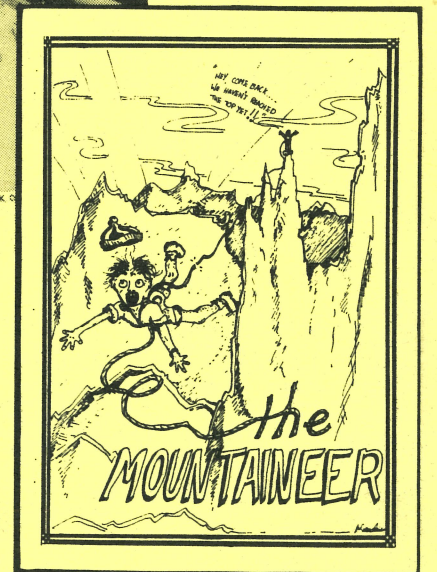


# THE MOUNTAINEER

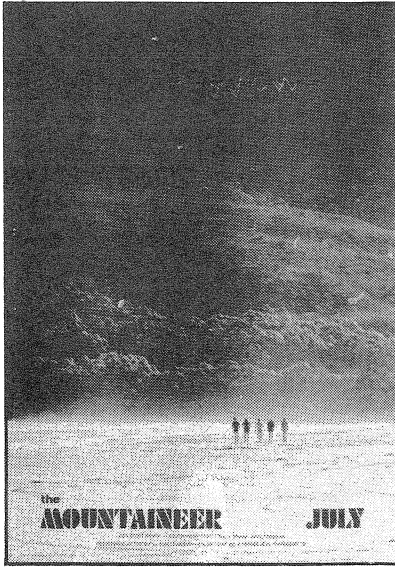
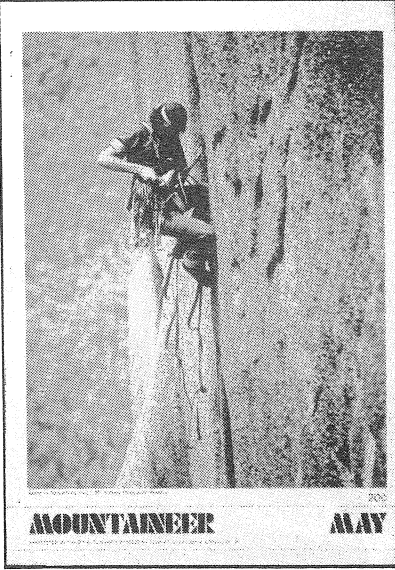
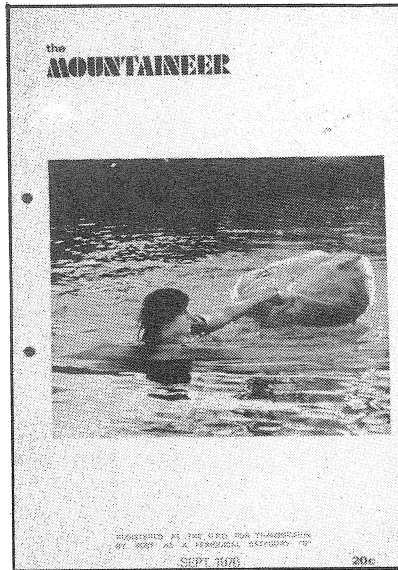
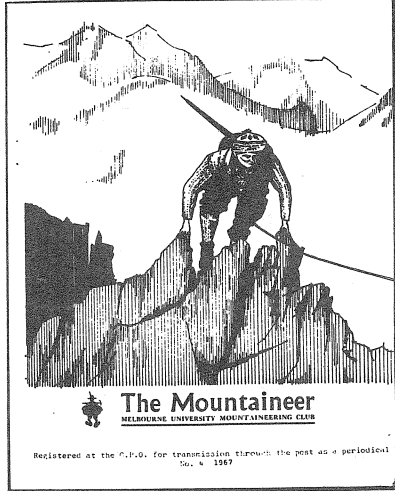
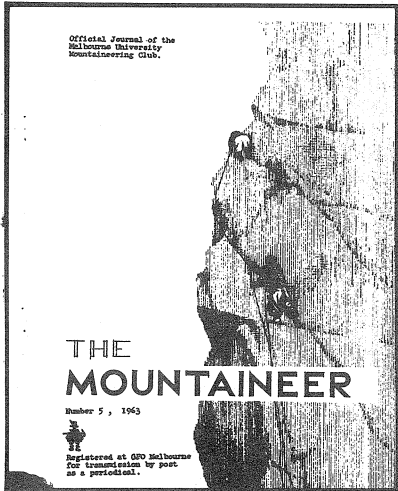
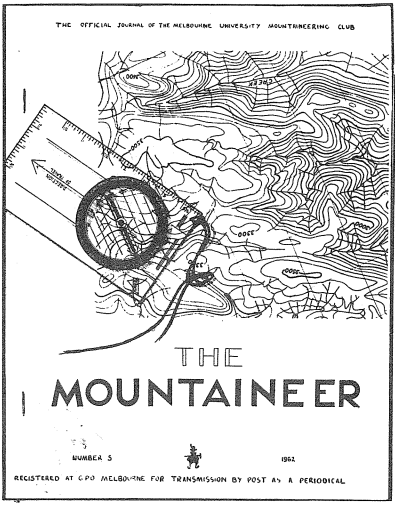
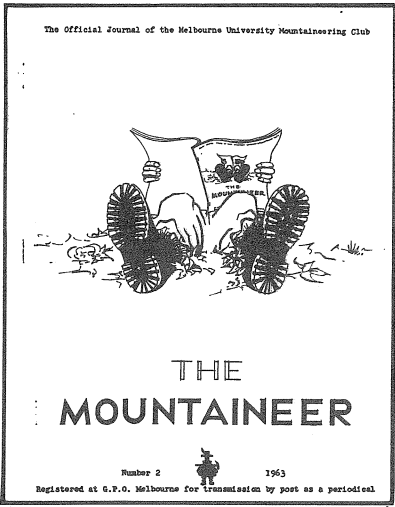
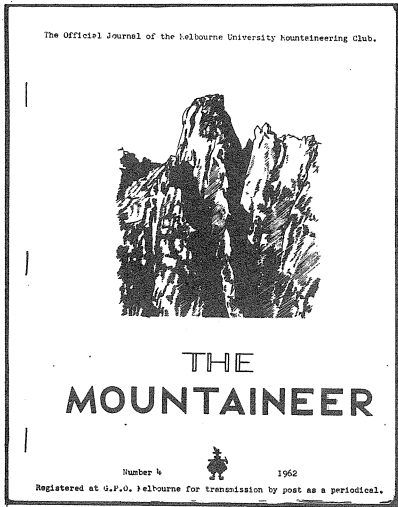


SEPTEMBER 1984



FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION





THE MOUNTAINEER

JOURNAL  
OF THE

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
EDITION



September 1983



### 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 day 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

March 1984

### Boots and All

It was deep in the throes of a November swat vac that I realised the control they had over me. Sitting at my desk fighting with realms of illegible, incomplete lecture notes I'd sense they were looking at me, tongues lolling pathetically. Snug just inside my wardrobe door they'd sit gleaming, trying their utmost to seduce me away from my studying. Beautifully "Snosealed" with only a hint of mud sticking to their soles those wretched boots pleaded with me to take them walking.

I resisted, my running shoes laced firmly to my feet and Explorer socks abolished to the back of my cupboard. To think that a pair of boots could be so demanding! Why, the weekend before I'd even treated them to a trip halfway around a rogaine, only to find that blistered feet cringed long before Erodium and rocky terrain had begun to scratch their enthusiasm. Even the North West Spur (twice), with snow, had failed to dishearten them; recovering with superb speed once cleaned and "Snosealed" while I limped on. Could nothing daunt my rapscallion Rossis? Was I forever doomed to a life of slavery?

And then, the last exam was over and I no longer had a conscience for my boots to prey upon. With ruthless determination I tightened their laces, leather squealing in pinched agony, and strode into four months of leisure. Pawns of my activities, my boots buckled under.

Alas, now, what horror!

Another year,

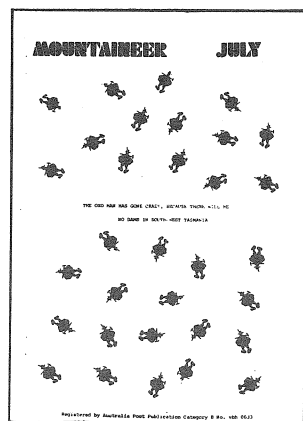
Another term.

The battle begins again.

Diana Rice



July, 1983



from

### THE REALITY OF THE ECSTASY

Victory in the South-West at last! There is no joy sweeter than the sudden realisation that a deep long-term personal desire has finally been satisfied. Certainly those involved full-time in the Franklin campaign enjoyed the most overwhelming ecstasy from the July 1st High Court decision. But it was a victory to be savoured also by the blockaders, and those involved in the many T.S.W. film nights, stalls, rallies and letter-writing activities. Moreover it was an event celebrated throughout Australia, and perhaps by more people than the March 5th election result. It was proof that ordinary citizens could bring about major changes in government policy.

10 am Friday July 1st at T.W.S. Hobart. The media had filled the office with blinding lights, cameras and personnel. Amongst the 20 or so media representatives 10 office workers wandered around sheepishly grinning at each other and collecting vegemite jars for champagne. A cool-headed pessimism had pervaded the place over preceding weeks. Office workers had shared their feelings the previous night at a 'nervous' party. A few more workers rolled in.

The decision was expected to be known by 10.20 and the verdict phoned straight through by a jubilant/quietened Bob Brown. 10.30 came and no phone call. 10.35 the phone rang. Someone wanted to know when her "Wild Rivers" book would arrive. 10.40 and no message. By 10.50 everyone had almost become fatalistic after that length of time on razor's edge. 10.55 I turned on the radio. Silence. "News flash. The High Court has ruled that the Gordon-below-Franklin power scheme will...NOT proceed".

Mayhem. Weeks of tension burst in an instant. Years of work were justified in a 10 second statement. The room spun as people hugged, hissed and cried to express the most overpowering happiness.

The press filmed coolly, some perhaps happy at the result. Champagne flowed. And flowed. And flowed and flowed and flowed. Resident eccentric artist, "Harold the Kangaroo", reminiscent of Joyce Cary's "The Horse's Mouth", mouthed some ludicrous aphorisms which were kindly ignored by others.

Out to the balcony of T.W.S. for a photo for nationwide front-page newspaper coverage. The office swelled with revellers as the news spread. Celebrations transferred to Rob White's (ex MUMC) home, also the scene of the T.W.S. election party. The night was not complete until Bob Brown, Margaret Robertson, Judy Richter and lawyers, Lincoln Siliakus and Barbara Lane had returned from Brisbane. Stone-faced airport staff looked on as 50 jubilant ('stinking, filthy, long-haired, dole-bludging') 'greenies' welcomed their return.

Jonathan Miller

## INTRODUCTION

The inaugural meeting of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club was held on October 9th, 1944. From 1944 until the mid-60s the Club grew steadily, becoming one of the most prosperous clubs on campus - and the largest.

Throughout the four decades which have passed since October 1944, the Club's fortunes have been reflected in its circulars. Initially brief in content and modest in presentation, they served mainly to inform members of coming events. But short trip reports became common during the late 50s and within a few more years MUMC's circular had become a fascinating jumble of detailed trip descriptions, reams of satire, the odd cantankerous letter and divers items of general interest.

In July 1961 it took its present name and in 1962 its present format.

Here we present extracts from The Mountaineer and the circulars which preceded it.



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October, 1981

Memories of the Mitchell

Crashing through the undergrowth and being viciously attacked by blackberries everywhere, I felt like an escapee. I knew I had to bash my way through the bush along the river bank to where my kayak had been hopefully helped ashore further downstream, but my movements had no plan or strategy for a while. It had been suggested that I go and retrieve my boat, a concept that hadn't quite reached my waterlogged mind at that stage, so I had gone.

Swimming the Ampitheatre had been quite an experience. We'd stopped above the rapid and in true ritualistic style had stamped up and down the less vegetated bank; assessing the strength of huge stoppers and planning the passage through the foaming waters. In typical style beforehand I'd been petrified, for I'm always utterly pessimistic about my paddling ability. However, although I was scared I had to give it a go. I could be considered a determined individual, or a stubborn fool, depending on your point of view, I suppose. It's not that hard, said Roger, as I was heading for my boat with my knees a little weak.

Above the rapid, in calm though not still water, I was paddling around, testing strength and strokes, steeling myself for the experience and simultaneously procrastinating. Finally, with a deep breath I turned the boat around and I was committed.

Over to the left had been the plan, and here I was heading to the right. Here goes, I thought, being virtually incapable of changing my path for my paddling wasn't that strong. I was heading straight into wild water and a stopper we'd all planned to avoid. Apparently, so they told me afterwards, I stopped paddling altogether and sat paddle out of the water - a fatal pose. I don't remember, however. The strength of the stopper hit me - whoomph, and I was over. No half hearted effort this one, being completely different from the slow sensation you feel when a support stroke is just not strong or quick enough. I almost came straight up again, and then tried to roll, but no, my mind and arms weren't quite co-ordinating, so it was a matter of getting out of the boat quickly. Once out, the water just forged me downstream leaving me with no hope of holding on to my boat and paddle. I

was utterly powerless and at the water's whim. Like a piece of driftwood I was pulled under water and spun around in a stopper then picked up again and swept onwards.

It was quite a while before the water had calmed enough to give me the opportunity to grab a rock, which I was dragged away from, to grasp another desperately and finally another before I could exercise my staying power against the water, and pit the strength of my muscles against its torrents. From here I was towed to the bank to begin the trip down river on foot.

I reached the rest of our party after crashing and falling and slipping; being scratched and being tripped by insidious insurgent undergrowth. The boat was O.K., my paddle had been picked up and I had a gentle ride on the back of another boat to collect my kayak on the opposite bank.

Being hurried on by Andrew who assured we would stop for lunch fairly soon, I rearranged boat, body and soul and set myself working again. The thought of stopping at this stage was bliss!

Janet Rice.



line of head-torches can be unbroken. The death toll in the Mt. Blanc Massif is also horrifying, with as many as 60 people dying annually, and over 200 serious injuries.

However, if you try the mountain in late September in bad snow conditions, you can have the mountain to yourself. And on the second attempt, I really was by myself.

The telepherique ride to the Aiguille de Plan was similar, with wide-eyed tourists ogling the nut-case Alpinist. The first snow bridge was terrifying but the rest of the traverse to the Refuge Grand Mulet simply sweat-provoking.

There were three French in residence who were planning a traverse of the mountain. Their company was confidence boosting, but they departed before I awoke.

I awoke at 2 and left at 3 following the much improved tracks which we had pioneered on the first attempt.

Craaack....." this snow bridge isn't much improved."

I was powering up and all was going well until I took one step above the high point of last time, then suddenly altitude sickness hit me like a sledge hammer. "Must be phsychological".

The head torches of the three French flickered somewhere above me. Soon after an avalanche rumbled past, somewhere in the dark. It sounded much too close.

My feet were starting to get very cold. At about this stage, any self-respecting solo nut-case starts to question the validity and ethics of the exercise. Two hours out and dawn still seems a long way off. The circle of illumination from the head torch is your universe and by now the batteries are getting low. I, wishing to conform to the norm, was getting bloody lonely so I broke into a rousing chorus of Waltzing Matilda in one-part harmony. Nothing like a bit of new nationalism to restore morale, but I was too out of breath to manage more than one verse.

I overtook the French at the Col de Gouter then kept on to the Refuge Vallot which is more akin to a rubbish tip than a mountain hut. As I stepped in I realized that my feet were very very cold and that my toes no longer had any feeling. A Spaniard emerged from behind a pile of garbage. His

companion was sick. I took my boots off and discovered that my toes "pinged" when I tapped them. After half an hour's vigorous foot bashing I felt the exquisite pain of blood flowing again in my toes. It was still dark so I wrapped myself up and had an hour's kip. On waking, the sun was up, so after some food I said "Adios Amigos" to the Spaniards.

This was now definately the highest I'd ever been and the affect of the altitude on me was remarkable. I was reduced to bursts of ten steps with breaks inbetween. Thinking was difficult (it always was) and my brain positively ached.

Then suddenly I realized that the view was superb. The summit circle is fantastic and exhilaration flooded through me like an elixir. Simultaneously - "Coq au Vin! This is no place to practice self-arrests". The drop into Italy is of Himalayan proportions and the French side is just as deadly. This is no place to trip on crampon straps and large doses of concentration are required on this razor sharp ridge. It was a cold, clear, crisp morning and the contrast between exhaustion and exhilaration was profound.

Eventually, the summit at 10 a.m. It was much too cold to stay long. I didn't shake my hand and I didn't take my summit photo, but I had a traditional summit piss and added to the conglomeration of yellow snow which is the top of Europe.

Back down slowly and carefully. My head stopped aching but my legs didn't. With a mime I explained to the Spaniard I was happy but stuffed i.e. I smiled then fell over. Further down I saw the snow bridge which cracked and the hungry looking crevasse beneath. Running across my heart was pumping twice as fast.

Leaping another crevasse I came into view of the refuge. There were people everywhere about it and lines of other black dots climbing up to it. I was aghast. I had forgotten that it was now the weekend.

Tom Millar.

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the line. Craig finds a quick way down one scree gully (which doesn't do his shorts any good) and the rest of us wait while he climbs back to where we have grouped. We are entertained by trying to work out what the large number of S.E.S. searchers on the opposite bank are doing by listening to their calls. A last sweep down a very scrubby ridge finishes our search area for the day - 3 p.m.

As we are still 3-4 km upriver from search H.Q. at Darley Ford, we have to walk down. On previous days the river and banks have been exhaustively searched and probed so there is little we can do except check anything unusual or interesting - very little as it turns out!

At Darley Ford there are several vehicles and caravans (Police, S.E.S.), the Salvo's mobile kitchen trailer and many of Bill Howell's relatives. His wife, her parents, his sister and her husband and others of his family and friends are sitting around a fire, as they have done for 3 days now, waiting to hear anything. In talking to his sister for a while I find out that although he was not an experienced bushwalker, he knew the area very well as he had taken horse-riding parties on the tracks around and above the gorge. No-one says much about his chances of being found alive - after 3 days of intensive searching only the thermos has been found, and that was on Sunday!

By 6 p.m. the other searchers had been driven back, fed and had time to change, so we leave for Melbourne. People doze again or talk, but it's quieter than on the way up - tiredness and probably disappointment at not having found anything. By 7.15 we are in Dawson Street again. It and Melbourne are busy, and it's just another wet winter night for nearly all of Victoria - except the Howells.

P.S. A few weeks later, Bill Howell's body was found in a pool in the river, just upstream from the point where he entered the Gorge, and where Search H.Q. was located.

Dave Caddy.

October, 1980

LITERARY CORNER

"Extract from T.L. Peacock's" Crotchet Castle" - 1831

Lady Clarinda:	Who was she?
Rev. Dr. Folliott:	That I know not.
Lady Clarinda:	Have you seen her?
Rev. Dr. Folliott:	I have.
Lady Clarinda:	Is she pretty?
Rev. Dr. Folliott:	More ...beautiful.

A subject for the pen of Nannus, or the pencil of Zeuxis. Features of all loveliness, radiant with all virtue and intelligence. A face for Antigone. A form at once plump and symmetrical that, if it be decorous to divine by externals, would have been a model for the Venue of Cuidos. Never was anything so goodly to look on, the present company excepted, and poor dear Mrs. Folliott of course. She reads moral philosophy, which, indeed she might as well let alone; she reads Italian poetry; she sings Italian music; but, with all this, she has the greatest of female virtues, for she superintends the household, and looks after her husband's dinner. I believe she was a mountaineer".

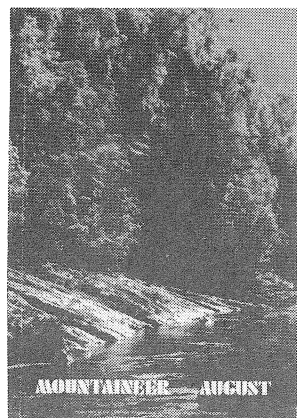
October, 1980

MT. BLANC SOLO

The first attempt had been a forgone conclusion. After setting off with the mandatory snide comments about "Sparkling Rhinegold" Messner and Peter "Habder to leap tall buildings", we had ploughed our way to a standstill on le Grant Plateau (it must be named after the New Zealand ones). I was with two Californians, one aged 60, and together we had worn ourselves out in the knee deep, sometimes waist deep snows of Mt. Blanc.

During the season, climbing Mt. Blanc (4807 m) is hardly a wilderness experience with hundreds of individuals climbing it daily. The refuge facilities are more akin to luxury hotels and there are many mechanised contrivances for the artificial gain of height. While ascending its slopes before dawn, the

August, 1978



"WHAT'S A SEARCH LIKE...?"

It's 6.30 p.m. on the Monday of the June weekend and the phone rings:

"Does Dave Caddy still live there?"

"Yes"

"This is Harry Schaap...."

Having heard the news of a man lost in the Lerderdarg Gorge, I know why Harry is calling - he doesn't ring me often. He can't tell me much about the search, except that the Police only want us for one day (to add to the work done by police, locals and volunteers on Sunday and today) and that nothing significant has been found yet apart from a dented thermos.

As I haven't been on a search for years, I have forgotten to tell my new boss that I am even in Search and Rescue, so have to find his home number and ring him there to make sure I can go - Yes. I spend the rest of the evening sorting gear and packing two packs for tomorrow - a day pack with essential items I will carry searching, and a large pack with most of the rest of my gear in it - it may come in handy! (For two days in March one year I searched on the Baw Baw Plateau in hail and sleet, soaked with ice-water, and didn't even have a change of clothes, or my wool trousers, because I had packed as I would have for a March bushwalk - never again!)

Tuesday morning - 5 a.m.

Out of bed and it's quiet, cold, grey and rainy. A hot shower and breakfast improve things a bit, then follows a surprisingly busy drive to Dawson Street, Brunswick (I didn't know so many people drove around at 6 a.m.). In the yard there full of cars, landrovers and the bus which will carry us, bushwalkers arrive

in ones and twos to shelter from the drizzle under the verandah. Police check in and out and ignore us - life goes on, searches or not. Inspector Bill Brand (Police S & R) and Eric Quinlan (F.V.W.C. S & R Police Liaison Officer) arrive about the same time, discuss details, then we all stand around and wait - as Theo later remarked:

"Why don't we do something?"

From someone else:

"This your first search?..."

Finally at 7.15 we leave, with sirens being tested in the garage to farewell us.

The bus trip up is uneventful - a briefing by Max Corry on how Bill Howell was lost (carrying refreshments alone to long-distance walkers coming down the gorge on Saturday afternoon, when the river rose at one-metre/hour), and the areas searched up to now. Mike Tegg (sharing the Field Organiser job with Max) puts us in groups of four or five - I am with Craig Devlin, Theo Dreher (MUMC), Graham Mascas (MBW) and John Mulligan (WCV). After all these formalities people doze, speculate on what could have happened, swap trip stories (or search stories - "Were you at the search for ..?") or get information from those who were there yesterday. In Bacchus Marsh, four more walkers from Geelong get in - we're now just about sitting on each other's knees, which makes my donning of boots and final shuffling of gear between packs a bit of a juggling act.

It's still drizzling as we leave the bus at 9 a.m. for a muddy 4 km walk along a track to our starting point. One sweep down the west bank of the gorge and back up takes from 10 to 12 - we have to continually shift our line of five across the slopes as other groups converge on us from both sides. Minor "border disputes" and fine-detail navigation provide some distraction for our minds as our bodies half walk, half slide down the steep loose and very wet hillside.

Back up on top we have lunch on the track as the cloud lifts and the rain stops. Max passes on his way to speak to groups further north - we are to return 3 km along the track and search an area not covered the previous day. We search this valley by contouring around it from a steep walking track down a spur - much of the time the adjacent searchers are more above and below than beside me in

## MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY ALPINE CLUB

A meeting will be held for the purpose of forming the above club on

Monday, 9th October, at 8 p.m. in the  
Men's Graduates Room.

The purposes of the club are:

- (a) to bring together those interested in, to stimulate interest in and to provide facilities for mountain and rock climbing, bush walking, cross country skiing and mountaineering generally. The club will embrace generally a number of out-door activities at present the function of a number of specialised clubs such as Ski Club of Victoria, the University Ski Club and the Melbourne Walking Club. It is hoped to co-operate with these clubs as far as possible, maintaining at the same time an organisation embracing all their activities in addition to activities not at present covered by any existing club.
- (b) to provide an official body which can act as a spokesman or agent for members in matters pertaining to the collation of information, organisation of tours, provision of equipment, etc.
- (c) to enable a central register of information to be maintained in regard to routes, tours and conditions.
- (d) to enable members to have the expert advice of other members who may be, by virtue of experience or training, experts in matters pertaining to the activity of the club.

The club does not propose to organise tours for large parties or in any way to interfere with the individual activity of members. The club's primary function will be to act as a link between individuals who now pursue this sport without reference to others also interested in the sport. By pooling information and experience, it is felt that all members will benefit.

All those interested are invited to the meeting where expressions of opinion will be welcome.

NIALL BRENNAN  
Convenor.



April, 1946

from Annual Report

The third meeting has been set for August 15th, the speaker being Dr. Loewe, and his subject "Meteorology". Unfortunately, peace broke out on this day. The meeting was postponed to the following Friday, which was the last day of term and in the general disorganisation following the end of the war and the end of term almost simultaneously, only about twenty were able to attend. This was disappointing as the lecture was of the high standard that the club had aimed at and which it hoped to maintain.

September, 1948.

Federation Peak

Two picked parties one under Bill Bewsher in December and the other under Professor Cherry in February will attempt to conquer Federation Peak. The Hobart Walking Club is also making a comprehensive attack on it during December. This mountain, in South West Tasmania, has yet to be climbed for both the approach and climbing provide difficulties. One party recently reached to within two miles of the mountain only to find their way blocked by a type of fern which grew so closely as to form an impenetrable barrier; another party walked over "Horizontal" a type of tree which grows closely interwoven, for six hours without touching the ground. Little information is available about the peak itself but aerial photos show it to be a large rock mass with relatively smooth sides. However, great hopes of success are held by both parties.

September, 1951

Exploit of some interest

Bill Bewsher and three others recently made an attempt to scale Buffalo Gorge and succeeded admirably in becoming benighted half way up. Two of the four apparently managed to reach a tiny cave on the face, where they spent the night roped to the rock and overlooking a sheer drop of 800-900 feet.

The other two, on the second rope, who

were on a narrow ledge about 130 yards below were unable to tie themselves on the rock, and spent an uncomfortable night maintaining their precarious position.

Prior to this effort they all had succeeded in reaching the top by an easier route, the last pitch of which apparently was by way of the sewage drain from the Buffalo Chalet.

We will doubtless hear more of the Buffalo Gorge.

August, 1953

Sat., Sun., 19th, 20th. Sept.

The "SHAMBLES WALK" (and is it going to be a shambles!)

This competitive event results from the researches of Fred Bowers, whose phone no. is withheld) Very briefly, the rules are as follows:

1. Competing parties to be taken by covered van to the starting point, arriving approx. 8 pm. on the Sat. night.
2. The only clue given as to whereabouts will be the direction in which it lies from Melbourne.
3. Main roads will completely surround the starting point and no road will be at a greater distance than 15 miles.
4. It is advisable to carry a map showing main roads in country districts around Melbourne (suggested radius of 500 miles).
5. The first party to arrive at a given point in the City will be considered the winners regardless of how they did it.

The complete rules will be posted on the Board. They may be slightly amended before the event.

certainly wilderness values to consider. The lack of consideration shown to wilderness values in this, and all similar instances, clearly illustrates the selfish attitudes of those who are apparently incapable of considering the wilderness user. We would add that this road affects us as deeply as if someone had driven a bulldozer through our back gardens.

There is so little wilderness left in Victoria for the greatly increased numbers of people who wish to experience it that, whenever another remnant disappears, the situation becomes increasingly intolerable."

from Minister of Forests to M.U.M.C. (12/4/78)

"I acknowledge your letter of 28 March and in reply must state, as I did in my letter to you of 14 March, that I am astounded at the attitude and lack of understanding expressed by your Club about the most dangerous fire situation that existed in the mountain forests during January. Your statement that "there were no property values or probably human lives at risk" shows complete ignorance of what can happen in an extreme drought when fires run uncontrolled through Victorian forests.

I find your attitude even more remarkable because it comes from an organisation which I would expect to be better informed. One only has to know something of the disastrous fires of 1939 and 1965 in Victoria to realise that the fires last January posed an immediate threat to life and property, as well as complete devastation of forests and wildlife.

If your members are not aware of the reality of the situation then I suggest they read the Report of the Royal Commission into the 1939 bushfires and the book written last year by W.A. Noble, "Ordeal by Fire - The week a state burned up", and try to understand that there is more involved than the interests expressed in your letter. The Government fully appreciate and supports the concept of wilderness but realises that it cannot do so to the exclusion of all other interests."

M.U.M.C. to Minister of Forests (24/4/78)

"Our club views with concern the comments you have made to us in recent correspondence concerning the construction of a road in the upper Wonnangatta. I believe you have been misinformed because some of

the comments in your last letter (12th April) are simply not true.

You stated in this letter that the fires last January posed "an immediate threat to life and property as well as complete devastation of forests and wildlife". This is not true. Where were the lives and property threatened? The nearest permanent residence was many km away from the Wonnangatta fire. If there were many people in the area at the time they would have had ample time to escape because the fire, we repeat, was not a particularly serious one. We have walked through the area burnt by the fire - from valley bottom to ridge-top. Absolutely nowhere did we see any crowning which occurs with the most extreme fires.

You ask us if we have read the Report of the Royal Commission into the 1939 bushfire or the book written by W.A. Noble. We ask you if you have read the submission by the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs to the L.C.C. concerning the Alpine Area in which fire management in wilderness areas is discussed, or the articles referred to in the F.V.W.C. submission - articles by Mutch et al. or the numerous articles in the Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference No. 14, or other work by Stankey on Wilderness fire policy or articles in the Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference No. 15. All of this research was conducted during the 1970's. All of this research has been carried out in forests every bit as inflammable as ours, and all of this research comes to one conclusion - in wilderness areas it is undesirable to put all fires out.

Fire fighting techniques and knowledge of fire behaviour and ecology have all changed dramatically in the last 30 years. Land use problems have also become more complex so that what was appropriate in the 1930's or 1940's is not necessarily appropriate today. The road in the Wonnangatta represents an antiquated, clumsy, and uninformed approach to the fire problem. The decision to build it was selfish, due to the lack of consideration of wilderness values and is highly regrettable. It has caused nothing but bitterness amongst bushwalkers, most of whom believe the road was not necessary to fight the fire but was put in for other purposes. We condemn it and will continue to do so until it is ripped up and allowed to revegetate."

June, 1978

from NEW ROAD IN THE  
UPPER WONNANGATTA VALLEY

In January 1978 the Forests Commission bulldozed a new road through the heart of the Upper Wonnangatta..... Below we reproduce, without comment, correspondence between M.U.M.C. and the Minister over the issue. You can draw your own conclusion.

M.U.M.C. to Hon. F.J. Granter (Minister for Forests) 6/3/78:

'Dear Sir,

Members of this club were appalled to recently discover a new road bulldozed up the Wonnangatta Valley in Gippsland to connect the existing road networks in the Wonnangatta Valley and in the Mt. Speculation - Mt. Despair area. This road cuts right through the heart of one of the few remaining wilderness areas in the Victorian alps and was put through (this January) at a very critical time as the Land Conservation Council are currently studying the area. There appears to have been no really pressing reason for constructing the road. There was one fire in the area but this was not a major one and was only at one end of the road near an existing fire access track. All the available evidence leads us to conclude that the road was put in before the L.C.C. finished studying the area in an attempt by the Forest Commission to ensure the existence of a road regardless of the outcome of the L.C.C. deliberations. If so this is deplorable - and we point out that there is no evidence contrary to this point.

We regard this road as an abomination which has partially destroyed one of our few remaining wilderness areas. The trail bike and four wheel drive owners who will soon use the road will complete the destruction of this wilderness. Words fail to express our anger and disgust with the Forests Commission for having built this road. Day by day with one example after the other of such selfish thoughtless actions by the Forests Commission, bushwalkers become increasingly angry and frustrated. We request that this road be immediately closed, then ripped up and revegetated."

Ministers of Forests to M.U.M.C. (14/3/78):

"I have your letter of 6 March 1978 concerning recent track construction in the

upper section on the Wonnangatta River valley.

The assumptions and inferences expressed in your letter about the track are quite wrong, and I must emphatically reject your imputations about the Forest Commission's motivations for constructing the track.

For your information, the track was constructed after thorough examination had determined the essential need for it in the forest fire situation that prevailed at the time. The decision taken to construct this particular track included that it was a temporary fire-access track and that it would be closed and allowed to revegetate, and that is precisely what will happen.

May I add two further comments. I am astounded at the selfish attitudes apparent in your letter with respect to your Club's appreciation of what is required to cope with forest fire situations such as existed in the Buffalo, Wonnangatta and Moroka rivers in January. Secondly, had it not been for the strategies adopted and the tremendous endeavours of hundreds of men fighting the Buffalo and Wonnangatta River fires, the wilderness to which you refer would now be burnt out."

M.U.M.C. to Minister of Forests (28/3/78)

"We feel compelled to reply to a letter you recently sent us (14th March, 1978) in response to a letter we sent you concerning the construction of a new road in the upper Wonnangatta Valley.

We are pleased to hear that this road is to be closed but we urge you to ensure that this is done as soon as possible. Having seen the fire and the area in question we are still convinced that the road was not necessary for fire fighting purposes. The damage the road has done to the area far outweighs the damage done by the fire in our opinion. We would like to make it quite clear that we would prefer any day to walk in burnt out forests in the area concerned than to walk through unburnt but roaded forests, as we now have.

You accuse us of having selfish attitudes. We fail to understand why. It is not us, but rather those who continually deny us the opportunity to experience wilderness, who must be considered selfish. There were no property values or probably human lives at risk by the Wonnangatta fire, but there were

No. 5, 1959

"SOUTH FACE" - by the Brothers Schmidt

The south face had been climbed only once, in summer. We were now attempting the first winter ascent.

Would it go? Would we have to bivouac on the face? Would we need to take umbrellas? (Sudden showers of rain are not uncommon in this district). These important questions raced through our minds.

To our relief the lower face was free from verglas. We began climbing. The grassy ledge from which we started was smaller now, taking on a sinister green hue.

Our first concern was the gendarme. We were not particularly anxious to come to grips with it but expected it to come into view around the corner at any moment. Fortunately he rode silently past on his bicycle without noticing us.

The face occupied all our attentions now. Here on this black face no eidelweiss grew nor did we expect a single rock crystal or small belay to cheer us as we climbed...

Upwards, hearts and muscles racing, crawling like flies up the enormous face. Vital seconds had to be expended making the fine calculations necessary to a successful climb ....f.16? f.8?... it was hard to say.

A slip! Lightning fast he pulled in the slack - though we both knew the belays would never hold. My hands stabbed towards microscopic rugosities. Suddenly a stop - before the slack ran out my braces caught on a firm hold. Fortunately my long experience in climbing had taught me that only Police and Fireman's are completely reliable. One leg hung uselessly - I should have to carry on with the one sound leg. My left arm was dislocated

but I managed to get slight leverage with it. I gritted my teeth. There was a grim native legend about this face that I tried to forget...

We were higher now and the full imensity of the overhang was apparent. I was exhausted. We had to think fast. A flash of genius momentarily flickered on that sombre face. He pulled the laces from his boots, throwing the boots away. Using the laces as prusik loops he overcame the obstacle and hauled me up. He may lose his feet with frostbite, but that's climbing...

We had been worried about the descent. Our success however so intoxicated us that we fell from the summit and landed on the terrace far below. We checked. No major bones broken. We decided to make an all out dash for the village - there was a good film showing that night. Soon we gained shelter where refreshed with lime juice and cream puffs we planned our next ascent.

No. 3, 1960

DAYWALK - Saturday 14th May

Them there Mathinna Falls (again). To the scrub; swish swish came the deluge; seven wet mountaineers; slimy logs and rubber boots don't mix ---crash; six weary mountaineers; wet scrub; hail roaring; six sodden mountaineers; heavenly waterfalls; dripping wet scrub; creek, ah!; cascades, ah hah!; big cascade one foot high, hooray! Mathinna Falls? "Y-yes of c-c-course it m-must b-b-b-be." Like smoke it was. Five super-saturated scrub-bashers returned to the cars on Mt. Monda. The leader may be found on the bottom of Maroondah Dam, weighed down with rocks.

Phil Waring



No. 5, 1960

UNTITLED

Dotted across the high country of eastern Victoria is a chain of cattlemen's huts, some of them now very rough and in need of repair, but nevertheless providing welcome shelter from the frequent bad weather. One has only to spend a few hours around a log fire in any of the huts to appreciate their warmth and friendliness. Ropers Hut on the northern edge of the Bogong High Plains looking across the Big River valley toward Mt. Bogong is one such hut, and the following extract from the first few pages of the Hut Book expresses exactly that feeling of warmth and hospitality, and respect for the pioneers of the area ...

April, 10th, 1944.

Many years ago, more than I choose to remember - I came to Tawonga, adolescent and not knowing what I wanted to do in life. I tried farming. My job was milk hand and general useful on the Roper farm. I did not stay long, a year or more and I was off again; but during my stay I developed a love for the mountains which remained with me through the years.

Twenty years later, eighteen of them spent overseas, I came back to Australia and eventually to the Mountains and the Ropers. This time, thank God, not for a job. I found a welcome there from the Ropers and the Mountains and suffered none of the disillusionment which is so common on returning to the scenes of youth.

Coming to this hut over the Mountain pass from Tawonga, once again I marvelled at the miracle of its finding and blazing by that great Bushman, Jack Roper, a true son of his father and his father's father before him, who alone had driven a trail through the mountains, a trail so perfectly chosen that years later, modern surveyors with all their tapes, telescopes and what not, found they could do no better than build their road along this trail as they opened up the country for the Kiewa Hydro Electric Scheme. And so I came here once again to help muster the cattle in the Autumn. To hear the crack of the stock whip and the thunder of hoofs. To see the magnificent shaggy red beasts and the sun rise and set in golden glory. To smell saddlery; the sweat of horses and the smoke of a wood fire. To sit around a log fire and listen to the

talk of the cattlemen; Pioneers; and the sons of pioneers, devoid of affectation, loving 'their beasts' and 'their country'; honest, straight thinking and straight talking. It matters not how much money or how little you have up here. One warms in their hospitality to the stranger, their tolerance of his fancy clothes and fancy ways, and ignorance. They care not for your accent; or how many brewery shares you hold; or if you do go to Government House. They have a simple confidence in themselves and a pride in their heritage. They, and their kind, are the breed that made Australia and continue to make it. They, not the moneyed commercial barons, are Australia's Aristocracy.

Continued city life and my office desk and the passing of time perhaps, have softened me for the job up here and this is possibly my last muster, and so I would like to leave behind me this book as a token of my respect and thanks to the Men and these Mountains. May they prosper and their kind never die out in this glorious country of ours.

To those that follow I would say - please tidy up and replace what wood you use and leave a fire made up if possible, and know "You're welcome".

W. Hope Gibson

September-October 1960

Editorial

" 'Ow ya goin now?..."  
....or should I say at this time of the year (only about 52 swotting days left) "What's your problem?" Spent too much time in the Caf., been on too many trips, spending hours planning trips for the coming vac., reading too many prescribed Mountaineering textbooks, etc.? If so, then Science 1, Law 1, Arts 1, etc. may be in danger...but at least you have qualified for Mountaineering I and will be permitted to take Mountaineering II in 1961. It is rumoured that a few members may gain Honours in Mountaineering I - as it is further rumoured that these same members will, in addition to taking Mountaineering II in 1961, be laying bricks or weeding gardens. Who wants a Uni. degree anyway?

September, 1975

EDITORIAL

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

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

Nick "Dead Bear" Reeves.

December, 1976

from a LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Turds in the Store

To put it in the words of a great philosopher "I am sick and tired of being nice to people...!" The attitudes of many store users and equipment borrowers forces me into a situation where I can no longer be nice to people.....

The arrogant, self aggrandisement of people when they have aired a sleeping bag or tent used, or put off a visit to the pub to return it on time is pathetic. Who the hell do you think you are? Get another joint into your arm and pat yourself on the back. What these people have fulfilled is merely their obligations as hirers of club equipment.

Stores assistants are there to help people to help themselves. If people do not know what is going on they will be helped. But don't regard me as your "boy". If you want a wet nurse, go to an old age home (sic). If you think I have been abrasive in the past, wait, you shall know when I am abrasive.....

Please return the overdue gear! I shall bitch but shit don't you deserve it!

Tony Marion.

perform. Not one to disappoint the crowds, I open the act with a 'crap' before breakfast. Looking over the ledge whilst in the middle of answering nature's call, I notice my half bag entangled in a tree a few feet below and after a short abseil recover it but it seems my jacket has been lost to the Gorge. There is no time to ponder on whether or not to go down and have a look, so I rack up for another day of pounding rock. Today things go more smoothly as a steady rhythm develops. Select a piton; drive it home; clip in etrier; step up; clip in; clip in rope and so on and so on, and gradually the rope feeds out.

Two pitches later I have reached the first roof section. A long bolt ladder up a smooth arete leads to the first roof which is tackled through the fault line running across it. Stepping out onto the first roof pin brings on a great feeling of excitement and fear as you hang suspended from such a small piece of steel spinning around 600 ft. above the deck. It takes me quite a while to rationalise the exposure as I continue across the roof and up the corner above on good aids to a string of bolts spread across the wall below a huge block (the second roof), this is to be my bivouac site tonight.

I am very tired now and it is dark, but my pack is below and I must keep moving. Descending around the roof, I can see far below the lights of the second party. They are on the sloping ledge and are preparing for sleep, almost asleep myself I fail to notice that I have not clipped the haul rope to the sack and as I release it, it swings out into space and out of reach, leaving me holding the bag. As punishment for my blunder, I must now carry it with me as I de-peg. I finish, exhausted, and collapse into my green cocoon of a hammock which swings gently over the void below.

I awake to the sound of hammering beneath me, the second party are on the move, peering over the edge of my lofty perch, I am confronted with an uninterrupted view, 800 ft to the bottom. Somehow, the exposure does not fully register after two days of it already, still it is very impressive.

I pack up quickly for the last time for today I must reach the top if I am to keep to my schedule. Also, I am almost out of water with three difficult pitches ahead of me. I move off around the second roof and up to a deep overhang which only accepts endways

bongs on the very lip of the crack. It takes ages to get above this section which is followed by another, equally difficult section. I am really beginning to feel the pace now. Severe cramps force me to stop every few minutes, the slings of gear cut deeply into my shoulders and it seems that I will never finish the pitch, but then the two bolts appear and I can have a short rest.

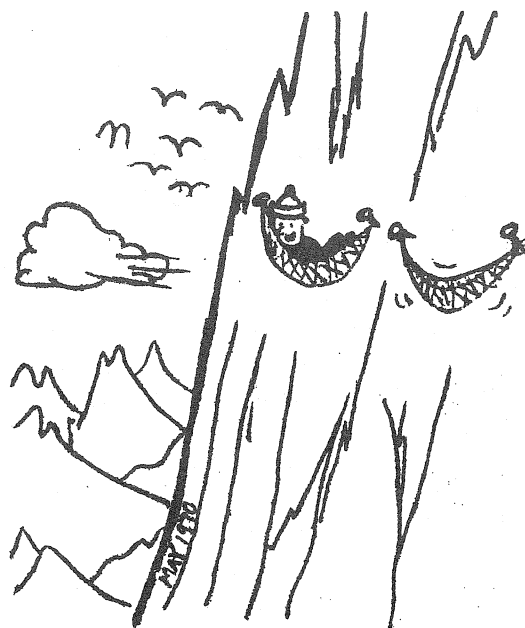
The thought of returning to clean the pitch makes me feel sick, but there is no way of avoiding it so down I go again. The next pitch brings me to a large ledge and the first solid ground for two days. I rest before the last pitch which is steep and off width, each aid bringing me closer to the top. I can hear voices and hurry to complete the last moves, pulling over the last holds I am greeted by a large group of tourists and climbers ...

Handshakes, drinks all around, smiles, photos and congratulations.

Much later as I lie in my tent, I have time to look back and reflect. The climb was over, but not the experience, for my whole body chemistry kept on reacting hours after I had stopped climbing.

Reg Marron.

SUMMARY; OZYMANDIAS DIRECT FINISH 1000FT. (M4) FIRST SOLO ASCENT. DONE OVER 3 DAYS INVOLVING 2 BIVOUACS COMPLETED 30/4/75.



" Bless you....! "

No. 2, 1961

The following is dedicated with Oxometric Affection to Mrs. Colline Muir.

### ODE ON SALAMI

Ave Salami!

ave and praise to thee!

There is no sausage like thee,

nor will there ever be;

Thou art our stench companion,

through rain and snow and fire,

We eat thee in the easy times,

and relish thee in dire.

Thou art indeed the ugliest dish

Among the culinary dainties,

But a better entree far than fish,

And with many more calories than 'taties;

Yet thy fat-rounded and mouldy hide,

Adheres to a rich and goodly core

Of red stringy meat (which if properly fried)

Gives off those aromae now famous in lore.

Oh noble snag, thou lordly snorter!

What if thou art an inch or two shorter,

Than thy lengthy rival, the yard-long Cabana?

Thy flavour's more piquant than his or  
banana.

What matters when days get stinking hot!

And thou perchance appear to rot?

'Tis but thy oil exuded seen -

We know thou aren't dead till thou art  
green!

R.A.M.  
Feb. 1961.

No. 4, 1961

Two Complaints have come to our notice which must be brought to your notice:-

1. The singing of improper songs in vans in the presence of young ladies has caused, naturally, offence, and this must not be repeated.
2. Recent behaviour at Mt. Sugarloaf and at the clubrooms has left a lot to be desired, and those concerned are asked to remember both the ages and the reputation of the club to which they belong.



" WHAT ! NO CARTOON ? "



THE MOUNTAINEER.....

No. 5, 1961

Stop Press - Trip Report

Mt. Sugarloaf, Aug. 18th-21st

Party: Ian Guild, Chris Davis, Martin Higgs, Scales Ingram.

A slight mishap this weekend gave the club an opportunity to practice a dropping test with a "real live body". The fall, which occurred while a leader was traversing above and across from his second, was approximately 70'-80' vertically and about 10' horizontally; the fall was almost completely free.

At the same time of the fall, about 90' of rope had been paid out, and a runner of No. 3 nylon with a 7 oz. screw-fastened Stubai snap-link had been placed over an ideal point just before the severe section of that particular pitch. The leader was about 20'-30' above the runner and about 10' to one side of it.

The second was about 10' below the runner and some 60' on the other side of it to his leader. The belay-point was a small protruding pinnacle of rock and the stance a small ledge.

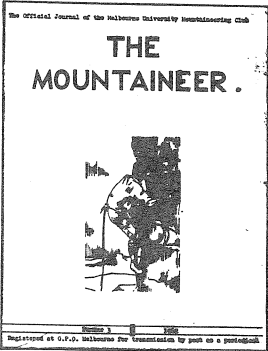
In breaking the fall the second let out from 5' to 10' of rope in a firm dynamic belay experiencing little shock from the fall, but rather an evenly mounting tension as the rope and the doubled No. 3 belay sling stretched. The Tarbuck knot by which the leader was attached to his rope had not yet slipped, which indicated that a considerable safety margin still existed. The leader suffered bruised ribs and stomach muscles with slight abrasions.

This fall, which was of reasonable magnitude, indicates that if the recommended safety precautions are exercised, serious accidents should not occur.

Ian Guild.

No. 3, 1962

(first illustrated cover)



AUSTRALIAN - PACIFIC  
CLIMBING EXPEDITION

A note has been received from the leader of the above expedition, Mr. Bob Jones, that on the 4th of March all members of the party were fit and well and about to begin their journey to Ball's Pyramid, 10 miles south of Lord Howe Island. They are enjoying the utmost co-operation from all sources, with special attention from the Meteorological Station. Being of course a member of our Club, Mr. Jones is anxious to assure us that:

"Yea, verily, we have upheld and honoured the noble traditions of the Ancient Order of Oxometrists. But harken unto our joyous tidings - beautiful maidens serve and wait upon our table on the great verandah of our fortress. Yea, and even mermaidens in binary bathing costumes. When my men return from our conquest of the great Ball's Pyramid, with our vessels laden with loot, we shall be sought after by the Beauties of this fair, idyllic island."

"However, Brothers, should I or any of my men not return from the perils of rock and water, lament not, nor mourn; for our adventure shall long live in the hearts of mountain-men. I leave to you Brother Dick, my reliable old chariot..."

(There follows a touching Last Will and Testament, your Assistant Secretary, Bro Dick, being the beneficiary, executor and oxometrist).

We wish them well on this exciting venture.

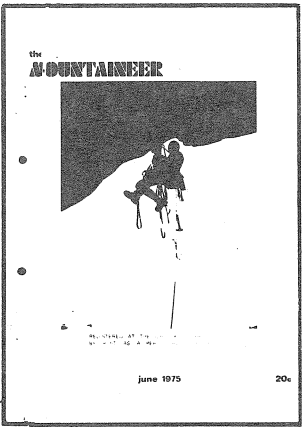
hysterically, with a kind of glazed look. Large numbers of cups of tea and doughnuts were consumed, almost mechanically - a sure sign of overtaxed nervous systems. It was too incredible to be true! Eventually, we went to the police. Conversation ran something like this:

US; "Rhubarb - Explain-  
Rhubarb- Mumble"  
HIM: "And you've lost someone - a  
Mister, ah, let me see  
(consults pad) - a Mister  
Hope?"  
US: (Excitedly): "That's the  
one!"  
HIM; "Well, he's ....."

But perhaps you'd better ask him  
yourself.

Rex Niven,  
Minister for Trips,  
Aboriginals and the Arts.

June, 1975



SOLO:

My fingers numb with cold, fumble with the ropes as I rig another of many abseils. It is 3 a.m. and I am shivering in the damp cold of a chimney. Each abseil rings the water from the rop and spills it into my crotch. My pack, loaded to the limit, threatens to turn me upside down as I descend deeper into the Gorge.

By the light of my headtorch I pick my way across the huge halfway terrace known as Furher ledge and continue for two more rope stretching rappels which finish at the beginning of an immense corner which marks the start of the climb. I arrive soaking and

with second thoughts.

I have come alone to do a climb known as Ozymandias Direct. 1000ft. long, it occupies the longest section of the north wall of Buffalo Gorge. The climb is reached by descending down a long pillar known as Comet Ramp, itself a climb. The main feature of the route is that it tackles a multiple roof section two thirds up the face, making climbing above this extremely committing.

The overhangs above and the particular problems they would present are far from my mind as I gaze at the rock of the first pitch in front of me. Arranging my pre-planned belay system, I set out, free climbing over wet and greasy rock leading to the main corner. Upon reaching it the banging begins as I drive home the first of many pitons. I have brought about 65 pitons and 15 chocks which I hope to use. As the climb involves predominantly pitons it places great importance on my hammer so I have packed a spare in my pack. The pins go in one after another and I begin to gain height, it is growing light as I rapell down the first pitch to begin cleaning (removing the pitons). The top is still shrouded in mist, but elsewhere the sky is clearing and my worries of bad weather are put aside as I get down to work.

Back on the hanging stance, I carry out what would become the hardest job on the climb, that of sack hauling. I have planned to spend three days on the climb and with food, water, hammock, duvet, half-bag, raincoat and spare gear it is hard work. At work on the second pitch, voices waft up from below. It is another party coming to attempt the same climb. There are three of them, but my lead cancels any immediate problems of passing. The third pitch, described as the 'crux', lives up to it's reputation as the aids become noticeably thinner. A slip in concentration, a blind lead up the wrong crack system delays me an hour while I regain the line, and it is not until late afternoon that I finally pull onto the sloping grassy ledge and the site of my first bivouac...450 ft up. Suspending my hammock from two pitons (one rather doubtful), I settle down to a well earned rest, only to be violently awoken when the 'doubtful' piton parts company with the rock sending my duvet and halfbag to the bottom. Drugged by sleep, I re-erect my bed and sleep ... a little colder.

Morning is heralded by shouts from the south side of the Gorge where tourists have gathered to watch the climbing 'madmen'

there is Cook - as good as climbed! Tasman, Aspiring ...

It is a moment of delightful romancing. Then the wind becomes cold and unpleasant. We descend, but with an occasional chuckle to each other.

Nicholas Reeves.

(Also in the party were George Kuczera and Chris Hume. N.Z. Dec 73-Jan 74)

June-July, 1974

#### Monthly Meeting Slide Night Report

We had this real beaut meeting the other night. Martin Wardrop came over from Nepal to show us his slides. He had lots of pictures of temples and statues and walking along the dusty road and little villages with funny little huts and smiling kids and people shitting in the streets and lovely mountains and rhododendrons and burning trees falling on them and alpine passes and snow and all. It was real good.

Anon.

December, 1974

#### from A Little Night Walk, or How All (Jim) Hope Was Lost

It was to be a simple trip - merely a drive to Wonthaggi; a two mile beach walk to a pre-arranged fire and hut for a barbeque. Nothing complicated or difficult.

The trip began about the usual time, i.e. 2 hours late, at Harmer's Haven, with the Minister of Supply's high jinks in the sand hills with Laurie (Minister without Portfolio), Kaye and Barbie. (Nick and Sue were meanwhile keeping the fire hot and the beer diminishing). Once on the beach proper, we strolled along under the brilliant moon, putting on moon-burn cream and of course wearing pointed hats.

Time passes (very pleasantly, I might add). We had the usual sort of instructions - a rough sketch on the back of an envelope where Sue had drawn in all the coastal bumps (a few extra appeared after bumping her tea) plus all

obvious landmarks like "mine", "the rocks end here", and "Thingamee's place - don't go in there: wild dogs, angry bulls and electric fences".

We had a normal sort of map - military, late '30's, the area behind the beach marked as swamp and scrub. Once we thought we had come far enough, we ascended the dunes to take a look at the farms in the area - only to see a suburban street with beachhouses. Hmmm. Press on.

Well, the cliffs became cliffier, the rocks rockier, and the tides tidier. When the waves were breaking at the base of hundred-foot craggy walls, we retreated to the top dunes. We found farms at last - about five miles further on than we should have. As we told ourselves "distances are deceptive."

Well this was not that unusual, and we struck back along a goat-track, a jeep-track, a dirt-track, and at last the main drag into Cape Paterson, found a street map, went back out of Cape Paterson, missed the turnoff, returned to the turnoff, traversed the town to open farmland, and headed off across the fences until on a distant hilltop Kaye saw lights flashing. Lighthouse? No, it flashed back our signals. Good enough, we thought, and trotted off across another fence.

At this stage, things became quite unusual. Jim disappeared.

Like a good show pony, he baulked the third fence, and then vanished in the middle of flat paddocks at 2 a.m., three hundred yards from the destination.

This was unusual. Nevertheless, we had quite a pleasant barbeque, occasionally speculating on the whereabouts of Jim, and honking horns and flashing lights. Cries of "hopeless situation" and "we've lost ole Jim" lost their novelty after awhile and about 4.30 a.m. we went to bed.

Next morning, Jim was still missing, despite a candle in the window, and after a while we thought we might try a search. We searched Cape Paterson; we searched the beach. We searched the paddocks; we searched the swamps. We searched the roads; we searched Wonthaggi. We rang Melbourne. We gave in.

Meanwhile, tension mounted, and Dave (ex-Minister for Supply) giggled uncontrollably. The others ate and laughed

No. 2, 1964

#### from 'THE GREAT SOUTH LAND'

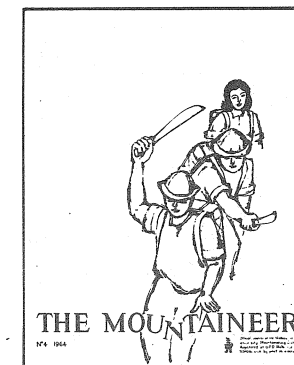
Next morning, we set off for the high plateau of the Reserve, whose surface twists and rolls as was the whim of the Creator. From it one may look far out beyond its walls, past range upon range into nothingness to increase the sense of isolation. And to sober the rash and adventurous spirit further, to remind him that the Reserve can also be harsh and uncompromising, are the snowgums clinging to the crests - bent now to avoid the wrath of the gales, yet lithe and with bright mottled bark as an antidote to the winter snows. Through the timbered ranges the fires have swept in broad swathes, leaving the sombre ridges on the far horizon's rim all hoary-edged as the stubble on an old man's chin. Here, above the young and vigorous saplings, rise the dead giants of the old forest whose bleached limbs show fiercely white in the summer sun. What a contrast to the quiet pines crowding the dark valley sides, whose dense tops strive to bar the last flecks of sunlight from penetrating to the soft gloom below, so that nothing may grow on the open floor save the festoons of vines and the endless furry carpet of moss.

Out on the moors and meadows and valleys of the highlands are the glacial lakes which, like mirages in the desert, beset the traveller to draw him from his course. Those set against the peaks are deep and dark and chill, yet in the meadows their waters are shallow and tepid; their white sandy shores fringed with pandanus palm would almost convince one that they are tropical lagoons.

Often we camped by them. Our cook, as was his habit, would be first up to make the porridge on his little fire, the twigs crackling and leaping about to send up a thread of blue smoke wavering into the clear morning air. "Get up, you lazy beasts", he would exhort, shaking the tent for emphasis, "the best part of the morning is slipping past." And if the mood took him, he would recite a couplet from Omar Khayyan for the benefit of any nearby birds, then race down to the water to be first in for our morning swim.

LES SOUTHWELL.

No. 4, 1964



#### MORNING AT SILVERBAND

It is several hours since dawn, yet the camp still sleeps. The sun is just beginning to break through the morning mist revealing a pale blue sky, indicative of a fine June day. The birds have been about for some time, and call to each other as they dart about the camp seeking edibles in the dew dampened grass. Some dare to approach a tent, but retreat hurriedly at a groan or snore from a sleeping camper. Slowly the dew is drying out of the scrub and grass.

Then there is stirring in a tent, and a scruffy head extrudes from one end followed by a dishevelled body. He shivers for a moment as his blood adjusts to the morning air, much cooler than the warmth of his sleeping bag, then stretches and yawns. He pulls on his boots, but leaves the laces untied which causes his walk to appear clumsy as he makes his way to the still glowing embers of last night's fire. A few dry twigs and steady blowing soon give it new life.

Having thrown on the remaining twigs he takes a water bag down to the creek. The filled bag is left on a grassy patch of the bank while he douses his face, breathing out heavily at the first contact with the mountain chilled water. The excess soon drains from his face and he brushes back wet hair with his hands. His step is not so heavy as he returns.

The fire is burning well so he adds two chunky logs and places a blackened billy on them. The birds are now quieter, and the sun is becoming warmer. The rest of the camp will soon wake, with people appearing everywhere from green and orange tents. The



A few very hurried comments on life at  
Mawson, within a couple of hours before  
the departure of the Nella Dan for  
warmer latitudes

This year almost 20% of the party at Mawson consist of M.U.M.C. members. Max Corry is the surveyor, John Bennett the moral physicist, Don Allison the power electrical engineer, Scott Cameron the doctor and myself the electronics engineer. Altogether there are 27 people on the base. Don, John, Scott and I have been here almost two months, whilst Max has just arrived, having spent his time on a survey of the country west of here whilst based on the ship.

The trip down was unprecedentedly calm and virtually nobody suffered from seasickness. Our good fortune with the weather has continued. So far we have not experienced a blizzard. We have had winds up to about 60 knots and some we experienced last summer in the New Zealand Alps. Winter will of course bring another story. We have had many fine days when with the temperature in the high 30's (F) it has been quite enjoyable strolling around in the sunshine in light clothes. I think everybody has found more than enough work to do. I know I have been busy. Too busy I fear to have written the letters that I should have. Now with the departure of the ship only a couple of hours away and still no letters written I must apologise to my friends.

A lot of the time has been spent in settling in activities, such as unloading the ship and unpacking equipment. Don and I both have "dongas" in Shackleton Hut. There are four sleeping huts, Shackleton, Balleny, Wilkins and Ross. Each hut can accommodate 7 men each in a curtained off 6' x 6' cubicle. John and Max are in Balleny and Scott is in Wilkins. I spent quite a bit of my spare time

during my first week ashore remodelling my donga. I repainted it and constructed a variety of shelves and racks for storage. In such a small cubicle it is essential to use all the available space efficiently, and this provides considerable scope for personal ingenuity.

There is a great deal of outdoor interest close to the station. If one doesn't mind the possible consequences of skiing on ice, there are good slopes just behind the rock outcrop on which the station is situated. We have found a good steep snow slope only 10 minutes walk from the station, which is ideal for practicing step-cutting, cramponing and glissading. Near to this there is a windscur with vertical ice walls where a little artificial climbing may safely be tried.

The country within a twenty mile radius of Mawson contains several ranges which offer great scope for climbing.

Life at the station can not be described as anything but comfortable, and the quality and quantity of the food is excellent.

In fact the kitchen is open all night with large coke stove burning and fluorescent lights ablaze and food within easy reach for anyone inclined to some midnight chomping.

It is fact of human nature that no matter where one is, there are times when one wishes to be elsewhere. And I daresay that before the year is over there will be times when I will wish I was at Arapiles, or sitting by a campfire near Mt. Cobberas, or cooking under the stars in Waterfall Valley, or sunbaking on Digger Bland. However at present the prospect of the year here is good. I daresay that between the five of us we will have many stories to tell and even more colour slides to show when we arrive home some time in 1966.

Greg Martin.

May, 1974

ALPINE POEM

Bottled up with doubt.  
By myself, alone with myself,  
Upon the upper bunk.  
Below, chattering, all cook tea.  
Relaxed anticipating a solution  
To the difficulties of the climb.

Sleepless night before the rise.  
No snuggled blanket but a  
Sweaty, open bag.  
Worried, I pre-live the climb  
To magnify the difficulty  
Into an overhanging hell.

Is it the sweat that beckons?  
Those long slogs with blistered feet.  
The need to plod on. Up!  
Until the point of exhaustion  
Driven well home.

Or the fear? That stomachache of fright  
Why the cold, stinging  
To leave a warm bed. Sleep disturbed  
For a long hard day.

Climb,  
Affirm by deed.  
Reach that ledge, look around.  
Feel the long way down.  
A dramatic posture. Contrived!  
Half way up a mountain. Absurd!  
To climb is to give a theatrical rejection  
To thumb at the role.  
Acting a role. Cast as ourselves.

Nicholas Reeves.

(The editors felt that the following quote from Oscar Wilde to be appropriate at this point:  
"He leads his readers to the latrine and locks them in.")

May, 1974

The West Ridge of Mt. Maltebrun. 10,400'

Starts before dawn are a necessary evil in Alpine Climbing. They exist to be endured. They are there to try your patience, to test your resolution, and to make you a better person for the experience....I cannot abide them.

Warm sleep is disturbed; in the half light of torches we must dress, eat our cold muesli, and stumble on our way. It is hard to be confident in the cold dark. The climb seems improbable, and the warm hut so close. But, even though we verbally express our intention of quitting, we keep on. We are each grumpy and insufferable. We feel so sorry for ourselves as the long dull glacier trudge continues .....then comes dawn.

The mountains are very beautiful in the first moments of light. After the dark, in the dawn light they appear magical. They are soft crimson towers, vibrant, full of vague promises.

With the sun rise comes the harsh light of day, and reality. Through snow goggles, in the white glare, the peaks no longer seem so mystical. They are there to be climbed. High up on Maltebrun our bodies begin to warm. Confidence comes as we can see where we are going. Increasing height gives us excitement. We become happy, those first few moments of exhilaration come, only to be tempered a few minutes later with the realization that we still have far to go.

The dull snow plod ends when we reach the west ridge itself; long, razor sharp much of the way, and tremendously exposed. We look down a thousand feet each side. But the rock is good and the climbing very easy, so we move unbelayed. It is satisfying to move steadily along the ridge, conscious of the vast depth below our feet, and aware that we are climbing so well that we will not fall. We move quickly. It is great climbing and the discomfort of a few hours ago is forgotten.

A short ice ridge and then, the summit ....success! Exultant, we laugh long, great surges of mirth. We act: each of us dramatically crest the top, ice axe poised. We cannot help grinning at each other. We are all at once on top of Maltebrun, and upon the summit of any other peak we care to climb. Success generates excessive optimism: over

December, 1973

Next day we drop into Terrible Hollow, cross the Wonnangatta River and climb the Devils Staircase; a steep 3000 ft. through scrub; to Macalister Springs; very glad to spend a night in the hut. A storm is brewing.

I awake next morning and peer outside. White-out, a gale blows and a fresh blanket of powdery snow covers everything. No-one is anxious to go outside and breakfast is drawn out. Eventually, nature calls and we all have been forced to expose ourselves to the elements. Should we go on. The Crosscut Saw will be hell in weather like this. Nick rigs up a kilt from an old plastic garbage bag; not having any overpants. We all laugh.

Out into the storm. Onto the Crosscut. The wind bites. Fortunately, it is not snowing. A complete white-out, however, and navigation is tricky. The snow slippery and near vertical drops into the clouds below don't give the perfect feeling of security. Rugged rocky outcrops traversed. Massive towering walls loom through mist. Mount Buggery reached and the snow floats down. A quick dash over Mt. Speculation and we are back on the Forests Commission's super highway. Six more arduous miles, dripping wet, to Cobbler Lake and our cars.

But the trip is not over yet. We still have to get our car down the jeep track to Bennies, 13 miles away, and with all the rain the track's condition certainly has not improved. 2 hours it takes. Sheer hell, nerve racking tension, sliding down greasy mountain roads, brakes wet, ploughing through feet deep puddles and bog holes, bouncing on rocks and soaking wet and shivery all the way.

How we made it, I don't know, but somehow, "That was a real trip, that was!"

AUNT ABIGAIL

Dear Aunt Abigail,

I have been disgusted and outraged to read, in the last two issues of the Mountaineer, your revolting column.

What is the club coming to? I disagree with the introductory remarks that the size of the club means that it contains Mountaineers with Problems, Mountaineers are simple-minded beings - children of the earth, you might say. They are at peace with the world and those around them - they have no Problems.

I am forced, therefore, to conclude that you have written all those letters yourself. No true blooded Mountaineers could be afflicted with such hangups.

This column is just cheap sensationalism at its very worst - for those who seek such reading I suggest that they become club dropouts and catch a taxi to the nearest newsagent where they can indulge their weakness via any number of other publications.

Yours in mountaineering,

Disgusted Old Timer

(This letter was forwarded to Aunt Abigail, who declined to comment, beyond assuring us that all letters received are genuine, and that she would be delighted to meet another Disgusting Old Timer - Eds.)

No. 8, 1965

THE MOTHER

In a previous issue there have been articles on N.Z. trips. However there are many other areas suitable for longer trips in the long vacation.

PARTY	Mr. and Mrs. P. Willy
TRIP	Rabaul-Rabalankaia - The Mother - Bai Village
DATE	21st-22nd April
PLACE	New Britain, T.P.N.G.

The Mother is the largest of a group of dormant volcanoes which tower over and separate the township of Rabaul from the Pacific Ocean. From Rabaul the upper slopes of the Mother above the tree-line appear to be smooth grass covered easy slopes, and consequently, every so often people are tempted to make the trip up to its summit. Val and I set out from Rabaul at 4.30 p.m. 21st April and headed towards the nearest place of ascent. After only a few minutes walking we were at the beginning of the climb and followed a vague track ever upwards for 1,100' vertical distance. This took two hours and we made camp at the end of a very narrow ridge. This ridge, about six feet wide at most on top, was really the rim of another volcano - Rabalankaia - which is joined to the side of the Mother. Hence on one side we had an uninterrupted view of Simpson Harbour and Rabaul township including the airstrip while on the other side was an almost sheer drop of 500 feet to the inside of the crater, now overgrown with jungle.

After spending half the night swatting mosquitoes we arose with first light and set out immediately in order to cover as much ground as possible before the sun began beating into us. Similar to the day before we traversed more light jungle climbing about 500 feet before coming out onto the deceptive "smooth grass covered easy slopes" of the final stretch. Now the sun had us full in its sights and we felt the attraction of our one

waterbottle very strongly. However one must carry water for the whole trip and so we were forced to ration ourselves carefully. Leaving the tree line we entered the kunai grass slopes. In places, this kunai grass is taller than a man and we had to struggle against it all the way to the top. At 10.00a.m. we reached the summit, 2247 feet, with the finest view of land and sea I had ever seen. Because of the strong heat of the sun we retreated from the Mother as soon as we had drank in the wonderful view and a tin of pears

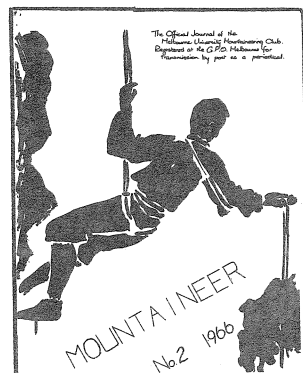
Heading down the opposite side we soon entered thick undergrowth and were confronted with innumerable spiders. Anyone who makes a similar trip through these 'spider forests' will know just how nerve-wracking such a trip can be. I have yet to discover the name of these spiders which on the average were three inches across (including legs) and the biggest we saw would have easily covered a six inch span. Black legs and body with yellow, orange or red markings on their back they blend beautifully with the tropical background and often we found ourselves blundering through their web before seeing them. They always sat immobile in the very centre on the web, which was invariably spanning our path. Our estimation for the trip was about fifty of these beasties.

From the peak of the Mother to Bai Village we dropped 2,200 feet vertically within a somewhat lesser distance horizontally which brought us out to the sea. Without hesitation we walked fully clothed into the sea and cooled off. After being treated to numerous coconut drinks and mandarines by the local natives we set off on our return trip via Nordup Village. Once on the road again a truck lift brought us home within 24 hours of beginning the trip.

Recommendations: Take plenty of water, film, energy and it is the best short trip you will ever do.

Phil and Val Willy

No. 2, 1966



from  
Buffalo Gorge, North Wall - A Brief History

In the final, and successful, attempt, "Spider" driving from Sydney joined the other three at Buffalo on 11th February. Rising at dawn on the 12th the party reached the foot of Comet Ramp and the main wall at 9.15 a.m. The previously climbed three pitches were repeated and the crux chimney climbed to the vital chimney in quick time. The problem of route finding beyond this point occupied several hours, which necessitated a bivouac on small ledges. The final three pitches were climbed the next morning, the climb finishing exactly 24 hours from the time of starting....

#### Emperor

750' V.S. and Al.

First ascent: Ted Batty, Ian Speedie, Reg Williams, and Mike Stone.

Buffalo again. Oh hell. It's not the climbing I dislike. I've done that before - but the drive up the Buffalo Rd. with Speedie at the wheel - absolutely undecipherable. Seventeen miles the signpost at Porpunkah says, so resigning myself with a prayer I tightened my seat belt, girded my loins (metaphorically), took two quells and spent the next half hour or so singing ancient Druid madrigals with my eyes closed. This, I may add, clashed rather badly with Reg Williams, who was singing something that sounded like a bad cross between Requiem Mass and the Seekers latest in a somewhat nasal tenor filtering through that well known beard in the back seat. He, I gathered, also was worried.

"You can open your eyes now", says Ian

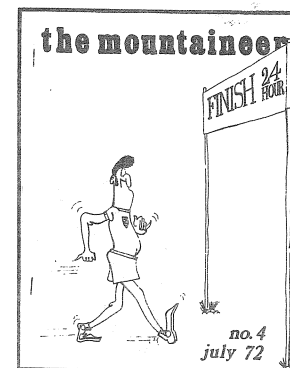
with extreme sarcasm "we're at the top". I was in no mood to resist so I opened them, just in time to see a wall of dirty great trees whirl past my windows at a speed which I estimated on the spot to be roughly 67.2 m.p.h. With a low moan I closed my eyes again, and let them say that way until I was absolutely sure the car had stopped at the camp ground. On the journey up I had noticed that I had found it hard to breath, but put it down to sheer terror acting on my frail body.

Now I realised that I was wrong. Reg, it turned out, had been using my shirt collar as a panic handle, and it took us over five minutes to loosen his fingers from around my neck. We decided that rigor mortis had set in, so mumbled a couple of burial services and threw him out on the snow plain. Some people may think this the action of a callous person but we didn't want him to affect the rest of the food in the car.

On the snow plain was a small, dirty, badly pitched, yellow tent. "Looks like Spider's here from Sydney", said Ian, and I thought I detected a slight note of bitterness in his voice as he said it, but I could be wrong. I personally was extremely glad. Spider on the following day, was going to get my vote to lead the hard pitches, and I wanted him in good condition. "Spider, you rotten New South Welshman", screamed Ian. "Wake up and say hello", and then turns to me muttering about the appalling manners of the damn foreigners who seem to be cluttering up the climbing areas now-a-days. Eventually a rather sleepy and peeved voice said what b...s we were, (this was definately unfair, I thought, as Spider had never met my parents, and besides I have an older brother, and what does that make him?) and did we know what time it was? I obligingly informed him that it was about midnight, for which he didn't even thank me. I mentally agreed with Ian's comments on New South Welshmen and their lack of manners.

We decided to bed down without pitching tents, as the night was fine. I had been lying in my sleeping bag for some five minutes when I heard a noise. To be more exact, I heard a noise over the already existing noise; Speedie, you see, was already asleep, and snoring with

July, 1972



#### "THAT WAS A TRIP, THAT WAS!"

A report of a trip through a 'wilderness' that was, by Arnold Wheeler

Saturday morning. Nick and Theo frozen solid in sleeping bags. Thanks to the friendly shooters camping nearby, their fire thawed us out.

One hell of a drive up to Cobbler Lake. Not recommended for cars in any condition. Rocks back in the bottom of our car. Tyres cut about. Coming out was worse.

Start walking. Five minutes later. Lost! Taken the wrong track. Logging tracks everywhere. Anne suffering from the dreaded lurgi. Find proper jeep track and head south.

Suddenly, super highway. Four letter words pour forth. Last time I came through here there was just a rickety, rustic, overgrown jeep track all the way to Speculation. Quite pleasant then. So, this is the foul and evil work of the Forests Commission. We feel like turning back. Curse the chap, no names mentioned, who said we couldn't get across Woolly-Butt Saddle. "You might get snowed in", he said. No snow anywhere. We could have driven right up to Speculation and saved a days walking along this stupid highway. We decide to go on. Four miles of highway slogging. Curse. Swear.

Have lunch on the side of Mt. Koonika. Wide spaces to Buller. A green carpet. We reach Speculation and decide to push on. Thick scrub and a steep drop to Catherine Pass.

Oh, my dear Forests Commission. I thank you so much for what you have left us. Bulldozed eternity. Smashed trees, burnt scrub, rubbish heaps. Our Alpine track ravished. Here they are pushing their machine

of destruction into Terrible Hollow, our last potential wilderness area. Another superb bushwalking area destroyed. Why must it go on. Surely, as bushwalkers, we have just as much right to "do our own thing?" What should I do? Thoughts of direct action. Sugar in their petrol tanks. Other pernicious acts of vandalism haunt the mind.

The sun's setting. No campsite, no water. We park on the ridge leading to Mt. Despair. Oh, despair! Nick and myself head off into the scrub in search of water. Anne and Theo set up camp. We find water. Hurray! No clouds in sky, a cutting wind, a frozen night.

Up at 6 o'clock. Over Mt. Despair and down into a saddle. The fun starts. Rocky outcrops, sloping slabs and thick scrub to be negotiated. Slow progress. Superb special views to Mt. Buffalo. Like flying a plane over a rolling sea of feathery green carpet. A maze of creeks and rivers below. Towering rock buttresses, cliffs and a jagged ridge leads out to the Razor.

The Razor reached. Magnificent. We sit, soak up the atmosphere. It seeps right through to the soil. You reflect on the beauty around you. The lingering idea of a creeping, hideous, destroying Forests Commission lurks in the back of your mind. How can they do what they do. Surely, had any of their top men sat upon the throne of the Razor they would see the light. But no, the machine creeps uncontrollably on.

So we creep on, slowly, reaching Viking Saddle. A towering cliff above, golden radiant in the afternoon sun. A long steep scramble leads to the Viking's summit. The ragged Razor with its long sloping slabs thrusts its mighty bulk skywards. Crystal clear. Gentle feelings of isolation, wilderness surrounding. Surprise! What is this? A packet of lime happy ade in the Viking log book. Left by Graeme Oakes and party in December 1970 for the fabled Glay's Viking trip scheduled for the following month. Geoff's trip was washed away by flash floods and the packet of happy ade was not collected. Here it had sat for one and a half years. Untouched and in perfect condition, it was. The delectable flavour soothed our parched lips that night. Sorry, Geoff. It's 6 o'clock before we find a campsite and once again Nick and myself descend into the valley below to find water while Anne and Theo set up camp.



July, 1971

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Madam,

I am becoming increasingly alarmed about the direction in which the Club is moving. The large size of M.U.M.C., as reflected in last year's turnover of just under \$10,000 and the large sphere of activities of this club, makes it increasingly necessary for tighter organisation. We may soon be reaching the status of a business corporation where we may be showing, perhaps unintentionally, less respect for the needs of our members and more respect for the mighty dollar.

We cannot return to the 'good old days' when the accounts did not balance and membership lists did not exist, but I wish to make a plea for less bureaucracy and a more personal touch in helping keen new members and other people interested in our activities. Our activities must remain purely recreational and not largely financial.

The problem is how to recapture that old atmosphere about which Tom Kneen always seems to talk, without letting the club run into chaos.

Unfortunately, as an embedded bureaucrat, I cannot offer any solutions.

Harry Schaap.

July, 1971

The following letter was sent to M.U.M.C.:

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a donation to the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club, being a small way of expressing my thanks for the shelter of the M.U.M.C. hut on Mt. Feathertop when I was lost on the mountain on the afternoon of Monday 19.4.71, after walking up the Bungalow Spur Track. I could not find my way back after passing the Memorial Cross when snow started to fall. When I came on the hut, I was wet through and

almost frozen. I was able to dry my clothes, and I stopped in the hut for the night, during which there was a very bad storm. The temperature in the hut was 42 and water in a tin outside the hut was a block of ice in the morning. Everything was covered with thick snow. I don't think I would have survived the bitterly cold night in the open. I found my way back to Harrietville down the North West Spur on Tuesday, guided by the plastic markers on the trees. Thanking you again.

Yours truly,

Don Angus

(This donation will be used for the hut)

July, 1972

The Editor,

I must thank you for your informative, witty and well put together journal. It does you credit sir!

Here in the depths of the darkest jungles of New Guinea I may say that it is only the thought of the next issue of your masterpiece that keeps me from going around the twist. (And of course, from the brilliance of my writing it is obvious that I haven't, have I or have I, I hope I haven't). The knowledge that beyond this vista of trees, rocks, slime etc. there is a world of trees, rocks and slime waiting to be hiked through is bliss.

Even the knowledge that when Hughie is sending his nightly inch or two or three etc. he still has time to spare for the poor slob in Victoria is heartening.

However, the real reason for writing is to assure all that I am still alive and hiking; am I ever hiking - seven days a week - four weeks a month. However, I have one major advantage. I do not have to carry my own load so I can have two packs full carried by my sturdy porters. I think I will import a few for my ordinary hiking as I will soon be so used to it that I will not be able to change back.

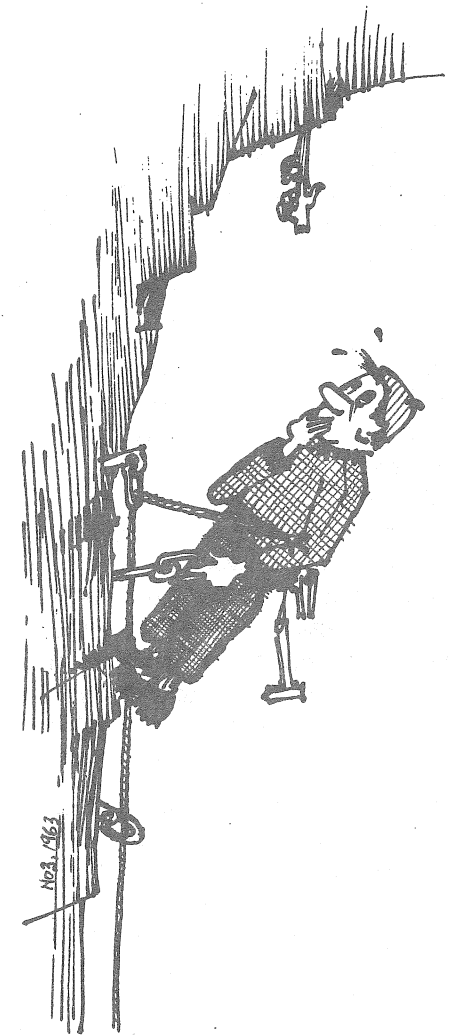
And a happy OXO to all good  
Oxomen and women  
Paul Callander.

the explosive force of a battery of twenty-five pounders. More queer noises wafted over from near the car, and looking over I saw something move. A puzzled frown floated over my face, as I realized that there was where we had flung Reg. An animal, I thought, has come to eat Reg. I was just wishing it luck and turning over to go back to sleep when I saw Reg get up and walk unsteadily to the car. That did it. "Speedie," I said. "Reg isn't dead." The snoring stopped like an air raid siren suddenly switched off. "Don't be bloody stupid, of course he's dead," said Ian. "We said burial services." But there it was, Reg was still with us, so the same four were ready to tackle the North Wall of the Buffalo Gorge the following day.

The following morn, somewhat early, Reg let himself go with a loudish, getting up type yell, which was noticeable mainly for its enormous failure to rouse the other three. However, with the help of several well placed kicks, and a billy of cold water the party was cheerfully gathered in the shed eating their various nauseous breakfasts. After packing all the gear into four packs we found that there was room for only 6 pints of water, 3 bars of chocolate, 2lbs of scroggin, and one tin of peaches, and thus we predecided that we were not going to be hungry.

At approximately seven o'clock Spider patiently showed us how to do a N.S.W. type twisted knot abseil, and after about 23 attempts I eventually managed to make it run. At about 9 o'clock we were all gathered at the foot of the climb, ready and eager to start climbing.

We punched and kicked Ian until he volunteered to lead the first pitch, and then we untied his hands, as we didn't want him to be under any handicaps for the climb. When he had finished the first pitch, which I grudgingly admit is quite difficult, we threw him up the ropes so that he could belay us up. Being the largest person there I asserted my right to climb last, and consequently, by the time Spider and I had hauled the packs up and arrived on the belay ledge, Reg was well on the way on the artifical. To speed him on his way and amuse ourselves, we flung rocks at



him, and took bets as to which swear words he would use when he was hit. He climbed the pitch surprisingly quickly, but when he reached the bolt belay at the foot of the Spider Walk, he did not want to belay us up. We were surprised, nay hurt would be a better description of our feelings, as we pointed out that we had his food and water down on the ledge with us, and that he wouldn't get it until we got up there.

I went up the ladder of entriers, and then brought Spider up to tackle the narrow chimney. After sorting out a tangle of ropes Spider led off up the Spider Walk and very quickly reached the bolt in the foot of the chimney, which marked the previous highest point reached last December, where we belayed.

With a nasty sinking feeling I suddenly realised that it was my turn to lead; my turn to explore the unknown; my turn to risk my life on the sharp end of the rope; my turn to vomit. But try as I could, I couldn't make the others see how much more fitted they were for leading than I. I pointed out that I had twenty-seven maladies and diseases ranging from diarrhea (nearly true) to house-maids knee (totally untrue), but it apparently fell on deaf ears. Ted cut the argument short by suddenly taking in rope, and without much climbing I was next to him on the belay point.

I decided that I must make the best of it, so started (in a filthy mood) up the chimney. After a short distance I banged in Reg's lovely, shiny, new, photographic Charlot Mosea Universal, up to the hilt and prepared to belay. Spider subtly changed my mind by crushing my left foot with his piton hammer and requesting that I kept climbing. So up I went. Unfortunately there was nowhere to stop, until a chock-stone at about 100', so I stopped there and defied the world at large to move me off it. Reg then came up and tried unsuccessfully to force a direct route out of the top of the chimney, cunningly tiring himself out in the process. As there was only room for one on the chock-stone, and Reg had the best position for a punch up, I decided to lead on, and after getting into the worst possible tangle with my two ropes, piton

hammer, drill and three etriers all clipping through my piton carrier, I managed, Tarzan like, to reach a ledge. I decided it was impossible to bivouac on that ledge and kept moving until I reached a better one that had some grass on it. The others eventually came up to join me, Ian in the dark, and we selected our bivy spots. Reg and I got the big ledge, being first there and decided that there was only room for two. Ian and Ted bivouaced elsewhere.

After quite a good night we kept going and at exactly 9.30 the Ranger attempted to book us for illegal camping. We discouraged him from attempting to collect the fines by promises of three King's Cross Whispers which we had back at camp.

After a thoughtful breakfast, Ted left for N.S.W. and home and we faced the drive back down the Buffalo Road, so resigning myself with a prayer, I tightened my seat belt, girded my loins (again metaphorically) took two Quells....

Mike Stone

For this article Mike Stone has been awarded the Roger Caffin Memorial (in anticipation) Prize in Journalism. STOP PRESS. Roger, surprisingly, returned from the South West, so the award cannot be made.

March, 1971

### WHAT REALLY HAPPENED DOWN THE SERPENTINE

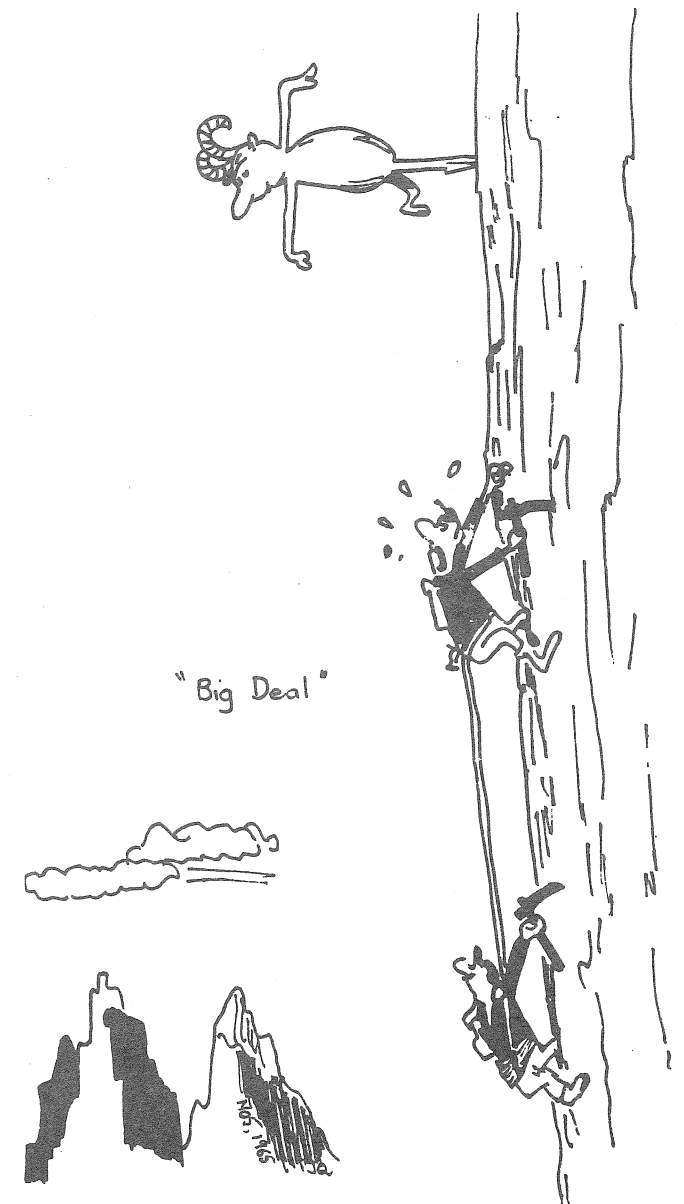
After the party we were with left Lake Pedder for Mt. Anne, Les and I headed off around the lake to where the Serpentine flows out. Les wanted to have a look at the Serpentine and get out to the Gordon Road via the Stillwater Valley. I deny all responsibility for the idea.

We left the lake and climbed a little way above the flats to avoid the swampy ground. The going was quite easy with only a few small scrub-choked creeks. We were moving quite fast and began to think we could get out by early next afternoon. Then we came over the top of the ridge. Our hearts hit the bottom of our boots with a noise like a thousand pentaxes going off at once. The whole valley was choked with scrub, thick, nasty, impenetrable-looking swampy scrub, and the route went across it and it looked as if there would be more further on.

At times like that the true measure of a man shows out. Once, I suppose, there would have been little hesitation, but you get older and wiser and less intrepid. We both carefully explained that neither was in the mood for heroics, that we had only come to have a look at the Serpentine, and now that we had seen it we didn't like it, and that it didn't really matter if we didn't go down it anyhow. Besides, we wanted to be in Hobart the next night. In the end we compromised and sloshed about a third of the way across before getting entangled in a mess of titree. From the top of a tree we could see nothing but more of the same so discretion got the better part of valour and we returned to the lake.

To make matters worse, Les' exposure meter played up and I had to take all his readings. All of them! But we now know where Tolkien set the Land of Mordor. It is in South-West Tasmania somewhere hard under the jagged quartzite ranges and ringed by vast swamps.

Tom Kneen



July, 1971

The highest known tree in the Barmah State Forest is 153' high .... (An item of interest for those who appreciate the flavour of Happy Ade).

March, 1971

THE LOWER GLENELG CANOEING TRIP.

Canoeing, is it for me? The Canadian canoes are quite large and can take all of my luxuries - canned fruit, lilo, jaffle iron, the works. And, what's more, the current carries you downstream - no effort. And the Lower Glenelg trip seemed more attractive - no whitewater so no chance of tipping out.

On Friday night I set out with a car load of passengers heading for a clearing just over Moleside Creek, a tributary of the Glenelg, some 260 miles from Melbourne, marked clearly with a tick on the zeroxed map that was thrust into my hands on the day before.

An early start the next morning! By 10.30 we were in the river after having left two cars at Nelson, twenty miles downstream. Alas, the river was motionless, so some rudimentary points of pushing the paddle through the water were received. The 'jay' stroke - most aptly named - was supposed to allow one person to paddle a Canadian canoe in a straight line. Also, with two in the boat, who is boss and who sits where? Ah, we were told, the person in the back has much more control over the direction of travel so he is the captain. Also, the stronger stirrer, sorry - paddler, sits aft and, one more, to prevent 'jay canoeing' it is best to paddle on opposite sides of the canoe. However, as in each of the four Canadians (there was also a one man kayak on the trip) there was one girl and one bloke, it was impossible for the more prolific stirrer to sit aft as well as the captain. I mean, well you

married blokes will understand, if she is up front then so is the captain! This paradox was solved in one case by the erection of a brilliant yellow sail and the elimination of all paddling.

The river wound underneath precipitous limestone cliffs and past many old boat-sheds each with its own dilapidated jetty jutting out over the water. Saturday night was spent at Canoeman's camp; a collection of huts beneath a huge walnut tree and a large cyprus tree populated with possums. The limestone cliffs behind gave a sense of isolation; a secluded spot well away from the roar and smog of the city. The downing of tea preceded the rising of an almost full moon. Its rays silvered through the silhouetted gangling gums standing guard on the cliffs opposite. The night was still, the river warm and the soft splish of the fishing lines hitting the water hyphenated the melodies from the harmonicist and vocalist in canoes somewhere out there amongst the splashes of moonlight.

Psssst went the Aeroguard and then a pleasant night under the stars. A cloudless sky and beaming sun beckoned us into the canoes for the last 10 miles into Nelson. A diversion to one of the caves in the cliffs before lunch, and playing chicken with power boats after lunch as we neared Nelson brought a most enjoyable trip to an end.

Yes, I am a canoeist!

by: Noel or Gaye or Ian or Liz or  
Tony or Cath or Bob or Greg or Ellen.

March 1967

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

To travel in a van with twenty or thirty other "Mountaineers" is to travel as a club.

In the van, one can make many new friends.

In the van, yarns are told.

In the van, singing takes place. It is not necessary to know the words, much less the tune.

Club personalities shine in the van.

The expense of van travel is shared by all.

Frivolities, such as tossing someone's boot - or someone to the end of the van cannot distract the driver.

The van stops halfway. The "Club" enters a cafe and eats and talks.

As a beginner, four years ago, the van portion of the trip was, and still is, a highlight of the trip. It was in the van that I heard the origon of "OXO". It was in the van that I heard the "B.....From The Bush". It was in the van that I met Max, Peter, Geoff, David, Cath, Sue, Carol, Robyn, Fred, etc. etc.....

I expressed some of these points at a recent committee meeting and a committee member, who prefers to travel by car with three or four people he has known for months, perhaps years, said "Kerr! , you are a reactionary, conservative b.....!"

Do you agree? i.e. Should the club run all trips by private transport?

Tony Kerr.

March 1967

Fallen Angels Club News

In early December Kevin Sheehy was leading up the top section of Thunder Crack at Mt. Arapiles when he dislodged a chockstone and fell back onto his top piton which was some distance below. The fall was held by Peter Myers who lowered Kevin to a firm footing below.

A fall in such a serious situation heralds a new era for the Fallen Angels. However, we are still eagerly awaiting the fall which requires a prussick to retain footing. That would be a feat worthy of honorary membership. Unfortunately, most members of the club have been very apathetic of the late and the burden has been falling on a few; that is, only a few have been falling on the burden.



"Don't worry about us Sidney - save yourself!"

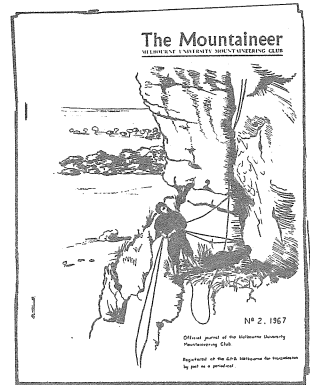
March, 1967

Napoleon of Crime Meets Downfall

In Karns, in Switzerland, the police announced they had finally apprehended The Nude Mountain Skulker, a gentlemen who had been upsetting mountain-climbers by leaping at them from behind rocks dressed only in gym-shoes and a straw hat.



May, 1967



from The M.U.M.C. Memorial Hut,  
Mt. Feathertop

At 5335 ft. on top of a spur on the north-west shoulder of Mt. Feathertop, a shining aluminium structure stands among alpine scrub and snowgum. Visible from the Ovens Valley and from the surrounding mountains, it is a fitting memorial to Club members Russell Judge and Douglas Hatt who lost their lives climbing Mt. Cook, N.Z. in January, 1965. Someday a full account of the building of the hut will be written; in the meantime a short article on the project seems in order.

Following the tragedy, the Club decided a suitable Memorial should be constructed, and after some discussion a hut on Mt. Feathertop was chosen. A hut sub-committee under Nick White was formed and work on the choice of site, design and fund raising commenced in April 1965.

Reconnaissance parties wandered over most of the slopes and spurs of the mountain before deciding on a knoll on the north-west spur as the best site. The view in all directions was magnificent, a spur down which a track could be cut ran directly to the Ovens Valley, and road access was reasonable without being too close. The site lay within the boundaries of the Mt. Hotham Alpine Reserve, and permission to build was obtained from this Authority.

Phil Waring

May, 1967

Professor Sir Thomas Macfarland Cherry  
K.C.B. F.R.S.

On the 21st November 1966, Professor Sir Thomas Cherry died at the age of 69. The first Honorary Life Member of the Club, he was also the Club's first President, a position he held for six of the Club's first nine years.

From early youth the Prof. held a passionate interest in the outdoors; scouting caught his imagination and for thirty-eight years he was a Scout leader. Following on his early Scout experience in Australia he founded the Cambridge University Rover Crew in 1925, and later on returning to Australia to take up an appointment in Melbourne University, he became leader of the University Rover Crew. Still later, following the disbanding of this rover crew, he became Rover Leader of the Scotch College Rover Crew, a position he held for twenty-one years until his retirement from Scouting in 1961.

The Prof. climbed his first mountain, Mt. Dandenong, in 1907 and in the years that followed he climbed 242 more in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, U.S.A. and Scandinavia; 24 of these peaks were climbed in the last 6 years! A competent rock climber, his early tuition set many members on the path to achieve the high standards of rock climbing that are maintained in the Club today.

He will long be remembered by those generations of Club members who came under his leadership and influence in the forties and early fifties and all who walked with him, if not for his skyline tours, or a morning's walk lengthening into the afternoon as an inspiring site for a lunch stop was sought, or the extra mile or two added to a day's walk to reach a lake or river for a swim. Also that ancient felt hat and frameless pack, supplemented when additional capacity was required, by a sugar bag in front, and the maps on the back of an envelope.

Then it would be the memory of a simple man, unassuming to the point of reticence, an artful strategist who invariably could produce

August, 1970

17 HOUR NIGHT ALPINE ORDEAL

Wangaratta, Tues. 11th August:

A 22 year old engineering student is in Wangaratta Base Hospital recovering from a terrifying 17 hour ordeal on the icy slopes of Mt. Feathertop. Twenty university students defied darkness, rain and ice-covered rocks to carry the injured man to safety.

Rod Tucker, of Panoramic Drive, North Balwyn, broke his leg in a mishap near the summit of the mountain at noon yesterday. A toboggan and pieces of wood were used to make a stretcher to carry Tucker 5500 ft. down treacherous slopes. Tucker's friends, all members of Melbourne University Mountaineering Club, splinted his leg with pieces of wood before starting their courageous rescue.

Tucker was wracked with pain for almost 11 hours before he was given pain-killing drugs by a member of a rescue party from Bright. Several university students collapsed from exhaustion when they reached the Ovens River at 5.30 a.m. today.

The drama began when Tucker was practising "self arrests" near the summit. He was deliberately tumbling down the side of a gully and was attempting to dig his ice-axe into the snow to stop his fall. However his leg caught an obstruction and broke above the knee. One of the 10 club members with him raced half a mile to the club's hut and gave the alarm.

Rescuers had to dig a track through 5ft. of ice and snow before Tucker could be carried to the hut. The party had descended about 1500 ft. by sunset and Tucker was transferred to a stretcher made from wood at the hut. Tucker was securely roped to the stretcher and the treacherous descent down the narrow one-man path began in darkness. Eight people - one in front, one at the rear and three on either side - were guided down the rock strewn track by other rescuers with torches. For most of the descent, three stretcher bearers were at least four feet above the stretcher and three others were three to four feet below it.

At 10.30 p.m. the rescue party met First Constable J. Owens of Bright. First Constable Owens was accompanied by Les Autlip, John Keating, Charles Autlip, all members of the

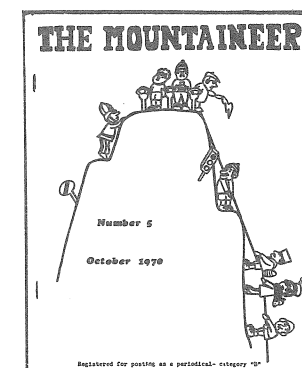
Bright Rescue Group and Ewen Lowe, an ambulance officer. At that stage Tucker and the rescue party were still four miles from the Harriettville Road. First Constable Owens said the members of the rescue party were in "pretty bad shape" when his party reached them.

First Constable Owens said they were half way back to the ambulance when the stretcher broke and it had been necessary to go back to the ambulance for another. The rescue party reached the Ovens River at 5.30 a.m. but Tucker and his rescuers had to run the gauntlet of crossing the river. A long rope was tied to the stretcher and fastened to an anchor point on the bank and First Constable Owens and Ewen Lowe made the precarious crossing 15 feet above the turbulent water. Tucker was taken to Wangaratta Base Hospital. He is in a satisfactory condition and will be taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital tomorrow.

Wednesday, August 12, 1970  
Page 1, Border Morning Mail.

October, 1970

GUTS OF THE YEAR AWARD



Geoff Lay was this year's winner of this coveted award. Unfortunately he ate it before it could be presented to him.

December, 1970

Recently, a 153 lb. case of stunk, a relic of Totter's first reconnaissance of Mt. Rumdoodle, was sold at auction for forty thousand and one half bohees.

An item of interest for those who appreciate luxury from the makers of Happy Ade.

August, 1970

OPERATION HAPPY MAIL  
(Codenamed Chuck)

Those readers with acute perception, and an ability to read between the lines, will probably be aware by now that the overworked state of your dedicated (!) LHSO is due mainly to the persistent presence in the store of a certain commodity. It's no secret of course that the stuff concerned is that wonderful gourmet product known as Happy Ade. For some reason, known only to the Almighty, the ghastly goo just won't, won't sell, and stocks have persisted despite monster sellouts, high pressure sales techniques, and skullduggery. Your LHSO had the greatest success of his career recently, when a Yeti trap was sold at the auction. Alas, the poor unsuspecting buyer realised too late that he was in fact now the proud possessor of a packet of Happy Ade cleverly disguised by your cunning and ruthless LHSO. (Just think - he paid 53 cents!)

Now, as a last desperate measure, I have devised a scheme loaded with devilish cunning that is guaranteed to dispose of the entire remaining stocks in one foul swoop. The scheme is of course top secret, and you must promise not to tell anyone, except all your friends. Listen carefully:

1. Everybody buys ONE packet of Happy Ade (specially reduced by the store to the suicidal price of 17 cents).
2. Write on a small card: "Happy

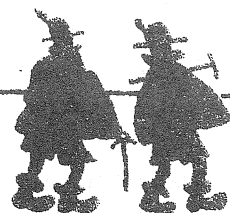
Christmas Mike, from ...." and place the card in the packet.

3. Wrap the packet in brown paper, and tie with light string.
4. Address to:  
Michael Feller,  
C/- Dept. of Forestry,  
University of British  
Columbia,  
VANCOUVER. CANADA.
5. Fill in a customs declaration form: "Sugar free drink powder, value 17 cents"
6. Post SURFACE mail, as soon as possible. (Imagine the disappointment if your Christmas present arrives late)

The above procedure should only cost 9 cents postage, so those generous mountaineers wishing to send their Christmas wishes to Mike will only have to fork out with a total of 26 cents.

Those who do not already know, should be told that Mike Feller was one of the wicked people who originally conspired to put Happy Ade in the store, so I am sure that he will appreciate as many Christmas presents as possible. I need only say that the sooner we get rid of the Happy Ade, the sooner we can get REFRESH. Buy up everybody.

LHSO



"Well, it was there!"

some small variation that would add variety to a hike, his love of Nature, uncanny sense of direction and sound bushcraft, his patience, charm and special sort of personality that promoted confidence regardless of the difficulties of the trip.

John D. Steel,  
January, 1967.

May, 1967

THE TRAVERSE

They had seen the face from the hut verandah that morning, grey and bleak when it should be been etched by the morning sun. Now they were on it, the climb two thirds done, but the crux still to go. It had been raining lightly for several hours; the little moist patches had multiplied and spread until the rock was covered with a uniform wetness.

A comfortable belay and a cigarette aid their discussion. Is "discretion the better part of valour". To go on or forfeit to the conditions and abseil off. Each goes out, tests his footing, but returns undecided. Finally, they check the belay and sort their slings, having decided to continue the climb.

Individually and isolated, each must cross that 40 feet of almost holdless rock. Hesitantly at first, then with increased confidence as they find that the soles still grip on the wet standstone. A foot slips and heart beats wildly, but the boot is just settling onto larger striations. Half way and the piton, with the worst still to go. The last few moves are executed with hopeful deliberation until at last they lead to secure holds and the belay.

They congratulate each other with foolish grins of relief. The top is now only a relatively easy pitch away and the rain has eased off. The valley has filled with mist making the cliffs strangely devoid of surrounds.

Anon.

October, 1967.

THE MOOR. 28th December 1965.  
Emerging from Waterfall Valley en route to Narcissas/Cynthia Bay.

The sullen drifting rain  
Hangs like a cobweb curtain from the clouds  
The path which rises imperceptibly  
Folds greyly into nothingness ahead  
Warm rain obliterates our tracks behind.

From the protection of the wooded cirque  
A faint breeze stirs and flutters in my face,  
The all pervading dullness lightening.  
The clearing misty haze of rain extends  
Away to the horizon, where the moor  
Has etched its profile faintly on the sky.

A sudden brilliant flash between dark shrouds  
Explodes the dimness of the tapestry,  
The wetly gleaming gold of button grass  
Glints dazzlingly against the smoky haze  
Compelling clouds to scatter, till blue skies  
Reflect the open emptiness below.

A sweeping glance behind reveals Barn Bluff,  
Enshrouded in its chrysalid cocoon,  
Its flanking buttresses and bony ribs  
Emerging through the silken twists of mist,  
Until the last veil rising from the cliffs  
Reveals in full the sheer-walled sentinel.

We stand a moment in our leaking boots  
To gaze on this unsullied lonely place -  
Then turn, reluctant, to the plodding path  
That takes us down to Windermere, and men.

Marg James.

October, 1967

from CLIMBS WITH A HISTORY:By H.P. No. 2 - Greg's Direct  
North Jawbone

....An amusing sequence of events took place three years ago when Pete Jackson and Bob Bull combined 'Spraggit', 'Speiglemans Route' and 'Greg's Direct' in sequence to give a superb full length climb. Bob led Greg's Direct with Pete belayed on the right hand side of the traverse. Climbing on a long rope he hoped to reach the top in one pitch. The rope must have been short of 150' for with a few feet still to go they ran out of rope. Not wishing to upset Bob, Pete said nothing but untied and started moving out from the belay holding the rope at arms length. Meanwhile, on the sharp end, and not wishing to upset Pete, Bob had unclipped the rope from his karabiner and attached it to his ankle to gain the extra few feet needed.

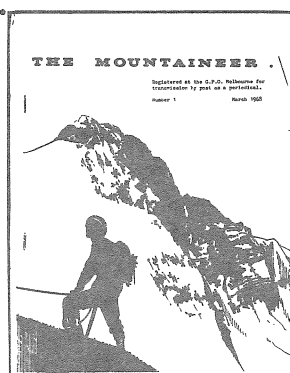
December, 1967

The slightest inadvertent push  
Upon a peak in Hindu Kush  
May cause the mountaineer to fall  
Down to a glacier in Nepal.

December, 1967.

The devoted parent of the year award for this year has been awarded to Mr. and Mrs. Harsant who walked up to Feathertop to tell Margaret of a supp. two days later. What a shame that Marg had missed the transport and was still in Melbourne. Still it's good to see the oldies getting about.

March, 1968.

SKULL ROCK

Eight or so miles SSW from Tidal River, a large lump of granite one quarter of a mile square rises almost vertically out of the sea for 300 feet. On its South Eastern side the 250' cliff is overhanging for its whole height. On its North Western side, there is an enormous 'cave', with its floor 40-50 feet above water level and overhanging the sea. 100-120 feet above the floor the roof overhangs even further, so that the cave is known as 'the Music Bowl' by locals. The floor is covered with tussocky grass and a herb carpet where it is visible from the sea.

This island is officially named Cleft Island and is locally called 'Skull Rock'. To examine the flora and possible fauna of this island I elicited the assistance of climbers who were available and interested in an attempt to make a landing.

In December 1966 and January 1967, there were two attempts involving Jan Nevill (as she was then), Bob Chappel (weilding several cameras at once), Phil Secombe and myself as climbers. Two people, Mick James and Keith Neylands, who were holidaying at Wilsons Promontory at the time became interested, and transported us out in an 18 foot fibreglass runabout (with a 75 hp outboard motor). Because of the type of craft, we had to wait until the weather was calm and the sea dead flat.

At the second attempt, a landing was made. This consisted of jumping overboard and swimming over to the rock, between seals from a nearby colony, waiting until a friendly wave surged up and then hanging like the limpets around me on to finger tip holds as the swell receded. In this manner I actually managed to get about 20-30 feet above sea level, when the wind sprang up from the North West, making instant retreat imperative.

and ten yards out from the base. We have slept in: it is eight o'clock already, so we get moving and soon Andrew is crawling back along the ledge to de-peg the top few feet of the second pitch. I sit in the warmth of my sleeping bag, belaying him as he takes out the pitons that he had to give up on in the dark. Soon he is back, and we get our gear together and lower the sack to the ground. We let go of the rope, and turn our attention to the overhanging crack above us. Andrew leads off. This pitch is free, and with difficulty he edges up the flake with some horribly delicate climbing, to a tiny ledge, and then onto the overhanging wall. A couple of pegs, and he is out onto the pillar, with 250 feet down to the trees below. It is awkward, but it soon eases off, and a victorious shout floats down from the top.

I am cold and very lonely on this exposed little ledge. Checking that we've left nothing behind, I get going, and soon discover that it's every bit as hard as it looks. The distance down to the trees is frightening, and the holds are small. I scamper across the hard bit not knowing what held me on, and arrive at the pegs. They have been here since the first ascent five years ago, and they are both rather loose. I chimney up a bit, swing onto the buttress, and then there is daylight above me at last. Andrew comes into view, and I gladly pull up onto the wide ledge. We are up. It's an anticlimax, and about all we can do is look around for a way off. We scramble to the top, and after having a good look round, it's then more scrambling and a couple of exhilarating free abseils before we get back to the bottom and our packs.

Adrian Davey (with Andrew Thomson)

August, 1970

A CLIMBER REPORTS ON HIS FIRST  
BUSHWALK

I wander lonely as a cloud. The sun's warmth floods down and as I pause to glimpse the fleeting shadows of birds swooping and diving into the valley, I am conscious of my exertion as I wipe the perspiration from my brow. Turning, I continue along the trail and delight in the delicate flowers and damp mosses that adorn its edges. Who could be happier? I ask myself.

Hail cloud, hail flower, hail sun! I am thinking as a turn in the trail sends my ecstatic gaze into the misty blue depths of some forgotten valley. My eye follows the delicate tracery of the foliage on the ridges, and I am filled with inward delight as I stumble over a boulder and transfer my attention to the tiny world of nature at my feet. I get up with dignity, and notice that I have come to rest in an ideal campsite. My tired shoulders rejoice in their freedom as I ease the load from off my back, and, floating lightly around the gully, I notice the beautifully gnarled trees and the fragrant wildflowers growing in haphazard clumps among the rocks. The evening shadows fall as I joyfully gather wood for the fire and pitch the tent in a grassy hollow. Such is life!

A thin, twisted, sinew of dusky blue smoke twines into the sunset sky, as the tops of the trees are set ablaze by the last fleeting rays of a dying sun. I relax by the fire with good food and companionship. The hours pass with talk and song, and then I stumble to the warmth of my sleeping bag.

I am awoken by the scream of a banshee, and, rain beating in my face, I notice shreds of tent blowing in the gale. The next few hours last for ever, as I huddle in the lake that has formed where my tent once stood. As soon as a faint glimmer of daylight appears through the banks of driving cloud, I am up to salvage myself and belongings in the rain. I must look a sorry sight as, snivelling, I strike match after match, and eventually a cloud of choking smoke engulfs me as I get the damp twigs alight. Wringing out my clothes, I rummage round in the mud and chaos and somehow manage to cook some watery porridge, and burn the scrambled egg. Every move is painful, the wet clothes clinging coldly to my back, and eventually I am able to bundle my gear, the tent, and several gallons of water, all into my pack, and set off forlornly down the miserable valley.

Stumbling blindly through the dripping undergrowth, I am aware of every step, as the wet pack straps bite into my shoulders and my boots gradually fill with water. Thick mist swirls menacingly through the trees, but dauntless, I just remind myself that "this beats climbing any day".

George



July, 1970

Seventh Pillar: The Second Ascent

Never underestimate the Grampians. It is raining, and great curtains of mist fill the massive sandstone amphitheatre of Mt. Stapylton. I pay the rope out as Andrew cheerfully belts in a peg and swings onto it. Above, the graceful curve of the overhang sweeps upward into the mist. Grunt, swing, heave; Andrew moves up, thinking what on earth made me come near this miserable place when he calls that he is on the half-way ledge, and I watch him crawl across the traverse and move out onto the bolts. I can see the bent and mangled bolts against the long white guano stain, and at every move Andrew is looking more and more worried. He is moving very fast. Another squall blasts my face, and long thin waterfalls are streaming off the top of this great overhanging cliff 250 feet above me and landing ten yards out from the base of the cliff. A shout of relief, and Andrew is on belay, so I get the sack ready, and swing it out into the abyss. It is very heavy, and we have a lot of trouble with the ropes, but eventually it arrives at the top and I turn my attentions to the climb.

I move up, warm at last, taking out the pitons and gapping at the awesome exposure. Andrew mumbles something about his ledge being mighty uncomfortable, and eventually I emerge from the crack and onto the bolts. I am on one of the better bolts: it's all bent over, and only in about a quarter of an inch. My throat goes dry, and I get a horrible feeling inside as I look at the worse ones. Gingerly, I put my weight onto the next, and Andrew calmly suggests that I wait there for a photo. Muttering obscenities, I ignore him, and literally scamper up the remaining line of bolts to the relative security of the top.

Standing precariously next to his tiny seat on the ledge, I am sorting our gear, and blindly staring at the treetops below. Grey clouds go scudding past, and I am glad to have something to do as I start to lead the second pitch. Muttering a gentle prayer, I step into the etriers clipped into the first piton I have placed, and peer up around the corner. I keep moving up, the ringing of the piton hammer on steel coming regularly as I move up the crack and around the flake. The flake peters out and two bolts lead up to the next. I stare up in horror at the horizontally overhanging flake

and resign myself to putting the pegs vertically up into the crack. I move on, very conscious of the frailty of the two ropes that are my only link back to Andrew shouting encouragement from below. The sun is getting low, and I pull up round the corner and start up the diagonal crack. The sheer, smooth rock is breathtaking, and the drop to the ground is absolutely terrible. I can see the ledge and after some hard pegging and a couple of very loose bolts I can manage a desperate pull-up onto it.

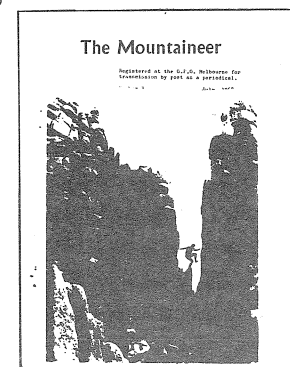
Sitting on this ghastly ledge I soon discover that it wasn't meant for sitting on; the rock forces me to lean forward, and the circulation is cut off from the legs on the edge. I start the long job of hauling the sack up. An icy-cold antarctic gale is blowing the load way off the vertical, but eventually I get the sack up onto the ledge beside me, and Andrew starts on up. It is getting dark. My legs and hands are turning blue with the cold, but I certainly don't envy him one little bit as he comes up in the dark, taking the pegs out as he goes. The last glimmer of sunset goes beneath the horizon, and all we have is the stars.

Misery is a cold ledge in the dark, 200 feet off the ground, with your lucky mate down below keeping warm with the exertion of climbing. Or misery is hanging precariously, belting pitons out in the dark, with your mate comfortably sat on a ledge up above.

No sight could be more welcome than that of Andrew appearing out of the gloom. I hand him the torch, and he crawls awkwardly off along the ledge, looking for somewhere to bivouac. After much trouble on wet rock, and difficult knobs and squeezes, he reaches the widest part of the ledge, and gets on belay. I swing the sack over towards him, 70 feet away in the dark, and start crawling. The two foot width of the ledge, when I get there, is absolute luxury, and without delay, we put in a couple of bolts and haul up the sack. We get the sleeping bags on, and for the first time in the day we feel the comfort of warmth and protection from the wind. It is late, but we are enjoying our new found comfort and have a good feed before turning in.

It is very, very cold when we wake next morning, and we have a look around at the ledge. With a mixture of horror, amazement, and wonder, we notice that the edge of our little ledge is 150 feet or so above the trees,

July, 1968

Exit Cave; Tasmania. (February, 1968)

Party: Ivan Scott, Russel Kaaden, 'Vonne Hardefeldt, Bob Chappell.

We arrived in Hobart (some the worse for wear) variously about Sunday, 4th February. After a couple of pleasant days around Port Arthur we contacted the local cavers; one of them, Peter, offered to guide us into Exit.

We left at 7.30 on Thursday morning and drove down by the Huon Estuary in dark rainy weather to Hastings. From here a rough road leads south to the coast. Some miles along this the Exit track leads off westward toward Cavehill and the cave itself.

Further west still, the d'Entrecasteaux River forks in the downstream direction; the south branch flows down to Recherche Bay, the other disappears into the ground and flows out inside Exit Cave a short distance from the entrance.

Along the track we walked in alternate bright sunshine and heavy hail, cheered on by brief glimpses of snow covered la Perouse and thoughts of poor lads on their way to Federation. Indeed, three of us walked right past the cave to be lost for some hours in the log strewn waste.

Nevertheless, we negotiated the entrance chamber at 4.30 p.m. by the high level (suicide) route. From here we passed via the Wind Tunnel (blows lamps out) through comfortable passages into a series of ever larger chambers, along the floor of which winds a fair sized stream. The roof was barely visible and on blowing out our lights we seemed to float in a sea of green stars: brilliant, inch-long glow worms.

The track leads along the gravelly floor, across the stream and often high around the back of the massive formation along the

sides. Shortly before camp I, and about a quarter of a mile into the cave, the d'Entrecasteaux rushes from a hole in the wall; beyond, the stream was much quicker and easier to cross.

Camp I is on a bank about twenty feet above the stream in the largest chamber so far entered. There is an impression here of being in the open at night: sometimes the running water would sound like an approaching rain squall and I would look uneasily for shelter. Here we ate and slept and ate again. In the night the worms made dim patterns on the far wall.

Before breakfast Peter and Russell made a rough map of a few hundred yards of passage that had recently been discovered.

On Friday morning we set off in good spirits for Base Camp which is a mile in. All went well apart from occasional hold ups to put packs through narrow spots in the Talus Blockage (an oversized and unfathomable rockfall), or find the way, or pass such inestimable TCC features as the ring bolt above the muddy ledge above the black and deep (bottomless?) pool.

We arrived at Base Camp - hours from Camp I. This was situated in a vast cavern, well above the river and behind some considerable cliffs, with a pleasant view of more cliffs resembling the Dolomites across the way. There was a carbide and food dump here.

In a small side chamber is a tangle of white helictite known as Edie's treasure: the mud floor there is littered with the celebrated gypsum crystals - imagine sword grass; transparent, fluted, feet long ("and don't bloody step on 'em").

After a meal and brew Peter left for Hobart and some sea fishing. We sat down and thought of the talus and went to sleep. Our forty-eight hours in this spot were generally uneventful.

Ivan decides to go for a swim. Anguished cries in the distance. Russell to the rescue - Mr. Scott starkers on the bank and his lamp blown out. No matches.

Bumping sound from Dolomites. Cook's walked off a cliff! First aid drill and we live to eat another day.

Russell and Ivan fight off base camp lassitude and explore in towards the Grand Fissure.

We decide to leave the remaining five or six miles of cave unseen as the taste of dehyd. and thoughts of beer trouble the mind.

Being slightly confused as to the location of the entrance to the talus section we had a look at the bottom of Mini Martin, the deepest natural shaft known in Australia (seven hundred odd feet from the hillside), recognisable by the great logs smashed on the floor of the cave.

The trip out was a good deal faster than that coming in; the d'Entrecasteaux had dropped considerably to make things easier and we emerged into bright sunlight on Sunday afternoon.

Walking out to the road and hitching back to Hobart was the hardest part of the trip, and food and beer did not eventuate till rather late Monday. The lounge of the pub near Geeveston is highly recommended.

From Hobart recuperation on the white beaches of the East Coast then home via the Silver Sands, the Launceston, the Royal, the Flight Bar, the Melrose and Naughtons.

I would like to thank friends who put us up in Hobart (cavers suffer from acrophobia sleeping out) and the Tasmanian caverneers for their help in going to Exit Cave.

R.A. Chappell.

July, 1968

### Untitled

Rockclimbing, once only a single aspect of mountaineering as a whole, has now become a highly specialised sport in its own right. I feel that in the same way, falling, now only a small part of rock climbing, must inevitably develop into a separate sport, with its devotees spending all their time working at this one activity.

At the moment, the development of falling as a popular sport is being delayed by the unpleasantries associated with a fall e.g. the desperation just before the fall, the possibilities of injuries due to inadequate protection, the need to climb perhaps hundreds of feet before the fall is experienced. When falling becomes established as a sport, the experienced faller need only drive or walk to the top of his chosen cliff, select a good secure belay point, and a suitably steep section of rock face, and then proceed to fall off. There is no desperation or worry involved, as the time and place of the fall can be carefully chosen, and will therefore give maximum enjoyment of a good fall.

At present I know of only one club for fallers i.e. The Fallen Angels Club of the M.U.M.C. which is largely inactive, and holds no club trips, but with the upsurge in interest in falling, this club could provide the necessary basis for future clubs. A vast literature, and a comprehensive technical knowledge would soon be built up and falling would soon take its rightful place amongst the great sports of the world.

I would welcome any suggestions or ideas on how to raise interest in falling, and eagerly look forward to the day when there are climbers and fallers.

C.A. Norak.

December, 1969.

### from The Prince of Wales Range

In January this year, Chris and I set out on a trip which had for several years occupied our thoughts. Our aim was to cross the country between the Lyell Highway and the Gordon River, including a traverse of part of the Prince of Wales Range.

By 8 a.m. we had left the huts at the Lyell Highway and were crossing the Franklin River. The rather dubious bridge constructed of several strands of fencing wire, is a few hundred yards from the beginning of the Jane River Track. South of the crossing the track has been recently bull-dozed for a distance of three miles. Beyond this section, the track was open and clear for a further 3 miles, however, after this frequent patches of bauera and ti-tree have encroached rather badly.

Stormy clouds sped over us, interspersed with sunny patches, lending contrast to the colours of wildflowers, fern gulleys and button grass plains. Camp was made close to Mt. Algonkian in a stand of myrtles.

Continuing rain and low cloud greeted us for the second day. Pushing our way through burnt limbs and debris we began the ascent of the ridge. Soon we were in unburnt forest. The lush growth, slippery and saturated, engulfed our feeble efforts, and progress was reduced to climbing, crawling and twisting amid the horizontal and other rain forest varieties.

There could be no complaint of monotony, for the vegetation changed several times before reaching the summit, each one providing a new challenge to manoeuvring tactics. A patch of sassafras gave brief respite, opening up the humid coolness of the rain forest. Then came pandani, scoparia and King William Pines, and a final pitch of cutting grass and melaleuca.

From the summit, mist and rain reduced visibility to a few yards. On a compass bearing we began to follow a connecting ridge to the northern end of the Prince of Wales Range. On either side, some 3000' below us in the mist, were a maze of forested ridges falling away to the Denison and Jane Rivers.

We dropped about 200 feet and camped in an open forest of King Billy and pandani. The slender mature pines grew up to 60-80 feet

high. There must be few groves of such quality remaining. Fire had already come to within half a mile, in spite of the inaccessible region.

By lunchtime on the third day we were standing on Sanctuary Peak, the first high peak of the Prince of Wales Range. Clearing weather opened up views of the western and south western mountains. Across the Denison valley to the east were the Spires, Innes High Rocky and beyond them, the Denison Range. To the north-east across the broad valley of the upper reaches of the Denison, the King William Range raised its flattened summits. A vast rain forest stretched away into the gorge between the King William Range and Loddon Range.

Our course to the south along the range top was open for the next mile or so, then patches of ti-tree and other scrub covered the crest at increasing intervals. Two higher peaks were traversed before we dropped down to a shelf on the eastern side of the range to make camp. The view was dominated by the sharp Diamond Peak, flanked on either side by jagged needles of quartzite, rising out of the steeply clinging forest.

Mists wreathing the summit peaks dispersed in the morning sun revealing Diamond Peak in startling crispness against a clear blue sky. Excitedly we climbed to the ridge anticipating perhaps the most rugged and difficult part of the Range. Before reaching the western most needle, several scrubby cols and serrated ridge crests had to be negotiated.

From the summit of Diamond Peak we looked down on the precipitous gorges and forests that fell away to the Denison Plains. In every direction stretched a wilderness of mountains, rivers and forests. Echoing from the near and distant valleys came the sound of water as though drifting up from eternity.

Further south we made our second high camp on the range and watched the sunset from a nearby crag. With the hush of evening, the lengthening shadows of the serrated range fell across the Denison valley. We watched spellbound as night descended on the primaevial wilderness, bringing a contentment that only nature in all her beauty can provide.

Neville Ludbey.

August, 1969

### Impressions of Nepal

The peasant woman was sitting on the mud floor spitting food into her baby's mouth. A diseased mangy dog licked scraps of food from the dirty dishes stacked in the dust beside the water pump. Enclosing the squalid village were the ever-present towering mountains of Nepal.

This was the lunch stop on the bus trip from the Indian border to Kathmandu in the centre of Nepal. The bus sneaks backwards and forwards along almost continuous hairpin bends. We were crammed into the hard seats and over the wheels for nine long hours.

Our first glimpse of the Himalayas left us incredulous. They seem to float: white crystal peaks, above the misty mountains and valleys. Later when the sun was setting they were even more unreal and splendid, pink faceted on the western side, shadowy on the east, seeming even more to float above the earth. Everest was among them. The mountains and valleys below the peaks are also beautiful - very steep and every foot of the valleys is terraced to form neat curving patterns.

The villages are a great contrast to Indian villages. The Nepalese villages give the impression that people take pride in their homes and their work, and that the land is being utilised fully. The houses are usually two storey, but very simple, coloured white and orange, with intricate wood work around doors and windows, and pumpkins and sweet corn drying on the window sills.

As for Kathmandu - I was fascinated. It is the oldest looking city I have ever been in. There are almost no modern buildings. The streets are cobbled, narrow, winding and ill-lit. Double storey houses jut out over the shops, displaying their ancient beautiful woodwork and Nepalese families sit smoking or spinning in the low door ways.

Young travellers from all over the world meet in Kathmandu, especially the hippies of course. Pot is sold very cheaply by the government and even more cheaply by unlicensed dealers. Westerners, and some Nepalese, congregate in the little eating places. The meals are fabulous, especially after India. The menus are of several pages and if you order half a plate of something it is

almost too much to eat. There are Western, Chinese, Nepalese and Tibetan meals served in the one shop, beautifully cooked and terribly cheap. Buffalo steak (delicious), pancakes and several hot lemon drinks would cost less than R4/- or 40 cents.

We stayed in a cheap lodge in Kathmandu. Entrance was via back streets, through a low tunnel under a building into a filthy courtyard. By negotiating around animals, geese and a stagnant well we reached the Lodge. It was the first time we had not slept on the floor of railway stations or the wooden berths of trains for two weeks.

I would love to spend weeks and weeks trekking through Nepal. We had time to do only one two-day walk, to Nagarkot Lodge. From here we watched the setting sun and the rising sun colour the peaks from the Annapurnas at one end to Numbur on the other, about 180° further around the horizon. Mist flowed below us from one deep terraced valley to another.

The walk to the old stone lodge was through countryside I thought belonged to a past era. The valleys and hills were rich with peasant life, thatched cottages, goats, buffalo and hens. We shared the raised foot tracks with highly coloured Nepalese farmers carrying dirt, vegetables or their babies in baskets hanging from bamboo poles. On the way up a Nepalese soldier who could speak no English attached himself to us and took us to a place which sold tea. Except that many villagers were gathered around smoking we would not have found it. We had not been game to drink any water as there was a hepatitis epidemic and some Europeans were hospitalised. This cup of tea, which we drank sitting on a board on the mud floor, with many black amused eyes gazing at us, was one of the most enjoyable I've had.

We shared the Lodge with two French guys, who could speak little English and returned to Kathmandu with them, startling the peasants we passed with gay songs of Paris. Pierre carried a minute Tibetan dog on his roll of luggage.

Once again in Kathmandu we found the markets closed, the streets full, and a car burning in the main thoroughfare. It was not a religious festival as we first thought but a student riot! However that's another story.

Vivienne Harvey.

July, 1968.

### The Cannon's Roar

The following is a transcript of the interview of Sir Smedley Falls by Bob Under on "Peepul" on the ABC recently.

BU: We have in the studio tonight Sir Smedley Falls who

SSF: Good evening.

BU: is one of the greatest peak-baggers in the world. Sir Smedley (SSF: Good evening) has recently returned from Rumdoodle where he (SSF: Good evening) was leading an expedition. I'm going to ask Sir Smedley (SSF: Good evening) a few questions about peak-bagging.

Good evening, Sir Smedley.

SSF: Good evening.

BU: I'm going to ask you a few questions about peak-bagging, Sir Smedley.

SSF: Good evening. Well, from the outset I would like to make one point quite clear. I am not really a peak-bagger for I simply don't bag peaks. I mean a mountain peak is a very large object indeed and, of course, it is impossible to get a bag to fit over the top of it. Similarly, it is not quite correct to say that I collect peaks, again on account of their large size. A mountain is quite large when compared with an insect, or an M & B tin, or an envelope or whatever small container that is handy when one uses insect collecting as an excuse for a rest. But as ...

BU: I think you have made that point quite well, Sir Smedley. It was reported in December that Sir Augustus Twitt was leading the expedition to Rumdoodle; this is not so I understand.

SSF: Well, no, it only looked as if Sir Augustus was leading since he was always at the head of the party. I was in fact the leader leading in true mountaineering tradition from the rear.

BU: I was wondering if you could tell me a bit more about the expedition.

SSF: Ah, now you are going to ask me to tell you a bit more about the

Only half a mile of the return trip was covered when the outboard stripped its gears. Fortunately another holiday-maker, Don Van, had accompanied us in his boat and he towed us back to Tidal River through very rough seas. Such as it was, this was the first known landing on Cleft Island.

On December 27th, 1967 with Kevin Sheehy as climbing partner, four boats went out with the same owners and another, Geoff Lee, went out for another attempt. This time, the chosen route was up a chimney on the North Eastern side, although the mode of landing was the same. (It was only much later than I learned that white pointer sharks love cruising through seal colonies.)

In proper climbing footwear, the climbing standard would be 'severe' but because gymboots had to be worn to protect the feet from sharp-shelled limpets, the wet soles made it feel like 'hard severe'. There is a ledge at the bottom of the chimney at low tide and a belay point (jam nut) about 50 feet above that, 110 feet above the belay is another large belay ledge. The top of the chimney is another 30-40 feet higher from where it is a walk to the top, but I had only just reached the end of the chimney when the fleet reported that the weather was getting bad. Fate was against us. I shoved a specimen of everything within arm's reach down my shirt, dropped a prusik loop, and reversed the climb.

As luck would have it, a blankety-blank jellyfish 15 inches across was floating right where we had to jump into the water. After some hesitation, Kevin jumped, swam to the boat and pulled the pack after him when he had reached it. That left me with 60 yards to swim in gym boots and a safety helmet throttling me, slings tangling me up and one hand holding the specimens into my shirt. I never again want to come so close to drowning.

We got back safely, and half an hour later the squall blew itself out, leaving the sea dead flat for the rest of the day. Skull Rock is still unconquered, but it will keep until next year, and this is one climb the J.D.'s can't pirate.

Rowan Webb.



expedition.

BU: You are a man of very acute perception, Sir Smedley.

SSF: For a while I was guided by a blond loquacious sherpa, but he fell foul of a yetiess - strange, once he left, I had no trouble getting pure water. After I had a Dutchman, but he kept getting lost and going around in circles, so I don't really have a guide at the moment. All the same I have had a remarkably good return rate - only once have I had more than a 1.53% loss, and that was when I was at the Union courtyard whilst the rest of the party was at Batman Avenue.

BU: On your last trip you had a very narrow escape didn't you?

SSF: My, my yes. While walking along the highway up the Bluff, I was startled to see a large tyre coming straight at me. A few seconds later the rest of the landrover came skidding upside down towards me. On and around it was most of a camp, bell (with cow attached), a horrible red zephyr and two hikers. I don't mind admitting it but I turned and ran as fast as I could to the nearest milk bar. My, a 7 oz. glass of trifle never tasted so good.

BU: All the same I suppose you will be climbing quite a few Australian mountains; you will of course be going to Buggary.

SSF: Oh, yes indeed, heh heh, many's a time I've been told to go there. Heh, heh. In fact I'm often called a peak bugger, heh, heh, etc.

BU: Is that so?

SSF: Er, yes.

BU: Do you use mules on your trips?

SSF: No, I carry everything on my back.

BU: I'm sorry, I meant a mule pack.

Then followed 5 minutes of mutual apologizing.

SSF: I don't believe in packs myself, so I just have a frame and a large back pocket attached to it, so that everything will be handy.

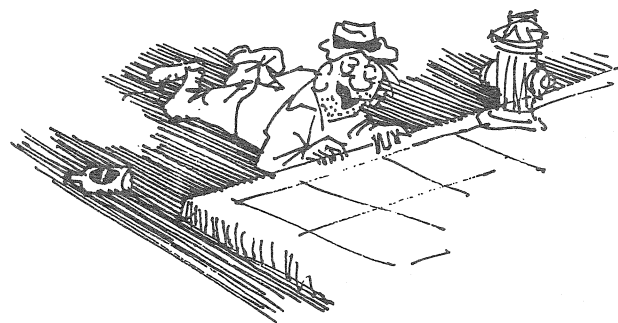
BU: A final question, Sir Smedley, in order

to do your trips you must have some power over the Government.

SSF: Well let me just say that Lloyd George knew my father and father knew Lloyd George. Not only that but also they know that if they don't do what I want I will get a stick of dynamite and blow them all up.

BU: Thank you very much for coming tonight, Sir Smedley, and giving us an insight into the picturesque life of a peak bagger.

BOOM.



"I'M CLIMBING IT BECAUSE IT'S THERE, THASH WHY!"

July, 1969

### Cognitive Dissonance

Why do we walk? A question often asked, and usually answered in the following ways. -- "Why the exercise, - close to good old warm dry friendly Mother Nature, and the scenery - great. Takes you away from such drags as cars, T.V., pubs, too. Rubbish."

From the dizzy academic heights of one year's Educational psychology, and the careful study of the habits of mountaineers, I would offer the following explanation for :- Why we walk. The explanation stems from work done by Festinger in the phenomena known as "cognitive dissonance." (hereinafter referred to as c.d. - impressed??).

Basically c.d. theory is applicable to people who have been co-erced into doing something obviously unpleasant. However, because there is a certain amount of choice allowed during the co-ercion he must justify to himself (and others) his participating in the activity - however unpleasant. He does this simply by telling himself and others what a wonderful time he had.

Now you mountaineers may well disagree quite emphatically - - - "Why isn't it obvious - the superb time you can have clinging to a mountainside exposed to a freezing blizzard and wondering where the hell you are going?"

Well I am sorry - I hate to disillusion you. You are in fact hating every bleak minute of it. Psychological statistics have shown that c.d. theory is valid. I cite the following example - with apologies to Aronson and Mills.

Two identical groups of people were asked to volunteer for some discussion on sex. Group 1 was given an initial severe "embarrassment test", where they had to read aloud highly lurid words pertaining to sex. Group 2 was given only a very mild "embarrassment test". Then each group had to listen to the most banal, technical, tape recording about multiplication amongst animals. Each group was then asked to write their impressions of the tape. Group 2, on the whole reported the tape to be the dreariest most uninteresting experience. Group 1 however, according to c.d. theory, to justify their enduring the "embarrassment test" reported the tape to be interesting and worthwhile.

Now the similarities between this example and mountaineering just leap out, and are instantly recognised.

You will no doubt have noticed how, after the most horrible trips, the survivors returned enthusing (dissonating) about the great trip. Notice also the tendency to over dissonate. Snow becomes deeper, trips longer, peaks higher, ascents become steeper (by at least 30<sup>0</sup>), sleeping bags become wetter, blisters bigger, packs heavier - and so on. Mountaineers are such accomplished dissonators that they even dissonate about their over-dissonations, (50 lb. packs become "pretty near 100 lb. packs - just to keep in round figures").

I believe the above applies to most mountaineers. Strangely enough though - I bushwalk for the sheer enjoyment of it :- Why I remember the last really good trip I went on was in the mighty South West. Must have been at least 140 miles - our rucksacks were packed so high - why snow clouds kept forming around the top, when it was hot we had to prime ourselves before we could spit, - and when it got cold and wet we had to keep spitting or get water logged. The tracks, - when they existed of course - were about 6" wide and about 18" deep. You know we lost two men and a rucksack in those bogs - and the mountains - huh! well it took us near two days to climb one - - - and snakes - I have never seen so many snakes, - why - - - - gabble, gabble, gabble - - - - yarn yarn - - - - Now that was a real trip.

Russell Downie.

July, 1969

### International fame department



From the May edition of 'Alpinismus' comes the following:

The "Oxo-man"; probably no European climbing club would come up with such an idea. However, he appears to be just the right club emblem for the climbers of Melbourne University. In distant Australia, where the mountains are in short supply, mountaineers are not taken seriously anyhow.

to the Hornli ridge on the Matterhorn, had a look at the first five hundred feet of the route and decided to try it next day. Rather than share the already overcrowded floor space in the Belvedere I crawled into a rough shelter in the ruins of the old hut for the night. But I had sadly misjudged the weather for by midnight large snowflakes were drifting down. The temperature fell rapidly, a wind sprang up, bringing a hailstorm and more snow. It was two days before the storm exhausted itself on the Matterhorn, leaving it plastered white.

Another time, on the Monta Rosa, we were chased off the mountain by bad weather, having reached almost fourteen thousand feet. The top was only a short climb above but made impossible by fierce winds and showers of ice particles. The ropes had become coated with ice and were like wire cables, we were chilled through and even in the notch in the ridge could barely stand against the wind. There was nothing to do but go back.

Always it seemed we were in the valley when the weather was good or improving, and on a mountain when it was bad or deteriorating. Inbetween times we had sneaked in a few climbs but there should have been a lot more.

If nothing else we had an original lot of excuses for not having put the time to full use. Right at the end of the season we got in one climb that, remarkably enough was not doomed by cut hands, fainting fits or slothfulness, and it helped to even out the score a little.

David and I went up to the Hornli Ridge and bivouacked in the old ruins. The barometer was falling, long thin clouds streamed across the sky from the Italian side and there was a cool gusty wind. After our previous abortive attempts at forecasting the weather it seemed normal then to ignore those obvious signs and prepare for the climb. Besides, the tantalizing sight of the matterhorn from the valley had been a constant reminder that we should have been up there, not sitting about.

We began the climb early next morning by torchlight, unroped as it was not difficult and also as that enabled us to move very quickly and overtake the slow-moving guided parties. We climbed rapidly up the ridge, sometimes on

slabs or in broken gullies on the East face, sometimes on its airy crest. The rock was clear of ice and beginning to warm as the sun came up. Not until reaching the steep face below the shoulder did we slow down, and then only because a loose layer of snow overlaying ice demanded caution. We climbed it still unroped, crampons still in the rucksack and only one axe between us - suddenly becoming very aware of our exposed position. We should have been scared as hell. Instead we enjoyed every minute on that precarious slope.

However, on reaching the crest we roped up, by unspoken agreement, and also because having left the sheltered side of the ridge we were soon struggling against a fierce wind that shipped stinging showers of ice at us. The rocks became flecked with ice and the rope was swept out from us in a wide arc, it also collecting ice. Above the rocks there was only the final steep icy slope below the summit. We hugged close to it for protection from the wind, shouting to each other but unable to hear, and moved steadily upward until there was nothing more to climb.

The cornice over the Italian side had collapsed and we thankfully crouched in a hollow dug out below it for the moment out of the wind. Beside us a young climber was being sick, and at the same time trying bravely to convince his indifferent guide that he was really enjoying himself. As for ourselves, we sat there half-frozen for twenty-five minutes, wishing those minutes could have been hours for below us a large part of the Swiss Alps was set out in gleaming white relief.

Having spent a month amongst those mountains, and having climbed a few of them, we felt we knew them intimately. That is partly what climbing is about - getting to know the mountains. Just as much a part as the planning of the climbs, or simply the time spent in the Alps, whether enthusiastically climbing, or as we seemed to have done for most of that month, not climbing them!

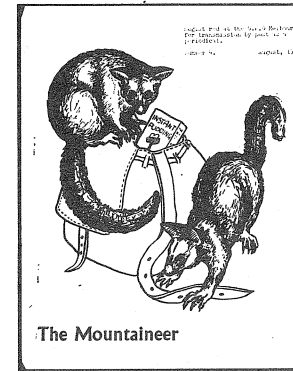
Fred Mitchell.

May, 1969

#### From the Buffalo Trip

Two old ladies at Bent's Lookout looking at Feathertop Hut flashing in the sun: "Isn't it shocking the way people leave litter on the mountains."

August, 1968.



#### THE PEAKBAGGER (with no apologies to anyone!)

One day as I walked down the track  
I saw a man who wore a pack  
Approaching me with lengthy stride,  
And as he drew close by my side,  
I turned my head, his face to view,  
And asked "What kind of man are you?"  
He stopped, and looked me in the eye,  
"A peakbagger," he said, "am I".

"And how does one bag peaks?" asked I.  
Like a flash came his reply.  
"One climbs them", was his sharp retort,  
"Don't tell me you've not tried the sport?"  
Why, peakbagging's the very latest,  
And of all walkers, we're the greatest!  
So stop, and take a breath or two  
While I relate my tale to you." "The road to my  
success was long -  
It started with Mount Dandenong,  
And then the You Yangs and Mount Bride,  
Mount Disappointment and Mount Slide.  
Then I moved on to harder stuff,  
I conquered Buller and the Bluff,  
The Governors, Stirling, Timbertop,  
Mount Wellington and Spion Kop.

"The Cobberas gave me not great worry,  
Nor did Fainter, Cope or Murray.  
Selwyn, Blue Rag, Razor, Viking  
All were greatly to my liking.  
Magdala, Howitt, Lovick, Clear,  
William, Useful, Hoad, Rosea,  
Cobbler, Koonika, Despair,  
And Typ, now have you been there?

"One day when I was feeling tough  
I conquered Kent and Snowy Bluff.  
The Twins, St. Bernard, Skene, McDonald,  
Ben Cruachan, Margaret, Ronald,  
Hotham, Jim and Speculation,  
Torbreck, Matlock, Federation,

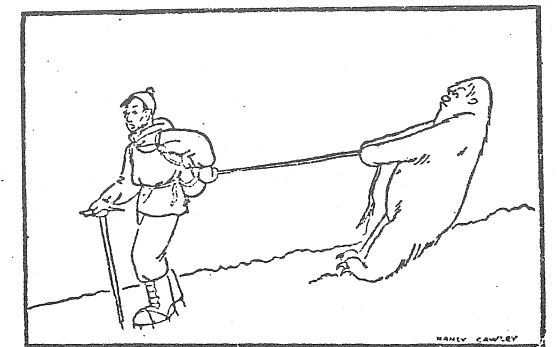
Bogong, Hotham, Nelse and Wills,  
Four Sugarloafs and three Big Hills.  
"On one of my more recent trips  
I climbed Mt. Livingstone and Phipps.  
Arthur, Pilot, Selma, Loch, Macedon and  
Hanging Rock

Reynard, Shillinglaw, McKay,  
And then the Snowies caught my eye:  
Townsend, Twynham, Tate, Carruthers,  
And Kosciusko, among others.

"And in Tasmania, I liked best  
Olympus, Cradle, Pelion West,  
Oakleigh, Gould, Hyperion,  
And all four peaks of Geryon.  
Ramsay, Wilson, Vereker,  
Baw Baw, Whitelaw, Erica,  
Baldhead, Mueller, Pinnibar,  
Juliet and Vinegar.

"Arnold, Grant and Singleton..."  
(He just kept going on and on)  
"...Higginbotham, Feathertop..."  
(I prayed to God that he would stop)  
"...Gibbo, Ritchie, Thackeray..."  
(I wished that I could sneak away)  
"...Zero, Redman's Bluff, Abrupt..."  
At last I had to interrupt

And asked "What are your plans today?"  
He said, "That peak four miles away  
I shall be adding to my list.  
There's not too many that I've missed!"  
I watched him go with great relief,  
And now it is my firm belief,  
While peakbaggers may be great walkers  
They surely are the world's best talkers.



"Cut it out, Charlie!"

August, 1968.

#### from SCRAMBLES AMONG THE STREETS

Two members of this club, thinking entirely of the glory of the club tradition, and not being satisfied with leaving it to challengers of Andean pinnacles, conceived and organized an assault of giant magnitude. And yet, there was one major obstacle to be overcome - a flag. It was difficult to imagine the 'oxo-man' at the summit of a well-known edifice on the north-east corner of Flinders and Swanston Streets, so it was with sad hearts that these stalwarts decided to climb under an opposition flag.

Equipment consisted of - 1 flag, 1 polaroid camera, 1 transistor radio, 20 feet of string and 1 torch. Footwear was necessarily absent above the first pitch as speed, nimbleness, and grip were a priority. There was, of course, no question of any standard equipment such as ropes.

The first pitch (12 feet, 2+) consisted of a chimney between two buttresses on the North face, onto a wide and sloping ledge of slate that was somewhat loose. Behind a line of boulder to the right of the ledge, excess gear such as coats, shoes and radios were discharged. The second pitch (30 ft 5) was a straight lay-back of the drainpipe variety and very exposed, especially to the aforementioned primary dangers. One member happened to drop the expedition torch from 15 feet and the resulting deluge of slate later proved these gallant's downfall.

By means of a hatch (unknown in any other climbing circles) entrance was gained to fixed steps left by previous expeditions which brought our heroes to the foot of the "yellow-band". Above this joint the rock was rotten sand-stone, while foot and hand holds were 4 feet apart on an 80 degree slope - exposure was unbelievable, and primary and secondary dangers combined to make this last pitch a fearsome prospect. Much debate ensued....

Suddenly, like the terrible Pong, a primary danger appeared. An assault team (of one) was immediately dispatched which managed to place the expedition flag at a previously ungained height nearly one third of the way to the summit, before being recalled, ignominiously with flag and all.

The party was led back by means of fixed ropes and ladders to their starting point, and were at once spotted by the natives who proceeded to blow whistles and sirens and appear from every conceivable place in the area. Said one of their number, "There are more coming!", "More of them?", "No! More of us!" Transport of the blue variety was provided to tribal headquarters.

Having been detailed for a considerable period, and given particulars at least n times, the expedition was allowed to leave and make their march out, after retrieving their porters.

Thus the debacle ended, and the pinnacle remains unconquered. It did not even rate a mention in despatches. The coveted award went to the successful Russell Street expedition and second prize went, believe it or not, to the Taj Mahal!

3 Melbourne & 1 Monash.

February, 1969



#### ZERMATT DAYS

The story is told of one of New Zealand's guides who often took clients on the longer climbs from the old Haast Hut. In the very early hours of the morning he would stamp out of the hut into the darkness and hurl a stone down the big couloir below. If there has been no frost the snow in it would be soft and the stone would just 'swish' into it, promising deep soft snow on the Silberhorn route to Tasman or in the Linda glacier. At this he would exclaim "Oh--!". At other times when the snow was frozen iron hard and the stone clattered away into the depths his exclamation would be "Oh--!", in exactly the same tone.

There is no moral to the story, simply it indicates something very common amongs many climbers - the occasional lack of enthusiasm or apparent reluctance to get out on a climb. Generally this amounts to no more than a few grumblings while fumbling with crampon straps at 2 a.m. or taking the first few steps into the coldness of the night. Up at the hut one usually managed to 'get going' despite those little hardships, and setting out on a climb from the hut always seemed easier than setting out from the valley for the hut. That was often the most difficult part of climbing the mountain and it was easy to postpone sweating it out up a steep track under a roasting sun until tomorrow, in favour of a lazy day and perhaps a few cold beers on a terrace, maybe a fondue at the Hotel Weisshorn and the evening with crowd in the Bierkeller. Probably all of us have been guilty of wasting a day or two in the Alps by that ingenious method. Besides, "Rather than start off at this late hour it would be far better to get an early start tomorrow, before the sun gets up".

However, many parties that go to the Alps are masters at this game and spend much more

time in town than above the treeline. Either that or they are just not destined to climb.

On my first season in Zermatt I seemed to have joined forces with just that sort of group. There was Derek, David, Doug and Bill. After several weeks most of the mountains were still known to us from a respectable distance, always something came between them and us .....

Like the time three of us set off planning to do the East ridge of the Weisshorn. We set our own pace on the track to the hut, Derek and I arriving in the middle of a very hot afternoon. At sunset David still hadn't arrived and it was only after nightfall when another party turned up that we learnt that David had been sick somewhere along the track, so had returned to Zermatt. That in itself was reasonable, but with him had gone all the climbing ropes as well! So much for the Weisshorn.

Bill was next to go. Heavy rains had chased David and me back from the Schonbiel track during a half-hearted attempt to get to the Rossiet Hut for the Dent Blanco South-ridge route. Two days later we arranged to try again. The weather was perfect, I packed and was ready to leave at 9 a.m. It was early-afternoon before he arrived, minus rucksack, and with the explanation that Bill has gashed his hand opening a tin that morning. David had taken him to a doctor, then fainted during the mopping up of blood and stitching.

Doug was also fated. We were returning from a good mixed snow and rock route on the Zinalrothorn, and barely a hundred yards from the hut Doug slipped on a loose boulder slope and one block fell and crushed a toe, an extremely painful and crippling injury.-

What of Derek? We were at the Mount Rosa Hut, the alarm had just gone off at 2.30 a.m., and outside it was bitterly cold and windy. The barometer had dropped slightly but we decided to give it a go. Except Derek that is. "I'm no' goin'!" And he didn't.

These were the sort of incidents that kept us off the mountains, apart from the odd days when we just admitted to general laziness. Bad weather played its part too, and in that month in the Swiss Alps we were not treated too kindly.

A little browned off by our fruitless attempts to climb something, I had gone alone