

MUMC DO NOT STEAL.
COPY.

MOUNTAINEER

MAGAZINE OF THE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
HO-HUM-WHERE'S-THE-SNOW-EDITION MAY 1997



Editorial

Hi all. Thanks to all those wonderful people who gave me articles. Unfortunately I haven't had room to publish them all in this edition, but they will be in next issue. Just a quick reminder that I only publish articles given to me on disk (I am not a secretary), and IBM disks are definitely preferable. From now on NO HANDWRITTEN OR TYPED ARTICLES will be accepted unless accompanied by a disk. Thanks. A big thanks to my assistant Ed, Scott E, and to Alex for keeping me company in the dark room.

Well, we're into the cold season, and praying for the snow. Amber asked me to add in her presidents report, so here it is: BRING ON THE SNOW. Thanks Amber, that was very articulate. Everyones enthusiasm has been fired up by Steve, Marty, et al on the ski info night last week, now we're just playing the waiting game. Hopefully this season will see heaps of women skiers on trips, and also females running trips. Especially those who were on the Sports Union sponsored women's ski week last year. Let's show those guys how to telemark with grace rather than grunt !!

See you on the slopes
Lisa Flew
Publications Officer



Scroggin'

*Thanks to all those who helped out on the type-in night. We now know who has and who hasn't joined the club!!

*The First Aid course, organized by Andy Selby Smith is going well, with a few weeks left to go. A note from Andy : could all those with MUMC First Aid Kits please return them to the gear store.

*Rogaining IV is being held on the weekend 18th -20th July in the Central Flinders Ranges in S.A. See the bushwalking trip folder for more details, or hassle Alan.

*All those who haven't paid their polo fees pay up now.

*MUMC has been successful in a bid for a conservation grant of \$9900. Check our conservation notice board for details and further information.

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Front cover: Deb Rossell exiting a cave, her usual smiley self

BACK COVER: SAM "ICEMAN" MAFFETT

The Western Arthurs

One sunny day in summer time,
(Abnormal for the Tassie clime!)
We made a pledge to do our best
To full traverse the Arthurs West.

The group was fit, no injuries -
Well, only ankles, backs and knees.
Listening to my groaning back,
I caught the muttered word 'daypack'.

A sprint across a plain knee-deep
In mud, - we'd got to Junction Creek.
From there, the track wound gently up.
"A stroll", said Steve, between each puff.

Theo complained about his knee,
Deciding it did not agree,
With the harshness of the track -
He and Niko had to turn back.

So we bade them a fond goodbye,
But as they turned, we heard a cry.
We looked at Kath, who blushed and said,
"There's something weighing on my head."

"But that's not all - it hurts my back.
D'you have some spare room in your pack?"
"Of course," said Niko, "Anything."
And watched to see what Kath would bring.

We turned again, the tension rose,
A snort was heard from near Steve's nose.
Amazed, we watched as, with some coyness,
Kath brought forth a climbing harness.

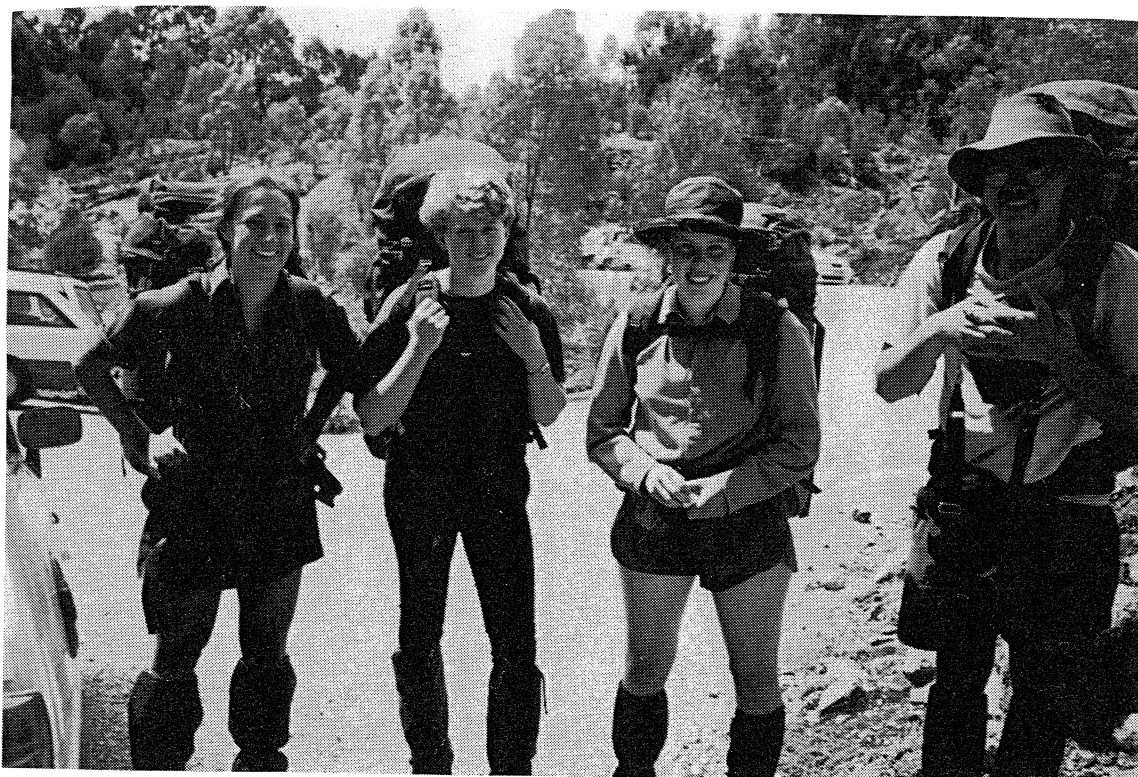
"Why?", the obvious question 'rose.
"Well, just in case," said Kath, "Who knows?"
On we marched with one pack smaller,
And Kath at least a half inch taller.

Arriving at the top of Hayes,
We saw the view we'd seen for days:
The damn dam met us stare for stare,
So far away, yet always there.

We learned to take what Chapman said
As understating what he meant.
The map said 'steep' in letters small -
It meant the track was vertical.

Some days later, walking out
From up ahead, I heard a shout -
And suddenly, my humble daypack
Was demoted - to a bum bag.

By Andrea Kneen



Andrea, Ruth, Jill and Steve, in Scotts Peak Dam carpark
about to start the Western Arthurs track.

OXO SKI

A Beginner's Guide

Tom Stringer



With the '97 ski season fast approaching and the feet of those hardened telemarkers and snow junkies just itching to get into some frozen water, we should pause to reflect on what makes the MUMC ski trips the unmitigated success they invariably are. Whether you are a hell-raising, cornice jumping, ice-shredding maniac or someone who's never skied cross-country before, the club has the trip for you. This year's skiing convener, Marty Meyer, has vowed to ensure that the number of trips will increase dramatically to allow everyone to "get into it".

For those of you unfortunate enough to have never been cross-country skiing before, you should make it your duty to do so this year. With the hot, dry summer coming to a close, we predict a season to rival the best we've had. What does this mean? It means some of the most spectacular skiing you can get in places many have only seen photos of, and experiences that only skiing trips can provide. What's more, it doesn't matter if you've never even seen snow before, four months is plenty of time to get some experience, get those "tele's" happening and get out the back where the slopes are steep and the snow's deep.

Here follows a short list of words, phrases and names that will come as a great help to those of you who are even a little intrigued. Let's start from the beginning;

Trip Folder: Yep, you've heard it all before. This is the first step to the pristine slopes of Stirling, Feathertop and Kosciuszko. Check the folders at regular intervals (at least hourly) and get your name down fast. Remember that this isn't signing a contract forcing you to go, it's simply an expression of interest, but putting your name down early does allow you to go on a trip that may be overfull.

Martin / Marty / Mardy etc.: One of the more useful names in the MUMC skiing dictionary. Marty is, as many of you know, our skiing convener and is the guy to ask about all things white and icy. Often found burrowed into a chair in the club rooms, this quiet, telemarking, harmless animal can be convinced to come and chat. If not, just try shouting "three metres of snow fell on Stirling last night!" and he should appear very rapidly.

Lake Mountain: For many of us, this is where it all began. Only an hour and a half from Melbourne, this beginner friendly mountain is about as scary to skiers as the pool is to paddlers. With a reasonable variety of trails it provides plenty of skiing for those who are just giving it a try, without any real possibility of becoming "geographically embarrassed". Look out for these trips early in the season so you can sharpen your skills for later on.

Port / Wine et al.: An essential ingredient for any club trip but particularly on those cold nights huddled in the "party tent" as the snow outside increases by several feet for the next days carving. (Quality is of no concern, in fact the cheaper the port the better! However, be warned to avoid Brendan on the question of wines, you don't want to die of hypothermia fighting to stay awake.)

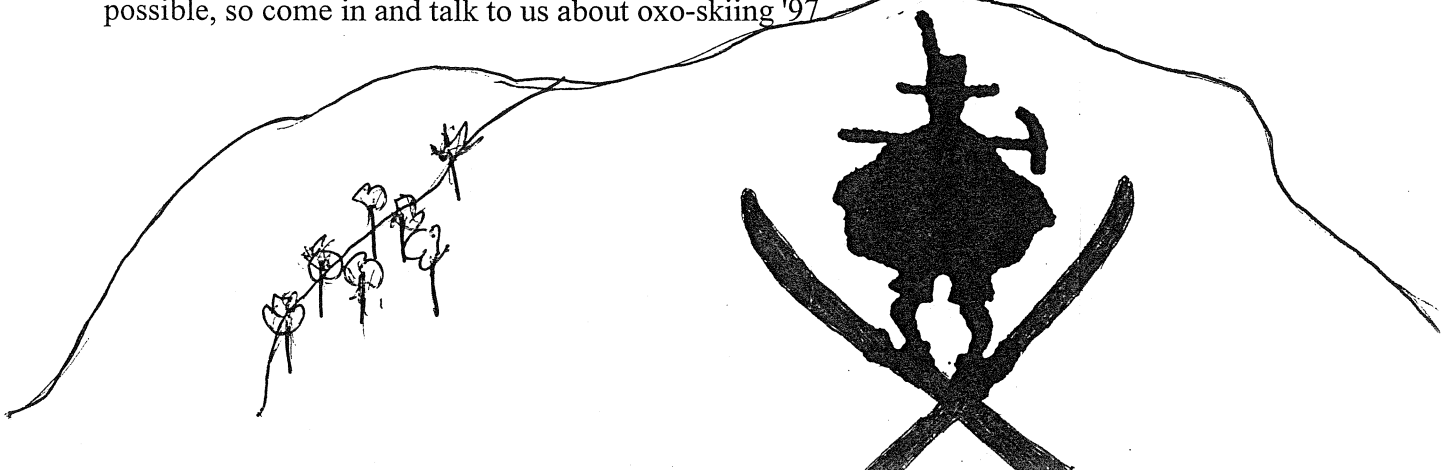
Mt. Stirling: Grollo tried to develop this gem and for good reason. He seemed to catch on to the concept that all those damn cross-country skiers kept going back because it's got some of the best, most accessible slopes in the state. All we can say is "Sucked in Grollo! This baby's ours!" and we love it. Situated next to Mt. Buller, Stirling offers a huge range of trails from beginner to advanced and the summit area has some of the nicest slopes you could hope to ski, from the green slide off the top to the gut-wrenching 50 degrees down Stanley's bowl.

XCD: This is what you'll hear the likes of Brendan E. and Steve Curtain talking about, accompanied with strange dance-like moves apparently representing the act of telemarking a hellish slope. It in fact stands for: Cross-country-downhill. This is a sport for anyone but most enjoyed by those have got their telemarks happening. Essentially it involves skiing to some awesome bowl or slope somewhere where the powder's deep and the gradient a little steeper than your average touring trail.

Telemark: Some argue it is the only way to ski down a hill. A skill that takes some practice, but when mastered, is one of the most satisfying and graceful actions that leaves downhill skiers looking like the end result of an MUMC pub night.

Girly ski: An initiative of the sports union's gender balance scheme whereby a group of ten or so of our luckiest MUMC girlyies were sent to Mt. Buller last year to learn to telemark (fully subsidised!). Unluckily, this year the scheme has been scrapped but that is not an excuse for the female members of the club to avoid cross-countrying. Oh no, on the contrary. Now we have a core of willing, highly trained women skiers who will lead trips this year and hopefully encourage as many "girly skiers" as possible. If you don't want to talk to Marty for some reason, have a chat to Amber.

The list could go on for ever but I'll stop there. As you can tell, excitement is mounting, the skis are getting dusted off and the weather's looking more and more promising. If you've ever considered cross-country skiing, or even if you haven't, give it a crack this year and find out what all the fuss is about. If you didn't before, you now know a few useful facts about MUMC skiing. Remember to check the folders and keep an eye out for those beginner trips earlier in the season. For those of you with more experience and an eye for suicide, try and get hold of Marty, Amber, Brendan or Steve for a quick adrenalin fix. We want to get as many people on the slopes (and flats) this year as possible, so come in and talk to us about oxo-skiing '97



THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

Kim Hazeldine (accompanied by Enmoore Lin, Dan Tropp, Marty Meyer, and Ralph Gailis)

"Let's go to New Zealand next year!"

"Oh Wow! We should seriously!"

And so, leaving last years' epic Tassie tales behind, determined to break new ground in '97, we boarded our Air NZ flight to Christchurch. "Going tramping are you?" inquired the customs man, suspiciously prodding our snaplocks of crushed dried broccoli, carrots, eggplant and potato - not to mention the kiwi fruit and strawberries. Thankfully he seemed to understand the strange antics of overseas walkers and, with some interested queries on how we dried it, let us carry our precious lightweight goods into his country.

We viewed Christchurch in a different light, or actually in now much at all as we waited out our first night. From Maccas to a depressing bus shelter, then on to the upmarket Flag Hotel foyer couches, thanks to the sympathetic nightman, confirming our decision that it was worth avoiding youth hostel costs after all.

Our first great walk was the Routeburn- a beautiful four day tramp that can be run in one, as proven by four not-so-young but incredibly fit and enthusiastic men who passed us in a cloud of dust on our second

day. It was a great warm-up walk for us, and our first exposure to the amazing sharp, snow covered peaks and incredible icy blue rivers. We avoided the luxury \$28 a night, flush loo, stove provided huts and occupied our pre-booked campsites (a bit more of a wilderness experience).

It was on the Routeburn that we had our first encounter with the one and only fiend of Fiordland. The most incredibly revolting, bloodthirsty creatures I've ever come across - so much itch produced by such a small, silent body! Without its tiny black sandflies, NZ's southern-most wilderness area would be heaven! Aeroguard and Vitamin B tablets, layers of thermals - nothing did any good, time being the only healing factor. Only after being driven to the point of insanity did the itch subside as our bodies became more immune to the bites. Give us Aussie snakes and spiders any day - at least they don't flock towards you in great silent swarms (despite impressions New Zealanders have of our bush creatures).

Following the Routeburn we hitched down to Milford Sound to do the touristy thing, but it was after this that our real adventure began.

The Dusky track!!

The philosophy of the Dusky:
to attempt the Dusky is a challenge,
To complete the Dusky is an accomplishment,

so

Don't complain about the

-hard grunts

-deep bogs

-sandflies

-the long days

Just enjoy

the physical exercise

the great scenery (when you get it !)

the alpine flora

and the solitude

(after all, that's what you came for)

You chose the Dusky

not the Milford or the Kepler

so DOC don't change this track!

This philosophy, found in the back of the hut logbook on our last night, fairly well sums up our incredible 9 day walk in the deep south of Fiordland. To begin the track, a small speedboat took us across Lake Hauroko - a 45 minute trip across the spectacular and mysterious waters of the deepest lake in NZ, right into the heart of the wilderness. Pulses quickened as the boat dropped us off and disappeared back into the mist. No turning back now!! Thank God (and all those who lent us food dryers) for our dried food. We wouldn't have wanted to have to lift much more as we heaved our packs on and followed Edith and Nick (a Kiwi couple) and two Canadians through the forest.

Nine days seems a lifetime, but after about day three the time flew. Legs got used to the pace, shoulders strengthened, hair got beyond the greasy stage, packs gradually lightened and before long it was the last night and we were left wishing we could turn around and do the whole thing again. So many memories.

The track follows the river valley for the first two days, then swings up to Lake Roe with its hut and spectacular Tarns above. Guarded by the Rock People (who now number three thanks to our Australian creativity) we spent our spare day in the hut waiting out bad weather. We feasted on gourmet meals, strengthening our reputations as "The Mad Aussies with all that food", while being entertained by one of the two DOC workers helicoptered in to paint this remote hut. He kept himself amused getting weather forecasts on the mountain radio and sustaining a diet consisting almost entirely of chocolate. We left him with plenty of stories to pass on to following trampers.

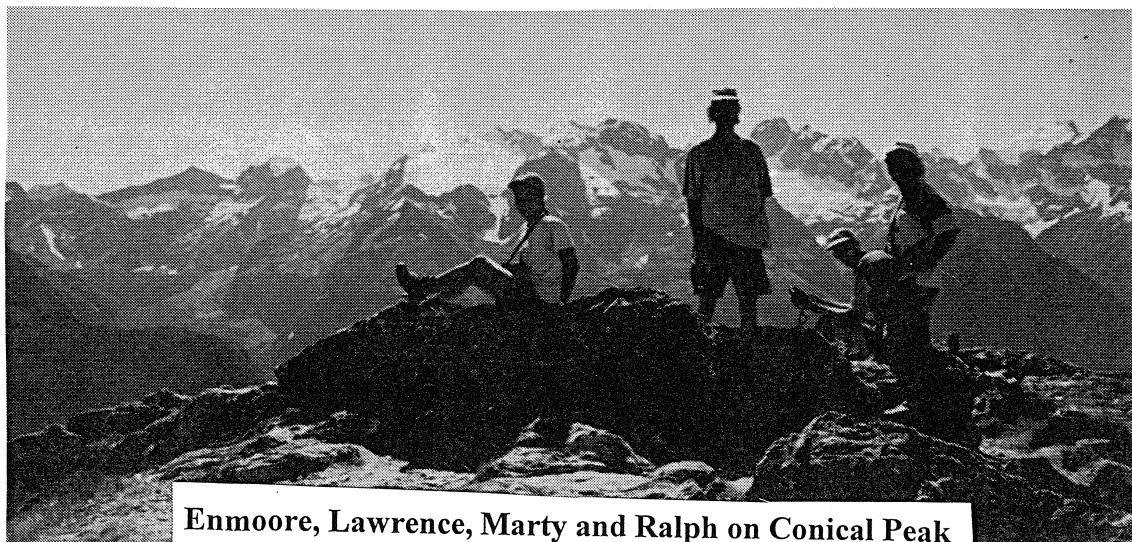
From Lake Roe we headed across and steeply down to Loch Maree, with the longest

walkwire of the trip (remember that one Ralph?) then out to the Supper Cove and the sea at Dusky Sound. Whose idea was it to take the low tide track for the last section of the day??..... Five pairs of very wet feet later, we arrived at, what was for me, the most spectacular hut of the tramp. Failing to catch fish for tea (how come every one else in the logbook could? All that rowing in the hut dingy for nothing!) meant it was back to the normal diet of soup, pasta and desert.ahh, that cappuccino mousse!!!

One miserable day of rain-walking later, we found ourselves back a Loch Maree Hut, amazed to see the trees of Loch Maree now completely submerged and gushing waterfalls over what had been bare rock. Tomorrow's walk over the lowest part of the track now looked interesting!

From here, Enmoore should take over the story, as it was on this day that she came into her element, coining the expression "An Enmoore in her native environment" (courtesy of Dan). The shortest of our group, she plunged fearlessly through mud hole after mud hole, disappearing into the murky depths to be pulled out the other end, and it was she who discovered THAT track marker in the middle of the river. No, it wasn't a practical joke, just another challenge to the Dusky on that epic day. Packs off, careful checking of waterproofing, and a test wade through. Waist deep on some of us, chest deep on others. oh well, just some more water to add to those boots.

Two days later we emerged back into civilisation for a night of absolute luxury at a hostel provided for the workers on the local Hydro scheme. Free washing machines, red wine.....what more could you want to end such an awesome walk!!



**Enmoore, Lawrence, Marty and Ralph on Conical Peak
Routeburn Track, Fiordland, N.Z.**

THE WESTERN ARTHURS

By Jill Fagan

We were an assorted group that set off on a traverse of the impressive Western Arthur range on the last day of 1996. Only half of us suffered no drastic injury before leaving, namely: Nico, Theo (Nico's friend from Holland), Andrea and Stu D. This left the invalids: Steve with his tight ITB (or as he preferred to describe it, his tight butt), Kath H., who had a dodgy knee, me, with dodgy knees and inflamed ankle ligaments, and Ruth, with tendonitis. This was Kath's first bushwalk.

Nevertheless, enthusiasm abounded, and we were a united party by 9pm on New Year's Eve, at the first campsite. Down to the serious business, we opened the port and red wine. We dined on port and sultana sago, cooked (and burnt) by Steve, and cheesecake, to greet the new year. Nico told us that for desert the next night he was having 'starlight, with banana croutons on rollerskates'. Steve's New Year's resolution was 'I don't want to be sexy any more'.

The next morning Steve tried to convince us all that we were really carrying daypacks, and that Andrea's pack was so small it could even be considered a bum bag. We squelched our way across the Arthur Plains and began the grind up Moraine A. Unfortunately Theo hurt his knee part the way up, so Nico did the honours, either carrying the two packs at once, or doing two trips while the rest of us sat around eating scroggin. The weather wasn't great, so we rambled on to Lake Fortuna.

Stunning views greeted us the next morning as the cloud lifted and the sun shone. Theo's knee was not showing any signs of improving, so after a few hours of walking, Nico and Theo decided to turn back. Kath caused much amusement by unpacking her entire pack to retrieve the mystery item she wanted Nico to carry out for her - a climbing harness. Obviously entirely devoted to general party welfare, Nico and Theo donated a large tub of nutella and another of honey to the rest of us. We consumed as many fingerfuls as humanly possible, and, on a sugar high, bounded up the nearby Mt Hayes. Many hours were spent relaxing in the sun and admiring the views of the Arthurs, the damn dam (Lake Pedder), Mt. Anne, Federation Peak and much more. We then proceeded to 'the gem of the Western Arthurs', Lake Oberon. We camped near the shores, surrounded on three sides by rocky cliffs. We were invited to Stu and Kath's camping platform for dinner, and Steve asked Andrea 'do you want a feel? It's got a knob on the end' in reference to his bladder.

Again, the morning cloud rose dramatically, leaving a beautiful sunny day. We walked amid more rocky peaks and deep black tarns to High Moor. It was here we realised that a 'traverse' of the Western Arthurs was actually a very misleading name. The track went over, or very close to the summit of nearly every one of the 40 peaks in the range. At dinner time Stu's portable combination bushfire-starter and conversation-killer, his stove, nearly succeeded in its bushfire starting, and we finished off the wine, after Ruth added some to her soup, thinking (I hope!) that it was water.

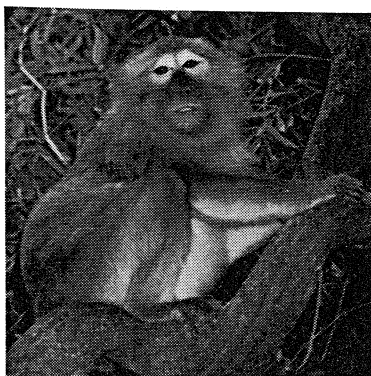
The next day we saw the sunrise from the top of a nearby rocky outcrop. It was a magic hour, watching the golden glow slowly spread over the blanket of clouds in the valley hundreds of metres below us, and seeing the cloud slowly rise to flow into a tarn almost directly below us. We filled up all water containers from the puddles that were our water supply and donned the packs to scramble our way across the Beggary Bumps (or was it the Blubbery Blimps?). It was

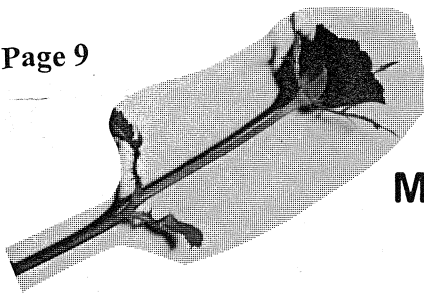
an area of unstable rocky gullies and very steep and slippery ground, where we were forced to cling to unlikely-looking tree roots for dear life. The day was incredibly hot and there was no water and little shade. We only walked a few kilometres horizontally, but it was hard work. We were all in automatic pilot mode after about 8 hours of walking through the heat, so the shores of Haven Lake were hardly going to stop us. Most walked in fully clothed. We drip-dried in the sun, guzzled gallons of water to rehydrate, and threw ourselves around the place doing yoga and acrobatics. The breeze and flying-saucer clouds make the weather ahead look ominous, and Steve kept predicting some 'bad poo', but it never eventuated. Garlic was confirmed the flavour of the trip as we all ate Steve's garlic and cheese for entrée, and garlic was also added to all meals.

Early morning entertainment the next day included watching Stu run down the hill every few minutes in pursuit of a runaway plastic bag or trangia bowl, etc., which flew away in the wind. The day was a stroll to Promontary Lake, with (yawn, yawn) more amazing views of rocky peaks and sheer drops to deep tarns, bathed in glorious sunshine. There were swims all round in the freezing Lake Juno and the muddy tarn which looked so warm and inviting from the other side of the valley. Everyone required second washes at the campsite due to the mud. We flopped in the shade to escape the heat, and relaxed and ate. Dinner was topped off with dumplings and honey, using a little of the 2kg flour which was another amazing item extracted from the depths of Kath's pack.

Throughout the walk we had become increasingly aware of an odd biological phenomenon. Namely, that the creatures which inhabit the lakes of the Arthurs do not 'quack', they 'wank'. On our final day of the traverse, the rather ordinary weather required that we resort to desperate navigational measures: the map and compass. Ruth maintained that we need not go to such efforts. Since our next campsite was at a lake, all we had to do was to 'follow the wanking'. Unfortunately cloud obscured much of the view from West Portal, the highest mountain in the range, but we climbed it anyway, sat and shivered, then went down again. An interesting introduction to rockclimbing for Andrea. Perched 100m or so above Lake Rosanne, there was debate as to what the lake resembled. Some said Casper the Friendly Ghost, other options included a duck's footprint (Steve carefully did the calculations, finding the duck to be 400m tall), and Rosanne herself. Andrea and I were quite hyperactive after a very hot Thai curry followed by chocolate pudding, so we, along with Steve, decided to keep poor lonely Stu and Kath company in the cosy one-and-a-half-man tent they were sharing. A few hours was as much as they could take, and we were booted out and sent to bed.

The next morning we split. Stu and Steve walked out all the way because: (1) They're masochists (2) They're too lazy to get up before 8am (3) Steve had to fly home. Us four girlies did the stroll down to and back along the Arthur Plains in one and a half days, being in no rush to leave such a beautiful wilderness. We ate copious amounts, gave Ruth crap about bringing a fork rather than a spoon (and boy did she lose out when we all dug into the chocolate mousse!), admired the jagged range we had just traversed, and had a great time. Upon finishing the trip we tried (unsuccessfully) to remove all the mud from our legs, and admired our gaiters tan-lines as we hooned back to civilization to prepare for our next adventures: climbing and seakayaking at Tasman Peninsula, climbing at Frenchman's Cap, Freycinet, Mt. Wellington and Ben Lomond, caving in the Growling Swallet system and at Mole Creek, rafting the Franklin, and much more.





Memories of a bare-footed red-head

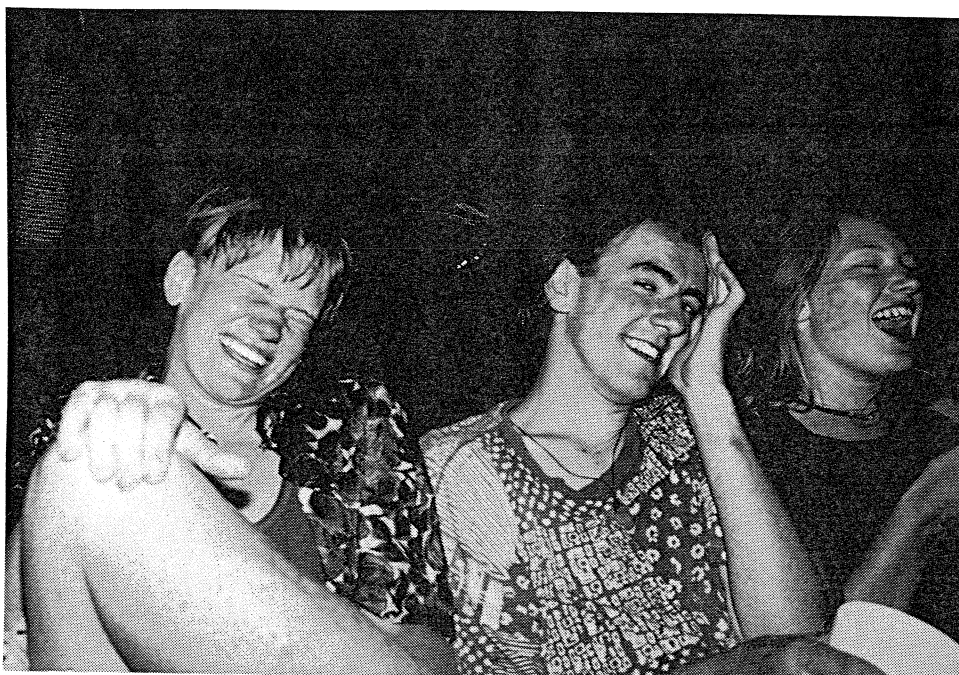
Alex Zdziarski

Deborah Rossell died recently in a road accident. She was well known in the club for her fiery spirit, her zest for life, and deep love of nature. Deb mainly climbed with the club, but dabbled in most of the other areas, especially caving and bushwalking. Deb was an incredibly strong and motivated person, unafraid to speak her mind. She always accomplished what she intended. Below are some of my memories of Deb:

- ☺ Sleeping by the fireside in the Bundaleer 'throne room' to the tingle of Deb aiding her way across the roof 15 metres above.
- ☺ Glorious hot summer days seeking shady climbs at the Piles, yet seemingly always ending up climbing on northerly facing crags!
- ☺ Innumerable belays tracking Deb's progress and confidence, not through the amount and movement of the rope out, but by the audibility and intensity of her singing (warbling???)
- ☺ New routing in the Southern Grampians with Scott and Deb, and bouldering at the Lake Bellfield shelter, on a wet, car-killing trip.
- ☺ Dissecting the starter motor from one of Deb's cars on the front lawn, after barely making it out of the Grampians.
- ☺ Late morning tent slumbers interrupted by THAT tin whistle!
- ☺ Drunken, stoned and debauchorous Christmas parties.
- ☺ Watching Deborah's enthusiasm for jamming quickly vaporise on Siamese Crack, Deb having previously convinced Tanja, her now very nervous belayer, how much fun it would be!!!
- ☺ Endless arguments about which routes we did when!!

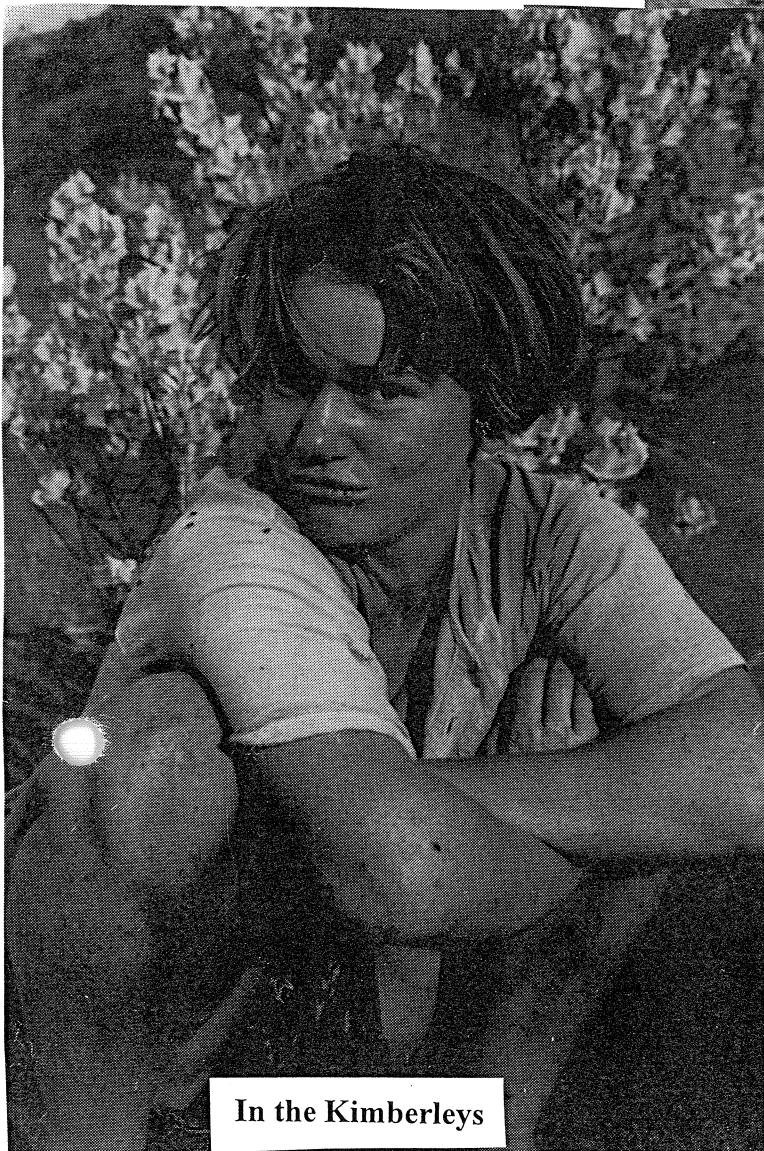
Deborah will be fondly missed, but she will always be a source of inspiration for me, and, I think, many others.

DEB

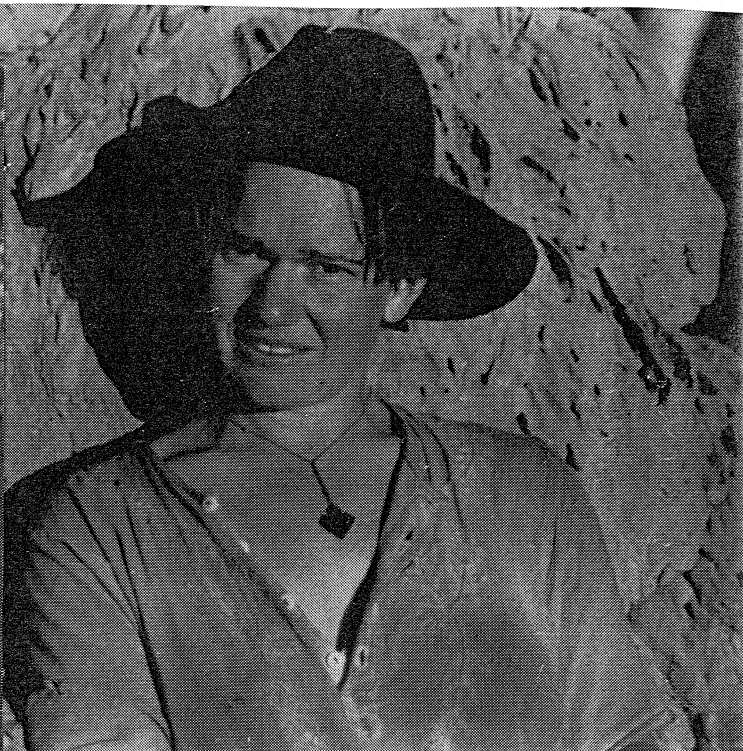


At the Christmas Party, 1995, having water squirted at her

DEB

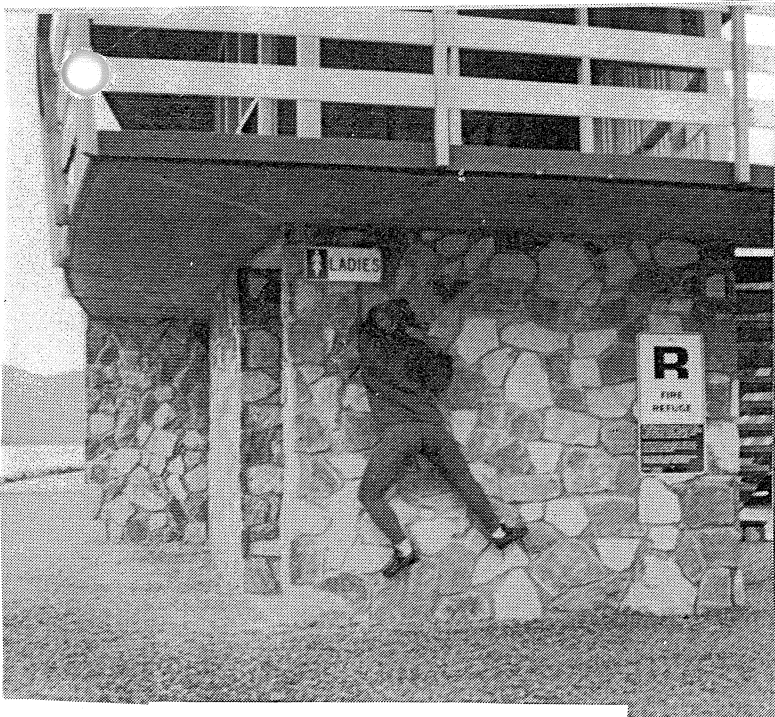


In the Kimberleys

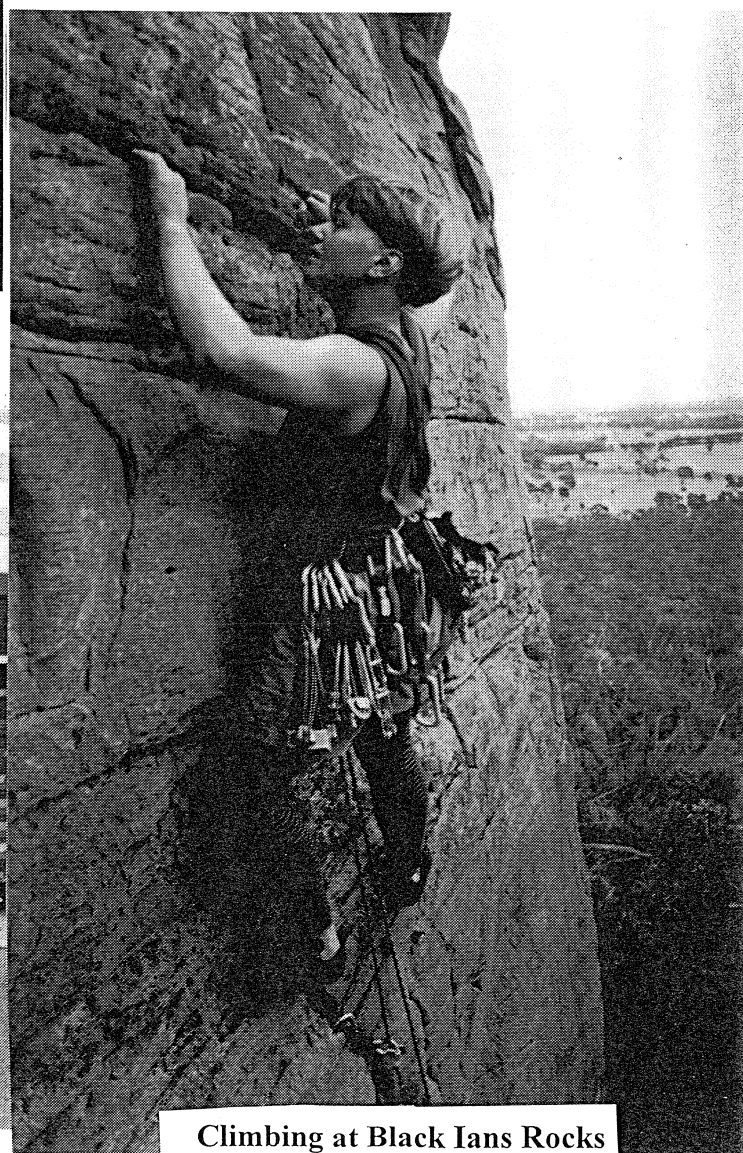


In the Kimberleys

DEB



Bouldering on a toilet block !!!



Climbing at Black Ians Rocks

DEB

Deb Rossell passed away on 21 April 1997. Many people (including various MUMC members) attended her memorable funeral on 29 April 1997 at the serene bush cemetery of Tarrawingee, just east of Wangaratta, surrounded by lovely eucalypt-dotted plains. It was an extraordinary and emotional day.

After I arrived back in Melbourne that evening with Alex, Carys and James, I felt lost, wasted and numb: a terrible pang ebbed through my body. To lose someone like Deb is tragic. But to truly see how such an event has changed at least one person's outlook on life is positive; maybe even inspiring. A very small but crystal-clear truth emerged, slowly, from a haze of loss, sadness and despair: life is short. The value I place on all my relations with people around me- all friends and family- now lies in a vivid (possibly scary) and stark reality. Whatever you do and enjoy: savour, treasure, build upon it. Stop bullshitting around. Live life and go for it!

Deb passed on without warning- a spark of life extinguished without reason. But what Deb achieved in her 26 years is enviable. Her fiery cheek, spirit and courage, especially in her outdoor activity, is admirable. Inspirational. Deb has inspired me to do more "doing", rather than just "saying". I hope you can see something in that as well.

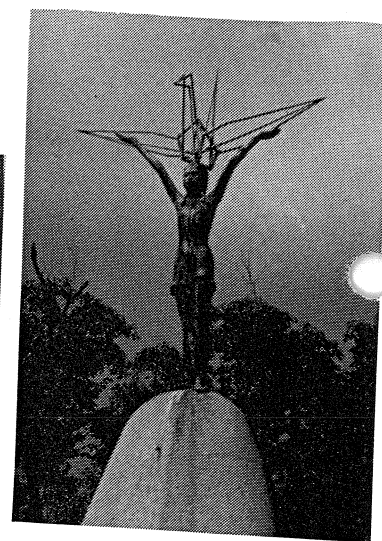
Rest in peace Deb.
Steve Curtain.

Deb. Thankyou for being an inspiration to my life, especially in climbing. Thankyou for bringing laughter and song to Arapilies. I may have teased and complained about your singing and harmonica, but I truly did love it. You always brought a smile to my face. I am grateful to have spent time with you, and climbed alongside you. I will miss you. Wherever you are Deb, rest in peace.

Lisa Flew

DEB

At the Midnight Ascent, 1994



Peace dove, Japan

Round, Round, Get Around Iceman and Hellman's New Zealand Odyssey cont.

Sam "Iceman" Maffett

We survived that epic. The next big question is why do we do it? (good question!) The feeling that encompasses the body once you have taken on the jaws of nature can't be described - one minute you are filled with anticipation, with nervous energy with a real question in your heart wandering what will happen and the next minute every cell in your body is swimming in a pool of adrenaline and shouting out 'I'm glad to be alive' and rejoicing in the big water feeling.

With stage one of my holiday complete, it was time to leave Rich until he finished his job in 10 days time; I was off to the mountains - the real mountains. On the 1st of January, as arranged more than 1 month earlier, I met Ralph Gailis and Laurance O'Neil from MUMC and three other Melbourne friends, Dave, Adam and Paul at the Twizel Back Packers; a rendezvous that was eagerly awaited since we were about to start our 6 day stint of private mountaineering instruction with Southern Alps Guides.

The following day is one I will never forget. From our blood racing, hyped up expectation as we pulled our gear on at the airport to the helicopter flight into the heart of the Alps - it was totally amazing. All of a sudden I was surrounded by icy peaks reaching up for the brilliant blue sky as far as the eye could see. The sheer beauty of the razor ridge lines and the pointed rocky summits of these spectacular mountains is too great to describe. From the broad expanses of the Tasman Glacier on which I stood, to the icy colours of the mountain peaks - I was about to learn the skills to pass over them all.

My dream of the last 5 years was coming true. Over the next 6 days we were to grow together as a group as we were taught the different skills of the mountains by our guides Charlie and Calam. We roped up and unroped, climbed and descended, dug and buried, talked and demonstrated everything from the South Face of Mt Aylmer to the intricacies of a snow cave. Our confidence was slowly building and by the time the guides left we felt as if we had some idea as to what to do and how to do it. (Although after the Avalanche Awareness lecture none of us were too keen on stepping outside the hut since it seemed it all could come down at any minute!) One thing about the mountains and the people like me that

periodically inhabit them is that every one is a mate. There are no hidden personalities and few built up egos; everyone is here for the same reason and wants the same thing as the next bloke - a good freeze overnight and a clear sky the following day!

Two of my new friends that now fill my address book were Tim and Simon from South Australia and one afternoon we went in search of some gnarly ice to climb. Since the weather had been quite warm over the past few days all exposed ice faces were out of commission - we had to find something deeper. A crevasse is a long, thin and very deep crack in a glacier where the river of ice moves over a drop of some other sort of obstruction way beneath its upper surface. These slots are normally to be avoided at all cost since if you fall in one without a rope on, you won't be coming out alive. But crevasses do have one good feature, their icy walls are always very cold and are great for climbing! So after setting up two absolute bomb proof snow anchors on the glacier surface and taking every other known precaution, we lowered each other 20m down into these icy jaws of death only to climb back out again! I still remember being lowered in for the first time, looking down into the endless blue beneath me as it disappeared off into the depth of the glacier and thinking, I have sharp crampon points on my feet and sharp ice tools in my hands - all are equally capable of slicing through the rope holding me so I better damn well think about what I'm doing. None the less it was an awesome experience and was certainly awesome ice for the iceman!

After 2½ days of being hut bound due to the 80cm of powder snow dumped outside, Richard was finally able to fly in to join me on my 12th day in the land of icy goodness. Not only did he fly in with 2 weeks food, 4 beers and a peanut butter jar filled with "Hellman Juice" (the last of our 50% alcohol duty free vodka!) but he arrived at the now empty Kelman Hut with 9 females all about to start their own mountaineering course. Despite my insisting they may need an iceman like me to help teach them the different features of the ice (*Ed. - oh, please*), Richard dragged me over to the nearby Tasman Saddle Hut saying "Ho Ho, we don't need any of them" - he hadn't been up here for almost 2 weeks! (*Ed. - huh?*)

The following day we whipped up Hochsetter Dame just to refresh Richard's memory of how its done since he did a Mountaineering course 2 years previously- and then the real climbing was to begin. With a fine forecast predicted, we set our sights on the gnarly Mt Annan Coulour - a thin line of ice reading 400m up the face of Mt Annan, a 2913m peak dominating the upper Tasman Glacier basin. Setting off under torch light at 5:00am we knew we were in for something awesome and soon we were front pointing our way up this 60° ice runnel that was our ladder to the Summit. After climbing along the ridge line for a few hundred metres to the top, we were nearly knocked back down by the vista that opened out before us. The early morning cloud had not yet risen out of the valleys and so we were standing on one of only a few summits that managed to reach its way out of the sea of cloud beneath us. It was more spectacular than any postcard (*Sub ed. - so you think postcards are spectacular?*), with a layer of cloud basically at our feet stretching from horizon to horizon being only interspersed with possibly 10 spectacular rocky peaks rising out of the mist. And for all we knew, we were the only ones who saw it...

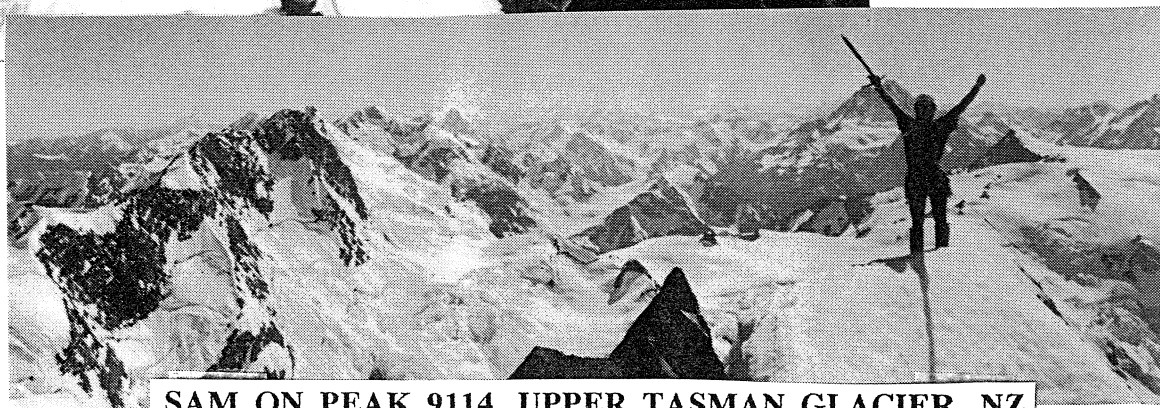
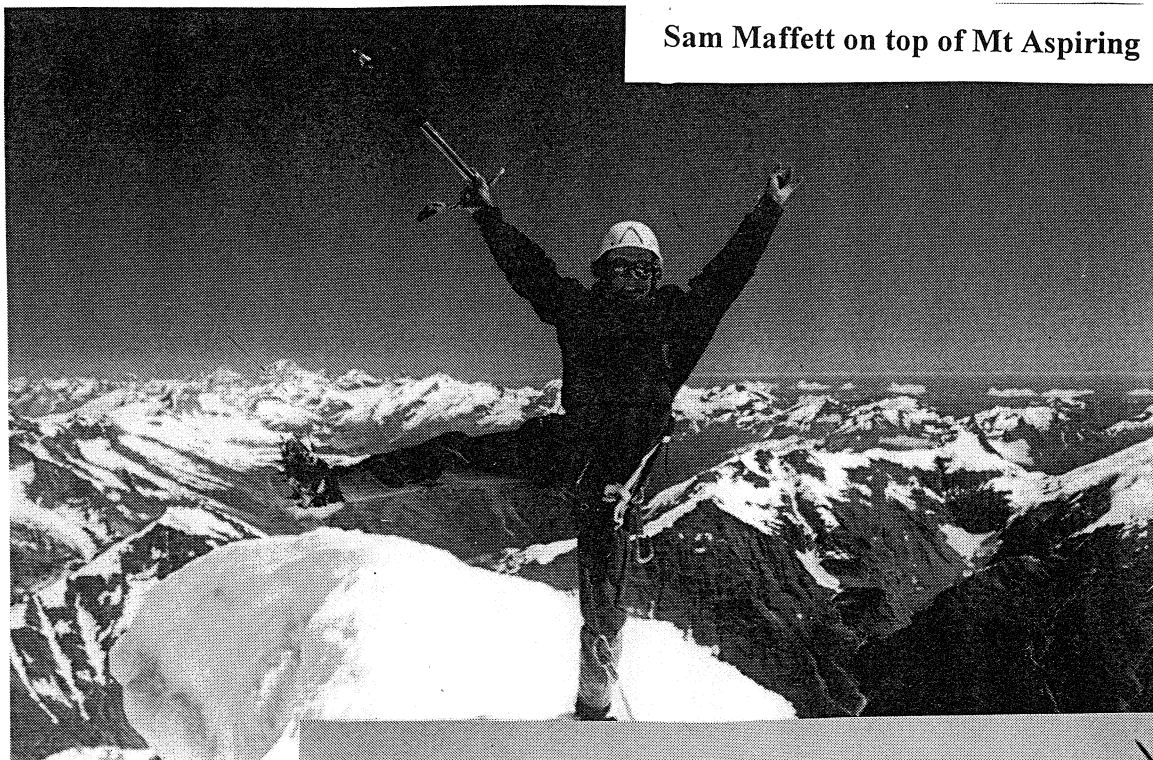
As I sit here in the Tasman Saddle Hut I begin to wonder what next, I begin to wonder what my life will be like once I've sold Mandy.

I won't have to put up with her grunting and groaning as her little 1.3lt engine struggles to get our kayaks, our paddles, our bouyancy vests; our thermals, our rock climbing rack, our ropes, our (few) clothes, our boots and our 4 helmets, our food and our own souls up all the hills she has. I also begin to wonder what other music sounds like since my ears will have more than one tape to listen to. And sometimes even; just sometimes I think about the outside world, has world war III started; has good old Melbourne changed at all; have they invented a better tasting box of shapes than BBQ (impossible!), does Burg's still taste the same? It is so easy to lose yourself over here - not only in the mountains, but in the whole country. There is just so much to do, so many rivers to paddle, so many rock faces to climb and so many icy mountain routes to tread.

We've been stuck in this hut for the last 2 days and as I look out the window down to Mt Cook and the rest, it is beginning to clear, the familiar peaks are starting to show themselves. Yippee, and the smiles are beginning to re-appear, its getting better. Now what will we do tomorrow...

*"Round, Round, Get Around.
We got around...!"*

Sam Maffett on top of Mt Aspiring



SAM ON PEAK 9114, UPPER TASMAN GLACIER, NZ

A summer and a half

I'd been planning to explore Australia's great southern land in the summer of 96/97 for almost two years when finally I found myself in Tasmania late last November. A devout optomist, I was not fazed when throughout the year I got encouragement but little response from people to my endless questions. My impression was that I'd joined the club too late. Everyone had all been to Tasmania, instead the talk was of New Zealand and other far away places. Yet by the end of the summer almost 20 Oxo's had walked, climbed, caved, toured and rafted Tassie in various groups.

I managed to inspire Tanja, a German exchange student then infamous among the cavers, to join me for the first couple of weeks. We planned to use every minute of our time together. Why waste even one day of only 23 resting? Our plan needed people so I inspired a German backpacker who I'd met in Scotland to fly over and join us. Laurence enthusiastically completed the "awesome foursome". Together we walked, drove and rafted a selection of Tassie's best country in snow and sunshine. The 'awesome threesome plus one', as it ended up due to an unfortunate clash of expectations, showed what careful planning and determination can achieve. It also showed that *Wild* articles aren't all that one needs to go long distance walking. Our friend 'Jim the German' hadn't really understood that walking could involve hard work, cold toes, cooking and blizzards, despite reading every 'beginners' article for the last year. Yet even Jim, by the end of the trip was converted to the outdoors lifestyle (except that he might add hot showers and microwaves to the campsites and huts).

My folks joined me for Christmas and we did the 'car-touring thing' as I stressed about my knees which the doctor had diagnosed as suffering from 'over-use'. Steve had invited me to join him on a traverse of the Western Arthurs, an opportunity which I was determined not to miss. On New Years Eve a limping assortment of Oxo's headed off for Junction Creek Campsite, including Andrea,

Jill, Kath Steve, Stu Dobbie, Nikko and Theo. 'Traverse' is a misleading word as every step of the way had a huge gradient up or down. The Western Arthurs made for a spectacular yet thirsty walk in the hot January weather.

(Congratulations to Kath for completing her first bush-walk safely.)

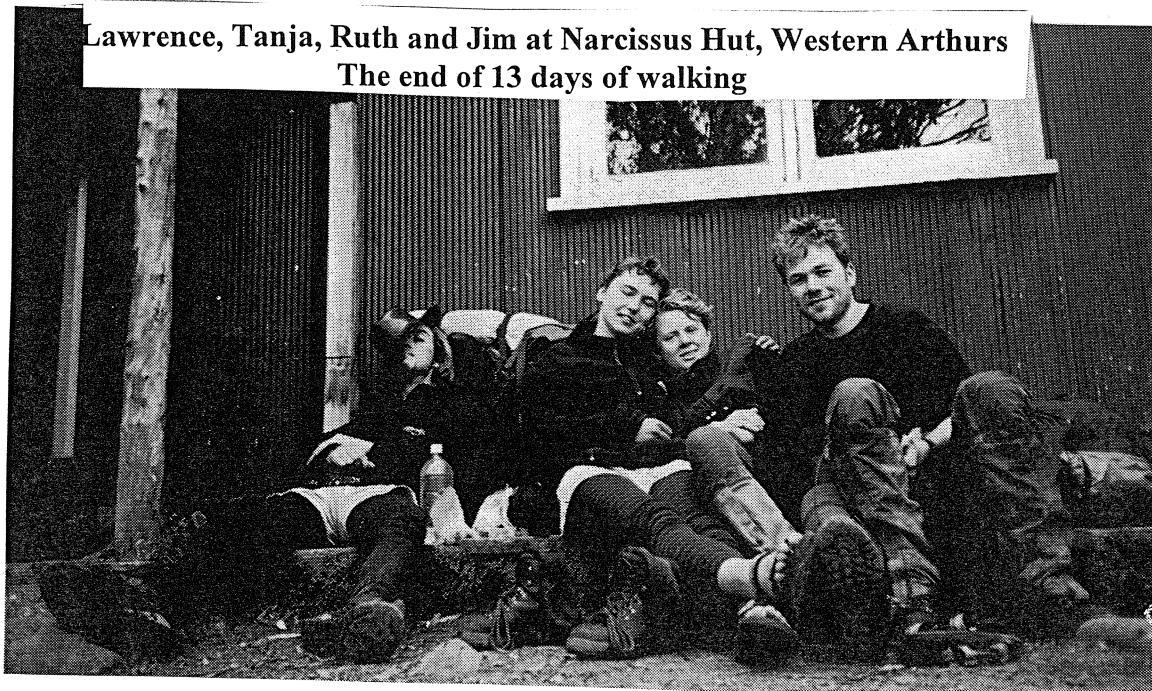
Andrea, Jill, Kath, Stu and I then climbed at Freycinet. Kath then headed for home, and whilst Jill and Stu went off to do some awesome climbing, Andrea and I did the tourist thing. Jill and Stu were later joined by Joel for some amazing caving.

Tasmania is a pretty special place, not only does it have some of the most beautiful country in Australia, the people are great too. I'd got in contact with an old friend in Hobart and soon found myself to be part of her family, including an extensive network of friends and relatives. Contacts are very important in Hobart, every person with outdoor interests is connected by the word-of-mouth, with Matt and Andy of Paddy Pallins at the hub.

My summer ended with ten days of rafting on the Franklin through connections with the University of Tasmania Rafting Club. Although I'll have to agree that rafting is just not the 'real thing', it was plenty real enough for me. There are many opportunities on the Franklin to do some amazing stuff. I spent our only quiet afternoon bouldering in Irenabyss. My goal is to run a multi-sport Franklin trip.... some day.

Ruth Paterson

Lawrence, Tanja, Ruth and Jim at Narcissus Hut, Western Arthurs
The end of 13 days of walking



A Hitch hiker's Guide to Tongariro National Park

(or how not to get killed by an eruption!)

Andrew Selby Smith

When I arrived in New Zealand, due to a lack of climbing partners at the Unwin Hut, I went off hitch hiking around the North Island, rather than bore myself shitless at the Unwin. After a bit of hitching, I got sick of it, and decided to climb volcanoes instead! Subsequently, I went up Taranaki, and then went across to the centre of the North Island to spend five days doing a solo walk in the Tongariro National Park. The park has double world heritage listing, as a World Heritage Area, and a Cultural World Heritage Area, due to the park's position in Maori legend. The park covers an area roughly 30 km by 25, and contains numerous active craters and volcanoes, as well as a huge variety of terrain.

The terrain I walked in included wet forest, tussock ridges, barren volcanic craters, rough lava ridges, desert, wetlands reminiscent of Tasmania, snow, open country, dry scrub, and moraine like slopes. It was a lot of fun, but a little bemusing to go from desert to Tasmanian bogs in less than 4 km! The incredible variety of terrain and vegetation is due in part to the volcanic history of the area.

This history is very interesting. The local lake, Lake Taupo, with an area of 606 sq. km, was formed in 186 AD by a massive volcanic explosion. The explosion was so tremendous that the ensuing brilliant red sunsets due to dust in the atmosphere were recorded by Chinese and Roman historians, accurately dating the eruption despite the fact that NZ was uninhabited at the time!! Roughly 100 cubic km of material was blasted out by the eruption, which wiped out virtually all vegetation in an area covering one third of the North Island. Vegetation patterns in the Tongariro area can be connected to the Taupo bang, as some slow breeding species of trees were protected from the blast by being on the lees of hills, thus enabling them to survive where they couldn't have otherwise re-established in less than 2000 years.

The Tongariro area itself is more complicated, but many volcanoes in the area

are active, with eruptions occurring on Ngauruhoe (1970's), Ruapehu (1995), and continual activity in the Red Crater. Ngauruhoe is a very beautiful cone shaped volcano. It is a uniform grey in colour, and totally devoid of vegetation. The perfection of the volcano's cone is reminiscent of Taranaki to the west (*Ed. - yep, we all like perfect cones*).

When I was walking on my own, I spent much more time thinking carefully about what I saw, and felt much more "in tune" than I would have felt if I had gone with friends. I found it to be a very lonely experience, at times depressing, like when I was in the desert in a three hour hailstorm, but at other times it was great fun. I realized that being alone contributed to an increased awareness of my environment, of weather, light, colour, touch, smell, and sound. I found that being alone heightened my ability to observe and reflect, in particular causing me to think more carefully about what I saw than I would have otherwise done, with the result that I got rather busy with my camera on several occasions! (*Ed. - hasn't anyone told you about long sentences*)

The diary entry below was written at the end of my first day, when I was still getting used to being on my own.

18/1/97 Sat Old Waihohonu Hut, Tongariro National Park, 7:40 pm

I'm lying on my full stomach in my tent. There's a pen in my left hand, and a mug of strong, sweet, white coffee in my right. The tent is pitched on a flat lawn of short grass, almost suburban in appearance. A few metres from where I lie, the grass is bordered by a variety of shrubs and small trees. The leaves of all are small and densely bunched, although they range in colour from a pale green, almost white, through brownish yellow, to a green that a child might use in drawing a tree.

The wind is strong and gusty; rising and falling in strength. The rain varies between none and a heavy drizzle, perfectly complementing the wind. Grey clouds move slowly overhead, over and down to

the east. Behind the eastern clouds, the sky is perfectly blue, darkening as I look upwards. Directly in front of me I can see out, across rather than up, to a roll of creamy white cloud, like a snow covered ridge in the distance. That roll of cloud is the only thing I can see that is touched by the sun, and the white is slowly changing to a luminous yellow as I think and write.

And me? I'm happy, warm, and comfortable, at peace. I have no duties to attend, except to think and write, which is hardly such. My mind is thoughtful, almost in a dreamlike state. This is wilderness, and I am at home here.

I started walking this morning at quarter past eight, after being dropped off by the bus from Taupo. At one point, after half an hour's walking, I found myself questioning whether I really wanted to do this trip. It was wet, windy, and cold, and I was halfway up a steep flight of steps. Being alone, giving up would have just been turning around and starting down again, no argument or discussion required. I shunned those thoughts, however, angry at my lack of enthusiasm. So I kept on going, until I had climbed out of the green, wet forest, into slanting, freezing rain, carried in the arms of a strong, cold wind from the west.

Despite the increasing foulness of the weather, the critical decision had been made, and I donned more wet weather gear, and kept on going. I followed the track upwards, up gentle, tussock covered ridges. Swirling clouds, cold wind, and driving rain engulfed me, and I enjoyed the wildness and loneliness of it all.

After passing several walkers coming down clad in only shorts, bike pants, or corduroy trousers to my ski pants and over trousers, I was astounded to encounter a large group of boys, from about eight to about 14 in age, led by a couple of men. None of them had even jampers, and one kid was clad only in a cotton tracksuit that looked to be sodden. I discovered later, in the Ketetahi Hut logbook, that the group called itself a Boys Own Camp. Apparently they changed their plans "due to the weather". I hated to think what could have happened, had they been caught out by the quick weather changes that must be so common up here.

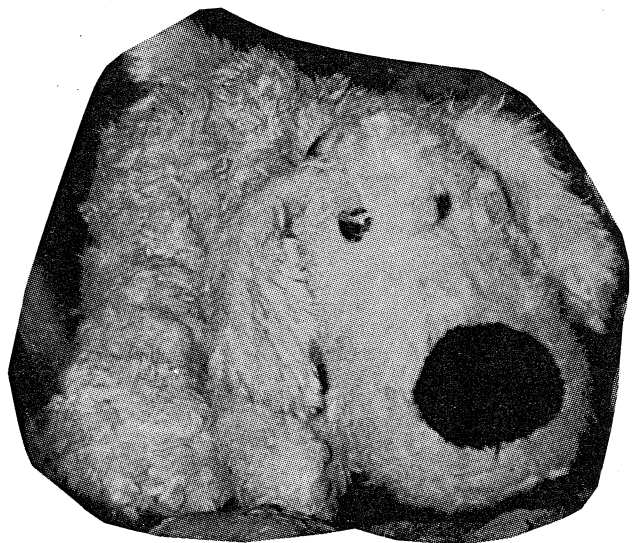
After resting at the hut for a few minutes, I moved on, back into my private world of rain, wind, and cloud. Every now and then, I encountered the stink of sulphur emanating from barren green and yellow patches of earth, and tried not to think of the eggs I'd eaten for dinner the night before. I reached the Central Crater, after encountering a jogger clad in parka and over trousers, with no backpack, but water and food in his hands. The ground of the Central Crater was flat and barren,

no vegetation to be seen. In places, the surface was so smooth and hard a racing bike could have been ridden on it. Rare holes in the clouds revealed nearby ridges and rock covered slopes, reminiscent of photos of Mars taken by the Viking Landers.

Several minutes later I passed a man carrying a large backpack, who sought to verify that he was heading in the direction of Ketetahi Hut. Considering how well signposted the area was, he couldn't have had a map. This, however, was nothing compared to the two boys a few minutes later, wearing flashy tracksuits, wet, carrying tiny backpacks. As they passed in the wind and wet and cold, for which they were so ill prepared, they made some asinine comment about the nearest McDonald's. I was astounded at their incredible stupidity. I was relieved to encounter noone for several hours until I reached Otutere Hut, having passed through a rocky landscape, dotted with surrealistic boulders. The vegetation was sparse, and clearly eked out a tough existence.

After a quick lunch, I pushed on to Waihohonu Hut, where I boiled water to top up my bottles. Considering the people I met today, I'm not surprised the water is contaminated with the giardia parasite. Afterwards, I looked for a campsite a kilometre south of the hut but failed, and so I backtracked and detoured to the old Waihohonu Hut, as suggested by the warden when I boiled my water. I camped on the grass lawn in front of it, which is reasonably well sheltered.

It is now dark, and I have shut the door against the blackness, safe in my little cocoon. I estimate I've walked about 23 km today, and I'm pleased with my progress and condition. I feel relaxed and ready, not at all sore or stiff. I'm planning to do about 28 km tomorrow, to Blyth Hut. My plans after that will depend on the weather....



HUT MAINTENANCE

APRIL 27TH

Author unknown

As dawn cracked on Friday morning (rather loudly for a few people who attended Kim's housewarming), the hut maintenance crew set out to Mt Feathertop. After lunch at Bright some of us went on to start the Razor Back while Jenny and Co. went down to The Bon Accord Spur to check out a patch of dirt suitable for the bridge planned for construction in November. Heaving on our packs, which contained several hundred kilos of food, 2 enormous pots, tins of varnish, paint and various other chemicals plus 2 brooms sticking out the side, we set off. Joel insisted upon sweeping the path as we went.

That night we cooked a candlelit dinner for thirteen. Carbonara, Fettucine and chocolate ripple cake, beautifully hand-crafted by Joel into the shape of Mt Feathertop. About 8pm we saw our second group, a cluster of figures heading our way along the ridge. Their leader, Richard, had the silhouette of a snail with 20m of insulation roll strapped to his pack. Then I slept my first night with the huntsmen at MUMC hut.

The next morning the weather was perfect, and we began experimenting with the many substances we had lugged up the mountain. The major jobs were the sanding and varnishing, fixing the toilet and changing the insulation. A couple of us spent the next two days sanding, while Jen and Richard changed the insulation and inhaled huge quantities of the gel grip, leading to a floating or flying sensation. Joel dutifully cleaned the toilet while the outside was restored to brunswick green. The possibility was discussed of a glass door on the toilet, such to get a fantastic view while on the best seat in the house. We put up 16 new brass hooks and sealed the windows.

At dusk Ralph arrived and Alan and Enmoore once again cooked a gourmet feast. Tonight was banana curry and pancakes. To accompany, a notable bottle of unknown port passed through the generations of Alans' family. Enmoore, seemingly obsessed with whipping, and Ralph ascended the summit for the night. After more maintenance on Sunday we heaved our packs back on and descended the North West Spur. We ended our gourmet weekend with dinner at King River Cafe.

MENTIONABLES:

Richards' driving record of 33.5 minutes from Razor back to North West Spur.

Alan and Enmoores' cooking inspirations

The weather man! (Ed- did I miss something here???)

Slush Slush Slush Slush Slush Slush Slush Slush

I like to know about guys' arses (Alex revealing his true interests?)

So that's what that vibrating thing is under my bum (Carys)

There's a big root over there, I don't really think I need that one (Jill to Ruth)

I always have more trouble getting them down than up (Carys)

You're not allowed to use incest on this climb (Stu D to Jill -apparently referring to insets)

Jill, close your eyes, open your mouth and turn around (Matt the Bastard)

I've got my head between my legs and all I can see is bush (Deb)

I feel cheated. I put the harness on and nothing happened (Joel)

There's something about the pole between my legs that isn't going down well (Carys)

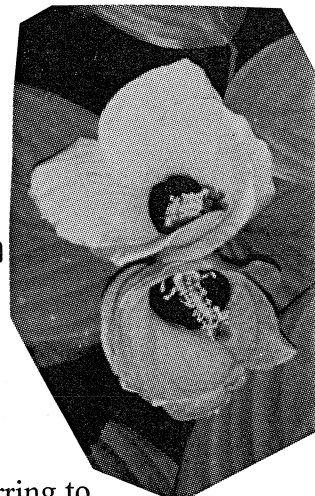
I haven't been able to turn on anything tonight (Kath)

This is where you need that male masturbation thing isn't it? (Cori referring to .finger strength)

No, it's females that get the strong fingers, guys get the wrist thing. (Andrew J.)

Matt: "It only costs \$2 or \$3 for a screw"

Carys: "But I don't know what size to get or where to go"



ICE MAN

