



MOUNTAINEER OCTOBER

Staircase Spur near Bivouac Hut Photo: James Pitt

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20¢

BUSHGEAR



Peter Lindorff on Morfydd (19) Mt. Arapiles

Photo: Neil Blundy

**SUPPLIERS OF BUSHWALKING,
ROCKCLIMBING, CAVING, SKI-
TOURING AND OTHER
OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT
46 HARDWARE ST. MELB.
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THE MOUNTAINEER

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The Journal of M.U.M.C.

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"FOUR DAYS ON THE HIGH PLAINS" Jonathan Miller

OR "PERHAPS HONEY WOULD WORK"

A recipe for Blackberry sandwiches: take your skis and butter with a useful layer of base-wax. Apply successive layers of red and purple klister. Let it set overnight and repeat the procedure on the following days.

Perhaps the above does not attest to good waxing techniques, but Huey's holding out on a new snowfall made for some interesting skiing for ten skiers, who had audaciously named themselves 'gun novices'.

It was a brisk but clear Monday morning, and several S.E.C. vehicles, that found us at the Mountain View Picnic Shelter sleeping uncomfortably close to a "No Camping" sign. We were survivors of the Alpine Instruction Course but now sought the delights of herring-boning up Mt. Fainter and wooshing down Mt. Cope. Slowly ice-axes and ice-shovels were exchanged for ski boots and klisters, and it was nearly midday by the time we left Falls Creek car park.

A steady climb to near the top of Mt. McKay had its problems as we tackled icy conditions and had some intimidating encounters with T-bars and other mechanised paraphernalia of the downhill skier. A three o'clock lunch gave energy anew to complete the trek through the frozen Pretty Valley to Tawonga Huts. Here the log book bore witness to Richard Serpell's earlier travels and Jo Richards commented on being the only female amongst nine male chauvinists.

Fainter beckoned us the next day and the continuing icy conditions made for an interesting descent. Apparently Mt. Fainter had also lured some skidoos, and Richard Thwaites was perhaps more than a little perturbed as he descended a slope swiftly pursued by these vehicles. Their grand finale was to tow a gleeful member of their party water-skiing fashion past us and into the distance. The whirring motors smashed the solitude and were as appropriate to the area as a fun park in a cemetery. After piking the traverse of the Niggerheads range we returned to the huts; some to climb Mt. Niggerhead, others to enjoy the aesthetic pleasures of a sunset behind Mt. Feathertop.

The first real signs of bad weather appeared the next day when clouds rolled in past Mt. Jim, threatening to white-out. However, it cleared before long, and so we raced on to Cope Hut, only to find it fully occupied and to be greeted with an inaccurate forecast of approaching blizzards. That afternoon we ascended Mt. Cope for excellent views in all directions before making an exhilarating, if at times hair-raising, descent - despite encouraging shouts of "to on, it's safe" Peter decided to leave jumping overhangs to the Winter Olympics. Kevin Chamberlain's rooftop acrobatics and Rod Costigan's "apples in the pond" provided entertainment that night before four of us slept in Wallace's Hut with the fortunately not-too-ravenous resident rat.

Final day lassitude assured a late start before we leisurely skied around Rocky Valley pondage, over the dam wall and down a gentle slope back to the car park. We were back in the frenetic world of the downhill skier.

Account of a ski-touring trip during August undertaken by:

Rod Gregory, Kevin Chamberlain, Richard Thwaites, Rod Costigan,
Jo Richards, Richard Serpell, Peter Robins, David Barry,
Andrew Wilson and Jonathan Miller.

1. POWERLINE THROUGH THE OTWAYS

The S.E.C. plan to construct a new powerline through the Otways to Lorne and have issued an Environment Effects Statement (E.E.S.) for public comment. M.U.M.C. sent off a submission to the Ministry for Conservation concerning the E.E.S. We supported the route which involved the least clearing of trees and also took the opportunity to criticise the S.E.C. for its heavy tree clearing program last year.

2. DEVELOPMENTS AT THE BASE OF MT. FEATHERTOP'S NORTHWEST SPUR

M.U.M.C. failed in its appeal against a Bright Shire decision to allow the Harrops to develop land at the bottom of the spur for a deer and trout farm and tourist complex. The Town Planning Appeals Tribunal recently rejected our appeal and allowed the development to go ahead subject only to approval by the Shire. The Harrops have now begun to cut down trees - some near the proposed bridge over the Ovens and others near Stony Creek beside the track up the N.W. Spur. The track has been used to drag logs along and has been turned into a quagmire in some sections. As a result a letter was sent to the Shire Council protesting the Harrop's complete lack of consideration to bushwalkers and asking them if the Harrop's have permission to cut down these trees. We also requested that we be kept fully informed of all future development proposals of the Harrop's.

3. COMMERCIAL DOWNHILL SKIING ON THE BOGONG HIGH PLAINS

A very recent (dating only since August) development on the Bogong High Plains has been the introduction of various machines to take downhill skiers to different areas, particularly Mt. Nelse. A helicopter which comes from N.S.W. has been used to take downhill skiers from Falls Creek to the Mt. Nelse area where they have been dropped off. Snowmobiles have been used to take them back up slopes. This helicopter also flies very frequently between Hotham and Falls Creek destroying the tranquility of parts of the High Plains for all the cross-country skiers present. In addition to the helicopter, a large over-snow vehicle has been used to take downhill skiers from Falls Creek to different parts of the High Plains, particularly Mt. Nelse. It has travelled anywhere, regardless of roads, and has been using Heathy Spur as an approach to Mt. Nelse. In addition, snowmobiles have been very active this winter, some being used to transport downhill skiers around.

M.U.M.C. and other organisations have sent strong protest letters to Mr. W.A. Borthwick, the Minister for Conservation and to the S.E.C. and urges as many people as possible to do the same. Show them you care. Please write soon - just a one to two paragraph letter will suffice. The important point is that the Victorian government has stated that there will be no change in the use of public land while it is being studied by the Land Conservation Council. The use of machines for commercial downhill skiing purposes on the Bogong High Plains represents a major change in the use of the area and, according to the government, should not occur. The high plains have not been used for this purpose before. Needless to say this use conflicts greatly with our own, cross-country skiing, which has been the traditional use of the area in winter.

PLEASE WRITE TODAY - a large number of letters gives us strength and is our most important means of defending our interests.

WRITE TO: 1) The Hon. W.A. Borthwick,
Minister for Conservation,
Parliament House,
Melbourne. 3002.

2) The Chairman,
S.E.C.
15 William Street,
Melbourne. 3001.

3) The Chairman,
Land Conservation Council,
464 St. Kilda Road,
Melbourne. 3004.

4. SOUTH WEST TASMANIA

In November 1975, the South West Advisory Committee was established. As a result of its preliminary report to the Tasmanian Minister of Environment in May 1976, its terms of reference were expanded "to advise whether it recommends the preparation of a Draft Zoning Plan for S.W. Tasmania and, if not, what alternative it proposes". The committee has now published its second report, and we have only until the first week of November to comment on their recommendations.

The committee did not recommend a draft zoning plan, rather it has adopted a be nice to everybody attitude. They are totally convinced of the importance of South West Tasmania from the point of view of its natural beauty and aesthetic values" yet the power of the H.E.C., forestry and mining interests are such that the committee rejected calls for a moratorium as impractical and infeasible. This is the general tone of the report; they recognize that S.W. Tasmania is a wilderness of world importance but do not have the confidence to take on the vested interests of the H.E.C.

Instead, they recommend that the status quo be maintained for the time being and that yet another committee be established. In the meantime the value of the wilderness will be decreased by the continued "development". It is well-known in Hobart that the unusually short period for comments is due to H.E.C. pressure so they will be able to complete their summer investigations unhindered. This pressure comes from a group who say "no part of the proposed S.W. Reserve should be included in a National Park until such time as the H.E.C. is satisfied that the development of hydro-power in that area would be uneconomic" and further "that it is in the best interests of the State to develop all the remaining hydro resources"

Anyone who is interested can obtain copies of the report by writing to Tasmanian Environment Centre at 102 Bathurst Street, Hobart. To counter the economic argument put forward by our opponents we need to convince the Tasmanian Government that the South West is of national importance. This can be done if wilderness recreationists all over Australia show their concern by writing submissions.

ALOM CANOEING

Prue Dobbin

BARWON SLALOM - The worst slalom I've ever been to (My story)

We'd all paddled the Barwon before - a piece of cake. I was full of confidence as we drove down to Geelong one Saturday morning. All Victorian rivers were high and the sun was shining. However, after viewing Buckley's Falls - a real tourised waterfall, I then scrambled over the rocks to view the Big Stopper. The gates were being erected down the sides of the river. Rumours were circulating that David Darks, a top paddler had vanished into the stopper, capsized and broken his boat. "I'm not letting my daughter into that" one anxious father confided in me (I later found him urging his little girl on with the full vigour of a parent at a Junior League Football Final and speculated on whether it was a scare tactic or not).

Soon everyone was having practise runs. I sat at the top in my fairly new Alternativ boat. Paddler after paddler went down - all confident. Yet still I waited. Eventually, a top ex-British paddler told me to follow him down.

"You'll be right" he said.

"What happens if I fall out at gate 2?" (right above the big water) said I.

"I wouldn't if I were you" said he,

"You'll be in BIG TROUBLE."

Off he went. I followed - gate 1 clear. Gate 2 I was side on to a rock Frothy water over my head. I don't remember getting out of my boat and I even forgot to hang on to it and my paddle. I suddenly feared for my safety. I swam with all my might and was battered into rocks and cut on sharp edges.

Fortunately I swam sufficiently to miss the big water and was dragged ashore by conscious onlookers. My paddle, recovered by Bill was bent at a 90° angle - I was lucky it was not laminated wood, but only aluminium. My boat was split. I gave up for the day!

That night I could hardly walk. Two other battered swimmers from Southern Cross Canoe Club and I, all of us black and blue, wandered from caravan park to caravan park to find a van. Bill and Craig Price following thought we looked like war refugees.

Not yet entirely defeated I'd sent home for a Prijon Olympia, a bulbous boat I had previously got down just about everything upright in. I'll be right, thought I.

It was soon my run. I paddled off. I was through the stopper, into the eddy and ready for a break-out. Too far, I was in. Once again I scrambled out and swam. It was easy this time and I was not hurt, but I had had it. I retired to judging.

The day was interesting. A famous person's super kevlar (many times stronger than fibreglass) boat, split on a protuding bolt. Craig Price's boat broke, and Bill paddled a one man team of 3.

A Great Weekend.

Results:

K1 Division 1

2nd David Danks (As usual, he just never can win)

K1 Division 2

11th Neil McGilp

K1 Division 3

2nd Bill Cruickshank

9th Craig Price

LK1

Prue Dobbin - capsized

FOR SALE

Scarpa Ice Climbing Boots,

Rigid soles, sewn in single-bellow tongue

\$40 - Contact Neil Currie - 429 3413

ALPINE CLIMBING COURSES IN NEW ZEALAND

Every summer Australian climbers travel to New Zealand to climb real mountains. Alpine instruction courses are an essential prerequisite to a safe and enjoyable season in the Southern Alps. Following are accounts of three courses conducted in these areas, and the opinions of those who have been on them.

Alpine Guides operate from the Hermitage in Mt. Cook National Park. Certainly this is the heart of New Zealand's big mountains and nearly all the ten thousand footers are contained within that park. However, the aspirations of first year climbers should be somewhat lower. Experienced rock climbers may find the sort of challenge they want at Mt. Cook, but bushwalkers will probably prefer the lush green valleys of Aspiring National Park (further to the south) to the glacial jumble of Mt. Cook.

The prices and information below may give you some idea of what to expect:

MOUNTAIN RECREATION

Alpine Skills Course: This course is designed for the experienced trampers and rockclimber, wishing to learn the skills of efficient alpine peak climbing. It is an exacting eight days of training and climbing with some of New Zealand's leading mountaineers as tutors. Several nights will be spent in snowcaves, igloos and bivouacs. The programme is oriented to instruction whilst climbing, in up to fifteen hour days. After two days of initial training, it is intended that two to three peaks will be climbed from high level camps.

To obtain full benefit from the course it is recommended that participants undertake a week of tramping immediately prior to the course and have a good working knowledge of rope handling and rockclimbing.

Duration: 8 days

Course Cost: \$165.00

General Mountaineering Course: Instruction will involve rockclimbing, ice-axe and crampon use; glacier travel and crevasse rescue and rivercrossing. We cover a similar programme to the Alpine Skills Courses, however greater emphasis is placed on fundamental rope handling skills. We have the pressure out of the A.S. Course and give you time to grasp these essential mechanics of mountaineering. One to two peaks will be climbed during the course. Good tramping fitness is essential.

Duration: 8 days

Course Cost: \$100.00

For the last three summers a small camp has been established at Shovel Flat in the West Matukituki Valley which serves as a base for Mountain Recreation. This is the Alpine Instruction School run by Geoff Wayatt of Wanaka. Geoff is a friendly, somewhat diminutive man whose mountaineering experience extends all over the globe: the Himalayas (Jannu North Face), Peru, Canada and of course, New Zealand.

Pete Cockerill and I attended his General Mountaineering Course two years ago. You have to be fairly fit and keen to learn, know basic rope-handling technique and own (or borrow) a collection of expensive mountaineering equipment including rigid boots, crampons, helmet and ice-axe. Some of these items are available for hire from the school. We spent the week prior to the course walking over the Routeburn, up the Rees Valley into the Dart, then over Cascade Saddle. This is recommended. When you discover the size and steepness of the climbs on New Zealand mountains, fitness can make the difference between total misery and pleasant exhaustion.

The first afternoon was spent fitting crampons and practising jumaring up ropes on trees. Next day brought extremely heavy rain, but Geoff was undeterred and we tramped up the valley armed with axes to practise cramponing on the ice of an avalanche slide off Mt. Barff. It is difficult at first, one must learn to roll one's ankles so that sole of the boot lies flat against the surface, assuring maximum grip for crampons. Front-pointing, though exciting and strenuous, is easier to learn. We returned to camp for lunch. Since we were completely soaked by the rain, the afternoon was spent in river-crossing practice in the swollen, Matukituki.

Next morning was sunny and gear was hung out to dry on makeshift clotheslines. We packed up and struggled up the sides of Rob Roy to a bivouac at the snowline and did self-arrests and belays on a snowpatch. One of the girls was unfortunate enough to spear herself in the thigh with her ice-axe and a first-aid operation ensued with Geoff carrying her back to the camp in piggy-back style.

A rousing call before dawn and we were off to climb Rob Roy. The morning was cold and clear. After plodding up some snowslopes we roped up to cross the head of the Maud Francis Glacier, then crossed a 'schrund at the base of a broad gully which was climbed using fixed belays. There were four pairs and Geoff wandered from rope to rope giving instructions, suggestions and the occasional warning. Eventually the summit was reached for a perfect view. The roped pitches were reversed, the snowslopes bumslid and we were back at base camp for tea: somewhat stuffed.

The following morning was fine and we climbed French Ridge to the Quarterdeck for that almost unbelievable view of Aspiring, Avalanche and others. We trogged down the Bonar to a small snowcave under Mt. French which was suitably enlarged. Next day we climbed the Pope's Nose and later practised crevasse rescue. I managed to get my leg jammed behind the rope and hung under the lip Dewhirst-style screaming for slack. We retired to the snow-cave with a fresh wariness of crevasses.

Strong wind and a white-out forced a retreat down French Ridge in rain on the last climbing day. At base camp that night we were treated to a slide show after some very strong chili stew which I had to dilute with mayonnaise.

The last day arrived and nobody could be bothered with cliff rescue. So we raced down the valley to the van and back to Wanaka to beer, icecream and a shower.

The course provides all food and transport from Wanaka. Ropes, hammers, etc. are supplied as well as tentage at base camp. Even though the course was not inexpensive, and the value of any particular course depends greatly on the weather, the benefits of proper instruction have been very important during our subsequent alpine climbing ventures.

ALPINE GUIDES (MT. COOK)

Basic Course: Qualifications: some tramping, skiing, hunting or similar background. Aims: to teach the general techniques of mountaineering, the art of survival in the mountains and to foster a wide appreciation of the high hills.

Cost: 1977-8 \$NZ 140.

Stage II Course: Qualification: above average fitness and either familiarisation with all Basic Course Techniques, or wide theoretical knowledge of General Mountaineering plus a minimum of 2 years intensive rockclimbing to a good standard. Aims: to consolidate general techniques and develop ice climbing skills.

Cost: 1977-8 \$NZ 140.

*Stage II Expedition: Qualification: a successfully completed Stage II course or its equivalent. Program: a transalpine crossing with selected climbs on up-to-10,000 ft. peaks. e.g. Graham's Saddle to Pioneer with ascents of the Minarets, Lendenfeld, Haast etc.

*Only one Stage II will be run this year.

EIGHT DAYS WITH ALPINE GUIDES BASIC COURSE

Mark Moorhead

By early January Simon and I (and a couple of friends) had arrived at Mt. Cook village, where we joined up with five others on the same course. We were able to hire most of our gear from Alpine guides, and they also supplied the food for the eight days.

The course was held a few miles down the road from the village in the Ben Ohau range at Twin Streams. Sleeping accommodation was in the form of a real life, five-man Indian teepee. A couple of two-man tents were provided for the instructors Bill Denz (Fatboy), Nick Craddock (Nuck), and a couple of locals, 'Struth' Ruth, and Peglet, Nick's girlfriend.

On the few days it rained we crowded into the teepee and were taught a few knots, how to prussik up a rope, climb roped up, and glacier travel. On the fine days we went up to Mt. Mary basin to practise self-arresting and belaying, or over to some cliffs for a bit of rockclimbing and bouldering. During the night came the inevitable stories about climbing, mountain medicine, and everything else, including the death of Bill's best friend in the Patagonia.

In the last couple of days we walked up Twin Streams, past the Twilight cliffs where the A.B.C. were filming about the Gledhills with Baxter and Dewhirst. On we climbed up to a small saddle 7,500' where time was spent digging a snow cave. However no-one bothered to sleep in it, and we bivvied on some rocks slightly lower down.

The next morning was fine so it was up to Mt. Dark, 8,200', and our first amusing experience with crampons, which ended with a fine view of Mts. Cook and Aspiring. Later the movement back down the steep little glacier started conservatively at first, but soon degenerated to a race back down past the film crew (who were picking up the pieces of a \$70 crayfish airdrop, courtesy of local lunatic Gavin Wills) and finally back to the teepee. The last day involved a short walk out to the road and a ride back to the village, the end of a good time.

ALPINE GUIDES - STAGE II

Peter Martin

On December 4th last year Neil Currie and I attended a Stage II course run by Alpine Guides.

As I am sure others writing about their respective courses will probably recommend them, not to be left out, I recommend the Alpine Guides Stage II course.

Perhaps to make this article a bit more informative I will summarize the week's activities which I hope will help anyone interested in selecting a course for this coming season.

To begin with Neil and I had a fair background in rockclimbing, walking and ski-touring but no experience of snow and ice climbing other than the brief introduction offered by Nick (they say he can climb ice) Reeves at Blue Lake in Kosciusko National Park and the M.U.M.C. alpine instruction weekend.

To get full value from any course number one priority is to get fit! We ran virtually every day for 3 - 4 months before we went to New Zealand and preceded the course with a week's bushwalking. We still finished each day completely shattered!

Due to bad weather we spent the first two days at Twin Streams (the teepee camp run by Alpine Guides and used as base camp on the Basic courses). We spent a short day going over rockclimbing techniques, but as all of us (five on our course plus 1 guide) were fairly proficient on rock we spent most of the time discussing and practising cliff rescue techniques and several forms of abseiling. The evenings (or whenever heavy rain forced a retreat) were spent discussing tie-on systems for rock, glacier travel, rescues etc.

On the third day we left Twin Streams and headed up the Tasman Glacier. As soon as we reached clean, white ice we practised ice climbing techniques: step cutting, front pointing, axe and hammer work, ten pointing, placing ice-screws etc. And then we walked the five hours or so to Malte Brun. At least I think we walked: I had to run to keep up whilst others just didn't! I can still recall Neil yelling:

"Dave (our guide), Rob's nearly out of sight (which he was). Hadn't we better wait?"

"Oh, O.K."

To which Neil lay flat on his back on ice for ten minutes panting . . . I don't think he was that worried about Rob!

That evening we discussed weather patterns and sign of bad weather in New Zealand. The following day it snowed, thank God, otherwise we would have had to get out of bed. At about 9 - 10 a.m. we revised roping up for crevasse travel and methods of crevasse rescue. A wander around in the snow and a few more talks on first aid, avalanches etc. finished a very pleasant day.

The fifth day was somewhat finer. We spent time practising self arrests and belaying in snow with snow stakes and axes moving together. Glacial travel (with the odd crevasse to fall down thrown in), and inevitably, pulley-systems to drag people out of crevasses.

We were meant to conclude the day by building an igloo and thus spend the night out. However, due to ambitious plans (ever seen a six-man igloo, with dining room?) and a hot sun, the final three or four blocks refused to stay put. Eventually we abandoned such a meaningless task and returned to the hut.

Day six was again bad and our enthusiasm for shitty, cold snow was on the wane, consequently we spent the day talking, going for the occasional walk, reading etc.

Day seven we had a last mess around self-arresting etc. etc. before walking out.

Overall our course (early December) was hampered by really shitty conditions. The last two days were planned for doing an actual climb but, other than about ten pitches of practice on easy slopes, we didn't get far.

The course gave me confidence to attempt easier climbs and above all introduced me to the Mt. Cook region. Might I suggest that Australian bushwalkers, skp-tourers and rockclimbers are pretty naive in the ways of the Southern Alps and that a course is essential for a safe visit to this area.

BLADE RIDGE

Reg Marron

The North-West face of Federation Peak soars 2,000 feet from the scrub choked valley. Access to the upper face is via the spectacular three-tiered formation of Blade Ridge. In early 1977 John Croker, Keith Egerton, and Reg Marron made the second complete ascent. Other climbers have traversed in to do the top face, but the whole route has only been climbed once before.

Our trip had been hastily planned. I became enthusiastic upon hearing that John had conned two Sydney bushies, and Keith, his brother into sherpa duty on the promise of beads, trinkets and sandals when we gained altitude. They were decidedly unenthusiastic when I presented each of them with a 30 lb. present, but the sight of a wickedly mashed (I only tap them in) 11 hex on the end of a blood-stained piece of perlon soon put an end to any hint of rebellion.

While this was taking place in the New Norfolk public toilets John returned after purchasing some stove fuel from the local natives. This later turned out not to be fuel at all causing the sherpas to have to race around and arrange fires for the master's meals.

Hitching in Tassie you meet them all ... "Go ta uni do ya? I've got a brother at uni" ... "What's he do?" ... "Oh he doesn't do nuffin. He's in a bottle ... he's got two heads" ... "Yes, well, this is where we get out thanks!"

Despite numerous maps and foolproof instructions we readily abandoned these and followed a M.W. Walking Club party going that way. A three day walk in: down the Arthur Plains from the Scotts Peak dam, a murderously steep ridge and the endless up, down, in, out and around tactics negotiating the Needles and Four Peaks, drained us of any enjoyment - tempers boiled - I dreamt of winning Tatts and Bell Helicopters.

It was only after we had settled into what must have been the best campsite on Thwaites Plateau, and downed a few freeze-dried steak dinners, that we turned our attention to thoughts of climbing.

I jump down from my vantage point no better off for my troubles and head off through thick scrub in the general direction, playing leader till someone finds a "better way", and I fall behind them till I find another even "better way". The 'track' steepens and we kick steps onward and upward - on belay - mate! Hauling up on tree branches we reach a rock shelf, a decaying sling in the mud identifies the route above. We send our sherpa packing with sandals and strict instructions to wait for the bwana to return the following day-

I lead up the first 200 feet - vertical gardening, a shovel would be more appropriate than my nutpeg toy. Keith leads, John follows, I bring up the pack, John leads and so it goes. The weather worsens and by late afternoon it's cold and wet and we're still below the first blade! I lead to a small shelf and we call a halt and bivvy. After dinner of smoked bacon and tube milk I tuck John and Keith into bed (First bivvy experience) and recount tales of tearing hammocks and falling sleeping bags. Sleep follows after some time.

Morning mist, cold rock, sore throats and 1700 feet to go; EPICS INC. is alive and living in South-West Tasmania. Starting is slow, we kick Keith out front to lead to the top of the first blade. An exciting traverse to the base of the second blade, the climbing improves. The second and third steps are soon behind us and above looms the North-West Face.

The sun is out but we climb in duvets to reduce the haul pack size. On Bus Stop ledge we look to the roof above and the left-hand traverse used by the first party to bypass it. Keith tried the roof direct; I am admiring the view when a sudden jerk tells me that up above it's harder than it looks. Keith looks down as he swings on the rope away from the rock and inspects the gash in his elbow. A few minutes later he succeeds in pushing around the bulge of the overhang and jams on up to a ledge. Blood leaks down on us as he climbs.

We follow, superb climbing, and lead through. We are climbing fast now and within half-an-hour we're on top. A V.W. size boulder teetering near the edge suddenly falls off as we lean against it. The noise and fumes fill the valley and brings the sherpas running with the master's boots. We head down and the next day head out as a storm moves in. The trip out is a grind as the sherpas deserted, but bearable when we reflect on the climbing done.

SUMMARY: March 1977. A report on the second ascent of Blade Ridge and North West Face of Federation Peak, Tasmania.
2,300 ft. New pitch added tackles the roof on the face direct. (Grade 18)

Climbers: Reg Marron, John Croker, Keith Egerton.

TRIPS PROGRAMME

- OCTOBER 28-29 BUSHWALKING
Cromwell's Nob - Moroka Gorge
Standard: Medium/Hard
Leader: Theo Dreyer. 347 1395
- NOVEMBER 2 - 5 CAVING
Bat Ridges or Narracoorte (S.A.)
Contact: Sue White 328 4154
- NOVEMBER 4 - 7 CANOEING
Indi River (Murray Gates)
Standard: Grades 4 - 5 continuous
Very experienced paddlers only
Leader: Jol Shelton. 419 8839
- BUSHWALKING
Snowy Bluff - Moroka Gorge
Leader: Ian Moore. 873 1182.
- NOVEMBER 11-12 CAVING
Tyers River (near Morwell)
Investigation of limestone - a lot of surface work
Leader: Dave Smith. 25 4074
- NOVEMBER 11-19 CANOEING
Snowy River
Leader: Andrew Wilson. 82 4665
- NOVEMBER 16 CANOEING
Surfing at Wilson's Promontory
Leader: Bill Cruickshank. 80 3719
- NOVEMBER 24-28 MUMC Hut Work Party/Bludge
Mt. Feathertop
Leader: Andrew Walker. 725 9765, 860 2241(W)
- DECEMBER 2 - 5 BUSHWALKING
Geehi - Mt. Kosciusko Tate West Ridge - Geehi Reservoir -
Watson's Crags - Lake Albina - Geehi
Standard: Medium/Hard.
Get fit for Tassie or N.Z.
Leader: Andrew Rothfield. 20 8500
- DECEMBER 2-10 CANOEING
Snowy River
Leader: Jol Shelton. 419 8839
- DECEMBER 2 - 3 CAVING
Buchan Dinner Weekend
Caving and boozing
Leader: Nick White. 328 4154

DECEMBER 3 - 8(?) BUSHWALKING

Buenba Hut, Mt. Gibbo - Mt. Pinnibar, Tom Groggin -
Hermit Ck, Surveyors Ck. - Mt. Tempest, Brash's Peak,
Wheeler's Ck. Hut - Buenba Hut
Standard: Hard
Leader: Jonathan Miller. 347 8062, (059) 754307

DECEMBER -
JANUARY

CAVING

Conference - Western Australia
Field trips to Nullabor and South-West Western Australia
Contact: Nick White. 328 4154
or: Jeanette McLaren. 387 1086

JANUARY 10-21

CANOEING

Australian Slalom Championships
Brady's Lake ("The Cruncher") Tasmania
Leader: Bill Cruickshank. 80 3719

Other activities: ORIENTEERING

Contact: Geoff Lawford,
19 Montalto Avenue,
Toorak. 24 2200

or: Tony Kerr,
5 Beleura Avenue,
Vermont. 874 2726.

CLIMBING:

Contact: Peter Martin
12 Westbank Terrace,
Richmond.
(Contact through Neil Currie
or Hugh Foxcroft,
6 Baxter Street,
TOORAK. 24 2084

Driving North-West away from Melbourne leaving the bright lights and thick air behind was like a release. Excitement induced by the rush home from college and the vague attempt at packing: boots first, harness, rope, nuts . . . Oh! some food and a sleeping bag.

The car speeds, tyres humming, anticipation; would it be fine? Ah . . . a lovely weekend on the Watchtower. But hot on the heels of excitement is fatigue. The road drones on, white lines flick rapidly past. I stare into the blackness, eyes heavy, mind blank.

Melton slows the hum from the wheels, the last of the plebs rush madly to fill the fridge for the weekend. Mum, dad, the kids rush around Target snapping up "red hot specials". The road keeps going.

Freeways are boring, two lanes, no oncoming traffic to send sparkling beams of light dancing across the windscreen, reflections from dust and remains of splattered insects.

Ballarat: a 'burger at Arthur's. He nods a welcome, squashes out the mince and it splatters as always. A drink but no straws. The green, hand-printed texta sign reads, "We charge it 5¢" (??). Food (?) brings on conversation. "What do you want to do?" Inevitable lines to while away the hours.

I try to rest before my turn at the wheel. I envy Kim asleep in the back. Ararat slips by, untidy from the remnants of late night shopping. Tony pulls over. I walk round, hoping to wake up in the chilly night air.

Back on the road the oncoming lights no longer dance: they dig and stab at my eyes, splitting the dark glaring and bright. The Grampians mass looms dark on the horizon to the left. The road narrows, twists and turns under that red brick bridge with the 'low clearance' sign and we're into and through Great Western. A turn-off right leads to Stawell. I'm glad it's dark: the scribbles of J. McCormack in 3 feet high letters daubed on the Sister Rocks can't be seen at night. Yes, I'm very pleased it's dark the moron.

A petrol stop breaks the monotony. Nauseous fumes linger in the air; forcing the brain to recall the city, buses, cars, people, college . . . work. The familiar road eclipses these tedious thoughts.

The traffic is thin now, occasional cars, the odd truck to relieve the boredom. "Rest If Weary" signs flash past, but the pines of the plantation draws us on.

Horsham at last, the Caltex is open. Trucks and cars are parked like moths round the only light in town. We join them. A cup of coffee; we sit and blink, unaccustomed to the bright light.

Kim has awoken, "the quickest trip I've ever had!" The bastard! He drives. I quickly nod off to awake once more amongst the pines; the smell of rock fresh in the air. The bag does down under "my" tree. I sleep; at Arapiles.

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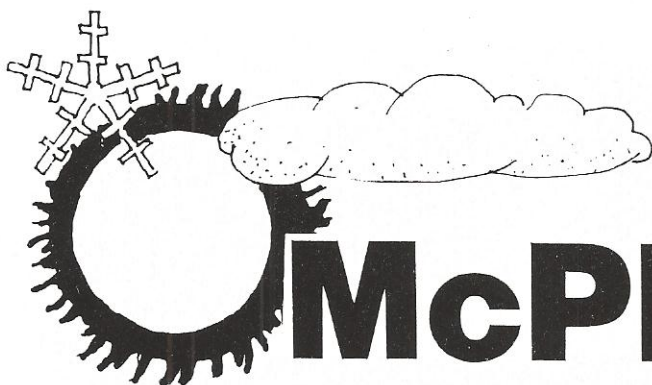
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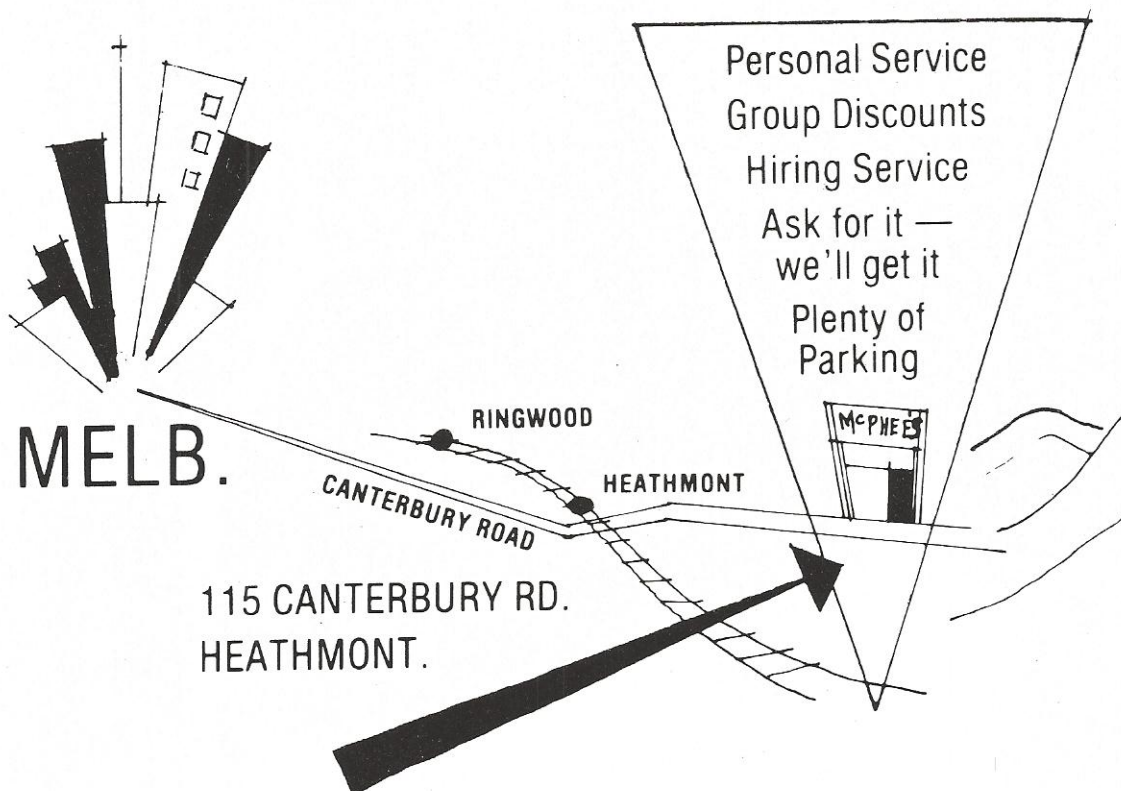
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KARAKORUM KRONIKLES

Hugh Foxcroft

The Challenge by Reinhold Messner.

In the Throne Room of the Mountain Gods by Galen Rowell.

K2, Chogolisa, Rahaposhi, Broad Peak, Masherbrum and Gasherbrum are names to quicken the pulse of any middle-aged armchair mountaineer. These great mountains are all to be found in the Karakorum: undoubtedly the most important of the trans-Himalayan ranges to the west of the Great Himalaya, but how many of us had forgotten it?

The Karakorum was the subject of some of the earliest European probes into the Himalayan massif: Godwin-Austen, Conway, Younghusband, Abruzzi and the Workmans. It continued to be a magnet for mountaineers for well over half a century. The region was frequently the target of expeditions varying in size from Shipton's planned upon the back of an envelope to mammoth efforts upon which nationalistic pride and aspirations bore heavily on the participants.

Political instability in Pakistan controlled Kashmir brought the close of the Karakorum to foreign visitors in the mid-sixties. By this time all the 8,000 metre peaks had been climbed and increasingly mobile and ambitious mountaineers perforce turned their attention elsewhere. Importantly mountaineering literature matured and proliferated during the ensuing period. Information was disseminated rapidly and widely, the exploits of hardmen appeared in paperback, and the successes of British, American and Japanese expeditions (in particular) fired popular imaginations. Furthermore, cult followed counter-culture as the East was re-discovered. Tourists poured into Nepal for Katmandu had become a new Mecca. The Nepalese economy and society were dramatically restructured by this influx. Meanwhile the Karakorum's great rivers of ice slumbered and its granite spires and snowy summits remained untrodden.

In 1974 Pakistan re-opened the Karakorum but it seemed to be insufficient notice for expeditions to form or change their plans. Whether this was due to the lack of time to reconvince sponsors of the worth of some new objective or to psychologically adjust to the new challenge, it was not for the want of an inspirational mountain environment. Certainly the task of obtaining up-to-date information about lesser known peaks in the Karakorum must have been daunting to smaller parties. On the other hand 1975 was the year. Both Rowell and Messner write about their experiences during that year.

In the 'Throne Room of the Mountain Gods' patently attempts to be the magorum opus on the Karakorum. The history of the exploration of the region and the attempts on K2 make enjoyable and interesting reading. They are well researched and provide welcome relief from those early chapters which include a "form guide" to team members and the imagined wanderings of a Balti herdsman. Regrettably the internal and external recriminations of the team continue. The book gains an all-pervasive air of gloom which makes for heavy, even distressing reading at times. From the porter strikes on the march in and the personality conflicts one soon gains the feeling that failure on K2 was somehow pre-ordained.

The resumes of other expeditions in the area (there were 19 in all) leave one hungry to know more, to see the mountains, the routes . . . Large numbers of black and white photographs dot the text but are often too small

to be of more than fleeting interest. The lack of topos further denies the reader the chance to share these adventures. Although the book is "big and beautiful" it has also suffered under the "coffee table" production syndrome. Whilst the colour photographs are eye-catching, disappointingly they lack anything other than initial impact. Numerous shots feature nocturnal views of camps and mountains and the unusual elements of the natural environment. The pictures of actual climbing and the route are poor and all too sparse; plainly the book suffers because the expedition made little progress on the northwest ridge.

Rowell seems at times to be on the verge of ridiculing the expeditions (like this one to K2) which rely upon the manpower, pyramid building formula to "success" in the mountains. After reading this book one is perplexed by the author's concluding decision to return again to K2 this year, indeed he has changed his mind since.

By way of contrast The Challenge is everything Rowell's is not. The reading is light and brisk having the feel of a novel. Messner opens by recounting his experiences as a member of a large scale expedition to the South Face of Lhotse. People quit the expedition, the route won't go, avalanches devastate base camp yet Messner avoids dwelling upon these matters. They are stated then laid to rest. The members of the expedition scatter somewhat demoralised. One senses that the author needs his spirit uplifting. When he meets his wife on the trail to Lukla and he also gets news of his request to climb Hidden Peak granted by the Pakistani authorities the reader is revitalized too.

Rapid preparations for the two man attempt on Hidden Peak (Gasherbrum-1, 8,000m.) without oxygen move one to the edge of one's seat as surely as any thriller. When first read Messner's remarks about Peter Habeler and himself seem somewhat pretentious and the plans over-ambitious. However as success slowly unfolds, the reader realizes that these are the product of frank analysis by one of the world's great modern mountaineers: why should they be anything than stunning to us?

The colour photographs do not have the visual majesty of Rowell's, but then that is intentional. The Challenge's offering is directed towards climbers. Indeed the whole appeal of this book is that it marks the beginning of the new wave of mountaineering in the Himalayas. Messner's book provides the reader with a unique opportunity to compare the large expedition and the alpine-style ascent - the new challenge.

Both these books are available from Walk and Bush.

In the Throne Room of the Mountain Gods \$22.95

The Challenge: Two Men Alone at 8,000m. \$11.00

See Neil Blundy at the clubrooms or telephone 347 7905.

ROCKCLIMBING

Peter Martin

Climbing of late has been left to the hardened few. Although trips have gone away almost every weekend they have been by people off-campus. Unfortunately this has meant that few have appeared in the Trips Book at the clubrooms. If you want to go climbing then you should get in touch with either Peter Martin or Hugh Foxcroft as there are sure to be trips from now on right through the summer vacation. Plans are afoot for several extended trips over the holidays so nail a few people down and get organized!

The only way to describe climbing over the past two months is "hard". Tony Marian is fast becoming one of Australia's best with second free ascents of The Elusive Butterfly (25) and Kor (23). He has also put up a short direct start (22) to Beelzebub on Mitre Rock. Tony has put considerable effort into his climbing and well deserves his current run of successes.

Still at Arapiles, but back in the realm of mere mortals, Nick Reeves seems to be leaving his reputation as an up-and-coming has-been in tatters with leads of Eurydice, Great White Hope (both 18) and Marmite (19). Peter Martin and Hugh Foxcroft have also completed a number of fine routes. Jex's leads include Wall of the Afternoon Sun, Puss'n Boots, Quisling and Morpydd (all 19) and Hugh has led Werewolf (19) and Stranger's Eliminate (20).

Keith Egerton has been climbing extremely well over the past few months. Gollum (20), Claw (18), Dramp and Thunder Crack (both 21) in one recent weekend at Mt. Arapiles are indicative of his current climbing standard. A thirty-footer from Gollum before completing the lead brought back memories of the days when Keith was a regular leader in the Fallen Angels award. Whilst writing of angels (?) Robyn Storer and Cathie Seccombe (with a friend from New Zealand) alternated leads on The Eighth (8) before wilting under the merciless sun. Rob later led Harlequin Cracks (8) in the Northern Group.

Only occasional appearances on the crags this year don't seem to have diminished Peter Newman's abilities. Displaying some cool he led Death Row (18) with protection from a wire which looked as though it had been there since the first ascent (and well worthy of a place in Iain Sedgman's museum: if anyone could get it out!). Peter also alternated leads on Gilt Edged (18) in the rain the following day. John Stone was around to second many hard leads by a group of Canberra climbers, his best efforts being on Tannin and Quisling (both 19). Jane Landman has also been most active, including seconds of Gollum (20), Howling Wolf (18) and Reunion (15).

Before they became exam-conscious students once more Nick Tapp and beginners Jenny Schlager and Craig Margetts completed Hammer (3), Sickle (8) and Camelot (10). With Richard Moore they also climbed Trapeze (10), D Minor (13) and Diapason (5). On a subsequent epic trip to North Jawbones Richard and Howard Cooper did the usual composite route of Route 1 - Traverse of the Gods - Speigal's Overhang (13) whilst Craig, Jenny and Nick climbed Northern Ramble (4).

Jex is holding an end-of-term party at his house (12 Westbank Terrace, Richmond) on Saturday, 28th October to which all climbers (and others) are invited: BYO!



Paddy Pallin

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