

MOUNTAINEER

O - w e E k 1992
The magazine of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club

AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



**AND NOW FOR A COUPLE OF
PHOTOGRAPHS OF OUR PRESIDENT
(Dave Kjar)**

On a nice day, beside the river.....



After a few swims (a bad day)



Unfortunately, photographs were not available of Dave in his other, more sophisticated outfits, such as when he's playing the Accountant, or doing some serious partying (perhaps at Rohan and Lorian's)

ROCKCLIMBING - MT.ARAPILES

September 1991

"Want to go rockclimbing?"

"Yeah, sure"

I hadn't really thought about the consequences of that agreement until I was clinging to a rockface 10m above ground level and wishing like hell I wasn't there. With sweat pouring off my hands, and my legs shaking enough to cause an earthquake I searched around for seemingly non-existent handholds and footholds

"There aren't any", I wailed, "and it's all overhung."

After positive encouragement from Rohan; "It's not overhung, it's not even vertical!", my hands decided to give in as well and would no longer cling to the cliff. Eventually I dragged myself and was dragged from above up the rock-face and landed at the top wondering if I would ever have the courage to face the descent and absolutely sure that I would never again even contemplate someones suggestion to go rockclimbing.

Thus was my first attempt at rockclimbing on the weekend trip to Mt. Arapiles. It was a popular trip with a number of beginner and not so beginner and very, very unbeginnerish climbers taking part. Some of the diehard climbers had been there for ten days already when the majority of us arrived. And arrive we did in spite of Steve Carter's directions to follow the Hume Highway!

Saturday morning saw everyone eager to begin climbing. Beginners were taught the all important figure of eight knot (the one knot not to get wrong) and eventually begin to feel comfortable in the nappy like harnesses. Whilst a few people spent Saturday afternoon climbing there was also a large contingent who raced off to the Natimuk Pub at 2pm having been caught by grand final fever, which most of us had left Melbourne to escape from.

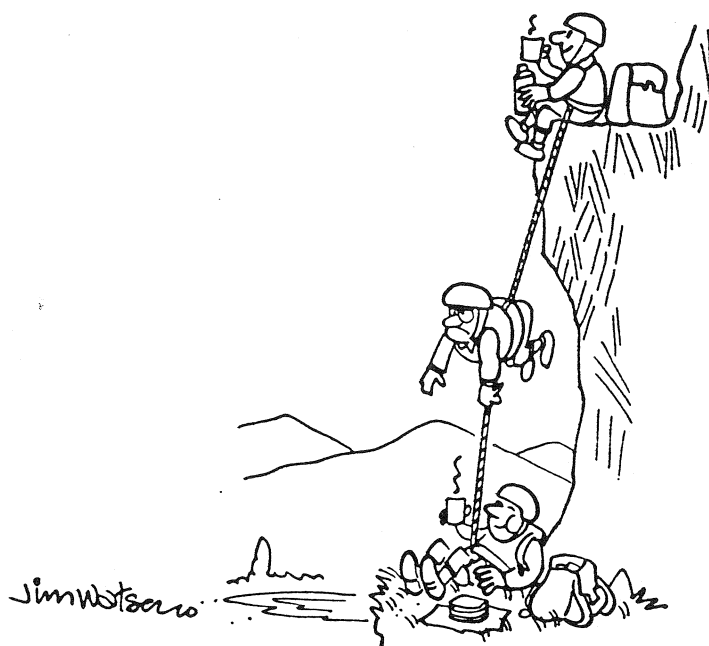
After my first attempt at climbing I was much surprised to find myself attacking another route less than an hour later. And then after a late lunch break to find that I was actually looking forward to the challenge of suspending myself in mid-air, fingers and toes clinging to miniscule cracks on the rock-face. Oh no! These were the first signs of addiction. By the end of the weekend I was climbing anything in sight. This included the camping ground pine trees (quite unsuccessfully) and the toilet wall. One other who had been similarly afflicted was even seen making an attempt on the video shop wall in Ararat on Sunday night, which was quickly ended when she realised a carload of the local boys were watching her!

The trip was enjoyed by all and only one injury of any significance was reported: Rohan was heard falling over one of the log fences

designed to keep cars out of the camping/picnic area. This injury was sustained late on Saturday night after a few beers. Reports have it that he was running away from a girl! And the result was that Rohan spent the rest of the weekend limping around the campsite. Other notable events on Saturday night (besides the Dave Burnett/Phil Towler (and everyone else who cares to join in) drunkenly conversation) were Mad Mike running a lap around the campsite with the Olympic flame (a burning branch of gum tree leaves) and Dave Burnett making passes at nearly every guy in the sight (esp. Phil Towler).

After more climbing on Sunday the tents were pulled down and everyone jammed into cars for the return to Melbourne and a week of holidays.

Julie Edwards



MAD MIKE

T'was once a lad they called "Mad Mike"
You'd meet him once and take to flight
His hair unkept and out of place
tied back with no less than an old shoe lace
His knee high boots they do protect his body from abuse.....
By the many a girl he's tried to pick up with any lame excuse
"She's looking at me, that's my cue, I'll be brave and
go for the kill".
Only to find that, without a doubt,
they'd already been hassled by Phill!
Alas, dear folks, the plot does thicken when tales are told
of Mad Mike's drinkin'
From wine and port to Vic Bitter no less his skulling skills sure
match the best
Mention the Bushdance and you'll soon discover
A story of Carlton rooftops and bodies uncovered
Enough of this talk of events bizarre.....
And onto the "green gherkin" he calls a car
The smell of burnt rubber is an all too familiar scent,
When hooning 'round bends or making a steep descent
"it's OK", he says, "it's pretty safe"
As he slams down the pedal and hopes it brakes
Rumour has it that his family is normal
With a chicken around his neck - he calls that formal??
Yes, Feathertop photos do reveal
That with great delight Mike wore the main course meal
With his "different" sense of humour and constant fall from
grace
In the Melbourne Mountaineering Club,
Mike sure aint out of place!

SO THIS IS WHY I GO TO UNIVERSITY.

The Midnight Ascent: - jewel in the MUMC crown; the high point, literally and figuratively, of the club's year. Huge.

Amazing Fact Number 1:

Eighty people put their names on the trip list. This is the longest list in living memory. I suspect this means MUMC is Back In Town.

Amazing fact number 2:

Number eighty on the list, Fred, who must have treated coming to the trip meeting as a bit of a joke, got to go! The number of pull-outs was exactly correct (until Dave the Fruit Loop remembered Steve the Wunderkind; result: a very full Legendmobile), leaving 36 Ascenters packing their japas on Friday (some later in the evening than others).

Worrying News.

As our heroes gathered at the clubrooms on Friday evening, the rumours began to circulate. Blizzard conditions in the high country; freezing temperatures; horizontal sheets of sleet; the Hume cut by floods at Euroa; earthquakes; bushfires; extraterrestrial landings.

This was going to be a full-on Midnight Ascent.

Things Run Smoothly. Shock!

Everyone left pretty much on time and on target, even Mad Mike and his Green Machine. The Legendmobile of Dave the Fruit Loop was the last to leave the Melbourne City Limits, and was also, surprisingly, the last to arrive at the trout farm. Dave must have been in one of his rare mellow driving moods: he only came close to crashing once.

Apart from a map that reduced the Bright/Trout Farm distance from 15km to 7km, and had more than one car ready to turn back, Andrew the Froberts's organization of this notorious leg of the journey was smooth, professional, and an inspiration to world leaders everywhere. A Nobel Peace Prize is in the mail.

Has everyone noticed the snow?

Leaping from a warm car into the cold alpine night was quite a shock. Firstly, it was sleeting. Ughhh! Hands turned blue, then green, and were soon glowing in the dark. Perhaps the extraterrestrial stories were true.

Packs were packed, unpacked, hefted onto shoulders then quickly dropped again. Jumpers were piled onto bodies in powers of ten. The wise refrained, chuckled, and then chuckled again half-an-hour later as layer after layer of clothing was peeled off. It may be minus three, but walking is still hard work.

Snowdrifts before the final creek crossing warned of things to come. Well before the Steep Decent sign the snow was three metres deep. Not long after it was ten metres deep, and a periscope was needed to check navigation. By the time the last groups reached the final ridge at about 5.00am the snow was at least fifty metres deep in some places, one hundred in others, and we were all using oxygen and probing with super-extension snow poles in an effort to find the hut. At least it wasn't blizzarding.

What do you think you're doing?

As usual on the Midnight Ascent, everyone celebrated their Glorious Victory over the Pitiless Extremes of Nature by Falling Asleep In the Loft. Some brave souls pitched tents and were never seen again, while Phil dug a toilet pit baring a remarkable resemblance to the Grand Canyon. A little later a certain bunch of immoral and disreputable Mountaineers (led primarily by Cathy and Jane) instigated some Serious Fun in the loft, involving the confusion of Dave the Fruit Loop with a pillow. Before long, all ten thousand trip participants were in the loft, leaping, rolling, laughing and some other activity I couldn't recognize, threatening to collapse the whole fandango and send the club hurtling back to the Fifties (at least in terms of membership numbers). Pretty soon a few unspeakables decided to take the club back to the Sixties, and everyone else went downstairs and left them to it.

Shiver. Click.

"Pure insanity." "Very, very cold." These were just two of the thoughts that went through the minds of those girls who had decided to wear backless dresses for a formal dinner in the snow. "Get Down." This was the thought that went through the mind of the twenty litres of snow that found its way into said dresses. And it did.

The cloudy snowy stuff that had enveloped us and the mountain all weekend lifted just as thirty-seven brave Mountaineers lined up for the traditional photos, just outside the hut. Revealed was a glorious, awe-inspiring, breath-taking, heavenly, mind-numbing, consciousness-expanding view of the Owens Valley and surrounding peaks, which we promptly stood in front of and turned our backs to. A couple of jokers who had picked the Wrong Weekend to come to Feathertop were loaded up with cameras and taught to say "Say Cheese", while we all lounged about in the snow looking stupid. They just looked like two bewildered Japanese tourists (snowy ones). As soon as the photos were done the cloud swooped in again. Weird.¹

¹Fred later spoke of wandering out of the hut on his own at 4.00am to see the weather clear instantly and produce a spectacularly moonlit Feathertop, Owens Valley, etc. under a billion sparkling stars. After blinking at it all a few times, and just after his heart had started beating again, the clouds closed in and it was gone. My skin crawls just to imagine it.

A Party on a Mountain.

Cook Cook Cook. Eat Eat Eat. Drink Drink Drink. Dance¹. Sing Sing Sing. Dave the Participant in the Naughtiness cooked some pumpkin soup which won the culinary award, closely followed by Phil's mushrooms. Nigel's souffle was saved from the fierce MUMC taste-test when it was thrown all over both him and the floor before anyone could eat any. Steve fell through the roof and lived. Phil the Recently Single, Mad Mike, Dave the Festival of Light, Steve the Nipple, Dave the Fruit Loop, Andrew the Froberts and Steve the Wunderkind had way too much to drink and also lived. Time Warped. Shears Clicked. Six brave souls linked their arms around eachothers shoulders (for both physical and moral support) and sung really old, daggy songs in the time-honoured fashion. A few of them continued their drunken warblings until the sinister hour of 10:00pm, whereupon Phil, attempting to throw-up through the hole in the loft, instead muttered a pathetic "Ssshhhhhhh!" resulting in the next half hour being taken- up with incomprehensible ravings by Dave Festival, Andrew Froberts and Steve Nipple as to why everyone who had gone to bed was a woos, why it's fundamentally important to the meaning of life and the underlying nature of all things that they keep everyone awake for a little longer, and something about okapis.

As they staggered to bed, Steve informed everyone that there were two girls in his tent and he didn't know what to do.

Oh No!.. The Morning.

Everyone was a little on the quiet and woosey side in the morning, particularly Phil, who engaged in a bit of snow re-decoration. Hang-overs were compared. A handful in the loft brushed-up on their very rusty conversational techniques, while most ventured to the summit area. Jumping off cornices is a habit best not to become addicted to. There are few cornices in Collins st., let alone deep, dry, powder snow of the mouth-watering quality to be found that day.

Warm.

As everyone packed and prepared for the trip down it was noticed that the temperature outside was warmer than inside. Dave risked his sanity removing the deckchairs from the dungeon, and Sue the Terminally Asleep and Steve Wunderkind sat on them. Still, it was snowing as the groups set out for their epic descent. It is just possible that some glissading, bulldozing, falling-over and snow fights were had on the way down. Andrew the Froberts, tired after his night of revelry, decided to slow his group down by hitting them with his ice-axe. Jane was first, but the look on her face, not to mention the lump

¹There wasn't as much dancing as the other things.

on her arm and the blue of her fingers, put a stop to all that. Once back in the car-park, Tim the Surgeon prodded and poked while we blocked our ears to hide the screams... (It wasn't broken).

The Pub, Pub, Pubberty Pub.

Ache. Creak. Stagger. Wobble. Sit. Drink. Sigh.

Porepunka Pub.

Best to eat all the tour-bus's bread rather than wait for service. After all, Melbourne was still 3 hours away...

Epilogue.

There was a serious movement to get everyone together and do it all again the following weekend. If you have to ask why, you weren't there the first time.

Dave Festival of Light Burnett.

MOUNTAINEERING HERITAGE FILE

Despite the first appearances, the MUMC library contains many priceless books, articles, maps, publications, a video (MUMC funded production), slides, journals, and photographs. You are encouraged to browse, muse, study, rave, flick, ponder, race, paddle, climb, and walk your way through our collection. You're not a true Mountaineer without your facts, stories, history and rehashed one liners!!

ON RECORD.....

"I was very glad to be in the Europa. Though it was an unfamiliar boat it certainly came out of the weekend's test with flying colours. With its high volume and sizeable rocker....."

Torsten Krebs May 1986 - Indi, Swampy Plains, Thredbo, King, Canoe Polo trip.

"I speak of the Thompson River.....(at .75m).....However poor Tim, suffering the consequences of trying to match Macca's drinking the night before wasn't enjoying it much.....one drop in particular allowed wonderful nosestands. Grigor and Macca both excelled, achieving full end loops....."

Andrew Danks Xmas 1985

MITCHELL RIVER FLOOD @4.6m -Tim Beriman

"The next day it was still raining and Phil was getting unmellow YET again, so we decided to drive home."

Carter's letter by Kjar March 1990 Nymboida

Discover the saga and controversy of the red couch!

MUMC PUBLICATIONS

Bushwalking in the Victorian Alps, MUMC Publications

2.3.9 Eight mile hut - Bluff Saddle

2.5.1 Woollybutt Saddle - Mt Buller- Mt Little Buller-Howqua River

A History Of Melbourne University Mountaineering Club 1944-1972
David Hogg

The original MUMC Hut Logbook

Anyone with MUMC literature at home, I implore you to return it, even if it is a Canoe Guide or Comic book. This material is vital to preserve in a couple of years it will be out of print and it will be sitting on your unhappy bookshelf at home. It only takes a few minutes to realise the fact that MUMC has made an enormous impact over the years; a few minutes longer you will discover a snippet of information so fascinating that you'll want everyone in the club to know; another few and you'll be oxidified!.....

Dave Kjar (MUMC President)

MAD PEOPLE GO TO ARAPILES NOT FOOTBALL : FULL REPORT

Arapiles Beginners Weekend :Grand final trip

Despite instructions from an ex-rockclimbing convenor to "head up the Hume until Horsham", a large party of enthusiastic beginners arrived safely in the Pines on Friday night. They were soon amused by the sight of one of their leaders (Rohan) stand too close to the fire and have his shoes catch alight. Threats to set alight an almost comatose Latrobe student lying by the fire were taken seriously by some. Could these leaders be trusted they were obviously wondering, and no, at that time of night they probably couldn't.

Early on Saturday (for MUMC), Phil took a party off to Agamennon, Mad Mike lead Mari, Dave, Dave and Fred grabbed some victims while Rohan and Steve went to the Organ pipes.

Rohan and Steve's groups all flew up a 10 and 12 and soon learnt all there is to know about retrieving protection, and abseiling. It was good to see the consistent use of helmets. Only experienced leaders who know and can judge the risks should be given the choice of not wearing one.

Dave, John and Sue joined everyone on the organ pipes and were entertained by an AUMC girl on Tanin (a strenuous 19) who spent more energy swearing loudly than actually climbing. Personally I find grunts much more effective than swearing on hard moves, but this girl obviously found the latter technique successful. Rohan and Steve gave a nervous Sue some belaying experience by repeating Tanin. It is certainly strenuous but hardly deserved so many expletives!

By 2.00pm those with football fever were inexorably drawn to the pub, while the stronger of us kept climbing. After promising Laura, Julie, Louise, Kate, Greg and Dave that Marmots Mall was a soft touch 15 (which is apparently being upgraded to 16) most of them zoomed to the top. Obviously they were ready for Lamplighter (14) but darkness fell too soon.

A group of drunk climbers / football fanatics arrived back from Natimuk Pub after dark. Singing was attempted, and after 10 minutes of American Pie, abandoned. A best leg competition between Phil and Dave was held but no result obtained. Firewood was collected in and throughout Rohan's car leaving no room for passengers. Mad Mike managed to keep his clothes on, and Rohan kept on stroking the wrong leg. By about 11pm bodies were strewn chaotically around the fire.

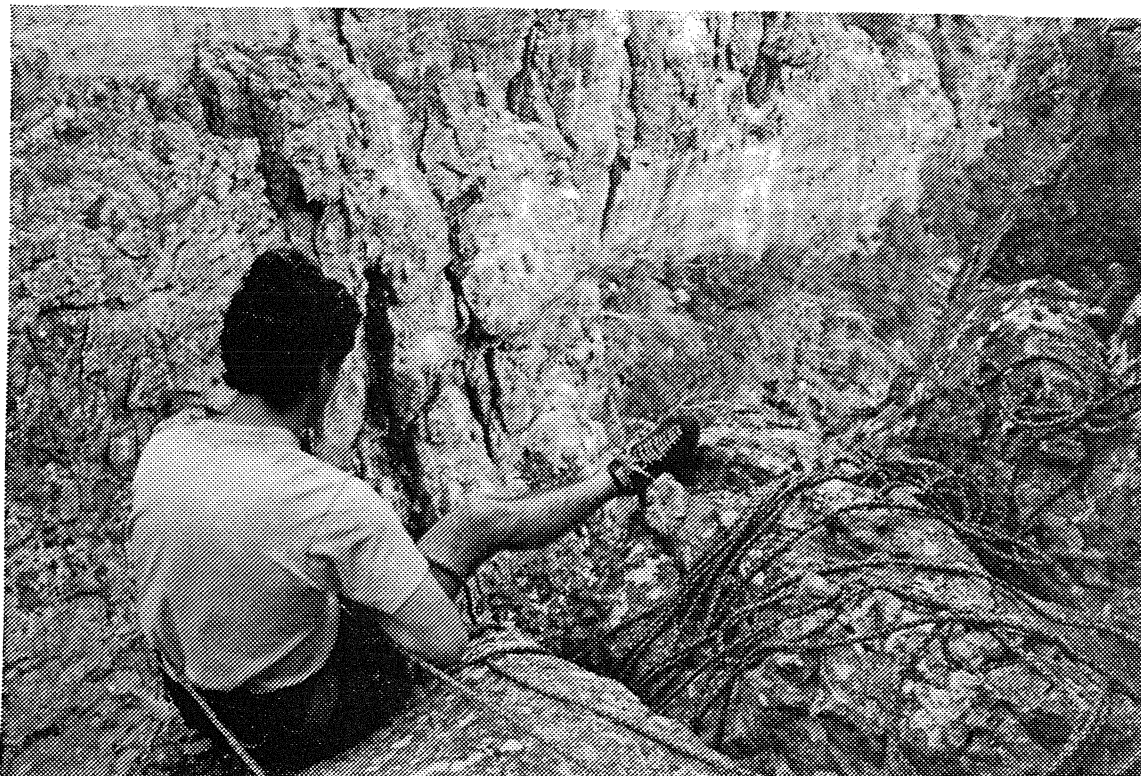
On Sunday a dazed morning and slightly better afternoon was spent on Agamennon, Lamplighter, Arachnus and Central Gully! Mad Mike led Watchtower Crack (airy sustained 16) in jeans, no chalk, no bolt plates, but worst of all, after eating cold Tom Piper Sweet and Sour whose appearance (and taste) defies description. A fine lead!

Those who hadn't climbed before probably noted how little climbing is actually done in a weekend. Leaders try to take you up as much as possible but if you are left out, don't sit back, demand to be taken climbing! If there is something you particularly want to do, ask a leader to take you up it. You might want to try Lamplighter (scary 14), Arachnus (long, airy easy 8), swinging (a 10 on Castle Crag), Bard (Megaclassic 12) or Kestrel (interesting 10).

Another trick to getting more climbing in is not to hang around. If you get stuck, make a move, any move and you'll probably find that elusive jug you wanted. If moving results in a fall, you're higher than you were before. And if nothing works, haul up or be hauled up on the rope (just ask Rohan about this technique). This is much better than nervously contemplating the impossible for half an hour!

Thanks to all the leaders (Dave B., Dr Dave, Rohan, Fred and Phil) for their effort, Dave B. for his organisation and the participants for their enthusiasm.

Steve Carter



"THE BETTER SIDE OF STEVE CARTER!"

NEW ZEALAND CANOEING FOR THE FAMILY

To serve as a record; to act as an inspiration to others and for general interest, I have written down the final itinerary of rivers paddled and reactions to them on my recent trip to New Zealand with Monash University.

HOORINOUI

Paddled at medium level. Good warm up river GR2-3, a really nice hole to play in. Off the beaten track; so a good river to get the group paddling together. 2 hours

MURCHISON AREA

EARTHQUAKE SECTION OF THE BULLER

Like the Mitchell at 2.5m; only twice as wide with waves in the major rapid ~4 meters high. Good, safe, high volume fun. Tordi claims to have paddled this in a Down River Racer. Paddled in high flood, flood and high levels - Character changes; still as much fun of more fun as formations appear. 2-3 hours

GRANITY CREEK SECTION; BULLER

High volume surfing, more controlled than Earthquake - higher up. Major rapid at Granity Creek, Gr3. Paddle as long as you can play!

O'SULLOVANS BRIDGE RAPID; BULLER

Gr3, Slalom Course site. Looping, surfing, powerful eddies. The best short section of water I've come across (i.e. a 2 minute car shuffle walk) 15 minutes- 2 hours.

Murchison area

If in New Zealand for new year's eve the campsite on the Buller up the road from Murchison is a must. Amongst the company in 1991/1992 was Mick Hopkinson, of "Canoeing down Everest" fame, Blue Nile, Orinoco, Indis, Colorado, Nevis Bluff etc. etc. together with 300 other paddlers. A great place to meet paddlers who can lead you in the right direction.

MATAKITAKI

Similar to the Thompson at minimum. New Zealanders freak out when there are rocks in the rapids. Probably good in high flood. "Scenic" 2 hours

FOX

Get in below the glacier; with ice blocks. Very cold. Only time in N.Z. that you need a wetsuit. Gr3 below the glacier to the swing bridge.

Below this Gr5, not recommended. 1 hour

KWUARWHU

Dogleg Section

High volume, dodge the rafts and boogie boarders; clean fun. Paddle underneath the bungee bridge after the first rapid. Chinese Dogleg, near the end, a real roller coaster 3-4 ride. No major hydraulics or other hazards for the boater. 1-3 hours

Roaring Meg Section

A unique piece of river. Mostly boils and man-eating eddie lines. This is the zone of "funny water". Whirlpools, nosestands in water going upstream in the eddie, a substantial hole halfway down and some good waves. An alarming paddle in a low volume boat!! 1-3 hours

Nevis Bluff

Nice tourist attraction. You'd probably have similar odds for survival playing frogger with yourself, on the Eastern Freeway in peak hour in pouring rain; when everybody on the road was drunk. A 400m grade 6 Section.

Cromwell Gap Rapid, Clutha River Confluence

Soon to be drowned by dam(n) water, nice backdrop of bulldozers pushing dirt in the water and typically very windy this contains undoubtedly the best wave I've come across. Slick, green, steep as a sand dune, spanning 10 meters across. The 5 seconds of ecstasy I went to N.Z. for.

REES RIVER

The first river I've paddled that could be legitimately described as "scenic" but still good paddling. Low-med volume in alpine conditions in a superb valley surrounded by alpine peaks. Classy. 2-3 hours

LANDSBOROUGH

Champagne paddling- the climax of the trip. Chopper in for camp on the first night (Hinds Flat). (Had a whole chicken between 2 for dinner!) Excellent scenery for ride in. Grade 4 gorge after breakfast. Grade 2-3-3+ for the rest of the day. Perfect weather. Camp overnight at Frazer's Hut. Grade 3 gorge after breakfast, Gr2-3-3+ for the rest of the morning. As the river was in flood there were holes on every corner. I got trashed once due to concentration problems; Gibbo had a surprised expression on his face after "surprise" rapid. (the surprise was having 2 dancer ender hydraulics in a row!)

RANGITATA

The best rafting in N.Z. Not bad paddling either. Grade 4 gorge, everything requires inspection. The last drop involves 2 river width hydraulics -gr5. We skipped this 10 meters or so only to find out later some German paddlers had been playing in the second stopper in C1s and their slalom boats! 3 hours

HOLLYFORD

Grade 4/5 very technical rapid after the second swingbridge. (Missing the finish would involve a paddle out into the sea and around to Milford Sound.) This river wasn't very pleasant at 6.30pm in pouring rain. A principle was at stake! Thankfully the autopilot on my paddle worked- after 3km of self navigation it eddied out at the very end. 2 hours

MURUIA FALLS

A single drop and its over.

Paddling it at the wrong level would be a mistake. Cheaper than bungee jumping! 1 second.

SHOTOVER

Grade 5-6 drive in that makes the Snowy-McKillops road look like a runway. Grade 0 water for some time, annoyance from tourist helicopters, gold mining machinery and bonehead rafters. The fun starts at Shark's Tooth. Toilet bowl provides the only real excitement- Gr3, but capable of flipping rafts. A couple of our intrepid crew were trashed- much to their chagrin it was mostly captured on video for other's delight! 1 splat spot; then the tunnel- good for a lark until halfway down you hit a small hidden drop- "Shit!! What was that?!" 2-3 hours plus 1.5 hours for a new fuel filter.

Dave Kjar Jan 1992

A bushwalk into NSW, Victoria, NSW, Victoria...

(IT'S A JOKE, IT MIGHTNT BE FUNNY , BUT YOU'LL GET IT.)

THE ALPINE WALKING TRACK - PART I

You know when you're on a real walk when you meet up with two of the walk's group, already gently broken in by an odd 400km stroll through Victoria's alpine region.

There we were, like the proverbial chalk and cheese: us, being Nicki Munro, Brett Hodges and myself - all spick'n'span in beautifully clean clothes, whoops, I forgot the dirt on our boots; and them - Matthew Cairn, Keryn Paul and Anton Weller -mud splattered overpants, torn gaiters and a hint of perspiration. Hey Matt, the dribble from the bottom lip was a great touch.

Dave Dodemaide had been as so kind to organize the transport (he drove) to take us to the rendezvous point, where we would meet up with the others.. Matt, Anton and Keryn,`who had started the Alpine Walking Track (AWT) about four weeks previously on Dec.1, from Walhalla in Gippsland.



The two groups met without any real problems on a so-so drizzly day at Limestone Creek in far north-east Victoria, near Benambra, a stone's throw from the border; however carrying in a pre-arranged food drop of fresh stuff, caused a problem initially, but was sorted out.

Having encountered just about every type of weather including driving snow on Mt.Wills, Anton, Matt and Keryn had been slowly soaked to the skin- not a great deal of sun or warmth to cheer about! Yet spirits and conversation picked up every now and then over the coming days when us 'newhands' began to slowly adjust to what been daily life for the others for several weeks; the sun even came out, making for beaut views. In particular, the Cobberas Range, being the last high point in Victoria over 6000 feet, (1800m) before heading into NSW, then Mt.Pilot, the latter providing the first glimpses of HUGE snowdrifts on the Main Range, several days walk away.

Just out of the Limestone Ck campsite itself, there were numerous limestone caves which may warrant further exploration, if not already. Although only in for a short time, some of the group went in as far as 40 or 50 metres, with spectacular limestone formations found.

Throughout the first half of the walk, there were brumbies everywhere, not to mention the fresh patties here and there. Onto Cowombat Flat and the infant Murray River, known as the Indi, after crossing the Cobberas and a night's camp- a relaxing lunch



enjoyed by all, stretched out under the sun. The Indi provided a handful of surprises with some great waterfalls/rockpools and minor grade 1,2 rapids, visited just off-track downstream of the lunch spot. The night's camp was made finally back upstream, close to the river's source; here we found idyllic camping, finally in NSW, (some climax!) with the grass so well manicured by brumbies, that it seemed as though someone had literally been through with a Victa. With fairly open vegetation underfoot, the going was relatively good the following day. Although not obvious at the time, we crossed back into Victoria -a mere two feet away- then into NSW five minutes later and Victoria two minutes further on. (.....there's the joke.) By mid-morning, we stopped and posed at what we guessed was the Murray's beginnings- a mere moss soak; pretty exciting stuff!



Although the rain of the last weeks' may have created a bit of uncomfortable walking, one sure outcome was the good flow of water in what were some normally dust dry creeks. With good progress towards Tin Mine the next day, the group would stretch out along the track, each taking pace in his or her stride.-perhaps most apt was Brett's performance. Coming to a complete stop in mid-step (in itself, amazing) on the Cascades firetrack, he bolted about 3 feet in the air, a fine vocal accompaniment of various words piercing the forest still.-a red bellied black snake, about a metre long, nearly merged with Brett's calf."God I love walking...", " he must have been thinking. Apart from scaring the hell through everyone else within earshot, from his explosion of words and aerial tactics, no-one could foresee what was to come.

Some time later, we were back in snowgum country, after sidling Mountain and Alpine Ash forest- lunch was enjoyed at a great hut- Cascades-just outside of Thredbo. Here we all met Ana, a seasonal Kosciusko ranger, out for a stroll for the day, who gave us warning of various gastro-related problems with the water. Needless to say, Brett was further impressed after the recent drama, as well as the rest of us- regular vomiting would be expected, if one of us was to be as unfortunate, though not to worry.

Unfortunately, though not linked, Brett had experienced short but intense stomach cramps, accompanying a slight pain around his ribs, earlier that day.

It was arranged that Nicki and Brett, being close friends, would take a day or two's break in Thredbo, while Matt, Keryn, Anton and I would continue up onto the Main Range, hopefully meeting somewhere, somehow, several days' later. So accompanied back to nearby Dead Horse Gap and carpark on the Alpine Way road with Ana, the group parted ways. In any event, I had to come from the Main Range in several days to meet up with Brett and Nicki, back in Thredbo, for the ride home, while Anton, Keryn and Matt continued onto Canberra to finish the AWT, 600km away.

With the Main Range such a large area to camp and walk in, there was some uncertainty that we would ever meet up, apart from the journey home. So it was to everyone's surprise, three days later, when our group heard a yell - " Steve!"; there was Brett, followed by Nicki. Literally just about to leave the group from the previous night's camp below Mt. Townsend, (2208m) I had intended to camp for a night by myself, before heading 'down' to meet Brett and Nicki. However, Brett had put a sudden but welcome stop to that plan when he stuck his cheeky face out from behind a granite tor to call out. Nick and Brett had in fact, after taking a break in Thredbo, camped beside Muellers Peak, a mere 1500 metres from our own campsite on Townsend.

They had even considered walking up to Townsend's summit, but at a moment, decided against it -it had been sheer luck we had met , though admittedly, they had seen figures moving up and about the camp, but hadn't counted on finding us.

During the period on the Main Range, a plateau comprising rolling ranges and major peaks around 7000ft+(2000m+), dawns and sunsets could be experienced to their max from such a high altitude; alpine glacially associated lakes- in particular, Blue Lake-provided some great sidetacks, as well as numerous summits of which revealed the impressive and very rocky west face of the Main Range -a drop of 1800 metres in some spots: bloody high!

Some of us broke out in uncontrollable spasms when 'glacading' the numerous snowdrifts- some several hundred metres in length and still over one and a half metres in depth -all in mid January!

The excitement didn't stop.

Nicki, Brett and I finally left Anton, Keryn and Matthew on Alice Rawson Peak, (near Townsend) whereby the latter group would drop down into the Lady Northcotes Canyon -quite deep- for a rest day. Largely playing by ear, the former group decided to make for a final camp before heading down to Thredbo. On making our way across the Snowy River upper headwater towards a prominent hut, (Seamans) Brett thought he'd take an easy ride on his backside on the rather slippery alpine tussock grass, which, admittedly, gives a good ride. What he didn't quite count on, was one broken hand and a dislocated wrist, confirmed several hours later and \$200 dollars for his troubles at the medical centre at Jindabyne!

Sliding down the snowgrass, Brett had caught his hand in a slight hollow in a clump of it-I heard the unnerving sound of a snap! as his hand was suddenly yanked sideways: not very pleasant at all.

As luck would have it, we caught a lift with a NPWS ute that was fortunately out visiting the hut, apparently, once in a blue moon. After a gradual recovery in a spa (no bubbles) and stuffing our faces with real food, we bade a unusual but welcome departure for home.

Stephen Curtain.

Further developments on the MUMC culture agenda.

The Ballard of the Pines

From the clubrooms to the Piles
is 'round about 200 miles
Driving up the Western Highway
talking bullshit all the while
And in the back we've got our ropes
we've got our guidebooks and our hopes
as the Gramps go rushing by

Have you ever seen the Bluffs
when the sun is coming up
Hexes jangle, ropes get tangled,
this leading game is mighty tough
And all around the wheat-fields bake
out beyond Mitre Lake
and jugs keep coming on and on

Steep, scary climbs are the pumpiest climbs
I check my runners once, I chalk my shaking hands...
I wanna watch the sun go down
in the rear-view into town
Park outside the Nati Pub
Go inside and grab some grub
I'd give you all your Euro limestone
for Castle Crag and that lonely payphone
And one more campfire under the pines

Yellow is faith,
Rock is solid being
Araps the yellow rock god Burnett.

Despite the occasional pretences as being complete bogans and vagabonds, the true Karma of the OXO man life philosophy is alive and well, rest assured. The latest development in this constant push for higher ground is evidenced by the plethora of classy MUMC patented songs that have been thrown out of the jamming sessions a few of the more talented hippies have been directing.
If you're lucky enough a rendition of the favourites may be available by tuning to 351 fm.(351-the house, not the bogan car; Faith Music)

D R Kjar B.Comm., Partner, MUMC Inc.

CHAMPAGNE CANOEING WINS OXO IV!!

It was a week of sunshine and success. Jokes made previously about the futility of returning last year's trophies turned into reality as they were all handed back to MUMC. As for the weather it was the antithesis of last years deluge.

The events started on Monday at the Latrobe moat (pond of death) with the polo competition. The usual "How do you like your women" - "BLACK" was effectively countered by Monash, who tagged "AND BLUE" onto the end, giving the impression that we were wife bashers and proud of it. This didn't stop the OXO women (Joc, Cathy, Jane and Lou) from trouncing everyone in the preliminary rounds. They were unfortunately beaten in the finals by MONASH (well 2/5 Monash, 1/5 Deakin, 1/5 Macquarie and 1/5 Bev (Janine)) despite a fine effort (physical and vocal) especially as Monash had an extra sub. Joc was her usual unquiet self.

The OXO men (Andy W., Andy G., Dave Kemp, Dave W., Andre' and Nick) always looked on top, but were troubled by a strong Adelaide team who only lost after a loose defence and a fast break from the indefatigable Nick. [Andy Waters' tactic of using a four man zone worked well for Melbourne, and gave the OXO cheer squad a chance to scream abuse at a seemingly incredible lazy defence.] Monash provided some resistance in the final, but still went down 3-0 (after a goal from Andy bounced off the goal, off a boat and back into the goal!) Well done guys!

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day, and the landscaping dinghy was put to good use by various larrikins. Little did some people realise what the price of swimming in the moat would be!

Tuesday was a disorganised day of setting up, practice runs/rolls and some paddling lessons for the incredibly unstable but seemingly unsinkable Mad Mike. (How ?? did he make it down the Mitta??) The rapid race was cancelled and Latrobe didn't turn up until night.

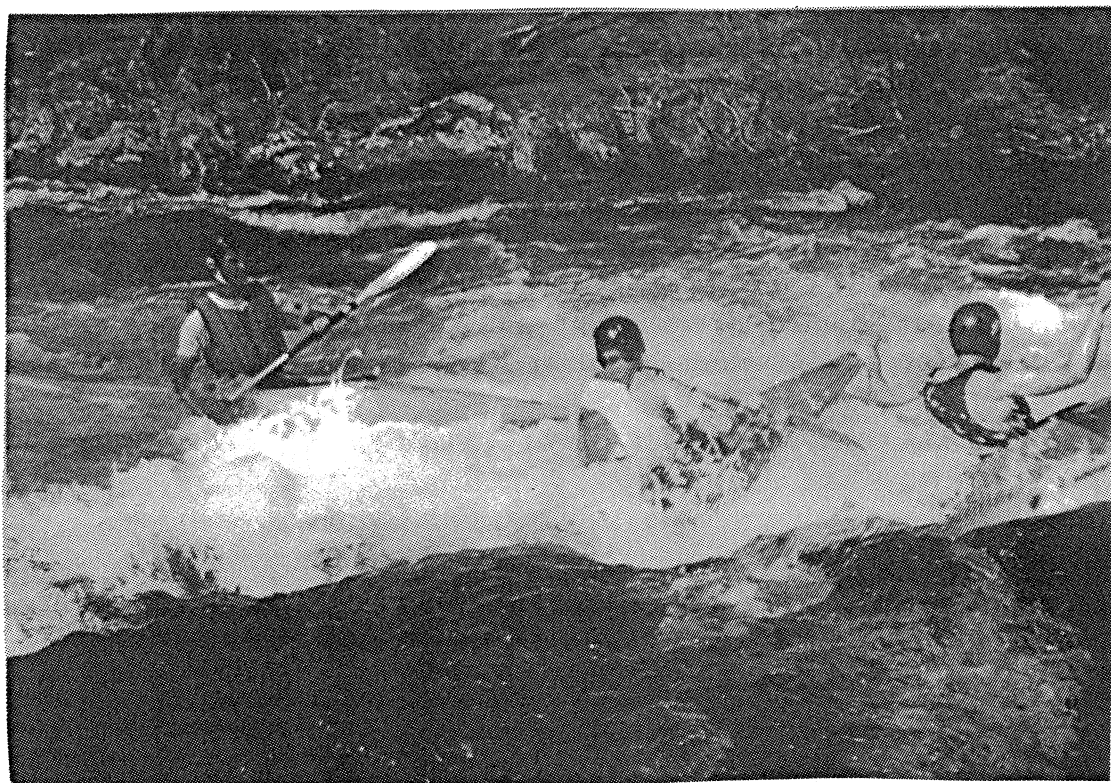
By 5pm the moat bug had hit Steve who was soon periodically convulsing on the ground. Not even being blown up at 10:30 pm by an exploding shark (previously given as a birthday present) could rouse him. The party was forcefully revived by the arrival of Kjar Bear, Phil, Karen and the media contingent, Dave B., who were determined to have a good time and did.

Slalom took up all of Wednesday. Kjar surprised even himself with top results in K1, C1 and C2. Nick was his unwilling companion in the open C2 (which they won) due to a late move by the moat bug. Rumour has it he barely had time in between throwing up to put in a paddle stroke. Heroic effort!

Lou, Joc, Cathy and Jane all went very well with top ten placings. Some of the above (especially Jane) were rather surprised to finish good

in 1st and 2nd year to keep paddling going - you will be leading, organising and running things next year. Remember half of the 'veterans' who lead you have only been paddling for 2-3 years; so keep your weekends free, paddle as many hard rivers as possible and 5 4 3 2 1

Steve Carter



PADDLING HEROES!

THOMPSON RIVER : SUN 13th OCTOBER IT'S MOMENTS LIKE THESE.....

STOP THE PRESS!! Another MUMC paddling trip goes down in history. This is no exaggeration and to this end this account of our Thompson River day trip is dedicated to Andrew Roberts. Given his obsession with male to female ratios in the Club, Andrew will be in rapture to discover that Jane, Louise and Cathy OUTNUMBERED (I repeat outnumbered) Dave Wilson and Dave Kjar! Needless to say that one of the minority (hint: a Dave!) was half an hour late on Sunday morning and came up with some weak excuse about his alarm clock failing him. While gathering gear in the boatshed, Jane and I were trying to make a crucial decision as to which type of boat we would paddle- a dancer or a reflex. The new reflexes won us over and by the end of the day we were both 'bent' on using them again - Jane literally, me figuratively! Driving up to the river the sun made a brave attempt to fight through the clouds. It was only when we arrived that a consensus was reached as to the thermals and shorts being the day's fashion statement. We were all pretty fired up even if the river wasn't all that high.

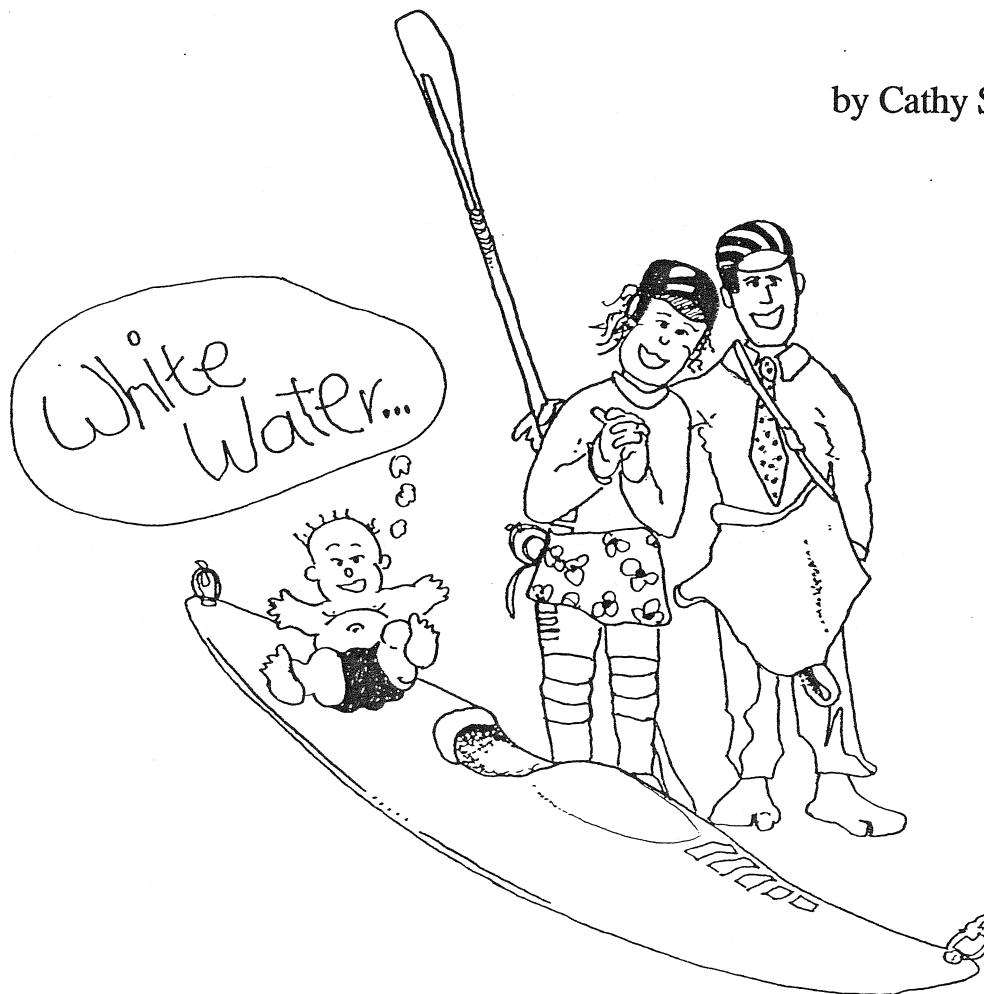
After a relatively quick but bumpy car shuffle, courtesy of Kjar, we made final adjustments to boats and gears then headed for the river. Jane and I spent a little while practising 'folding one's ankles in a reflex' and then ferry gliding across the current (yes, the Thompson has currents). The first stages of the river were fairly flat, the monotony broken by water fights and boat ramming. We arrived at a 'play' rapid in which ferry gliding, duck tails, rolling and swimming were practised. It is an hilarious sight watching someone float down the river under water then flinging their arms into the air, taking an humungous breath, while at the same time eyes working overtime to catch someone who looks like they might attempt a rescue. Of course, while balanced precariously half in and half out of the water, one inevitably heard the other bellow "let him/her swim". You would have guessed by now that the river was pretty calm at a low level and surprisingly warm. Jane had the best technique of convincing other to save her- let out an almighty scream as if you were in shark infested waters. Admittedly the flat river was a bit of a grind, but just before lunch and Louise's paddle reaching breaking point, we met with our first decent rapid. This also marked the beginning of the gorge section- our planned destination. One memorable rapid was when we stopped to do nose stands. This involved dipping the nose of your kayak into the swirl of the rapid then being shot out and upwards. The male propositon (just for Andrew) of our group made them look easy and said it too.

"Come on Cathy and Jane, just paddle up, point your nose in and you've got it." They failed to tell us how many warm up attempts it would take. After paddling, dipping, tipping, rolling I did my first nose stand- what a feeling!! Jane had other ideas as she willingly rolled kayak in the rapid much to the surprise of Dave W. whose kayak came into contact with what was now a confused Jane.

It must be mentioned that the wildlife surrounding the Thompson was in abundance. We caught sight of many considerably sized lizards basking in the sun, a variety of birdlife, platypus and a snake sliding out of the river onto a rock. Dave Kjar did a Harry Butler impersonation and described to us that the "snake edged his way scale by scale up the rock." We paddled on, reaching some more 'play' rapids and one interesting shoot. This was a pathway rushing between a narrow passage of rocks and carried the boats rather quickly. At this point flat water became the norm. Paddling flat water is hard yakka, especially in reflexes where the legroom is minimal. After six hours paddling and with the movements of old men and women, we climbed out of our boats, dragged the to the car and got changed- talk about hungry! Dave Kjar and Louise did the car shuffle while Dave W., Jane and I built a great fire and talked about food etc.

Well, for a day trip the five of us (3:2) managed to quite successfully put Uni and exams to the back of our minds and concentrate on the finer things of life.

by Cathy Sealey.



"THE FAMILY"
- Stephen Curtain

1992 INAURGURAL DECADENCE FEST (please no, never again!)

The date has been forgotten but the memory of THE DECADENCE-FEST. lives on.....

Nige was house sitting and, seeing as the place wasn't ours, it seemed the perfect place to host a gathering of MUMC types. The first thing we noticed upon entering was a tame rabbit snuffling around the yard (but wisely keeping just out of arm's reach) - with seasoning this would make a great main course. However the host called us away from the rabbit and demanded we begin with the intended cuisine.

First course: Cheese Fondue with champagne. Cross-referencing numerous recipes we came up with one that looked appropriate and so we began frantically stirring cheese into wine with Nige swearing that the cheese was curdling and the rest of us (at that stage "the rest of us" consisted of Louise, Rob, Andrew and Stefan) consoled him that it simply wasn't mixing properly - "nevermind, just add some more kirsch". The fondue was quickly (and surprisingly cleanly) finished off and a chocolate version begun.

Second course: Chocolate fondue. Destined to be a mess, but what can you expect when chocolate and gluttons are put together. We began with "strawberries dipped in chocolate", moved to "bench smeared in chocolate" and finished with "chocolate dripping on T-shirts".

Third course: Pancakes with port and wine. Once the stack of pancakes was placed upon the table we tackled *The Glutton's Dilemma*, a well chronicled problem encountered when a glutton's stomach is overburdened but more food is placed before the said glutton. Should the glutton consume the food and risk intolerable stomach expansion or should he/she restrain themselves and simply salivate quietly in the corner? Needless to say (possessed by the oxo spirit) we risked all and stuffed ourselves.

Post-pancakes: A temporary peace involving grapes, wine, remnant champagne, polite conversation and the arrival of more decadence-festers (Phil, Dave B., Rohan, Laurian and Marie) who demanded that we resume our over consumptive activities.

Fourth course: Ice-cream. Not the usual, it had to be Plumes and Sara-Lee (only decadence would do). Decadence being the

theme, we couldn't help but spill an unfortunate portion on the couch.

Fifth course: More pancakes and more wine. Need we say more.

Sixth course: Cheese fondue. After a suitable pause in proceedings we decided the cheese fondue deserved a second go. The only trouble was a shortage of bread, soon relieved when it was realised that Andrew was hoarding it. This time around we were a little messier.

Seventh course: Chocolate fondue with anything handy. Marie came out of this worst - Andrew could not stop dripping chocolate on the sleeve of her shirt when reaching across to the the fondue. At this point we began attempting to finish any remaining port and red wine (we lost).

The first (hopefully of many) decadence-fest wound down to the sounds of cleaning in the kitchen and Bronski Beat (plus many other hits from 1983/84) in the living room. Given the apparent success of the first decadence-fest it is clear we must go on to grander enterprises perhaps involving more seafood and dancing girls/guys. However such options can only be explored if club members maintain an obese and yet quality conscious appetite - take heed.

Andrew Gaff



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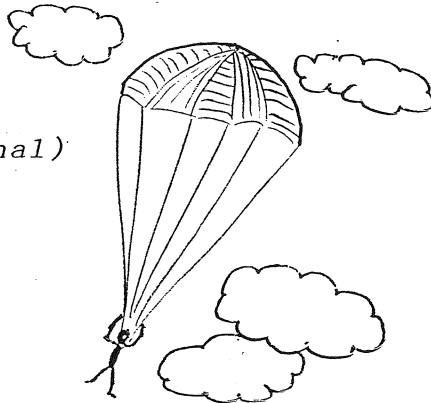
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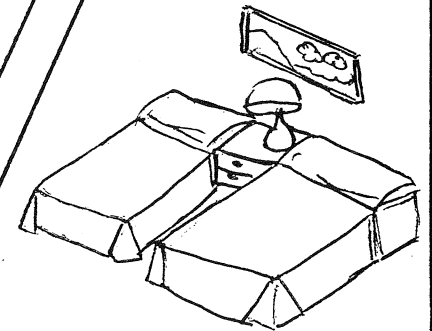
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(Make-your-own-parachute
kits provided)#
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aerobics
- * NEW Soloist Harassing
(With only a brick, a
bucket of hot oil, a jar
of bull ants, and a rake,
can you dislodge a soloist
from the rock face?)

#CLUB HEX cannot be held liable for absolutely ANY
injury incurred by participants during this activity.

CONVERSATION AT KHANKOBAN.

6.35pm Saturday night. A petrol station.

Rafter: G'day.

Steve: G'day.

Rafter: *What've you been up to?*

Steve: A bit of paddling.

Rafter: *Yeah? Whereabouts?*

Steve: The Indi.

Rafter: *We've just been on the Indi* (points over shoulder to a couple of full cars).

Steve: Yeah?

Rafter: *We were rafting. It was enormous! We had to pull out 1km from the start. It was just too huge. Really dangerous. Walked 10km to get out. What an epic: I've never seen it that high. How'd you go?*

Steve: Fine.

Rafter: *What were you in?*

Steve: Kayaks.

Rafter: *Fair dinkum? What type - high volume boats, I suppose. Dancers.*

Steve: No: plastic Reflex's.

Rafter: *What!! At 1.6m! (Jaw hits the ground) So, you paddled it yesterday did you?*

Steve: No, this morning.

Rafter: *So where are the rest of you?*

Steve: It's just the two of us.

Rafter: (Momentary shocked silence) *How'd you do the car shuffle then?*

Steve: We walked about 15km, then got a lift for the rest. It took about five hours.

Rafter: *Wow. So where are you off to now?*

Steve: Melbourne. We're going to a party.

Rafter: *Ahhh...Ummm...Really?*

Steve: Yeah.

Rafter: *Well...ahhh...see ya.*

Steve: See ya.

Pre-expedition quote:

Dave & Steve: "C'mon Phil: we're going to the Indi for a day trip."

Phil: *"I'm not coming - I am not insane."*

Two days, one river, a 15km walk, 1000km drive (including the Alpine way, at speed, in chains) and one speeding ticket later:

Dave & Steve: "The paddling was the easiest part."

Epics Inc: Dave "Fruit Loops" Kjar.
Steve "Wunderkind" Carter.

They didn't get to the party.

(Compiled by Dave Burnett.)

A One-Eyed View
of The Alpine Instruction Weekend,
Mount Feathertop and North West Spur,
30th August-1st September.

30th August
MUMC Hut

Dear Diary,

I really thought we might not get here. We left Melbourne at about 2 pm and pretty quickly were asking for directions at the 7-11 in Pascoe Vale. We were actually exactly where we wanted to be but we thought we were somewhere else. That happened a lot of times tonight!! After stopping for hamburgers (and 42 cents worth of petrol for the stove) we got to Harrietsville trout farm to find a cover of fresh snow. As far as the Steep Descent sign was uneventful but by then the snow was already deep enough to be slippery. It was raining. A few hours later we were bashing a trail through waist deep powder snow. Sometimes we thought we were on the proper track, mostly we didn't know where we were. I should have known there was a catch to going up in the early car! We tried lots of different methods of breaking the track. Steve tried the swing-your-leg-around-at-chest-height-and-plant-it method, Dave dug it down to his waist with his hands before stepping, and kneeling then stomping worked too. Mostly we just waded: it was all hard work. Eventually we gave up and a scout was sent on ahead. At the instant she sighted the hut the rear guard was reached by Fred and Paul O'Byrne. They'd only left Melbourne 4 hours after us!. We bounded the last 50 metres to a completely snow covered MUMC hut/igloo. It had taken nearly 8 hours!! Hot chocolate never tasted so good. Now everyone else is here and I'm snug in my bag. Boy will I sleep well tonight!

31st August
Room 2
The Snow Cave
Northwest Spur
Mt Feathertop.

Dear Diary,

Finally my fingers have thawed out enough to write. This snow cave is awesome. I'm in the main bedroom. On my right is an alcove, with a candle in it leading through to the dining room, where people had their dinner kicked over by others going through to what should be the lounge on the far end. On the left we can talk through the hole in the ceiling to Simon + Andrew in the room above. There's 17 people sleeping in here. It's amazingly pretty with the candle light reflecting off the walls and everyone in their trendy bright bags and bivvy sacs.

What's even more amazing is that I'm warm! Even my toes are warm. It's an interesting perspective on the world, where absolute heaven is achieved solely by warm toes. Makes life simple. It's been a good day though. Some silly nut woke us up at 9am. I wasn't in the group doing "Advanced Sleeping In" so I got up and instead learnt the theory of how to use an ice axe to stop myself sliding into oblivion off a glacier. We also learnt how to Prussick (I don't know how to spell it) up a rope-- like James Bond does with his shoe laces-- and after lunch roped up for Glacier travel and headed out onto the treacherous ridge. It was grey and foggy but not unpleasant.

Everyone gathered at the last saddle for the leaders to show us what not to do, like walk too close to the cornice so it falls off or put in anchors that pull out when you slip over the edge. They eventually broke off enough cornice to make a safe place for

a cave then there was a lot of enthusiastic digging (for about the next 4 hours!). When we weren't digging the others practised belays and self arrests while Vicky and I played with our stove (the one with the unleaded petrol in it). It took at least 8 matches to light and then usually blew out. Once it was lit the safety valve invariably caught fire. Somehow we managed to burn the dinner permanently on to the billy. Now, full of pasta, and custard with fruitcake I think I'll sleep alright. It's pretty cold out though, my mittens have frozen as stiff as a board and there's ice in my plaits.

1st September
North Melbourne

Dear Diary,

It's the first day of Spring. The weather certainly set out to remind us that this morning. It was fantastic! Clear blue sky and sun everywhere. Of course when Andrew R. woke us to say it was sunny this morning we didn't believe him, and you can't see much with only your nose poking out of the bag. I was far too warm to move. Those Daffodil bags are great. Eventually I got bored looking at the inside of my sleeping bag hood and got up. I had some trouble with my boots. My feet wouldn't go in until they melted a fair bit (the boots I mean--the feet were warm until they got in the boots). Now I have new respect for mountaineers.

We all stomped up to the summit in the sun. It's a heavenly place with a view for miles and untouched, white shine everywhere. The lazy people sunbaked on the ridge. We found a steep slope to practice self arrests: sliding on our bottoms, our heads, our faces; spinning and sliding and rolling; getting control and then hitting the jump and tumbling again; snow down our necks, down our trousers, up our noses--the Best Fun. There was a bit of cornice jumping, and some impromptu cornice breaking, but no one fell into Avalanche Gully so Paul was happy. After a bit more teaching and lunch we hoofed it for the cars, slithering in the now icy, melting snow. We had the usual Hamburger-from-down-the-road in the Myrtleford Pub on the way home and debriefed. It's been a really terrific experience. I've challenged myself a bit, got a lot fitter and learnt heaps. I guess I had soaking wet, freezing cold feet continuously (except when I was in bed), but I've forgotten that already, and I won't be as scared of them next time. Sitting in my little box in town I can dream about the weekend and it will make it all a lot more bearable. I just wish I wasn't quite so sunburnt.

Memorable quotes:

On the way up Steep Descent.

Beginner: "How much further is it?"

Leader: "About 15 minutes."

"Life is really just a series of gear tests" --from someone who's just torn their brand new 3mm foam, trying out their bivvy sac inside the hut.

Dinnertime by the cave: "I feel like a frozen T-bone steak".

Special thanks to our intrepid leaders--Paul O'Byrne, Andrew Letcher, Rob Gatt, Malcolm Haylock and Greg Abramovich--who braved the cold and our ignorance to take us into the wilds.

Lindy Coulson

FITZGERALD'S HUT -Gone?

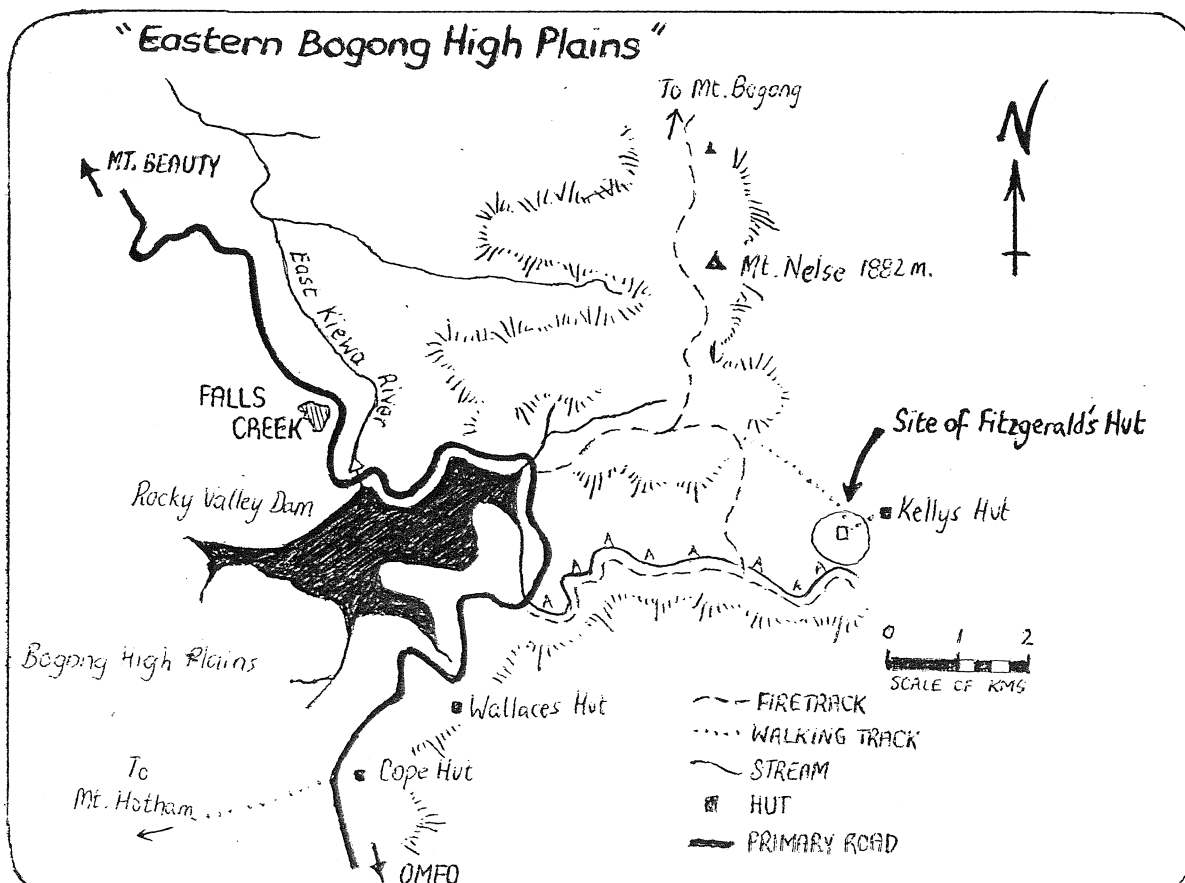
Located on the eastern flank of the Bogong High Plains, Fitzgerald's Hut was recently burnt down in December, 1991. This small shingle-clad hut was unfortunately lost due to "...an unsupervised schoolgroup (who) saw (it) fit to use a huge fire in the fireplace." (THE AGE 2/1/91)

The Fitzgerald family of Omeo had not only brought cattle up from the shelter of nearby Shannonvale (in the Big River valley) to the high plains in summer to make temporary use of the hut, but had also brought up valuable food supplies for walkers and ski-tourers alike over many years.

In its original form, the hut -built in 1903- was made of woollybutt palings and split shingles packed in from forest below; iron had since replaced the shingle roof some years ago.

In this 'corner' of the Bogong High Plains, the walking and ski-touring is relatively easy (except in white-out!) highlighted with such features as Fitzgerald's once was, adjacent Kelly's Hut, and brilliant vistas from Mt. Nelse of afar - yet the loss of Fitzgerald's isn't as first seems.

Recent discussions and opinions, including the FVWC (VicWalk) and locals, vary from constructing a simple refuge hut without bunks, to rebuilding it to its original plan with bunks, as soon as possible. Either way it would be good to see the site replaced with some construction - hopefully, the original plan prevailing, maintaining the look and feel it gave to so many before.



O-WEEK REPORT
A STORY OF HOW THINGS WENT RIGHT

O-week for MUMC was huge. Bigger, better, brighter, more beautiful and, yes, more members than ever before. Exponential growth; membership explosion; this club is BOOMING.

It would be reasonable to say that the club maintained a 'high profile' during O-week. In fact, anyone who failed to notice us would be advised to find out what medical services are offered by the Student Union. All roads led to the MUMC table. Potential members within a 20m radius were drawn in by the oratory skills of a tall, skinny, long-haired man with glasses whose initials were D.B., but who shall be referred to as Mr X for the purposes of this article. (Mr X must remain anonymous for security reasons. It is rumoured that other clubs threatened to have him obliterated from the face of the earth if he didn't shut up.) Nigel, Steve, Dave, and me (and intermittent others) mingled in the milling crowds, and convinced people that if they failed to join MUMC the rest of their lives would be an endless cycle of misery and boredom. Ewan, Kathy, Tom, Phil, Andrew, Jane, and lots of other MUMC veterans signed people up at the table and confirmed that MUMC was THE club to join. Despite an annoying lack of pens, and despite Nigel materialising with a stubby and cheerfully exclaiming, "And we drink beer too!" when I was quietly explaining the different activities in the club to a nervous new student (who suddenly decided not to join!), about 430 people signed up.

"Join MUMC and abseil off the tallest building in (the world), (in Melbourne), on campus." Abseiling off Redmond Barry was a big draw-card for the club, and the same old questions kept popping up - "What if the rope breaks?", "Is it safe?", "What if s/he falls?". Considering the somewhat 'uninhibited' nature of some MUMC members, it was quite surprising that the Golden Boot Award for 's/he who abseils naked' remained unclaimed. Steve Carter and Steve Byrd skied down the side of Redmond Barry and confirmed our suspicions about their sanity. (Anyone watching Steve C. eating an icecream in Lygon St the day before would have reason to be concerned - he popped a big hole in the cone, then tossed it in the air and caught the icecream end.)

It was a great O-Week and a very positive start to the year for MUMC. Everyone was full of enthusiasm, lots of people helped, and with the slogan "Join today! Join tomorrow! Join everyday!" MUMC has begun the year with more members than ever.

kATE bRADSHAW

BUCHAN CAVES

Dateline: Buchan, Jan 4-6. This year.

How do you write up a caving trip?: "great views, wonderful sunshine, lots of open air and relaxed walking"!

Buchan muddy caves!!!. Having been convinced by Jane that caving was a good thing, Nigel, Greg, Stephen and I rolled down to Buchan on Sunday night for a couple of days of squeezing, grovelling and wallowing - and that was only to get into the pub.. We vetoed "Buchan" jokes after about the first half hour, having had enough of Buchan stupid one-liners about the Buchan place. We found Jane at the Buchan caravan park, having been deserted by those that had been down for the Saturday/ Sunday trip and looking a bit bedraggled after two days of Buchan torrential rain.

First up on Monday morning was Buchan Wilson's cave. This was apparently pretty straightforward - just an "easy 10 minute walk" under the Buchan road. An hour later we were out and quickly decided to do it again because we had had such a Buchan good time. Ten minutes later we re-emerged and headed down to the Buchan River for an unintentional swim. To quote Jane: "I'm sure there'll be caves in that rock face across this very shallow river". Well, there weren't and it wasn't!

After lunch we descended upon and into Dickson's (or Dixon's) Cave where Jane found us a nice dead-end and then invited us to crawl back out without lights. This was a bit of a struggle, but we finally got far enough to warrant lighting up again. We eventually made it out after a bit of a wander around.

Sunday was spent doing a couple of laps of the Honeycomb. This is a circuit with a few tight bits, a few wide bits, one or two up bits and at least one down bit (head first) The major up bit was trying to get back to the surface again - something like trying to climb a water slide with your hands tied behind your back and your eyes shut!! After a little rock climbing to get out and a lounge in the sun, it was time to head back to Melbourne.

All together we had a fine time - Thanks Jane.

Rob.



FITZGERALDS HUT,
Bogong High Plains

