever increasing number of guides being published.

A guide gives the timid, the faint hearted, encouragement to tackle what he otherwise would not. Today much of south-west Tasmania, one of our last remaining "wildernesses", has been so well track noted that "every man and his dog" seems to go there. Those wonderful tales of impenetrable scrub, foul weather, rocks, leeches and mud have taken second place to the route guide. People aren't scared by the southwest any more!

Let us preserve true wilderness. Ban the route guide!  
Write no track notes. Exaggerate and distort your experiences and so preserve for others the thrill you felt on discovering for yourself.

Jolyon Shelton

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR .. (Continued)

The Editor,  
"The Mountaineer"

Dear Sir,

Through your august publication, could I request the committee to provide the reasons behind the decision to move the heater from MUMC Feathertop Hut to the basement. From my rather secluded position, looking out over acres of tiled roofs in suburbia, I can see few reasons for this action. My rather random thoughts for this view are :

1. "Conservation" to me is "the wisest use of man's resources". To substitute burning highly refined petroleum spirit for wood does not seem to be the "wisest use".
2. The Hut was built primarily for winter usage, both as a base for winter activities, and an emergency refuge. It has been used as a refuge at least once by a person lost and benighted on Feathertop. A refuge should be capable of providing shelter and warmth. The stove can heat the hut in winter.
3. The stove's main usage is in winter. It is an acknowledged poor cooker of food. However, it has warmed the Hut on many occasions. The main fuel consuming during summer would be the various cooking fires outside the hut. I cannot see how removing the heater would reduce summer fuel requirements. For winter usage a supply of wood should be maintained by MUMC - as is customary by custodians of most mountain huts. For many years after the Hut was built there were annual summer work parties which, amongst other jobs, replenished wood supplies. Why not reinstate this?
4. Has any green wood been cut? Has any thought been given to erecting a "Protect the flora/fauna" sign? Are briquettes still carried to the Hut on large winter trips?

In summary, I feel that the removal of the stove will not prevent fires, etc., outside the hut - it will allow MUMC to say it is trying to practice "conservation" (is it really?) -; it will reduce the winter utility of the hut and remove a basic function of an emergency refuge :- its capacity to provide warmth.

Tony Kerr

Two other letters were received by the secretary containing similar sentiments from Tom Kneen and Rod Tucker.

\* \* \* \* \*



NEWS

1. The question of a suitable memorial for Mark Spain and Andy Kelso was considered at the recent committee meeting, but no decision was reached. It was decided that a memorial would be discussed at the annual general meeting, where it was hoped more suggestions will be made.
2. A barbecue, with slides of the various club activities, is to be held, hopefully, in the Sports Pavilion, on the first Wednesday of term (i.e. March 10). All new members are urged (!) and invited to come along and meet other club members. All welcome.
3. More club tee shirts will be available shortly.
4. After (not enough discussion) the committee decided to keep the stove at the Feathertop hut. However, investigations will be made as to the feasibility of replacing the stove with one that works efficiently. (see letter to Editor).
5. Nominations are now open for all committee positions. Become a club heavy! Help the club and nominate. There is nothing like a good election!
6. This is the last "Mountaineer" before the AGM. So if you want to remain on the mailing list - pay your subs now! In view of the rising cost of printing and posting the "Mountaineer" a new collection system has been evolved. As from the next edition, all club members who are full-time students at the University will have to collect their magazine at the club. Magazines will only be posted during term to full-time students off campus, part-time students or others who are not at the Uni. A notice will appear in the Activities Sheet (Uni. Activities Sheet, not the club one) when the "Mountaineer" is ready to be collected at the clubrooms.

\* \* \* \* \*

MOUNTAINEERING FIRST AID

Hopefully, there will be a FIRST AID COURSE for MOUNTAINEERS run during first term. However, it will depend upon the availability of an audience and some willing helpers, especially those with practical knowledge. So if you want the course place your name in the trips book NOW. Please indicate if you can help.

The course will cover both practical and theoretical aspects of first aid of interest to mountaineers - hence some aspects of ordinary First Aid will not be covered. However, important aspects such as exposure, etc., will be emphasised.

Anybody who has a particular subject they want discussed should see MIKE HENDERSON, as should anybody else who has any other enquiries.

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CLIMBING REPORT

NEW ZEALAND 1975/76

The climbs done and the enjoyment people had over in New Zealand this summer, was overshadowed by the unfortunate deaths of four Victorian climbers in the Mount Cook area. Early in February, VCC climber Alan Gledhill died while attempting a new line on the West Face of the Unicorn. Alan was a very experienced climber, and he was an integral part of the Victorian scene for many years. He, and his friendship and advice to many club members over the years, will be greatly missed.

The weather (as usual?) was generally bad, however, there were occasional good fine spells. December saw rain, snow, and very strong winds. Christmas Day had six inches of snow at the Hermitage. January came with improved weather and many good climbs were done. One fine day saw eighteen people on the summit of Mt. Cook. An impressive tramline!

Several club members climbed Mt. Book. Mike Feller, along with fellow Andean climber, Keith MacNaughten, climbed the Zurbriggen ridge to the high peak. Several days later, Bruno Zeller and Richard Schmidt raced up the same climb. Earlier in the season, Nick Reeves and George Kuczera climbed the East ridge to the middle peak in bad conditions (and not the east face as reported!)

Around Pioneer Hut, Bruno Zeller, with others, cleaned the area out. They climbed the West Face of Haidinger, the West Buttress of Lendenfeld, Mt. Douglas, and Mount Tasman. Mike Feller, with Keith, pounded up the dreaded Murchison moraine, and climbed two rarely ascended routes on the way. These were the East ridges of Mount Hamilton, and the Aiguilles Rouges.

Over on the west coast Mt. Seffon had an ascent by the west ridge. The large party had to sit out two wet squalid days under the bivvy rock at Scott's Creek. There were Gill Hume, Ev Smith, Mike Henderson, Nick Reeves and George Kuczera. The last two had a particularly fast ascent when they mistook the Tasman sea for an oncoming nor-west front, in the gloom of early morning.

Mount Malte Brun was climbed by Mike Henderson and Peter Hicks via the west ridge. Nick Reeves and George Kuczera finished their season with an ascent of the long, hard, rarely climbed MacInnes Buttress on Nazomi.

Down south at Aspiring, Mike Henderson and George Kuczera climbed down the North-West ridge. Roger Barson did a fine, seldom attempted, traverse of Mt. Avalanche and the peaks of Rob Roy before descending to Aspiring Hut that same day. Avalanche was also climbed by Mike Feller and Ev Smith, and Ian Moore and Dave Caddy.

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ROCKCLIMBING REPORT

Over the summer, climbing has continued vigorously within the clubs with many fine ascents being made in Victoria and elsewhere.

1. Before and during Christmas Mt. Buffalo was beaten into submission by many climbers (or did the climbers get beaten?). Reg Marron in particular was particularly active with ascents of Il Duce, Ozymandias and Fuhrer on the North Wall done basically on nuts. Reg also did the 2nd ascent of Tripping The Light Fantastic which was found to be easier and shorter than expected despite an epic hailstorm. Also at Buffalo, Keith Egerton led a desperate 'Variant Start to Angels' 19 after being somehow lost at the start.
2. The Grampians still receive the odd sporadic attention, and of interest was Chapman's lead of 1st pitch of R.I.P. Corner (18). At the Weathered Wall Tony Marion did well to second the fine corner line of 'Barometric Pressure Rising' 17 and down at the Temple, Nick Reeves and Gretel Lamont repeated the fine climb 'Catwalk' 11, 770' long. More recently Reg Marron freed Resurrection 17 at Mt. Frederick as well as a new route at the 'Dreamtime Wall' after a death march.
3. Mt. Arapiles has seen little activity due to the hot weather. However, a small new cliff was opened up and climbed on by Egerton and Peter Watson to produce some short easier routes. Also, Dave led Procul Harum, a dramatic aid climb.
4. Closer to Melbourne, Peter Treby has put a new route at Werribbee Gorge called 'Cochium Diagonal' 19, a very hard climb. Witch at Camels Hump has had a repeat by Peg Marron with numerous plummeting seconds, and seconds reportedly using chalk. One of the more dramatic climbs was the Pinnacle Traverse at Woolami done at high tide, resulting in a very wet Gretel Lamont and Jol Shelton with a totally dry Nick Reeves (he's not stupid). The climb turned out to be a real 'adventure on the seas' with the big waves and perpetual spray.
5. Further afield, Keith Egerton visited the Wolgan Valley to do numerous climbs and described the area as really beautiful to visit even if you don't climb. The valley has a good river, a close pub and impressive cliffs. He also visited Mt. Piddington and was impressed by the good lines and good rock there.
6. The epic Balls Pyramid trip returned and Peter Watson was partially successful in that he climbed one of the unclimbed faces and reached one of the major peaks, but he unfortunately did not reach the highest peak on the Pyramid. The trip was highlighted by a storm and an epic retreat from the island in which much gear was left behind.

In retrospect, the past 12 months have seen a great influx of new young climbers going out climbing, and it is to be hoped that this trend continues for the coming year.



ROCKCLIMBING REPORT .. (Continued)

The beginners' courses will be held early this year on March 20/21 and March 27/28, and all climbers who have climbed with the club are encouraged to help with instruction.

One last word about the gear is that heavy careless use has caused much deterioration. All climbers are advised to take more care in future, otherwise they may find that there will not be any safe gear to use. So check to see that rope can't get cut on edges, use slings more liberally to prevent abrasion, and treat the gear as if it were your own, and it might then last as long as your own gear.

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CANOEING REPORT

In view of the fact that canoeists require water in rivers, there has been little canoeing of late. Since walkers cannot walk on water (JC excepted) canoeists cannot canoe on rock (J. Terrell and Grub excepted).

\* \* \* \* \*

CONSERVATION REPORT

Mike Feller

THE EAST GIPPSLAND WILDERNESS AND YOU:

The Land Conservation Council has just released the proposed Recommendations for the East Gippsland Study Area. This area should be of the utmost importance to MUMC and, in a way, of more importance than the Alpine Study area, because it is in East Gippsland that Victoria's last remaining forest wilderness occurs. It is worth noting that the only wilderness we will ever have is what we have now, so we should do our utmost to save what we can now, before it is too late.

The L.C.C. has recommended only one area of East Gippsland as a Wilderness area. This covers about 46,000 hectares and is centered on the Snowy River. Nearly all of the remaining crown land north of the Princes Highway has been recommended for hardwood production, about 434,000 hectares. This includes some fine potential wilderness areas, such as the headwaters of the Wingan, and Thurra rivers, and the country around Mt. Ellery. To devote such a large area to hardwood production means only one thing - woodchipping. And woodchipping would lead to the construction of evil smelling pulp mills at Orbost which would require damming the Snowy River, ruining the proposed wilderness area there. Thus, the proposed L.C.C. recommendations are just the tip of the iceberg which is about to obliterate much of our last remaining wilderness.

The conservation sub-committee would get down on its hands and knees and implore every single club member who has any feeling or love for the bush to immediately get hold of a copy of the recommendations (available from the L.C.C. at 464 St. Kilda Road,



CONSERVATION REPORT .. (Continued)

Melbourne, for free) and find out what is going on. Then send a letter to the L.C.C. opposing the allocation of so much land to hardwood production, and supporting the recommendation for a wilderness area, but suggesting that several other areas should be included.

Remember that there is one thing, and one thing only, which makes Australia different from other countries, and that is our native flora and fauna. Everything else - cities, farms, bracken, and people, can be found elsewhere, but not "our bush". It is our bush which provides us with a spiritual, cultural, and national identity. It is our bush which has provided the inspiration for some of our greatest artists and poets. It is our bush that foreigners come to see. It is the bush that pervades the minds of our expatriates. It is all that we have got that no one else has, and if we lose it then our lives and culture become that less richer. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to preserve now what wilderness we can. East Gippsland must remain forested with large areas of wilderness. It must not be woodchipped on a large scale.

If you are sceptical, then just go to Eden in S.E. N.S.W. and see the large scale devastation of forests and listen to the silence in the air - the birds and animals have gone. Is this what we want for East Gippsland? Smell the vile and poisonous fumes of the pulp mill in Traralgon! Is this what we want to happen to East Gippsland? Several of us spoke to a farmer near Euroa recently. He had sold some timber to the woodchippers from Eden, and he stated that never again would he do so because of the mess they made on his land.

Before it is too late we urge every one of you to get out of your apathetic state for a short time and get hold of the L.C.C. recommendations and send them a letter. You have until April 30th to do so. If you don't then you have no right to criticise what's happening in the bush, and no right to call yourself an Australian.

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MARK and ANDY - An Appreciation

"Hey, Gordon! I'd like you to meet someone."

"Sure, Nick."

"Gordon Bedford - Mark Spain"

"G'day"

"Andy Kelso"

"Hey, didn't you miss the bus at Timaru?"

That started it. Plans! Off to Three Johns Hut. Good area. See you at Mueller, Mate! There stood Mark in the doorway.

"Hey, the boys look a bit wet, Wücker!"

"This rain, not falling on the plain, gives me a pain, Spain!"

"I bet you have been itching to say that all the way up."

"Too right!"

Then, four days in Three Johns. A raging blizzard outside. We talked and explored each other's personalities. Mark, a powerful and strong person. Andrew, quiet and reserved. Mark, boisterous and seemingly confident, yet always turning to Andrew for the crucial lead. Andrew was the buffer, Mark the voice. They lent on each other and worked as a team. Then back to Unwin.

"How about Footstool, mate. We will power up it."

"Power up it". How many times did I hear that expression. It will always stand in my mind as the symbol of Spain and Kelso. Sefton Bivvy. The three of us under the rock, others in the hut. The choofer would not work. Two feet of flame from the safety valve. Mark becoming more furious by the minute. Andrew calmly solves the situation. In our bags we talked. The clubs, people, climbs. A clear night. Should have been sleeping. Hand around the chocky.

Late start. The sun is up. Ugh! Crusty with two feet of powder snow underneath. Onward we plough.

"Bugged if I am going back!" Ice on the ridge is a relief. Forced back onto the face. Soft snow. At last ice. Then the summit pyramid. Solve the problem of horrible loose snow with the East Face beneath our feet. Mark, Andrew and myself alone on the summit. The others are all collapsed 200 feet below.

"Take a picture of us, Cocky!"

And the Copland Pass. I still see them now. Grinning from ear to ear. Success. Back down the avalanching snow. Me laughing when they fall. Those snowstakes really work. Finally the Tavern Bar.



"MARK and ANDY - An Appreciation ... (Continued)

Next day the long haul up the Tasman Glacier. Minarets they did while we were on Green. Then a rest day, for us. They did ~~Malte~~ That was them. Always on the go. Push-Push. They missed the Darwin Buttress, though.

That night the card series against the Kiwis. Mark's voice booming throughout the hut.

"The NZ boys are in trouble, Wucan! Calling in the dregs, now. Remember those two bottles of beer, fellows!"

Then they left for Aspiring. When they came back we had done Mt. Cook. Out from Plateau. "See you at the Hermitage tomorrow, boys, via Cook."

We only knew each other for five weeks, but in that time we became firm friends. The plans. The slide night in March. An expedition to the Himalayas or the Andes. Only a few friends, nothing spectacular. Yet the future looked good. They were fine men. I liked how they respected everyone for what they were. Sure they could criticise, but then who doesn't. They had no pretensions about their climbing ability. Hardly average, as Mark once remarked. Another time, after Mike Cooper's death, Mark said "Let's forget the accident and only remember Mike and the good times".

That's what they would want. I have my memories and so have all those who knew Mark Spain and Andrew Kelso.

Gordon Bedford

- Gordon Bedford is a Monash Climber.

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"LIKE A DEAD BEAR'S BUM"

Nick Reeves

"It was as cold as an ice berg gloomy and glum  
It was as cold as the hairs on a dead bear's bum"

.. Ancient Saying

At the beginning it was calm. The moon was full, so we switched off our torches. It was a good freeze and the cramponing was easy. The rhythm of our movements was soothing and we could relax. In the middle of the night we walked across the Grand Plateau to the East Ridge. We began to work up a sweat over those three miles. Indigestion came from the midnight porridge. The ground steepened and we, panting now, entered into the hardness of the climb.

At some moment during every climb you consider retreat. Usually this moment is when that first surge of energy fades, and before second wind. You wonder at being tired so soon. That mountain seems to be so big. You have doubts .... yet at the same time you move up. Beneath the huge bulk of the East face of Cook we wondered about what we were doing. Each bump we climbed only led to another. The way up to the ridge looked steep. We moved clumsily over crevasses. Bugged! .... and it seemed a good time for some chocolate.

If you do not turn around with your doubts, you become mentally committed towards success. So we moved on, and into argument. There were various ways up to the ridge but we disagreed over which one to take. In the dark, George led out into difficulty. Two other climbers moved quickly above us, up an easy gully to our right. Cursing, as only one can at three in the morning when forestalled, we belayed across steep ground to the gully. The moon had set, so using head torches, we moved up, over a bulge and onto the ridge.

Once there we had intended to rest, but it was too windy and cold. In the sheltered gully we had been sweating but now we put on parkas. Slowly we moved together, upwards. It was cold but the sky was clear. Away down to the south the first signs of bad weather were approaching. Before today it had been poor weather for a week. If we're to climb it had to be now.

It became steep, and we belayed. We used snowstakes, and led out full rope lengths. The climbing was not very hard but it was exposed. Climbing was nicer than belaying. Leading out we could forget the cold, the wind, and our numb feet. Whilst on stances belaying we each cursed the other for his slowness. Towards the top, the ridge became steep as it merged with the upper Caroline Face. There were four difficult pitches and our calf muscles ached as we front pointed up. We could see light between the two front crampon points as they barely penetrated the ice. In the fusion of



"LIKE A DEAD BEAR'S BUM" .. (Continued)

cold and climbing we became absorbed. I can remember George pissing on his numb fingers to thaw them, and my newly acquired technique of belaying with my hands in my crotch. A mighty pitch led by George, and we neared the top.

It was seven o'clock in the morning when we gained Cook's summit ridge. We climbed over the crest into a gale. It was obvious that a traverse over the mile of summit ridge to the high peak was not feasible. The other two climbed down towards the Hooker glacier. George and I hesitated, and turned towards the top. It was easy ground to the middle peak and for a short time our hopes rose. But the ridge was too exposed, too long, and the wind too bitter. It cut through our parkas, chilling us and the tips of our noses became cold. If the ice had been easy we might have made it, but no one could belay for a mile in the wind. We turned around, and followed the others. There were patches of green ice to cross and everything seemed to cold, bleak and high.

On the way down I slipped but self arrested easily. More than carefully we reversed front pointed to join the other two climbers. They were at a stance cut out of ice, near a frozen rock. Below, the gully snaked steeply down over green ice, rock bulges, and verglas. We abseiled twice, using both ropes, and the frozen rocks for anchors. On the way up we had climbed as separate teams with hardly a word exchanged. Now, we teamed together. Swapping names and jokes, it all suddenly seemed easier with four.

We were soon sheltered from the wind by Cook's west ridge and the going became easy. The southern slopes of the Hooker face are gentle, and we cramponed down quickly. It was sunny and on a convenient rock ledge we removed our parkas. It was a marvellous contrast to the bleak summit ridge 2,000 feet above. Another gentle gully would lead us down to Empress Hut and a brew. It was only ten o'clock and we decided to walk on to the Village that day .....

It was the seven o'clock radio schedule that evening, and 'ZLVA' headquarters were discussing a problem with Plateau Hut. It seemed that four climbers were missing on the East ridge of Mount Cook. There was no sign of them, the wind on the top was vicious, and the weather was closing in. People were worried. Gardiner Hut knew nothing, and Empress could not be contacted. As people pondered, the radio crackled "This is four Hooker four Hooker! The four climbers passed through an hour ago. Heading for the pub! Over!"

Summary - An ascent of the East ridge of Mount Cook to the middle Peak in poor conditions. Nick Reeves,  
George Kuczera.

\* \* \* \* \*



"IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME"

by Roger Barson

Not yet dawn, awoken by the light of a dim candle. Porridge for breakfast, thick and gluey, washed down with almost hot coffee. The painful clash of cold night air on bare flesh, reluctant to leave the warm comfort of a sleeping bag. Knocking ice from boots, cursing the cold. Stagger outside, already cold fingers fumbling with half fastened clothing. The stars. And the indescribable beauty of the Bonar by moonlight.

One day in civilization. A chance conversation, discovery of common interests, and a hastily arranged return to Wanaka and the Aspiring park. The long hot slog up the valley, the slow climb to French Ridge hut. The almost illicit pleasure of sleeping in. A crevasse-dodging zigzag up the Quarterdeck to the cold comfort of a snowcave on the Bonar. Restless sleep, mind busy seeking excuses.

Roped together, moving quickly, crunching up the glacier. The heart-stopping crack as one leg vanishes in a hidden slot. Taut rope, reassurance. Careful traverse below gendarmes, cold guardians of the West ridge of Avalanche. Up steepening slopes to the doubtful security of rock. Don't like a handhold, throw it away. Standing on toes, nothing beneath my feet, body alive, mind relaxed.

A few tense moves, difficulty exaggerated by exposure. The half-hearted reassurance of a belay. Doubts betrayed by nervous laughter, then two more moves, loose rock. Tension evaporates with a solid runner. Move up, faster now, difficulties forgotten, sky turning to molten gold. Easily onto the summit. Wishful looks at Aspiring, rising from the cold-white bedspread of the Bonar. Compensation in photographs, postcard view from Mt. Avalanche.

No doubts now, tremor gone. East peak blocked by a deep notch, confident descent toward a snow ramp in the west. A less confident abseil from a nervous bollard, followed by another, and crampons bite hard into ice crust. Still steep, belayed down slanting ice, insecure stances, no place for a rest. Then sliding down easier slopes, a cautious leap over the 'schrund to the Maud Francis glacier.

Food, and once again a mind deadening trudge. Tentative exploration of glacial mazes, the spikes of Rob Roy ahead, the drop into Gloomy Gorge at our side. A steepish ramp leads up toward the North Ridge of Rob Roy. On the ridge, blue ice now, crampon points biting. One steep section invites front pointing, aching calves soon demand a rest. A small stance, the security of a belay. A startling rumble as a section of the Quarterdeck disappears into the gorge.

Easier ground, sun hot now, packs too heavy. The low peak at last, collapse in a sweating heap, curse the heat. A long exposed ridge to the High peak, moving slowly enjoying the view. A world beneath us, the gleam of the Matukituki, skyline of peaks,



"IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME" .. (Continued)

wilderness. Then, almost an anticlimax, the High peak. Another rest, summit photographs. Wearily, feet stumble along the South ridge. Gratefully onto rock again, moving down loose slabs, cautious belays, conscious of our tiredness.

Snow, now softened, slows us more. Confusion and retraced steps, with Aspiring Hut gleaming in the valley below. Too tired to argue, follow down alarming rock, take my turn as snowplough, at last collapsing onto warm snowgrass. Water. Hungry now we swing down scrub covered slopes. Almost running down eroded trails, the legacy of deer herds past. Across the flats to the river, ford it in boots, then stagger to the hut and food.

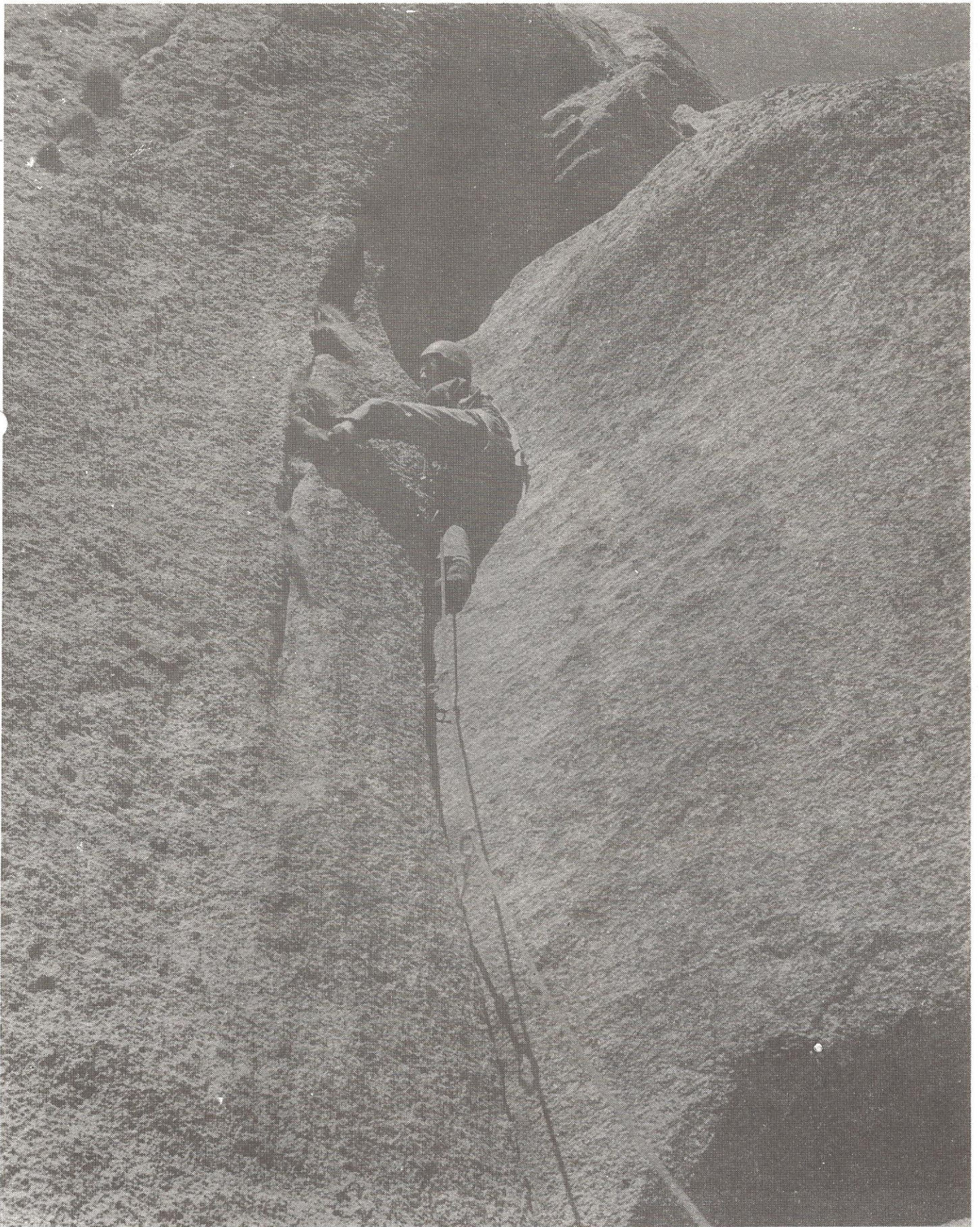
Later, look back at the mountains.

Sit there as the sun sets.

A traverse of  
Mt. Avalanche, 2590m, W.ridge, SW face  
Rob Roy, 2615m, N.ridge, W. face

\*\*\*\*\*



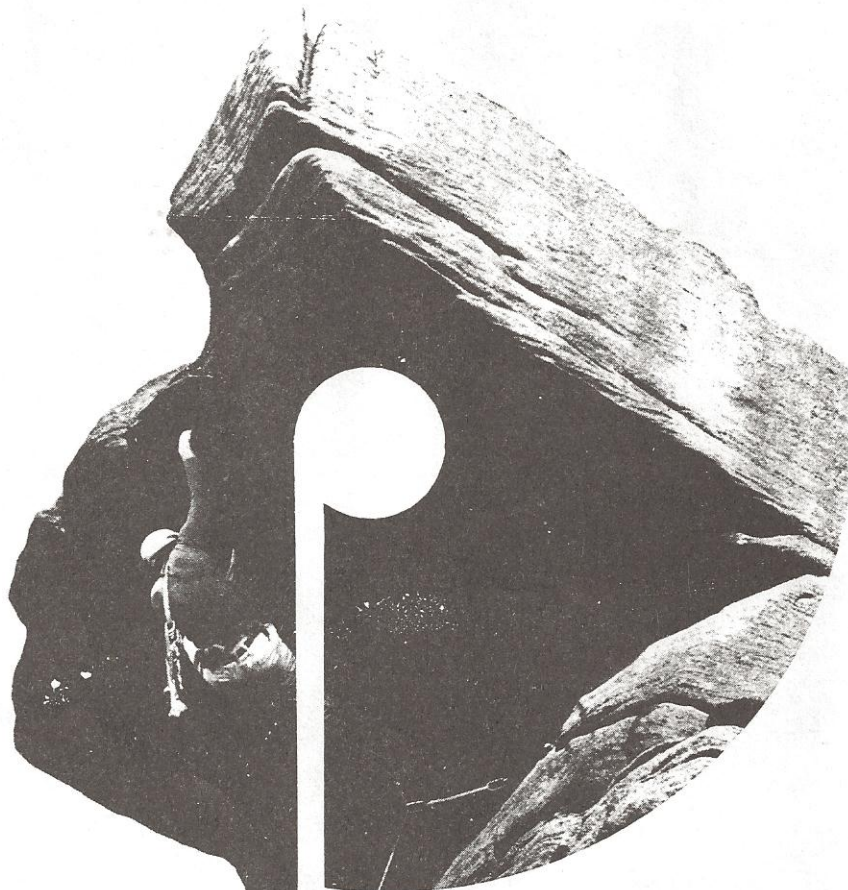


28/183 Jim Grellis, Maharajah Direct Start  
Mt. Buffalo Photo J. Chapman



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55 Hardware Street, Melbourne VIC 3000



TRIPS PROGRAM

This is of necessity an incomplete list as many bushwalking, rockclimbing and canoeing trips tend to be of a spontaneous nature, i.e., organised a week or less in advance.

For more up to date information contact the Trips Secretary (Jol Shelton). For information on specialist activities contact

Bushwalking	- Jol Shelton	25 4324
Rockclimbing	- John Chapman	C/- Bushgear 67 3354
Canoeing	- John Templer	38 6201
Caving	- Sue White	328 4154
Orienteering	- Ron Frederick	870 4033
	or Ian Moore	82 6029
	or Tony Kerr	874 2726
Conservation	- Mike Feller	20 2232

BAR-B-QUE - March 10th

The annual MUMC bar-b-que will be held in the Sports Pavilion on Wednesday, 10th March, at 5.30 pm. Tickets will be on sale for food and drinks. Slides of club activities will be shown. All new members are urged to attend.

BUSHWALKING

DATE	- March 13-14
EVENT	- Introductory Walks
AREA	- Wilson's Promontory Lake Tarli Karng
STANDARD	- Easy
TRANSPORT	- Van
CONTACT	- Jol Shelton (25 4324)

DATE	- March 27-28
EVENT	- Introductory Walk
AREA	- Upper Howqua R. Valley
STANDARD	- Easy
TRANSPORT	- Van
CONTACT	- Jol Shelton (25 4324)

DATE	- April 3-4
EVENT	- Search and Rescue Practice Weekend
AREA	- Otways
STANDARD	- ?
TRANSPORT	- Private
CONTACT	- Dave Caddy (53 9840)



TRIPS PROGRAM .. (Continued)

BUSHWALKING

- |           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| DATE      | - April 3 or 4                      |
| EVENT     | - President's Day Walk              |
| AREA      | - ?                                 |
| STANDARD  | - Easy - Medium                     |
| TRANSPORT | - Van                               |
| DATE      | - May 2                             |
| EVENT     | - FVWC Day Walk (organised by VMTC) |
| TRANSPORT | - Train                             |

CANOEING

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| DATE      | - March 20 and 21                                      |
| EVENT     | - Beginners' Canoeing trip                             |
| AREA      | - Two one-day trips on the Yarra R.<br>near Warrandyte |
| TRANSPORT | - Private  |
| LEADER    | - John Templer (38 6201)<br>Ross Seedsman (83 4497)    |
| DATE      | - April 3-4  |
| RIVER     | - Thomson R.   |
| CONTACT   | - John Templer   |
| DATE      | - April 10-11  |
| RIVER     | - Yarra R. (Bend of Isles)                             |
| CONTACT   | - John Templer   |
| DATE      | - April 16-20  |
| RIVER     | - Mitchell R.  |
| CONTACT   | - John Templer   |
| DATE      | - April 24-25  |
| RIVER     | - Barkly R.  |
| CONTACT   | - John Templer   |

ROCKCLIMBING

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| DATE   | - March 6-7  |
| VENUE  | - Mt. Buffalo  |
| LEADER | - Neil Blunday (341 6917 bus. hrs.)                                    |
| DATE   | - March 11 (Thursday evening)  |
| EVENT  | - Beginners' Climbing (part 1)   |
| VENUE  | - Sisalkraft Theatre (Architecture Building)                           |
| DATE   | - March 13-14  |
| EVENT  | - Beginners' Climbing (part 2)   |
| VENUE  | - Mt. Arapiles   |
| LEADER | - John Chapman   |
|        | - Numbers will be strictly limited.<br>Attendance at part 1 essential) |



TRIPS PROGRAM .. (Continued)

ROCKCLIMBING

DATE - March 20-21  
EVENT - Beginners' climbing (part 3)  
VENUE - Mt. Arapiles  
LEADER - John Chapman  
- Numbers also strictly limited (may not be held, depending on demand)

DATE - March 27-28  
VENUE - Mt. Buffalo  
LEADER - David Lia (47 1374)

An excellent instructional course is held by the Victorian Climbing Club. For a cost of \$30, beginners receive excellent tutoring from experienced instructors. The course runs over three weekends beginning 3-4th April. Contact Bushgear (67 3354)

CAVING

DATE - March 6-8  
AREA - Limestone Ck.  
LEADER - Nick White (328 4154)  
STANDARD - Easy

\*\*\*\*\*

Addenda

Easter Walks

Dates - 5 day walks : April 16 → 20

3 day walks : April 16 → 18

Transport - Van leaving North Court

Thursday April 15 at 6.30 pm

Cost - \$8 - \$9



Trips Program.. Continued

5 Day Easter Trips

- (a) Medium : Woollybutt Saddle - Stirling  
- King River Hut / Cobbler - Koonika  
Speculation / Crosscut saw - Mac Springs /  
Howitt - Magdala - Laricks Hut / Bindaree
- (b) Medium Hard : Woollybutt Saddle - Buller -  
Little Buller - 8 mile hut / Bluff -  
Upper Jamieson Hut / The Knobs / Mt Clear  
Mac. Springs / Bindaree
- (c) Hard : Bindaree - Howitt - Crosscut saw /  
Razer - Viking / West Buffalo River - Catherine  
Station / Cobbler - King River Hut /  
Clear Hills - Stirling - Woollybutt Saddle

3 Day Trips

- (a) Easy  
Bogong Village - Fainter - High Plains  
Edmansons Hut - Mt Nelse - Spion Kopje  
→ Bogong Village
- (b) Medium : Mountain creek - Bogong  
Ropers Hut - Spion Kopje → Bogong Village
- (c) Medium : North West Spur - Feathertop  
- Hotham - Tawonga Huts - Bogong Village



MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

CLUB CONTACT SYSTEM

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY AND LEAVE THIS INFORMATION WITH THOSE AT HOME OR WITH ANYONE ELSE WHO IS LIKELY TO WORRY.

Occasionally on a Club trip, an unforeseen delay occurs resulting in the party arriving back in Melbourne much later than anticipated. There is also the very slight possibility that the party might not arrive back at all. To cope with these situations, the Club has a CONTACT SYSTEM which operates as follows:

Before a trip, the Trips Secretary or the Leader gives the contact the details of the trip (i.e. intended route, mode of transport, when expected back, any anticipated difficulties, etc.) together with a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of those going on the trip. As soon as the party returns to Melbourne, or in the case of a trip being overdue, as soon as the party reaches civilization, the leader notifies the contact. If the party is long overdue, the contact makes arrangements for a search to be initiated.

This procedure applies primarily to van trips. For trips involving a large number of private cars, arrangements are made among the party to ensure every car arrives safely at a main road, and should any mishap (like mechanical breakdown) occur thereby delaying the return to Melbourne it is the responsibility of those in the car to notify the contact who can then notify the parents of all concerned.

All enquiries by parents and others concerning the safe return of a trip should be made directly to the club contact who is the person most likely to have any information. Under no circumstances should the police be contacted as they generally know nothing about the trip and such action could result in damaging publicity.

For 1976, the Club Contact is:

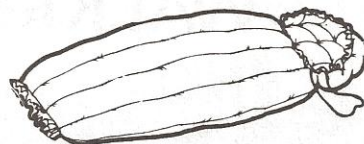
REX NIVEN  
PHONE NO. 329 9660



# Kimpton SLEEPING BAGS

## arctic bag

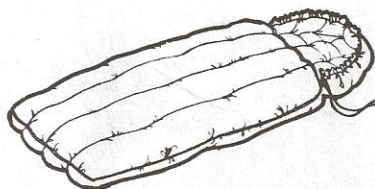
For sub zero temperatures and high altitudes. Cellular walls form lengthwise flutes, this stabilises the filling, ensuring even insulation and maximum resistance to cold throughout. There are no cold spots on the stitching, not even on the side seams because of these walls. The quilted flap hood is fitted 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.

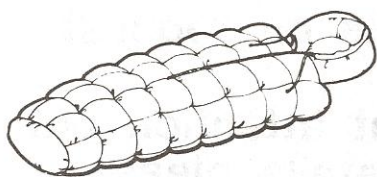
Body of bag cut 6'6" long x 32".  
Total weight of bag 5¼ lb.

## 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

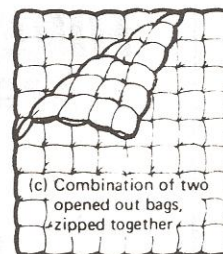
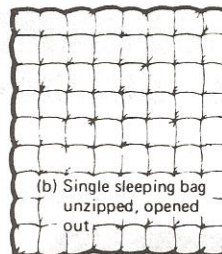
## snow bag



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.





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