

MOUNTAINEER

December 1993

The magazine of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club

MUMC AT MOONARIE

Spider, Sue, Alex Dagmar and Matt

Scene: The inside of a tent with Matt Alex and Dagmar all but hidden by their sleeping bags

Day 1 (of 11)

Alex: Matt, tell me about the glorious weather

Matt: It's drizzling. Grey

Dagmar: Oh well, it'll clear up by tomorrow.

Day 2

Matt: It's raining again, Alex.

Alex (diving for the Tim Tams): Doesn't this place have only ten days of rain a year? It has to get better tomorrow

Day 3

Alex: And today?

Matt: Pretty shitty.

Alex: It can't go on for more than three days in a row, can it?

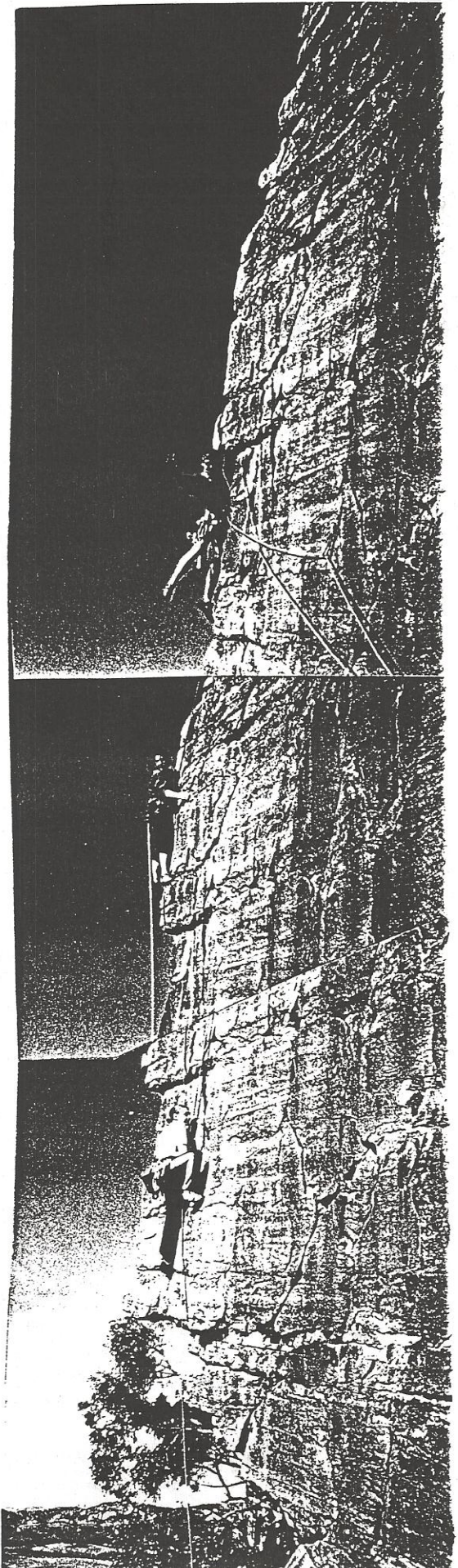
Day 4

The spine-chilling looks from under the hoods of the sleeping bags around Dagmar quickly silence her commentary on the weather.

Day 5

Alex: Where are the £\$!\$%!& kayaks?

You get the idea, I'm sure. Five consecutive days of miserable drizzle interspersed with rain didn't exactly enthuse us five climbers. We were desperate for rockclimbing after departing a sodden Melbourne with visions of the Arapiles of South Australia, where it was rumoured to rain only 10 days of the year: Moonarie. We all know that feeling that comes with any outdoor sport at the wrong time of year- there's never the right amount of rain or snow. Fortunately, an almost infinite supply of firewood and pancakes did much to keep hopes alive as our camp slowly sunk into the red mud. After five days of pitter patter, port ant patience- we had all learnt enough of climbing theory to last a lifetime: Alex still knows the 120 page guidebook off by heart and Spider filled January in my diary with force diagrams of every possible belay- loading configuration. The sixth day dawned with clear blue skies and the following week provided superb climbing on really



Moonarie is purely and simply about adventure. There is no water (except for rain!), the nearest pub is many kilometres of dirt roads away and every morning starts with a steep forty minute walk to get to the base of the cliffs. Climbers consider anything more than a two minute walk to be pretty hard bushwalking, but after being stuck in the tents for a week, we didn't mind at all. Almost every climb on the cliffline is multi-pitched of about 100m in length and there is very little in the way of low teen classics. It provides a fantastically isolated atmosphere; for the most part, we were the sole inhabitants of the campsite. If you can't stand crowds, this is the place to go!

In the clear but cool weather (typically 16 degrees) we zeroed in on classics in the sun (a prerequisite for winter climbing, along with thermals). This resulted in a wall (35m) with a number of middle/ high teen starred routes. We also spent two days on the *Great Wall*, a slightly overhanging 50m high by 60m wide slice of rockclimbing paradise with the guidebook proclaimed to be "Moonarie's answer to Arapiles". The easiest line of the *Great Wall* is the outside arete, *Outside Chance*, 16, with the main wall climbs consisting of a network of fingernail-sized cracks at grade 19 and higher. We were determined to at least attempt one of these multi-pitch main wall climbs, which are the very essence of Moonarie.

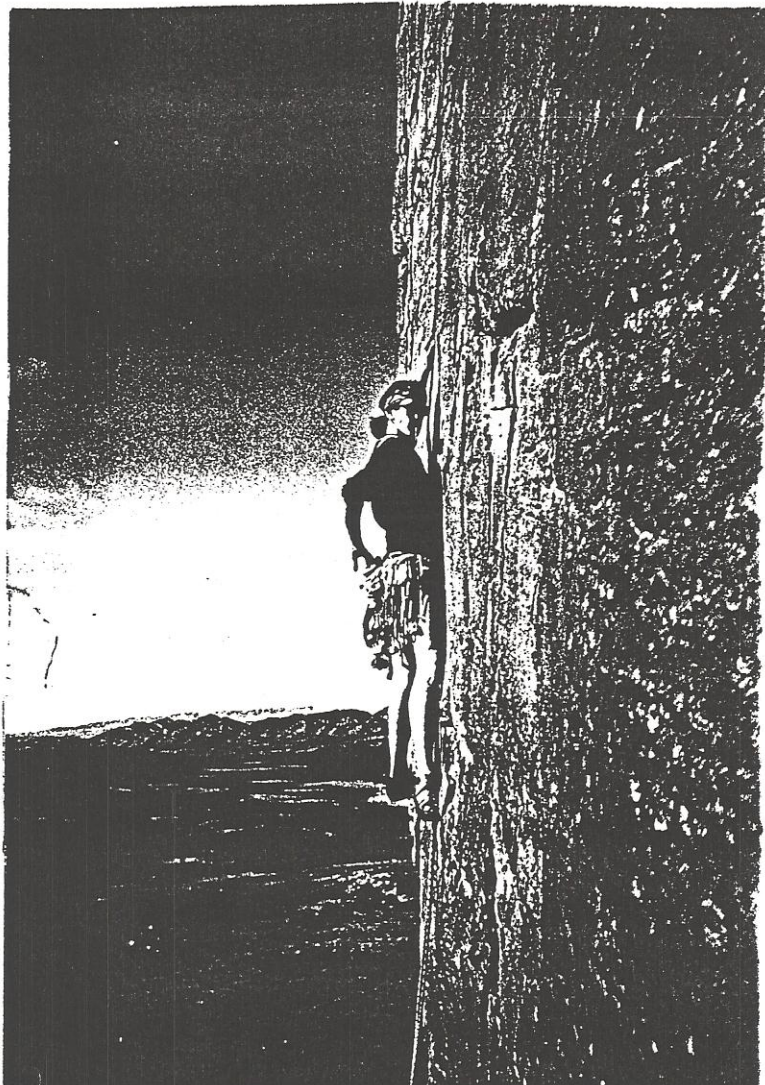
Getting to Moonarie was a debacle. You can imagine the confusion when a mix up in the arranged meeting place resulted in Matt, Alex, Dagmar driving around Adelaide looking for Sue, who was in fact waiting at Port Augusta. The unroadworthy rust bucket, Spot, which made the 2000+ km round trip was scarier than most of the climbing we did. Five people, food for two weeks, climbing gear and tank of water are definitely more than the Datsun 120Y was designed to carry. Despite rust holes big enough to qualify as a sun roof and a cacophony of rattles, squeals and grinding noises, Spot held together for more than 1200 km until a particularly bad stretch of road took the exhaust off. A few hundred kilometres further on, Spot scared us half to death when the accelerator got stuck down and the tailshaft fell off. We didn't have enough Trangia straps to fix the tailshaft.

A few hair-raising moments gave the climbing trip some excitement: Alex took a spectacular eight metres earthward plunge which yanked his surprise belayer right off the belay ledge on an overhanging cliff. Spider did what was possible only the second ascent of one of the first routes ever climbed in Moonarie. The grassy eight grade climb in a seldom visited part of Moonarie had a few hidden surprises: at regular intervals Spider boomed 'BELOW!' as head-sized blocks hurtled down to Sue.

The highlight of the trip, our attempt on *Downwind of Angels*, didn't happen until the last day at Moonarie. Dagmar and I were itching for a challenging end to our stay and Alex didn't need much persuasion to cling to such a photogenic piece of rock (see photo). DOA was certainly worth every one of its 3 stars. Wary of previous knitting exercises, our long-limbed climber started the climb on twin ropes. Two metres up the face were all that was left of Monash Uni's aborted attempt. Belaying Alex had me alternately tense with the expectation of a fall: "Slack on pink! Slack Slack! Clipping-" and breathing a quiet sigh of relief"- clipped". Alex stood on small flakes of rocks and balanced his way higher and higher. The climb required balance and reach, rather than arm strength, something which rather worried the shortest climber in MUMC (yours truly). Occasionally curses buzzing down from above indicated that Alex was enjoying himself immensely.

Seconding was made easier by the jiggling rope shaking some of the protection loose. I climbed, looking down at the jumble of fallen boulders below and imagined what leading the climb was like: "If I let go with one hand now, how long can I hang on while trying to find a nut placement?" Not long. A movement caught my eye. Looking around as best I could with three fingers jammed in a reasonably secure crack, I spotted the white underside of an eagle gliding lazily past the face, no more than ten metres from us. A quiet 'wow' from the belay ledge above confirmed the sighting.

The first belay ledge was wide and offered an excellent view. After swapping gear with me, Alex stepped out from the ledge back onto the face, which was now overhanging. He placed his first protection early, and I settled back and stared over the brown sheep country towards the Flinders Ranges.



Two toy tourist buses were parked near Arkaroo rock, an army of colourful German ants screamed out of them towards the cave painting at Arkaroo. I closed my eyes slightly and saw a dreamtime serpent of geological proportions sliding away from us in that range. Belay ledges are a marvellous place for a little daydreaming.

'Psing!' I locked off and looked around, expecting to see that Alex's first piece of protection had worked its way loose. But that wasn't the real problem. Something else was wrong: Alex's face fell right past me. For a second or two, I wondered why he wasn't stopping: the violent jerk on the rope didn't come; he just kept falling down towards Dagmar and the ground. Had Alex forgotten to tie the rope? A wave sprang up in the red rope, rushed towards me and struck my hand—WHAM— I was ripped up and off the belay ledge.

Silence. I looked up. I was hanging in free space, the taut red rope ran five metres up and right to Alex's last bit of gear, well sort of where he'd been climbing. Following the rope up, through a karabiner and then straight down from there, I realised that Alex was hanging some distance below me. He found a foothold, pushed himself over towards the climb and climbed a few moves to take the weight off the rope so that I could unlock my sight plate and get back down onto the ledge.

After rejoining me on the ledge for a brief rest and re- psyching. Alex started on a second attempt of the pitch. Around the area where a loose hold caused the fall on his first attempt, Alex placed an extra piece of protection before making the move, and pulled up carefully to the distinct crack line and moved quickly to finish the climb. The top of the climb was deliciously exposed. While Dagmar followed up the second pitch, I lay flat on my back on block warmed by the afternoon's sun, quite content to watch our last Moonarie day fade.

For those considering a trip to Moonarie

The best time to climb in Moonarie is undoubtedly on either side of Summer- in Spring or Autumn. Moonarie Summers are scorchingly hot, with 35+ degree days being the norm.

as we found out, Moonarie Winters are equally inhospitable, except for those wanting alpine conditions. Take plenty of water- there isn't any there apart from a small tank halfway up a cliff. This tank probably doesn't even last through the first week of Summer. Bivying at top camp, thus eliminating the long walk up, would be the way to go in fine weather, though carting up water might be a problem. Whatever you do, this is not a place for beginners and to get the most out of it, leaders should be leading at least 16- preferably 19. Most of all, make sure you have heaps of time to spare: Moonarie is addictive, and if the weather turns sour (which it shouldn't in Spring/ Autumn), you'll probably want to wait it out. It's only rained more than three days in a row once so far. When we were there.

M.A.D. (Matt, Alex, Dagmar)

WHY?

I sit at a desk cluttered with diagrams, books and scientific papers. Yet despite the academic pursuit to find out why it all exists- why the world is the way it is, why we have law in this country, why the market behaves it does- we are all bound by a common twine. Whether we know the answer "why" or not, we all gain great delight in just being in the wild; the raging rivers, the huge, glaciated mountains, the vast floodplains and forested hills, and the miles of sandy beaches

I am so often puzzled by questions people ask me about mountaineering. The most common of which is a simple shake of the head and a quick but straight "why?". I am puzzled by this because it misses the entire point of "why". The reason "why" is because in my rockclimbing, my bushwalking, my mountaineering, the question "why?" never comes into my head.

There need be no reason we must explain in the pursuit to climb mountains, paddle rivers, penetrate caves or ski the slopes. There need be no explanation of a drive entirely based on the will to achieve the highest goals and to exert our freedom. There need be no reason to pass the bounds of physical and psychological certainty in the active wilds of this incredible planet. The desire to be free among the violent rumbling mountain ranges of the world, the quiet rolling hills of our vast homeland, the crashing waves and clean sand of our beaches does not require justification.

Within these places exists something we feel but cannot explain, despite our intimate knowledge of the physical and psychological- it is as simple as that.

Soon I will leave MUMC. I have greatly enjoyed the past five years in the mountaineering club. I could never hope to repay what the club has given me. I can only encourage others to contribute now what they see as being good for the club. In February, I shall leave Melbourne to live in Perth. Thank you to all those with whom I have been involved with in MUMC. Cheers.

Andrew Roberts
President.

Kinglake Bushwalking Daytrip
Sunday, 19 September, 1993

After some initial confusion, Tim McIver managed to get three other MUMC members together for a beginners' trip to Kinglake for the day. After enjoying a beautiful Saturday, all involved knew that on Sunday it would piss down - and it did. However, this did not deter Tim, Alan, Limor and myself from doing the easy 14.5km. schlog through the muddy track along Running Creek to Masons Falls. Arriving at the picnic grounds, Limor found that she had acquired a friend along the way - a leech, engorged with her vital fluid, was on her stomach. A hasty body check revealed that all four of us were carrying the parasites, although no one else got "chewed".

On the subject of chewing, it must be said that we probably gained more weight than we lost on this hike. Tim made Trangia - style pancakes, Alan lugged his glass coffee plunger along to make some real java, and copious amounts of pate, bread rolls and chocolate cake were also consumed. I don't know if this qualifies as real bush tucker, but the flock of crimson rosellas that descended on us en masse seemed to think so. These birds were obviously familiar with tourists, as they ate out of our hands and wouldn't get off Limor's head. Needless to say, they left their inevitable calling card. They shat on Alan's knife and fork. We took this as a hint to move on, and got back to Melbourne around 6.30pm.

- James Golden



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Extract from New Herbalist, vol. XIX, 3
Aug. 1993.

Causes of the expanding Universe uncovered.

Scientific discovery heralds new
understanding of the Cosmos.

Four years ago when a recreational physicist uncovered some anomalies in his calculations, little did he know that they would herald a new understanding of the origins of the cosmos. The subsequent investigation by an undergraduate at Melbourne University has led to the discovery of a 'mountain seed' universe. This universe exists independently to our own, and indeed was the direct cause of the big bang to which we, until recently, believed was the origin of the universe.

The two universes, perhaps more correctly named biverses, only interact in a very specific way, and they have very different characters. In the mountain seed universe, there exists no matter as such, and indeed most of the laws of physics do not seem to apply. What exists in this biverse are discrete pockets of energy; remarkably similar in behaviour to solitrons here on earth. They were formed along with the universe in the mountain seed universe's big bang - about 17 billion years ago. These discrete pockets of energy are what interact with our biverse - they form mountains when they interact with our own, hence the name 'mountain seeds'.

The mountain seed universe is finite, and has ceased to expand rapidly; it is slowing. According to calculations¹ 'our' universe will overtake it in size in approximately 500 million years. This

will be known as the mountain event horizon. With there being no mountain seeds for our universe hereafter, the universe will be flat. This, however, will not mean two-dimensional, it will mean that landscape will be non-mountainous. Three dimensions can still comfortably exist, as this is not dictated by another universes interaction.

In a theory which draws from the Gaia hypothesis, it has been shown that humans are able to sense the presence of a mountain seed. In a mountain environment, the biorhythms of the mountain seed universe and the biorhythms of the visible universe cancel out and they create a sense of karma, found nowhere else.² In non-mountainous terrain, one only feels our universe's biorythm, and this creates a subconscious unbalance; only distinguishable in its absence.

Continental drift is caused by the plates being balanced at the edge and unbalanced in the middle, thus they appear to move. The theory also explains the formation of solar systems. When a mountain seed collides with our own universe, there springs into being a mountain. This mountain will attract matter, and indeed other mountains, and eventually enough to form a planet. If a group of planets suddenly move into vicinity of each other, then they will suddenly attract matter to their gravitational centre, and the speed with which the particles collide creates the friction and the heat which starts off the nuclear process.

Further research is required by the department to see if there are any other universes which act upon our own in the way that the mountain seed universe does.

DANPUB.

¹ Calvin and Woodforde, *Journal of Cosmology*, vol. 78, no14. p 255.

² Documented in *Possible Causes and Effects of Mountain Karma*, By Harry J.Korlech. Prescott Books, London, 1981.





And on the seventh day the Lord said "Let there be Mt. Feathertop, and let descendants of my deciples climb it every year at midnight on the first weekend after the full moon in August."

In this recently discovered and rarely discussed quotation from the Great Deceiving Manuscript certain things are always assumed:

- 1 - Insanity.
- 2 - Dinner suits/dresses.
- 3 - Alcohol
- 4 - Gaffer tape (for gagging obnoxious drunken first year Med. students)
- 5 - Snow.

The last point was taken on pure theological belief and has now spawned atheist traits in Stuart Richardson, Dan Colborne and Michael Ratcliffe. The existence of a God would almost have certainly be proved if there were to have been snow at the second highest skiing spot in the state. No God would have let these three hardy souls lug the heaviest pairs of skis and ski boots on the market up a mountain in the middle of the night to find a barren vista at the top. To further compound the agony, there was thirty centimetres of good snow at Lake Mountain - a good half kilometre lower and four hours closer to Melbourne.

"I am the music man and I come from down your way,
"And I can plaaay,"

"What can you play?"

"I can play the Russell Smith: Where am I, Where am I, Where am I...."

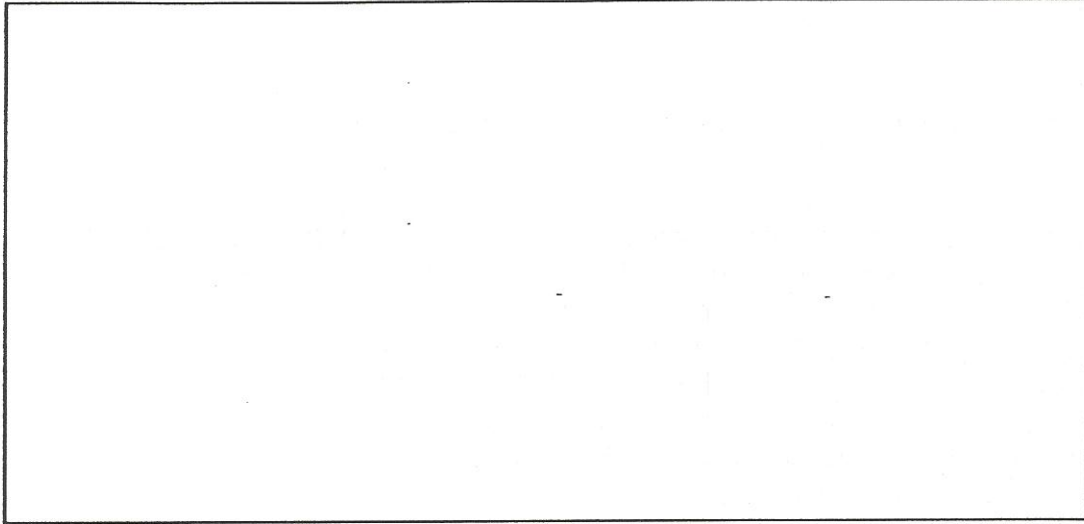
Most species of Earth dwelling mammals have come up with an excuse for living. The three toed sloth, for example, claims that if it did not exist then David Attenborough would have nothing to film, and Channel Nine's Our World programme would have nothing to show. All species have perfectly good reasons-except one. It is a homo sapien variant called Russellus Smithus. As a species it suffers from a lot of spatial disorientation and confusion leading to memory loss. It is a profoundly genuine creature and those around it are sometimes grateful for its presence, yet there are times when even the best value judges have mixed feelings about it.

Especially when these judges are searching for this spatially disoriented creature at 3.00 am in the morning in a gully at the bottom of North West Spur.

It is possible that this type of spatial disorientation is contagious, for the leader of the whole trip (known affectionately as Soggy) was seen to be leading all those tired weary walkers on the summit who wanted to go back to the hut off down the wrong spur... Fortunately this was temporary and all was rectified.

And there was much partying and consumption of food. And in the evening all those who went to bed were kept awake by joviality. And in the morning those who had drunk to excess were sore. And a foot of snow had fallen. And it is about now that one realises that those who created the Bible were very clever at using the word

'and'. And Dan Stu and Michael went skiing. Doesn't the word 'and' appear in the Bible 46 000 times? And after this the group climbed to the summit (maybe to do with certain people's fantasy to be on the top of Mount Everest in a spa bath with certain illegal substances.) Below is a photographic reproduction of the view from the top of Mt. Feathertop.



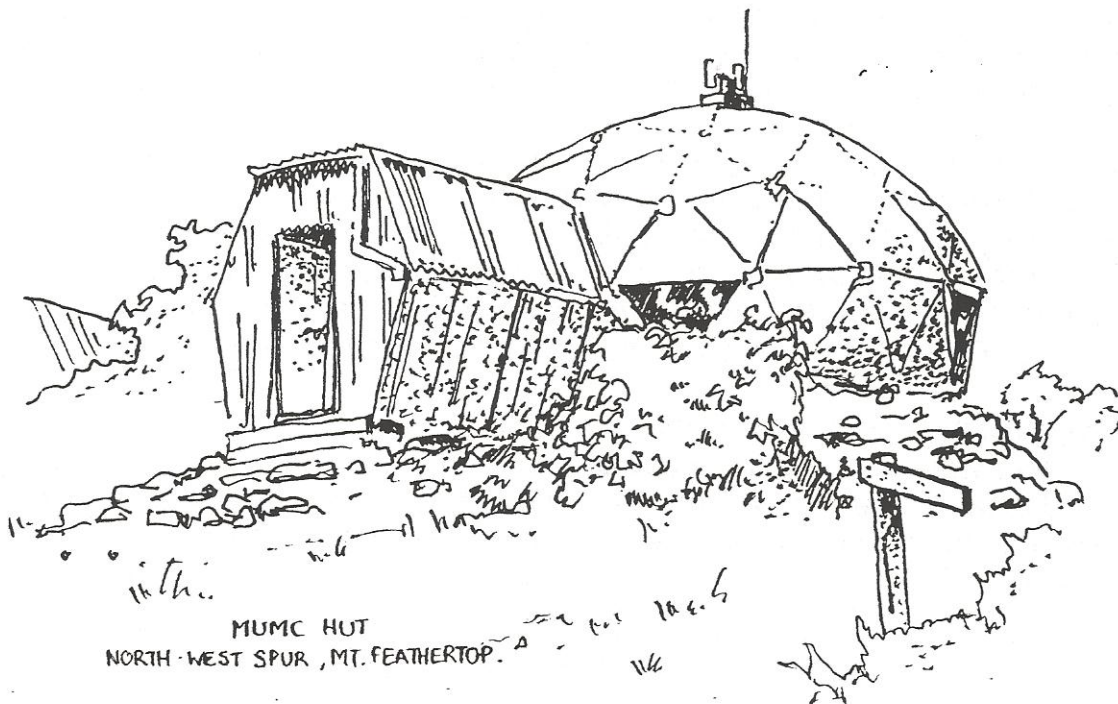
ABOVE: A photograph taken from the summit of Mount Feathertop.

After the descent the traditional gathering in Porepunkah pub, followed by a photographic collage in Milawa in which most of the drivers got a free photo taken from this roadside camera. Stay tuned to the clubroom walls for the photographic collage and any news on group discounts for speeding fines.

Suggested improvements for next year:

- 1 - Snow.
- 2 - Navigational Skills.
- 3 - "More Beer".
- 4 - Get an official writer for the trip report.

DANIEL



BOGONG XC SKI TRIP- PART II
July 13th- 16th
"Bogong lives and breathes..."

SATURDAY: 50 cms of fresh snow on the Alps.

SUNDAY:..oh yes, sunshine but melting, sapping away; car situation still very indefinite...desperation, anxiety.

MONDAY: car situation getting better, but still no guarantee.

TUESDAY:We've got a car! Thanks Tim- you generous soul. We're firing, well nearly. Start the car, sounds fine..clutch in and we're off.

Putt, putt. Silence. Try again and again. Err, maybe one more time.

Miraculously, the car makes it to the clubrooms, in weather that begins and looks decidedly suspect. Three quarts of an hour later and I realise that I've been beginning in third gear- the truth hurts...



On Bogong Summit

Two thirty in the early morn' sees us ascend the Staircase Spur (no moon). we see the previous MUMC group's car (Mt. Bogong was a bit of a mecca at this time with nine OXO cubans on the mountain)- it still looked safe , hubcaps still intact. Luckily no rain as forecast, but a waft of unusually warm air escorted us as we climbed higher.

Alas, beginning to think that most trips begin in darkness, end in darkness. It was now 6:00 pm. Ten hours ago, we had Bivouac Hut: after four hours sleep, some nourishment and half way through lunch, the "first" jolly MUMC summiteers are met- Steve, Nicki, Mike and Lara. Bit wet guys? Nicki's eye looked quite impressive with bruising and scratches from an epic fall. These guys had just come down from the summit where apparently, "it was a bit blowy". The summit plateau of Bogong had brooded for most of that morning, as swirls of cloud and spindrift blew haphazard across the crest and eddied down steep, rocky gullies.

Having come this far, we fine walkers- Jenny, Tim, Pam and Steve- the second MUMC group, continued onward, spirits high and bodies keen. A memorial cairn appeared as a haze in the white out. The inscription on it read: "Sacred to the memory of GEORGINE GADSDEN, EDWARD NEAVE WELCH, JOHN J. McCRAE who perished here during a blizzard about August 2nd, 1943."

As we ascended the spur, the white out enveloped us silencing discussion and allowing only wandering thoughts to ourselves. As the treeline had been left 100 or so metres below, deep snow greeted us. As the guys had said it was indeed, a little "blowy"- anyone could have mistake this to more of a parachute jump rather than a scramble up a snowy slope. On the higher section of the defined spur, both Welch's and McCrae's bodies were found, exhausted by the bitter cold and fallen victim to alcohol consumption. The search party could not find Gadsden though- where was she? Several days later, she was found several hundred feet down the adjacent gully, her body having literally frozen stiff and slid down the slope.

The snowpole line was bypassed beyond the Gadsden Cairn, and we attained the summit crest short after. Ah, saved by the compass bearing and soon, an Alpine Track marker was spotted, affixed to an ever reliable snowpole. It's strangely discomfoting to realise that a

bearing must be trusted in the worst conditions. Darkness had come quickly past 5:00 pm. Surprisingly, Hells Gap did not live up to its namesake, but progress was nonetheless slow as backtracking became one of the evening's more frequent activities: icy conditions, windblown, very ordinary.

Settling into a hearty serve of tea later on, and the walk/ski/slide into the hut became the night's conversation shared with its other occupants. One or two MUMC people still lingered. Pete and John, as well the introduction of two other fine lads, Glen and Mark. Awaking mid morn' with a magic fire burning but still lethargic, activity was very, very casual- adjusting to the climate of the hut inner from the bliss of the sleeping bag wasn't too hard to handle, though the sensation of feet on floorboards is a little reminder of the Antarctic conditions lurking below. Tim loved his sleep. "Tim. get outta bed." The 'boys', Mark and Glen, made a mockery of what we considered to be food. The bastards had cuisine had written all over his faces, decadence dribbling from their mouths- a food drop had been made before they settled in and now they were feasting on real pancakes with real pancake mixture from the bottle, fine salami and tasty cheese grilled on mountain bread as well as other delights. Tim thought he'd pig out on his peanut butter, and really showed 'em.



Stepping out into the alpine glory, the attire was most appropriate for the day's frenzy of activity. Vomit coloured shorts(the ones that went out of style a couple of years ago but who cares), thermals, sunnies, t-shirts and caps. The day or what remained of it, entailed touring down Camp Valley to visit Howman's Falls, which fell over 70m, impressive from all angles of perspective; flanks of jagged metamorphic rocks drop steeply beyond. Our arrival back to the hut coincided with nightfall and the introduction of another group of four. These guys were gear freaks all the way: full footfangs, mountaineering ski bindings etc. etc. Losers. I'm sorry guys but there seems a distinct lack of something... something called snow. Apart from their slight overkill for the situation, they weren't too bad- for some reason Pam was off her rocker- the conversation was a juxtapose of mumbles, short comments, ridiculous stories including jocks for some reason and short hysterical fits of laughter: all of which Pam had a hand in- very bizzare. Meanwhile, Jenny was very cool, soaking in the atmosphere, while Tim seemed to have made a good friend. Me? I just watched. It's great to know that most people get their kicks out of the simplest things in life. Take for example, Glen. He was getting his jollies out of making unusual noises in the sleeping bag when settling for bed; no further explanation needed (ed: sounds like you found the perfect match). Hey, you can't blame him really- suppose we had to get our kicks somehow.

The night hinted at a calm clear morning- if it wasn't snowing, at least the weather was fine. I awoke, dazed and fumbled with the zip. Almost immediately, I was aware of the fact that today- after some very ordinary weather- was a day we deserved. Peeking out the window from the top bunk, the scene was calm. Jenny was out somewhere, pottering about. Contorted *pauciflora* glowed in the first rays. The

snow was soft orange. The sky was slowly adjusting to a pale blue. No wind. Thud! Feet on the floor. Ah, the unmistakable feeling again. In the morning air, the view was clear, mountain and valley features were sharp, no haze, no cloud to obscure. The "sleeping lion" lay peacefully on the far north eastern horizon- Mt. Jagungal, northern Snowy Mountain. What a view...

Confined to the sheltered valley below the past day, we now trudged gradually upward. Despite the huffing and puffing up icy slopes toward the summit plateau, all were pretty hyped to be back 'up' here again. A full rucsac never changes, always doing its best to hinder progress. Small crops of heathland could be seen exposed everywhere, evidence of the poor winter's cover- surely it had to get better than this. Still, once the crest was reached, all we had to do was shuffle our feet in some sort of rhythm- the views would do the rest. Ice. Ice. Ice. Sometimes it was faster to take off the skis and walk. It was so hard and icy that the crust supported weight of skier and rucsac with little fuss. However, this also made for more slips.

The scene of Bogong's gullies and huge rolling summit, now fully visible, dwarfed us as we continued onward to the summit cairn. The natural high was exhilarating and made all the more seemingly surrealistic when a small plane swooped over the ridge. It appeared to miss the huge summit cairn by only a few metres but of course was a good 30 to 40 m above. From our vantage point, the perspective was deceiving. In one long sweeping arc, the plane passed overhead, its shadow cast a blue on the extensive snowfield. We waved at the occupants, though soon they dropped to the valley and from view, as the drone of the plane faded. Then, only silence again. Mark and Glen had reached the summit, appearing as small figures, while we were some distance off yet but within sight.

As we drew near the cairn, some freak skied off the slope-
unidentifiable- with only the bare essentials. Who in the hell was
this loser? After a quick bolt out to the West Peak, the 'boys'
returned to watch us finish lunch and prepare for the return trip.
Like all great cliché endings, the cloud truly parted off the west
side of the spur, to reveal the depths of Mountain Creek and something
to think about....

Steve Curtain



Bogong Revisted.



Candid photo of Jenny, Pam, Tim and Steve-
totally oblivious of any camera

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY RUN A COMPLETE DEBACLE

Débâcle (dābah'-) n. Sudden and overwhelming collapse, rush, stampede. [Fr., = 'break-up of ice in river']

Oxford Illustrated Dictionary

Débâcle (dābah'-) n. Complete and utter mayhem, usually involving many people, fast water, big cliffs or hot wax.

OXO derivation.

Debacles are and have been an effective and pleasurable way in which people have managed their time in MUMC for numerous years. Generally those that have organised effective debacles are generally very well experienced and specialised in this field. Take for example a particular trip to the Howqua River:

Scene: Howqua River put in point

Members Present: 2 elderly members (official debaclers), 1 vaguely experienced first year, 3 raw beginners (e.g. have never paddled white water before)

Ambitions: Paddle the Howqua in flood

Results: All 3 beginners swim within 50 metres. End result – Three members have to carry boats up vertical cliff for 500 metres. Rest of weekend spent with beginners thanking other members for the great time "because we didn't drown".

Moral: Always take exceedingly inexperienced people on your trip – especially if a) it is an advanced trip and or b) they have a car.

Talking of cars, the following extract is a classic debacle:

Scene: Mitchell River Road

Members Present: numerable (e.g. 3 cars)

Ambition: Get to the top of the Mitchell

Results: 2 cars go to the top, 1 car goes to Dargo, about another 40 kms along the road. Only meet up with rest of party 1 minute before they were to give up and paddle the river without them.

Moral: Never tell anyone where to stop and meet up, and then if told, don't bother to stop.

Stopping, interesting concept I must say:

Scene: Pull out point of Thomson River

Members Present: lots (including one hapless first year who happens to drive an underwater modified ZZZ Gemini).

Ambition: go on trip and not to use spare tyre (because it was different to all the others)

Results: get a flat tyre at start of dirt track and drive for ten km on this track with flat. Proceed

not to believe anyone that tells you have a flat when you arrive at the end. End result – have 3 flats on your car in the next week and 2 on your bike.

Moral: Never take your car on a trip, especially if a person with the initials RAK comes along.

That particular club member with the initials RAK can easily influence a debacle:

Scene: Midnight Ascent

Members Present: 36 of the most esteemed members of the club, and RAK

Ambition: To have a huge time

Results: One particular member gets so drunk he has to be tied up and gagged, people seriously considering throwing him out into the snow for the night. Generally destroys all semblance of a good night for anyone. End results – particular member vows to never drink again (lasts two nights), also particular member spends \$50 shouting drinks at Porepunkah to redeem himself. Also to improve on the weekend, a double debacle – 1 official debacler to get themselves lost for 3 hours on the way up the ridge, leaving his group no longer as the sunrise group, but the sunset group.

Moral: Never take particular member on trip where alcohol may be present. Also beware of official debaclers.

And so, here I have tried to provide you with a few tips on how to run a debacle (and how to avoid your trip going beyond that). Remember there are innumerable manners in which people can run debacles, group debacles are always popular – such as every car on the Midnight Ascent getting flashed by speed cameras ("Could we please get a group discount on those fines, Officer?"). As long as you are original, tell everyone about it afterwards and you have a great time then the sky is the limit – well maybe further, check Climbing Folder for a base jumping trip to the Moon.....

Have a good time,

One particular member.....



Leadership Weekend

What makes a true leader?

Bugged if any of us know, but the thirty-odd (and we do mean odd) MUMC members who did attend the leadership weekend (22-25 July) in Greendale did manage to amuse themselves. Hell, they might have actually learned a few things as well.

The weekend began on Friday night as Stuart Dobbie had us ponder what made for a good trip, a good leader, etc. This more-or-less preliminary discussion kept us up till 1:00am, way past our bedtime. At this point all the unlucky plebs had to go out to their freezing cold tents, whilst the leaders exercised their autocratic control by monopolising the warm, dry house. A few of us underlings managed to weasel our way into staying inside near the fireplace (some of us had an excuse - my bloody tent blew down in the wind & was stuffed thereafter).

The next day began at eight am with discussions on geography, past trip experiences, and navigation skills. Of course, this led to the inevitable orienteering/rogaining expedition, in teams of four, in the Wombat State Forest. All in all, only one group found all the markers; most of us were completely flummoxed over the whereabouts of marker #2. In fact, Jenny Wolswinkel's group spent the entire afternoon in search of the hidden orange bastard, wandering in circles on an eminence they disgustingly dubbed "Wanker's Ridge".

The disappointed were lucky enough to catch a ride with Stuart to the rendezvous point at Lerderderg Gorge State Park (if you call cramming nine people into a car made for four lucky) only to find that the next mission was to retrieve the markers in what was by then a benighted Wombat State Forest. Somehow, the consensus was that finding the bloody things in the dark was easier than finding them in daylight.

Back at the camp, the evening was frittered away with odd games. In an age of increasingly deadly and contagious diseases, the sight of 30 people playing "suck and blow" with a sputum-saturated MUMC card was something close to surreal. The best and biggest "sucker" turned out to be Alan, whose cheeks are reputed to still be recovering.

On Sunday, from 8am to 3pm, we learned what to do and what not to do with snakebites, bee stings, fractures, hypothermia, and other fun ailments in a first aid course. Next time you're lying half dead on a track in the bush and a club member mutters "D.R.A.B.C.", you know you're in good hands (or so we hope). In a final test of our co-operation skills, or perhaps in a fit of sadism, all participants were grouped into teams of five and sent out to overcome such obstacles as an imaginary electrified fence, help a multiply wounded Steve Curtain, retrieve Stu Dobbie's lost keys, and cross a creek blindfolded - without getting wet.

After this, the evening degenerated into a contest over who could make the most bizarre noises with their bodies (or, for that matter, someone else's body). No outright winners were chosen, but as everyone piled into their cars for the ride back home, the only sound to be heard over the hum of human voices was a chorus of farting, squeaking, popping sounds. Is this the stuff a leader is made of?!! Well, not exactly. But making sure everyone has a good time is probably one of the most important things a trip leader can do.

- James Golden

TRIPS IN THE NEAR FUTURE

Rockclimbing at Grampians (all standards). Dec 28- Jan 2.
Contact Stuart Dobbie: 387 9558 or 736 8031

Bushwalking in Namadgi National Park. (Jan- Feb)
Contact Alan Daly: 349 7103 or 376 2811

Daytrips around Victoria.
Contact Simon Collins: 598 6894

How do you get four sane people to sit with their chins on their knees for five hours and to then perform gruelling weight training for another four hours? Call them skiers, say, "There's snow on them-there hills" and you've got the answer. Of course, calling them 'sane' is debatable.

The above mentioned four, inmates of the Cardigan Street home for the skiing insane, escaped from their respective cells and eluded capture for three days, from the twenty-third to the twenty-fifth of June. Chasing that elusive first glimpse of snow-covered mountains, they procured a small white Corolla and set out at dusk among the traffic and trucks. This daring escapade, all four declare was to find snow, but on further questioning agreed their objective was Cope hut, Falls Creek.

Oncoming traffic may have been slightly startled by the strange apparition appearing out of the smoggy Hume highway gloom. It's not every day that one glimpses a coupe wallowing under a plethora of skis, poles and packs strapped to the roof. This, combined with the actual contents of the Corolla, all caused the tiny machine to bulge slightly at the sides. The back seat, that site of many a romantic move, was adequately chaperoned by a sixteen kilo pack in the middle.

Petrol, margarine, sugar and a gortex were temporarily forgotten, but the essential item was replaced thanks to your local BP. Although much tact was attempted, the lid falling off the sugar made such a resounding tinkle that one member of the group, Steve 'Soggy' Curtain, looked like a startled rabbit ready to bolt before Kate 'Kayjay' Raulings was arrested for sugar-stealing. The remaining two members of the intrepid (insane?) foursome - Mike 'Ratsoh' Ratcliffe and Steve 'Jack' Williams were not at all phased by this audacity. Their fore-planning meant they were not present during the sugar raid, only emerging from the men's room when they were sure the coast was clear.

After another short break in Myrtleford, making Tony's Pizza a thriving venture, the intrepid (insane?) arrived up at Falls Creek at midnight. Mad as they may have seemed, none fancied the car park gravel as the ideal sleeping surface. All agreed to venture among the damp dripping snowgums in search of Wallace's or Cope hut. Kayjay, or Cajun as she became known, (when everyone's vocal apparatus had frozen sufficiently to render impossible the pronunciation of Kayjay) put all her year's experience to the test to direct the intrepid (insane?) to Watchbed Creek. However, her commentary of which bush some hapless drunk froze under may not have been entirely appreciated by every member of the group. (What do you get when you cross snowgums at midnight, subzero temperatures, gale-force winds and fresh snow? A soggy Soggy!)

Several scroggin stops and an hour later, Watchbed Creek was reached. After this point the navigational skills of the group were completely dependant on Steve 'Soggy' Curtain's wet compass; he persistently refused to get the group lost. Sogster denied hysterical claims that the party was close to finding Omeo after skiing for five kilometres with Wallace's hut being, "Just up here somewhere". His next

navigational triumph was to insist that the Turn-off to Cope hut was only another 500 metres. No-one believed, "It really is only another 500 metres now" until 45 minutes later, when this turned out to be true. Cope hut was now within sight, at least it would have been if it wasn't blowing snow horizontally at 4.20 am. A fresh burst of energy revived the flagging spirits of the group, one of whom got so excited he skied past the hut back on to the return trail to Wallace's hut ("No, Ratsoh we really would prefer to stay at Cope").

Our arrival at 4.30 in the morning disturbed no human presence, the hut's only occupants being small, slightly rotund, fur-covered and probably awake anyway. After a hot cup of Jarra and much sickly self-congratulation ('I was so tired'... 'No, I was sooo tired') at arriving in one (albeit cold) piece, the intrepid (insane?) lay down for a few hours of well-deserved repose.

Kayjay's sleep was rudely shattered five hours later when impatient voices demanded to know if she was ever going to get up. Nothing short of a vociferous debate about the size of the rat running along the rafters (perilously close to her mattress) propelled her out of her sleeping bag.

The blizzard had blown itself out overnight, leaving the hut's surroundings a glistening white freshness under clear azure skies. The intrepid (insane?) foursome's hearts swelled with anticipation, before they proceeded to wipe as much snow off the slopes and into their clothes as they could. Only satisfied when every slope the eye could see was marred by (bumholes) (assholes) potholes did they stop to recuperate their strength. After a mutual grooming session the likes of which are usually unseen outside of Melbourne Zoo's monkey enclosures, all four went back to hit the slopes. The discovery of a jump near the hut meant this 'hitting of the slopes' was literal.

After getting thoroughly soaked, or in one member's case 'soggorised', and adding to those (bumholes) (assholes) potholes, the intrepid (insane?) retired to the hut for a comfortable two-course dinner of chips and dip, pasta, gluh wein, port and chocolate. This repast was marred only by the bitter cold and the camp fire, which refused to light despite continual concerted efforts by all party members. Although Cope hut was rated as 'four' on a five-point scale, snow did drift in one end and rather dismally, didn't melt. Kayjay was rather spoilt by having another meal brought to her in bed; Jack retired to his immediately after eating, leaving port and chocky to the youngsters. All shortly retired to their respective foam rubbers, to prepare for the gruelling ski home.

Overcast and ominous skies threatened upon the foursomes' return to consciousness. The first order of the day was to scrape out of their cups and bowls the telltale remains left by the original hut occupants. After this unpleasant task was performed, the intrepid (insane?) left their rodent relations in peace as they attempted the return trip via Wallace's and Watchbed, back to their small, white Corolla. Lunch was had at Watchbed, while everyone thanked Sogster for not finding Wallace's hut: rated only at 'one', without beds, mattresses, or four secure snow-proof walls.

Upon arrival at Windy corner, any sense of achievement at accomplishing their daring feat was evaporated by finding one of those

ominous pink slips under the windscreen wiper. Luckily, this was only a slap on the wrist notice, not a six stroke caning on the backside. Entry fee paid ('No, no we only had one night, not two, on the mountain'), packs packed and skis bundled on top of the car, the intrepid (insane?) were urged on by Jack's search for the perfect caffe latte, and again set their culinary sights on Tony's Pizza. Tony, now not sure he wants to sell his booming business, was again confronted by a 'short white!' Jack (and miscellaneous others). Full of belly, sated of spirit, the intrepid (insane?) headed for Melbourne. Unfortunately, the only thing that wasn't full and needed to be was the petrol tank. "Yes, Jack of course we've got enough petrol...if we get off the Hume now, find an open bowser fast, don't go above 60, and....See!?! We didn't run out of petrol!!"

Despite these slight hitches, the Cardigan Street home for the skiing insane did recover it's four missing inmates, all of whom can only look back and reminisce about what was probably the 1993 snow season.

Mount Stirling

On Sunday, 22 August, Steve Curtain led an expedition in quest of that increasingly elusive beast, SNOW. (Steve was heard to remark several times on how desperate he was). After a three hour ride via Mansfield, the seven lucky MUMC members arrived at a Mount Stirling car park utterly devoid of snow, with an ominously sunny sky above. A forty minute walk up the mountain finally revealed some rather wet snow at the summit area - just enough to spend three hours goofing around at the top, practising telemarking, turning, and of course falling (the later being executed with considerable grace). A cold-bummed lunch was enjoyed just below the treeline, out of the wind and white-out on the summit, which sort of negated any decent views. However, the whole thing came off pretty well, considering what kind of ski season it turned out to be in general.

We cannot close without a few congratulations to a certain Ms Bradshaw (for somehow convincing us all that she had got lost when in fact she was safe and sound at the car park), or to Kate (who failed to realise that the little gauge with an "E" and an "F" was for petrol and that we had none left - or for neglecting to remember that in Australia, cars drive on the left side of the road). But hey, no disasters, and at least we got to see what must be about the last of the white stuff for 1993. Better luck next year.

- James Golden

25 MINUTE BROWN RICE AND ONE OR MORE TENTS
Sheepyard Flats/ The Governors/ Eagles Peaks/ The Bluff

While Arapiles was attacked en masse by a large MUMC contingency, several walkers, dare we say intrepid in nature, headed off once again for the ranges of the Victorian Alps. All the exciting ingredients were present to boil in a broth of adventure and toil; unfortunately, our portion of our soup boiled a little dry.

MATTHEW: resplendent in his new polar 300 top (bargain steal at \$70), a keen walker at the best of times, a philosopher and a mathematician.

TIM: Always one to love his sleep- tiny Tim akin to dog on the leash but savage at times. Beware.

KATE: Fresh vegetable need only apply- demanding only the freshest food and tastiest meals, yet wouldn't carry any of it. Made sure the stove fuel bottle nearly emptied due to 25 min. brown rice boiling away- white cooks much faster, but thanks for the tip anyway. Carrier of the 0.5 tent.

STEVE: Can't really say much about this guy. Has no self respect, but doesn't mind being nice to people.

Club debating has always been one of the forerunners to trips. For 4 hours, a destination couldn't be decided upon- like all good consensus decisions, we practically flipped a coin. Sheepyard Flat was where we'd begin. Even in the middle of Autumn, the day buzzed with the noise of innumerable, let alone identifiable insects, more reminiscent of a day in the peak of a scorching Summer. The weather itself was very warm, and a sweat was easy to develop as the track led to the old homestead at Fred Fry's, downstream on the Howqua River. We had been a little reluctant to give up the shady and easy rest at the car before it was time to move off for night's camp at Castle Rock, south of Fry's.

The view from the lofty perch of Castle Rock was impressive, as the route up to the Governors was eyed with interest- which spur would we take from the creek below? A clear, almost unnaturally occurring spot of open club- parklike in appearance- quickly reaffirmed the route to be taken the next day. Scrub was thick and ugly in regrowth areas en route up this unnamed spur, on some knoll around 1300m, we stumbled across sawn logs. What made this particularly strange was the fact that this was in an area inaccessible to vehicles for a number of kilometres- no firetracks or breaks were found in the immediate area- very strange indeed. Despite the ordinary scrub, tantalising views were provided of snow sprinkled peaks to the north, a reminder of the pathetic Winter.

Huey was sure to provide a good shower whether we liked it or not, as the drop off the Governors toward Lickhole Gap was taken- thunder clapped, menacing clouds lay some minutes off yet. A formal apology was made to Matt, who had strolled off in search of water, reassured (but disillusioned) with the idea that it was only 75 to 100m down from the saddle. An hour and a half later and about a 350m descent later, the savior Matt returned with ample water, but soaked through from the constant rain and from his perspiration..." Sorry about that, Matt."

"Steve...Umm.... The river's DOWN there.."



Matthew Cain: I'm resting-

got a problem with that?

Scrambling up to Eagles Peaks was your typical stroll through steep rock bands, some appearing very near vertical for some reason, but the route soon became a grovel where tree roots provided hand/foot holds- progress was gradual but still enjoyable.

"Mount Booller- you uh a very unattractiff mountain."
The normally incessant hum of ski lifts and tows was gone from the ghastly and shocker of a 1993 Winter- Buller's summit is a bit like an old man: bald and ugly, and although its sewerage plant at Corn Hill couldn't be seen, no doubt it was releasing fragrant smells to some other unsuspecting walkers elsewhere.

Apart from this eyesore, the panorama was magnificent- as far as Mt. Speculation could be seen to the east, and the mounts, although mostly hidden, beyond Mt. MacDonald peeked over to the south. Several Wedge Tails and Kestrels were sighted en route back to the Sheeppard- although the wedgies squawked impressively above as they displayed their huge wing span, one or two Kestrels simply guided in the cool breeze from the Howqua Valley below.

"Where to brown cow? The Bluff it is."

The chilled waters of the Howqua were a shock to some very warm feet, but the mini siesta was glorious in the sunshine. Making the most of our time, the grovel resumed soon after up to the Bluff. Most tracks are at least easily negotiable, let alone distinct, but the tracks to the heavens of Bluff 'o' high was all over the place; up stream beds, under moss soaks, some climbing occasionally but otherwise straightforward. Unfortunately the summit was completely windblown, white- out little visibility the following morning, so the decision was made to get out, leaving at 6:30 am- this was in light of our outward route being possibly altered. A bogged car wasn't out of the question, but there were no hassles.

"Who's for brekky in Mansfield?"

A sidetrip was made to Mason's Falls at Kinglake N.P. on the way home, just to ensure that we didn't miss out on our quota of waterfalls, views and more trees. OXO!

Stephen Curtain



Home Sweet Home

