the MOUNTAINEER

"BOGONG AND FAINTER FROM FEATHERTOP IN SPRING"
Photo Rob Jung

OCTOBER 1977

20¢

REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. FOR TRANSMISSION
BY POST AS A PERIODICAL CATEGORY "B"

A SNAKE YARN

W.T. Goodge

"You talk of snakes", said Jack the Rat,
"But blow me, one hot summer,
I seen a thing that knocked me flat -
Fourteen foot long, or more than that,
It was a regular hummer!
Lay right along a sort of bog,
Just like a log!

"The ugly thing was ly'n' there
And not a sign of moving,
Give any man a nasty scare;
Seen nothin' like it anywhere
Since I first started drovin'.
And yet it didn't scare my dog,
Looked like a log!

"I had to cross that bog, yer see,
And bluey I was humpin';
But wonderin' what that thing could be
A-layin' there in front o' me
I didn't feel like jumpin',
Yet, though I shivered like a frog,
It seemed a log!

"I takes a leap and lands right on
The back of that there whopper!"
He stopped. We waited. Then Big Mac
Remarked, "Well then, what happened, Jack?"
"Not much", said Jack, and drained his grog.
"It was a log!"

The Journal of M.U.M.C.

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This Mountaineer edited by Julie West and Cathie Seccombe.

Copy deadline next issue: December 6th.

INDEX

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

In response to recent criticism about the running of the store .... stores assistants feel that their main responsibility lies in helping members unfamiliar with the ways of the club to hire out equipment, sign out gear etc. This is the type of "service" we are primarily interested in providing.

The food section of the store is maintained in order to provide cheaper, more sensibly packaged mountaineering food for mountaineering trips - not a snack bar pandering to the whims of a self-congratulatory leisure class. Serving a core of club members as familiar with stores operations as any assistant, who have nothing better to do with their time than clock in stores assistants and grow fat on cherry strength bars, is not a priority!

Criticising the store is a much over-used bandwagon attracting no end of destructive comments but little constructive criticism, let alone actual help. Those who do nothing but sit back and criticise have absolutely no right to criticise....

Yours in Protest,

Jane Landman, Debbie Tyler, Meredith Gill,
Fiona Richards, John Stone.

* * * * * * * * *

Dear Ms. Editor,

We are writing this letter anticipating the usual arguments by the stores officers that they are not here to serve people. Dear stores officers, what a load of tripe. This is exactly your function. Due to your lack of activity in the past one member of this household actually discovered a centipede amongst the strength bars! You may not think you're there to serve but please don't let the store do all the work by itself.

Yours,

Pitt St. (some of)

P.S. We would even be happy to serve ourselves if there were any strength bars to select from (and don't try to tell us that dried fruit is out of season!)

NEWS AND OTHER ODDS AND ENDS

1. Jacki Rand has been selected as part of the Australian Women's Team to compete in the World Nordic Ski Championships.
2. The Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs still has no secretary. Any volunteers?
3. Hugh Foxcroft (taking the Life Be In It Campaign a little too seriously) helpfully suggested at the last committee meeting that we could all go out and count the trees to keep fit!
4. The Wolgan Valley in N.S.W. is of great importance for climbers as one of the last unexplored areas which still has some wilderness value. According to the "Thrutch", Spring '77 edition - "A plan by the N.S.W. Electricity Commission proposes a large power-station in the Wolgan and a possible dam on the Colo River to provide cooling water. This dam would back up through the Wolgan and essentially cut in half N.S.W.'s best remaining true wilderness in the northern Blue Mountains."

CLIMBING REPORT

HUGH FOXCROFT

The climbers have been spreading their efforts between many cliffs in recent months. The more intrepid travelled to Blue Lake in Kosciusko National Park to try ice-climbing in the area. Nick Reeves introduced Rob Storer and Hugh Foxcroft (and later Neil Currie and Peter Martin) to the delights of technical ice work on ice varying in steepness from 45 to 80 degrees. A description of this trip is to be found elsewhere in The Mountaineer. There were visits to several other areas including:

(1) Black Ian's Rocks (Grampians)

Jim Grellis, Peter Megens and Don Hird quickly developed an affinity with the steep cracks at Black Ian's with Grellis leading Prosecutor (19), Chancery Lane (19) and Subpoena (17). Megens led Decree Nisi (17), Barbed Tongue (17) and Gallow's Pole (6), he is still jam, jam, jamming in his sleep! Don Hird led Meglomania (12) and Habeas Corpus (14) and determined efforts saw him second all the leads done by Grellis and Megens. Joe Lynch, John Stewart and Cathie Seccombe were busy doing Jury Box (11) and Bagatelle (12) amongst others.

(2) Arapiles

After several attempts Tony Marion led Rack (18) but regrettably took too long to win any beer. Marion also had success on King Rat (19) with two rests, Swinging (17) and Watchtower Crack (16). Marion should be grateful to Neil Currie who spent considerable time belaying him on these routes (and getting cold feet). Upon several other climbs, including such classics as Mantle (13), Bard (12) and Arachnus (8) Marion was ably seconded by Jane Landman. Megens, Hird and Andrew Kincaid also attempted Watchtower Crack (16) but the bid was abandoned after the third (crux) pitch. Megens was also successful on Brickdust (17) and Marmot's Moll (13) after considerable piking by others who shall remain nameless.

Grellis executed some fine leads on Golden Echo Direct (20) and Wurlitzer (18). After a lengthy fall Keith Egerton conquered Little Thor (20) in fine style and also led Five-Fingered Mary (20). John Chapman led Interloper (16) and was active in seconding Marion, Grellis and Egerton. Lynch did a number of routes including Ejaculation (15), St. Peter (16) and Iphrigenia (13). Several others visited Arapiles during the vacation but no details were available for inclusion here. As you read this David Lia may still be hanging in etriers on the arete right of Kama Sutra at work on yet another aid route.

(3) Werribee Gorge

Before the closure of this area Megens was successful on Centurion (17) and Androcles (16) (again, yawn!). Hird led Ben Hur (13) and seconded Megens on the other routes. Peter Martin was also successful leading Octavia (18) and Conscientious Pontius (17). Neil Currie led Golgotha (17) and Conscientious Pontius (17), but not without falls.

(4) Hanging Rock

A pleasant day was spent here by Chapman, Lia and Jim Mitroy. Climbs included Long Rib (8), Bemadotte (13) and Doc's Dilemma (9).

Remember that the Victorian Climbing Club celebrates 25 years climbing in Victoria in the picnic grounds of Hanging Rock, beneath the main steps (Vampire Crack) with a barbeque lunch on 30th October.

No climbing is permitted at either Staughton Vale or Werribee Gorge until after 30th November. Climbing has been banned from the North-West Outcrop at the You Yangs which is situated on private property. Borrowing of pitons has been restricted following a recommendation of the climbing sub-committee. Any enquiries should be directed to the convenor, Hugh Foxcroft.

CAVING NEWS

ANNE DONNELLY

For all you keen cavers, good news at hand. Caving trips are held oblivious of exams and work, and there will be plenty before the end of the year.

For any potential cavers, if you have any spare time to go away before the end of the year, there is no need to wait until next year. Weekend trips are usually of all standards, including beginners.

Quite a deal of caving equipment is available from the club, through the caving convenor. This includes helmets (essential); carbide lamps, ropes and ladders. Boiler suits may also soon be available (necessary for caving in comfort).

You may also be unaware that there is some interesting reading matter in the M.U.M.C. library connected with caving activities. "Nargun" is the periodical of the Victorian Speleological Association. Past issues are in the library and the current issue is displayed on the notice-board on the left, as you walk into Aikman's.

Hoping to see some new and some not-so-new faces before the end of the year, and over the summer holidays.

Question : "What is black and crisp and hangs from rurps"

Answer : "David Lia"

Jex Martin.

CONSERVATION NEWS

MIKE FELLER

1. The Otways

The L.C.C. has released its Proposed Recommendations on the Corangamite Study Area, in which the only area of major importance to bushwalkers is the Otways and the coastal strip. Four major and two minor parks have been proposed, as well as a number of flora and fauna reserves. Of most importance to bushwalkers are proposals for a long but narrow coastal park, stretching from Cape Otway nearly all the way to Warrnambool, taking in most of the remaining public land. This would greatly enlarge the existing Port Campbell National Park and would be a valuable addition to our parks system. A number of recommendations such as the banning of grazing within 5 years of government acceptance of the park, accompany the proposal.

Another park would stretch from Cape Otway north to the crest of the Otways and extend eastward as far as the Ellist River. Unfortunately low intensity timber production would be allowed in the park for another 10 years which rather lowers the value of the term "national park". No form of commercial logging should occur within a national park. If an area is worthy of being declared a national park, then all forms of exploitation which lower its park values should be prohibited within the area.

Another major park stretches from near Kennett River all the way along the coast to Lorne as a relatively narrow strip. Near Lorne its northern boundary turns up to the west of the Otways then along this to the country north of Aireys Inlet; the study area boundary forming the southern boundary to the park. This will complete the Angahook State Park of the Final Recommendations for the Melbourne Study area. The latter indicated that some logging might occur within the park but no comment on this is made in the Corangamite recommendations.

At first glance it seems rather strange that the northern boundary to this park does not follow the crest of the Otways all the way along to above Kennett River, as was proposed by M.U.M.C. in its submission to the L.C.C. However, when one looks at the vegetation map for the area it becomes very noticeable that the park boundary more or less follows the boundary between the tall forests and the shorter ones. Needless to say, the country north of the park has been proposed for timber production. This is something that the L.C.C. has very frequently done throughout their recommendations - the drawing up of park boundaries in such a way as to exclude the larget and most beautiful forests. Often parks have been given the "left-overs"- the forests which are less valuable for timber production. In fairness to the L.C.C. it must be pointed out that the proposed Cape Otway national park contains large areas of the tall forests. However, these forests can continue to be logged for a number of years, as discussed above. It certainly appears that we are unlikely to see any substantial areas of unlogged, mature tall forests in parks, given the recommendations to date. One can only hope that this will not be the case with the alpine area.

A further problem with the Angahook-Lorne park boundary is that it cuts across catchments, the lower parts of which are in the park but the upper parts of which are in timber production areas. Thus, upstream logging may increase floods and sediment downstream in the park. It also may not but we have no guarantee of this.

Cont....7

CONSERVATION NEWS (Cont.)

As has often been the case in the past, most of the forested land (45% of all public land outside lake areas) has been devoted to hardwood production. Fortunately the L.C.C. has recommended that only a relatively small area of native forest be used for pine plantations. Most of the area recommended for pines is already cleared farmland.

2. Mt. Feathertop

The owner of the land near Stoney Creek at the base of the northwest spur recently applied to Bright Shire for permission to construct tourist facilities - a bridge across the Ovens River and a car-park to facilitate access to his deer and front farm. M.U.M.C. has lodged an objection with the shire on the grounds that the proposed developments are totally out of place in the existing environment and would lower the value of the approach to Mt. Feathertop for walkers as well as lowering the aesthetic values of the area for passing motorists. We also note that the owner ultimately wants to create an early settlers village or something similar and has begun collecting various items of junk and depositing them in a paddock. The dirty shack collected last year has recently been joined by an equally dirty tram. A high metal fence has been built around what is presumably to be the deer enclosure. This presents an ugly contrast with the existing bush and paddocks. An escape of deer could have potentially disastrous effects on the flora of Mt. Feathertop. Another fence has been built across the paddock through which one usually walked to reach the track up the north-west spur, necessitating a wide detour on the part of walkers. There is supposed to be a public right of way somewhere in the area and we are currently seeking clarification on this issue.

3. The Grampians

The Forests Commission released their management policies for the Grampians towards the end of September.

In general the management policies are not highly controversial; in many respects they are a rationalization of the status quo. At least they set down in writing what one can expect to occur in the near future in different parts of the Grampians.

The only major problems to the bushwalker are:

1. The possible intrusion of fire access tracks into some of the more remote areas.
2. The lack of protection of the wilderness-type recreational values of the northern part of the Serra Range.
3. The ban on camping in the Red Man Bluff- Mt. William - Major Mitchell Plateau area.

4. The Alpine Area

M.U.M.C. prepared a brief one page submission which basically expressed support for the Federation of Victorian Walking Club's submission to the L.C.C. on the alpine study area. The M.U.M.C. Conservation sub-committee, particularly Peter Cameron, Jol Shelton, Barbie Whiteley, and Ros Wood, prepared much material which was included in the F.U.W.C. submission.

Cont.....8

CONSERVATION NEWS (Cont.)

The M.U.M.C. submission also made a special plea for the preservation of the wilderness-type recreational values of Mt. Feathertop as well as for the wilderness rock-climbing values of parts of the alps.

The proposed recommendations for the alps are supposed to be due out before the middle of next year so now we must prepare ourselves for a tough struggle against the various interests which would deny us a significant portion of that part of Victoria which is so valuable and dear to us.

****

FAREWELL TO AIKMAN'S ROAD B-B-CUE.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 11th , 5.00pm.

CLUBROOM'S LAWN, NEAR 37 ROYAL PARADE.

Bring your own meat! Salad and biscuits, also cheese provided free! Drinks will be sold!

After over ten years in the cellars, the club will have to move on campus to the Old Meteorological Workshop before the next university year. A wake is being held on the above date at the club rooms to mourn, celebrate??? our move. All welcome!

MAP LIBRARY

DAVID LIA

The Club possesses a fairly comprehensive map library covering principally Tasmania and south-eastern Australia. Maps are available for inspection and copying but policy is that they are not available for loan or to be taken on trips.

Maps are filed according to the series to which they belong and may be located by means of: 1. a card index or 2. consultation of the master catalogue. The former is more efficient.

To find the maps you want:

1. Consult the master sheet(s) to locate the 1:100 000 map of the desired area. This has a four-digit number eg. Alexandra 8023.
2. Look up this number in the card index. A number of cards may be found. These correspond to different maps.
   - i. 8023-N & 8023-S are 1:63 360 maps of the north and south parts of the 1:100 000 map.
   - ii. 8023-I, 8023-II, 8023-III & 8023-IV are 1:50 000 maps of the north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west parts respectively of the 1:100 000 map.
   - iii. 8023-I-N & 8023-I-S are 1:31 680 maps of the north and south parts of the 1:50 000 map.
   - iv. 8023-I-NE, 8023-I-SE, 8023-I-SW & 8023-I-NW are 1:25 000 maps of the north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west parts respectively of the 1:50 000 map.
   - v. Special maps such as those produced by walking clubs are indexed according to which of the above systems they fit best.
   - vi. Maps at scales of 1:250 000 & 1:1 000 000 and overseas maps are not indexed. Consult the catalogue.
3. Read the other details of the card. This indicates the scale, the name of the map, the publisher, often whether it is contoured, whether it is a provisional edition, when it was published, and most importantly, IT GIVES THE LOCATION OF THE MAP WITHIN THE LIBRARY.
4. Look at the labels on the filing cabinets, open the correct drawer and extract the required map.
5. If maps are removed from the club for copying, please enter the details of the map along with your name and address in the library book. This lets the map librarian know which maps are missing but not lost.
6. On return, put maps back in their correct positions.

"SOME BRIEF EXPLORING AT BUCHAN"

ANNE DONNELLY

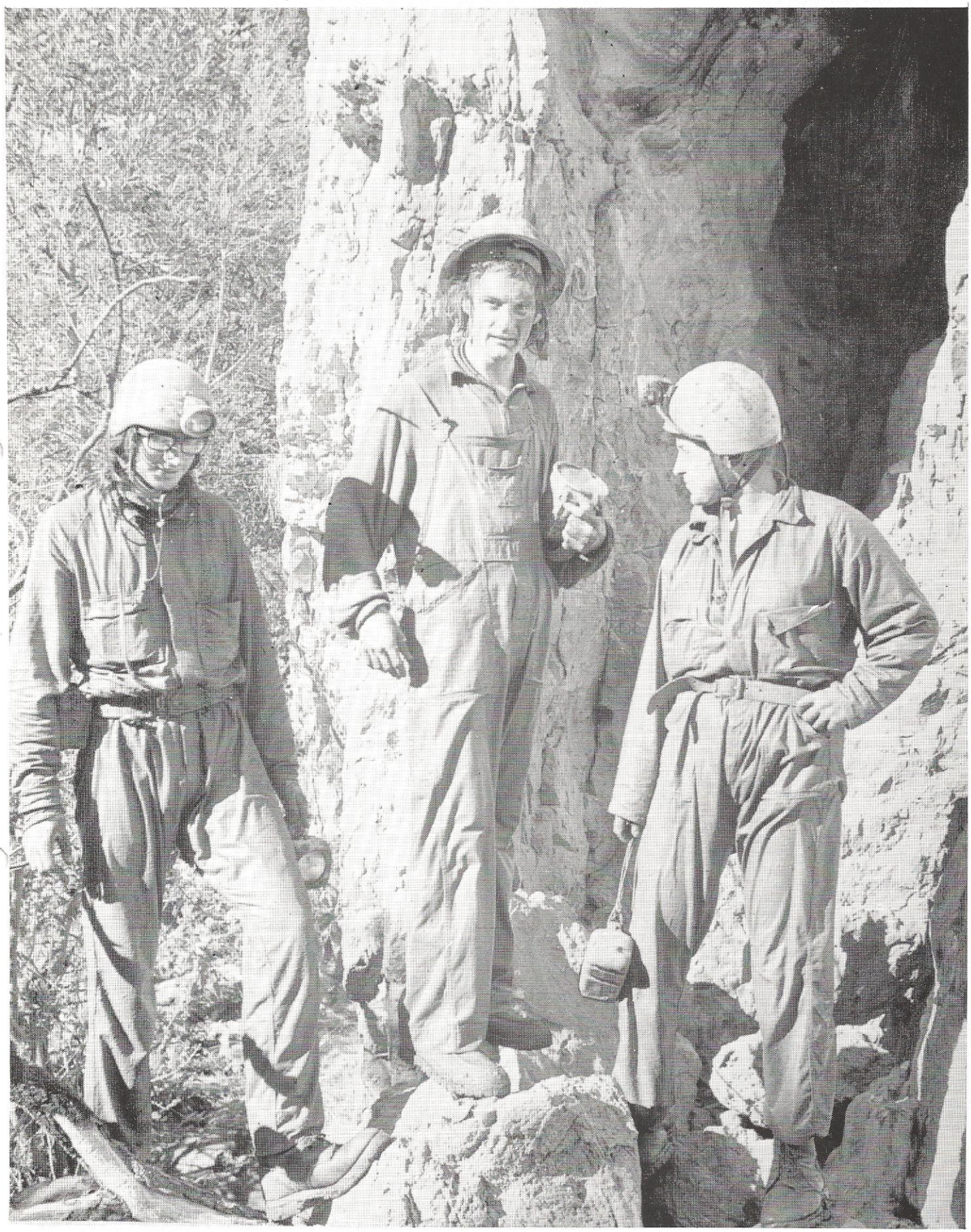
On a trip to Buchan, earlier in the year a few of us had a look at the cave M-19. This is in the Murrindal area at Buchan. Under the leadership of a couple of V.S.A. members who knew the cave, some unsuspecting and some not so unsuspecting had a few delights in store.

Even though it is not a long drop we used a ladder to make the descent, and belayed each other down the 30 feet. A couple of false starts from the bottom of the first drop, and we eventually found our way through one of the least promising gaps into a tunnel which was broken by a couple of minor chambers. We were told we were in search of "the lake" and so had our eyes and ears out for the sound of running water.

Before the lake was reached, however, there were a few interesting diversions, most of which led nowhere, but the struggle to get there was fun. One diversion, led steeply upwards through a very narrow passageway at an angle of about 65°. If the passage had been any wider, or had anymore formations, there would have been no way to shoulder yourself to the top.

We eventually found ourselves in a small, narrow chamber with some beautiful formations and flowstone. As this seemed to be the extent of any interesting formations, we were glad we had seen it. The lake turned out to be the anti-climax. After visions of expansive water glittering under torch-light, I was disappointed to find a chest-deep cavity just big enough to hold about eight people. Which it did! After we had all been convinced that there was a high possibility of a sump and further exploring. But no! Just a very wet dead end which made our exit a bit more uncomfortable, and maybe a bit more hasty.

M.U.M.C. Cavers: Dave Caddy
Lyndie Beattie
David Finn
Anne Donnelly.

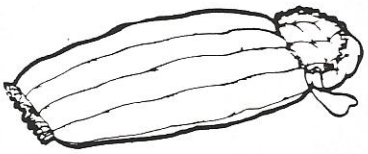


"AFTER THE TROG DIP SWAMPS"
Photo Nicholas White

Kimpton SLEEPING BAGS

arctic bag

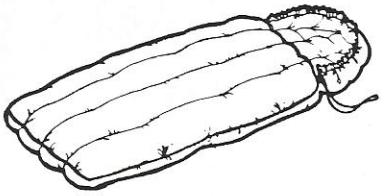
For sub zero temperatures and high altitudes. Cellular walls form lengthwise flutes, this stabilises the filling, ensuring even insulation and maximum resistance tc cold throughout. There are no cold spots on the stitching, not even on the side seams because of these walls. The quilted flap hood is fitted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

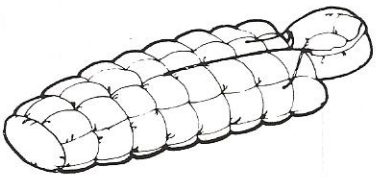
Body of bag cut 6'6" long x 32".
Total weight of bag 5¼ lb.

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

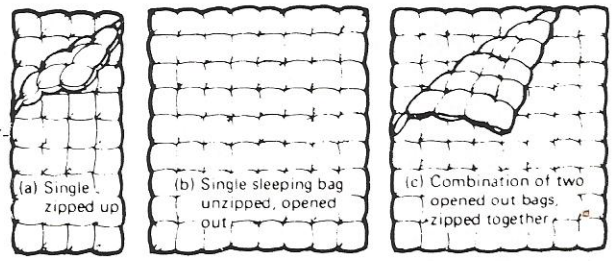
snow bag



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 caravaning 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.



Economic Down Quilt Co.

39 Sackville Street, Collingwood, 3066.
Phone: 41 4878

"THE ODYSSEY"

TONY MARION

Cold fear gripped me as I prepared to climb. The noise of the waves as they flung themselves at the cliff was a constant reminder of the futility of my gesture. They had been sieging the climb since the dawn of time. My gaze was drawn hypnotically to the line. It loomed large, dark and ominous above me, overhang after overhang reaching out and up until they were lost in mist. The desolation and isolation over-awed me, I wanted to run, but there was no escape. I cowered feeling the whole mass about to crush me. I knew I must climb or I would go insane and throw myself, screaming, into the seething, boiling sea below (as so many had before me).

I moved out to the base of the line. The wind tore at me, hurling me against the cliff. Reaching gale force it ripped through my clothing to freeze my very bones. I must either climb or die in this freezing hell. I climbed, beckoned on by the Reaper, his long black cloak blowing in the wind as he struggled to hold his scythe. Onward, forever upward I climbed. Looking down I could see my rope hanging free to the rock-shelf from which I had started. My belayer stood braced against the howling gale, her face portraying the calm of one who has come to accept death.

The whitened bones strewn about the shelf - grim testaments to previous attempts - no longer worried me. I was drawn back in time by my primaeval battle, to when man was locked in a constant death struggle with his environment. In this I found new strength and the courage to continue fighting onward and forever upward. The jagged summit appeared at last and I climbed with the last ounces of my strength until I dropped spent at the top.

Postcript: Well actually the tide was out that day. About 200 miles out (has been for the last couple of thousand years). The line is about 50 ft. high and overhangs a couple of feet. There is a good cave for the Reaper to wait in, just below the crux, but he'll probably have to wait a fair while since it protects so well. The only bones at the base are likely to be chicken bones from lunch and the isolation is somewhat mitigated by Natimuk 5 minutes away. That day the weather was fine and sunny with no wind.

But if I'd told you that in the first place would you have read with such fervour and do you want a hold by hold description anyway? (Do you want anything?) If you didn't like this articile just remember it did get Peter Megens off my back about writing something.

N.B. The white stains are not all chalk.

"WATCHTOWER BY NIGHT"

"It's a full moon".

"Yeah", silence.

"What about Watchtower Crack tomorrow night?"

"Sounds great but....."

The prospect seemed daunting but a challenge was out as we roared towards Arapiles in the famous green Sedgemobile.

"Don't move" and a hard poke in my earhole woke me at 6 am. Bleary eyes revealed two bastards with a shotgun and stocking masks. "Hey this is a joke", but it was for real. We were robbed then tied up in our own climbing ropes. An all day epic at the Horsham police station resulted and three tired broke climbers reached Arapiles that afternoon. The Watchtower attempt was abandoned.

- - - - - - - - - - - -

Nearly a year passed before the next attempt. This time it was unplanned but the offer of a dozen "tinnies" clinched it.

The faces and spires of the Piles looked mysterious under the soft moonlight as we passed them feeling small intruders in the night. The moonlight was brilliant. The mighty corner soared above us and Keith raced up the first pitch to the big ledge. Following I quickly appreciated the boldness required for night climbing.. Scoops and flat holdswere hard to see in the soft flat lighting. The next pitch was plunged in deep shadow but the secure cracks led the way over loose rock to the belay in the small cave. The belay had to be put in by feel. As Keith came up the pitch a big bank of clouds swept over to plunge the cliff into darkness and apprehension set in.

In darkness Keith led up and out under the big roof, with no runners, to the awkward crack above. A single aluminium bolt bracket provided the only confidence builder as he muscled his way up the crack above.

After an eternity "On belay" sounded from above. The first major obstacle was conquered. It was now very dark and I followed quickly. The roof seemed easy compared to the desperate crack above. Holds were found by feel and the famous knee-jam was essential, what a lead!

Light rain began to fall as I lead off on the last pitch. Laybacking immediately seemed best in the dark and the bolt runner was found by feel. Another reassuring (?) aluminium bracket. Laybacking furiously 5m. to the ledge, where is the ledge? A dodgy reverse was done. Both belayer and leader gripped as the drizzle falls. A pause to calm down and layback as high as possible 'til better holds are felt and out onto the face. Relief, the difficulties are over. An easier 25m. led to the top and safety. What a scare, only 2 runners on the entire climb.

It looks ready to rain heavily and Keith throws caution to the winds and runs up the pitch to arrive gripped but jubilant. We shout our victory to the cliffs but no-one watches us. The dark descent gully seemed easy after the climb and camp was reached before the heavens opened up properly.

We sat around the fire and recalled the unique experience we had just shared.

First Midnight Ascent of Watchtower Crack by Keith Edgerton and John Chapman (author).

TRIPS PROGRAMME

Oct. 16th	Climbing:	Campaspie River
	Leader:	David Lia
	Transport:	Private
	Standard:	Suicidal
Oct. 15/16th.	Bushwalking:	Moroka Gorge
	Leader:	Mike Feller
	Transport:	Private
	Standard:	Medium-hard
Oct. 15/16th.	Bushwalking:	Otways
	Leader:	Rob Jung
	Transport:	Private
	Standard:	Medium (rough)
Oct. 22/23rd.	Bushwalking:	Mt. Tamboritha-Crinoline
	Leader:	Dave Caddy
	Transport:	Private
	Standard:	Medium-easy
Oct. 29 - Nov. 1st.	Skitouring:	Main Range, Kosciosko
	Leader:	Mike Feller
	Transport:	Private
	Standard:	Experienced skiers only
Oct. 28 - Nov. 1st.	Bushwalking:	
	Leader:	Rob Jung
	Standard:	Suicidal
Nov. 19/20th.	Bushwalking:	Snowy River, Rodger River Gorge
	Leader:	Rob Jung (take lilos)
	Transport:	Private
	Standard:	Medium
Dec. 3/4th.	Bushwalking:	Mt. Darling-Wonnagatta Station, Bryces Gorge
	Leader:	?
Dec. 31 - Jan. 2nd.	Bushwalking:	Reedy Creek Gorge
	Leader:	?
	Standard:	Medium

'MOUNTAINEERING EDIBLES'

A most delicious scroggin recipe was given in The Age Weekender recently. We have decided to reprint it here for all those people who missed the Weekender:-

SCROGGIN

250 gm. dried fruit - raisens, sultanas, apples, apricots, cherries

Ginger
Rum
250 gm. dark cooking chocolate
1 tablespoon butter
2 desertspoons honey
5 Wheatmeal biscuits
¼ - ½ cup rolled oats

Method

Soak dried fruit in rum for up to a week beforehand. Melt chocolate, butter and honey over hot water. Stir frequently to prevent sticking to saucepan. When melted add fruit mixture and mix thoroughly. Add finely broken wheatmeal biscuits. Finally add small quantity of rolled oats to achieve desired consistency. Store in fridge in aluminium foil trays.

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"SUPERALPINISM"

NEIL CURRIE

(an account of a winter trip to Kosciosko)

Charisma is a strange term to use in relation to a mountain. However charisma does not necessarily mean warmth and friendship, it may mean the complete opposite..... Blue Lake has charisma and to date has escaped the worst effects of public exposure. Less than a few rope lengths in height and tucked away in far off Kosciosko National Park it has so far failed to capture the imagination of any but the well informed of the climbing and skiing world. Yet to these climbers it has come to represent the epitome of the attainable icy ridge - a savage knoll of rock, encrusted in a firm armour of ice and exposed to often cruel elements. This formidable area has come to embody the whole spirit of SUPERALPINISM. The phrase "abandon hope, all who enter here" seems somehow to inadequately describe this area high in the Australian Alps.....

- "What are you doing?"

"I'm writing an article on Blue Lake"

- "Let's see ..... you can't write that!!"

"If they can make a disastrous movie called "The White Buffalo" I can write a disastrous article on Blue Lake."

- "What happened?"

"I got sunburned."

- "That's not disastrous!"

"I guess you had to be there....."

Jex carefully encourages the green and white ghost to Thredbo. The car is filled with the inevitable juvenile excitement about the first snow patches beside the road - like dirty albino wombats huddled into the underbrush waiting for the intruders to pass so they can carry on their activities in solitude.

Thredbo reeks of wealth - the thoroughbred lines of the cars, the jumble of chalets, the healthy (liquid?) bronzed faces and sun-bleached hair. The main hiring area/toilet block complex reminds me of a pavilion at the Show with the bustle of the gay holiday mood, the stench of an over-taxed sewerage system, the loud splashes of colour all calling out for attention and recognition.

The contrast between the bottom of the chairlift and the top has to be experienced to be believed. At the base the sun is warm and drowsy, making you feel over-dressed in layers of wool. But at the top these same clothes are hopelessly inadequate to protect one from the bitter chilling wind that blows right through you, making you huddle into yourself, to tuck your hands deep into jumpers and shirts to minimize the pain.

We procrastinate in the shelter while we pull out the balance of our clothing and dress more appropriately for the cold, howling wind that will brace us and spit fragments of ice into our faces as soon as we step around

Cont....16

"Superalpinism"(Cont.)

the corner of the terminus. Eventually we move off and ski/walk towards Seaman's Hut in worsening weather. The snow-pole line is a constant reminder of others who have preceded us. Does that reduce the wilderness experience or simply reduce the risk of those who choose to venture out? I guess that depends on the skill of the party, the area involved, and the weather - in the near white-out conditions I felt more than happy to be moving from one pole to the next!

Seaman's Hut loomed out of the mist and flying ice particles about mid-afternoon. We sat around for a while and then Jex and I put on our boots and crampons and grabbed our ice-axes to experience for the first time the tremendous feeling of running around without going arse over tit! The soft snow and ice gully in the crag behind Seaman's saw us both romp and solo up a probably very unimpressive grade of difficulty, but in that howling gale it was enormous fun and certainly a taste of better things to come.

Our slumbers next morning were broken by an enormous blue sky that provided a brilliant contrast to the rolling white ridges encircling the hut. This was to set the pattern of the weather for the rest of the trip - brilliant clear weather in the morning followed by a canopy of cloud later on during the day, dropping down to swirl around us.

We walked, next day, to Albino Lodge. The log book entry informed us that Nick and company had left that morning for our rendezvous of Blue Lake. After resting for a few minutes we headed off toward Blue Lake in pursuit. We passed by the saddle we were supposed to take and continued for about another ½ mile before the mist parted and momentarily Blue Lake was in view. Retracing our steps towards Blue Lake and romp/fall/ski down the slope to join the tents of Nick, Rob, and Hugh, ending a tiring and often frustrating day.

Nick and Rob were woken by the irritating shrill of an alarm clock. The rest of the camp were woken by the irritating shrill of Robyn .... "Nicholas Reeves, get off my carry mat! Now get up and climb, that's what you came here for.!'" So much for the articulate soothing voice of love, gently caressing the ears of her beloved.....

Nick got up and climbed.

To describe them as climbers is inaccurate, as the word climber seems to refer to some-one who intimately relates to rock and ice with no other intervention. These people were practising technocrats surrounded by the paraphernalia which seems to be generated by any sport in an era of technology - ultralite, super-small, and poly-strong. Brightly clad in helmets, parkas and reflective goggles they seemed to be participating in some strange religious rite; attempting to please the immortals by their unflinching faith in the icons called equipment; the humbly prostrate position adopted on a verticle pitch with limbs spread before the Almighty, striving for height as if to deny an earthbound existence by coming close to the gods above (and occasionally being punished by a clumsy action resulting in less than 4 points of support to hold them on to the face).

The day was an eventful one, beginning with the sun creeping over the lip of the ridge to warm us and painfully reflect off the lake bed. Nick led an impressive looking snow gully using one snow stake and one ice screw for

Cont....17

"Superalpinism"(Cont.)

protection! Then our attention was directed to an iced-over cliff on the opposite side of the lake where we spent the rest of the day in the masculine (? ed.) activity of making ice submit to our crampons, ice axes and ice hammers, forcing those lengths of steel into the virgin white of the cliff. You hang on for grim death until that holds' usefulness if finished with and then look a little further afield for your next conquest, moving it seems by instinct alone.

The climbs were for the most part of one pitch but that didn't stop the fatigue. It was magnificent to stop for a few seconds and feel the situation you are in. To the right the frosted mountains rolled off towards Charlottes Pass, behind you Blue Lake and the campsite, to the left the gullies, cliffs and cornices that compose the rest of the basin, in front and above the ice-plastered cliff supporting you. And you finish the climb with arms aching, calf-muscles complaining, chest heaving!

After tea that night Jex and I went to get water from an exposed corner of the lake. The moon's reflection on the ice and snow gave a peaceful blue light to the area and we just stood there, taking it in. It was magnificent, almost too good to go to bed.

Another hot, bright day followed as we broke camp and moved off to Albino Lodge via Caruther's Peak. Some of the views from the Peak were every bit as good as those in expensive climbing posters of the European Alps. Arriving at Albino at about noon we spent the rest of the day enjoying the freedom afforded by skiing without a pack - no more attempts to sabotage your every weight-change manoeuvre. Dusk saw the sunset photos taken.- they never quite do justice to the colours do they?

Mid morning the following day the view from the top of Kosciosko was magnificent while we played spot the mountain. The ski from Kosciosko to Thredbo was uneventful except for the last long slope that was great to swoosh down as a finale to an enjoyable journey to the land of charisma.

Neil Currie (author)
Peter Martin
Wendy Mathews
Gary Martin.

"THERE'S NO DECENT RAPIDS ON THE BARWON" Bill Cruickshank

AN EPIC EXPLORATION CANOEING TRIP

With heavy rain the week before culminating in a major flood warning for the Barwon River the stage was set for a quiet day trip on a river which after all "has no decent rapids" and would be reminiscent of the Yarra at Ivanhoe.

However having seen what appeared to be good rapids on the Barwon at Queens Park the previous year I didn't believe the stories and organised an exploration trip.

A party of eight intrepid canoeists gathered at the Uni canoe sheds on Saturday morning for a trip graded as suicidal (for those who knew) to mild (for those who thought they did) and departed for the pre-arranged meeting spot in Geelong, but not before Ross piked with an unlikely story about parachuting ($5 on bouncelotto square 8).

Several hours later Rob and Di finally arrived in Geelong after some rallycross action trying to find a direct route from Glenroy to the Geelong road via Melton, Werribee, Bacchus Marsh, Warnambool and other out-of-the way places. But seriously why do they call him "Rapid"?

Arriving at Queens Park a little later we stopped to look down on the Devils Pool rapid, Buckley's Falls where those who thought this trip would be a bludge got a slight surprise. Amid mumbles of "shit he wasn't joking" and assorted crow calls the party moved on to find a launching position. This involved a significant amount of exploration, but after several dead ends an appropriate road was found and the trip began.

The first rapid consisted of a 4' weir with a bluestone wall diverting half the river flow into an aquaduct along the river bed. Accompanied by that famous fibreglass screeching noise we proceeded down the aquaduct and negotiated a nice little drop over the dividing wall and back into the river bed. Unfortunately Sandy's paddle couldn't handle the pace and time out was called while a spare was assembled (yawn!)

"There's No Decent Rapids On The Barwon" (Cont'd)

Buckley's Falls was soon reached and portage seemed the order of the day. After about 10 minutes, I hesitantly decided it might be possible and chose to have a go. The rapid dropped over 30' in about 20 yards including a 10' weir to start and was an impressive sight with many foaming stoppers and pressure waves (grade 4+-5).

The tourists and ghouls moved in camera's blazing as I took the drop to emerge seconds later, in the foaming "devils pool" below the falls. Encouraged by my success Barry tried, but snagging a rock on the weir face got himself jammed side on half way down the face. After repeated attempts at dislodging himself Wonder Woman, in the guise of mild mannered Di, swam/waded out to the weir face, climbed down and hauled Barry and his kayak onto a rock.

Following this time consuming delay the trip was quickly underway again, through a nice series of rapids below the old mill which the aquaduct once served (future slalom site). In the course of this negotiation I discovered that the last stopper was actually a rock and proceeded to bulldoze it aside (fibreglass isn't as strong as basalt).

The next rapid a good grade 3 seemed straightforward and Rob and Di in the C2 led the way, to emerge upside down in the pool below (life wasn't meant to be easy). Judy tried an interesting variation by doing the last half backwards and Barry investigating a mound of foam in mid-stream discovered it concealed a powerful eddy (the water was cold).

We paddled over flat water to finish the trip, ending beside the road where we watched the cars playing chicken on the one-lane bridge with the inevitable midspan disagreement attracting many cheers.

The entertainment over Sandy and Judy departed and the rest of us searched out a Pizza joint, for dinner. Needless to say Rob got lost on the way home trying to find the elusive shortcut to Beaumaris

There's No Decent Rapids On The Barwon (Cont'd)

(Altona Esplanade?)

Overall a really great trip of good standard.

The Pioneers:-

Bill (you'd better get a photo of this) Cruickshank
Prue (I feel terrible) Dobbin
Rob (I know a shortcut) Marshal
Di (It's another bloody dead end) Coon
Ian (but there's a rock there!) Cruickshank
Barry (I think I'm stuck) Stuckey
Judy (we could have had a counter lunch) Downe
Sandy (twist the blade another 90°) Morrison.

Bill Cruickshank (author).