

Midnight
Ascent
22-24 July
1983

Photo
P. Whetton

MOUNTAINEER SEPTEMBER



Registered by Australia Post Publication No. VBH 0633

One of the favorite topics for discussion amongst last year's committee was the fact that the Club had. We had the occasional social night, but it seemed to be only the new members who would come into the clubrooms at lunchtime, however round and the trip books. These people who joined the club together would come in, five year, and go off together on their own trips.

THE MOUNTAINEER

Official Journal of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club

September 1983

Contents

Page

President's Report

2

MUMC Committee Positions

3

Spring Trip List

3

Steve Galland - An Appreciation

4

News

5

High Plains' Hazel

6

Canoeing The King

7

1983 Midnight Ascent

8

Beginners' Trip - Falls Creek - Mt. Nelse -

9

Edmonson's Hut

9

Wildtrek Winter Classic

10

Tasmanian Tit-bits

12

You'd Better Believe It

14

The Oxoman and Oxo

16

The Wombat and the Man

17

The Franklin Diary (Conclusion)

19

Editor's Note

Thank you to all those who submitted articles for the way. Keep those articles coming. Thank also to Katie Hadden, who did most of the typing. I can't recover her.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Janet Rice.

One of the favourite topics for discussion amongst last year's committee was the lack of togetherness that the Club had. We had the occasional social night, but it seemed to be only the few old stalwarts who bothered turning up. We could see the reasons all around us. Newcomers would come into the clubrooms at lunchtime, hover round the noticeboards and the trips books, then leave, not having spoken a word to anyone. Groups of two or three people who joined the club together would come in, hire gear, and go off together on their own trips.

That was the impetus for our decision to only allow the hire of gear for Club trips. These trips have to be placed in the book a week beforehand, in order to allow other people the opportunity to go as well.

The results were more than I had hoped for. The clubrooms were positively bustling with people each lunchtime! People who had only joined the club this year got to know a lot of other members well through going on trips with them.

The 24 hour walk had a great atmosphere to it - people were competing against their friends, not just strangers. The original number of people interested in the Midnight Ascent was unbelievable. We managed to cull the eighty-four people down to a comfortable twenty-three, and proceeded to have one of the best weekends I've ever had!

Steve Galland's death jolted us. The Club was stunned, and sorrowed. But as we pulled ourselves back to normality we found ourselves even closer than before. It's been good to see how those on the Alpine Instruction course especially have supported each other and got to know each other. We are at present running a St. John's First Aid Course, involving many who were on the weekend. This too, is a really friendly group of people.

I hold great hope for this atmosphere in the Club to continue. I know the slide competition and pie night next Wednesday will be a great success. Next year is the Club's 40th anniversary, and plans are just beginning for events to celebrate it. I think we're in great shape to celebrate in style.

Editor's Note

Thanks go to all those who submitted articles for the mag. Keep those articles coming. Thanks also to Katie Haddon, who did most of the typing (I can recommend her).

MUMC COMMITTEE POSITIONS

President	Janet Rice	347 3394 (h)
		663 1561 (w)
Vice President	Kim Adshead	589 1084 (h)
		341 6127 (w)
Secretary	James McIntosh	836 3014
Asst. Sec.	Bill Borrie	347 4461
Treasurer	Andrew Rothfield	347 8551
Editor	Greg Dutkowski	341 5237 (w)
		481 6811 (h)
Publications Officer	Peter Smillie	347 3394 (h)
Stores Officer	Tom Kapitany	549 8402 (w)
Convenors		
Bushwalking	Mark Durre	417 5805 (h)
		341 7171 (w)
Ski touring	Andrew Kinsella	29 4113
	Peter Robins	419 5306
Caving	Ian Household	789 4340
	Ian Rutherford	890 2521
Climbing	Adrian Bloch	29 1559
Canoeing	Ian McKenzie	435 8268
	Peter Freeman	314 2997 (h)
		341 5847 (w)
Conservation	John Chambers	

SPRING TRIP LIST

Date	Destination	Leader	Contact
Bushwalking			
24-25 Sept.	Grampians	R. Costigan	387 5136
		K. Adshead	
30 Sept-2 Oct	Mt. Howitt/Crosscut Saw	O. Morgan	3876735
15/16 Oct.	Hattah/Kulkyne	M. Durre	4175805
	(Bushwalk and Birdwatch)		
After Exams	Budawangs	M. Durre	4175805
(Six days)			
Rockclimbing			
24 Sept	You Yangs (Beginners)	A. Bloch	291559
December (?)	Blue Lake / Booroomba	G. Garnham	29 5339
Caving			
22-25 Sept.	Bats Ridge, Glenelg Riv.	M. Pierce	
8-9 Oct	Buchan - The Pyramids	Daryl Carr	
Oct (?) w/e	Buchan	I. Household	481 0154
		(Upon Recovery)	
15-16 Oct.	Mt. Eccles	Lloyd Mill	

Steve Galland - An Appreciation

" Book him Danno! "

This innocuous expression became the often repeated phrase of our ski trip last year from Harrietville to Bogong, and it was Steve who offered it. It was Steve who broke his ski on the second and spent the remainder of the trip perpetually taping it with elastoplast. It was Steve who wrenched his shoulder badly when he fell over on the icy snow, but never complained afterwards. Steve with his sparkling eyes, his keen enthusiasm, his strength.

And then there was Easter - but I have forgotten the abortive President's Daywalk that became an almost pointless ski trip to Baw Baw, with Steve standing on a patch of melting snow, trying to ski.

The Wildtrek Marathon, with Steve and I doing the cross-country running together, meeting his wonderful family, discovering that we had a lot in common.

And then it was the Alpine Instruction Course, and as Steve and I plugged up the steps to Mt. Feathertop's summit, we chatted about Tasmania; about cycling and bushwalking there during summer. But suddenly, before anyone knew it, Steve had slipped and could not stop, and the rest of us were struggling with the horror.

The waves of sadness wash over all of us. Steve, you were a fine friend, I miss you.

Andrew Rothfield

NEWS

* The social event of the year, that you've all been waiting for is finally happening! Our annual Slide Competition and Pie Night is to be held on Wednesday September 28 at 6pm in the sports Pavillion.

Prizes for slides will be awarded in four sections:

Landscape

Wildlife - Animal, Vegetable or Mineral

Action

Personality

Cost \$2, and a promise of better pies than last year.

* And just when you think that you've had enough of slides, here's something that will change your mind. Paul Sharp, survivor of the Simpson Desert, will show the slides of his solo journey, Sports Pavillion on Tuesday October 4 at 7.30pm.

* Just to remind you that the Clubrooms will be open every Tuesday night from 7.30 to 8.30 pm until the end of term. If you can't get to the Clubrooms at lunchtimes then this is an opportunity for you to meet your friends and find out what is happening in the Club.

* We've just received a copy of the draft version of the State Conservation Strategy. This is an important document, the final version of which will have far reaching implications for our state. As concerned Victorians, this is an opportunity for us to help shape conservation policy, one that we must not forego. Contact the Conservation Convenor, John Chambers, who will be coordinating the Club's submission.

* We've just recently updated our First Aid kits. It is Club policy that every Club trip must carry a First Aid kit. Five of these are available in the Clubrooms - just ask any committee member. They have to be signed out in the book provided and notification given of anything that is used, but their use is given free of charge. This kit contains bandages, dressings, some medicines and creams. With eighteen Club members at the moment doing a St. John's Ambulance First Aid course we should also soon have a body of people in the Club experienced in their use.

Also each Club member should have a personal First Aid kit which contains; triangular bandage, roll elasticised bandage, sunburn cream, Leukoplast, aspirin, elastoplast, and some antiseptic cream, such as Savlon.

* The M.U.M.C. celebrates its fourtieth anniversary next year. If anyone has any ideas on how we should celebrate this momentous occassion, please make your views known. Otherwise the committee will plough on regardless.

* Finally, don't let studying allow you to lose your perspective on things. Come with us and see Monty Python's "Meaning of Life" on Tuesday 27 September. Contact Rod Costigan (387-5136) for further details.

Our party set out from Falls Creek on what I suppose was the best snow I have ever skied on - about twenty cm. of really dry powder. On reaching the tree line we were hit by strong winds (all but three of the tows at Falls were closed due to wind). On very hard crust and in places sastrugi or soft powder we battled against the wind to Tawonga Huts. En route, we lost the road near Jim Saddle. Of the five of us, three had different ideas about where to go, and two didn't know.

Someone found a small dead animal. Mark said it might be a Burramus Possum, so he kept it. Later he identified it as a marsupial rat.

Some of us spent a comfortable but cold night in one of the huts while the rest stayed in tents. Everybody's boots froze overnight, but the next morning, after much suffering we were ski-ing again. On Mt. Niggerhead the view was good. (we even saw Mt. Macedon 250 km away). But that wind! I had forgotten to bring goggles and whenever I looked windward I got a face full of painful spindrift. Andy was leaving a trail of maps, plastic bags etc which the wind blew away.

We headed north over the Niggerheads, and descended to the Fainter Fire Track through fantastic powder snow. Mt. Fainter was climbed; one of its gullies provided much telemarking practice. Here Mark announced that an old knee injury had reappeared, the first injury for the trip.

The six kilometre ski back to Tawonga Huts was completed in about one hour. Good speed on fantastic snow.

The wind had stopped on Saturday afternoon, so we had perfect weather for the return. At Pretty Valley Pond, Andy announced that he also had hurt his knee. While Mark and Andy hobbled back to Falls, John, Chris and I detoured to Mt. McKay. On the summit we encountered a little ice, but on the descent the excitement started.

I fell on the way down and one ski came off (I had neglected to tie the skis on). The ski headed south, out of sight, down toward Pretty Valley Creek Gorge. An attempt to chase it on one ski proved to be futile.

Expecting an epic walk off the mountain I returned to our packs and packed my day-pack with food, water and crampons for the search for the ski. John and Chris meanwhile side-slipped down the gully intending only to go a short distance. Imagine their surprise when they found the ski lying at right angles to the fall line. They continued around it and approached it from below so as not to disturb it from its delicate position. When I joined them I noted that the slope was about one in two, one of the steepest slopes I have ever been near, it was even steeper below. The snow was so hard that walking was difficult, even though I had Vibram soles on my boots.

We returned to Falls, racing down hill skiers on a home trail. In Falls John fell and strained a shoulder muscle.

Many thanks to Andy for a great ski trip, though I don't think he was responsible for the excellent conditions.

Party: Andrew Kinsella (leader)
John Chambers
Mark Durre
Hazel the rabbit
Chris J. McArthur
James McIntosh

CANOEING THE KING

Julie Chaplin

You would have to be mad to get up before 6 a.m. on a cold, wet and windy Sunday morning to go canoeing on a far away river which had had a minor flood warning on it just a few days before. But that is exactly what we did.

After a short tour of Melbourne to drag some of the members of the party away from their breakfast, we managed to leave more or less on time - most unusual for canoeing trips. Our destination: the King River in the north of the Ranges.

Our leisurely Sunday paddle (!) started at a dam where the water surged down 100 metres then bouncing up to create a huge hump - rather like the Big Dipper. Only kidding! While it was suggested that some of our more experienced paddlers might like to give a demonstration on the wall, we actually launched the boats in the awe-inspiring spray below the dam.

Our party consisted of 6 experienced paddlers and three of "US". "US three" soon discovered how handy skill and experience could be. We pulled into a very strong eddy just before a rapid, but then realised we would have to cut sharply into the current to position ourselves for the rapid. No easy feat for us!

"No worries", yelled Bryan, "just point the nose of the boat into the current, paddle and LEAN DOWNSTREAM!" With no other options open to us, we decided to take his advice.

I went first. Nose into the current, lean downwater gurgle - oops, not quite far enough. As I rose to the surface and began a tug-of-war with the might of the river to stop the boat filling with water, a body flashed by yelling, "Don't worry, Greg fell out also". How comforting!

Aha! But even the mighty may fall. Keith tried to take a photo while paddling through a rather turbulent rapid (!!!) Little did he know that Peter was lurking behind. Peter saw his chance and pounced at the top of a substantial drop. Exit Keith.

As with all dastardly villians, Peter was to get his comeuppance. The ingredients: a strong eddy, a fast current, a solid rock, a confident paddler. Mix together and the result is Peter upside down with the rock standing guard to stress the severity of his punishment.

Several swims later, we reached the end. A few of the really gun paddlers (those who had remained dry and warm) immediately set off for a second run, leaving "US three" and our guardians shivering in our booties.

Our exciting day was adequately copped off with a magnificent view of the King Valley and a delightful drive through gently falling snow and sunshine (which brought out the children in several people).

It seemed like a loony idea from the start. Trotting up Victoria's second-highest mountain, - its very name implying bad weather - in the pitch bloody dark, the middle of winter, snow on the ground, freezing weather and just about the steepest way up. Added to that, carrying a dinner suit and copious quantities of food (and booze). It seemed like your caring friends should call in the men in white coats to take you away.

They were right - it was insane, but by gees it was fun!

Having left the Trout farm at about midnight, the first-timers were surprised at how steep the north-west spur was, especially carrying half-a-dozen bottles of wine. Plugging steps in metre deep snow at 4 o'clock in the morning is no joke either - especially when you haven't the faintest idea how far it is to the M.U.M.C. hut (as one couple didn't, who set up camp just 200 metres below the hut-to be passed by a group singing "Good King Wenceslas", particularly appropriate at that moment). All was made up for by the vision of sunrise over the edge of Feathertop.

There is something incomparably luxurious and hedonistic about lying in the sun on the snow drinking port slurpies and brushing up your suntan while looking over one of the best mountain views around - uncomparably graceful Feathertop, Mt. Bogong squatting massive and sulking in the distance, the Fainters, and Buffalo, with its sheer rock walls basking in the sunlight.

As darkness descended, everyone put on evening wear, don't you know, and took photos of the full moon over the mountains. Then an orgy (of feasting) commenced with an amazing variety of foods being prepared eg. poulet en casserole a la Feathertop (chicken in a billy to you non-cogniscenti) all washed with an equally amazing variety of drinks (Bacardi with the meat? Now I ask you!)

During the 2 days, which were marked by the most stunning Alpine weather I have ever seen, who could ask for more than it being hot, sunny and not a cloud in the sky, dawn to dusk?, everyone climbed to the summit and took photos. Peter Campbell showed off his ski-ing prowess with dramatic results! While linking telemarks in a gully I would have hesitated to downhill ski on, he lost a ski and had to chase it for 200 metres, being very lucky not to lose it altogether!

The descent off the N-W spur on Sunday afternoon was made in speedy knee-troubling time, with piles of rubbish strapped on our backs. I couldn't walk for 2 days afterwards.

I'm doing it again next year - that's for sure!

FALLS CREEK - MT. NELSE - EDMONDSON'S HUT.

16-17 July.

A party of 9 excited people left for Falls at around 7.30 p.m. on a Friday. All went well, until we stopped at "Seven Greeks" takeaway for dinner: a decision could not be made on which Pascal packet should be bought. Finally, after much screaming by Natalie and Kim especially, Fantails, Milk Shakes and Country Mints were bought, much to the delight of Owen.

Late that night we found our favourite "No Camping" site, and spent a night on the cold S.E.C. concrete. After kicking Rod awake, (our fearless leader), we loaded up and left. Blue skies and lots of people greeted us at the top. If there's two things which should never be put together, it's beginners and skis. We made that fatal mistake.

All hell broke loose. By the end of the trip, we had 3 broken stocks, 1 broken ski, 3 people stayed at Edmondson's Hut on Saturday Night, 6 at Mountain View: numerous snow fights, numerous snowmen and women, a very confused leader, and a lot more excitement to boot.

Members of the trip.

- ROD COSTIGAN: "I think I will lead you to the top of that crest over there. It's important for you all to find out what real fear feels like".
- KIM ADSHEAD: "How did YOU know I lived in Beaumaris?"
- OWEN MORGAN: A real "connoisewer" of Country Mints.
- LYNNE PADDLE: A real champion ... Winter Olympics for sure!
- ROBERT TAYLOR: Very proud of his miniature snowmen, but they kept running away
- HELEN WHITE: "Someone has to be last in every group".
- NATALIE SVARSOVSKOVITCH: her thoughts wandered afar ..to Owen and Kim?
- TIM DYALL: Who could forget Tim?
- STUART PRICE: Definitely the only sane person in the group, except perhaps for an extraordinary attraction for trees.

Altogether a fantastic trip, not to be forgotten by the M.U.M.C. treasury. Lots of praise and thanks goes to Rod for all his work ... and not forgetting Tim, who added that extra bit of spice to the trip.

REPORT: WILDTREK WINTER CLASSIC

A PLEASANT WEEKEND IN THE BUSH

Steve Galland

It all started that day when I picked up an entry form one day in a bushwalking shop. It sounded like fun. A bit of ski-ing, a bit of running, a bit of cycling and a bit of canoeing, all in a beautiful bush setting. The outdoor enthusiast's dream you might say. It was the "Wildtrek Winter Classic", a combination teams race for two or six people. The two man, or marathon team, was for the extremely fit. A race rule stated that you had to be medically fit. Mental fitness, though, wasn't one of the requirements. Late on Friday night was the first time I knew we would have a complete team. Two had pulled out a few days before. On Friday afternoon we still only had five in the team. (We ended up kidnapping a cyclist from the Squash Courts).

Up before dawn and away to the start at the Snow line. The ski-ing section was over fairly flat ground, although the snow was thin in places, rocks and logs protruded. Two and a half hours later Peter and Ian were back; numbers were exchanged with the runners. The race continued.

The run began gently, following the road a little way. Andrew and I set a comfortable pace. By the turn off, we had warmed up enough not to feel the cold. Snow still covered our path.

Gradually the terrain changed from flat snow plains to rocky slopes in open forest; real ankle twisting type country. We slowed down. There was no point in pushing too hard we rationalized. An injury here or anywhere for that matter would mean the end for the whole team. Off the rocky slopes and along a cattle pad following a stream to the Cobungra. The running here was enjoyable, until the river. Ice in the rock pools. Yes, it was cold water, but a steep climb soon removed the chill from our feet.

Following the ridge track, we could begin to run again after walking the "grunt". We kept a steady pace. Snow covered the track until the other side of Mt. Battery, where the surface turned to slippery mud instead of slippery ice and snow. The drop down to the Bundara was over open farm land with excellent views of the surrounding hills. The cyclists awaited eagerly.

The route followed a gravel road out to the Omeo Highway. Cattle grids were a hazard for some but not us. One had to stop and walk across them they were that rough. Vadim and Damien made good time along the windy, gravel road. Canoes were taken ahead by the support vehicle. We passed many cyclists with breakdowns and were relieved to see our team at the finish with no troubles. The route had turned off the highway and down the "ramp". An official stood at the corner pointing the way. He should have been holding a trident and wearing horns. The ramp was steep and rough, hell on the suspensionless bikes. The steeply eroded track provided plenty of thrills and spills. Unscathed, the riders made a fast run down the last hills on sealed straight road.

From the bridge, the sight of the orange support vehicle heralded the arrival of the bikes. The canoeists were ready, having rested from the mornings ski-ing. The Mitta Mitta was wide and slow, down river boats had the advantage. Others, like us, paddled kayaks, expecting some white water. As we drove to the finish we cheered Peter and Ian on from several vantage points.

Everybody was showing good team spirit. This was a race

to be in, rather than a race to win. The river was slow, but tomorrow's sections promised some surprises with rapids like pinball machines and crackjack.

Being twelfth after day one, we retired to the "Bundara", a comfortable group of cabins nestling next to the scenic Bundara River. We felt a bit short changed having showers and hot water service there but no water supply. You can't have everything, I suppose.

The running started first in the crisp morning air with an 8 km tramp over rough and hilly country, with several river crossings. It had been a clear night and another perfect day ensued. Frost made things crunch under foot. It was bitterly cold in the still morning air. The river crossings were invigorating, to say the least. It was a while before I could feel my feet again. With one crossing after another, they didn't get much of a chance to thaw out. The orange route markers were elusive. We clambered up and down rocks, across steep gullies, carefully avoiding the fallen timber. It was a horrible run, nowhere could we stretch out.

The cycling began with a steep descent from the quarry to the main road. Several diversions were made through rough tracks, bush and a swamp on the way to Big River Bridge. The river was faster than yesterday, with good vantage points for the spectators. Peter swam once, but we still held our place. Kayaks were an advantage, being more manoeuvrable than down river boats. One boat broke in two after a bad knock. Peter and Ian crossed the finish with smiling faces and numb fingers.

We finished 11th. The team was pleased. It was an enjoyable event.

Highlights: Peter dancing on tables when turning out the gas lights in the cabin.
Ian sliding down the bank in his canoe
Some idiot diving into the Mitta for the cameras.
Crossing the old bridge on frosty logs to avoid the blackberries.
Andrew's recitation of the twelve cranial nerves.
Vadim tiptoeing through the ice encrusted waters of the swamp with his bike on his back.
Damien's heroic effort after a bad fall from his bike on the Big River Bridge 50 m from the finish.

A great weekend, with plenty of team spirit. Those in the support crew were well entertained.

TEAM 32

1. Damien Twining
2. Vadim Gershon
3. Ian Edgerton
4. Peter Smillie
5. Andrew Rothfield
6. Steve Galland (team manager and writer)

Other teams of interest competing was the McCutchen team (No 25) taking out first place and Andrew Kellies team (No 29) coming in in fifth.

TASMANIAN TIT-BITS.

Jonathan Miller

Blustery and wet spring weather has replaced a surprisingly fine, if freezing, Hobart winter. I can look back with frustration on what has apparently been a typical Tasmanian ski-ing season, falls being poor and sporadic. "Permanent" bases do not form. Yet there are sublime moments to be enjoyed in the winter wilderness.

Last weekend was such an occasion. From Cynthia Bay we walked up to Mt. Rufus along the well marked route (N.B. the H.W.C hut is not visible from the track and is not signposted). We reached the summit just as leaden-bellied clouds moved in for 10 hours solid snowfall. We spent the afternoon and night in the miniscule Gingerbread Hut (259353 on Nive Natmap).

A 10-20 centimetre blanket of snow welcomed the morning. The Pandanis looked resplendent in their white mantle, while shorter shrubs and rocks disappeared beneath the flattened landscape. Progress was in fact made easier over the scrub. We left the track at the Rufus - Hugel saddle and headed up over boulders of ever-increasing size. Just before the summit the ridge narrowed and became more exposed. It is a classic Tasmanian dolerate ridge walk: huge boulders lying in obstructive chaos beneath forbidding vertical pillars. Movement was slow and the route intimidating on one occasion. However the magic of the conditions more than compensated.

From the summit were superb views of the fresh falls on all surrounding peaks. Immediately to the west lay the headwaters of the blessed Franklin. The ridge relented soon after to a flat and easy plateau; however from the saddle to the summit it had taken 2½ hours to traverse 1½ kilometres. Two large unmapped lakes preceded the superbly enticing crag of Little Hugel, before the bash to Cynthia Bay.

The walk could be done on a long fine summer day. However there are many other superb walks in Upper Franklin - Lake St. Clair region. The Cheyne range with spectacular Mt. Gell is a particularly popular walk through open country either as a 3-4 day summer walk or for extended autumn "Fagus" hunting trips. The Cheyne Range can be approached via the Rufus canal and the Franklin Lakes (Dixon and Undine), celebrated by Dombrovskis. Alternatively, day walks from Lake Petrarch, including to Mt. Olympus, could be considered.

* * * * *

Unpredictable weather can leave the holidaying oxoperson stranded in Hobart. Don't despair, there are many worthwhile day walks on Mt. Wellington. These include one from the Pinnacle down to Ferntree (and then buses to the city).

Why not indulge in such local quirks as a 9 a.m. rendezvous at the Mt. Wellington summit after an early morning climb? Better still, camping at night on the summit and catching the sunrise is a prerequisite for entry to the local green clique. After that I would strongly recommend the day walk to Collins Bonnet. It is an easy 5-6 hour walk along the plateau to extensive views of the Snowy Range, Mt. Field, Reed's Peak and Wyld's Crag. Guns may also tackle the more distant Trestle Mountain and Collins Cap in the same day. Refer Derwent Tasmapi, or if you must, Tyrone Thomas' "100 Walks".

* * * * *

Now Hartz Mountains have suffered fire damage a better short walk to the brink of the Southern mountains is up Adamsons Peak. This walk, too, can be done in 6-7 hours. There is a poxy little hut at "872" on Tasmapi Huon. A new signposted road leaves Adamsons - Creelton Road at roughly 015927, and is left at 019913.

* * * * *

Social notes: Steve Bennett and Louise Gilfedder have just returned from an extended tour of Europe. They were riding around Iceland on July 1st. Richard Thwaites is in Hobart temporarily preparing for a stint in Antarctica. Sam Rando has just landed himself the plum job of planning fire protection for the Franklin this summer. On the debit side, a former M.U.M.C. president is working with the Forestry Commission for 6 months.

* * * * *

Finally, calendar releases approach. Jim England's Flight Wilderness Calendar is to be published despite production problems. The "Mercury" obviously decided there is a buck in wilderness and not 2 weeks after the most vitriolic and slanderous post-High Court editorials announced their own "Wilderness Calendar". Titled "Wilderness in White" it had "World Heritage" proudly emblazoned on the cover. It had 13 poorly produced and uninspiring plates taken on flights around Mt. Anne and the Arthur ranges. The only colours that came out were blue, yellow and white, and the calendar sold for an outrageous \$9.95. The mercenary opportunism of the venture was only overshadowed by its blatant hypocrisy. On one page the editorial was vehemently arguing the need for roads riddling the south-west to compensate for the resources "lock-up". 3 pages further on was a nauseating account of the courage of the pilot and photographer and statements of the beauty and value of the wilderness. I still await undistracted the Dombrovskis calendar.

* * * * *

My first M.U.M.C. trip was an Easter walk over Snowy Bluff, Mt. Dawson and home via Moroka Gorge. That trip had a shockingly typical M.U.M.C., ending when the van got to Burgoine's Gap before our group was missed, then returned to McFarlane's Saddle and picked us up - all but one, who was left behind, again, standing all alone in the dark with only the clothes he was wearing.

But something else happened on that trip which gave me my first taste of the ragged and unpredictable, even fascinating character of this club.

On the summit of Snowy Bluff, two older members of the group recalled a trip they had taken to Mt. Cobbler some years earlier. They had already forgotten a lot, but by prodding each other's memory they put together an unusual recollection culminating in combined derision of one person, whom I shall call "Mike".

Some-one else in our group, "Cath" remembered another trip which Mike had led. It had been an Easter walk through the Caledonia River valley. As Cath recalled, Mike had listened constantly to his "trannie" trying to catch and savour the latest news reports as the Viet Cong finally reached Saigon. She had recently been told that he had since found his way into a West German gaol.

About a year later, I asked a graduate member of the club whether he had ever heard of this fellow Mike. I repeated all that I had heard wondering how much he would put down to exaggeration. Astonishingly he confirmed it all and added that he had led the Cobbler trip.

In relating again the story of that long weekend at Cobbler, he painted a bit of the character of this man Mike.

"I had to cancel a trip to Frenchman's Cap once because he wanted to come along".

But he could not remember who else had been there.

Over the next two or three years, I repeated the story several times and with incredible luck identified nearly every other member of the group. But now my own memory of who told me what is getting a bit muddled. So the time has come to put down all that I know. I'd hate this story to be lost.

"Pete" spent his first M.U.M.C. trip sharing a tent with Mike. He remembered that Friday night was dreadfully cold and that his sleeping bag had been barely adequate. After he had pitched a tent under Mike's silent scrutiny, Pete clambered into his sleeping bag. Then Mike crawled in beside him and lay down to spend the night wrapped up in a great coat. Apparently the theory was that this would save the weight of a sleeping bag in Mike's pack. Pete was kept awake for much of the night by Mike's groaning and the sound of chattering teeth.

It seems that Mike would normally do everything at his own pace.

"John", the leader, and others have said that Mike had an annoying habit of sitting down on a log to smoke his pipe first thing in the morning. This would go on while everyone else had breakfast. After that he would stay one step behind - you all know this story - so that the others would have to sit around and watch him pack. John, being a very self-disciplined and well organised person, obviously found this intensely annoying.

John also had little time for Mike's ideas: "He used to talk endlessly and every second word was a Socialist one".

It was also widely observed that Mike often carried unusual equipment. Pete thought that despite leaving out his sleeping bag, Mike had carried a spare stove. This is quite likely as John told me that he was "the sort of person who would carry three stoves in case the first two wouldn't work".

This brings us to the incident that everyone remembers.

On Saturday night the party camped at Cobbler Lake. Then on the following morning, they all wandered down to the Dandongadale Falls a few hundred yards away. Whether the air was clear at that stage I am not sure, but by the time they returned to their tents a very thick mist hung over the plateau.

Mike fell behind the others with the only female member of the group. It seems that they did not immediately locate the tents in the fog. As this poor woman stood alone with Mike in the swirling mist on the shores of Cobbler Lake and wondered whether to turn left or right to find the camp, she saw Mike fumble in his pockets. Then, without warning, he drew a pistol.

Now word has it that this lady was more than a little taken aback. In fact some have said that one can't really be too cautious with a person who takes a pistol to visit a waterfall.

It wasn't long before the first shot was fired and I believe that nothing had passed in the intervening stunned silence that might have calmed anybody's nerves. In which direction the pistol was aimed no-one can tell me. Voices rose in alarm from the tents which were in fact only a few yards away. Exactly what happened in the next few minutes nobody seems to know.

Whether a second shot was fired, I can't say.

Whether the heroine stayed on her feet, I don't know.

Who of the others was first on the scene, I have never been told.

I'm afraid the story ends here in anticlimax. The weapon turned out to be just a starter's gun bought along for just such an emergency. And to give credit where it is due, the gun had proved most effective in re-uniting the party.

Now before you flood the offices of the Mountaineer with letters pointing out that a starter's gun is not exactly the dead

spit of any Smith and Wesson, I should remind you that I am only doing my best to pass on as accurately as possible what other people have told me.

Author's note: This is a true story but all names have been changed to protect the guilty.

THE OXOMAN AND OXO!

We all know of that little fellow who pops up everywhere the club goes. He's on all our club trips, all our club correspondence and has been sighted as far afield as Germany and Canada. But what of his origins - and why do M.U.M.C. members tend to form crowds and shout "Oxo" at passersby?

With the publication of the first edition of 'Equipment for Bushwalking and Mountaineering' in 1946 (The Third edition (1982) is available from the clubroom for \$6.00) there was discussion concerning a suitable design for the cover. The design of a mountaineer in traditional European climbing costume - was met with general approval and adopted not only for 'Equipment for Bushwalking and Mountaineering' but as the club's symbol. Since then the little chap has appeared in log books, on cloth pack badges and in mountaineering magazines all around the world.

Around the same time, the club developed a club call - "Oxo". Contrary to popular belief it was not associated with beef cubes, although its exact origins are unknown. Early recollections have attributed it to the use of "ox" as a retort or a slang word. The two terms "Ox" and "Oxo" were used synonymously for many years, for example, as greetings on letters between club members. The call sign is probably still the most famous of any club in Australia.

Our club mascot, however, did not attract the term "Oxo Man" until the 1960's. But you can be sure he'll be with us for a long time yet.

OXO!

(More information on the club's histories and traditions can be found in David Hogg's

"A History of the Melbourne University
Mountaineering Club 1944-1972")

Two ill-matched figures could be seen together on the very edge of a snow plain where the sandstone outcropped above a precipitous hillside and a heavily timbered valley. The larger was obviously seated, legs resting out in front; the other, a wombat, was also at rest, holding with comfortable ease the odd posture that a wombat does when, were he a dog or a person, he would sit. They faced and thus by implication gazed upon - though no casual observer, had there been any, could have been sure - a deep openness, bounded far beneath by the rumpled, puckered, dimpled upper surface of the forest, and far beyond by green ridges progressively shaded by the bluish summer haze. This spaciousness, it appeared, might have overwhelmed these two beings, for they hardly spoke and never moved except for the incidental fidget, the rub of the nose, and so on. But the truth; having as it does, or is said to have, a propensity for coming out, the truth was that, had anyone been there to know it, is that neither was overwhelmed, nor probably even impressed, as most would have been. For such experiences are common in the mountains and these two fellows were, after all, creatures of the bush; this was their normal state.

Then a single engine Cessna crept out of the haze and buzzed high above, scarcely louder than a blowfly but, by the persistence of its drone, caught the wombat's attention. "The wombat hesistantly asked, "Oxoman, that's an aeroplane, isn't it?"

"Yes indeed, Wombat".

There was a long pause which might have been taken to indicate that that line of thought had passed. (That is not to say that it would necessarily be replaced by any other).

Speaking again with a voice that, like any solid sound in that summer air, suppressed the monotonous hum of insect, grass, stillness and heat, the wombat asked another question - still, as it turned out, on the same subject:

"Oxoman, what about spy-flies in Transmania?"

"Spy-flights you mean?"

"Yes",

"A curious thing, Wombat!"

"Yes ..."

The wombat's eyes showed some expression (in the barely perceptible way that a wombat's eyes can be seen to do at its moments of most extreme expressiveness) in a way that would have suggested that his brow was creased. But of course, a wombat's brow, if he has one at all, is covered in fur which hides any creases that may form at times of great vexation, or at any other time, beneath it.

"Why do they make Transmaniacs so mad, Oxoman?"

"Ah!" said the 'Man, almost sharply confirming, should the wombat have doubted, that the 'Man was conscious. (Whether the 'Man displayed what would be regarded in human terms as total consciousness is open to speculation. However, what is indisputable is that, in wombat terms, he was intensely alert - or at least, alert).

"But are they really mad, Wombat?" he said knowingly.

"Yes, Oxoman".

"Oh"

They sat a little longer, the Cessna having long departed from their world, feeling alone together like the only intelligent life on Earth.

"Well ..." said the 'Man with apparent world-weariness, "who can possibly say, Wombat!?"

"Coffin Gray," replied the wombat.

"Eh?"

"Mr. Gray, he's their leader".

"Like the head Sherpa I suppose"

"He says they're mad".

"Well you see, Wombat, when a country has got something to hide, you can't just go and look at it".

"Why?"

"Because they get mad, Wombat. It's all just a matter of Observing International Comedy".

Now the 'Man was talking about things the wombat didn't understand. The wombat was stumped but glad that he had started all this talk. It just went to show that the Oxoman knew almost everything - and that always made the wombat feel good.

"Politics, Wombat, that's what it's all about. Just politics".

"Gee," thought the wombat.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR.....

.....A CAREER,

.....POST-DEGREE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE,

.....OR A MID-COURSE BREAK ?

Then why not consider working for Australia's most successful environmental agency, The Wilderness Society?

Conditions : The remuneration package includes a base salary of \$ 73 per week; selected positions pay to \$ 140 per week. Free health cover. Tenure; negotiable. Working hours; extremely flexible. Superannuation; unavailable.

Each employee has the opportunity to concieve, initiate, and carry out projects in such diverse fields as research, publications, lobbying, and administration. Cheap housing is available within minutes' walk from the well appointed office, with its unique work atmosphere. Year round access to Tasmania's superb wilderness areas can be your's. There are opportunities to mix with those at the forefront of social change. ASIO file is not a pre-requisite.

For further details write to

Wilderness Society Personnel Officer,
c/- 20 Poets Road,
WEST HOBART 7000

or call at 130 Davey St. Hobart.

The Franklin Diary (Conclusion)

As promised in the last issue we now bring you the conclusion of our tale of four young lads who ventured down the Franklin River. The diarist is still Trevor Dess.

Tuesday 14 December

Woke in the morning after a surprisingly good night's sleep - we had not used out sleeping bags for fear of rain - but it had not rained - the cramped conditions had kept us warm - for my part the Footy Jumper, skivvy, singlet, swandry jacket and Japara had done their part, Chris got up late as usual - the group of 5 oldies passed and then the 12 Angel Rainers. The Angel Rainers helped us to do the low portage at the Cauldron - 100 yards past our campsite.

The weather was fantastic again Sunshine - a gentle Breeze. We passed - 5 elders, 12 Angel Rainers, 8 on the expedition, 4 other blokes 6 in another group You can't afford to stop and look at things its is like peak hour looking for campsites. Took some photos at McCallis Crossing swing Bridge. I was dumped 3 times just before and after Cannymedes pool. All in all an enjoyable Days paddling and a great days passing (overtaking)

Wednesday 16 December

Up late and the weather was not promising - past by three groups before we left. Scenery was good again but after the First half of the day the Rapids became less and less - until the water was wide and flat often with a head wind and drizzle making the going hard. Saw a large white and grey eagle - very impressive. Camped past the hut - had a you beaut lilo drying fire. Today we had a Tick Inspection Greg found one in a Vital Position. Ian had one in his ear.

Sunday 12 December

Up at 5 past 6 am - Caught the Mist On The River. Past by two Groups we saw yesterday before we left. On the River we dragged on a few logs and rocks - explored up a little creek. Saw a beautiful waterfall - buzzed by the Chopper again. Past 3 groups we have seen before - the big Rush to the Great Ravine - we got there - The expedition was portaging the Churn so were the 13 Angel Rainers - so many people - spoil the trip a bit - everyone racing everyone else to get the portaging done so they can get to a good camp-site. We camped about 300 yards from the churn (downstream) on the Right - I stood by the river and couldn't believe as I looked high up at the rocky ridges why people have to dominate everything!

Monday 13 December

Set off early to portage the Cascades, (paddling Down inception reach) After doing the lower portage we set off to Thunderush in rain which the ominous sky had been suggesting. Greg holed his raft so we stopped and patched it. Got the Thunderush and as groups were already portaging we deflated the rafts and had lunch. Setting off to do the portage we were in high spirits. But it soon became clear that this was not going to be much fun. Incredibly steep, slippery, rocky vertical walls - Tiring - up and Down - it seemed to go on forever - by half way Chris was a gibbering idiot. By the time we finished we were Bugged, and it was getting late. We set off down to Sanctum to the campsite just above the Cauldron - big surprise (?) - people there. So we desperately searched for a campsite we found one with enough room for two people to sleep so we took it - The sky looked forbidding we set up fly and cooked tea after bringing everything up. There was alot of cursing going on as the campsite was minute. All of us crawled under the fly and went to bed amongst laughter at the sardine like conditions.

Thursday 16 December

It was 8.00 am when we were awakened by a noise not of that of the Bush - the Chopper had spotted our rafts and was scouring the ground for our campsite hidden in the dense forest. Circling at tree height it still didn't see us so it flew at just above River level - to get a good look through the trees as we were camped on a rise. Ian, Chris and I got out of the tent and Rushed to Camera positions But it flew off up the River. On its return we were waiting and took some excellent shots. It drizzled for most of the Day. Saw some eagles. Undertook the Double Falls and Big Fall. Chris and I made it through the Big Fall - Greg Portaged. Ian came a cropper. In the Big Stopper. At night we camouflaged our Rafts. It rained But under the Nothofagus trees we Barely got wet at all.

Heard later that someone had drowned at big Fall in 1981.

Friday 17 December

Away to a late start again. Drizzle intermitted with Blue sky and Sunshine. The chopper did not come over this morning. Saw a Platypus and more eagles. Saw a HEC Blasting sign just near Pyramid Island. Stopped at Pyramid Island for a shot up and Down the Gordon and up the Franklin and some group pictures. A chopper was flying about and a plane and to Motor Boats went past - Cops in one and HEC in the other. Going down the Gordon was Damn hard work - with the Head wind and choppy seas. We stopped early afternoon. After changing and lighting a fire the police Boat came in and apologised for having to move us we were on HEC land. So we got dressed and paddled further Down the Gordon to just before Butler Island on the left Bank. We shared the spot with The Australian Himalayan Expedition Group. Had a good talk and went to bed. (went past the Dam site - but there was no activity - HEC on holidays).

Saturday 18 December

Off to a slow start. left at 11.30 to catch the Denison Star at 12.00 - the wind was howling - I had taken the lilo out of the bottom of the raft and it was Bloody hard going eventually made it to the protesters' outpost - we packed our gear onto their Dingies and they took us to the Denison Star. 32 of us Boarded. I was amazed at how bored the people on the Denison Star were. Greg and I stayed at the Caravan Park, Ian and Chris stayed at the Pub. Rang Home. Heard there had been trouble at the Wilderness shop - some Queenstown Yobs had Beat up some woman about 50 yrs old.

Sunday 19 December

Deregistered at the Police Station over the Road from the Caravan Park. Walked to the King River - didn't make it - foreshore was filthy - litter - water - two girls gave us a lift back to town centre. They were from Queenstown. Chris and Ian Had take away - Greg and I cooked our own.

Monday 20 December

Chris had spewed overnight - touch of the old food Poisoning. Caught the Bus from Strahan to Queenstown some worker at the Bus Depot in Queenstown made a quip to his mate about rafting the Franklin. The Bus from Queenstown to Burnie took us through Zeehan and Roseberry. Raining all the way from Strahan till past Roseberry. Stopped at some pub with anti-greeny and pro-Dams stickers. In Burnie fixed up plane tickets - Dropped in to say Hello to the Kneebone's - they weren't home left a hello with their eldest son. Sunny hot windy in Burnie. Went to the airport for the 5.00 pm flight (got there at 2.30 pm). Chris still ill.

Postage Paid
Melbourne
Vic. Aust.
3025

THE MOUNTAIN
Registered by Australia Post
Publication number 989

It is desirable to return to:
MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINING CLUB
c/o Sports Union
University of Melbourne
PARKVILLE VIC 3025

THE MOUNTAINEER

Registered by Australia Post
Publication number VEH 0633

If undeliverable return to :

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
c/- Sports Union
University of Melbourne
PARKVILLE Vic 3052

Postage Paid Melbourne University Vic.Aust. 3052
--