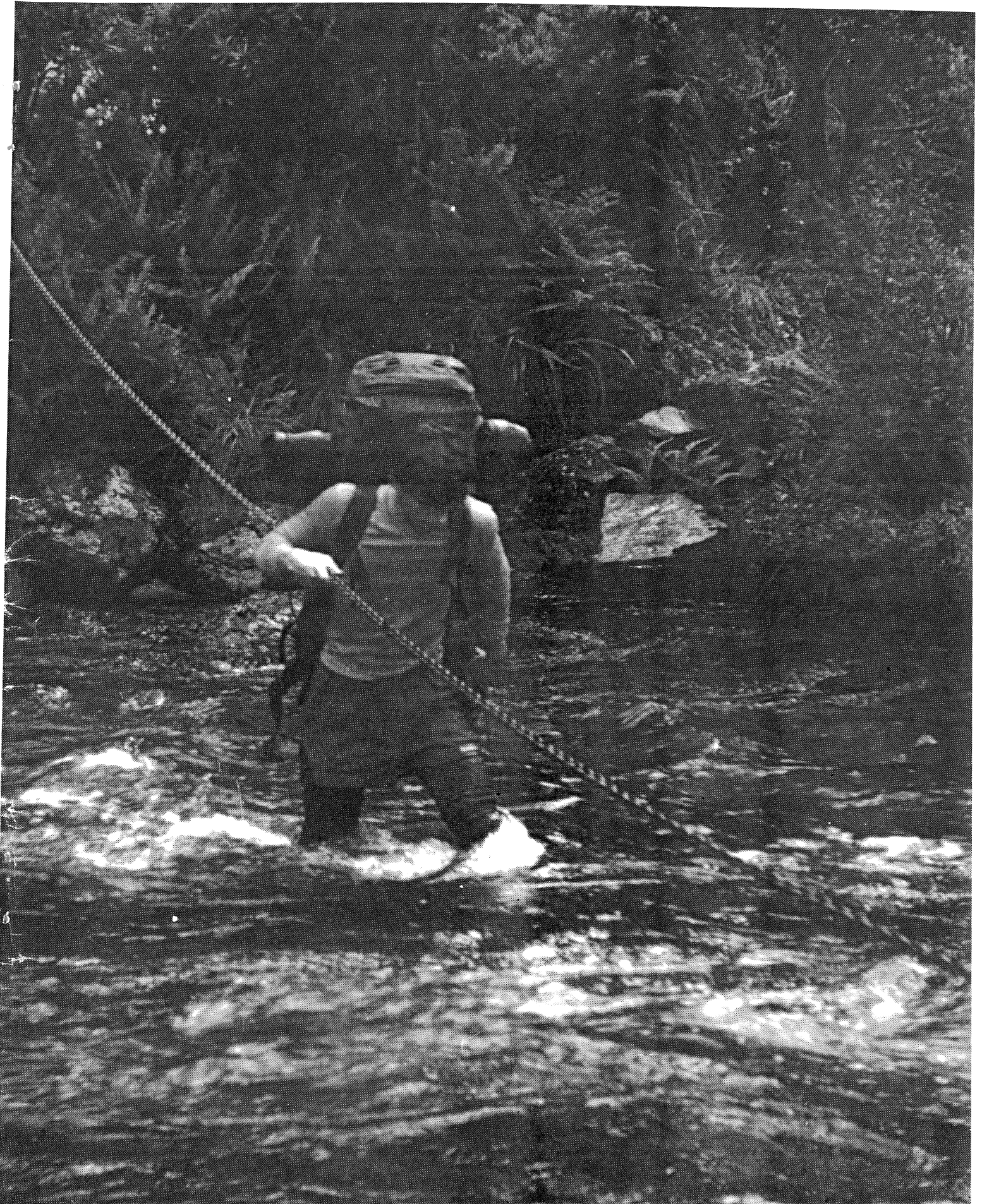


MOUNTAINEER

*The Magazine of The Melbourne University Mountaineering Club
Waiting For The Snow Edition, May 1996*



Editorial

Well, I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm getting mighty excited at the moment. The magical white stuff, the substance dreams are made of, the flakes that cause new legends to be created, is about to start falling from the sky in a few days (so, OK, maybe the Big Q's Birthday isn't really a good starting date, but every year I live in hope). Start waxing those skis and bending those telemarking knees. The kayakers are also itching for the cold fronts to come through, so if you prefer your snow in the liquid form, you had better see them before the water levels are up. Apparently dirtbike helmets and dirtbike gloves are the essential kayaking wear this season.

Elsewhere in MUMC, people have learnt to climb, camp, kayak, rogaine and look for cows and are moving on to more difficult things. I hope you have all got your membership moneys worth.

On a sadder note, it is vale to Peter Dombrovskis. I saw it written that he brought the wilderness of Tasmania to city people, but for many OXOs, his pictures will jog our own mind into remembering the magnificence that we have been lucky enough to see with our own eyes. They should continue to remind everyone of us that the environment is fragile and precious and can never be replaced once gone. It is also vale to all the mountaineers who died recently on Mt. Everest.

Amber Mullens.



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Andy Gaff crossing the Big River, Mt. Bogong.

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Warning!!! If you see these two hoodlums, do not approach them and contact the nearest police station. They created quite a ruckus at a recent MUMC event and are believed to be very dangerous.

President's Report.

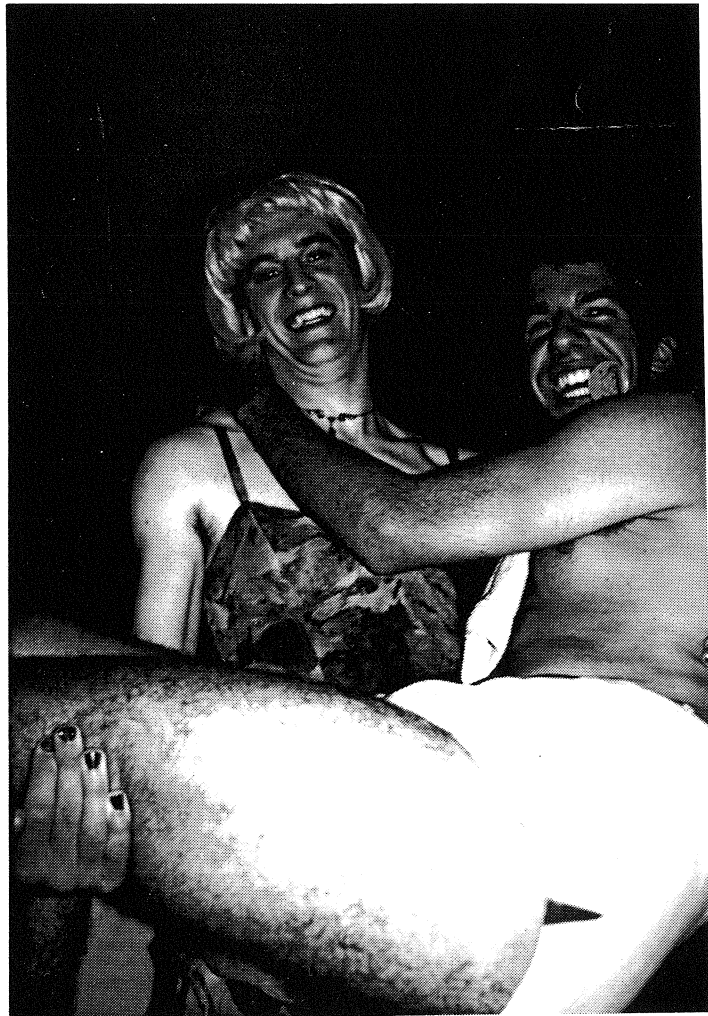
Welcome those of you who are new this year, and welcome back those who aren't. By now you should have a taste of what the club has to offer with heaps of people crowding on trips. It all started with that **hugely** successful Wilson's Prom trip after O-Week, and many thanks to Amber for her flawless organisation. Trips of that size are nightmares to organise! Thanks again. Beginners' trips in paddling were run in earnest during March, thanks Stu & co., and Easter saw that mega huge Arapiles climbing trip, featuring the spit roast and many quirky games, not to mention the climbing. Many thanks to Cuan for organising fifty people in one of the most memorable climbing trips. With Kim H., our bushwalking convenor, still out of action from a Tassie epic (go on, ask her, I dare you....) others have been left to hold the fort there, thanks to Joel, Alan and Enmore. And that curious sport of caving is going through one of its revivals, thanks to Kim Ely, and many keen newcomers squeezing and grunting their way through all wonder of formations underground.

As semester one finishes and that horrible time approaches, remember the old adage that even though you have exams and essays due, you won't do any study on the weekend anyway, so you may as well go away, and do something relaxing and constructive! Try it, it works!!

Most importantly, even though many big beginners trips have been run, there will be more to come, and follow up intermediate trips. If you want to try something, ask a leader in that sport. If you are keen, he or she will accommodate your enthusiasm. Try it and see!!

See you back-country

Dan



Dan gets picked up by another girlie after spinning her his tales of heroism.


Scroggin.

Without naming names, there was a problem on a recent trip where upon unpacking a tent to sleep in, it was found that the tent was wet and now mouldy from the previous trip it had gone on. It was totally unsleepable in and really pissed off the person who borrowed it. The tent was a yellow Macpac Minaret number 88. If you borrowed this tent on a Steve Curtain trip before Easter, hang your head in shame. If you borrow any tents, make sure you air them when you get home, even if you do not think they are wet. This is your responsibility and there are no excuses. And we all know what happens to Joel when he gets mad....


Lara, Nicki and donkeys are off to the Kimberleys for some wild trekking. Good luck. Nasty rumours are being heard about naked trekking. Be sun smart then girls.

Nigel Prior has been to Indonesia for some back packing.

Coming up in the break in Semester 2 is the Australian Universities Kayaking Championships. That may seem a whole ski season away, but this is a warning for everyone to start increasing their paddling prowess before the big event. We are hosting it this year, so this notice is also a plea to get everyone involved in helping out. You do not need to be a mega-god-dirtbike-paddler in order to help and compete in the real boat races. It is lots of fun and there are lots of wineries nearby if the paddling (or the paddlers) get too much.

 Steve Curtain has been going through a golden patch with the club at the moment. He has been awarded an honourary membership for all the things he does. So, if you need a leader for a trip, call Steve and make him earn his money. Mr. Curtain has also won his 35th straight T-shirt competition. (Yawn. What one person could possibly do with 35 petzls is beyond me, but I'm sure not beyond Steve.) The T-shirts will be arriving at any tick of the clock, so have your cash ready.

Be watching out on developments regarding Mt. Loch. Very bad business. ☹

 Past Mountaineer editor and now Rock editor, Dave Burnett, may not do much climbing anymore, but he has still managed to tie the knot to Nicole Milsom (is that tacky or what! It took Steve Carter and I ages to come up with that. If you can think of any other really tacky sentiments, let me know, so I can use them on the next card). A number of old OXOs made the big trip to Wycheproof to partake in the celebrations and dance the night away to My Shirona with Uncle Bob.



THE PLIGHT OF A BUMBLY- BEE

By Dale Cooper

My first trip with the mountaineering club was to Werribee Gorge at the start of the year. I'd been climbing indoors for a few months, I owned a harness and some boots which made me look pretty jolly dapper in my opinion and I was keen to get on the real stuff and be Mr. Hardcore, yeah-man, cool-dude, hairy-chest.

Werribee Gorge was a lot of fun and a good stepping stone from indoor to out. It was a bit weird how all the holds were the same colour. I tried my hand at seconding with an outstanding zero death count, first go. I laughed heartily at the clever use of climbing gear in innuendo by the more experienced climbers. However, although the day was très cool and I met some nice people, as well as Michael, the following weekend trip to Mt. Arapiles was where Dale the bumbly really got started.

The first climb I went up was Voodoo, a two-pitch 18; Alex led and all I had to do was follow. It was spectacular; the weather was great and the view was fantastic. I can still remember the last move of the second pitch, stuck in a chimney and having to reach out for the overhand with only a handjam for balance. My pounding heart came just shy of smashing through my ribs and saying hello to the outside world. It was probably if not definitely, not as big a deal as all that, but I was packing darkies none-the-less. Even the rappel back down was a first. It was pretty humbling being around a camping ground full of people, the majority of who knew more about the game than I did, so I didn't end up wearing my "Hi, I'm Mr. Hardcore, yeah-man etc" T-shirt.

The following night, the big dogs went to do Pilot Error (21), a short exposed overhang. I flashed them my expectant puppy look until they said I could come along. I was stupid enough to think "Yeah, that doesn't sound that bad, we haven't been drinking for that long, I can do it, I know I can". I was quite wrong, which isn't that surprising. Everybody except me did it without batting an eyelid or readjusting their head lamp. The best excuse I could come up with after an unsuccessful attempt was that the sun was in my eyes. When we got back to camp I went over to the RMIT fire to tell lies but ended up listening to one guy tell me how he popped three bits of gear on a lead fall in the Blue Mountains and landed on his second, who was his father. He knocked himself out and put his father in hospital. I told him I'd just soloed Pilot Error to make him feel even more crap. He was from RMIT after all.

The next morning was to be my last and again I managed to get caught up with the boys that knew what they were doing. I figured they probably needed a mascot. We wandered out to Kachoong (21), another exposed roof with a good deal of atmosphere. It took me a couple of minutes just to get off the ground; I didn't even make it to the roof before I was hanging on the end of the rope. After listening to what I'm sure was reverse psychology from Matt Lang, I got back onto the climb, made it to the roof and started along it. It didn't take long to realise I sucked and I was swinging again. My overhang technique is like cold beer - it would be good if I had some.

Thus, I am initiated into outdoor climbing and I didn't even have to chew on ox tongue for six hours in a pool of rat urine - I wasn't even given this option. It's probably not as good as it sounds anyway. I have a new opinion of indoor climbing; I still like it but it doesn't come close to the good stuff. People who stay indoors must just like telling people at the office that they're rock-climbers. I'm looking forward to becoming self-sufficient on the leading front, but I can wait. I'm not that interested in being dead, no matter how much others say it might suit me.



Rohan Schaap at Mt. Jagungal.

NEW ZEALAND DIARY. PART 2.

BY ANDREW SELBY-SMITH

The story so far.....

Andrew has braved massive blocks of ice in the New Zealand Southern Alps and has returned alive - only to plan a sea-kayaking adventure. Now read on....

28/1 Sunday Unwin Hut 11 pm

Today was pretty lazy - getting up late, (10:30), washing clothes, etc, and later going up to the village with Rob to mail stuff and buy stuff. Rob and I are heading to Te Anau soon to pick up the boats for 9 days of sea kayaking. Should be fun!!

29/1 Monday Unwin Hut 11:50 pm

Hitched into Twizel in the morning. I had to walk for an hour before I got a lift! Among things like food, I got 2 pairs of sunnies (because they had a "buy one get one free" deal going) and pair of sports sandals for only \$17 (but I later had to spend 2 hours modifying them because one of the straps was too long and the velcro was in the wrong place - lots of work with knife, hotplate needle, and thread!). A couple of tips about hitching:

- 1) Always try buses - if they are empty, they will often stop and give you a lift.
- 2) Foreign tourists under 30 always stop - except the Japanese.
- 3) Expensive, brand new cars with 3 or 4 seats free never stop - bloody yuppies!
- 4) Overall, complete bombs of cars are more likely to stop than brand new ones!

After I got back, Rob and I went up to the village to get bus tickets and for me to call home. The ticket counter was closed, so no tickets, but. it was nice to call home and say what's been happening and what's about to happen - a lot!

30/1 Tuesday Te Anau 6 pm

I was woken by a phone call from my family telling me I had gotten into Queens - YIPPEE!! Packed then walked up to the village to catch the bus and pick up some mail from Dad. Earlier, we had watched the Japanese climber, Hideo, head off from Barren Saddle, carrying a massive pack that extended over his head! He is an unbelievably tough bloke - he walked from the Unwin to De La Beche in 11 hours, carrying 35 kg - when we went, we took 10 hrs from Ball Sheather, and must have had 30 kg. I have sorted through my wallet, and I have a NZ 10c, Aus 10c, a NZ 5c, Aus 5c, and an old NZ sixpence piece! [same size as 5c] *[sub ed. - I've just looked in mine, and it has a VISA (anyone coming to Jimmy's), and a condom, what are you doing later A. S-S?]* We did some shopping after arriving in Te Anau. Rob got a pair of sports sandals for \$15 in the town - don't buy \$120 or \$80 Teva sports sandals - the reason they are so expensive is because they are American, so they pay their workers more, while the no-name Chinese ones are made by workers paid a pittance - but the Americans also pump their prices way up, have a massive advertising campaign, and catch all the suckers stupid enough to buy them (ed. - or maybe the suckers have seen the working conditions that workers on a pittance in third world countries have to contend with and therefore won't buy the cheap ones at any price. I'm sure I don't need to add anything about Chinese Human Rights record, let alone their environmental history. And maybe the more expensive ones use superior materials, water proof glue and don't need 2hrs of work on them.). From what Rob tells me of his conversations with Bill at Fiordland Kayaking, they are a bit leery about us going off for 10 days - "you'll get cold and you'll get wet" (we have breathable parkas, my snow tent, down sleeping bags...pikers.) I have lots of sailing experience, a fair bit of river paddling, canoe polo, a bit of rafting, am a strong swimmer, very fit, and bush smart. We have a meeting tomorrow with Bill to sort it all out and convince them of our capabilities.

31/1 Wednesday Te Anau 11 pm

Today we had the meeting with Bill which went OK, although we may be forced to take a double kayak (bum). Afterwards, we went up to shop and spent an obscene amount on food - well over \$200. We also treated ourselves to 20lt dry bags each. We have mixed up huge bags of scroggin - really huge!

1/2 Thursday 6:30 pm North Arm Lake Manapouri

After being picked up from the motor park, we were driven to Lake Manapouri by the woman from Fiordland Paddling. After a lot of discussion and instruction, we packed the double kayak - it just ate equipment - food, gear, tents, tarpaulins, radio, fly shelter, etc, etc. We started paddling at 11:30 and within an hour had reached Holmwood Island, almost 7 km away, and in another hour we had reached Hurricane Passage. We went west from there and up the North Arm. The northern side of the lake is spectacularly steep - huge cliffs, vertiginous gullies, and vegetation everywhere! Very, very impressive. Conditions were very flat until a westerly blew up, creating small waves, but only enough to rock the boat a little. We were very impressed with the boat's performance - stable, fast, comfortable and leak proof. Once up the northern end of the Arm, we went up Awe Creek for a bit, before going up to the north-eastern corner of the Arm to set up a great camp on the beach after a day's run of 35 km. Rob is now cooking dinner in mesh net tent, and I am sitting on the boat writing my diary. The sandflies are awful, but it's a beautiful place!

2/2 Friday 9 pm West Arm DOC hut

Last night in the tent was OK - thank god for fly mesh. Before leaving the tent, we both "suited up" in long clothing and heavy socks, so only our hands and heads were exposed to the sandflies! I went for a skinny dip. Luckily, after I went a little way out, the sandflies abandoned me in favour of dry ground. After a breakfast in the net tent, amid a light drizzle, we packed up camp and left the North Arm and it's sandflies at quarter to ten. Paddling down the Arm was a little rough and windy, but not too bad. The scenery, as usual, was very spectacular. Round into the West Arm, and under even more huge cliffs. It's amazing where the trees can grow around here - they even get tree avalanches in the Hall Arm of Doubtful Sound, so tenuously do they cling to the cliffs. We got to the end of West Arm at about 12 - not a "bush" campsite due to the presence of the Manapouri Power Station, tourist buses, DOC hut, Park displays, etc. The transmission lines across the valley carry 220,000 volts! The fence around the transformer yard carried an "Electric Fence" warning - we wondered if it was charged to 220,000 volts! We got back in time to meet Bill, who had come over to do a bit of boat cleaning. We decided to trial the Puffins (single boats) to see how they handled compared to the double. They are not so stable but are far more manoeuvrable and more fun, but a little slower. We are spending the night in the DOC hut - it's pretty comfy and fly proof! Oh, yes, before I forget - I tried to hand roll a Puffin and failed by the skin of my teeth - I will be successful next time. (the spray deck popped off, so even though I righted off Rob's boat, I had to come in to shore to empty it anyway!)

3/2 Saturday 10 pm DOC hut Lake Manapouri

No-one turned up to collect us this morning, or all day. We assume we will have to wait till tomorrow. We spent 7 hours sitting in the Fiordland Kayaking 4WD - frustrating. It has rained all day - appropriate for an area that gets 3.2 metres of rain a year. There is no way we will pay Fiordland for boat hire for today! We could have set up the radio to call the DOC to find out what the delay was but Rob didn't want to buggar around in the rain setting up the aerals - fair enough. After dinner I taught Rob to play Spit - lots of fun. I have just spent 10 mins killing 200 sandflies using a head torch and a white wall - the wall is no longer white!

4/2 Sunday Crooked Arm camp 9:30 pm

We got picked up this morning at 8, in the usual rain. The drive over to Doubtful Sound was incredibly spectacular - well, the waterfalls anyway - huge bolts of water falling down massive cliffs. Once we reached Doubtful Sound we had the boats loaded in time to leave at 10:15, in light rain. It was pretty windy but the seas weren't too bad. Up the eastern side of Elizabeth Island past incredible, massive steep cliffs with huge waterfalls everywhere. We had to shelter for 1/4 of an hour under a tree as a rainstorm came through - the sea went white from rain - very impressive indeed. We had two thunderbolts as well - ample evidence of the power of nature - mighty booming rumbles that even I could hear! [I was not wearing my hearing aids at the time, and my threshold of hearing without them is about 120 decibels.] Up and across the Malaspina Reach in alternations of rain and wind with calm - pretty wild paddling at times. We eventually got into Crooked Arm. The sheer splendour of the scenery is indescribable. After going within 4 km of the end of Crooked Arm, we turned back due to the time and arrived at the campsite a bit after six, to complete a day's run of 42 km (Friday was 10 km). The rain here is incredible - it just falls and falls and falls. Sometimes it stops for a few min, but mostly it varies between light drizzle and high powered hoses. Dinner was fantastic and it is lovely to have a nice dry tent - aaah! Rob and I spent a fair bit of time giggling about the two German boys who shared the Manapouri hut with us. Last night they had vitamin tablets and digestive biscuits for dinner and looked bloody envious when we had a good cooked meal. Tomorrow we are planning to get over to the Gaer Arm, which should be a nice long day. (about 30 km). I wonder how the Germans are getting on. I would be prepared to bet that they are not completely happy right now.



Andrew Selby-Smith being a lazy sod in New Zealand.

5/2 Monday 9:30 pm Gaer Arm

Left Camp 5 this morning at 10:45 in bloody typical light rain. We saw a large bird (flightless) called a Weka having a good look around the campsite. It is about 30 cm high, 35 cm long, dark brown and has a dark orange beak and dark orange feet. Across the Malaspina Reach and into Bradshaw Sound we paddled in a surprising lack of rain. We had a good laugh at the ferry that went past us, crammed with tourists, bearing the slogan "Great Adventures" - it runs to a timetable, you sit on your bum, and there's a flushing bog nearby. It's not an adventure tour. We went through a narrow passage at the back to get into Precipice Cove and then south into the Gaer Arm and up to the end before beginning to try and find a campsite. About this time, the two Germans turn up looking for a campsite. They are surprisingly happy. It's getting late (about 6 pm) it's raining, and there's no sign of a campsite. We finally go up the left hand river at the end of the Arm, following the Germans, and find a perfect spot in the trees. We have just finished dinner - excellent and very tasty! I wonder what the Germans had - maybe vitamin tablets and digestive biscuits? Poor sods!

6/2 Tuesday Dees Cove Hut 11 pm

Day's run: 33 km. We woke up at 7.30 to find it had stopped raining. At 10, we were on the water and heading up the river in constantly improving weather (leading east from Gaer Arm). At 11, we had gotten as far as possible after pulling the boats up a few rapids. It was an incredibly green and verdant river, maybe 20 metres wide. Moss covered the trees in layers of green and brown, giving dead trees an incredible spongy appearance. We went back past the campsite, where the German boys still had not moved - lazy sods!! We passed the spot where the day before, a seal had tuned on an impressive performance. Rob and I had seen it on the surface and gone to investigate as quietly as possible, which, in a sea kayak, is pretty quiet! The seal rolled over and over and over, either oblivious to our presence or ignoring us. After a minute it dived, leaving only bubbles - an incredible experience... We paddled out of Gaer Arm in rising wind but still perfect weather, and across Bradshaw Sound to Thompson Sound and up it to Deas Cove Hut. The hut was first class, and after an excellent dinner of mussels, rice, and cheesecake, we started discussing our chocolate, of which we had bought 2 large blocks in Te Anau, but since seen no sign of. Rob suspects it was stolen from the motor park fridge by a Japanese tour group. It really makes me angry 'cos we had been looking forward to having it (ed. - I can't believe it took you this long to notice it missing). Reading through the hut logbook is interesting - the hut is so rarely used the log goes back to 1979!

7/2 Wednesday Gut Hut 11 pm

One thing I forgot to mention from last night was the hut shower - a tin filled with 4-5 litres of cold water. You stand under it for a 10 second soaking with incredibly cold water. I was glad when my shower was over! We left at 10:30, in perfect weather, bound for the northern end of Secretary Island, where the Sound leads into the sea. Once there, truly on the sea for the first time, I was able to gaze across the Tasman Sea, and think that my home lay 2,000 km away on the other side - rather a homesick feeling. Coming back down the Sound I decided to pass behind a small island, as I could see seals on the far side. I was able to get within a few metres. Then I tried to pass through this narrow passage, but the way was blocked by the 4 or 5 seals. One even touched the boat, but otherwise ignored me, and my paddle splashes. I was forced to back up and go around the other side of the island. We reached Gut Hut at about 6:00, to meet two men who offered us the remains of their crayfish. Yum. Day's run: 32 km.

8/1 Thursday Camp 4 7 pm

Day's run: 20 km. Left Gut Hut at 11 am - late b/c the winds were too strong to paddle around Bauza. The paddling across was hard work - strong wind, big waves, strong outgoing tide - very annoying, since south winds are rare and we wanted a good strong north wester to blow us down the Sound. As a result we had to abandon our plans to go to Campsite 1 and settle for 4 instead, getting there at 5:30. The sun is now shining, the sky's getting bluer. I'm a bit concerned about my hearing aids. I got putting them on, and realized some of the plastic was looking soft and white - the culprit was the repellent, which I had also been applying to my ears. As a result, I now have bog paper behind my ears to protect my hearing aids. I have suggested to Rob that, following the tradition of the International Turkey Patrol (sorry, mountaineers only), we will name ourselves the International New Zealand Leach Eradication Team (INZLET). Rob approves! Dinner was excellent - coconut milk soup, fried egg noodles with crab meat and vegies, followed by a huge mug of apple cinnamon tea and 2 puddings! Bliss.

9/2 Friday Camp 2 Hall Arm, 7:45 pm

We left camp at 9 this morning, working against a headwind and tide. Very frustrating and slow. We eventually got to the mouth of Hall Arm - very spectacular. We had lots of time on our hands, so we let the wind blow us down the Arm. Very relaxing and peaceful. A little bit later, a school of dolphins passed us - YIPPEE! There were about 20 dolphins in the school, plus at least two calves. Magical. Later on, the dolphins came back and we were treated to a bit of acrobatics, and several times they passed under the kayaks, including once from behind. The acrobatics involved leaping up to 4 metres out of the water, followed by a pretty big splash! We camped at Campsite 2, to find a first class campsite on the east side of the river, where a path of rocks had been laid from the water and a permanent tarpaulin set up - Fiordland Wilderness Experiences, of course. Day's run: 27 km.

11/2 Sunday 11 pm Queenstown camping ground

Getting out yesterday was no problem, 10 kms of easy paddling on calm water. - Total trip dist. 239 km!!! I spent a couple of hours trying to teach Rob to eskimo roll, but without success. The trip back to Te Anau was uneventful, and we stayed in the motor park again. The next morning, we spent 6 hours trying to hitch to Queenstown, before giving up at about 2 and walking back to Te Anau to catch the afternoon bus. Selfish NZ drivers. We got to Queenstown a bit before 8 and I booked a bungy tomorrow, before we retired to a campsite and cooked a groovy dinner.

12/2 Monday 9 pm Queenstown camping ground

The bungy jumping was great fun! We got driven to the bungy in an ex- British Army personnel transport - like a huge jeep, but even tougher! Skippers Canyon Bridge is a really old, but spectacular suspension bridge over the Shotover River, part of the Skippers Canyon road - an awesomely exposed dirt track, the most exposed I have seen. After a quick bit of instruction into what to do, the first few people go off, plunging rapidly out of sight towards the Shotover River below. When my turn comes, a towel is wrapped around my ankles, followed by a sling. When I ask, I am informed that the ropes are used 600 times before retirement, and my jump is number 519. After waiting for a bit, I shuffle to the edge, perform the wave for the camera, and look down ... to the river 72 metres below. Next a quick check that everything is clipped and tied together, and the other end of the bungy rope is tied off. Then I look at one of the crew, to say "OK!" His hand is extended, and he counts me down on his fingers. Five, four three, two, one... Closed fist. I have been fine, relaxed, till this moment - no fears at all. I know it is safe, high thrill and no risk - nothing like the risks of the Minarets, Elie de Beaumont, the Anna Glacier, the North Face of Annan, but the moment of jumping off, committing myself to one rope alone is utterly terrifying. Next an incredible sensation of free fall, weightlessness, followed by very high speed. The load comes on, and I slow, stop, and rush back upwards for more incredible free fall, near the top of the motion - I rebound a surprisingly long way. Eventually the incredible motion, with all the jerking, stops, and I am lowered to the jet boat below. Back down the river on the jet boat to the pick up point, and we were driven back to Queenstown, where we watched the video of our jumps - I am surprised how relaxed I look as I prepare to jump - relaxed, calm, unhesitant.

13/2 Tuesday Unwin Hut 4:50 pm

We got up at 6 this morning for the uneventful trip to the Unwin. At the Unwin, I get lots of lovely mail, as well as a message from Dylan that he is in Wanaka/Aspiring National Park - I suspect walking.

14/2 Wednesday Bus somewhere between Twizel + Christchurch 3 pm

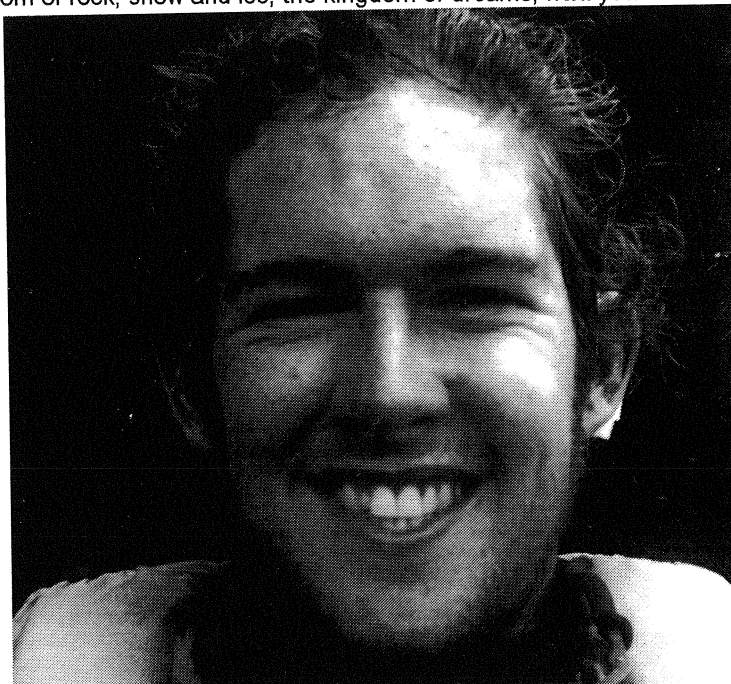
Dylan arrived at the Unwin that night, after hitching up from Aspiring, where he had been with Dan, Cora + Nikki - apparently they spent 2 weeks waiting at the hut for good weather. I am really disappointed I have not seen them or been able to climb with them. We caught a bus from the Unwin at 12:30, and had good views of Cook on the drive out, however, I was disappointed that we weren't able to see the Minarets or Elie de Beaumont before we left - they were obscured by clouds. Next time I come back, I want to climb Malte Brun, Tasman, Sefton from the west, etc..

15/2 Thursday 5:25 pm (Aust) somewhere over the Tasman

Got to bed pretty late last night, after swapping one of my books for one on the backpacker's hotel bookshelf. This morning I went off into ChCh city centre with Rob to develop my film (excellent photos from the Alps!), buy an ice hammer, Dad's b'day pressie, second hand books etc. Rob and I split so he could go to Immigration while I went back to the backpackers' to pack and get ready to leave. I had planned to leave at 1 and enlist Rob's aid in getting my gear to the bus stop, all 38 kg of it, but he does not turn up and I have to carry it myself. The bus stop is in Cathedral Square and Rob jumps on at the last minute - a rather nice coincidence. The time eventually comes for me to board the plane. The flight is uneventful. Aotearoa, New Zealand, is now 2,300 km away, and I am back in Australia, but I intend to return to the kingdom of rock, snow and ice, the kingdom of dreams, next year.

Scientific name

- *Andrewselbysmithus hirsutus*.



Climbing At Buchan - An Oily Experience

Gear list:

- Baby oil
- Handcuffs
- Candles
- Duct tape
- Studded boots (Rik's new method for climbing)
- Large amounts of rope
- Flaming blue Sambuca, Port, Beer, Metho
- Chilli
- Detergent
- Pink Dummy - to shut Rik up (it didn't work)
- Tim Tams, chocolate Teddy Bears, glucose enriched lollies
- Milky Way and Kinder surprise toys



... and now we are ready for caving!

Jess and Rik.

Wilson's cave - a really friendly start for us young beginners. Rampaging through this, we christened our overalls and lost all our fears (momentarily). Squishing 12 people into the corner was a challenge well met until someone distributed some hot smelly decaying air and the 6.62 second record of clambering around the circuit was nearly beaten. Dan, Richard, Tom and Hock put in a commendable effort, but the prize goes to Pedro's head-first slide! Speaking of slides or slots, head-first on your back is always fun at about 45 degrees. Even if you are sober it is not necessarily easy to climb ladders on you first go.

On Saturday us newly experienced (?) cavers in our dusty overalls managed to get into some interesting positions! Tanja tried to give birth while casually rising herself up a wall and asked permission to dribble. In Razor Yolanda did a no no going head first down a tunnel, which wasn't supposed to work but somehow did. Nasty piece of work that tunnel! Coming back, Kath managed to wedge herself in and had to be pulled from both ends. The ultimate rebirth, complete with the "push, push" sound effects. Joel would not have felt over confident when backing out of a pipe over an impaling pyramid shaper pock. Dan re-established his credible reputation by suggesting that he should take off his clothes to get through a squeeze. Those who could be bothered getting to the bottom of "Razor" were greeted by a two inch detailed yet androgynous little mudman. This art work was our offering to the natural, pure, cavellike experience. Kim missed the "Razor" and nearly sent people down the "Jam pipe" complete with a huge scary drop.

Jess and Rik came equipped with Kinder surprises although Alex preferred the Milky Way toys (despite taking the whole drive from Bairsdale to Buchan to construct such a toy). The favourite toy, "Rumpole the rat", was proudly displayed, gaffered on the bonnet of Dan's lovely SAAB much to the disgust of Jess. The one low point of the trip - not that it was - being when Rumpole mysteriously vanished after we got to the Pot Holes.

Saturday night looked like the entertainment was going to involve kicking Rik off the oldies table (dummy intact), until Rik said to Dan, "it's 12 o'clock now I can wax your belly button". After much debate and baby oil squirting, it was decided that the small of the back was better. Under peer pressure and most of a bottle of port, Kath "volunteered" to be the first victim. Rik tremendously enjoyed being voyeur, while Dan and Pedro dripped wax on the kicking Kath and Alex squirted baby oil.

Next up was Dan, who was looking good with people armed with ropes and gaffer swarming at him. We had him down momentarily with wax and oil dripping all over his back, but he escaped when the detergent and pots of cold water decided to join in.

Rik did a deal with Pedro (the man who feels no pain). Something like "I'll do my face if you do your back". So Rik received interesting wax moulds of her eyebrows (last seen they were still there), nose and happy face patterns on her cheek. Pedro then beared his back to us. he may not have felt pain, but he certainly screamed like mad, so much that the squirter must have got excited, as Kim was still wiping it off the next morning.

When the morning arrived, most people, a little worse for wear, put on their mud encrusted gear and slipped down their respective holes. More cool caves; formations, squeezes, wedges and irregular body positions.....

So if your clothes are dying for a mud bath, you want to be squashed between rock and a slimy rock and you have a fetish for baby oil - caves are the place to be. Join us next time.

Rock-climbing Convenor's Report

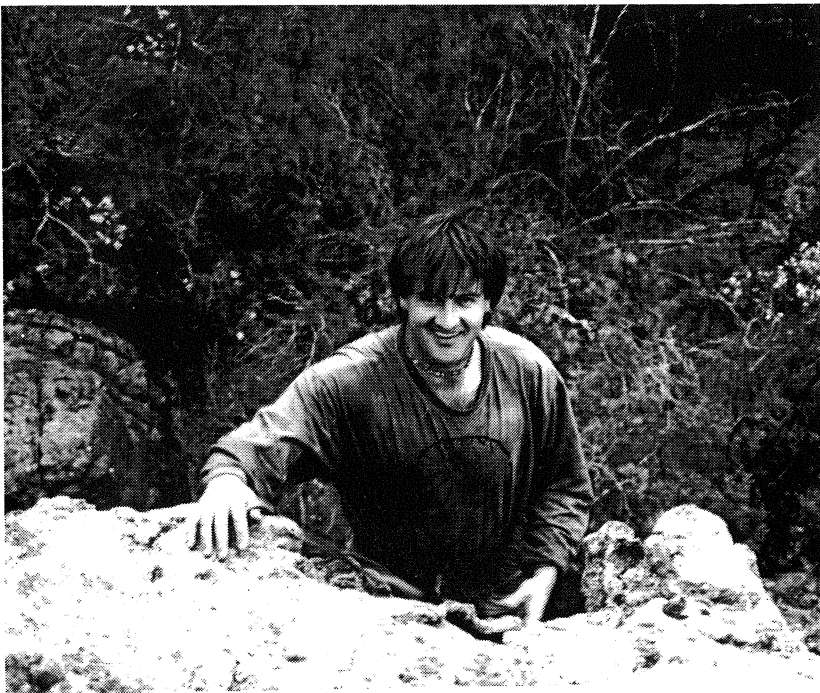
Cuan Petheram

This year so far has been very successful with weekend trips to Wilson's Prom, Arapiles, Mt Stayplton, Asses Ears, as well as day trips to the Cathedrals, Werribee gorge, bouldering areas around Melbourne, and various climbing gyms. With five beginner trips run and numerous others of a higher standard, climbing in the club is looking very healthy. It has been great to see a number of beginners come on numerous trips, and advance to the stage where they are leading or are just about to.

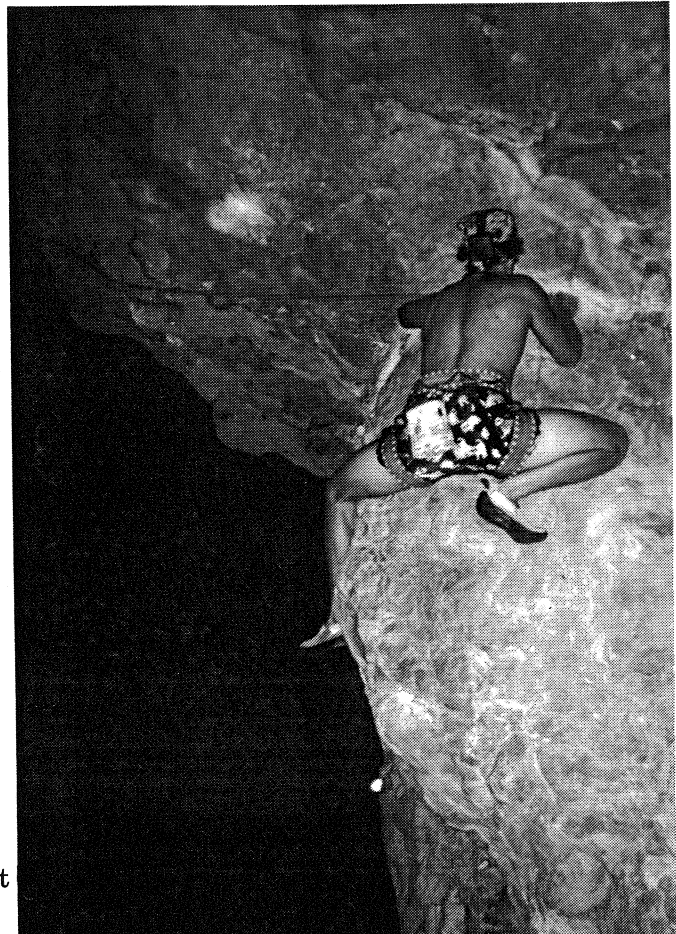
While climbing trips tend to decrease as the weather gets worse, any trips that are to be run over winter will be of intermediate or advanced in nature. If there are any beginners who for some reason were not able to come on one of our beginner trips, I am afraid you will probably have to wait until next semester when the weather improves and beginner trips start up again. In the mean time the best thing you can do is visit an indoor climbing gym on a regular basis, and keep an eye on the climbing folder for any possible theory nights. I am also in the clubrooms most lunchtimes and will be available to help people practise setting up belays on the climbing wall.

Finally I would like to point out to those of you who may not have noticed, but I am running a trip to Nowra in NSW (need to be an Intermediate/Leader who is at least seconding 18 as most climbs are very steep) over the winter break. If anyone is interested and would like more information come and see me.

Happy climbing



Would you give your Visa Card to this man?
Scott Edwards puts on his caring, trusting face.



Dale Cooper seconding a midnight ascent
of Pilot Error (21).

MOTLEY CREW CLIMBS MITRE PEAK

BY DAN COLBORNE

For decades tourists have been drawn to the majesty of Mitre Peak, in Milford Sound. Instead of gazing in awe, I convinced three other climbers to go and attempt this beautiful rocky peak rising 1700 metres straight out of the water. Milford sound is only about 50km as the crow flies from Wanaka, but via road it is over 400km. During the drive, the Priscilla soundtrack echoed across the New Zealand countryside in four very different accents - John, a Scot, Andreas a Swiss, Galit an Israeli, and me. These accents sounded very different due to the Doppler effect from the velocity of the yellow bullet John was driving.

At Milford, we found a fisherman who was willing to ferry us across to the base of the peak. "Gee it's popular this year, eh? You're the second group to climb it this summer, eh." It was March. The fisherman plonked us at the bottom of the ridge, directly across the sound. "Puck yez up in two days"

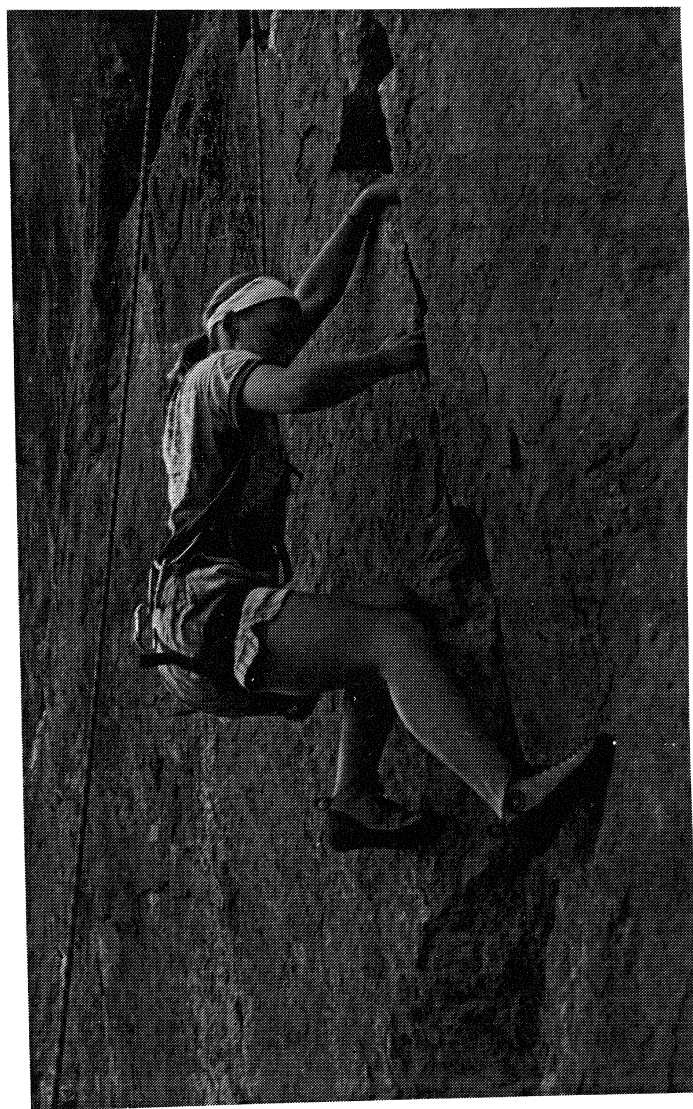
We were on a tiny rocky beach, at the mouth of a Sinbad Creek, with mile high cliffs rising in every direction. Thick, thick scrub hemmed us in onto the beach. The afternoon light glowed on the cliffs.

Then the sand flies hit. Clouds and clouds of them. There was no respite from these tiny little biting insects. Any exposed skin, no matter how much Rid is on it, is fair game. Eyes, ears, nose, mouth. A random clap of the hand would kill about twenty of the blighters. Through this haze we struggled to cook dinner. As the rice boiled it attracted the sand flies, and by the time it was ready, it was grey. Hundreds had suicided in the pot of rice. Mmm, tasty.

A late morning saw us clambering up rocks, through scrub and up trees to 500m asl (ed. - for those of you who don't know, asl is wanky for above sea level - you should never give mountain heights in anything but asl, so the term is rather superfluous) to where the ridge flattens out. Unfortunately, this section is the flightpath to the airport and tourist planes cruise around just above the treetops. Even I grew sick of them! The ridge was surprisingly long, and on the saddle on the other side of The Footstool (of the Mitre, get it?) we decided to bivvy.

We had the time, we were moving slowly due to people's fitness, and weren't going to make it up and back in the day anyway.

Water was a problem. There was a tarn on the ridge, but it was dry! A place that gets eight metres of rain a year, and we couldn't find any water! There was some damp moss at the bottom of the tarn which we squeezed and got a couple of litres of syrup, rather like cola. We filtered it through my silk inner which was probably more of a health hazard than ingesting the handful of sludge per litre that we filtered out.



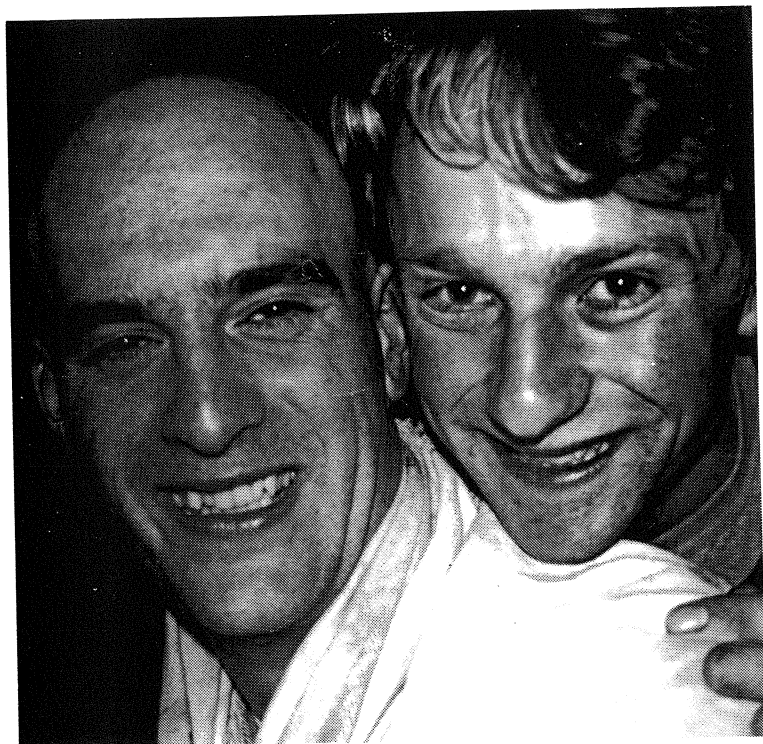
Jenny Johnson in a different disguise
- this one as a climber.

The next morning, I awoke to a thumping headache and a cold, probably not helped by the previous day's dehydration, but I knew the cold was on its way. But soon we were above the tree line onto snowgrass at 1000m asl (ed. there it is again), and the ridge narrowed to two foot wide and dropped away the kilometre either side. Parts of this ridge were very steep too, pulling up on grass tussocks, and the occasional loose rock. After climbing steeply upwards, the ridge flattened briefly on solid shattered rock (!) and the serious, exposed rock scrambling began. Whilst not overly difficult, we had no ropes or any gear, and airy moves 1400m asl (ed. - and AGAIN!) up take on a new meaning. Some rocks were loose too, and one suddenly lurched under my foot, and it's luck that I'm still here. The route then bypassed some bluffs in a step grass couloir, about sixty to seventy degrees, and grass tussocks were the hand holds. It was an amazing view of the tourist boats a mile beneath my feet as I held onto a small plant. Descent through here in the rain would be highly dangerous,

a fact that concerned me as the cloud build-up had increased and it was raining north at Mt Tutoko.

More narrow rocky ribs followed, culminating in moving out onto a crumbling knife edge rock jutting out over a sickening void, and heaving awkwardly upwards. It was not difficult, but reversing it was more than what I was ready for that day, and frustrated and bitterly disappointed I waited while the others moved through the step to the slopes that led to the summit, only ten minutes away. A rock whistling past my head and exploding on a ledge four hundred metres below heralded their return to the rock step.

I was so disappointed and angry with myself, as I knew that I could do it, but was not up to it that day. Although the consequences were severe, I still have to repress those feelings of "I should have gone on". But at least I'm here to repress those feelings. And I can go back.



Good God! What is that? Sam Maffett takes great pride in his monster, "FrankenRak".



Scott Wiltshire hangs about in Tasmania. (I love tacky photo captions).

Wilsons Prom Trip.

I had a dream. I envisioned happy little Oxos all climbing, walking and kayaking in the sunshine, laughing their little heads off with glee. It had to be done. A mega-climbing-kayaking-walking trip that would introduce new members to some of the activities undertaken by MUMC and meet the older members who keep the club going. Hopefully, this sort of trip would encourage the new members to return and go on other trips and not feel intimidated about the whole scene.

Forget retrospect, I knew this would be a pain in the bum to organise from the beginning. Where? How many people would come? What do we charge? In the end, a number of us decided on Wilson Prom and booked campsites for 60 people. O-week put an end to any lingering notions that this would be an easy trip. Trip lists were full, people were throwing money at us. The number of participants was extended to 80 but still there were nasty scenes when people were turned away.

Thankyou to all the leaders who put in a huge effort helping out, and also to all the keen new comers who came along. Thanks also to Kate B., Kim H. and their crutches. It was great watching the expressions on other people's faces when we told them we were from the Mountaineering Club. You could just see them thinking, "Wow, that must be really dangerous - two of them are on crutches".

I have another dream. I envision someone else organising it next year!

Amber Mullens



Above. Mt. Oberon. Amongst the rabble are Rohan, Simon, Chris C., Chris F and Andy Gaff and his poetry book. Below. Waiting for the walk to Sealers Cove.



History In The Making!!

First Ever MUMC Trip On Crutches!!

Not one, but two (and at one stage rumoured to be three) crutcher clad MUMC "oldies" joined the throng of new members who poured to Wilsons Prom for the big MUMC Introductory Weekend.

Despite some doubts as to how our extra appendages would cope with Squeaky Beach sand (or how the chemist would react to sand and salt filled crutches on their return), we decided to brave the shore nethertheless. For two days of luxury, we sunbaked, took in the views (including spectacular eskimo-rolling, climbing and volleyball skills!) and were waited on hand and foot by concerned (and no doubt thankful it wasn't them) fellow members. Possibly not a good ad to up and coming members, but we felt our various experiences and enthusiasm (Western Arthurs and Chemistry Department Stairs) justified our injuries.

All in all, we had a great time hobbling around away from the stresses of the big smoke and encourage all future crutch bound members to come along.

Thankyou to all who helped us out and gave us piggy backs!

Kim Hazeldine and Kate Bradshaw.



Tidal River Tent City.



Dan, Scott, Marty, Kim, Al, Cath, Jenny, Enmoore and Maz at Frenchmans Cap in a freak whiteout.

The Schlong Safari

by Calvin Klein (alias Catherine Kent).

Members:

Nigel '*Fish Sauce*' Prior
Catherine '*Calvin*' Kent
Stu '*Six Foot Schlong*' Richardson
Andy '*The Destroyer*' Lean
Russell '*Nige! Problem!*' Smith
Bec '*The Mounting*' Starling
Richard '*Toula*' Kjar
Alex '*Testes Slap*' Zdziarski
Jane '*Vodka*' Cudmore

Sponsored by:

Toula, Voula, Soula, Roula (and Agape).

The trip began in three halves - Stu, Richard and myself travelling south from Peregrine Beach, and two cars travelling separately from Melbourne - all converging at Goolang Creek. Nigel, Andy, Alex and Jane were lucky to arrive at all after a nasty altercation with a rather large Armidale woman. After Andy almost drove through her, she chased them into the MacDonalds' car park demanding they pay for the drinks she spilt. Needless to say, they refused to pay and went on to dinner regardless of the fat lady still chasing them.

Without a map or Andy remembering where to go, they pressed on regardless and after a few detours (short cuts? That is the first I've heard of a two hour longer short cut.) finally made it to Goolang by midnight, where they were met by an empty bottle of gin, a snoring Stu and two dancing figures.

The next day was a repeat of IV, which was held at Goolang Creek six months previously. The exception this time was that it was Andy 'the Destroyer' and not Stu, who managed to break two paddles in the one day on the same stopper. Meanwhile upstream, Nigel's introduction to Goolang Creek was thoroughly enjoyed by all watching as he got trashed and then swam in the first ten metres. Alex was confused at first as to whether one should paddle down a 3-4 rapid upright or underneath one's boat. He soon learnt that

the former was much more enjoyable and one did not lose as much skin either.

The weather and water were both warm, so we did not bother with thermals and cags. But after leaving half his shoulder on Rocky Corner, Stu decided that the layers of clothing normally worn had distinct advantages besides keeping one warm. So, with numerous injuries, a minimal number of paddles and Russ and Bec turning up, we left for the Nymboida.

After our first day paddling on the Nymboida River, it was suggested that we systematically go through all NSW guidebooks and rip out Section 1 of the Nymboida so no other unfortunates have to suffer the pain. It was a long day of rock scraping and nightmare portages while we tried to paddle the trickle of water they called a river. There were numerous conversations along the lines of:

"Why did we drive for 20 hours to paddle this piece of shit?"

"It would be all right with another 5 metres of water."

The highlight of the day was Russell getting stuck in a rock-squeeze yelling "Nige! Problem!.....Problem! Nige!" Russell has an awesome ability to spot major water hazards and head straight for them. This proves the theory that if you look where you don't want to go, this is exactly where you end up.

A torrential downpour did nothing to help the river level, or our spirits, as we began to wonder whether the bridge we had passed earlier was actually the pull-out point. Thankfully, another bridge came into view and so ended our first day on the famous Nymboida River. Everyone was exhausted to the core and wondered why they did not stay at Goolang another day. This question was answered almost as quickly as the next lightning bolt - if we had let 'the Destroyer' paddle at Goolang any longer, we would have no paddles left.

The next day we began Section 3 of the Nymboida, one of the best whitewater touring trips in Australia. Section 3 was a vast improvement on Section 1. There were many rapids with little flat water in between. One rapid is particularly memorable, the aptly named 'Devil's Cauldron Falls', as this is where Andy was pinned and folded his boat. Luckily he got himself out before he got his legs crushed or other delightful experiences happened (ed - just as well Stu was not in the boat! He would never have been able to get out). The boat was still pinned halfway down the fall and looked like it was not going to move. Stu, not knowing what was going on, barrelled down over the waterfall and somehow knocked Andy's boat out of the way without getting pinned himself.

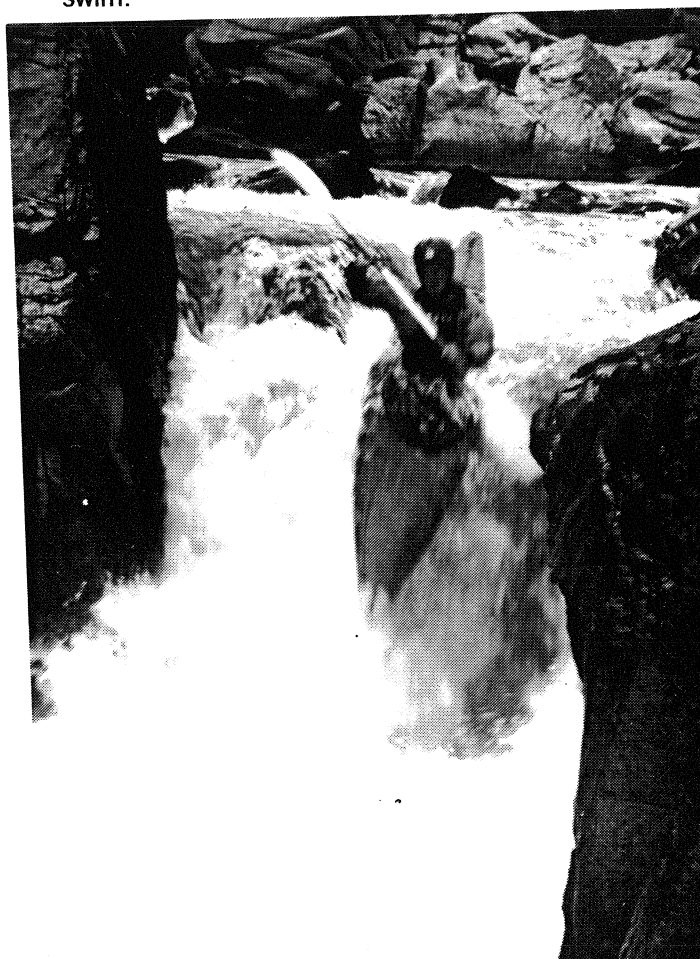
That night, the drivers spent a fun filled three hours navigating dirt roads to do the car shuffle for the overnight touring trip we planned for the next two days. The next morning Richard stumbled out of the car, having slept the night on the back seat. He claimed that when he went to bed the night before, he found Andy sprawled across both thermarests in their tent and could not bring himself to wake him. (There is another version of the story floating around that Richard was too drunk to notice that he had actually crawled into the car and not his tent)

It was the start of an interesting morning. The first debacle of the day came with Andy spilling his tin of powdered milk throughout his boat. The result was a giant milkshake sloshing around and soaking into his gear. The first rapid of the day created carnage, with numerous people swimming or flipping and Russell folding his boat. Everyone paddled over 'The Waterfall' rapid and disappeared into the pool below. There is a great slide of Andy taken just a second too late to actually see Andy - only his paddle is visible, the rest of him and his boat are under the water. For all those

sceptics who would not believe he was under there, the slide has been scrutinised by the paddling board. The conclusion was that you can just make out three fingers on the paddle, which have been identified as Andy's. (The Board's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into). On the next major rapid, described as a 'bouncy chute', I decided next time to take Alex's advice - paddling a grade 3-4 rapid upside down is not pleasant. It was on this day that Bec first earned her nickname; as she spent the day mounting the pyranhas and grounding herself on numerous rocks.

We stopped at a rocky campsite for the night. The claim to fame of this campsite was its cliff and deep pool. The cliff was estimated to be between 8 and 12 metres high, depending on whether the person measuring had jumped off the cliff or not. In true New Zealand style, Nigel led the way with the first leap off - naked. The males all discovered the joys of the 'Testes Slap', whilst Jane found the same problem with parts of the female anatomy. Everyone who jumped gave their rectum a good clean out, despite Stu's advice to 'clench your buttocks'.

The next day was another enjoyable paddle with many good rapids in quick succession. Richard gave everyone a good laugh, swimming twice while surfing a wave. He still insists that he did not touch the deck, it just popped off and he had no choice but to swim.



Cath Kent on the Murrumbidgee River.

The nightmare came at the end of the paddle. The boats had to be dragged about a kilometre up a hill. It took more than a hour to carry them up. I was so hot and dehydrated by the time I reached the top that I had to drink the water out of the boats, as it was all we had. Bec walked up in her bathers and her back peeled for a week afterwards from the sunburn.

We said good-bye and happy new year to Russell, Bec and Richard, who were driving Richard to Brisbane. The rest of us, who couldn't be bothered to cook, had dinner at the Dorriggo pub and then returned to Platypus Flat, a very happening place on New Year's Eve.

New Year's Eve was watching Jane get totally off her face from drinking vodka while holding her nose. The rest of us were not much soberer, but at least we could walk enough to get ourselves to bed, while Jane slept the night outside by the fire.

Many matters of worldly importance were discussed that night. Some useful trivia to come out of that night was that apparently one in four males are flexible enough to be able to put their own schlong in their mouth. Although we had four males present, none of them admitted to being able to do it. They did all agree on the best position in which to try it though - supposedly on your back with your legs behind your head is the best method to adopt.

On New Year's Day, we seemed to lose our paddling God. We began our drive southwards in the hope of finding higher river levels for our last day's paddle. Instead we drove through torrential rains, leaving floods and rising river levels behind us.

Both cars had started protesting against all the driving we were making them do; they both had to be roll-started; Stu's car would not go in the rain; Nigel's car continued its backfiring, and we discovered Stu's roof racks were hanging on by a thread. By 2am we'd all had enough of driving and settled down for a good sleep. Three and a half hours later we were woken by the sun and continued the drive to Wagga Wagga. Along the way we made a list of things to do:

- have an Egg and Bacon McMuffin (a highly debated point)

- fix Nigel's car
- buy new roof racks
- go to the doctor
- have a shower (it had been at least a week since any of us last showered)

We discovered Wagga Wagga is a great place to stop on a paddling trip. It has everything one could need - namely a good mechanic and a McDonald's. It also has a great swimming pool and waterslide, which is highly recommended as a place to go while waiting for the car to be fixed. (It also has good showers). I think we got more bruises on the waterslide than we did while paddling. They also had a ten metre diving platform, which we were again drawn towards. Nigel's new invention was instead of having a height measurement, the diving platform should have a rectum scale; measuring the amount of water shot up your bum. (ed. - I am quite concerned about the attention given to colonic irrigation in this article. Kids, do not attempt this at home, the author and company are obviously experienced professionals).

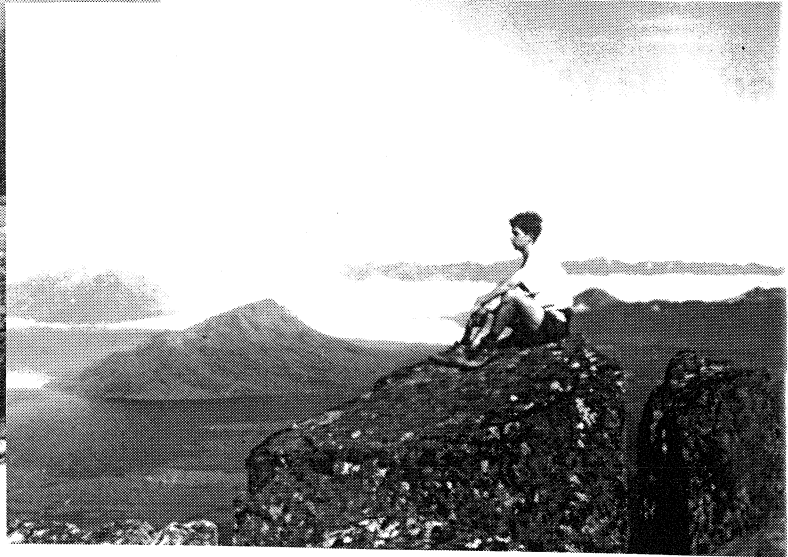
We spent the last day paddling the Murrumbidgee River, the only river in southern New South Wales with a decent amount of water in it. We paddled the section from Bredbo to Collington. Despite being described in the guide book as a dangerous section for experienced paddlers only, it had only a few decent rapids. The most memorable was the three metre waterfall which we all paddled over.

By the last night we knew we were getting closer to home. It was so cold and rainy that we wussed out on the tents and opted instead for the Youth Hostel in Khancoban. It was an absolutely huge place perfect for the end-of-trip party we had planned. The Hostel was ready for a rage but we were not. Everyone was exhausted and in bed by twelve.

The last debacle happened during the drive home. Driving behind Nigel, we were worried when he suddenly pulled over and everyone jumped out. The whole situation looked very fishy. We pulled up behind and as we got out of the car, could smell what the problem was. Nigel's bottle of Fish Sauce had broken and spilt throughout the car and over their luggage. The three of us in Stu's car just laughed as they wrapped their packs in garbage bags. And so ended an awesome trip!!!!!!



Amber Mullens at Mt. Stirling.



Lara Ross, Kate Bradshaw, Andy Gaff and Nigel Prior on a wine tour.



Anton Weller poses on Mt. Feathertop.



Rohan Schaap loves the Snowy Mountain wilderness. Thanks to the Snowy Mountain Authority, you never know where that next bulldozer will pop up.



Peter G. bushwalking in Tasmania. (Yes, Pedro! and yes, bushwalking. Is there no end to his talents?).

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

by Stu Dobbie

A squirrel is scratching at the remains of the previous night's pepperoni and anchovies pizza. I watch with amusement from the comforts of a sleeping bag, sprawled out on a sheet of plastic next to a bear-proof food-box that is "home". The sun is slowly rising above the surrounding wall of pine trees, warming the campground and nearby meadows. The air is full of the smells of pine needles and breakfast cooking on stoves.

Ravn strolls over, stopping to pick the pine sap from his bare feet.

"We climb today!", he greets in his thick rolling Danish accent.

I sit up in the sleeping bag. The sun is bright. Painfully bright. Just another day in the valley, another hang-over, and another day of climbing in paradise.

"Damn! Another lost 'biner.". Slowly the shiny metal carabiner drifts downwards towards the ground. It takes ages, then finally: chink! It lands amongst the boulders several hundred metres below.

Belay finally set up, Ravn jugs the line and takes the lead.

Sometime late last night, between Budweisers and rounds of pepperoni pizza, Ravn and I had agreed to climb The Leaning Tower. The route is a multi-day aid climb, striking wildly up a blank overhung granite face beside the spectacular Bridalveil Falls. I remember standing at the car-park in the half moonlight, trying to work out where the route wanders up the steep granite cliffs towering above, harangued by wails of pain from the 3-door Corsica behind, crammed with ten or-so drunk climbers who were calling for another crazy lap of the valley and back to the bar.

Soon the rope sags upwards from the belay, clipped into various assortments of placements from thin rusted 1960's bolts to rivets and "fixed" mashies. Ravn dangles from a hook, unconcerned by the incredible exposure.

At nineteen Ravn had left school, then worked in a gear store in Denmark only long enough to afford an air-ticket to the United States. He doesn't even like free-climbing, he just wants to climb big walls. He is also built like an ox, and combined with an inexhaustable supply of enthusiasm for Yosemite's classic big wall routes, made the perfect climbing partner.

We finish the last pitch of the first day by torch-light, and abseil down a diagonal fixed line to a tiny bivvy ledge. Soon we are snug in sleeping bags, slurping down Spaghetti-O's and commenting on how much traffic there is down in the valley tonight. One last check that the anchors are solid, harness done up, then I snuggle down into the bivvy bag and start dreaming, dreaming of steep granite and endless perfect jam cracks.

The next day we're aiding a great roof, ten meters above and as many meters out from the belay. I toss a few old manky tie-offs back down at Ravn to wake him up and let out more rope. Whee-hee! Swinging in the wind, I balance to place the next Friend vertically upwards into the roof crack. Beneath is just the warm Californian summer air, and the valley far, far below.

We top out after dark. I want to bivvy on the summit but Ravn is already sick of canned Spaghetti-O's and wants more beer and pizza. We rappel the ten pitches down a rubbishy chimney. I head down first with the haul bag tied to the stitch plate. It manages to scoop up tonnes of rubble and shove it down into the blackness below. We bottom out after midnight, and descend the now enlarged scree slope back to the car-park. A family of perfectly spherical Americans are having a late dinner in the car-park, so we entertain them with tales of three days of climbing until they offer us a lift back to camp.

The world is twisted and wretched when you look at it through the foggy glass of a Budweiser. We're in the Mountain Room Bar, and I've managed to piss the waitress off yet again because I forgot the obligatory fifteen percent tip. It's raining outside, so

Sunnyside Campground's inhabitants are drowning their non-climbing sorrows in the bar, talking about life, climbing, and dreams of "tomorrow".

Pete mumbles something about heading back to Colorado when the rain stops. He says that every day. Once we set off to climb The Nose of El Capitan together. Less than a day up, he decides he wants to go home to Colorado *again*, so we rap off and he tosses his haul bag into his car and zooms down Highway 61. He is back by sundown. "Pete Repeat" we call him.

I wonder if the German girl "Muff'n" will ever leave. She rode her bike across the continent, so the story goes, and was heading back to Germany to a good job. She was just making a quick visit to Yosemite before flying out. She eventually sold her bike to buy climbing boots.

Muff'n climbs a lot with Valerie, a beautiful Puerto Rican. In true American pioneer style, she drove across America to the promised Californian sun and granite. Along the way she picked up Dave, an Aussie, who was hitch-hiking between crags. I first met him in the valley's post office; he'd grown a beard, but I still recognized him as the same David I'd met at Arapiles last summer, practicing yoga on a thermarest in the Pines.

Suddenly the rope leaps into the air, and the anchor, ropes, slings and my body are thrown into the rock face.

"Fuuuuuuuuuaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaarrk!" cries Andy from above. A moment's silence, then a barrage of cursing descends.

"Fuckin'-five-nine-offwidth-thrutch-fukin-aid-pitch..."

"Err, trouble Andy?", I call back. Once the belay becomes slack, I step out on the ledge and peer upwards into the rain. No sign of him, must be too high up. I shrug, and look down instead. Below is acres and acres of smooth white granite. Then the speckled carpet of the high Sierra pines, and finally the meadows on the valley

floor. I check the anchors just one more time.

The rain stops for a while. I look back down the valley. Black storm clouds are brooding in the distance.

Andy finally finishes aiding the horror pitch, and I jug up the icy ropes to meet him.

The fabulous Californian summer sun thankfully returns. Lethargy from the dusty dry heat envelops Sunnyside, so Andy and I hitch up to Toulumne Meadows, in search of the higher altitude cooler air and classic back-country routes.

We follow an old fisherperson's trail up to Cathedral Lake, and set up camp. Both Andy and I live out of our backpacks and so we brought everything. Two tents, two stoves, four ropes, two racks, enough photography equipment for a Discovery Channel documentary, and a slab of Samuel Adams beer. It takes several trips from the road to bring it all in, and "Camp Decadence" as we call it was so well supplied that two backpacking Germans saw us from a hill and set up camp next to us (without saying a word) thinking we were the Toulumne Meadows campground.

As evening draws, the alpine glow brings oranges and reds to the white granite, and Cathedral Peak is ablaze. The sharp pinnacle is irresistible, rising above the rolling sweeps of granite and pine infested valleys. We decide to climb it the following day.

After endless hours of leading up perfect granite cracks, Andy finally tackles the last pitch, I second, and haul myself onto the table-top summit. There is just enough room for the two of us. Andy and I agree this is the best climbing we've ever done. In every direction there are granite domes, ridges, pine valleys, blue lakes and meadows. Beneath is just the warm Californian summer air, and the world far, far below.

Memorable Moments - The summer of '96.

A large MUMC contingent flew south this summer. Having heard colourful tales of adventure from more senior club members, it was time to see Tassie for ourselves. Little did we know!!

ACTV...oops! We mean ATCV! (Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

Enmoore Lin and Kim Hazeldine flew into Hobart on Australia Day to join two Canadians and two English girls for a week of culture and hilarity in the depths of Tassie's lush rainforests, south west of the barren and desolate Queenstown. Led by ATCV's vibrant Rebecca, our task was to play God and redirect the flow of the Bird River as it swept under a historical railway bridge, in an effort to reduce erosion and damage to ancient timbers. Built in 1899 and used to transport ore from Queenstown's mines to Macquarie harbour, this beautiful Huon pine structure is a one of a kind and well worth preserving. In between filling huge wire baskets (gabions) with river rocks, we swam, chatted about our different cultures and backgrounds, drank in the spectacular scenery and munched on delicious home made bread brought in daily by the ranger. A worthwhile experience and heaps of fun!

This is summer????

1cm

1inch

1 foot

1 m

We watched the rivers slowly rise. From the day we all gathered by the Franklin to begin our expedition through the famous mud-baths of the Lodden Plains and up to Frenchmans Cap, through to the day of miracles in the Western Arthurs when the sun actually shone ALL day, we put up with 12 constantly wet, grey days - continuous drizzle causing very wet boots, socks, feet, gaiters, shorts, T-shirts, undies and spirits!!

Never have we been more glad to see a hut than at the end of day one of Frenchman's Cap. Leaving the highway in the drizzle, we were given one mountain to climb and warm up our legs before being plunged (only knee deep if we were lucky) into viscous mud. It is very disconcerting not knowing how deep your foot will end up each step and not much fun pulling personage plus pack from the dark depths! This was the type of walk you hear horror stories about but never quite believe. (ed's bushwalking tip - This kind of walking is actually quite easy. You make the shortest person go first. That way you can check how deep the mud is, or in a worse case scenario and the short person goes completely under, you can use their body as something solid to stand on when you cross). It just has to be experienced.

Following a night in that luxurious hut, with its equally stylish composting loo (and an interesting variety of OXO men in the log book!), we experienced a day of walking that could not have been more different. The track up to Sharlands Peak and through Baron Pass, then along the Artichoke Valley provided mind-blowing views, dotted with haunting King Billy Pine skeletons, spectacular lakes and everlasting mountain ranges. This is what walking in Tasmania is all about.

To make it worthwhile, do everything twice!!

This could well have been the motto of our trip and it started with Frenchmans Cap. The novelty of sitting in Tahune hut wore off after several games of 500 and Warlocks and Scumbags, so over our delicious lunch of crushed biscuits, cheese and peanut butter, it was decided that we would try and bag the peak anyway. Our climb went well despite not actually seeing a thing and we returned satisfied. This however was amended the next morning as we awoke to glorious sunshine that required our second climb and rewarded us with spectacular views (and even a patch of snow). Wow!!

Put it all down to a learning experience.

Six days later saw six of the same people making our first attempt at Moraine A - up onto the amazing and rugged Western Arthurs Range. Just how rugged we didn't discover until rounding the final corner to the summit plains where we were met by ferocious winds and chilling sleet. Not what we considered to be favourable walking conditions! While sheltering to rescue one member from near hypothermia, it was a unanimous decision to retreat and try again later.

Sitting the next day out at Junction Creek and staring wistfully up at the cloud covered ranges, we decided to repeat the previous day's journey - back to Scotts Peak Dam to deliver Cath to the bus to Hobart (a repetitious pattern begins to form). Safely returned, we spent the night discussing dinner menus with our neighbouring camp from Newcastle University, who carried 30kg plus packs for their "gourmet tour of the Western Arthurs". It is no wonder we beat them to the top - couscous and packet sauce v's fresh meat and vegies!!

MUMC Movie Stars! Launching our careers.

13/2/96 dawned sunny, warm and DRY! Miracles can happen. We packed early and began the "race" to the top. The other competitors were our 4 food laden Newcastle friends, three middle aged Perth men and two Americans - we had all been waiting for this day! Moraine A was in complete contrast the second time around. Awesome views all the way to the top, including Mt Anne and the beautiful Lake Pedder. Up on the summit plains of Mt Hesperus, it was hard to imagine we had been chilled to the bone here two days before as the hot summer sun threatened sunburn and dehydration. Those weather map highs were keeping their promises! Once again, spectacular views greeted us from the top - rugged mountain ranges and perfect crater lakes. This was the place to be!

Also waiting for such a perfect day were the film crew for a group called "Walking the Fine Line". They look after walker education and track management in the Tasmanian wilderness. Making a video to supplement their poster displays, they were flying over the Western Arthurs and interviewing walkers in the area. Thus, as we descended into the beautiful Lake Cygnus area for lunch and a much looked for swim in the icy waters, we were pounced upon to provide our views and comments. An odd and out of place event! We look forward to viewing our complementary copy some time in June.

Survival of the Fittest

During our tent-bound day at Junction Creek, our original ambition had been shortened from an entire traverse, to being thrilled to make it as far as the famous Lake Oberon and pleased to simply glimpse a crater lake! On the night of the 13th, we achieved the Oberon dream. We stood at the top of the Oberon crater looking down at a lake even more beautiful than Pater Dombrovskis' poster - an amazing sight. Our descent to camp was slow as we drank in the views and scrambling down the difficult path.

We began our trip with 11, lost two to the Overland Track and two to the Walls of Jerusalem, then one in Hobart and Cath at Scotts Peak Dam. Down to five, I was the next to fall off the pack with a dislocated knee. On the helicopter flight out, I speculated as to who would be the lone survivor! As I write this, Enmoore, Jen, Marty and Joel continue their Western Arthurs Traverse, and after such an epic trip, I'm sure it's time luck was on their side!

Kim Hazeldine.



Danny Tropp and Marty Meyer celebrate their birthdays at Vera Hut (Frenchmans Cap Walk). Kim Hazeldine says, "Note the port and Tim-Tams", but I'm afraid I can't see any 2lt casks there Kim.

Easter At Arapiles

Despite the number of trips the club runs, the Easter Arapiles trip is always hugely popular and this year was no exception. Even though we had over forty people come along, we were once again forced to turn many people away at the trip meeting. We never like doing this, but unfortunately the club has only the resources for a finite number of people.

With Peter Kreisner having gone climbing in South Australia, most of us thought our Petzels were to safely remain in our packs this trip. Boy were we wrong. I don't think there was a night where we didn't have at least two groups spend a large part of their evening on the rock.

Ralph and Alex, or Dog and Frog as they are more affectionately known to some, set the early pace by returning well after dark the first two nights. In one case Frog was left to negotiate an over hang in the dark and ended up having to be hauled up the cliff. Not to be out done, Andrew Selby-Smith, Andy Wear, and Sam Carter took up where Dog and Frog left off, bringing their respective groups back hungry. While I'm sure Pete would have been proud of you all, Sam really stood out as a possible heir to the Kreisner throne. Deciding against a bivvy, Sam and co. made it back to camp sometime just before midnight. Thus completing his 11hr siege of Aracnus.

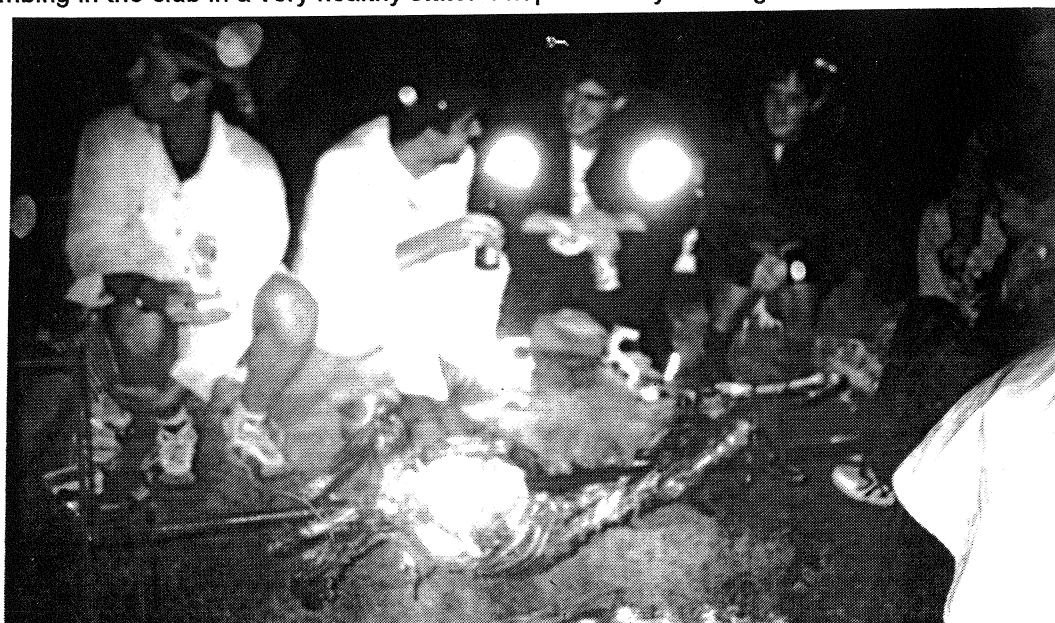
While climbing was done during the day (mostly), the onset of darkness brought new challenges and fun. As with Friday night, Saturday night continued into the wee hours of the morning much to the annoyance of many of those silly enough to be camped around us. With the start of a slight drizzle most of us took shelter in the auto-tent, where numerous stupid games were played. In fact one of the three RMIT climbers (whom we were fortunate to see butt-naked after they lost the tarp game) who continued to hang around us (apparently because everyone else in their club is a couple and had gone to bed) said "you guys have a pissweak fire, but you do play cool games".

MUMC also relived the lost tradition of having a roast spit at Araps over Easter this trip. With the art of spitting lost in the club some 20 years ago, experience was severely lacking. However, with what was lacking in experience was made up by a large number of enthusiastic beginners, who volunteered to turn the spit in five minute shifts for four hours.

While it was great we had good climbing, entertaining nights, reasonable weather and a roast spit, for me perhaps the most significant aspect of the whole trip, was the emergence of MUMC as a hackie-sac force. With new names such as Faris, Cooper, Cossens, and Parberry coming through the ranks the future of hackie in the club has never looked better. For all those beginners out there wanting to learn to hack, keep your eye on the climbing folder for hackie-sac trips.

All in all it was a very entertaining and enjoyable trip. It was great to see many new faces, as well as a few intermediates have their first leads and others gain valuable experience seconding. Thanks to all the leaders who helped out with intermediates and beginners. Your contribution has left climbing in the club in a very healthy state. I hope to see you all again there next year.

-Cuan Petheram



The Incredibly Cool and Courageous Classic Cow Count

We recently had a successful trip to the Baw Baw Plateau with nine keen cow counters. The count was organised by the DCNR and aimed to find out which areas of the mountain are inhabited by feral cows. The cows are rarely seen on the mountain but cause erosion and damage to vegetation. The DCNR wished to find out more information about the number and movements of the cows in order to formulate an eradication plan.

The plan was to scout your area of the mountain, looking out for any traces of cows - such as trails, campsites or pats. Although no MUMC members actually spotted any cows, we did manage to find a six pack of beer, a \$2 coin and a woollen beanie (ed - definitely a far more useful find).

Altogether, there were 130 people involved and the results have been used to determine patterns of movements and the campsites of cattle. The plan of eradication is for the DCNR to attract the cows to a camp which can be reached by road or helicopter. The cows will then be shot and transported out.

Once we have eradicated the cows, we can start on the downhill skiers.

Mt. Stirling

Everybody's help will be needed in the next couple of months to defend Mt Stirling from turning into a contaminated, bulldozed, gondola-infested downhill ski resort.

Soon the Minister for Planning will appoint an independent panel to consider all aspects of the development proposal, including the findings of the Environmental Effects Statement and submissions from the public. The panel will then make recommendations to the Minister about the future of Mt Stirling.

Ways in which you can help defend the mountain from Grollo will be by:

- making a written submission to the panel;
- meeting the panel in person;
- caring enough to speak up and be prepared to fight.

Stay tuned for more information about when to act. Watch the conservation board for the latest Mt Stirling Newsletter.

Paper Recycling

There is now a box in the clubrooms for paper recycling. It is located in front of the rubbish bin. Please use it!

-Cath Kent.

"Here Cowy Cow Cow".
MUMC members struggle
to find signs of damage to
the environment.
Can you see any?



EVALUATIVE CRITERIA IN THE SEARCH FOR MY FAVOURITE TOILET

Andrew Gaff

What should I look for in a toilet that can allow me to compare it with others using an evaluative gaze? Perhaps I should look at how well it performs its function. Lets face it though, it's me performing my function that counts. With respect to function, toilets only stand out when they are not up to the task at hand. Any toilet that is not functioning won't allow me to function and is not going to be my favourite toilet. So performance of function is not a useful criteria for the task of finding my favourite toilet.

Since function is blocked, perhaps aesthetic criteria are the go - they are certainly removed from function...at least pink toilets always seem to work as well as white. However most toilets always seem much the same in appearance (not even Cinema Nova has interesting versions¹) and I have certainly never found one so different and interesting in appearance that I have thought of it as my favourite - or even close to it.

But, progress is made in my search when I turn my gaze away from the toilet itself to its surrounds. Yes, you're right, the door is boring, the smell is awful and I too wish those flies would go away. Now open the door (be careful, there may be a queue outside) and admire the view. The best I've seen from a constructed toilet is at Long Harry (Stewart Is., NZ) where there is a lovely view across the ocean from the cliff edge. It is said that from this spot you can even watch the penguins returning to their nests for the night. Surely a fabulous toilet. And yet, if views are important, then to my mind, one should leave the confines of corrugated iron and walk bravely to the top of a mountain, paper and trowel in hand. Like a dog in a forest, mountain tops have always pressed hardest on my bladder whether I am at Mt. Feathertop, Mt. Eccles or K2. Beware, the Niggerheads are both daunting and exhausting, not to mention draining.

But why should only site be included? Broaden your field of perception, include now the whole of the experience. Reach deep in yourself². Take in your environment, engage the experience totally and expel all unwanted matter.

Here at last is where the true criteria for evaluating toilets can be found - in the experience in its entirety. The relief, the relaxation and, being a man who enjoys small luxuries, the comfort.

There can be no doubt that after days in the bush, the first visit to your home toilet is the best. The experience can be enhanced by using the appropriate aids such as a good book or magazine (popular choices are Cleo and National Geographic, though my preference is the New York Review of Books).

Here at last is where the true criteria (mentioned above) is situated. My favourite toilet will be the homeliest, with climate control and good books to hand, paper on the roll and spare incase you run out - it's definitely worth waiting for.

¹ true, the Clyde toilets in O-week are always different from the norm, both in colour and texture, but they will never be my favourite.

² Each of you will know how deep inside you must go.

Slush

Joel - "Carys and Alex were doing it everywhere - In the car, in the pizza shop, in the cave, they were even doing it with her on the front seat and him on the back seat!"

Richard Kjar - "I definitely scored it internally".

Bec: "Please don't tie me up Russell"

Russ: "That's not what she normally says!"

Rik Thornclyft - "I can't stop thrusting."

"Oh good, I can keep banging away at it until it dies" - Matt Lang.

"I turned away for a moment then it was all over before it began", - MUMC beginner at Araps.

Tanja to Ruth, - "I'll go on top, but I'm not taking my shoes off".

Steve Curtain - "Oh God, it's in me!"

Admiration from everyone for Cuan Petheram, who showed the Sports Association what he thought of the Sports Ball aboard the Polly Woodside by sliding down the ropes that tethered the ship to the wharf. Pity about his friend who tried to follow Cuan's lead.....and fell in the water, black tie and all.

Richard Kjar sums up a recent trip, - "Whale of a woman!, whale of a boat!, whale of a time!"

Enmoore: "I want the whip!"

"If I set my mind to it, I can pick up anyone I want", - Richard Kjar.

Stu, - "Coffee-fucking-plunge my arse".

"It's amazing how much fun you can have with one condom!", - Jess.
On relating the above Slush comment to Richard Kjar, he replied, - "Hey, that sounds like something I would say".

Catherine Kent helping to select a group video, - "I don't want any with mindless violence. We just want one showing mindless sex, don't we Stu".

Read This.....Very Important

The next edition of the Mountaineer will be the send out edition which goes to all club members. I found it extremely difficult to get items for this Mountaineer, especially photos, so could everyone please put in a big effort for the next one. Articles MUST be in by the **12th of July** in order to give the required notice for the Annual General Meeting.

The hills are alive with the sound of Rik.



Soph and Sam.



Regina Kjar looking seductive.



Kate Bradshaw cuts a fine figure.

