

MOUNTAINEER

Year edition

July 1993

The magazine of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club



--EDITORIAL--

Members all, take note, - it's that time of year again - the MUMC A.G.M., Thursday July 29th, 1993, 7:30pm. (Sports Union Boardroom) This is an **O**ppportunity for all club members to vote in a new committee, learn more about the club and catch up on what's happening by way of many **U**p and coming club events. There's the Bushdance to consider, and **N**aturally the popular Pie and Slide night. These are just some of **T**he fringe benefits of being involved in MUMC. Of course there are m**A**ny club skiing, walking, caving and paddling trips to fill up that spare **t**ime! And if that wasn't enough there is always a news-thirsty editor to satisfy with juicy articles for The Mountaineer. This brings me to my **N**ext point! In the event of the AGM I will finish my stint as **E**ditor of this esteemed magazine and leave the way open for the **E**nergetic, creative efforts of the up and coming editor. Needless to say **R**eadng and publishing everyone's articles has been a fun, sometimes **very** interesting (need I say more?) exercise. On that note I'll sign off, wish everyone exciting times for the rest of '93 and keep those articles p-p-p-pouring in!

Kind Regards,

Cathy Sealey

(Publications)

The editors of the Mountaineer, Cathy Sealey, Andrew Roberts, John Stern and Kate Bradshaw thank all those who contributed articles, bromided prints and helped to send out the 600 or so copies to members.

Cover: Dave Wilson on Marria Falls, New Zealand. Photo: Nick Gust

Reminiscences of one and forty nine years of Club history

Looking through the club history it would be possible in places to change a few dates and names and you would have a description of the club as it is today. Somethings just haven't changed.

For example Niall Brennan, the club founder recorded in the first annual report (1945) his disappointment concerning the lack of women on trips, and the lack of beginners on trips organised especially for them.

Some may think that the club membership has been particularly high over the past few years, however the membership of the club was 561 in 1965, and has hovered around 500 ever since. The proportion of active club members has always been substantially less, and the number of active bushwalkers in 1968 was estimated at 216. In 1969 and 1970 the club decided not to accept membership fees at the O-week stand, but instead to handout a map showing where the clubrooms were. Those that found the clubrooms were thought more likely to be active members

While those involved in building and crane climbing probably felt they were breaking new ground in the early 90's, the original Wilson Hall was climbed on a Saturday night in 1951 by Bill Bewsher, Faye Kerr and Bruce Graham leaving an enamel jerry pot on the spire. Around this time an ascent of the Ormond College clock tower was abandoned just below the summit, leaving a wooden ladder on the roof and a jerry pot (some sort of obsession) hanging from the spire. Ringwood police were not impressed when in 1966 club members climbed the Ringwood Clock Tower after a Club dinner dance at "The Cuckoo".

There have always been club debacles. In 1962 an expedition to Ball's Pyramid off Lord Howe Island failed as the climbers became sea sick on the boat out and then heavy swells prevented landing. The climbers spent their time on the Lord Howe Island snorkelling and socialising instead.

Club factions have come and gone. A climbing group threatened to split the club in 1963 and a paddling group threatened to split the club in the late 1980's. Thankfully nothing came of these altercations.

Somethings definitely have changed. While Niall Brennan originally proposed that "The club does not propose to organise tours for large parties", the running of beginners trips soon became and still is a key club activity. Trips to Wilsons Promontory ranged in size from 4 people in 1961 to 80 people in 1965, and in 1972 almost the entire club went there (175 people).

In the 50's and 60's club rockclimbers were amongst the leaders in their sport. However with the enormous growth of climbing it has become increasingly difficult to lead the field. Climbing is now a full time

occupation for those at the top. The commitments of study and work keeps many club members resigned to being weekend enthusiasts.

Similarly although the club was the driving force behind the creation of the Victorian Climbing Club, Search and Rescue, and the evolution of Rogaining/Orienteering, the growth of each of the above meant that the club has played an increasingly smaller part in their respective organisations.

The scope of club trips has been expanding ever since the clubs inception. Many of the first bushwalks were around Healesville, Hurstbridge and the Cathedrals, but gradually the Grampians, Wilsons Promontory and even Mallacoota and the Flinders Ranges were explored. It became a challenge to find virgin walks, and the club moved its focus to South West Tasmania. New Zealand was tackled soon after by rockclimbers/ mountaineers, and Antarctica has always been highly regarded. Today club members are going further afield to Nepal, India, and Thailand, while New Zealand has been rediscovered by the paddlers. There is plenty of exploring still left to do among India and South America's undiscovered peaks and rivers.

This year safety became a major item on the committees agenda and will hopefully be here to stay with the inception of the position of Safety Convenor on the committee. Gear hire was well collected thanks to the honesty and commitment of trip leaders and participants. Keeping track of club gear still remains a problem, but seems to be improving, once again thanks to the honesty of club members, and the work of the Convenors.

More importantly Bushwalking, the historical backbone of the club, was particularly active, while Rockclimbing experienced something of a revival and will benefit in the future from this years new leaders. The Canoeing contingent remained strong, (winning I.V Canoeing) and will soon have a number of new leaders. Despite the perennial problem of a five hour drive to Buchan, Caving ran some interesting trips.

Steve Carter
President, MUMC,

HOW DO I GO ON A CLUB TRIP?

See the trip books in the clubrooms if you would like to attend trips. Get in early. Clubrooms are situated in Cardigan St. between Elgen St. and Faraday St. on the same side of the road as the Clyde hotel. It is a small terrace house with a sign on the front (only about two minutes walk off campus). Open 1 - 2pm during semester on Weekdays, and 7- 8pm all year on Tuesdays (other than during the Christmas period). These trips are only a sample of ones that will be run. Some will be placed in the folders only one are two weeks prior to the event, so keep coming in to check the trip books. If you would like to lead a trip, see the appropriate convenor. We welcome beginners, leaders, or just about anyone. Advanced trips are most likely to be decided upon at the last minute, so stay tuned to the clubrooms.

SKI TOURING

What more can be said other than, "Oh Yesss! It's snowing and heavily".

Well, at least it was on 12th - 13th June, the opening weekend of the ski season, where people were really expecting to get a hell of a lot more drinking done than actual skiing. It was a boom weekend in all alpine areas. Mt. Hotham received around 80 cm(!) while further south-westward, Baw Baw and Lake Mountain received a decent 35 to 40 cm. (It has been rumoured that several individuals took to the open flats of Lake Mountain during the middle of exams at such a time..) However, given that the previous three years have all great late seasons, the early start of this year's falls may be an unfavourable indication to the remainder of the full snow season. That is, not that much snow later in the season, but who knows.

So journeys into the magnificent alpine area this year, like last year, will include day and overnight trips to Lake Mountain, Mt. Stirling, Baw Baw/Gwinear, the Snowy mountains and other fantastic spots around the Alps. Skiing ranges everything from general to heavy touring, with this year offering Telemark instruction sessions run by the club and Ski school at Mt. Stirling. This year will be a hopefully be a great one, so go for it!!

Steve Curtain
Ski Touring Convenor

ROCKCLIMBING

The club runs climbing courses that cater to all levels. We pride ourselves on being able to help students climb very cheaply (thanks to all those that have helped out on the beginner trips so far).

This year has seen many safety improvements in our climbing activities - Most notably the earlier retirement and standardisation of karabiners, harnesses and nylon equipment. Also important was the introduction of compulsory helmet usage on beginner trips.

Over past years the number of active climbers in the club has decreased, however this has changed. Many large and very successful beginners trips have been run this year. Several new climbers are now on the verge of running their own trips. This trend looks to continue with the help of technical instruction evenings in semester 2. Look for notices in the clubrooms.

The more experienced climbers continue! Steve Carter still enjoys defying gravity, Stuart Dobbie is climbing at the rate of knots, John "spider" Stern makes us all feel nervous around cliffs, and Andrew Wettanahall is beginning to climb again after ripping his shoulder to pieces at Easter. Fred Watson is also looking pretty good. The grades are increasing (but that's not all that matters). We seem to have convinced Euan Robinson and Steve Curtain

that during the summer, climbing sure beats paddling and skiing.

To all those climbers that have had the opportunity to learn from experienced club climbers, it is now time to return the favour. **RUN SOME BEGINNERS TRIPS**, the demand is high and I need your help! We also need more representation of climbers in the club, so **PLEASE**, climbers, run for a position on the committee. Many important decisions are made affecting the future of the club. Have your say.

My wife says climbers are in love with death. Wrong. Climbers become in love with themselves every time they elude death. They have a narcissistic relationship to death, and preen in front of those dark mirrors. At each escape from a death-dealing threat there's a little infantile voice within that shouts gleefully: "Hey, look at me! I'm terrific!" Egos feed on that magic.

-from " The Pornography of Death," by John Thackray [no. 67, July/August 1981]

[I'm not sure if this is good or bad - ED]

Steve Bird
Rockclimbing Convenor

MOUNTAINEERING

The year in Mountaineering has seen Luke Mahon, Derek Fabel and myself in New Zealand. Luke climbed The Nun's Veil, among other peaks. The more-than-usual raging Tasman river was crossed by being very nice to a local chopper pilot. Prior to this, Derek and I had watched most of New Zealand washed away in December and January during our climbing (on again off again summer) season. See article in this edition on the Footstool.

Derek is presently planning (and saving his pennies) to climb Mt. St. Elias in Alaska. About five vertical kilometres of ascent (the things we do!). Meanwhile, an army of soon-to-be apprentice mountaineers will

reach the hills of N.Z. in the 1993/1994 season. These include Angus Campbell, James Allen and Ben Pallich. Hope to meet them there. Whispers can be heard of an expedition to South America.

The annual Alpine instruction Weekend is being held on the 21st and 22nd of August. This weekend is meant for people about to try their first season Mountaineering and for people wishing to learn a few snow skills in Australia. There will be five mountaineers on the weekend to instruct, and we look forward to seeing you on Mt. Feathertop.

Andrew Roberts
Mountaineering Convenor

ROGAINING

Although rogaining is not an event run by MUMC, there are many keen rogainers amongst our club members. Rogaining, a relatively new sport was invented from an MUMC event, and has just gained international recognition, with the first world rogaining championships held in North-East Victoria last year.

Six, twelve and twenty-four hour rogains are held regularly throughout the year. Upcoming events are advertised in the green folders in the clubrooms, and there is often a list of those intending to compete if you're looking for a partner.

If you want to find out more about this challenging sport, come down to the clubrooms and talk to some of our rogainers.

Nicki Munro

VICWALK & MUMC SEARCH & RESCUE

The Search and Rescue section of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs is set up to provide a pool of experienced bushwalkers and ski tourers for use in searches for lost people in the bush and snow fields of Victoria.

The idea is to make available to the Victoria Police those members of walking clubs, and other organisations such as the MUMC, who have the experience, fitness, and enough personal equipment to safely participate in prolonged searching in adverse conditions.

Members are called out to search only in response to an official request for assistance from the Victoria Police, as a part of "DISPLAN". Members of Search and Rescue work under police direction at all times, and are registered as emergency workers as required by the Emergency Management Act of 1986.

Members responding to a call out need to come with enough food and equipment for three days since return transport to Melbourne is not assured in less than three days unless the search is called off in the meantime.

As you would expect a member is free to decline any particular call out for any reason what so ever.

If you are interested in joining this pool of search and rescuers or you are just interested in finding out more about it call Steve Bird on 598 4154.

Steve Bird
Search and Rescue Delegate

THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO (INTERNATIONAL RESCUE)

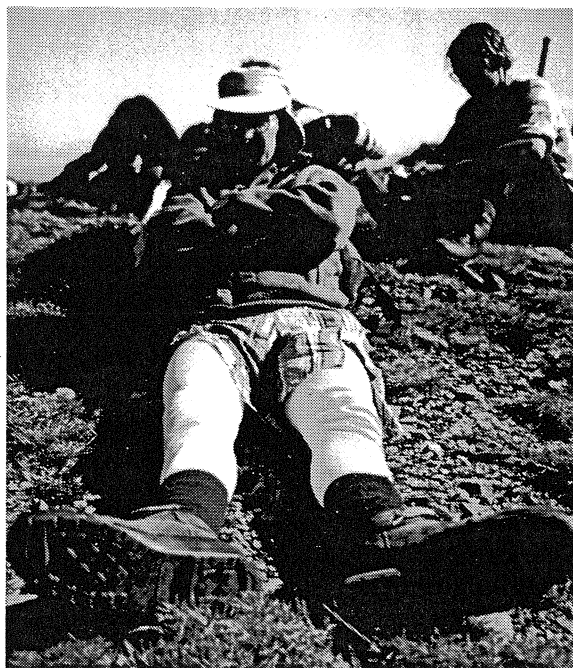
[Neither the editors nor the author of the previous article take any responsibility for this comment]

CONSERVATION?

As conservation convener this year I found myself co-ordinating many activities - in fact so many that I don't know how I found the time for them all. The masses began rallying to the conservation banner, planted on a well forested hill, around July as soon as it was pitched, and, as is usual with large groups of people, many were late in arriving and we decided to wait for them. Waiting, as I'm sure you are aware, is usually quite a tedious process and this

wait was no exception - so to pass the time we decided to have a picnic around the banner on top of the (well forested) hill. Many people saw us having fun picnicking around a campfire (next to a banner on top of a well forested hill) and decided to stop by and join in the fun - bringing with them food, wine and wood for the fire. Soon a great festival was in progress around a huge bonfire near a (singed) banner on top of a (decreasingly less) well forested hill. All agreed that such a festival should not end - so the debauchery continued. The consequence of this momentous decision was that the conservation convener became the Picnic co-ordinator and not an awful lot of conservation was achieved (except the destruction of a forest on top of a (now bare) hill). The Working Conservationists spotted the destruction and interrupted the festival to enquire as to what would be done about the shambles: a peace pipe was smoked, a peace offering sacrificed and eaten and a protocol negotiated whereby you may now see some W.C. trips advertised in folders - do something for the walking tracks, and the environment at large, by going on some of these trips then come back to the party on Bald Hill.

Andrew Gaff
Conservation and General (more
general)



Steve Williams

BUSHWALKING

After the biggest summer for a long time, bushwalking has continued to be strong in the club during this semester. Sadly, the good weather has departed once again, and all but the hardened walkers either plan epics to central Australia or start waxing their skis in anticipation of the great white wet. Spider and Jenny Wolsinkel lead a trip to Mt. Howitt at the start of the year. Lara Ross lead a trip to the nearby Crinoline. She was joined by an American, who proclaimed at the car-park she had changed her mind and would stay there.

Steve Curtain lead a bunch of OXO-farians to the top of Mt. Feathertop for a summer midnight ascent. They breakfasted looking over the Ovens Valley. Damien Ryan, master of the bludge trip, took three total juveniles and Nicki to the Otway ranges. (oooooh I'll pay for that one.) Yours truly took some new members to the hills around Marysville for a fresh winters' daywalk. Accompanied by a lost dog that we named "Stupid", we followed Steavensons River, looked at the falls, took a wrong turn, climbed into the Mountain Ash and saw bits of Marysville between the clouds. Michael Ratcliffe took some keen walkers to Mt. Cobbler. Kate Bradshaw and Andrew Roberts ran an extended Easter trip to Andrew's real home: the Barry Mountains [Really? - ED]. Peter Kreisner lead the classic Wilson's Prom circuit and a visit to Lake Tali Karng. Of course, there were many other walks.

Stuart Dobbie
Bushwalking Convenor

CANOEING

This year our dragnet appears to have been successful so far with at least 5 new beginners, including a female at last, last year's catch returning from injury and one prodigal son! These new MUMC paddlers are very keen and so far show great potential, but as yet are relatively untested due to the lack of "real water" in the summer. Therefore these new recruits have been diligently working on their skills in the pool along with a plethora of keen polo paddlers.

It is very satisfying to see such enthusiasm within the MUMC Canoeing fraternity after last year's dismal recruitment. Such is the enthusiasm of these first time paddlers, that a return trip to New Zealand is being organised for the end of the year with plenty of room for any other interested parties.

The news to hand is that this year's Intervarsity Canoeing competition will be held in conjunction with the inaugural "Wild 'n' Woolly Games" somewhere in Tasmania from 7-11 December. This leaves us the non-instruction week in second semester for a HYOOOGE paddling trip taking in such classics as the Indi, Swampy Plains, Thredbo, Goodradigbee, Upper Snowy and Mitta Mitta rivers in what we hope will be yet another MUMC epic! - watch this space, and the folder, for more info.

The Spring Canoe Polo season starts at the beginning of August but if anyone is interested in forming a beginner's team, or two, I may be able to slime you into the competition at the last minute but I will need to hear from you really soon! By the way, MUMC B Grade team were victorious in their Grand Final match against Essendon recently - PREMIERS '93!

The rains are falling and the rivers are rising so soon we'll be setting out for a season of great Winter paddling. River-levels as of 22/6 indicate that the King is above maximum and therefore just perfect for paddling, while the other favourites are filling too. However, it's never too late to start paddling, just talk to one of the friendly paddlers or put your name down for a trip and we'll help you on your way to a sport of fast action and adrenalin but most of all, heaps of fun. See you on the water,

Euan Robinson
Canoeing Convenor
(Ph: 817-3156 AH)

CLICK YOUR Heels and
get on down to The

• MUMC •

BUSH DANCE



Yee-ha!



Ya-hoo!



Saturday July 31st

8pm start

[Refreshments
provided.
BYO Drinks]

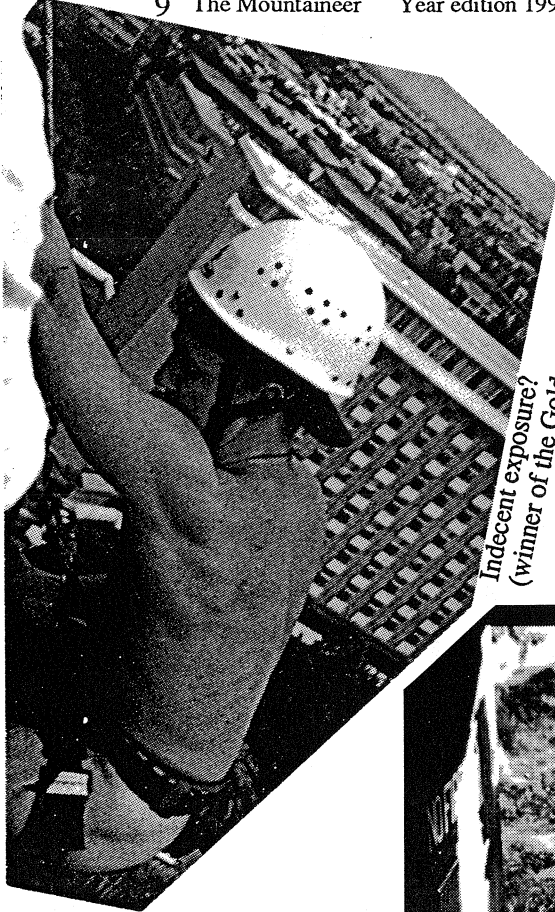
Hall - Ground Floor Union

Building

Tickets - \$10 at the door

Dress in
your
best
bush
gear!





Indecent exposure?
(winner of the Golden Boot award)

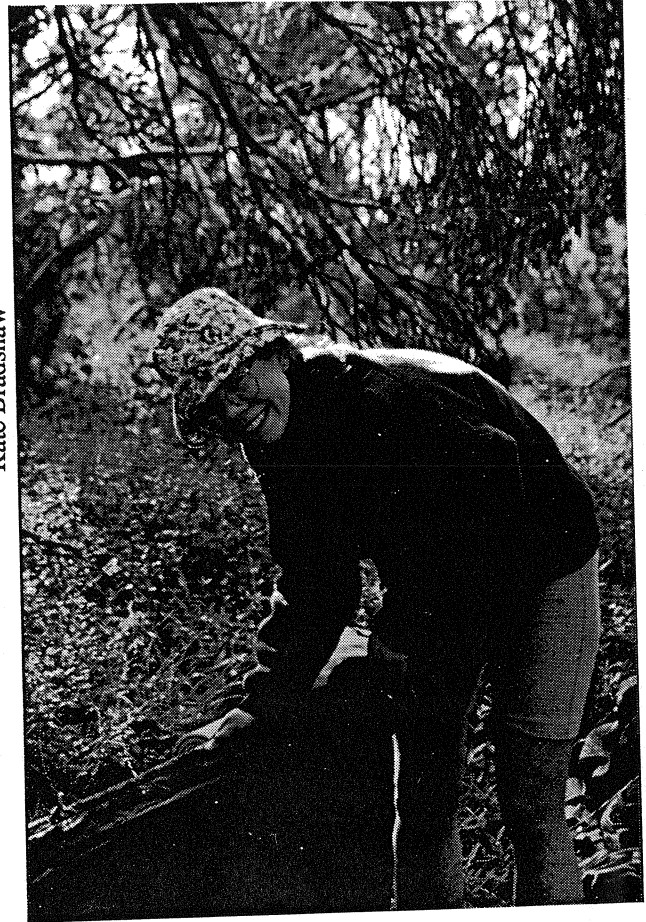


Andrew Gaff

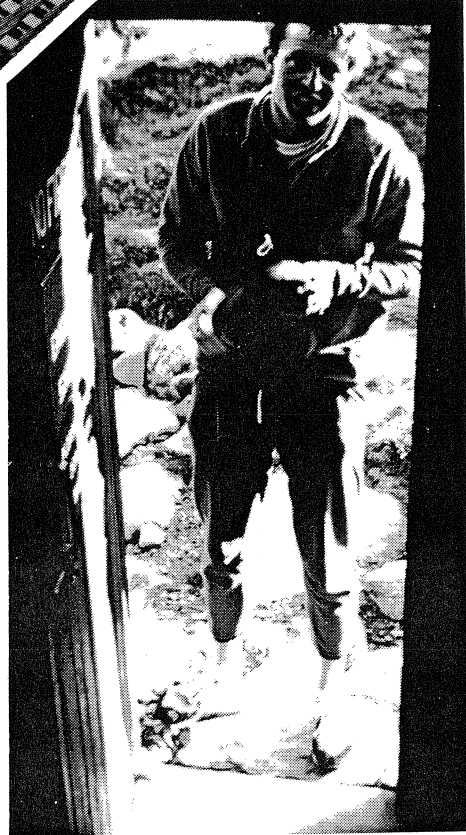
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Derek Fabel
Ball Shelter, New Zealand

Kate Bradshaw



NEWS FLASH: Stuart Dobbie is in hospital with a broken ankle. We all wish him a speedy recovery.

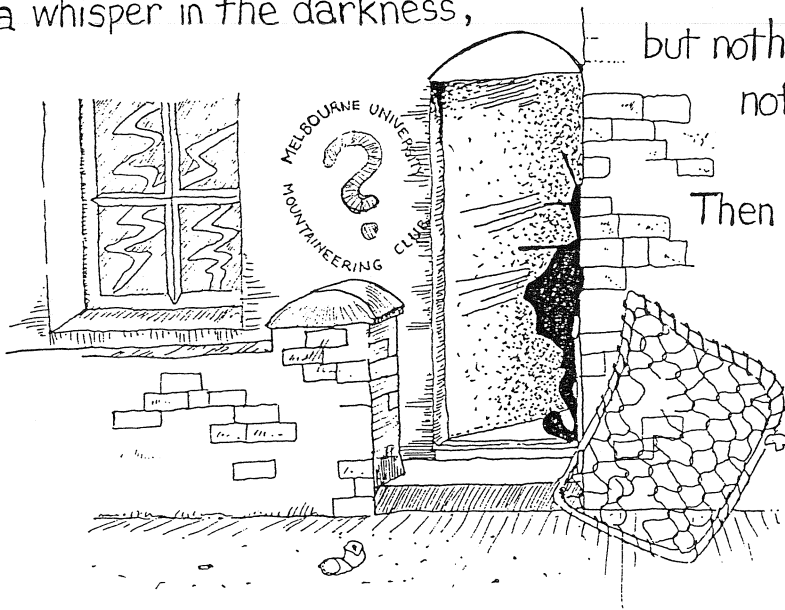


Tracy Mitchell and Stuart Dobbie

Many had seen only a sign,
a whisper in the darkness,

but nothing substantial...
nothing concrete...

Then from within
the depths,
it appeared...



STEVE CURTAIN

1993

B E T H E R E

Telemark Instruction, Hotham or Stirling	3rd, 4th July	Standard: Intermediate to Advanced Leader: Steve Carter
Rockclimbing, Moonarie, S.A.	2nd - 14th July	Leader: John Stern Standard: Intermediate - Advanced
XC Skiing, Bogong high plains	13th - 16th July	Leader: Steve Curtain Standard: Beginners
Leadership Weekend	24th, 25th July	This weekend is organised for new and prospective leaders. See trip book.
Annual General Meeting	Thurs 29th July	Sports Union Board Room.
Bushdance Union Building 8 pm	Saturday 31st July	See advertisement in this edition.
Sport Climbing, Nunawading Gym.	Approx every second week.	Leaders: various Come into the clubrooms each week to check folders.
Canoe Polo	Starts in August	Contact Euan Robinson
XC Skiing, Lake Mountain / Mt.Stirling	1st August	Leader: Steve Curtain Standard: Beginners
Midnight Ascent Mt. Feathertop	7th, 8th August	Standard: Intermediate-Advanced Leader: Stuart Dobbie
XC Skiing, Snowcamp skills instruction	14th - 15th August	Leaders: Kate Raulings, Steve Curtain Standard: Beginners
Alpine Instruction Weekend Mt. Feathertop	21st, 22nd August	Standard: Advanced Leader: Andrew Roberts
XC Skiing, Telemark instruction	29th August	Leader: Steve Curtain Standard: Intermediate
Rockclimbing, Camels Hump	18th or 19th Sept	Leader: Steve Bird Standard: Intermediate
Pie and Slide Night	Thursday 2nd Sept	The club's annual slide competition.
Bushwalking, Budawang.	Two weeks in December	Leader: Nicki Munro Standard: Intermediate
Bushwalking, Bogong High Plains.	Four days, December	Leader: Nicki Munro Standard: Intermediate
Bushwalking, Wannangatta area.	Three days, December	Leader: Nicki Munro Standard: Intermediate
Rockclimbing, Grampians.	December	Leader: Andrew Roberts Standard: Beginners

Leadership Weekend - 24/25 July 1993

Recall your last MUMC adventure. Was it enjoyable? What things happened that were unplanned? Was it a relaxing day out, or a true epic? Think about the individual who organised and ran the trip. Would you be interested in running a trip? It doesn't take much; just a reasonable level of competence in whatever endeavour you are undertaking, some enthusiasm, confidence, and... participation in the leadership weekend! The Leadership Weekend is a fun-filled, action-packed two days designed to give you the confidence and skills necessary to lead your own trips with MUMC. Although we focus on the issues involved in running a bushwalk, the course has general application to other outdoor activities. The weekend includes a Level 1 First Aid Course (with special emphasis in first aid for remote places), bush navigation tuition and an orienteering course, group discussions on leadership theory, individual responsibility, group dynamics and dealing with difficult trip members, talks on making your trip successful, the practical issues of planning, organising and running a walk, and lots more.

Please contact Stuart Dobbie (387-9558) if you are interested in attending.
The trip meeting will be on Tuesday 20th July at 7.30pm in the clubrooms.

MIDNIGHT ASCENT - The Weekend to Discover

The midnight ascent is MUMC's most established OXO-metric. First conceived by Tom Kneen many, many years ago, this tradition has now become a religious pilgrimage that all good OXO-women and OXO-men should undertake. It all begins on a cold moon-lit Friday night. After making plenty of noise to annoy the Trout Farm owners, thirty-three or-so MUMC members gather in a huddle and wait for midnight. Then, in small self-contained groups, they head off up the north-west spur of Mt. Feathertop, where by morning they shall find snow, sun, the legendary MUMC mansion-hut, and hopefully Mt. Feathertop. After sleeping through the morning and afternoon, these good OXO people dig out from their ruc-sacks dinner jackets and evening dresses, and gather for a photograph in the snow. Back inside the hut and some thermals, the feast begins. Dinner is a thirty course decadent delight of fondue, caviar, smoked salmon, curry, pasta, trifle, chocolate mousse, Tequila, geto-blaster, dancing, singing, and guitar-playing. On Sunday morning, hang-over permitting, an ascent of the fabled Mt. Feathertop is in order, followed by a descent of the north-west spur in order to reach Porepunkah Pub.

The weekend is quite demanding so be prepared for the cold, the wet, and exhaustion. You must have been on an overnight MUMC trip before, as well as spent enough time in the snow to know its wet, cold and potentially dangerous if unprepared. (A day-trip skiing with the club is fine.)

Trip Date:	Weekend of 7/8 August 1993
Meeting:	27th July, 7.30pm, Boardroom
See trip sheet for details.	

Notice of Changes to the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club Constitution.

The constitution of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club requires that any proposed changes to the constitution be included in the notice summoning the annual general meeting.

At the coming Annual General Meeting on July 29 1993 a proposal will be put forward for the creation of a position of Safety Convenor as a new committee position with full voting rights.

The role of this convenor is envisaged to include

- a) maintenance of the clubs first aid kits
- b) organisation of first aid courses
- c) general promotion of safe practices within the club and organisation of safety workshops.

Steve Carter
President

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1993

The Annual General Meeting of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club Incorporated will be held:

Thursday 29th July , 7pm.

Sports Union Boardroom (between swimming pool and Trinity College)

The purpose of the meeting is to conduct the ordinary business of the Annual General Meeting. In addition, any special business will be considered if seven day's notice in writing of the business to be discussed has been given.

Notice in writing may be given to the Secretary by placing the notice of business in the sealed box in the clubrooms - where the nominations for Committee positions are to be placed - no later than Thursday 22nd July.

COMMITTEE POSITIONS

Nominations are called for the following committee positions:

President	Bushwalking Convenor
Vice-president	Canoeing Convenor
Treasurer	Rock-climbing Convenor
Secretary	Caving Convenor
Assistant Secretary	Ski-touring Convenor
Publications Officer	Conservation Convenor
Gear Store Officer	General Member

Nominations are to be made on the form below or on a nomination form available from the clubrooms. All nominations are to be placed in the sealed box in the clubrooms not less than seven days before the Annual General Meeting - ie. NO LATER THAN THURSDAY 22nd JULY.

NOMINATION FORM

I, _____ (name of proposer)

nominate _____ (name of candidate)

for the position of _____ (committee position)

Dated this ____ day of June/July 1993.

Signature of Proposer _____

Signature of Seconder _____

Signature of Candidate _____

NB. Please note that for the nomination to be valid, it must be signed by two members of MUMC and the proposed candidate.

1993 VICTORIAN ROGAINING CHAMPIONSHIPS

- 24 HOUR MYRHEE

4.30am

PHIL - Wow man! Check out the cows! They're just standing there watching us!

DAN - Where?

PHIL - (pointing) There...

DAN - That's a grass clump!

PHIL - No..okay, what's that over there then? It's a bull, it's huge!

DAN - Um Phil, that's um er, a blackberry bush.

Dan hereafter was silent, realising that he was trapped nine hours from the hash house, with a hallucinating gastric madman. Soon, however, whilst walking along a bitumen road, Dan was heard to exclaim, "Wow Phil, there are blackberries growing out of the road, and we're walking right through the middle of them!" Soon after, and even more worryingly: "Look at those three cows, they're transparent, you can see right through them." Phil laughed.

The rogaine had taken its toll.

It's a harsh competitive sport, and bad luck will strike down the unwary, and often the wary. Dan and Phil we were certainly amongst the wary, concentrating heavily on pre race training. They had been to bed before 1.00am for the previous week, and the night before we observed* to be not drinking and had left a party before 1.30 am, to go to Phil's and pack, for the bus left at 6.45 am.

Despite such extraordinary preparation, the cold hand of delirium hit Dan and Phil very hard. The start (2.00pm) to midnight session was very fruitful, and the pair did very well, getting difficult checkpoints with little trouble. After a call in at the hash house, the wheels fell off - tracks were cleverly disguised as moon beams, when for the previous half an hour, moon beams were cleverly disguised as tracks.

Still it was a good rogaine pleasant country for rogaining, no swamps, few blackberries, no rain (as in the World Champs) and the sight of a bus disgorging forty tired limping, bizarrely clad rogainers at Richmond Station was a sight to behold!

Dan's and Phil's Handy Hints #1: Get some sleep before a rogaine.

*There was much of the committee present. Reports of this event are so outlandish that shock is thought to have taken over those present and they are now recuperating.

CAVING CONVENOR'S REFLECTION

Many people have taken tours of the tourist caves at Buchan, walked along the flood lit paths and seen the stalagmites and stalactites illuminated by blue and red lamps. Why then go wild caving? To discover the extraordinary variety of species of darkness. Usually, only one species inhabits a particular cave. The cave called *Honeycomb* is home to a deep thick darkness much like treacle. *Centipede* is noteworthy for a darkness almost unknown in Australia but fairly common in New Zealand, which is always accompanied by a strong smell of denco-rub. It is called the New Zealand All Blacks. *Razor* is filled with a thin string like blackness well adapted to squeezing itself into all the narrow crevices. *Wilson's* has almost no darkness due to the high numbers of users who have unfortunately disturbed the delicate subterranean ecosystem. So don a helmet and come exploring with us, but as darkness is a timid creature, don't expect to see any unless you turn your lamp off.

Tom Bevan
Caving Convenor

Mountaineering in New Zealand

Moments of truth

Andrew Roberts



Behind our bivy, The Footstool extended into the evening glow of the western skies. Its majestic partner, Mt. Sefton gently rumbled as massive blocks of ice fell from icecliffs on the east face. The sound travelled through the amphitheatre of valleys like rumbles of crashing waves across sand dunes. Crimson sunlight touched only the highest peaks on the horizon. A thousand metres beneath, the lights of Mount Cook village shimmered into existence. Further away, last reflections of red warmth traced glacial streams winding knots to Lake Pukaki, nearly 30 km away.

Then the light of day disappeared. Cold, still air captured the mountains. The watery snowpack began to freeze. Satellites travelled through the milky way and it was time to sleep.

But neither Derek Fabel nor I could shut our eyes. The silent, spectacular sky show kept us awake. Shooting stars flashed in a pin-cushion night sky alive with millions of speckled

stars. Soon it was time to prepare to climb. We lay in our bivvy bags drinking and eating. 3 am came. We left to be lost in the enormity of the landscape, and to attempt the Main Divide route on The Footstool.

The freeze was good, and the going fast, other than for my technique with crampons, which was slow. As we traversed the Stocking Glacier, weaving in and out of slots, the rising moon began to reflect on the snow, as it smiled, low on the east horizon. 5 am. Classic shades of dawn caressed the night skies. But further down the valleys "Hogsbacks" lay like grey stacks of pancakes over mountain tops. These clouds gave warning of bad weather to follow. We had maybe 5 hours to be off the mountain. With our route sitting in front of us as snow slopes to the summit, we pushed on; the crunch of crampons in frozen snow synchronous with the sound of breathing. I followed the rope Derek dragged behind him.

East Face of the Footstool (left). Mt. Cook reflects the sun in the background.
Photo: Andrew Roberts.

The slope narrowed to a thin stretch, and then to a ridgeline. Derek looked to our left. Nothing. I looked to our right. Nothing. On either side of us cliffs plummeted to the Stocking and Eugenie Glaciers. Straight ahead was the East Ridge; A jumbled pile of loose rock. Awful climbing. A navigational error, but we had no time to correct it. I was a beginner; slow and unskilled. Better to err on the side of safety. We descended.

Finding our way down onto the Eugenie Glacier, now unroped, Derek watched my every step.

"Take bigger steps and watch your feet".

Baptism by fire, but baptism by necessity. Moving fast is important in the hills. Speed is safety.

On the walk down, rain began to fall. The storm was beginning. In the pub an hour later, staring cross-eyed at a Monteath's Dark (it had been 36 hours without sleep), we counted our money:

"Well, after the beer, we've got \$2.65 for dinner." But it wasn't a bad dinner. The sleep was better.

Three weeks later, upon our return to Mt. Cook village, we attempted The Footstool again. Another climber called Karl Winkler, joined us. He was interested in attempting a harder route than the main divide - The East Face Coulior route. I had improved, but not to the skill level of Derek or Karl. Both had spent many seasons in New Zealand.

Conditions were different this time. Three other climbers had attempted the main divide route a few days before, but retreated due to high avalanche danger. As they descended, point releases occurred from their tracks less than fifteen minutes after they passed.

A snow slope becomes extremely heavy with the weight of its own moisture if nocturnal sub-zero temperatures do not occur. The melted snow is not refrozen, but added to by more melted snow on the following day. A point is reached when the snowpack can no longer bind sufficiently to support the weight of the slope above. Under the force of gravity, it slides away. The weight of a human body can provide a perfect trigger for an avalanche.

On a balmy, overcast afternoon in January this year, Karl, Derek and I made our way up to Sefton Bivy. We would begin our climb from there the next morning. Sefton Bivy is situated just below the summer snow line of the

Southern Alps. The oldest hut in Mt. Cook National Park sits here, about 1¹/₂m high and 2m wide. A nearby boulder can sleep two people under an overhang, and one in a luxurious crack in the rock.

Sitting under the overhang of the bivy rock waiting for water to boil, and listening to "Khe Sanh" on Karl's short wave, thoughts of friends back home flooded my mind. A collision of two different worlds. Outside my thoughts was a wilderness of grand proportions. One hundred metres below us the Stocking Glacier crackled and crunched as seracs shifted in their icy foundations. Rocks the size of small cars bounced down the cliffs either side of the glacier, like marbles down a stairway. Among the rocky rubble at my feet, a flower bloomed in defiance of the harsh surrounds.

Distant echoes reminded us of Mt. Sefton in the darkness of dusk. Night air enveloped the mountains. Sleep embraced in the last shadows.

Alarm Clock. 3 am. Time to leave our warm sleeping bags. The night skies were free from cloud. Small wisps of fog slumbered in the valleys, white with moonlight. Mars Bars, porridge and hot chocolate, and then up the first slope from the bivy. The tracks we followed had already found the hidden crevasses, or so we hoped. We walked unroped.

Leaving the track, we stayed unroped. Roping up takes time, travelling roped on a glacier takes even more. Time is precious on a mountain. From the moment one becomes committed to a climb, a race begins. A race against avalanches, a race against rockfall, and a race against the warmth of the day melting the snow. Speed is safety.

The experience of Karl and Derek led the way. They had a better idea of where crevasses were hiding. A convenient snowbridge spanned the void of a large crevasse under the east face. As Karl put one foot, and then the other, gently onto the bridge, he calmly said

"I've got my helmet on, but it's not going to be much use if....". But the snowbridge was safe.

Beginning our traverse under the east face, bright, cool, shades of red, ochre and orange reflected from snowy peaks, the light blue sky now white with sunlight on the eastern horizon. A blanket of cloud drifted over Lake Pukaki. The crunch of our crampons in the badly frozen snow was suddenly interrupted

by a deep thud... a breaking snow bridge. A metre in front of me, Derek's legs were consumed by a small crevasse. He climbed out and continued. Ten metres on, the same sound came again, but this time I felt the thud under my own feet. The fear of god burst through my veins for a fraction of a second. Then my pack wedged me in the small crevasse as I fell through the disappearing ground. With both hands gripping my ice axe planted on the other side of the slot, I hauled my dangling legs from the blackness disappearing beneath.

"Right, that's it", I said. "We're roping up."

Roping up was a bad thing. Soon we passed the crevassed region of our traverse under the east face, but then encountered snow runnels about a metre deep, and two wide. These are caused by snow and ice breaking away from the cornices and sliding down faces of mountains, gouging a line in the snow as they fall. They also act as bowling alleys for ice and rock breaking away from the mountain. Placing faith in chance, we hoped that neither rock nor snow would come flying down the runnels while we were in them. But since we were roped I sometimes found myself waiting for Karl or Derek to surmount a runnel while I stood in an adjacent one.

We continued crossing the runnels in search of the couloir to ascend. But nothing seemed to be apparent. Our thinking was that the East Face Couloir continued through a rockband above us. It didn't. Fooled, we traversed way too far under the east face. Eventually a break in the rockband came. There we unroped and began to solo possibly a new route on The Footstool.

The Sun was beating down on the face, and the snow was no longer well frozen. Avalanche danger was increasing every minute. Small rocks "wizzed" past, the ice that once held them in place now melted. There was no retreat. The runnels crossed previously would now be alive with falling rock. We had to climb this hill so we could descend another route.

Soon we were on mixed climbing on rotten ice and rotten rock. New Zealand alpine rock is not called "Weet-Bix" for nothing. With ice axe in ice, and the other hand ungloved holding snowy rocks, I moved slowly and carefully through the rockband. Underneath me I could see the Stocking glacier. The large crevasse we had crossed at the beginning of the traverse now seemed much smaller, 300m below. The intensity of the activity prevented me from noticing that cloud had migrated up the valley. A sea of cloud now floated so the valleys no

longer seemed so deep. Silver reflections came from cloud tops a kilometre below.

With crampons gripping small lips in the rock, I pushed on. The screech of front point metal on rock came as my feet moved. I pulled on hand holds in the rock. Many came out. Some looked as though they might hold, so I used them.

Visible two hundred metres to our right was the couloir we were supposed ascend. But I had to keep concentrating on the activity. An activity more intense than the mind can imagine....*Ice axe in, hammer in, left crampon.....right.....hand hold.....*

The rotten rock finished and soon I was on snow again. The summit ridge was in view. Karl had just reached it 100m above. The snow dislodged by his crampons rained down.

Waiting on the summit ridge, Karl lowered a rope for me to clip-in. Getting over the cornice was not easy. One last step with my ice axe in the solid, frozen snow on the other side of the ridge. That side of the ridge was still in shadow, still cold and icy.

Firmly on the summit ridge, I was exhausted. My technique was so inefficient. I could hardly think or concentrate. All around became a blurr. Survival was all that mattered now. Just climb the last short part to the summit, and then descend via the Main Divide, I thought. Just keep concentrating

On the summit, I remember seeing the bank of cloud that had progressed up the valley spilling over onto the Copland valley. We had to descend fast now, more and more of our descent route was being engulfed in a white haze. Finding our way would be difficult.

The slopes we descended were heavy with their own moisture. Avalanche danger was extremely high. As I tried to hurry down a slope, I tripped on my right crampon and slipped. The world went into slow motion. I was falling now. For the first time all the self arresting practice had to work. Now I was sliding fast. Rolling, I began to dig in my ice axe. The slope was not icy, my speed was still manageable. But the wet slush meant my ice axe couldn't stop me. Only sheer mass would stop me... or create an avalanche. I dug my feet in as hard as I could. The wet snow meant my crampons were useless anyway. Grinding to a halt, I lay there for a minute, looking down at

the crevasse that had been waiting to stop my slide.

Continuing our descent, a shrund blocked our way. We could find no way of downclimbing. Abseiling would take time. Derek jumped, risking the possibility that the soft snow at the bottom was the overhanging lip of the shrund. Karl and I crossed our fingers. He landed safely. No major obstacles now lay between us and Sefton Bivy.



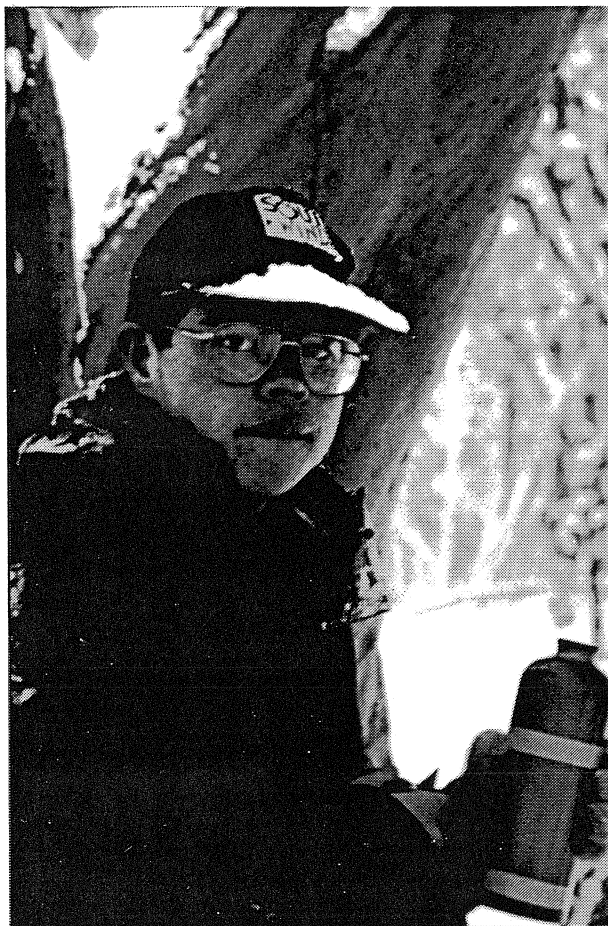
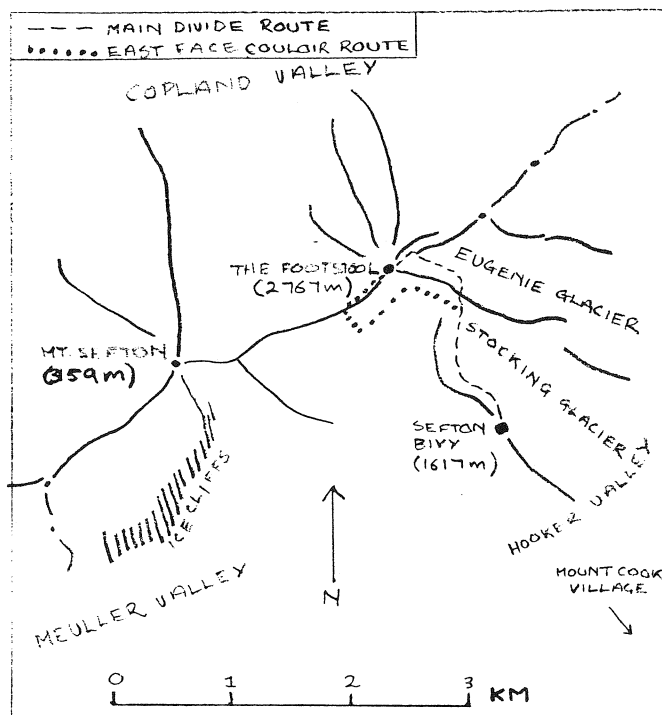
Lara Ross

ROGAINING RESULTS

Tracey Mitchell and Niki Munro won the Women's section of the Cathedral 6 hr. Cora and Jenny Wolsinkel came 4th.

Stuart and Niki came 2nd in the mixed division of the VicChamps 24hr. Results aren't back yet from the winter 6 hr in the Wombat State Forest. The next big event is the Australian Championships 24hr in Western Australia. The rogainers from Monash Uni Bushwalking Club are keen to make rogaining an intervarsity sport. If this goes ahead, we could regularly see rogaining on the MUMC calendar.

The Footstool area, Mt. Cook and Westland National Parks



Steve Curtain

MISSING:
This person last seen at the Clyde Hotel muttering something about the sexist connotations of his(?) name.



WHERE TO NOW?

Steve Curtain

How many people know that the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club (MUMC) is more than just a student club? Its current membership and activity is greater than ever, but this is only a small fraction of what MUMC has been over the years. On 9th October 1994, next year, the club reaches a milestone - where the grand age of 50 years is attained!

While the club and its members naturally experience huge variations in activity as a result of occasional lag in commitment due to work overload, exam periods and the decrease in skilled and experienced older members, some of this lack of commitment is purely on the shoulders of members. The club's constant buzz of activity is only - as it has always been - the result of dedication and commitment of all its constituents. Over the last several years, a tremendous amount of time and energy has been expended, with some excellent results to show for, such as increased numbers on club trips in all activities and the small but constant trickle of new leaders. The ability of the club to do these great things is not only of great benefit to all, but apart from this, is a lot of fun! Without the ongoing commitment (there's that word again) of such members, MUMC simply suffers: few trips

are run, potential members are turned away, and overall, there's lack of will to do something, compounding any further problems.

Apart from the steady flow of people - often many beginners - that join the club throughout the first half of each year, others join because they've heard of the rave comments like the great time they had on the weekend, or the huge pitch they did on a climb successfully or the time when the car broke down half way up a mountain road! There is little doubt that MUMC is one of the most active clubs around, with an absolute heap of places visited each year - the dark depths of Buchan Caves, the beautiful mountains of the Australian Alps in summer and winter, the glorious rock of Mt. Arapiles, the inland stretches of Eastern Gippsland, the dry but vibrant desert parks of the north west, the rushing and exciting rivers of NSW and Tasmania, and other innumerable crags, open plains, deep streams, cliffs and caves that so many of us love to get out there and "do our thing..."

Over the years, MUMC has been involved in some amazing feats and trips. Traditionally with a strong walking base, it was one of the earliest walking parties to attain Federation Peak's summit,

and has explored and established - in conjunction with other walking groups - routes and area descriptions of other ranges and remote peaks in Victoria specifically, but NSW and Tasmania as well. Through the years, MUMC has developed multiple skills, so that the current activities that people enjoy today, are the result of individuals "getting out there and doing it". Skill and experience have filtered down through the club as more experienced members pass on knowledge and the necessary skill for others to absorb and utilise, so that they too can pass on this knowledge to others. Although a rather informal working, it allows for a relaxed, enjoyable but effective environment for individuals to learn and above all, have a great time!

Other mentionable involvements includes the numerous forays of members to New Zealand, where in recent years, members have been gaining alpine / mountaineering experience, which for some, will be an initiation to climbing other alps around the world. MUMC had also been an active member in Search and Rescue, a component of Vicwalk, formerly known as the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, whereby MUMC's bush and mountain skills, as well as from numerous other walking clubs are offered collectively from Vicwalk (or the 'Federation') to the Victorian Police in aid of searches for individuals lost in bush regions. This association between MUMC and the 'Federation', up until recently had been fading as active involvement

dropped. Even so, MUMC needs to recover and maintain its ties - as an example, the last Federation club day that MUMC hosted was in 1975. These days hosted by a Victorian walking club does each year, allows for the strengthening of relations and enjoyment of other clubs.

Apart from this, MUMC has encouraged individuals to try activities that they would have not otherwise have had the chance to do. It has been on the basis of members actually 'doing' things and sharing these experiences, that has resulted in club members, over many years, developing and excelling in all club activities and being able to apply this knowledge in many practical ways. Of worthy note is the publishing streak that emerged in the late 1970's, resulting in many fine publications, such as "Mountaineer" journals and bushwalking and mountaineering equipment guides.

Members should realise what the club has been, what it is today, and what it can be in the future. It brings people together to experience an array of activities and to develop a spirit of adventure. MUMC needs the support of all its members - it needn't be a 'full-on' commitment, but a suggestion, an opinion or a hand here or there, would help the club to be what you want it to be. It's the support, and motivation of different people that have different qualities and offer different skills, no matter how small or big, that makes MUMC.

A HIMALAYAN SKIING EXPERIENCE

By Amber Mullens



Well, where do I start a story of MUMC Debacles International Inc.'s sojourn through India? The kayaking and rafting leg has already been written about by someone who wasn't even there. The eyes of Buddha must have relayed our adventures to him. Kjar Bjar's view of the third world, Cathy's solid speech demonstration, and the camel epic all need stories of their own - perhaps published in the next pirate Mountaineer. Should I gloat about seeing a wild tiger and an extremely rare asiatic lioness? No, for this Mountaineer, I have been told to write something serious to prove that members don't sit in the pub all the time. I've decided to limit myself to telling you about the ski trek Rohan and I did.

After a 14hr. "express, deluxe" bus trip from New Delhi, Rohan and I arrived in the Himalayan "resort" town of Manali (a groovy little village populated mostly by Tibetans), only to find that it still hadn't snowed. This was quite disheartening since we'd lugged 3 pair of skis around India. All that changed on New Year's Eve as the rich Indians from New Delhi trudged through the sludge to their parties, in designer saris with matching socks and sandals. Two days later, as the weather cleared and Asian MTV could once again be satellited into our hotel room, Rohan and I hired a van and driver and travelled north to the Solang Valley.

Rohan Shaap getting out of the snow cave... or is that a tent?
Photo: Amber Mullens

It started to snow heavily once again and even Rohan ("I've never needed to fit chains") Schaap pleaded with the driver to stop, assuring him we'd be fine to ski the rest of the way. After digging the van out of the snow drift it finally got bogged in, we skied to the tiny village of Solang - home of one of India's 4 ski resorts. Solang does indeed have one tow, it's about 50m in length, runs along flat ground and probably hasn't been used since it was built. We spent some days here practising telemarks and eating hot chips, before setting forth on a trek to the lake, Beas Kund, at the foot of Hanuman Tibba (6400m).

Unusual as it was for a Debacles trip, everything went well. The snow was dry and powdery and the scenery was spectacular with the mountains rising all around the valley. Anyway, I could go on with superlatives and cliches forever but I've got a word limit. At some point, we met the Indian Army based at Dhundi (a little further along the track) in case China invaded. The army thought we were mental and tried to persuade us to stop at Dhundi. We said we would but skied straight through it, only the weather or the terrain could stop us from reaching Beas Kund. Unfortunately, they did. The sky clouded over and we were forced to camp half a kilometer short of our goal. Overnight it snowed nearly 2m. I spent the night knocking snow off the Macpac and stamping it down, partly because I was starting to develop pulmonary oedema and couldn't sleep, but mostly because Rohan was sure the tent would collapse and he was too lazy to do it himself. There were also avalanches crashing down all the time, but we were secure in the knowledge of previous avalanche experience (sarcasm).

By the time the weather cleared, we were able to ski out in snow that was often around our waists in depth. We ran into the Indian Army once again. They were on their way to look for us because they were sure we'd been covered by an avalanche. We don't know how they expected to find us under tonnes of snow if that had of been the case. Unfortunately for us, the army now saw itself as our saviours and insisted that we come and eat at their base, and partake in the obligatory Indian photo session. Eventually we made it back to Solang without being killed by an avalanche, dying of hypothermia or AMS, or even being eaten by a bear. The following day, we skied back to Manali and drunk a well earned beer or two. The day after, we left the beautiful Himalayas for the nightmare that is the rest of India.

See what mountaineers do away from Uni..... caught in action and preserved on film, at the

MUMC annual

PIE & SLIDE NIGHT



Thurs. 9th Sept. 6:00 pm
at the board room.



Meat and vege pies for tea, and fruit pies for desert.
Please BYO plate, mug and cutlery.

Slides can be entered
in the following
categories.....

people in the wilderness
personalities
landscape
action
flora + fauna

Also enter a
photograph collage....

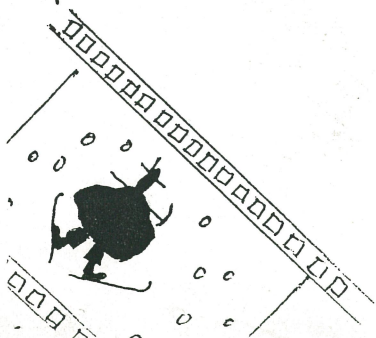
To be judged

Everyone welcome.....

be won!

Great prizes to

Cost \$5



Any questions/queries - see Nicki (Ph 3751181).