



CHRISTMAS PARTY 1991
"CLUBBROOMS" - CARDIGAN ST

MOUNTAINEER

- O'WEEK '93 -

The magazine of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club

EDITORIAL

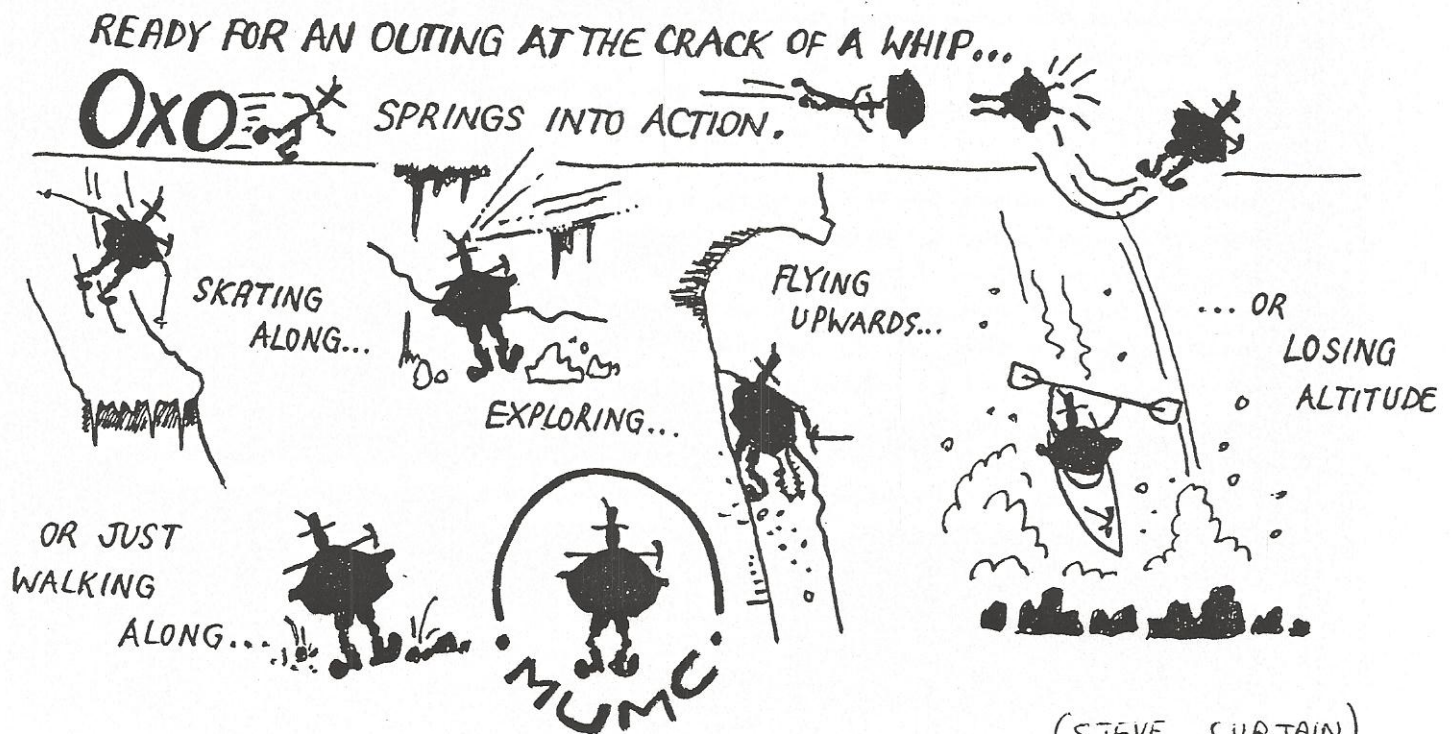
1993! A warm welcome is extended to all those new MUMC members who have already shown us by their joining that they're a daring and happening bunch! (Hi! also to the more familiar faces)

As most of us are caught up in the feverish O'Week happenings, it is most important not to lose track of the true flavour of MUMC, (no, not liquid amber!) the innumerable club trips which are about to get underway.

If you have a spare weekend what better way to spend it than paddling, climbing, walking, beaching the finer things of life! As following reports reveal MUMC entered international territories over summer - India, New Zealand - you too could mingle in such a jet-set circle! Also included are memorable trip reports from 1992 for the benefit of those who don't know, but, would like to know what's install for them this year!

Needless to say it is hoped new and returning members will partake in the many introductory trips now on offer and live to tell their tale in forthcoming Mountaineers.

Kind Regards, *Cathy Sealey (PUBLICATIONS)*



FROM THE PREZ

Welcome to MUMC for 1993.

By now you've probably abseiled the Redmond Barry building, and are wondering, what next? Well, don't stop there. With a little bit of effort on your part you could soon find yourself clinging to a rockface a hundred metres above the ground, or even squeezing through chasms metres below the ground, or having a formal dinner party in the snow, or camped on a deserted mountain top, or paddling down a mass of whitewater or.....

The Mountaineering club has the equipment and leaders to run trips of all standards; trips can be as relaxing or as challenging as you wish. Some trips are run at very high standards, while many others are purely social, and the choice is all yours. Part of going on a trip is meeting people with similar interests and hopefully you'll find us an agreeable lot.

If you have previous experience in an activity and feel capable of running a trip, please do so, leaders are always welcome. Lack of experience is not necessary if you wish to organise the logistics of a trip, provided you find a leader to tag along.

So don't be intimidated, make your way to the clubrooms on Cardigan St, unravel the mystery of the green trip books, and head off into the wilderness. Try to get involved early in the year, as this is when the majority of beginners trips are run. But beware, this could be the start of an obsession that won't let go...

Steve Carter
President, MUMC

MUMC COMMITTEE 1992/1993

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MOUNTAINEERING CONVENOR- Andrew Roberts 889 7332
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If you have any queries about the club, or wish to run a trip, or go on a trip, please ring any of these people and bug them till they do something!

MUMC

T-SHIRTS

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ALL NEW STOCK IN NOW!!

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AVAILABLE IN THE CLUBROOMS FROM 1 PM TO 2 PM

TEE-SHIRTS ARE ALL WHITE. FRONT DESIGN IS A COMBINATION OF RED, GREEN AND BLUE. BACK DESIGN IS PRINTED IN BLACK.



THE HEIGHT OF ADVENTURE



MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



ONE SIZE FITS ALL
(EXTRA LARGE
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MUMC

FIRESIDE ENTERTAINMENT.....

SLAB O VIC

(original version)

Backing vocals:

Chug, chug, chugalug, chug, chug...

Verse

Four pigs were safe from big bad wolf, in the house of brick,
He huffed and puffed till he was stuffed,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic
Jack came home and spilt the beans, gosh that boy was thick,
A large stalk's worth much more than that,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic

Chorus

Oh, betta geta slab, betta geta slab, betta geta slab of Vic
Betta geta slab, betta geta slab, betta geta slab of Vic

Verse

Hitler's nasty party tried, to give the Jews the flick,
His party didn't go as planned,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic
Romeo found Juliet, looking really sick,
Instead of sculling cyanide,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic

Chorus

Verse

One time a Bhuddist sat for days, he thought he was a stick,
Enlightenment can wear you down,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic
Christ and crisis on the mount, gota feed the poor and sick,
He dealt them out fish sandwiches,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic

Chorus

CHUGALUG!

SLAB O VIC

(Mountaineers Version)

Backing vocals:

Chug, chug, chugalug, chug, chug...

Verse

Climbing up on Mt Araps, in the burning sun,
He huffed and puffed till he was stuffed,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic
Stretched out on a 29, next hold was a jug,
Or so he thought, as he sailed by,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic

Chorus

Oh, betta geta slab, betta geta slab, betta geta slab of Vic
Betta geta slab, betta geta slab, betta geta slab of Vic

Verse

Paddling down the Snowy River, in the freezing cold,
How can a river be so flat?,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic
Paddled to a waterfall, tried to loop the loop,
Probably needed, weight up front,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic

Chorus

Verse

Walking up Mt Feathertop, under moonlight sky,
The guy in front walks way too fast,
Should carry a slab of Vic
It's 5 am and we're all lost, whatever can we do?
Don't like to say it, but it's true,
Shoulda got a slab of Vic

Chorus

CHUGALUG!

S.C 24/6/91

CHUG-A-LUG

Mt Stirling Overnight Skiing Trip.

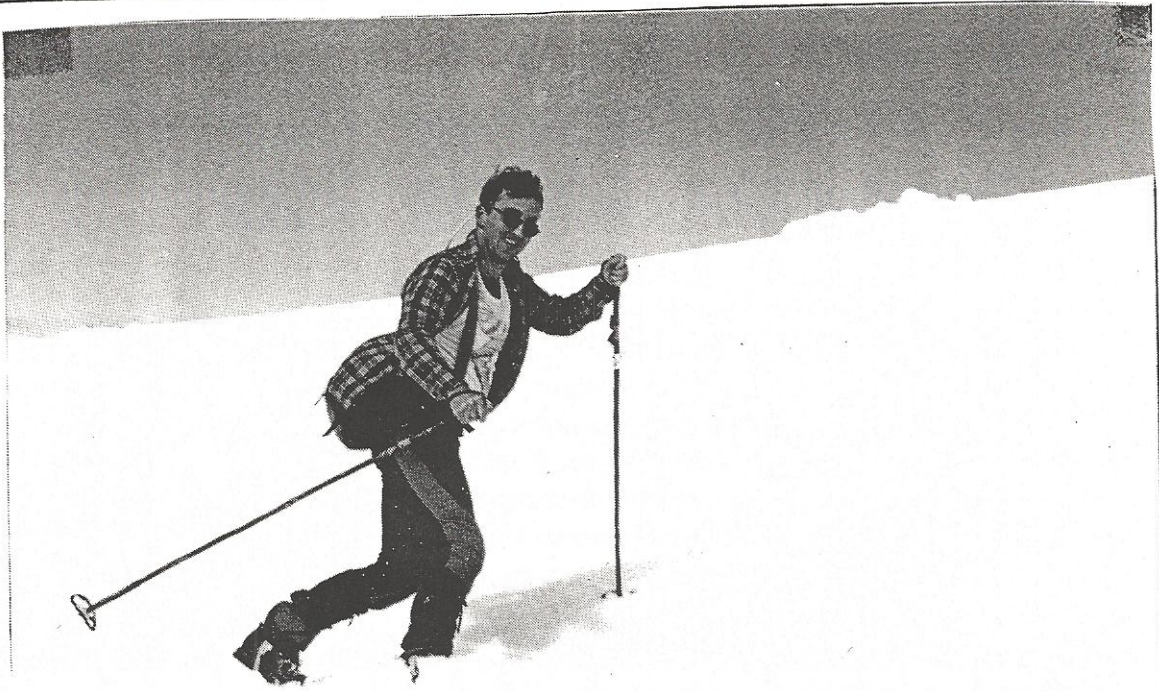
September 19th - 20th 1992.

Keryn Paul
Jack Richards
Nick Richards
Stuart Richardson
Paul Watson
Andrew Wettenhall

We arranged to leave Melbourne early so as to get a full day of skiing and arrived at the carpark at Stirling at around 10.30am. The other car wasn't there yet so we packed our packs and had a chat to some people in the carpark. I couldn't help noticing that having a grey beard and smoking a pipe seemed to be *trés chic* on this, the mountain of adventure. Paul's car, which had all the skis, still hadn't arrived so we went and had a rather pricey cup of coffee and we waited and waited and waited It was at about this time that we started experiencing bad karma, very bad karma indeed, like where the hell are they ? Fortunately they did make it and without further fuss we clipped on our skis and headed up the trail towards the summit.

We took the Bluff Spur trail up to the G.G.S. Hut and pitched our tents before heading up to the summit. The weather was fantastic, the views spectacular and the skiing was spectastically fantacular. We skied till just before sunset and then headed back to the hut to cook dinner. The hut was half buried under a reported 1.7m of snow. We shared it with a school group and an indignant *antechinus* that appeared to resent being classified as a rodent by the afore mentioned party, and subsequently terrorised them for much of the evening.

Sunday was absolutely magic. The sun softened the crusty snow and made the summit perfect for telemark practice. Paul, Keryn and Stuart skied down to Craig's Hut, built during the shooting of *The Man From Snowy River* while the rest of us enjoyed skiing around in T-Shirts and doing unnatural things to our knee and ankle joints. We met back at the hut after lunch and found a great cornice to jump off at the southern end of the mountain.



By mid-afternoon we decided to head back to the car in order to avoid the icy conditions that would follow if we left our descent too late. We took the Stirling and Fork Creek Trails and enjoyed some exhilarating downhill sections and the odd tight corner. The car trip was uneventful and like most club trips we arrived back home absolutely buggered but having had a damn good time.

Andrew Wettenhall.

**MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INTERNATIONAL
DEBACLES INCORPORATED.
NEW ZEALAND KAYAKING 1992**

Eight members of M.U.M.C have just returned from an epic kayaking trip to the South island of New Zealand. The high rainfall and mountainous topography result in big white water and guarantee excellent paddling for experienced kayakers. Amongst the numerous rivers paddled during our trip, one was a true epic- the Landsborough.

The Landsborough river flows away from Mt Cook and is surrounded by pristine wilderness, with the only access via helicopter. No roads or walking trails come anywhere near the river and its isolation is complete. The chopper flight in was mind-blowing : the river snaked its way through open plains and into tight gorges, beech forests dominated the lower hill slopes and soaring above all else were snow and ice capped peaks. Between the ridges were numerous glaciers- tongues of ice stretching down to water level, it was an awe inspiring 360 degree panorama.

The chopper held only 4 people and was thrown around violently in the howling gale. "Is it always this arrr bumpy? asked a slightly fazed Nigel as the chopper dropped 100 feet towards the trees and the air speed indicator hovered around stall... the pilot just muttered something about "bit windy ". That afternoon was spent in brilliant sunshine checking out the rapids of the upper gorge before the paddling started on the following day. The lines were tight, the water big and paddling technical... but the rapids were paddleable. Then it rained over night.....

It rained some more.....

In fact it poured.....

Holy shit the river had risen well over a meter overnight, and what would have been extremely challenging rapids took on a new, more sinister appearance. The gorge had turned into a roaring, raging, seething torrent of white water- brown actually because of the rock dust

from the surrounding glaciers. Some of us chose to paddle sections of the gorge- the consequences of a capsize and swim were horrendous. Rescue boats were out of the question in most places and a swimmer in this water would be washed out of sight in seconds, not to mention the other hazards of a gorge like this in flood.

We were forced to carry our boats up and around the gorge in some places. Through forests and around cliffs. It poured and was freezing cold. We walked over a glacier dragging our boats and could actually see the river rising just by sitting in any one place for a few minutes. The whole trip was supposed to take 2 days and was around 45 kilometers long, but by the end of the first day {despite 7 hours of paddling and dragging boats}, we had only gone about 4 kilometers.

An American paddler who had tagged along with our group had paddled off late in the afternoon without telling us what his plans were. We assumed that either A. he had drowned, B. he had camped further down stream, or possibly C. he had tried to paddle all the way out.

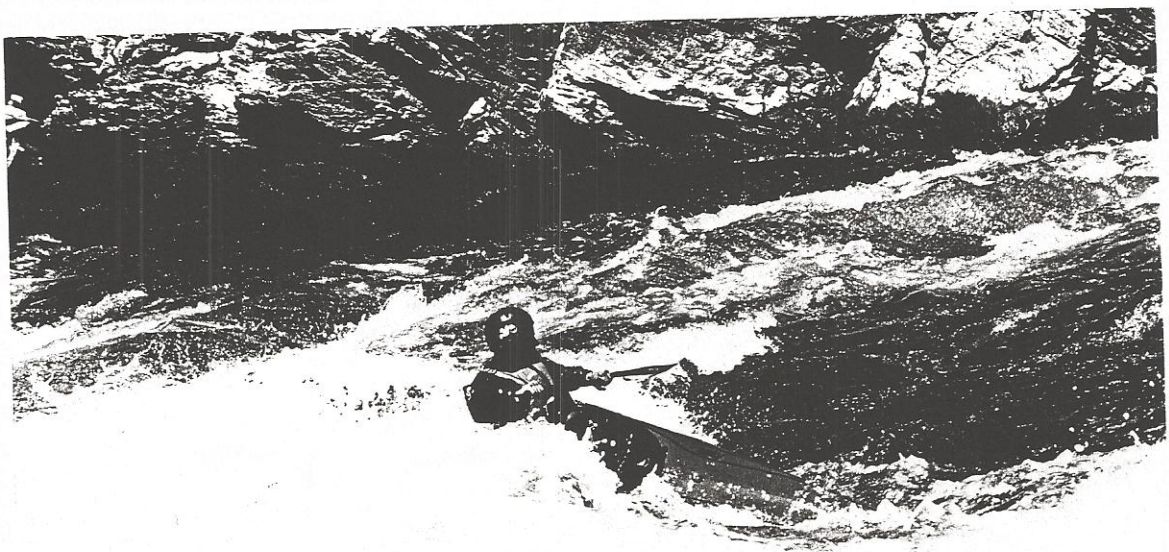
Overnight the rain ceased and thankfully the river began to drop almost as fast as it had risen. We pulled on sodden paddling gear and were on the river early. After only a couple of kilometers and a swim by Jocelyn, a helicopter turned up looking for us!!! The yank had paddled out and asked the local pilot to come in and look for us. Jocelyn, Louise, Nigel and Russel opted for the wirly-bird air taxi and were very relieved to be air lifted out, and to survive into the new year. Four of us decided to keep paddling-- just to keep the MUMC epics saga going.

Steve Carter got a nasty trashing in a big stopper at the end of a series of huge waves. The river was still in flood and greyhound- bus- eating- stoppers were all over the place. For non- paddlers a stopper is a section of recirculating water on the downstream side of an obstruction, this water surges upstream and if the stopper is big it can hold and pulverise a paddler. Small to medium sized stoppers can be played in without significant risk to a paddler, but the greyhound bus variety are a definite no-no and are avoided like the plague, AIDS or Dave Kjar after a bad day at the office.

After negotiating the second major gorge we were all caught unaware by a hidden stopper on "surprise" rapid. Dave Kjar led the way into (and he got out of) the stopper, followed by Steve the wunderkid who got another trashing. The problem was, the river was so big that you sometimes lost sight of paddlers in front and had to follow blindly, warily looking out for nasties and seeking eddies to rest in. I came next- also straight into "surprise" stopper and managed to get spat out downstream, while Dave Wilson followed and got trashed losing both a wet suit bootie and a paddle mit as the torrent tore them free.

With jangling nerves the rapids then slowly began to subside in size and difficulty. In essence we all survived to paddle another day and have a serious New Year's Eve party at the Buller river with about 250 other paddlers. For those of you lounge lizards at home, sitting back thinking hummm sounds good wish I could have been there, don't worry its caught on video and is soon to be released in a MUMC theatre near you.

Nick Gust



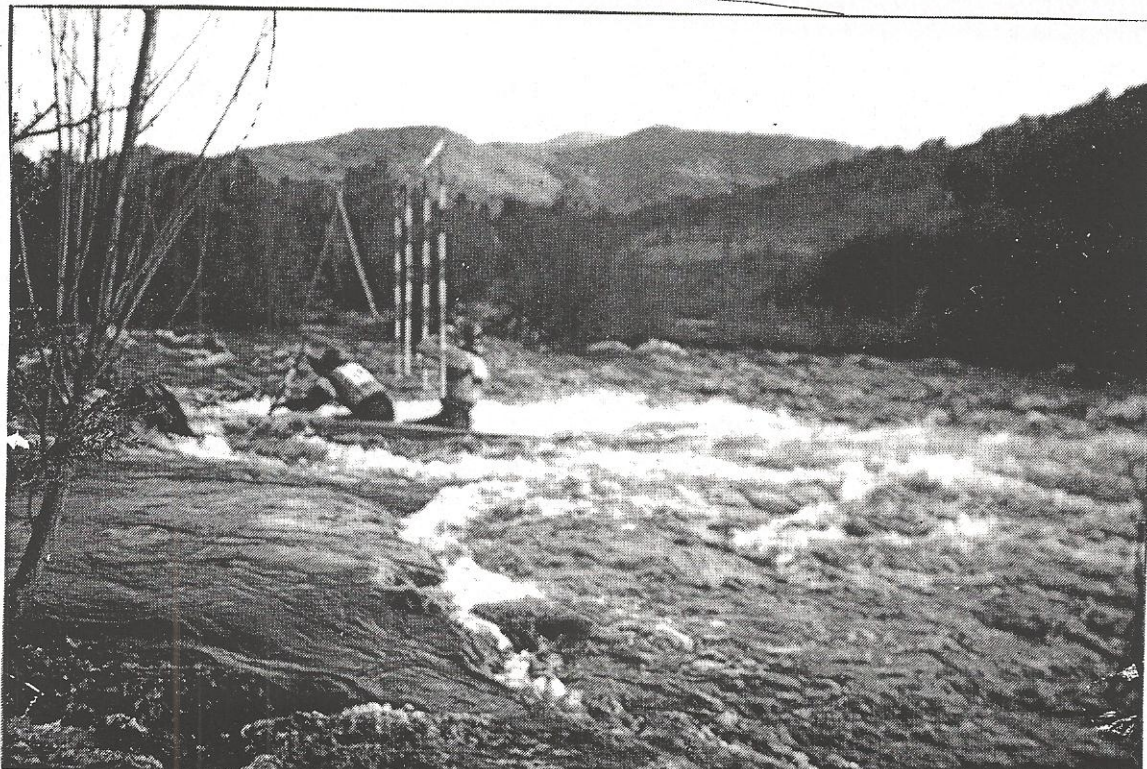
CANOOOEING CONVENOR'S REPORT SUMMER 1992/3

Summer is generally a quiet time of year for paddling enthusiasts, and this season has been no exception. There are stories circulating of M.U.M.C. people getting their feet wet in India* (should that read Indi?) and some others (including a few from India) sampling a couple of little streams in New Zealand (should that read New South Wales?) but otherwise paddling over summer has been pretty boring. Well atleast for someone like me with no money or exorbitant Visa card credit allowance!

To avoid potential boredom through familiarity with rivers commonly paddled, we plan to search further afield for the perfect wave and ultimate adrenalin rush. So watch this space in subsequent issues of Mountaineer or come in and check the trip folder to find out just what an awesome year paddlers have waiting for them! Of course, all this big water only occurs after big rains and the start of year beginner recruitment drive. Last year we only caught one beginner in our stopper, this year we need more, especially of the female genotype to bolster our I.V. squad and our male egos.

*M.U.M.C. Canoeing fraternity disowns the wooses that resorted to rafts for some of their aquatic exploits, shame on you!

Euan Robinson



Moutaineering

The summer season in New Zealand has hosted a two month trip by Derek Fabel and Andy Roberts based in Mt.Cook village. Weather conditions were not always hospitable, with 115 knot winds (nearly 200 km/h) clocked at the village airport during one of the many storms, and 207mm of rain recorded in one night in a different storm (about 1/3 of Melbourne's annual average rainfall). Luke Mahon recently departed for N.Z. to attempt all those hills that seem to be "put off"; From peaks in Fiordland in the South Island, to Mt.Egmont in the North Island. Hopefully he's having better weather than we had! Plans are already underway by some club members for a trip to North America and a late summer trip to N.Z. in 1994, as well as an army of "up and comings" hoping to get to N.Z. to do courses in the '93/'94 season. Look out for soon-to-be-held slide shows on climbing in N.Z. and (hopefully) in Antarctica. And remember, *"diesel only dudes!"*.

Andy Roberts, Moutaineering Lookerafterer



An Icy Wilderness.

Andrew Roberts

When Derek woke me, he already had the blow-torch like sound of the stove piercing the silence of the hut. The darkness played host to the beam of Derek's head torch. The time was 3:30am. I groaned as I lifted my back from the bunk. I should be used to alpine starts by now, I thought. The others in Tasman Saddle Hut stirred in their sleep with the sound of Derek's whispering voice.

"The freeze is good."

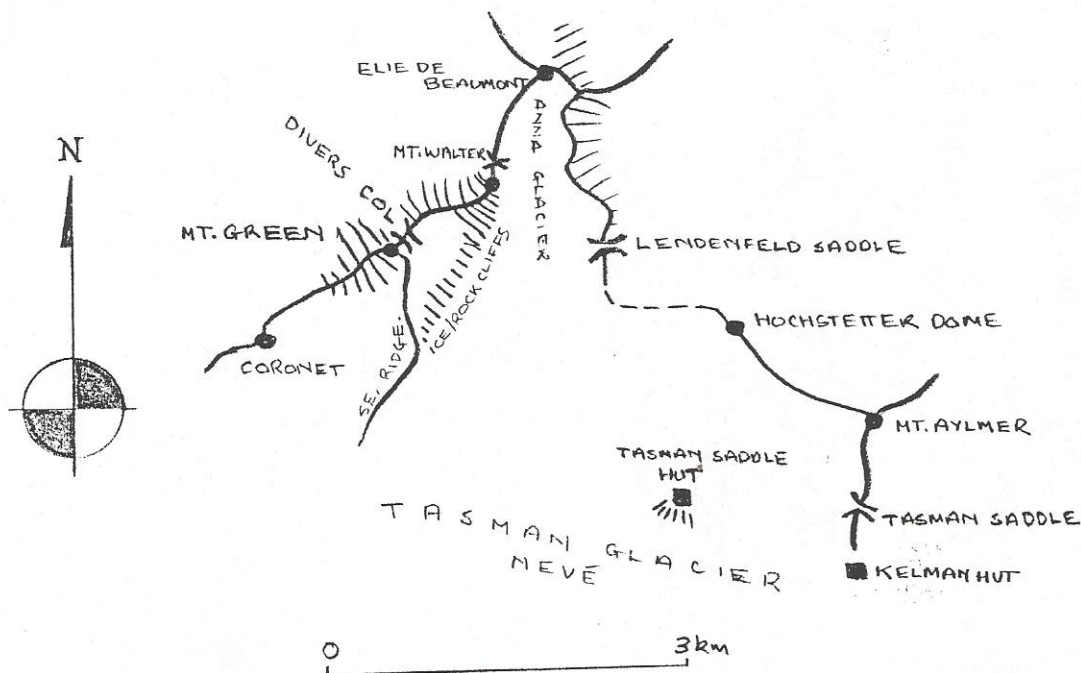
My head torch lit the worn floor boards of the hut as I made my way to the door, half dressed, to look outside. The sky was an array of stars. Surrounding peaks silhouetted the night sky in different shades of darkness. The headtorches of four climbers could be seen wandering through the white night of the Tasman Glacier. They seemed to be approaching the hut. I returned inside and hurriedly finished dressing, and then began eating and drinking. This morning we would attempt Mt.Green.

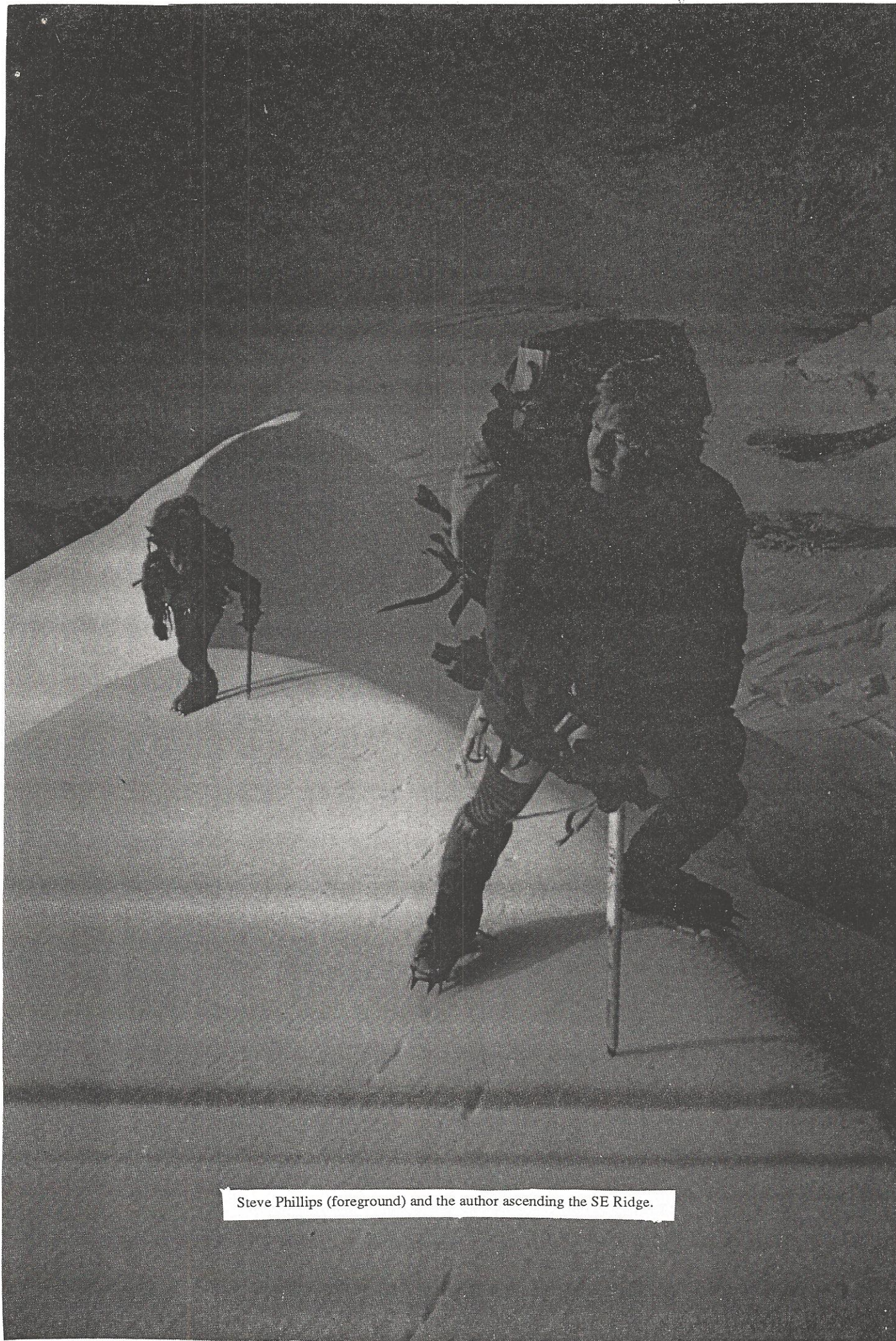
While finishing our breakfast, we heard the clank of ice tools and the crunch of crampons on frozen snow descending the final slope to the hut. The four climbers had been Steve, Stuart,

Alan and Dallich from Kelman Hut- about a kilometre away in the opposite direction from which they had come. They had left Kelman at 1am to attempt three peaks at once; Mt.Green, Mt.Walter and Mt.Elle de Beaumont. They had decided to abort, somewhat shaken by a close shave with an avalanche (about a hundred metres from being wiped out). Steve, however, wanted to return to attempt Green, after having time to cool down on their trip back along the glacier. The others didn't, so he joined us on a rope of three.

Soon, Derek, Steve and I were traversing the Tasman Glacier to the base of the ridge leading to Divers Col. The snow pack was frozen solid, and only our crampons penetrated the surface layer. Zig-zagging our way through the crevasses, we soon reached the position where the Kelman party had retreated. The first light of dawn played upon the iceblocks of debris that lay close by from the avalanche. This was not a place for a picnic. Above the debris, a cocktail of rock and ice cliffs stretched to the sky. The dawn sky was now dark blue in the West, while across the Tasman Glacier to the East the horizon was faintly pink.

The Upper Tasman Glacier Area





Steve Phillips (foreground) and the author ascending the SE Ridge.

The three of us stood there for a moment, under the massive blueness of the Southern Alps, surrounded by snow and ice, as small insignificant creatures of another planet. A cool gentle breeze touched our faces; a feeling of the frozen wilderness. We conferred and agreed on a route through the slots that would also pass the avalanche cones as safely as possible, in order to gain the South East Ridge to Divers Col. I led off, and soon we were crunching our way through rock and snow avalanche debris-most of it frozen hard. Having crossed many solid bridges and negotiated the shrund, we began to ascend the ridge. About a quarter of the way up we stopped to unrope. Soloing seemed better.

We made good time up the ridge. On the way, we were witness to a spectacular sunrise, lighting the surrounding peaks with a cold radiating orange. This one moment was worth all the danger in the whole world. Steve pulled

out a video-8 camera and began to film us, giving commentaries such as:

"There's Andy climbing". Derek then took the camera. By this stage a commentary wasn't easy; We were all puffing from the exercise.

The final steep arete to the summit ridge was icy and hard. As we climbed higher, the slope turned to glass-ice. Only the front points of my crampons penetrated the slope; Wonderful climbing. The intensity of the activity was tremendous. If I fell.... Between my legs I could see crevasses and rock cliffs disappearing off the side of the East Face and South East Ridge to the Tasman Glacier, nearly 1000m below.

As we sat on the summit, of Mt.Green, we also sat on the Great Divide. For the first time, I saw the West Coast of New Zealand and the Tasman Sea, forty kilometres away. Steve pulled out an orange. There we sat, eating orange at 2838m at 7:30 on a beautiful morning. Tiny specs on an icy wilderness.



The East Face and SE Ridge of Mt.Green from the Tasman Glacier.

ALPINE INSTRUCTION WEEKEND August, 1992.

Well, I thought it was time to let you young folk out there, just what went on down during the Alpine Instruction (A.I) Weekend 1992, since no-one has written a word since.

Traditionally a week or two after the auspicious Midnight Ascent, this was a jam filled weekend (and half a night driving up there) for twelve or so? keen participants. Despite the entire group splitting up/ departing Melbourne at different times/ rejoining, then losing one another again, statistically, an impressive 75% of the contingent actually made it to the final destination by Friday night - the Hut! A further (two more people) came up Saturday morning, but alas, missed the main group and returned early-ish Sunday. Most people were all safely in bed without incident, from about 12.00am to 5.00am Saturday morning - generally quick times were made up the Tom Kneen track (formerly the NW spur), though its taking a bit to catch on in name. The lead group, at about 1200m, had seen some weird acting lights down at the foot of the spur, at Stony Ck; what had appeared to be the following groups with their roaming torches and lights, were in fact cars hooning down the Ovens Highway.

Steps kicked in from the previous weekend (Midnight Ascent), had remained intact - firm and stable, but with fresh cover. Somewhere high on the summit, Derek and Andy were asleep in a snowcave, having gone up a day earlier to practise alp techniques.

A vision had stuck in mind... 1991's A.I. had been awesome, mind-blowing.... beautiful, to say the least. Pitch blue sky, billowing clouds in the surrounding valley were but a blanket, lay beneath an ominous shining summit, sculptured by wind with a massive blue-ice cornice and and so it goes on. Half way up the summit the next morning and where were the mountains let alone the bloody sun... Admittedly, earlier that morning the sun had been out and the views were pretty fantastic - the main summit could be seen in full, as could the Fainters across the West Kiewa valley. Even Andy and Derek could be seen, as two tiny figures, coming down to rejoin us. Instruction began soon after brekky, with invaluable info and advice on glacial travel, crevasse rescue and technique, prussiking and general rope work



While the weather closed in later, it would lift occasionally, if only for a glimpse to an adjacent coated spur. Fresh in mind - perhaps a little chillingly- was last weekend's self arrest or "little fall" down the southern flank of the upper spur. From a hundred or so metres down the spur, one could observe when looking summitward, an object bouncing down the steep incline - hold on, did someone bring a mannikin up here? (Scratch of head) Hey, that's a person... Recovery was superb, the arrest, well executed despite a scratch or two - timewarp back to the A.I and self-arresting was practised over and over again, in different positions and switching hand holds with either arm.

Although a lot of fun and mucking about, safety was always a prime concern, particularly when crossing the summit ridge; slipping down Avalanche or Hellfire gullies would result in more than cold fingers.

Once a ledge was established and a bit of lunch, building the snowcave was next at mind. With time and daylight up our sleeves, people began to burrow, scratch and shovel away the beginnings of the cave - like its great predecessors, the finished product was a result of enormous enthusiasm and teamwork based on a set plan, not to mention a ton of sweat and about 18 m³ of snow! Tea tasted pretty damn good that night.

Cold toes but a warmer environment than outside was most noticeable when we awoke Sunday. Saturday had proven to be totally crapped out - ahhhh, today would hopefully be finer conditions, if not thinner cloud. Evidently, Huey was NOT looking down favourably. Sunday was really, really crap weather. This was a weekend where it snowed down to 600m and Mt.Macedon could have passed as ski resort. The view was non-existent, only an emptiness, yet for the guys -Ben, Jack, Stu, Derek, Andies, Fred, Julian, Kate and friend (with Dan, Karl and Maddy in mind), things were just spicing up a little. Descending in a gale is an experience in itself, but who could beat a howling wind on a Sunday morning? On one of the spur shoulders, in one of those sudden and dramatic moments, Derek was sent flying over the crest. Out of sight, god forbid, one could imagine the countless tumbles and numerous lacerations sustained by Derek. The closing scene to this ghastly event was when several of the party peered cautiously over the edge - the situation was made all the more serious when Derek stood there, 10 feet below, lighting up a smoke..... crevasse rescue at its most entertaining. Feeling the cold later, the group departed for the somewhat warmer depths of the valley after lunch in the hut (despite it bucketing down), and pizza. Huge.

Steve Curtain.

ROCKCLIMBING - MT ARAPILES

"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 that 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 and ^{myself} was dragged from above up the rock-face and landed at the top wondering if I would ever have the courage to face the downwards 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 (27th-29th September). 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 10 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 began 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! Were these 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 ~~seen~~ heard falling over one of the log fences designed to keep cars out of the picnic/camping 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 anyone 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 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

Night Sports

When most of OXO was docey-doing and hokey-pokeying, Dan Colbourne and I took it upon ourselves to seek fame, glory, prestige and blisters at the 1st World Rogaining Championships at Beechworth...

I felt sorry for those who never leave the city. Few people experience being out in the bush at three o'clock in the morning, off track following nothing more than a wandering spur through open native forest, bewildered but enchanted by the drifting mist that twists, turns and engulfs the trees around you. Yes, we were bushed, no more than 200m from the last water drop and unable to locate the blasted 60-point marker. Our brains were jammed in neutral, our legs felt like rubber and there was an ever-present temptation to lie down and go to sleep. But Dan's insistence (i.e. hard physical prodding) kept me moving, and purpose seemed to keep us alert. Into the darkness we stumbled, headlamps casting cones of light into the mist. Into the enchanted woods we walked.

The latter half of '92 saw some good rogaining results. At the Goulburn Games 6hr at Alexandra, Jane Fröhlich and the author came close to taking out the mixed division! As the results were read out, we were declared the winners. But no! The controversy! The tragedy! It turned out the veteran mixed team weren't exactly totally veteran and so the results were changed, and we became runners up. The course was very steep with little opportunity for running. Route choice consisted of deciding between the steep forested section with large point-value checkpoints, and the open farmland region with sparse checkpoints of low value. Most teams took to the forest, but we found the farmland more effective in picking up plenty of points in the small time given. Novelty checkpoints included a marker on an island in the centre of a dam (the swim was welcome considering it was 30 degrees), another in a shower complex, and a third marker was located inside a fridge! Jenny and Cora Wolsinkel had a good time too, Cora keenly displaying her competitive intentions with a camera tripod attached to her daypack!

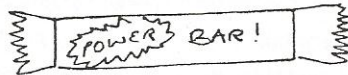
Despite being timed in the middle of exams, the Summer 12hr at Murrundindi saw three OXO teams compete on a very steep course. Judicious route choice was in order, and soon teams discovered exactly what those little brown lines mean! John Scopel and Jenny Wolsinkel collected 12th place in the mixed division (33rd overall); Tom Bevan, Kevin Gruen and the author came 6th in the mens division (9th overall); and Tracey Mitchell and Chris Gersch got a little lost.

Events to look out for soon include the awesome Autumn 6hr on March 14, located in the rugged Cathedral Ranges well known to bushwalkers and rockclimbers. The Autumn 12hr on April 3 is rumoured to be located in and around Marysville - providing a steep and spectacular course. We hope to get one or two teams from MUMC to fly off to Western Australia in July to compete in the Australian Championships.

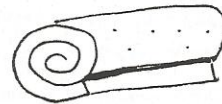
And the final results of the World Rogaining Championships? Well, a few hours later one half of the team not including Dan developed a pain in the knee and we withdrew with

8 hours to go. Still we had collected 500 points before then which placed us 80th mens (103rd overall) out of about 200 teams. Next time!! Congratulations to Victorians Mike Walters and Jim Russell with 1330 points which earned them the title as World Champions, narrowly defeating the South Australian team of Peter and Andrew McComb with 1320 points. Dave Rowlands, legendary rogainer himself, winner of the prestigious MUMC 24 walk many years ago, provided the most challenging rogaining course ever seen. 500 square miles of course reaching as far as El Dorado and Yackandandah was daunting even to the most fearless of rogainers. Teams came from all states of Australia, New Zealand, United States, United Kingdom and Sweden. The success of the 1st World Rogaining Championships will ensure a great launch of the sport on the international arena. Who knows - one day it might become an olympic sport! And to think it all started twenty years ago when a few members of MUMC wanted to see who could walk the furthest in 24 hours.

Happy Rogaining,
Stuart



energy source of the champion
veteran WRC team (six scientifically
developed sports energy food bars)



Dan's energy source for
the WRC (a swiss roll,
with extra cream + jam)

KAYAKING THE HOLY WATERS

by Steve Carter and Dave Burnett

"Strange place, India," the guy in the Melbourne canoe shop said. I looked up from my credit card computations.

"What?" I said.

"India... strange place." he said again. He looked at me a moment and then asked,

"How are you traveling?"

"Mainly by bus," I replied.

Then he laughed.

Our original plan for India had been to run the Indus and Zaskar Rivers in northern India, but abandoned this scheme when we discovered that the rivers in question would be almost frozen over during our anticipated trip dates. Instead, we pre-arranged with an Indian rafting company to run the Bhagirathi river, which joins with the Alaknanda to become the holy Ganges. Three of our team of seven were to be in Kayaks, the rest in rafts with the guides.

Planning an expedition to India is easy: the trick is to begin packing the night before and buy any extra equipment (such as boats or packs) the morning of departure. This does away with months of un-necessary stress during the planning stages. A Visa card acts as a magic wand for any financial difficulties. Two points to remember though: don't lose all your travel documents within minutes of entering Melbourne airport; and shepherd all boats, paddle bags, skis etc all the way onto the plane. The baggage handlers are otherwise likely to see the awkward packages and hide somewhere until they become somebody else's problem. Probably yours.

Figuring that the best treatment for culture shock is total immersion, we tackled the worst of our fears on the first day: a bus ride, with boats, from Delhi to Rishikesh, 235km to the north of the capital. In Australia this distance would be trivial - here, paddlers regularly undertake 800+km round trips for a few hours paddling - but in India it was a day-long nightmare of overturned lorries, crowded villages and an endless stream of humans lining the entire length of the road. So many people!

It was quite a relief for our first-time expeditioners when we arrived at the rafting base camp, just beyond Rishikesh. Indeed the contrast was ludicrous: within a few minutes we were sipping local beer from the depths of wicker cane chairs, reclining under enormous tents on a beautiful secluded beach on the Ganges. Images of the British Raj welled up in our minds as the memory of that other India faded away.

The first morning of paddling was spent warming up on a section of water just above Base camp. Fears of brown, polluted water were soon put to rest. The river was a beautiful greenish-blue with swirling flakes of mica that twinkled in the sun, and none of us, despite vile predictions, became sick from the water. The sight of a human skeleton being picked at by vultures was a little unnerving, but this and one floating cow was all we saw on the entire trip.

Despite descriptions of grade 3-4 water, all we came across initially were gravel races. Had I endured 15 hours in a non-reclining airline seat to paddle the Goulburn!? The situation was soon rectified, however, when we paddled Three Blind Mice. "River left has nice line between two holes," said John the rafting guide. "Sounds OK," I thought. Ha! My last view down the river as I slipped backwards into one of these enormously deep holes was of Dave grinning crazily at my demise. Thankfully the forgiving curves of my dancer made surfing out of such difficulties relatively easy. Base camp was reached via a series of pleasant waves, whose size initiated us in the mechanics of high volume paddling.

I had heard stories of the horror of traveling by road in this part of the world, but nothing had prepared me for the nightmare trip from Base camp to Tehri, where we were to start the Bhagirathi. As the road climbed into the mountains its crumbling edges soon dropped away straight into the river, a kilometre below. There was barely room for a bus and a car to pass, and we were often forced to reverse back down the mountain track to a wider section to allow overloaded Indian juggernauts to go by. Judging from the outrageous behaviour of our Matador 'minivan', and the shrine to Shiva on the dashboard, it seemed our driver had a far stronger belief in the afterworld than I did. For once the window seat was the most undesirable one in the vehicle, and talk of helicopters for our next trip was rife, although Dave was disappointed that they wouldn't let him ride on the roof.

Paddling large volume grade 3-4 water the next day seemed safe and relaxing by comparison. We were treated to long sections of large waves, often requiring some deft manoeuvring to avoid two metre deep holes, and relatively little flatwater in between rapids. We had been concerned that Indian grade 3-4 would be a far higher standard than Australian grade 3-4, and when we discovered we could cope with the added volume the butterflies went and the pure enjoyment set in. The standard was slightly harder than paddling the Indi at 1.5m plus (taken at Biggara).

Being quicker than the rafts, those of us in Kayaks had become used to paddling the rapids first. Still, we were somewhat surprised when one of our guides asked if we could go down first and tell him where the big holes were, because he couldn't remember! Fortunately, he remembered the only rapid that needed inspection.

After this long day's paddle we camped on a sandy beach, and the following day paddled a slightly easier section to Devprayag, where the Alakndanda meets the Bhairathi to become the Ganges proper. Almost everyone in this remote village watched from the riverside and rickety suspension bridge as we paddled the last, grade 3, rapid before the confluence. At our pull-out point a yogi came out of his cave to look at us and our kayaks, and we hurriedly kicked off our shoes when we remembered that we were now on the Ganges, and one is supposed to leave the holy river barefooted.

After another frightening drive back to Base camp our adrenalin was running, and we wanted to paddle something that would really scare the wits out of us. The guides recommended we change our plans and paddle the upper Alakndanda from Nandprayag to Rudraprayag, a section which had been paddled only four times previously. We were a little skeptical when we heard that two Czechoslovakians had drowned on the river quite recently, but decided to play along when we learnt that it had occurred on a section above the one we were to paddle. Why not? It couldn't be worse than another bus ride.

In the morning we experimented with a different approach to travel by paddling to Rishikesh and then hiring a taxi. It's driver tackled the boats with great gusto, enthusiastically tightening the tie-on ropes until one of the roof racks snapped with a loud 'twang', sending the razor sharp ends spearing through the roof into the rear

seat. Despite this, and a worsening expedition-wide stomach bug, we set off for Nandprayag, arriving safely later that day.

When we began early next morning, our thoughts were more on food, or rather the problems it presents in a country such as India, than paddling. I had eaten nothing for two days, and the other two kayakers, Phil and Dave, had had a banana each. After portaging a grade 5-6 waterfall (paddleable at a higher level), we paddled off with our minds set firmly on food at Rudraprayag.

Consistent grade 3-4 water followed, made up of large waves and even larger holes (which we did our best to avoid). Paddling these continuous high quality rapids for only the fifth time in history provided a great contrast to our usual start-and-stop trips to familiar rivers in Australia. These rapids didn't stop for 60 kilometres!, and provided fabulous entertainment.

We missed the rapid our guides had recommended we inspect, but the grade 5 gorge at the end of the paddle was obvious when it came. At this point the whole river ran onto a savage undercut. With choice breakouts and a good ferryglide the rapid was eminently do-able, but the consequence of a mistake was likely death and we portaged the final rapid of our trip.

Due to logistical difficulties too complicated to mention, the three starving kayakers were not able to eat at Rudraprayag, and so became three deathly-weak bus-travellers yet again. As a man tried to sell Dave carpets for 6 hours, and I tried to keep from being accosted with a chicken, we began planning our next expedition. Consensus had it that India had plenty more potential. The Indus and Zaskar were waiting for the thaw, and adventures were to be had on the Beas, near Manali, and the Brahmaputra. We would certainly return, although as the bus swayed around the mountain passes one nagging doubt remained...

How much *would* it cost to charter a helicopter in India?

Melbourne University Mountaineering Club expedition to India.

Kayaks: Steve Carter, Phil Towler, Dave Kjar.

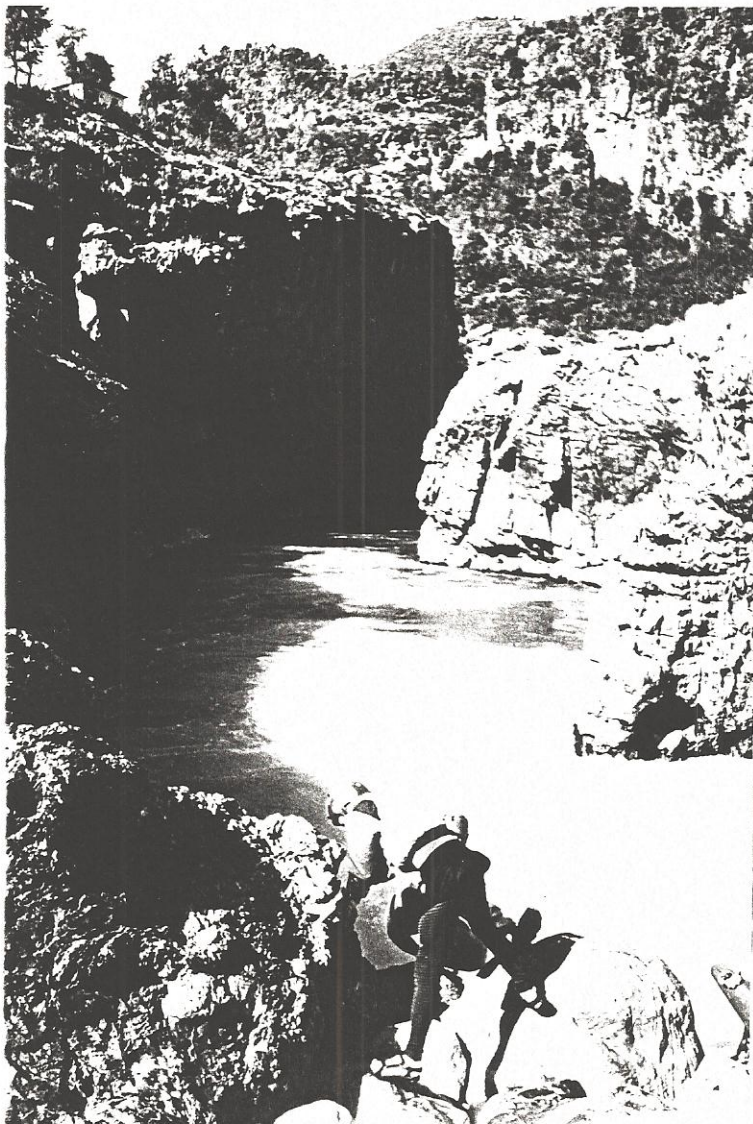
Rafts: Rohan Schaap, Amber Mullins, Cathy Sealy, Mike Bethume.

November 1992



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JUST A GRAVEL RACE ?! "oh, you MISSED THE STOPPER!" : ROHAN



SCENIC (RIVER) BEAUTY !



SO MANY PEOPLE ?! ESCAPING THE
MASSES !

