

MOUNTAINEER

AUGUST 1991

The magazine of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club.



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Melb UMC '91

EDITORIAL.

Welcome to the "new" (?) Mountaineer of 1991. It is the intention of the compilers to put out an edition on a regular basis so that all information in The Mountaineer is up to date and relevant. But this cannot be done without the help of everyone. It is impossible to have a magazine without articles, so every trip you go on please ensure that we get something, even if it is only a paragraph, from someone on the trip. We will accept anything, and will not edit unless totally necessary.

In this respect, perhaps the heading of "EDITORIAL" is innaccurate, but if you have an alternative, please tell Peter Chew (phone 818 3563) or Nigel Prior (phone 822 5115), or drop articles off to the clubrooms, leaving them in the shoe - box on the table!

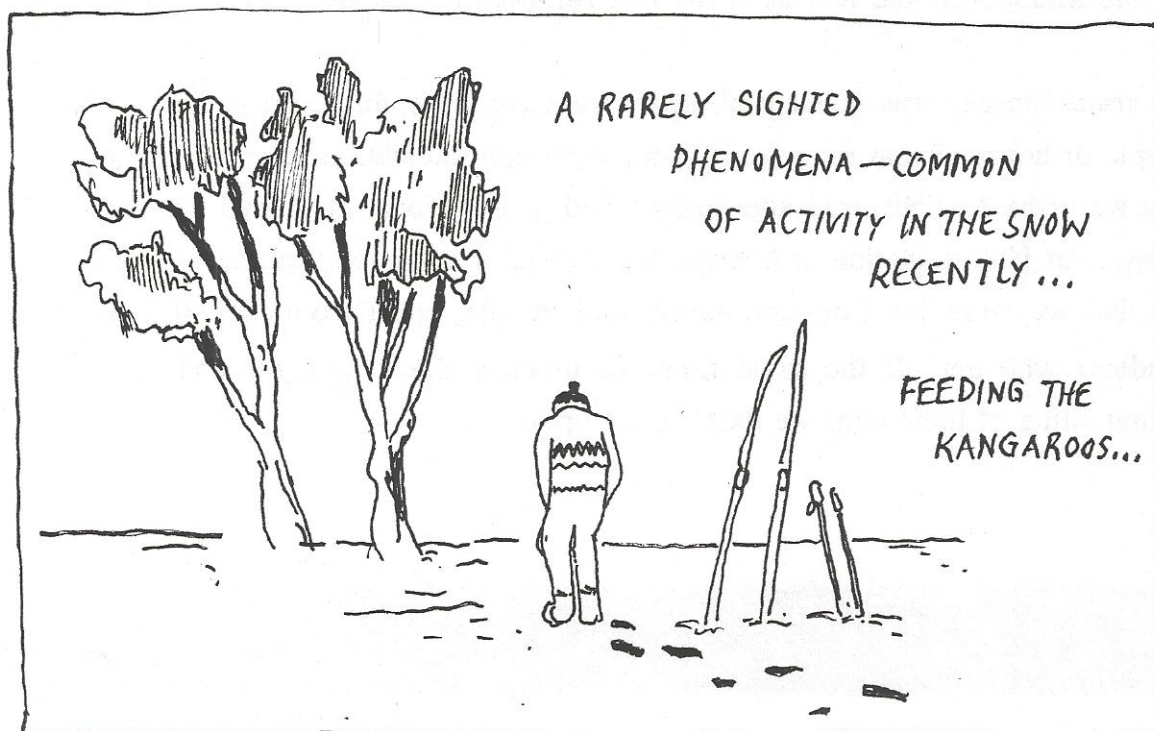
Here are the members of the Committee for 1991 - July 1992. All are vey approachable if you have a query, or would like to help them out.

President:	Dave Kjar -	ph. 878 1843
Vice President:	Andrew Roberts -	ph. 889 7332
Treasurer:	David Wilson -	ph. 337 3614
Secretary:	Phil Towler -	ph. 387 3804
Assis. Secretary:	Andrew Gaff -	ph. 842 3125
Publications:	Nigel Prior -	ph. 822 5115
Canoeing:	Nick Gust -	ph. 497 1808
Caving:	Jane Cudmore -	ph. 592 7940
Bushwalking:	Tom Bevan -	ph. 481 5601
Conservation:	Meagan Rush -	ph. 808 5484
Rock Climbing:	André Geelen -	70 Curzon St. Nth Melb.

Unfortunately, nobody nominated for Ski - Touring Convenor. If you know of anyone with skills and interest in this area, then approach any of the above people, and discuss the matter with them.

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THE HATTAH LAKES

(Sunshine in Winter)

Bushwalking in Victoria during the middle of Winter may seem at first glance to be a pretty stupid idea, and at second glance, and at third..... but surprisingly, if you go far enough North it is in fact possible to find sunshine, even in July.

The Hattah - Kulkyre National Park is about 450km North west of Melbourne, up towards Mildura, and there was a six day MUMC bushwalk there in the last week of the mid year break. The walk was basically from the "town" of Hattah (a train station and milk bar) to the Murray River and back again via the scenic Hattah Lakes. The main attraction as far as I was concerned was the complete absence of anything resembling a mountain. What bliss, I thought, four days of walking without a single battle with gravity over whether my pack was coming with me.

The eight hour train journey left Spencer St at 9:45pm on Sunday night. There were seven of us at the station: Tom, our illustrious leader, Kevin, Paul, Henry, Zac, Csilla (that's pronounced "Chilla", we finally got that after about six hours into the train Journey) and myself. The eighth member of the party, Michael, drove up from Melbourne and met us at the first campsite on the following evening.

The train Journey was uneventful, apart from the inevitable card games, and after a couple of hours of that deep and restful sleep only possible in the confines of a train seat we arrived bright eyed and bushy tailed..... well, most of us had our eyes open anyway,.... at Hattah station at 6:30am. We cooked a hot breakfast happy in the knowledge that we were far from civilisation and people, apart from the 40 High School Students who got off the same train. Fortunately they drove off and apart from a distant siting of their tents we didn't meet up again.

After Breakfast we walked to the first campsite at Lake Hattah. These salt lakes are enclosed drainage basins with no outlet. They fill periodically and over the years evaporation concentrates the dissolved mineral salts that are constantly wasted into them. They fill to a depth of about half a metre, and then dry to form a salt pan, like Lake Eyre in South Australia. The upshot of this is that you can't drink from them. The idea of carrying four day's supply of water on our backs didn't appeal to anyone, but this is where Michael and his car came to the rescue.

With astounding foresight Michael and Tom arranged large water containers and filled them at the Ranger's station. After breaking into Michael's car with the frame of Tom's pack (it is not the author's intention of promoting car theft among Bushwalkers, but as Hikers are unlikely to be carrying a coat hanger with them, this is not useless information, of course, hikers don't usually carry cars with their keys locked in them either....but you never know). Anyway, they drove off and deposited water at strategic positions along the track.

The Weather was superb and the next morning we headed off bright and early, around 10:00am. We had three maps and they all agreed on the names of the various tracks and lake beds, it was just their relative positions that they disputed. It didn't matter which one we used, as all of them were equally inaccurate, but hey, who needs to know where they are all the time anyway.

I wasn't disappointed about the contour lines, there weren't any, just dunes covered with tussock and hammock grasses, mulga trees, acacias and small weedy succulent things. The four wheel drive tracks meant that there wasn't much bush-bashing, but it was great to be outside for a change.

Apart from the tracks there were two obvious signs of human activity: a huge SEC power line that stretched diagonally across the park, and an electric kangaroo fence. We weren't sure whether the fence was to keep 'roos in or out - they didn't seem to know either as we saw them on both sides. There was great dispute on this matter, the three Engineering students arguing heatedly about the aerodynamics of a kangaroo's lift off.

We reached the Murray River in the early afternoon. If you picture the Murray as a clear, lively river lined with Eucalypts and typically Australian in character you would have been as disappointed as we were when we saw it. You couldn't see the water for the frothy scum on its surface. The River Red Gums were still lovely but the river itself was downright depressing. Not wishing to be dissolved by whatever was in the water we decided unanimously not to go for a swim and to set up camp nearby instead.

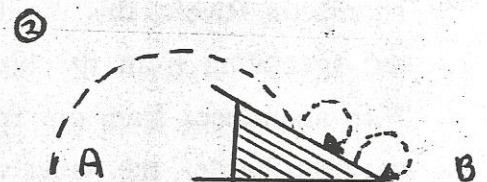
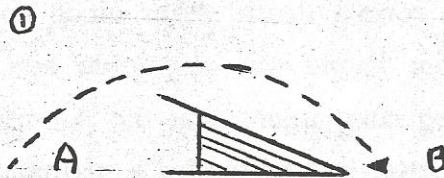
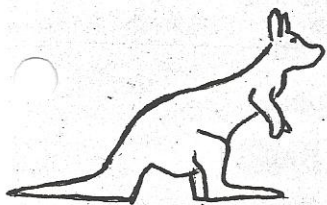
I shant bore you with a day by day account from here on. The literal high point of the trip was 67 metres, the spot height of Mt. Hattah which we climbed on the last day. After this arduous ascent many of us felt it was necessary to actually climb the trig point on top to get an extra couple of metres. The view was surprisingly good - it was the highest point for miles around.!

It was a great walk and despite the maps Tom managed not to get us Geographically embarrassed. A good time was had by all. We cooked dinner at Hatta station on Friday night and then caught the red-eye express again to return well rested (ha, ha) to Spencer St. station on Saturday morning. It was raining of course!

By Jane Frohlich.

FOUR SCENARIOS OF THE KANGAROO MEETS ELECTRIC FENCE

If the aim of the fence is to keep the kangaroos at A, then the fence should make an $A \angle B$ shape, so that when the 'roo lands on the fence and electrifies itself it rolls back to the appropriate side. This assumes that the voltage is not lethal as otherwise it does not much matter which side it rolls back on as long as it does not manage (1) or (2).



MITCHELL/MITTA MITTA RIVERS TRIP.

30th June - 4th July, 1991.

What better way to relieve exam stress than shooting down rapids of dubious titles such as "Pinball" and "Final Fling"?! Sunday morning saw the usual luggage cram and people squash as we attempted to fit all and sundry into two cars - anything after this would be a mere technicality!

Our first port of call was the Mitchell River where we were casually informed that touring would commence as of this day. Touring proved to be an experience in itself and the art of "borrowing" became a refined skill for those who packed their kayaks extra lightly.

After a long car shuffle we all ventured onto the deceptively calm waters of the Mitchell. It was not long before we reached the first major rapid, The "Slalom Rapid". For those whose kayaking experience extended as far as The Goulbourn and Thompson Rivers, this rapid spelt almost certain death. After much contemplation and spectating from the banks, the Slalom Rapid was attempted and conquered. With assurances from our friendly paddling companions that the Ampithetre Rapid was even harder, the banks were looking better and better for a permanent walkout! Gear was unpacked and we set up camp for our first night.

The day was Monday, our second day, and the Ampithetre was to be the main event. Approaching this rapid one was distracted by a continuous red cliff face under which the river curved. Needless to say all attempted the rapid with about an equal ratio of swims to successful paddles. Some of us had first hand, foot, head and general bodily experience as to how cold a river can get in Winter. "Who put that rock there anyway?" The days paddle was to end after the Final Fling rapid. Following this, boats were loaded on cars and maps hauled out to view the route to the Mitta Mitta River.

Again, the Mitta would prove to be a new experience for some, as obstacles such as rocks were in abundance and river "reading" skills were required. Wednesday was probably our longest days paddle, and the most taxing. Everyone manouvered their way through the "Pinball" Rapid, after careful inspection from the bank. Following were long stretches of white water dotted with rocks. Finally, we finished paddling, and with the comfort of dry clothes waited to be shuffled back to camp where hasty packing was done and Omeo Caravan Park declared our next destination. An overnight stay saw the final part of our trip pass away.

Five days and nine weary bodies later we set off for Melbourne satisfied that our paddling efforts had been worth it.

By Cathy "Sloth" Sealy.

MISSING:

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PHOTO? IT

HAS NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE THE

TRIP - IN FACT IT HASN'T BEEN SEEN
AT ALL!

WE WANT MORE PHOTOGRAPHS FOR FUTURE
"MOUNTAINEERS!"

SKIING AT LAKE MOUNTAIN

At about seven o'clock in the morning, not all the mist had lifted when the first light filled the sky with promises of fine weather. With reports of snow depth around 35-40 cm, tension mounted as the cars neared Gerraty and patches of snow like "plastic bags" quilted the sides of the access road that could almost be touched. Framed by twisted snowgums (eucalyptus pauciflora), the sun beamed with a brilliance that made the thick snow sparkle and the crisp air swept everything to life. We had finally reached what seemed like a piece of heaven but only some two and a half hours from Melbourne.

After reluctantly handing over our five dollar notes for the privilege to ski, we departed with determination etched on some faces, and tried to make sense of the sometimes icy track. Soon after, the group separated to venture different parts of the mountain. The undulating Echo Flat was a friendly introduction to skiing while the Woollybutt and Panorama trail offered a touch more speed and variety amidst endearing snowgums. Jubilee graced us with some exciting downhill that brought water to the eyes as the wind raced past your face and the scenery appear like streaks of colour. There was the conventional snowplank, diagonal stride as well as the charismatic bum plant. Eventually, everyone exhausted themselves and one by one weaved their way back down Long Heath and the carpark.



The sun quietly slipped away as the cars headed towards Melbourne. Tired?- just ask Nigel who half-slept with his head upright or Jane who pseudo-slept with a contented smile on her face. It had been a great day; Nigel 'fed the kangaroos', Phil paraded in this Summer's prediction- shorts, Tim revealed that banana ester smelt like rotting flesh and enlightened us with what Mr. X did for kicks, Mike (the crazy one) handed around Barney Bananas and Malcolm who's telemarking wetted many an appetite to do the same.

With melancholy, so ends another memorable trip to the snow. And like 'Jamaican Rum' chocolate, one can be certain that they'll be back for more of that glorious white stuff that comes all too erratically - snow!

by Peter Chew.



Andrew Roberts:

Hero, father-figure, legend, modeller
for Kathmandu(?!), or just someone who has
nowhere to go at lunchtimes?

Affectionately known by his friends as Froberts, Andrew was the Club's Bushwalking Convenor last year. I met him in first year on a Beginner's climbing trip, and since then Andrew has been an active member of the club, involving himself in most areas, namely climbing and bushwalking. He frequents the clubrooms when he has no other important course work to attend to, and you can recognize him by a number of things - his gourmet lunches, his religious wear of Kathmandu fashion items, and his is the voice heard complaining about the lack of girls on club trips (he seems very concerned about the guy to girl ratio).

Seriously though, Andrew does do a lot of work for the club, which he proved last year by his motivation and enthusiasm in bushwalking and the club in general - coming in on weekends, holidays, any day he wasn't supposed to be at uni, dragging in with him Personal Secretaries and others he could muster to do all the little extras needed around the clubrooms.

Andrew is a really good guy and if he pushes his position as Vice - President as energetically as that of Bushwalking Convenor, he should be a great V.P. for MUMC! (Wacko, it rhymes!!!)

By Kathy Kolarik.

Andrew really is a bit of a student. He may be found many a time in the Earth Science Library, head down, wrestling madly with the extremely complicated Meteorological concepts of why the wind blows, and why it rains, especially when he doesn't want it to. Surely any of us could tell him it does this to spite him, but if we did that, he would lose total direction in his life, possibly ending up going to The Clyde every afternoon. Lets face it, it's by far the best thing for everyone, including The Clyde, if he goes to the Library, don't you think?

Anonymous

Andrew is organising (or perhaps I should say has organised) this years' Midnight Ascent, a weekend when we walk in the snow up a bloody big mountain, in the dark, carrying formal attire, and have a Dinner Party. Sounds pretty silly hah? Yet this is a traditional club trip, and it would appear that it could be a record year, with over 70 people interested in taking part. Next issue of The Mountaineer will have a rundown of the weekend.

MITCHELL AND MITTA MITTA RIVER TRIP

Early July saw nine fearless kayakers challenging the strengths of the mighty Mitchell and Mitta Mitta. Mighty may seem to be a slightly strong word but definitely applicable from the point of view of Cathy, Karen, Jane and Peter- the semi-beginners. The Mitchell has three main rapids- the Slalom Rapid, the Amphitheatre and the Final Fling.

The Slalom Rapid was great 'play' site where Dave and Nick excelled in doing nose and tail stands. Playing is mucking around in the rapids and is an excellent way to improve paddling skills- especially that of the 'eskimo roll' as one invariably tips in. The Amphitheatre rapids is renown for it's fast currents, large rocks, stoppers, and ability to make even experienced paddlers fall in- great one Louise, Cathy, Karen, Jane etc. On the Mitta Mitta, there is a brilliant Gorge section where kayaks shoot down a drop of three feet and land with a splash. The Pinball Rapid bounces the boat from rock to rock

"What happened to the 'reflex' again Louise?"

Not only was the end of the 'plastic' kayak broken but Nigel's car insisted on dying even after hours of revival attempts (" Bloody starter motor!") and one broken window later. Cathy gave her sleeping bag swimming lessons. Dave found a great campsite with blackberries and a forty degree slope to position one's tent and kayak on. It was getting dark and at least he was making some effort to find one- we eventually found quite a good one. Spondonical?? Also, everyone's gear froze one night- snap frozen skirts, life-jackets and wetsuits. The water was freezing too.

A stopper is where the water rushes over a rock and spouts upwards creating a solid wall of water. Nigel used the rapid to get lots of rolling practice: he supposedly made between four to six attempts before finally getting back on top of his boat. It's a lot healthier there. Naturally, with so many exciting events, it was a brilliant social trip.

This report should definitely not put you off paddling- it's exhilarating going down rapids. The fast current races you downstream and sweeps one miraculously around (or over) rocks. Really, the Mitchell and the Mitta Mitta are relatively easy paddling rivers- only to the beginner do they seem "mighty" and thus extremely exciting.

By Jane Cudmore

OXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO



A MEMORY OF WARMER TIMES -

NO!! IT WASN'T OF THAT TRIP - WE DIDN'T
HAVE ANY - HOW OBSERVANT YOU ARE.

WINTER KAYAKING N.S.W.

JULY 1991

After a short break from the last Kayaking trip, seven of us set out in search of BIG white water in N.S.W. Our plans included the Thredbo, Indi, Swampy Plains, Murrumbidgee and Goodradigbee Rivers - all in the vicinity of the Snowy Mountains and consequently very cold at this time of year. Ultimately each of these Rivers was paddled, except for the Thredbo which didn't have enough water at the time.

The Indi (headwaters of the Murray) and Swampy Plains were paddled first, providing technical paddling through the gorge sections. Rounded granite boulders formed the majority of the rapids, with ferns down to the water's edge, towering gums on either side and snow on the main range. It was indeed spectacular - a reason in itself to be out there when the majority of people are sitting at home being Winter couch potatoes. The water was crystal clear but icy cold, and numb fingers were the rule rather than the exception. The gorge walls were generally steep and rocky and any boat destruction or injury would require a difficult walk out through dense bush and over mountains.

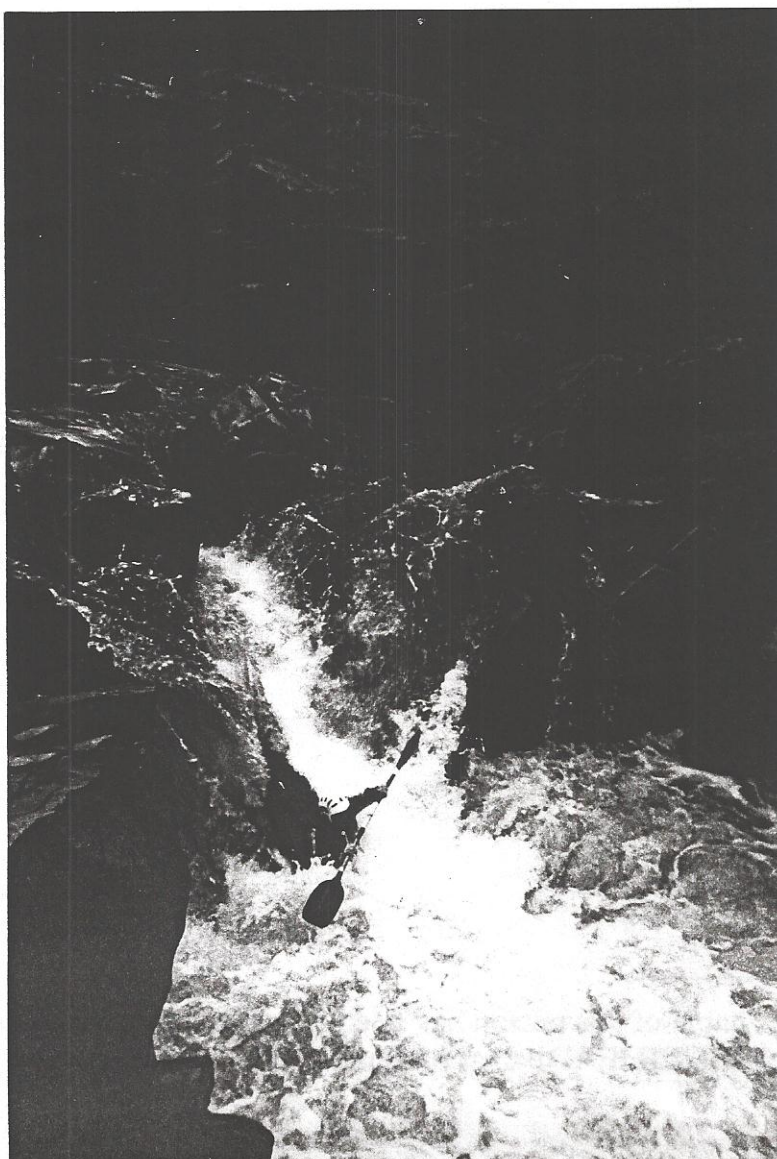
After a day's rest while ~~Dave Kjar~~¹ got his clutch replaced in Corryong (following a tragic attempt to tow Nigel's car up a hill) we headed off to Cooma and camped at a lookout. ~~Dave~~ woke us in the morning with tales of giant concrete mushrooms and gingerbread houses in the surrounding bush..... he must have forgotten his medication that morning!

¹ (EDnote: The name of this person has been censored due to the likelihood of him receiving an ~~EVEN BIGGER HEAD~~ than at present)

We paddled a short section of the Murimbidgee next and although it began with an extensive flat water paddle in, once the gorge was reached the river character changed immediately into some considerable white water. A four metre waterfall was a definite portage, but prior to this was a two metre drop which looks impressive in the photos (see club noticeboard) but was actually quite straight forward. Paddling waterfalls may seem a weird thing to do for some of you, and that's because it is. The heart pounds, the butterflies go ballistic and you point in the right direction and paddle.....

..... **SPLASH**, you are at the bottom. What happened you wonder? Who knows, it was all over so fast!

SURE IT WAS REALLY QUITE STRAIGHT FORWARD!



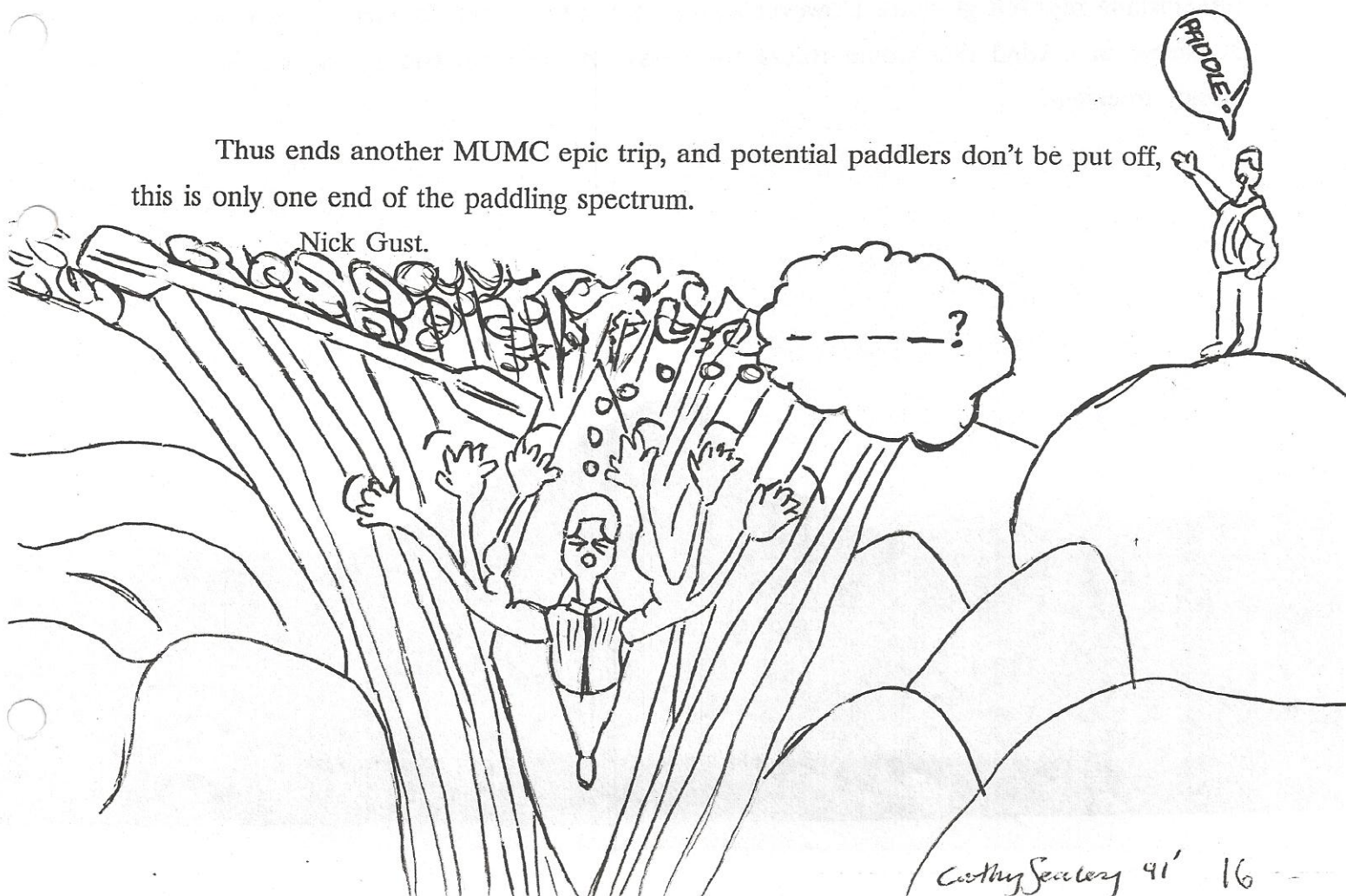
HAS ANYONE SEEN PHIL RECENTLY ?

That night after a few beers at the Cotter Pub we slept under a picnic shelter in Cotter, which two days latter was under metres of flood water from the Murimbidgee!

The last river we paddled was the Goodradigbee near Canberra and it was by far the most difficult, being in flood conditions and previously unpaddled by anyone in our group. It is an Alpine River with an extensive gorge and towering cliffs which we latter climbed, in order to avoid a monstrous Grade 5 rapid. The river began with a series of Grade 3 rapids with big waves and stoppers providing an exiting roller-coasting ride. Then we reached the 6 km long Gorge and the solids really hit the fan!!! The water was continuous Grade 4, with **HUGE** munchy stoppers, enormous waves and difficult lines to take between the boulders. At re-telling this part of the story each of the paddlers concerned breaks into an incoherent frenzy of flailing arms and paddling language, but let it suffice to say that it was **BIG, VERY BIG.**

Thus ends another MUMC epic trip, and potential paddlers don't be put off, this is only one end of the paddling spectrum.

Nick Gust.



JIM CRAIG AND THE STEGOSAURAS

April 1-5, 1991.

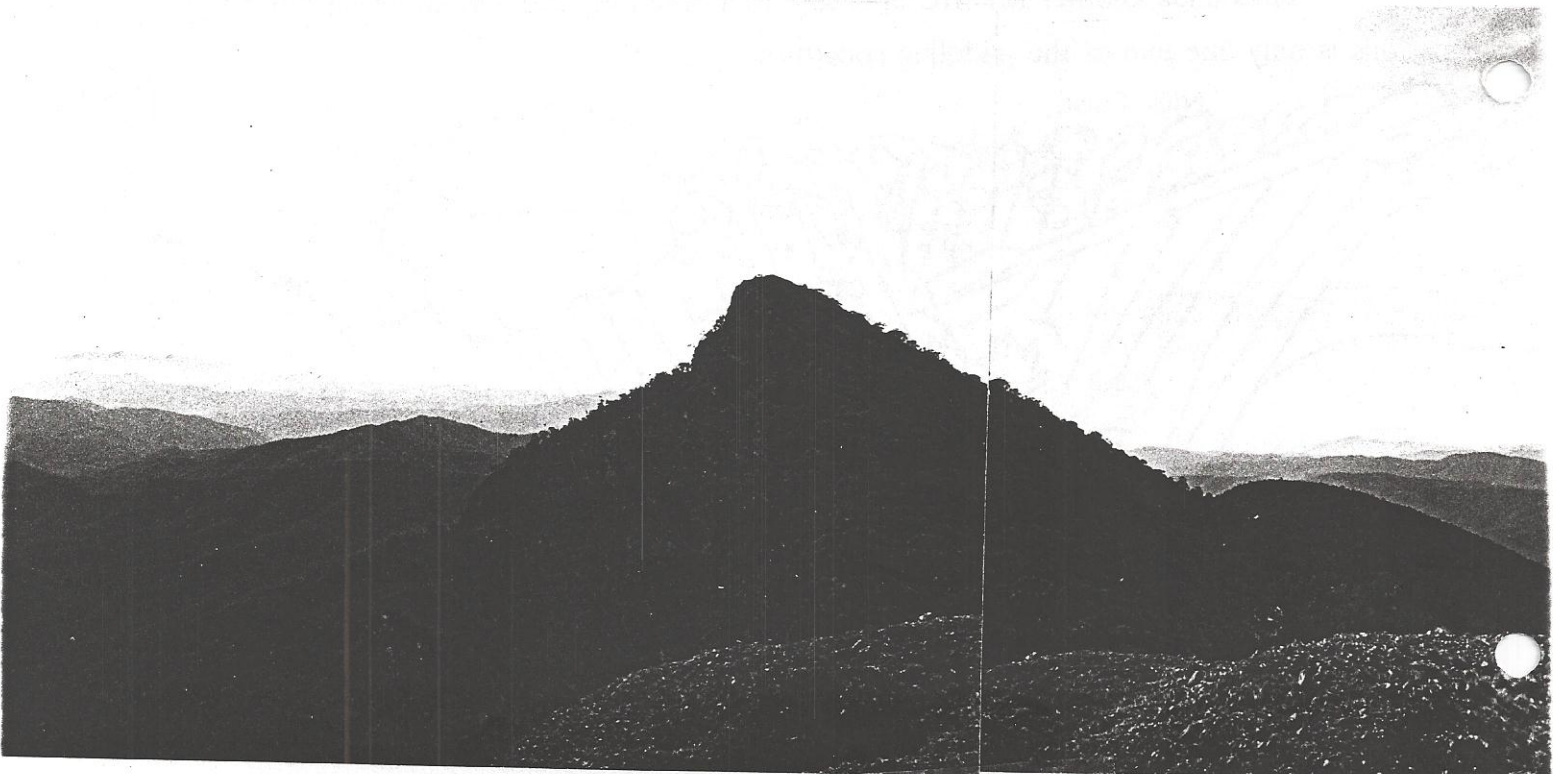
Mt.Howitt - Terrible Hollow -
Viking - Specky - Howitt.

Perhaps the dark and heavy clouds that loomed over the Dandenong Ranges were a sign of things to come- who knew? The morning was cool but fresh as we made our way towards Mansfield to meet the rest of the new faces- morning tea for some, brekky for others. After last minute buys, we headed to our destination, the bottom of the Howitt Spur by the Howqua. Rain soon fell lightly.

Our leader, Tim Woods, sounded our departure. Reaching a clearing up in amongst familiar snowgums, Hells Gap could be clearly seen adjacent to the jagged and imposing face of Mt Magdala, as well as silent and swirling clouds.

"What did you say the temperature was- five degrees?"

With "ohhs and ahhs", the sun revealed itself and its warm and almost energy replenishing rays felt glorious. However as we crested the summit's edge, there was a hurricane of a wind that would freeze the brass off the most courageous monkey- bloody freezing!!



The vista was beautiful- the heads of the Viking and the Razor rose above the Hollow to the north, while the stegosaurus' back of the Crosscut Saw rose and dipped dramatically towards Speculation. That night, the cloud cleared enough to allow a soft glow of moonlight to illuminate the Crosscut but the cold was too much- back to the tents!

Awakening to a pitter-patter, a duck outside the tent revealed a very slight cover of frost and sleet but melted away some time later. Moving on down into the Terrible Hollow, behind Howitt, views gradually became more obscure, although at one stage an aloof Viking dominated the scene. After encountering thick vegetation on the overgrown fire track, a relaxing lunch was enjoyed beside the flats of the Wonnangatta river.

Rising some nine hundred metres above the river valley, the South Viking was reached, just as the sun was setting and a chill could be felt- hinting of the cold of the night to come. Treated to a complete drop in the wind, the moon rose once more as its soft and welcoming light overwhelmed everything. Warmth of the fire accompanied talk of recipes, food, the moon, life in general, UFOs (really aeroplane lights) and more cold!

The sunrise was equally rewarding. One by one drifted up to the nearby knoll to gaze at the morning's welcome to the ranges- bathed in an unreal purple light. Opposite, the Razor was covered in fluorescent orange, while Buffalo and the Darling Ranges lay silently in blue hues. After a very rocky and steep descent, even Jim Craig would be proud of, the Viking Saddle was a welcome sight - not so for the absence of any water! We all lumbered back up the saddle after finding nothing; it was not very serious but it played on our minds. The views from nearby the Razor was some compensation; a clear and bright day providing more scenes. Added to that, an enthusiastic brown snake was met- this hadn't been so bad after all. Funny how fast a person can move when one really wants to.

After a lethargic lunch at the Despair Saddle, conserving water and energy, we plopped ourselves at another saddle, Catherine, after rolling down the hill from Mt Despair's flat summit. Water!- somewhat murky but fit for drinking. After drinking Camp Creek dry, further on camp was set up. As the sun dropped slowly behind Cobbler, more views from Speculation's top was enjoyed that were..well, spectacular!

The next day, with a detour out to rocky Mt. Koonika 's summit ,the climb thereafter up to Mt. Buggery was supposed to be unpleasant- it was not that bad after all.

"Hey guys, there is smoke in the ranges in the ranges over there- fire"

In fact, the smoke created a hazy and unusual sunset which drifted from a bushfire many kilometres away and had settled into the nearby valleys, including the Hollow. Another great (camp?) fire was shared, with more 'UFO sightings' and great yarning at a good campsite.

The next day, a cool breeze soothed our bodies as we steeply ascended and descended each tooth of the Crosscut Saw. Some great photos taken, including a large bug that basically dropped its 'guts' on Fred's palm while posing- who could ask for a better finish? Bidding farewell, it was homeward to Melbourne.

Stephen Curtain.

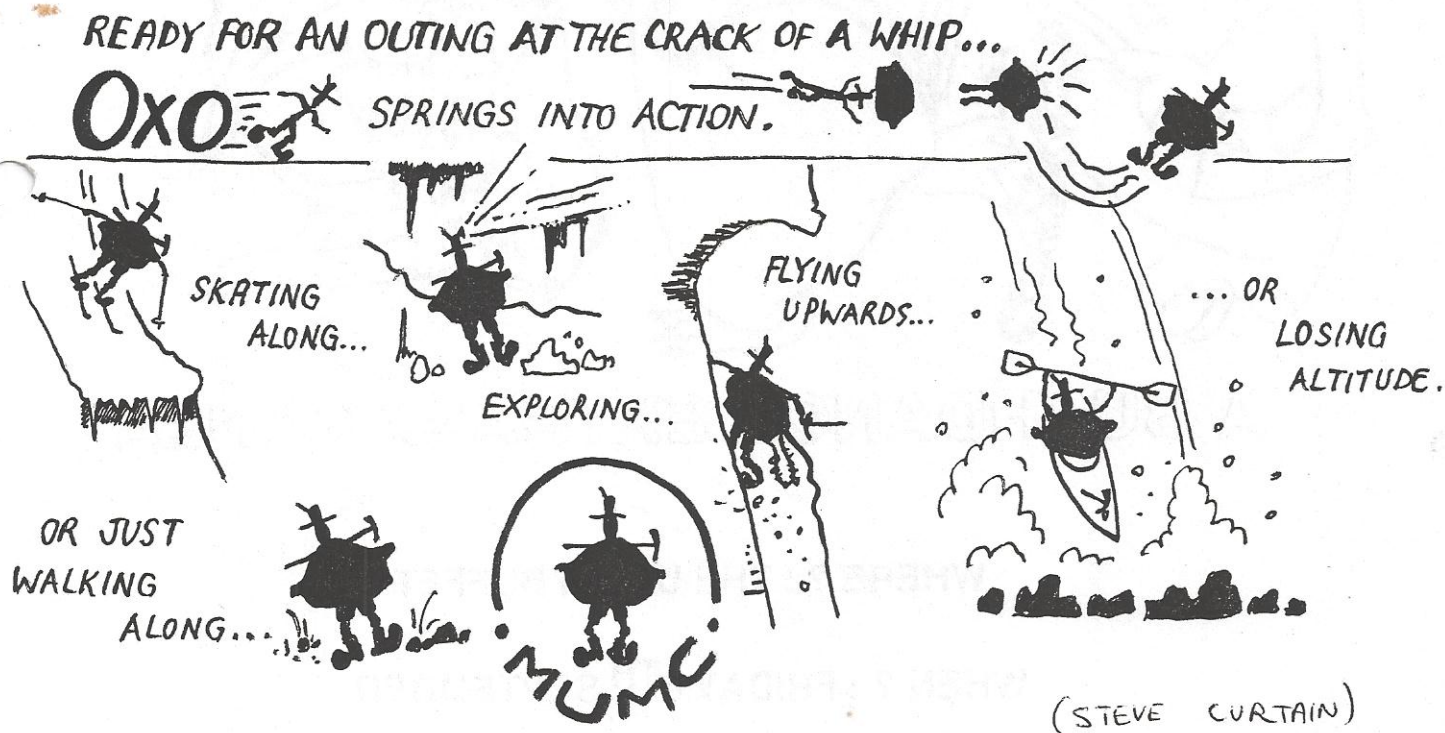
OXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO



MUMC ALPINE SEASON 92/93 NEW ZEALAND

In the past few years, MUMC has been involved in an increased amount of "true" mountaineering. In the 92/93 New Zealand season, another group of members will be taking part in a Mountaineering Course in New Zealand, mixed with a small amount of rock climbing.

The courses are conducted by companies in New Zealand, and cost about \$2000 for a comprehensive basic training. Anyone (preferably with snow and rockclimbing experience) who is interested in joining the group should contact Andrew Roberts in the Club Rooms on Mondays (1:00 - 2:00pm).



MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTINEERING CLUB

PRESENT...

BUSHWAHZEE

BUSH BAND



A BUSHDANCE EXTRAVAGANZA

WHERE ? : THE UNION BUFFET

WHEN ? : FRIDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER

COST ? : \$12 (This includes light refreshments)

B.Y.O.