

MOUNTAINEER

A photograph of a person rappelling down a rope next to a waterfall. The person is wearing a helmet and is positioned in the middle of the frame. The waterfall is on the left, and the rocky cliff face is on the right. The scene is illuminated by natural light, creating a dramatic effect.

August 1999

Send out edition

Magazine of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club.



Are you sick of being stuck at Uni?

Come and get stuck in the mud!

From the Editors...

Welcome to another jam packed version of the Mountaineer. As my last Mountaineer you would expect that it would all be smooth sailing. That is so wrong this edition has been an epic to match all epics. I would much prefer to have been rockclimbing by torchlight up a crumbling cliff in a wetsuit or bashing through 10 foot high scrub with no idea of my location, but for some bizarre reason I enjoyed putting this publication together. In actual fact I have been presently suprised. We aimed to present a particluary high quality edition (as it goes to all club members) and in doing this had expected that we may have to include exceptional articles from past editions. However, this was not necessary. So here is the fresh, new look Mountaineer full of recent articles.

I would personally like to thank all the active club members who helped to make a contribution either by writing or by giving time. People to thank especially are Jackie, who helped throughout the year on all 5 publications we produced. And especially the team of people who helped coordinate this massive edition. Thanks Katrine, Kylie, Carys, Jackie, Andrea, Richard, Marcelle and Tennessee. And thanks to all for having patience.

Enjoy another year and vote well at the AGM.

Kath Hammond.

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Cover Photos

Front cover: Stu Hollaway, Danae Brook Canyon, Blue Mountains.

Inside front cover: Alice Ewing submerged in Tasmanian mud.

Inside back cover: Ski-plane landing site below South Face of Douglas Peak, New Zealand.

President's Report, from the President

1,2,3 Bow 1,2,3 Stop Join Hands Star,
OXO!!!

Thank-you, again, SOPH BROWN, for organizing a very special bushdance that MUMC has been threatening to hold for too long. More thank-yous later.

It is a rarely acknowledged fact that most people join MUMC simply to receive the AGM edition of the Mountaineer. Customarily, it is thought that membership of MUMC involves trudging through horizontal scrub in Tasmanian bogs; free-heel skiing on the Main Range; 4am starts for ice-climbing in New Zealand; paddling flooded Gippsland rivers at a day's notice; squirming through caves around Buchan; or stumbling in a dark storm looking for rogaie markers in the Strathbogies. No! the rigours of MUMC membership demand only receipt of a magazine and a quick (roped) jump off the Redmond Barry Building in O-Week (or on Discovery Day, Sunday 15th August – be there!!)

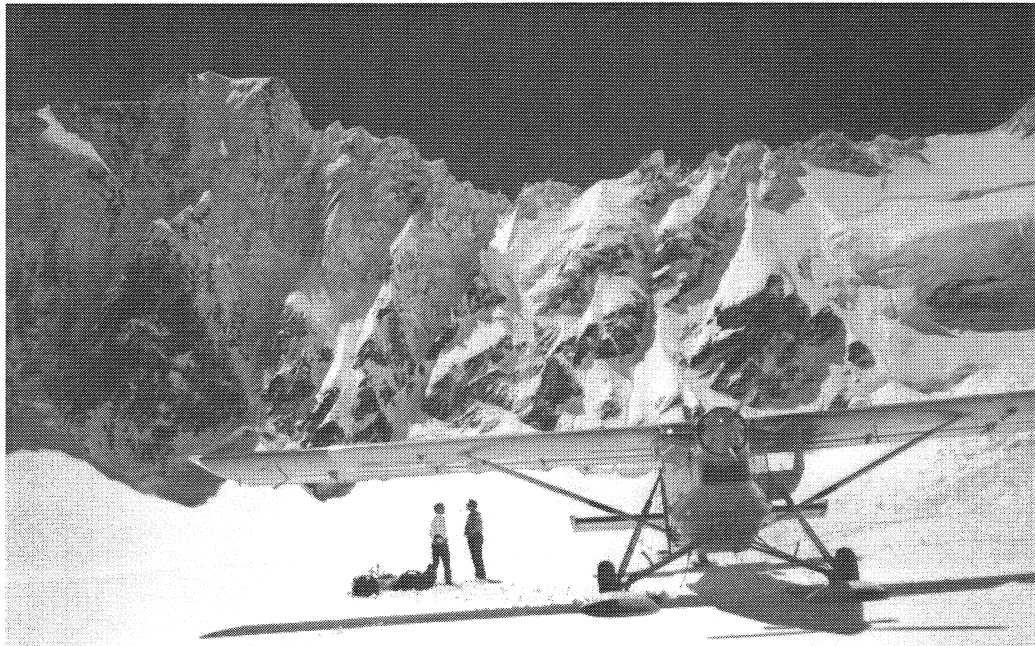
Well, it's both. All of the activities described above occurred in the past 12 months and they are but a small taste of what the club does, as are the stories you will read in the Mountaineer. The tired cliché is that the Club (any Club) is what you make of it: and there is nothing wrong with joining MUMC for the cheapest abseil of your life! But I wish to reassure you that there is MUCH MORE to this Club than one descent. Furthermore, to make all this happen, the Club relies on the generosity of trip leaders, who quite willingly give time to teach members skills that would commercially cost a lot to learn. In the process, MUMC does help forge life-long friendships; exposes engineers to Arts students, medics to Science students and; somehow causes an exchange of ideas at least at a superficial level.

One of the themes of my reports this year has been David Kemp's Anti-Student Unionism legislation. He has said it is about choice, and I agree with him. Except I see ASU as regressive: it removes your ability to choose to join a Club such as MUMC. We are affiliated to the Sports Association, and thus to join MUMC under ASU, you would have to join the Sports Centre first. So, instead of rocking up with \$15, joining a Club offering 10 different sports, you would have to go to the Sports Centre with \$120, and then pay \$30 to join MUMC. Some choice that Dr. Kemp has afforded students!

MUMC's AGM will again be held in the Pavilion, and I draw your attention to the notice on page 4 which details the constitutional amendments that have been proposed. Election of MUMC's Committee will also take place, and the call for nominations is open to all members. If you wish to contribute constructively to the running of MUMC, I strongly urge you to nominate for a position on the committee: apart from leading and participating in as many trips as you possibly can, there is no better way to help the Club. However, MUMC is an active club, and it is expected that nominees take their responsibilities seriously, and that they have the time available to do so. I, for one, must admit guilt in trying to juggle over-full-time work with the presidency, and I apologize to all for their extra burdens. In particular, I would like to thank Carys and Marcelle for their strong support, our convenors for getting on with their jobs, (if not their codes), Kath and Jackie for producing 5 quality editions of the Mountaineer, and Joel for his quiet words and a few quiet ales.

See you in your new t-shirts!!!
Alan.

New Zealand Mountaineering



Dave and Richard at the landing site below the south face of Douglas peak

Article by Dave Kneen

We left the hut quickly and without fuss. Richard and I were good like that - up at 1am, hot breakfast, dress, out by half past - a smooth transition from sleep to glacier travel. The weather was what we had expected, clear as a bell and bloody cold - perfect for the day's objective, Mt Tasman.

A shade north of her taller cousin Mt Cook in New Zealand's Southern Alps, Mt Tasman is a beautiful peak by any standard. Standing 3500m tall, and overlooking the nearby west coast, the classic fluted ridges leading to its sharp summit have caught the imagination

of many mountaineers more skillful than I. Sitting high on the summit of Douglas Peak the previous day, we both independantly considered the notion of climbing Tasman's North Ridge, possibly the most arduous route one can attempt

from Pioneer Hut. An optimistic weather report and some insightful local knowledge from our hutmates was all it took to convince us we stood a reasonable chance of success.

The long glacial approach passed easily, contouring around the upper Albert Glacier, passing Haidinger and Haast, clear in the moonlight, before joining the Heemskirk Glacier as it curves around Ledenfeld, and under the shadow of Tasman, towards Engineer Col. We moved together as the ice steepened, halting briefly to pull out our second tools, but unwilling to waste time belay-

ing too early. Moving quickly, we came to our first real obstacle, a wide flow of water ice, very steep in places and brittle in the frigid air. Here the climbing was very good, technical, but not hard enough to be scary, and in the moonlight we climbed without headtorches. Several easing pitches brought us to Engineer Col, high up between Ledenfeld and Tasman's North Ridge, as the first rays of dawn poked over the ranges to the east.

The North Shoulder of Tasman, a classic snow/ice arete, is both steep and intimidating, rising several hundred metres to the summit. Although it's never difficult technically, the ridge is very

exposed and scary and we pitched a lot. The route is demanding physically, traversing the best part of a kilometre on steep ice, and the altitude (we were at sea level only days earlier) wasn't helping. Breathing hard, we moved together over the final slopes.

The summit is tiny and very sharp - our legs hang down the side and I'm not feeling secure despite our anchor. Slowly though, the panorama hits me; the sea to the west glistens, close enough to touch, before racing from horizon to jungle in a golden, shimmering arc. Lowland forest greens lap like waves against the dark foothills, which in turn mount to the



Pioneer Hut, Replaced in 1999.



Richard "Butterfingers" Salmons atop Mt Tasman, Mt Cook in the Background.

crescendo of the ice-encrusted peaks of the Southern Alps. A grin crosses my lips - life's good.

Already the sun is softening the high snows as we descend, although we're more confident now and move quickly together to Engineer Col. A short climb brings us to the summit of Ledenfeld, and its horrendously long snow descent to Marcel Col. From there it's a long glacier haul home, arriving just in time to see our hutmates fly out. They've left us a meal, but we both head straight to bed, gladly accepting the weather-enforced rest days ahead.

* * * *

Never had I seen so much snow fall in so few days. It was beautiful, but an awful hinderance to any high climbing. Several days later it still hadn't fully consolidated, but the time had come for us to move to Plateau Hut on the far side of the main divide. Of the several ways to cross the main divide, Pioneer Pass or a route over Dixon seemed the most straightforward. As it turned out the weather was a bit too fickle and the packs a bit too heavy to attempt the summit of

Dixon, so we followed the Pioneer Pass route, contouring around the northern slopes of Dixon's East Ridge. The icefall below us tumbled in a chaotic mess to the Tasman Glacier, and we stayed high to avoid its complications. Eventually, however, the broken nature of the ground below forced us up a classic 'weetbix' rock pitch, followed by some mixed climbing to a spectacular vantage point high on the east ridge. Breathing hard and scoffing chocolate, we knew the complexities were over. An old set of tracks were still visible on the standard east ridge descent route, and following them downhill should present few problems. The consistently fickle weather and its softening effect on the snow were our concerns now, and rapid descent became the priority, despite the close proximity of Dixon's alluring summit.

The ridge was in surprisingly good condition and we moved quickly towards the Plateau. At the shoulder, the tracks dropped down a steep, narrowing ice couloir, mentioned in the guidebook as a standard access route, which we pitched down, until only the

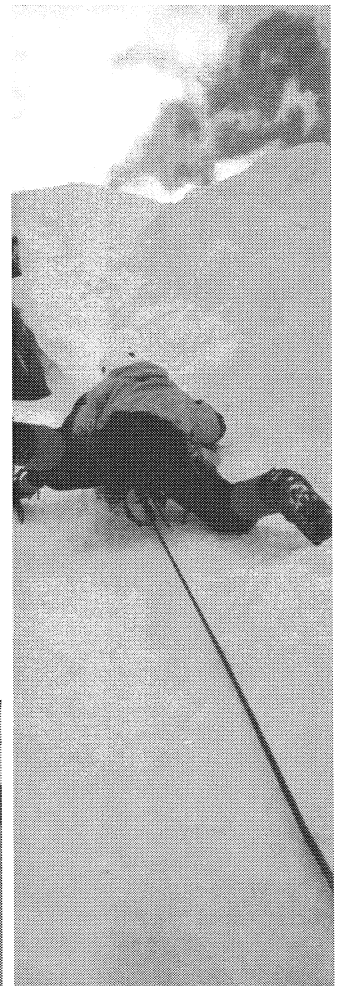
gaping bergschrund below separated us from the Grand Plateau, and an easy walk to the hut. Above the schrund we found a pathetic rock anchor, but thought better of it. Instead, we placed a snow-stake, as well as both of my tools, for Richard to abseil off. I would jump later if the ground was still soft, and I could be anchored from below.

Several metres above the enormous crevasse lurked a second, smaller slot, into which Richard slipped, almost to his waist, as he abseiled. As he struggled to extract himself, a brick-sized rock skipped silently down the couloir above and exploded against my right elbow. In an instant I was tumbling down, my anchors all gone. My momentary slide was arrested by the same slot Richard lay in, and I crumpled next to him and groaned. It felt like my funny bone had exploded, the arm just wouldn't respond. Worse still, my mental armour was destroyed. What had previously seemed like harmless icefall on the adjacent face of Dixon suddenly terrified me; the crevasse below was a menace, no longer just an obstacle. That instant

changed my life.

Richard was good; very good. Cool as a penguins bum, he rigged a second abseil, got us down and away, gathered my gear - although I would gladly have left it just to get away from the now terrifying scene. Knee-deep snow across the Plateau made for a tough walk, but Plateau Hut was something I could focus on, and I didn't mind the distraction. Neither did the hut occupants mind our arrival - it was a bit of excitement to end the day. Luckily for me, a qualified nurse happened to be staying there, and there were also a couple of guys from the Department of Conservation - I was well looked after.

A helicopter came in that night but couldn't land due to the high winds - we were picked up at first light the next morning. Soon I was on my way to Timaru Hospital on the Happy Gas, and the rest is history.



Dave sucking on the Happy Gas



Dave "Lightning Rod" Kneen: on south face of Malory.

Walking In South West Tasmania

(Yes the spelling is right!!)



Precipitous Bluff; South West Tasmania

By Andy Selby-Smith and Alice Ewing.

The equipment required for Tasmanian walking includes all the usual stuff - tent, backpacks, some-one stupid enough to go with you, and an essential is a piece of equipment known as an Ambulatory Tasmanian Bog Penetrometer, of which we have four in the Club - Alice, Enmoore, Andrea, and Liz. Dimitri will do at a pinch. The ATBP functions as follows. They are coerced by some means to lead a walking group through "dangerous bog territory", either by appealing to nonexistent navigation skills (a group won't get lost trying to follow a bog - if your feet are dry, you are off track!), or by any other devious means. They need to be watched closely, otherwise you may miss the warning signs of impending extra deep mud. If their boots vanish from view, it may be worth checking the seams on the bottoms of your boots. If calves and/or knees vanish, it's probably time to do up the laces on the boots properly to keep out those occasional splashes of mud. Once fluorescent shorts vanish, or other common bush abuses of fashion (Dimitri's yellow thermal pants?), it's probably time to pull out gaiters. Once shoulders disappear from view, it is suggested that one treads firmly on the now well seated ATBP before extracting it from the mud by

means of traction from the far side. An additional warning sign integrated into these wonderful pieces of technology is the speaker, which will give off a squawk just as the device vanishes into a REALLY deep one. The decision as to whether to stop and extract the device may depend on the presence of other devices in the group, the time of day, the urgency in reaching your destination, the phase of the moon, and your desire to see formerly yellow thermals stained a shade of brown or black.

Well, well, an assumed ATBP named Alice has also been able to use Andy as an enlarged form of this amazing device! He too was able to track the deeeeeeepest bogs, amazingly, with his ATBP walking behind - in inactive mode! Our amazing sojourn through South West Tasmania involved a fair amount of death-defying bog navigation, but luckily we have since been able to survive all that the wilderness and everything else threw at us!

We began our hike at Mystery Caves with rain coming hot on our heels, ascending loose soil, rocks and wobbly logs, lyrebirds scampering everywhere - there were so many of these vocal mimic-experts, it makes us

wonder if they were trying to mimic our crashing through the bush! We had a brief interlude for lunch in a hollow in the tea-tree forest, but were still many Tasmanian kilometres away from P.B. We were in a faraway land, no one else to be seen or heard, alone in the wilderness.

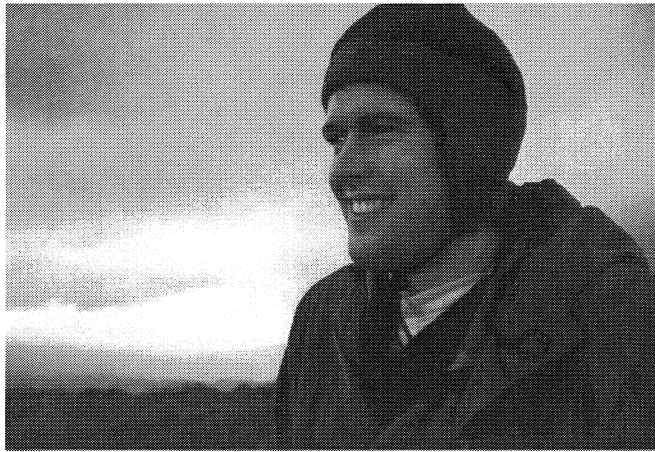
Visibility was about 30 metres for hours, as we trudged in the heavy mist along humpbacked hillocks of loose rock, with indistinct cairns. We longed for a decent view, given all that people had told us about the magnificent scenery. Pity - there were so many things that we never saw. Eventually, Pigsty Ponds ghosted into view through the ethereal mist. As we got closer, the ponds, surrounded by bouncy, boggy lawns, shimmered eerily in the translucent whiteness. White, white and white is all we saw, until later in the evening, suddenly, the clouds lifted to reveal the steep and looming faces of nearby peaks, seemingly cascading down into the ponds. It was the furthest we had been able to see all day.

After a very lazy start, we scaled the sinister black mountainside in screaming winds and spear-like rain. Climbing, we traversed along ridges and precipitous edges, grabbing any solid rock in reach with wary hands, fighting

the winds clawing at the packs. Sometimes the wind was to our advantage, gustily blowing from behind, lifting our packs upwards, which helped on the uphill sections, seemingly alleviating the pack's weight.

The fact that we did this hike as a two-person team gave time to think and reflect, allowing us to take in the shrouded scenery, while the misty whiteness formed amazing, wild and lonely landscapes. In case you were wondering what P.B. meant earlier, we did not either, not until we reached Pindars Peak. After a windy climb up onto the ridge, in unusually clear, and sunny weather, a distant hummock of rock reared up on the horizon. It was, according to the map and compasses, our goal, Precipitous Bluff.

We walked in awe of its razorback appearance, with steep drops on either side, bush-bashing through the hated Scoparia, flora from hell. The pronged horns and tails pene-



trated every fabric we wore, be it goretex, polartec fleece, t-shirt, or thermals, or the whole lot put together. P.B. seemed such a long way away, but like a carrot hung in front of a donkey, we were led on to our goal. An amazing campsite was found that evening on a squat ridge, Whyllly Plateau, leading up to P.B. We were sheltered from the wind and rain by an alcove of thick vegetation, and protected from the boggy ground by natural flagstones! It was the only evening on the traverse of the Southern Ranges that the day was farewelled by a lovely clear sunset, amazing and awe-inspiring despite the cold. New River Lagoon shimmered in the last rays of the setting sun, while the massive and impregnable appearance of P.B. was eased by a gentle honey-coloured light. It held big promises for the next day.

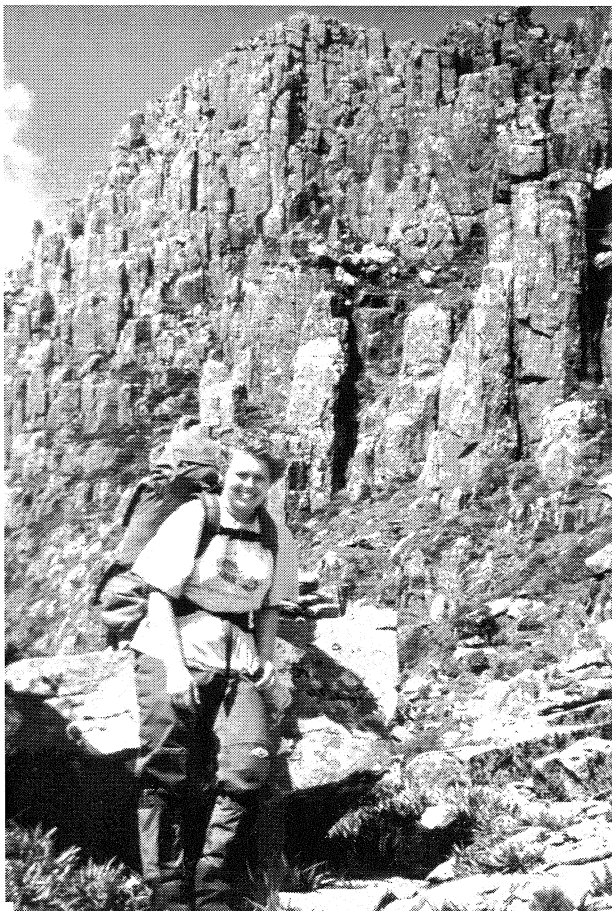
An early start greeted us with fairly windy, yet clear weather. We decided to continue and scale P.B., and then descend the far side to New River Lagoon to camp. After 4 hours of intense bush-bashing and careful navigation we arrived at the Base Camp site, and then the weather closed in, becoming more dubious. Heavy looking clouds raced by, carried by the strength of the Roaring

Forties. We decided it would blow over shortly, as the sky had been clear earlier. We continued on. Half-way up P.B. the torrents started to pour down on us as we climbed up, putting in a bit of rock-climbing practice! The strength of the wind was ferocious, and behind a puny boulder, we clutched our parkas desperately as we put them on. On reaching the saddle at the top of the "hanging valley",

we decided there and then it was way too dangerous to continue down to New River Lagoon, and so began a worried search for a suitable campsite where we wouldn't be in danger of being blown off the mountain!

After some weaving amongst extraordinarily large, dense trees for a mountain-top, we came to a "room" amongst the trees, a "room" with an even more extensively flagged floor! It was almost totally protected from the elements. Except for the light drizzle trickling through the foliage, it was a most exciting find! Totally enclosed by trees and with a solid floor, it was the safest we had felt all day! It was lunchtime when we arrived at the saddle, and we waited and waited, planning to re-pack and continue if the weather improved markedly by 5pm. But to mixed relief, it didn't, and we were able to have a long and uneventful evening's sleep, in preparation for an extra early start, as we needed to cover two days' walking in one, making up for time lost.

Hastily packing at the crack of dawn, we descended in slightly rainy conditions, in a never-ending retreat from the bad weather above, until we reached tall rainforest with eucalypts and thousands of deep potholes waiting for a misstep! After watching a few wombats gallop away through the vegetation, we crossed some rather deep and fast flowing streams to the New River campsite. It was a relief to have descended P.B. safely, although we were disappointed that time constraints and bad weather had



Alice the intrepid walker

prevented us from reaching the summit, a mere 100m from the previous night's campsite.

Rejuvenated after a late lunch in the shelter of a broad tree trunk, we searched for solid walking sticks to wade along the lagoon. Wading is necessary, as the dense scrub bordering the lagoon means a far longer alternative route bush-bashing. Ploughing through brackish water, at times reaching our hips, which floated the packs nicely, we reached a large stream outflow which needed to be negotiated, as it had cut a deep channel in the lagoon bed. Swimming across was not an option we wanted to consider, in the wind and rain. Instead, we walked inland along the creek bank, until we found some well trodden logs spanning the creek, and then safely returned to the lagoon on the other side! Next, wading along some sandy bays made for amazing walking, far superior to the unstable pebble bays, which had caused a few near drownings! After a few more creek crossings, we reached Prion Beach. We did not stop at this paradise, where a toilet was available, instead continuing along the (relatively!) easy South Coast Track to Surprise Bay, in clear weather.

But as always, we were to be disappointed, it RAINED and RAINED all through the night and intermittently the next morning. Somehow, open pit toilets lose their romance when one is waiting for the hail-storm to stop so that the bog paper will not disintegrate in use. It was today that Andy proved his expertise as a giant ATBP! The bogs in the button-grass plains were unbelievable. Untouched, they resembled solid ground, with scraps of vegetable matter and clumps of soil on their surface, along a main track,

but as soon as a foot touched the surface, they would quiver and split apart, not unlike the fabled Red Sea crossing, enabling the victim to plunge into its depths as it closed in again. Boots, gaiters, legs, all were turned an unidentifiable, shiny black...

Sadly, the bog let Andy go before Alice was able to get an utterly BRILLIANT photo of him in a



Andy, enjoying the view.

groin-high bog victim pose! Andy did get a good one of Alice later though, when she misjudged a leap and was punished by a half immersion.

The rest of the day was spent struggling with the amazing bogs of the South Coast

Track, meeting lots of other walkers, including the usual tall Germans with passable English, pebble glasses, and Army Disposals gear! It made for

quite a change after the splendid isolation of the Southern Ranges, although the beaches were utterly wild and beautiful. Camp was made in the early evening, in a tiny gully near a small creek, in which we were able to wash sodden boots and gaiters. The creaking trees and fallen branches were a bit of a worry! The feared leech invasion didn't eventuate - perhaps they'd had enough of the mud too? We were a few kilometres short of our goal, South Cape Rivulet, but the campsite was on the far side of the rivulet, and we had been warned against crossing in the dark. We rose early the next morning, confident now that we would make Hobart for the dinner appointment that evening. The final few kms to the rivulet were pleasantly easy walking, and THE crossing was the last major excitement of the trip, the search for the shallowest crossing being a bit of a trick.

A few hours later, after an encounter with a small, stubborn tiger snake, we were trundling along the board-walk like tractors on a freeway, passing the oncoming kids, parents, and grandparents in board-shorts, heading for a picnic on the Southern Ocean beaches. We eventually reached the South Cape car park, where Andy hitched a ride with some friendly bushwalkers, back to Moonlight Caves, and our car. Alice was left to guard the packs and peel off her armour, as there was no room in the vehicle for our packs or Alice. In all, it was life in the fast lane! We completed our route in a total of five and a half days, where it is recommended that the trip be undertaken in 8 to 9 full days!

We were sad to be out, but confident that we would return another

New T-Shirt Design



Illustration: Carys Evans.

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DEPENDING ON WHERE WE ARE: HANNEL'S SPUR-MT TOWNSEND-TOWNSEND SPUR



Mike, looking intelligent

**By
Alan Daley,
Kim Hazeldine,
Markus Voegel,
Nic Kohn
Mike Yarski,
Cathy Scholes,
and
Matt Turner**



Peek-a-boo Kim

Plan A -

Melbourne to Geehi

Miraculously, Alan & group left the club-rooms within half an hour of scheduled departure time. Both cars had independent stops before leaving Melbourne: Matt to pick up Kim; Alan to try to remember where Mike said he lived.

The tunes of Simon & Garfunkel distracted Matt's car, and, thinking it was Midnight Ascent, stopped in Euroa for greasy truckie burgers. Mike & Markus, instead, picked up a dead bird and a hunk of bread at Coles Campbellfield while Alan ducked into the bottle shop for essentials.

Plan A(i) - Euroa to Khancoban

*W*angaratta

Operation Coffee Break began the Operation Coffee Break Leap-Frog. Many were ordinary, but we were blown away by the outstanding hospitality from the locals at Bulloh Coffee Break. (Note that the town USED to have a

school, now it only has Operation Coffee Break. ironic.) Fully fuelled on coffee, milo, hot cross buns, flavoured milk, biscuits and kit-kats, we reluctantly hit the road for the final two hours to Khancoban. Running low on fuel, and without a National Parks Pass, we were forced to set up camp at 4am just outside town, and only just off the road! Gently woken at 6:30 am by a passing car's wake-up horn we piled back into the cars and coasted back down the hill

to Khancoban general store for breakfast on the lawns. Setting up our mobile kitchen, we tested stoves, deafened NSW with Nic's "whisper"lite, and brewed the first of many espressos. Warm muesli was a bonus for the less-roughened presidents. Khancoban locals are used to this sort of thing, and wander by without batting an eye.

Plan B -

Khancoban to Geehi to Byatt's Camp

Still recovering from only 2 hours' sleep, we drove to Geehi flats to begin the walk. A little behind schedule, (3 hours), we began to search for the "trail" at

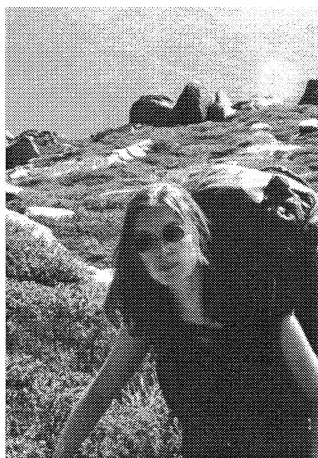
11am. We found: blackberries, water, blackberries, the wrong river, blackberries, an open plain with occasional patches of blackberries. Oh for summer. Matt heroically

bashed through the, um, blackberries, and eventually located the grassy "knoll" (Alan survived this attempt) and the trayle (as in "trayle" mix). Cath now realized that the gaiters ought NOT to be at the bottom of her pack. Alan realized that he HAD brought gaiters!! (Hooray!) Having found the sign to Hannel's Spur, Cath leapt for joy: whole new styles of bush-



Marcus, check out those legs

dance have evolved from her elegant steps. Unbeknownst to the rest of the group, Mike had casually shared with Cath the location of a snake: next to her. In fact, rather than dancing, Cath had desperately found agility that defied the weight of her pack; Australian snakes are obviously bigger



Cathy after a hard night

than English ones. From here, it was up. With 1800 metres elevation, Hannell's spur is the tallest spur in Australia. It keeps going, and going. Something like North-West Spur, but much, much longer (three times!). A small path and little orange markers defined our trail. Little did the group realize that this was the well-marked, easy part. (Stop, rest, breathe, scroggin, rest, breathe, water, scroggin, breathe etc.)

At 1400 metres a grassy oasis tempted the hallucinating adventurers and we decided our campsite right there at Moira's "Flat," renamed more aptly, "Moira's Incline." Matt's immediate reaction, apart from stealing Mike's North Face 80/20 goose down slippers, was to fall into a deep slumber / pass out - to be woken hours later by dinner. Mike returned from his wash at the creek with THE YELLOW BUCKET, set up camp, his Thermarest chair, table and bar-fridge. (We don't believe the bit about the table - ed.) Then, lights appeared and Mike's space-ship landed - a four-person silver dome tent: disappointingly without a North Face logo.

Gourmet Dinner 1

A Butternut Risotto rescued by magical appearance of stock from Markus's larder-cum-pack. (Alan was picky - cubes are not the "real thing.") Nic's stove started up, although most of us looked to the space-ship seeking the source of such a

deafening roar. For dessert a newly created method of making apple crumble: stewed dried apple with fried toasted muesli, served with fresh cream.

Plan C - Moira's Flat to the Opera House

Another early start at 10 am.

The explorers reached the tree-line at 11:30, enjoying a clear view of the Abbots above and the Murray Valley below. The track here veered toward the disappointing Kosciuszko, so through knee high bushes a path was forced. Cathy, however, was lost to all but the close observer; it seems snakes aren't the only things bigger in Australia. At the top of the Abbots, a breezy lunch was eaten before a strenuous 200m descent (horizontal) brought on the unanimous decision at 2:30 to camp in the Wilkinson Valley. This was a tough day. Trangia frisbee (mitts essential) was played on the flat while Mike had his sponge bath with THE YELLOW BUCKET in the stream.



Grumpy Matt.

Plan C (i) - Mt Townsend

Sunset over the Upper

Murray Valley was definitely a highlight of the trip; a great opportunity for group photos too, as yet another foreigner appeared (now outnumbering Aussies 5:3) who was instantly bombarded with instant cameras. (groan, ed.) Nevertheless, Mike assured us that the views in the Sierra ranges are much more spectacular.

Gourmet Dinner 2

A freshly-made satay (see page 31, for climbers' reference) lightened Markus's larder slightly, and was consumed under a spectacular moonrise, (why is it always a full moon on the Arapiles Easter trip???). A rapid drop in temperature

forced the group to take some of the 2_kg of chocolate from Markus's pack/pantry and retreat to the space-ship, where the Infinite Improbability Drive inspired a few rounds of Psycho Uno and proved correct Matt's hypothesis that the less you

understand what's going on, the greater your chances of winning!!

Plan D - Wilkinson Valley to the Opera House

Despite the aroma of fresh coffee (again, yum-yum), a change of weather for the worse on Day 3 ensured that some of our hardy backpackers could not be prised from their tents until 11am. We eventually took a bearing over Alice

Rawson Peak, where we enjoyed a misty view of Lady Northcote's Fog, before descending further along the ridge to a reputed trig point. The cloud lifted briefly, and allowed a reconsideration of our route. Checking our navigation three ways - by bearing, feature and altimeter - the group decided to abandon Canyon Falls and the Opera House altogether in favour of the legendary Townsend Spur. (There is no legend, but it sounds good). Incidentally, there is no track. This is why the trip was designated "Int-Adv:" it started intermediate and became advanced incrementally.

Plan D (i) - Trig point 1838 to Wild Cow Flats

From 1838 (where the trig point actually is), we slowly bashed down the steep beginning of Townsend Spur. Fortunately, Alan had brought a pack-haul rope, (you never know, just in case), and it made its Club debut down a particularly tight section. Lunch was taken by an exhausted crew at the second spur turn-off. Now officially declared advanced, the trip included tree-climbing for more accuracy in navigation to the obvious ridge. But even here, in the middle of completely untracked "wilderness" we encountered #@!£%\$ blackberries!! As night descended, and Nic & Matt started to take 50m leap-frog bearings in the dark, the trip was speculatively declared an epic. Nic's altimeter started giving heights relative to some random point near Kilmore; navigation in the dark was tricky. Thus, Alan suggested we stop on A Spur Somewhere. (I reckon there's

a TV series in that!) Tent sites required Markus's expert clearing skills with trowel, while Mike, Nic & Alan dropped down "60 metres vertical" to the convenient water. 110m later, Kosciuszko Creek was reached, and 25L of water collected, yeah, even without use of THE YELLOW BUCK-ET. Upon return to camp, the presence of rain confirmed the trip's status as EPIC.

Gourmet Dinner 3

Finding the second tent was tricky, especially given Kim's directions of "100 metres @ 380°." Matt and Nic bravely cooked under the fly erected between three trees, Mike periodically exiting his North Face bivvy to empty the rain from the fly. Matt & Nic's pasta was eagerly, hungrily wolfed down by a weary group, unaware that they were eating... tuna. (Prejudice again!!! Question: was it Flipper-Free?? - ed.) This was followed by a ritualistic sipping of Bailey's from seasonal Easter eggs.



Nic, soaking in the sun.



Alan, hiding behind his pitt zips.

Plan E - Depending on Where We Are to Wherever We Get to

The final morning began with the group assembled around our gallant leader, map in hand. "Depending on where we are..." was his opening statement. Confidence was not high. Daylight aided our descent to the

Geehi. Then a crossing of this famous river - lengthwise! Despite cool water and wet feet, most abandoned the banks for the natural protection from blackberries that the river afforded, but Mike pressed on, precariously jumping from rock to rock in a bid to avoid becoming water-logged. To our relief, he eventually succumbed to the inevitable and was forced to drop into the river.

After a river bank re-group, Matt bravely attacked the bush, (including blackberries), to beat a path up the spur toward the road. Suddenly, an old 4WD track appeared. To the cries, "We want another shrubbery," the group trotted out to the road and, after a short road-bash, collapsed into the cars.

Thankfully, the epic was not quite over! Matt had left his interior light on for 4 days, and his battery was completely flat. With the judicious use of jumper leads (don't leave home without them!), the might Suby revived the Ovlov and 1_ hours later, we were relaxing at the Bullioh Operation Coffee Break, eating cheese & bikkies, hot cross buns, Kiewa Valley milk, and, admittedly not espresso, coffee.

SKIING AT JUGUNGAL

By
Katrine
Wilson.

The following little story was created by the five of us; Tom, Rich, Jackie, Kath and me while we were spending our second day in Greymare Hut. It was pouring down outside, and we had nothing really to do apart from either going out and getting wet in the not terribly pleasant snow or staying inside trying to ignore itchy bodies which longed for the skis and stocks. After a day, a couple from Melbourne suddenly knocked on “our” door. They had come all the way from Melbourne because the weather forecast said a couple of cold fronts were heading north and that hail was expected in Melbourne.

The skeleton of this story was written by me beforehand, with blanks left where there now are underlined words. I then got everybody to give me adjectives (without them having read the story or knowing why I was demanding all these adjectives), and I wrote them in the spaces in the order they were given to me. - I guess just another way to pass time when you are bored... (*Sounds like fun - Ed.*)

Before this rather miserable story is narrated, however, it must be clarified that we had some awesome days conquering Jagungal before the “cold” front came, with cold, good weather, full moon and beautiful sunsets. I got progressively worse at my tellies, and I think I might stick to the straight-down-the-hill approach in the immediate future! But everybody else seemed to be enjoying their tellies and were perfecting their styles on icy slopes, and otherwise trying their best to get up even the most minute hills of, well, ice.

Once upon a time, there were five gruesome people who decided to go on a round ski trip to big Jagungal. They left Melbourne one sticky evening in the middle of a lukewarm winter. Up the freezing Hume until they reached Euroa where Kath had the most boring fish she had ever tasted. Rich and Tom enjoyed their tedious burgers, while Jackie was satisfied with her stimulating hot chocolate And on they went to Jackie’s perspicacious (Good adjective - Ed) house in grey Albury where they spent the most seedy night of their lives.*

The next morning they carried on the snowless trip towards the snow. Up the confused Murray along the perplexed Hume. The road was bendy and the cars were going fast. Katrine was becoming car sick and had to stop doing her quiet knitting and concentrate on the road. All was, however, forgotten, when the messy Main Range was spotted with tacky snow hanging down the sides of it. The exclamations of joy in Kath’s car were smelly.

Now, however, we are sitting in a cute hut waiting for better weather. The egotistical snow is disappearing in fantastic rain. We have resorted to unreal card games, looking at beautiful maps and lighting demanding fires. Spirits are low. But ho! What do we hear? A greedy cold front is coming in from nurturing Melbourne. And tomorrow we will all be sadistic and happy, playing in new salicaceous snow.*

* Some words for the ones with less insight in English adjectives, like myself. I tried to pick up my word of the day tradition again, but I am afraid Tom managed to pick far too difficult words for me to remember, so to the dictionary.

Perspicacious - acutely perceptive or discerning

Salicaceous - of, relating to ...

(Ed. Katrine, should obviously be concentrating on her words of the day with more commitment Please help to monitor her improvement!)

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NOWRA, The Cabin of Pleasure.

On the holidays went to New South Wales did we and much was learnt. mmrrnmnmrm

The Jedi Council had the same shower curtains as us (See through you we can.)

On large group climbing trips it is absolutely imperative to have many, many rest days in order to allow muscle regeneration to develop the endurance to cope with sustained nights.

1:30 a.m. is the perfect time to start playing monopoly.

There is no excuse for "Bad Taste".

One should plan one's climbing to avoid peak hour in Nowra.

Fear leads to sport climbing. Anger leads to aid climbing.

We have no idea what leads to caving.

When two people ascend the same pitch, rubbed in all the wrong places will you be.

7 p.m. is a good time to go into a 6 pitch cave.

At one with the cave must you be.

Fisherman must be beyond gnarly. Pity they're never beyond those freak waves.

Always check the pouches of marsupial road kill.

The grading in Nowra is somehow linked to the value of the Czech Zloty or another of the world's defunct currencies.

When it is a long way down, it will be a long way up and the gear bags weigh a lot more going up.

It is not unreasonable to watch a movie, 3 episodes of South Park and play Psycho Uno after midnight.

If you dig for long enough, squeezes get bigger.

Pillow fights are good.

Many things can be described as "more seductive".

The trail of polished rock will lead you to the surface.

FIRST DESCENT

By Dan C

(ex-prez, currently hiding in NZ)

I had spied the hole many times on the regular medical flights I do out of Timber Creek, NT; flying doctors out to remote communities in the area.

It was big - an estimated 50 metres across and at least that deep. Access was a problem - the nearest road was 15 kms away. To actually locate the hole on the ground was another challenge - it is on a perfectly flat plateau. I took photos and planned the route in: drive to the end of a 4WD track, go bush as far as possible and then walk. Permission was gained from the local aboriginal owners and the stage was set. 100m of rope, harnesses, water bags, everything. On the way out that morning, Craig and I found a person standing on the side of the road. To our surprise, not only was this a person, but ex mumc and oxohellwoman herself, Lara Ross - hitchhiking from Darwin to the Kimberley.

Eager to have another along, we asked her to join us. And so there were three; Myself, Craig and now Lara. We took a very rough and rocky 4WD track as far as it went. There the long speargrass hid termite mounds and Craig sat atop the roof navigating calling left and right. The largest Boab trees I have seen in the Top End lined our route along the river.

Finally the river closed up to the cliff where we started walking. We followed the dry bed up onto the plateau just in time to watch the last of the colours fade from the spectacular sunset. Pinks, yellows and all the hues of the desert sunset. There by the campfire we lay under the stars in eager anticipation, Lara and I reminiscing about old pub nights, IV's, ski trips, Alfas and current and past oxo relationships...

As the sun exploded out of the ground, we were breakfasting and eager to explore. Aerial photographs were produced and a grid search pattern devised. The going was easy through the spinifex, and the birdlife outstanding. Getting nearer, I spied red rock out in front. An excited yell and we quickly moved closer. The rock grew bigger and the hole deeper.

Speechless, we crept toward it, our heart rate reaching a crescendo as we peered over the edge. At least 95 metres deep and 50 metres wide. Straight down, with rockfall at the side.

Palm trees and a whole different ecosystem lay inside. Feeling weak at the knees, we surveyed the options. The far side had two short abseils onto the top of a steep rockfall section. Abseiling to avoid dislodging the rock, we scrambled down to the bottom, deeper and deeper, seemingly into the bowels of the earth, with the blue sky getting more and more distant overhead. The red sandstone gave away to soft mudstone, and at the bottom there was evidence of big pools of water but no drainage spaces had formed that were large enough to crawl into.

At the last rock before the bottom, we stood together and jumped, so we all hit the bottom together. We sat, chuffed, staring at the distant world arching above our heads.

As we scrambled out, something caught Lara's eye - a painting. And another, and another. Five men drawn in the typical style of the area - looking like spacemen - in the unicolour mud ochre. Stunned we wondered about the rockskills of the local aborigines. It was possible to downclimb one stretch without rope by jumping onto a palm tree. At any time over the last few thousand years, there probably would have grown other palm trees on the second step.

So we were not the first to enter the bowels of the earth here, just the first white people. We came away slightly humiliated, yet incredibly happy.

Sitting back quaffing beer at the Wayside Inn, Craig and I planned which of the 100+ other cave sites that I have meticulously logged would be our next descent. Before writing this, I had just finished entering the coordinates of three similarly large sinkholes I found today 200 kilometres south of Timber Creek.

Good Climb, Long Day.

Fear and desperation in the path of the Elders.

A insight into Mountaineering with Stuart Hollaway and Carys Evans.

"Ok. Take. You got me?"

"Yeah"

"Slowly down." After a series of progressively more strenuous and sketchy attempts to pull past the bulge, bridging tenuously in the narrow corner, I had gradually lowered myself onto the rope, having yanked vigorously on the wire, and lowered back down towards Carys. "Shit."

Strapped to a vaguely dubious belay, balanced on cramped, sloping ledges in a howling gale, unwarmed by the feeble white sun hanging out over the Malte Brun range, it was hard not to be disillusioned. Yet another shortcut rapidly revealing its own special horrors. Looking down our line of retreat inspired me to try again, further left, where a slab of pink rock snuck under a roof and disappeared behind a steep buttress. It wasn't supposed to be this hard.

A few rope lengths of scrambling, just technical enough to keep things interesting, on good, pink rock, with only occasional ice patches, had started to make things seem more manageable when I pulled over the crest and saw, at the end of a sharp 40 metre cheval, the second step rear up like the prow of a rotting ship. In no way did this appear to be a good thing. The arete itself was horrifically overhanging, poised above the void of the Sheila face, and the steep crack to the left was ominously black.

Out left, beneath another roof, pink rock offered some hope. A bouldery move, hard at the best of times, led to a delicate face traverse, climbing on small, flat holds to a corner with a crack. This gradually became more choked with ice as it widened, and the outside wall of the corner eventually ended as a detached pillar, glued to the main ridge by a saddle of ice. I looked at the steep, blank wall above me, dropped a sling over the top of the pillar for pro and thought about abbing off.

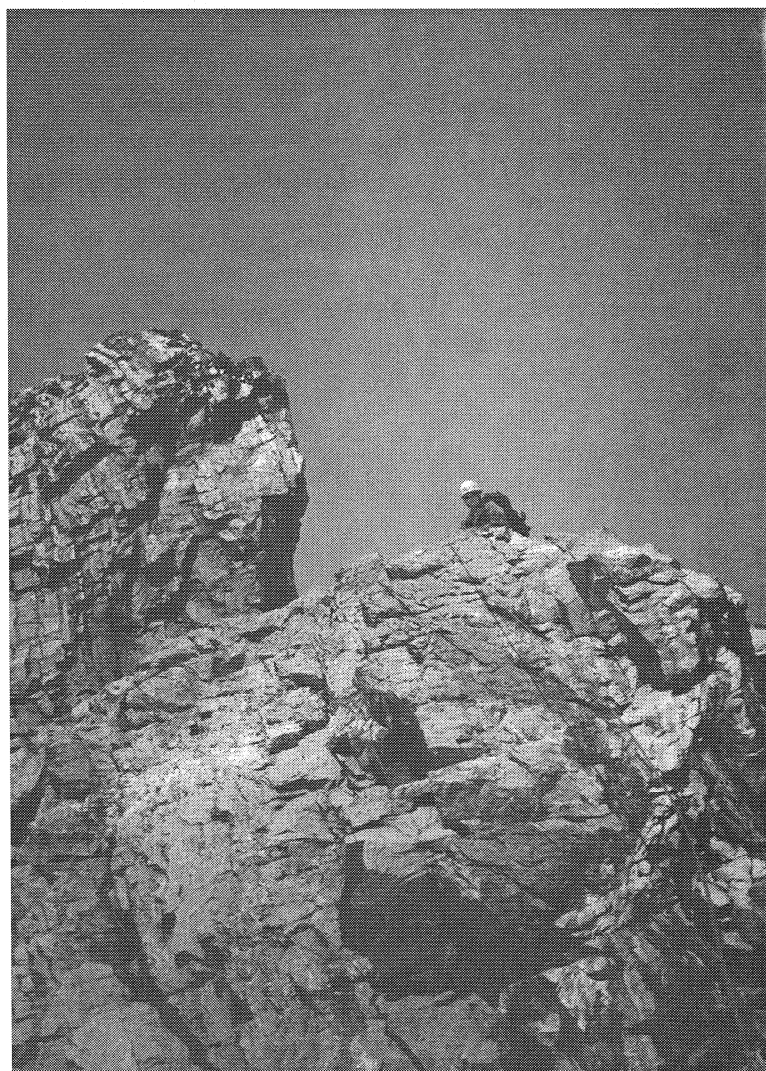
It was a classic expression of alpinism. Ugly and excellent, terrifying and exhilarating. Sliding on ice, body climbing, steepness and space. It took a long time to reach the safety of a belay.

"You O.K?". I shouted wondering how bad the climbing must be beyond the rooflet to stop Stu in his tracks like this. Apart from the route finding difficulty on the first pitch we hadn't had much trouble until now.

"What's going on?" I shouted, louder this time. The reply was faint.

"Just wait".

I figured he was just psyching himself up for a hard section but the lack of movement and the icy wind that had sprung up were a catalyst for the fatigue that had been creeping up on me since we had begun front pointing up the steeper slopes to gain the ridge. The trip up the glacier the night before had been beautiful and invigorating. Despite only managing an hours



Stu at the top of the first step.

sleep before we left, it took only three hours to rise the first 800m. My energy levels were up and I was looking forward to the relatively easy, grade 14 rock climbing on the ridge.

A lot had changed in the last few hours and I was now in a desperate struggle to stay awake. I scoured the landscape for something, anything to focus my attention on, but although beautiful to those who could summon the energy, to my eyes the landscape was desolate and monotonous. I felt helpless in the battle to stop my eyes from closing as I swayed between daydreams and reality. Remembering pictures of people counting sheep in bed, I was certain that this must be a way to stay awake but not even this seemed to work.

"Hurry up!" I called desperately, knowing that if he fell there was at best a fifty-fifty chance I would be able to catch him and it was decreasing all the time. It helped a lot when at last Stu started to climb, but it still felt like eternity before he reached the top, got me on belay and I could finally start to climb.

At first I was relieved at the chance to move and warm up, but this dissipated quickly when the wall I was climbing blanked out and I realised Stu must have traversed across the tiny ice-saddle to my left. Sounds simple enough doesn't it? Unfortunately the 1000m drop to either side and icy surface made the saddle a daunting prospect.

It was a tremendous relief to get up the ice-saddle pitch, and the rest of the second step went fairly easily, but the solutions were only just unfolding, scarcely conceivable and emotionally demanding. I was hoping that we'd find an easy traverse into a couloir at the top of the step, but Carys wasn't keen and it looked like pretty steep downclimbing to get there, so we were committed to the crest, in a howling, sapping wind for a bit more yet.

It was a delicate and awkward process, fitting crampons hanging on a sloping ledge on the narrow ridge. This was followed by tricky mixed ground and a couple of easy rope lengths that put us at the base of the third step. I think Carys was hoping it would end soon, and I was rapidly moving beyond intimidated, staring up the searing red buttress with a decayed cornice crumbling off its top. Apparently it had been freed at 19. This was getting out of hand.

We stopped at the top of the second step long enough to share a muesli bar and get our crampons on for the next pitch of mixed ground. The wind had really picked up now and, although the need for sleep had abated to a manageable

level, I now found myself shivering uncontrollably. As I ate I gazed out over views that cannot be described fully in words. Then I saw it fall. An ENORMOUS block of ice tore off a nearby peak and rolled down the face below. We responded in unison. "Shit!" Knowledge is one thing but seeing for yourself is so much more, and I found a new respect and fear creep over me as I gazed at the remains of the block spread out across the glacier below, this new world was a transient one. Looking over the ridge I now saw for the first time the 1500m drop that I would have to climb out over in order to reach the bottom of the third step, my confidence was wavering.

We had to get off this thing, so we had to get up. Technical bridging. Hard face moves. Rotten ice. No protection. No alternatives. It led to a desperate, improbable layback, which eventually enabled me to gain less traumatic ground. Beyond fear I found only the climbing. Previously I had found certainty, so it can't have been that bad I guess. Given the circumstances, I think it was my hardest lead. After half a rope length I stuck a good cam in the back of a corner, and reached the crest of the ridge with a few metres to spare.

A sickly grey in the clouds reminded me it was getting late. Scratching for a belay in the ephemeral wasteland

where shattered rock and honeycombed old snow come together in an embrace that is both powerless and destructive, I was terrified that if Carys fell the rope would trigger a barrage of rocks from the loose upper reaches of the groove system. I tied together 6 bits of junk, stood so I'd be hard to pull off, and suggested that Carys might want to put her prussiks on before starting. She belted it.

The pitches on the third step brought me to the edge, unfamiliar with climbing in crampons and with a pack, tired, cold, hungry and doing some very difficult climbing over a very BIG drop with a dubious belay is not good for your psyche. How I wanted to be back at the hut or at least moving towards it. Instead we were moving further away with each pitch.

The climbing was just getting harder and Stu's confidence seemed to be fading. When we

The North Ridge of Mt. Cook was climbed for the first ascent of the mountain by Tom Fyffe, Jack Clarke and Peter Graham on Christmas Day, 1894, equipped with 3 piece suits, a rope tied around their waists and a long ice-axe each. It was unrepeatable for almost 60 years until the great Harry Aires guided it for the 100th ascent of Cook. These are heroes and remembering them offers us new understandings of adventure. They imagined the impossible; they made it real. We can solve the undefined.

first reached the gully we had been cheerful that at least here the rock wasn't overhanging, but as Stu began the climb it was obvious that we had miscalculated. He was bridging off two crampon points on a rock edge, the other foot kicked into a vaguely attached shawl ice when the shawl broke. My heart skipped a beat as pieces of ice fell towards me and I waited for Stu to do the same. I saw his whole body weight fall onto a hand jam between the shawl and the rock before he managed to kick his left foot back in. Too soon it was my turn, but it's amazing what the fear of dying can do to your climbing ability and somehow, to the surprise of both Stu and I, I made it up without falling.

Across the 'schrund below summit rocks and we could finally sit down. We just have to go carefully across the Linda Shelf, not get killed by an avalanche, stagger across the Plateau and we'll be home and right. Being out of the wind was an unbelievable luxury. Carys woke me up. She was ready to go.

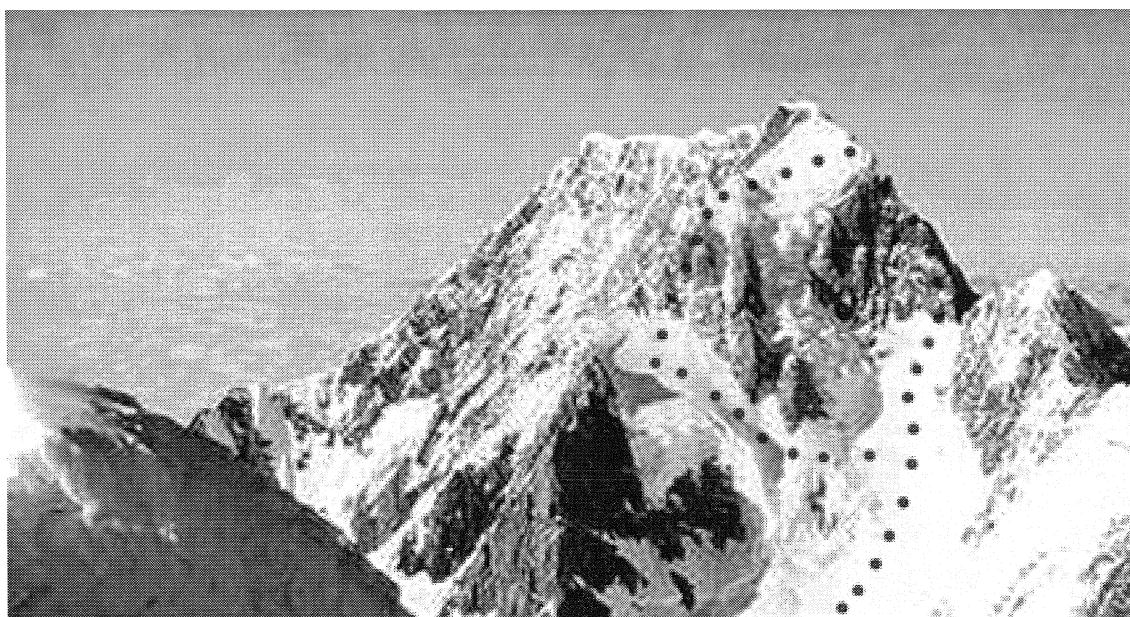
My spirits soared when finally we crested the ridge; at last we could begin to move towards the hut. The summit was only about fifty yards from where the ridge ended but it may as well have been fifty miles, I was going down. We descended the summit ice cap in a race to beat the setting sun before abseiling down summit rocks and some of the steep ice below. The lower down we went the stronger the wind got, stopping communication unless we were right next to each other, freezing us to the bone and on the odd occasion knocking me right off my feet (makes crossing narrow snow bridges exciting!).

"We're safe here. We can have that break, and Carys, you better take the lead. I'm having trouble seeing. I see crevasses that aren't there and I nearly walked into that last slot because I didn't see it. I've been walking around flat snow and nearly fell in a big hole."

Once we were out of danger the toll of the previous day began to show on Stu who fell asleep at every opportunity, even though the rests only lasted a few minutes as after that it became unbearably cold. When we had started down the glacier I let him lead, presuming his superior knowledge of the area would make the descent safer, but he appeared uncertain and walked an erratic path down the glacier. When he told me he was seeing things that weren't there I knew it was my turn to take the lead. It was pretty easy really. The Linda Glacier is the descent route, and for most the ascent route, for many of the climbs on Cook, therefore, as a result of the recent spate of nice weather, I was following a veritable highway of frozen footprints.

My torch failed in the icefall, making it an ankle-twisting nightmare of deep, frozen footprints. We clambered over the haphazard blocks of debris, balanced on contorted bridges across unfathomable voids, weaved our way through seracs and sat, laughing, in the snow on the edge of the Plateau. It was a great place to watch the sun come up, all things considered.

It's amazing how much harder things get when you know you're close to home. As soon as the hut had come into sight and finally become an attainable goal, the effort of the previous day and nights came crashing down on me and



Mt Cook. with the route Carys and Stu took. Up the north ridge, (left hand ridge) & back down the most obvious route.

every step became more of a struggle. In contrast, the rising of the sun and the easing of the wind made the journey almost leisurely compared to the pitch black and howling gale of the night before. The urgency and uncertainty had left and we felt no guilt at giving in to our bodies needs for frequent rest stops.

The vaguely discoloured snow signals the last rise and the last few yards. Good to get to the hut. Good to take the gear and clothes off after 28 hours. Good to eat and drink. Good climb, long day.

The toilet is a landmark of climbing at the Plateau.

Real Snow

Not at that Tower of Babel,
Where heathens worship their false idol:
Synthetic pleasures derived from tainted slopes,
Bathed in the ultimate heresy -
An attempt to emulate one of God's creations,
Combined with the destruction of another;

But out here - alone,
Tracks behind, not in front,
Surrounded by snowgums, each one unique,
As well as the earth,
All immersed in the white glory from heaven.

Doug Bambrick.

An odious (ode to) bushwalking

By Andrea Kneen

As I sit and stare out windows, and swivel on my chair,
I think about the pleasures of a day spent in fresh air.
So I'll share with you, my friends, my tales of trips now long gone by,
In the hope that you as well may be inspired to have a try.

'Tis 6am, the group's assembled at the usual place.
That is, except for Dimi, who'll arrive at his own pace.
So at 8 o'clock we set off, and all is going well
Until we come across a junction, when tempers start to swell.

Our driver Andy shouts out to the people in the back,
"Does anybody know which of these roads is the right track?"
A voice is heard to say, "turn right", and then return to sleep.
But no one heard the muffled "...then left" coming from the heap.

So after a scenic tour of nowhere, and an extra hundred k's,
We return along the track we'd driven earlier that day.
After several times repacking, and a somewhat hurried lunch,
Finally we set off, a professional-looking bunch.

For it's the gear that is important, or so the climbers say,
And I'm pleased to say we had it all, on that ill-fated day.
There was Matt, who looked resplendent, with his wildly bulging pack,
Containing tripod, several lenses, and an ice-axe on the back.

Once again, though, Dimi starred in the department of attire
With his brilliant yellow thermals, and a beard which caused much ire.
And as for Soph, well there's a sight, if ever one was seen -
Co-ordinated socks and cap, in pale blue and green.

We only take essentials though, some things we do not need:
Gaiters are superfluous when bashing through thick weed.
And as for Texas, one's enough, or so I've heard it said,
Though I've yet to see Marcelle without a hat upon her head.

The day drags on, the night draws near, the moon begins to rise,
And in the cold the mud upon our legs begins to dry.
But we struggle on, through thick and thin, battling dry and wet.
We have no choice, you see; we haven't reached the campsite yet.

At length we do arrive though, and prepare to stay the night.
The tent-poles have gone missing, but there is a 'no standing' sign.
So we pitch the tents, surrounded by a sky of eerie blue,
Then it's off to test the pleasures of a toilet with a view.

Around the portable bushfire sits a tired hungry group
Who can't believe their eyes - the cook has burnt the packet soup!
So it's 'Rices of the World' again tonight we're served for tea.
After ten days of hard walking, you get awfully sick of these!

Dinner's over, the stars are out, there's just time for a line
From your favourite English poetry, or maybe some of mine!
Or there's cards to play and music too - why not join the chorus,
Before turning into bed to find out your tent-mate snores.

So you see, my friends, the pleasures of this pursuit of ours;
The tears, the pain, the laughter, the mateship and the hours
Spent sampling bakeries (cakes as far as you can see!).
All these things and more, much more, are what make a trip for me.

Climb of the Month- Moonshine Buttress

Fox Glacier Neve

Mt. Cook & Westland NP

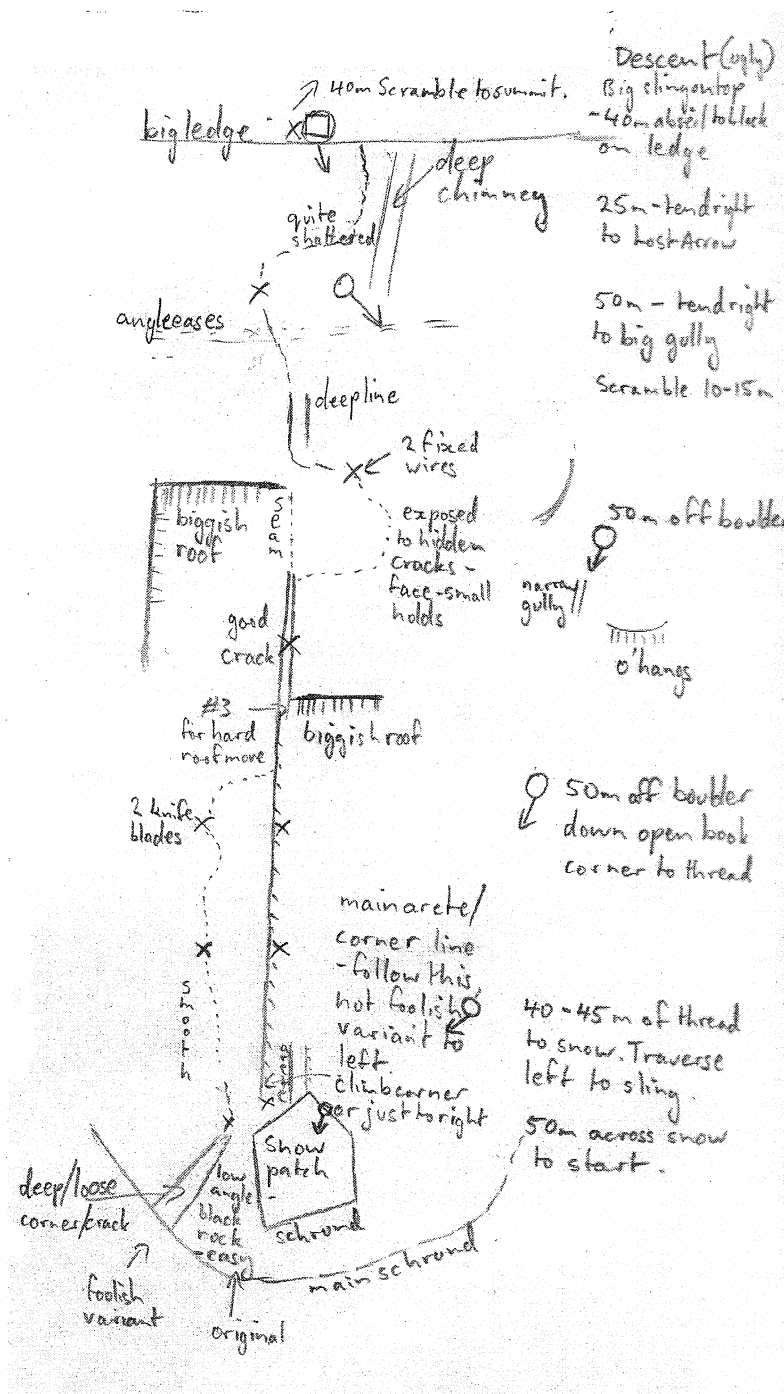
By Stu Hollaway

Staring out from the balcony of Pioneer Hut into the steep upper cirque of the Explorer Glacier the eye is inevitably drawn to the striking pillar of the Moonshine Buttress. Flanked by the classic Glacier Peak ice face on the right and hidden in the morning shade of the brooding south faces of Triad and Mallory, black deserts of crumbling verticality, the slender rocket of orange pink rock, driving straight from the ice to a distinct summit, is an unavoidable feature, an inevitable challenge.

The Fox Glacier is an incredible climbers playground. Enjoying excellent access and minimal objective dangers, climbers are able to reach landmark snow and ice climbs such as the North Shoulder on Tasman and South Face routes on Douglas, mixed alpine classics like the Pioneer Ridge and a number of quality rock routes, while skiers enjoy touring of unsurpassed quality. Even here the Moonshine Buttress is something a little bit special.

Get up just before dawn and stagger over to the base of the pillar, where the Hollaway/Morgan foolish variant start is not recommended, change into your rock shoes, leave most of your gear and up you go. Expect 340 metres of climbing in about 8 pitches. The climbing, on good rock, with spaced, solid gear, is sustained at about 13, with a couple of sections 16. Take double ropes, 6-8 wires, a couple of knife-blades, spare sling for the abseils and 3-4 cams including a #3 camalot, and head straight up the main line past the two prominent roofs. Abseil back down the line or, much uglier, into and down the gully system on the right.

Put your boots back on, walk back to the balcony and watch the sun sink into the ocean as the fishing boats head out into the night.



THE ROUTE: MOONSHINE BUTTRESS

This Year's Preparation for Future Leaders

**By
Doug
Brambrick.**

On the weekend of 17th-18th April, around 20 aspiring future trip leaders along with six more experienced leaders willing to impart their bottomless wisdom, stayed at Woodside House, Blackwood, for a weekend of intensive leadership training. The purpose of the weekend was to train new leaders in the skills of leadership, including first aid, navigation and group coherence.

Marcelle, Dave, Inga, Marty and myself were the first to arrive on the Friday night, and set about our first challenge for the weekend - getting into the house without a key. So, determined to prove our resourcefulness we donned our Petzls and proceeded to scout around the building. Having tried a couple of doors and several windows to no avail, we encountered the laundry door, which, much to our relief, was unlocked. Our relief quickly turned to frustration when we realised

that the door on the other side of the laundry only led to a cupboard. We were about to resign ourselves to a few more hours in the cold night air, when we noticed that, on the opposite side of the cupboard was a second door. So, exercising our well-honed caving skills, we crawled through the cupboard into the dark abyss of one of the bedrooms.

Naturally, it would be unfair to deprive everyone else of such a wonderful challenge, so, being the considerate people we are, we locked the house from the inside, and waited for the others to arrive. The last car to arrive, several hours after us, despite, at least in theory, leaving at the same time, was of course the car containing Andrea, and the key. Here, Andrea and the other people in the car showed their true determination. Despite us making it perfectly obvious that we weren't going to let them in the front door, they continued trying, until, about 10 minutes later, Kylie and I moved away from the door and let them through.

After spending the remainder of Friday night sitting around, talking and laughing, particularly at the climbers who had consumed copious quantities of alcohol on the way up, we woke up bright and chirpy at 8am the next day, ready for the real work. To this end, we began with the theory of what makes a good leader and various leadership styles to be used in different situations. This was terminated with some role-play situations in which we had to deal with situations of

group conflict, which tended to involve one member of the group, namely Alex, being a pain. It must be said that the role suits him very well.

Saturday afternoon was navigation, where we revised how to use a compass and a map, then put that knowledge into practice in the nearby forest. The activity was unfortunately made shorter, mainly due to Matt's haphazard directions which succeeded in getting everyone lost and, therefore, starting our navigation later than anticipated. Certain female members of the group, however, decided that the shortened time wasn't enough and, after searching out a few extra features, came back 45 minutes late, and, as if this wasn't conspicuous enough, they had to add to it by returning minus their tops. After returning to the cars, the tops were quickly replaced, apparently to prevent hypothermia.

After spending so much time waiting in the cold, we were all hungry, and, once having arrived at the camp, set about preparing a banquet of gourmet food ranging from satay chicken, to Kylie and Sarah's cheese fondue, which was shared by most of the group. We ended the evening with slides of various people's trips. I'm sure they were all marvellous, but at this time I felt too tired to watch and went to bed to rest up for the following day's activities.

Sunday followed the same
23 format as the first day, with

theory in the morning, activities in the afternoon, and hacky-sack at every available opportunity. Morning theory consisted of discussion about our impact on the environment: "we shit" as someone so delicately put it, as well as undertaking numerous other destructive activities. We then talked about minimising the impact on the environment.

Afternoon activities involved splitting into groups to work on different challenges. The first challenge I encountered was Kath, Andrea and Marty in the bush. Andrea was already hypothermic, Marty became hypothermic, and Kath was pissed off her brain making a nuisance of herself, and providing general hilarity in the process. She also was a bit disappointed when I got into the role a little too far and tipped out her soft drink, which for the purposes of the exercise was a bottle of alcohol. Oops. Another activity was a communication exercise where we had to pass the message "Check Fred's harness before he abseils" from one person to the next in a similar manner to Chinese whispers. Finally there was a teamwork exercise in getting through a tangle of ropes, using only one hole per person, and not touching the ropes.

Not too long after this was bump out, farewell to the house, and off to the pub for dinner. All in all, a fantastic weekend in which we all met some great people, and hopefully learned something in the meantime.

24 Hours, another view...

By Alan Daley

I was shocked to pick up Wild magazine and see my gorgeous photos splashed all over their pages without so much as a passing credit to the effort put into obtaining them: here is the real story...

Midnight Ascent is a strange event, and it set off an odd challenge when I jokingly suggested to Matt Thomas that a 24 hour trip from Feathertop to Bogong must be possible: after all, didn't rogaining stem from these sorts of crazy, 24 hour walks? Shockingly, Matt took my jest seriously, and 4 months later I found myself trundling up the Hume with 4 post-exam MUMC members completely not ready to tackle the REAL 24 hour challenge.

Matt's team: VP Joel Bartley, Kath Hammond, Andrea Kneen, Dan Tropp and the Matt man had set off on the Thursday night - itinerary: to climb Bogong on Thursday, camp, then set off from Bogong at Noon, and go to Feathertop via Hotham, thus avoiding the wearying Diamantina Spur. My group had four 9-5 workers, and could not afford the luxuries of extra days to recover, so we set out from Melbourne at 6:30pm, and arrived at the base of Bungalow Spur at 11pm. This spur is a wonderful way to climb Feathertop if you are feeling lazy, because it has an even gradient on a well made track. It used to be the access to the Feathertop ski chalets that was used by horses (and people) back in the dim dark '30s when the first two Australian Ski Championships were held there. The chalets, however, kept burning down, since they were made of wood, and their heating was, um, wood-fired. My team of 5 walking zombies:- Boel Gerhardt, Mike Moore, Dylan Shuttleworth, Ralph Gailis (the offending photographer), and myself - arrived at Federation Hut about 2am, crawled into bivvies and continued sleeping. Note: it is a fitting tribute to this trip that from my group, only Ralph and I still live in Melbourne.

We rose at 11am and set off for the short stroll to the summit of Feathertop. I record for posterity here that all of us did go to the top. This may

not be true, but I wish not to sully the reputations of any of the fine women in our group. Leaving the summit with a loud cry of "OXO!!" at exactly noon, the group was in fine spirits as we descended Diamantina Spur. That we had not sighted our rivals the other team yet did not discourage us from our goal, and at 2pm we were looking good at the bottom of the Spur.

Things were not so happy at Weston's Hut when we lunched at 3:30pm: it had been a gruelling walk up the spur, and the first reservations about just how far we had to go were finding voice. A couple of guys from Albury who were doing a reeky of the hut for a possible maintenance project spurred us on with encouraging words, "You're mad, I could never do it." So we broke lunch at 4pm and set off to Mt Jim. In vain, I tried to demonstrate the disconcerting magnetic deviation effect that Mt Jim's magnetite causes, and we were crossing the Bogong High Plains towards Mt Cope. If it were winter, we might have been beginning to see some sort of darkness set in, but December is a good time to attempt this walk, especially given that summer heat has not yet set in. Looking over to Mt Mackay, the group was highly tempted to trundle over to make its own protest, but instead opted to leave our thoughts in a logbook later on. Admittedly, Mt Mackay is neither beautiful, nor particularly "wild," but something in the principle of excising a chunk of National Park because someone feels like building ski lifts on it seems really dodgy to me. The message is in the refurbished Wallaces Hut logbook, with some added concern that we had also not seen any logbook entries from the other team, who were supposed to pick us up at the other end, please? Fatefully we had scooted past Rover Lodge because the group was moving nicely, and wanting to make the most out of the diminishing light.

We did not progress far from Wallaces Hut before hunger pangs struck at our number, and Boel and Dylan forced a rest at the SEC Hut outside Longford's Gap. Unfortunately, the hastily bought pasta was still in the car. Thank God for someone's abandoned supplies!! Sated, we collected water at Watchbed Creek and headed up the track to the Mt Nelse turn-off. It was now past midnight, and some hard decisions were

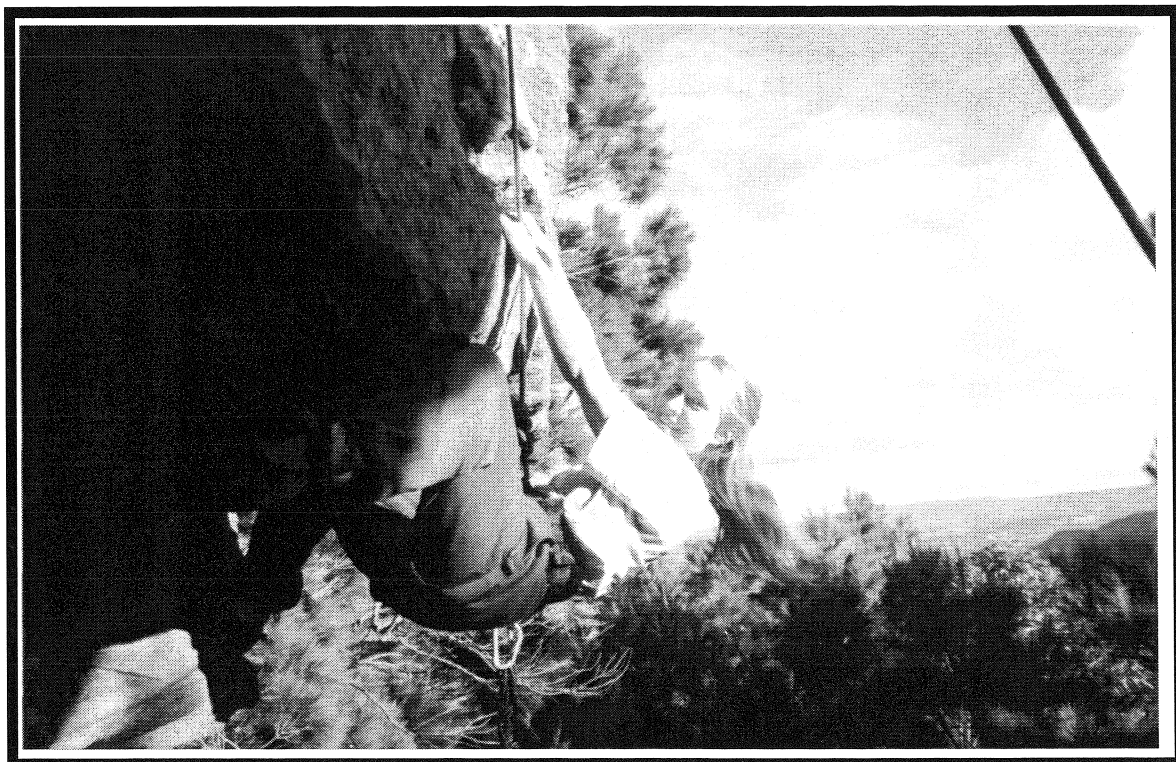
going to have to be made: if we took the rest that Ralph indicated he needed on the uphill, that Boel needed, and that I needed in order to stay warm, we would probably not meet the targeted time limit. Unfortunately, we gave way to tiredness; the lack of physical preparation (due to exams, and the fact that I actually finished my degree, at last!) had definitely taken its toll. We curled up at Edmonson Hut at 2am promising ourselves to get up at the first sign of light.

Magically, this happened! Not too reluctantly the party was off towards Spion Kopje and the Grey Hills Track. Mt Bogong, (with its higher West Peak), was now visible, and if we could make good time over the Hills, we might have some chance of being respectably late. Going past the bizarre "unused aqueduct," the water flowing in decidedly the wrong direction, we took our bearing over to the Grey Hills. Be warned that this bearing needs to be accurate in the dark, because there is a distinct chasm to fall into between the AWT and Crows Nest. From the sparkling creek we took our last water, and headed for the Grey Hills. These had proved to be the other team's undoing as well: even though just 6_km long, this took just on 2_ hours to complete from Crows Nest at 10am to Bogong Creek Saddle at 12:30. That Boel was not walking easily, that Dylan had hurt his knee on the walk down Mt Arthur, and that Ralph was also struggling with his knees on the uphill now forced our group to contemplate its sad plight.

After some heartache that 20 hours of walking was going to be for nothing, the 3 injured members took the western escape route via the Bogong Huts to Clover Dam, while Mike and I continued on to the rendezvous with the dastardly braggarts who must have defeated us utterly. A quick 1_ hour sprint up Quartz Ridge - the best approach to Mt Bogong - did much to lighten our spirits, and to meet a small bunch of 4 "young" people at the summit, enjoying nature for no job training benefit, was the best end to any trip.

Once again, we missed the wicked opposition's telepathic messages, and thus did not search for the blow-up goldfish that had been strategically placed in the summit cairn at Bogong. Instead, Mike and I collapsed down the mountain for a swim in Mountain Creek. Dan met us at the bottom, and while we enjoyed the refreshing waters of Mountain Creek, he regaled us with the dramatic story from his team, only two of whom had made the distance; he and Andrea had reached Mt Feathertop at 3pm. Joel, Kath and Matt had all pulled out at Diamantina Hut having hurt knees and other parts of anatomy during their walk in the dark over the High Plains. It was fitting that such an arduous walk might claim a number of victims, and still I mused, 26_ hours, I'm certain it can be done. Maybe 1999.

P.S. If you didn't realize, the photos are in Wild.



Carys: Climbing at Nowra.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Alex Chapman, Conservation Convenor.

Since its formation in 1976, campaigning by the wilderness society has resulted in more than 5 million hectares of wilderness being protected in Australia.

**TODAY
KAKADU
WONGUNGARRA
THE GREAT BARRIER REEF
THE TARKINE**

**AND MANY OTHER
PLACES ARE ALL
UNDER THREAT!**

**YOU CAN HELP
BY JOINING
PH 1800 030**

WONGUNGARRA: A POSITIVE STEP

The prospects for Victoria's last high quality wilderness area are looking promising.

A couple of months ago the Government released its North East Regional Forest Agreement Directions Report. For those of you unaware, the RFA is an agreement between State and Federal Governments which decides the fate of a region's forests for twenty years. This report proposed the protection of Wongungarra from logging activities. While this news was good to the environmentally conscious, it was bad to those in the business of rape and pillage. (i.e. the timber industry). They are currently lobbying the government to reverse its decision. The report indicates only the direction, it is not the final

RFA outcome. Therefore we must continue our lobbying effort to protect Wongungarra.

YOU CAN HELP BY: Writing a letter that recommends Wongungarra be incorporated into the Alpine NP.

Address it to:
**Hon Marie Tehan
Minister for Environment
8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002**

(Wongungarra Valley is a 25000 hectare valley around 15km north-west of Mt Hotham.

It is currently state forest, bordered on three sides by the Alpine National Park. The valley has largely escaped damage by human impacts such as roading, logging or bushfires. It contains stands of old-growth Alpine Ash and many threatened species, including the critically endangered Spotted Tree Frog. Several of the club's members have been involved in the campaign to have it included in the Alpine NP.)

Mt McKAY: UP SHIT CREEK!

In late 1997 the State Government excised 285 hectares from the Alpine NP without any public consultation. The land around Mt McKay has been handed to Falls Creek for the expansion of their down-hill Alpine resort. Apart from the precedent of removing areas from National Parks to promote commercial development, the area contains many rare plant communities and the endangered Mountain Pygmy Possum.

The proposed down-hill ski

field is massive; nearly one and a half times the size of the present resort ski field.

Extensive clearing and major works will be necessary to establish ski runs, lifts and other facilities such as shelters, ski-hire, cafeterias, car parks and access roads. The development would involve removing thousands of snow-gums, large areas of dense tall heathland, and numerous large boulders.

One ski-lift and 5 or 6 proposed runs pass through the 'preferred habitat' of the endangered Mountain Pygmy Possum. Furthermore, the government has granted Falls Creek permission to raise Rocky valley dam by up to 8 feet, removing even more land from the Alpine NP.

Having realised that the government will not reverse its decision, environment and outdoor community groups are calling for a full independent Environmental Impact Assessment. If carried out properly, it is unlikely the current development proposal would pass the investigation. So far the government has stated there will be no EIA, but if we can mount enough public pressure, you never know what can happen. Look at what happened at Wilsons Prom!

YOU CAN HELP BY: Writing a letter that recommends the proposed development be subject to a full independent Environmental Impact Assessment.

Address it to:
**Hon Marie Tehan
Minister for Environment
8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002**



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

Protecting, preserving and promoting wilderness

Alans's Satay Sauce

Ingredients (serves 4)

oil
3 cloves garlic, chopped finely
200g (about 1/2 a 250mL *Nalgene*) peanut butter
1/2tsp *Tabasco*
100g (preferably dark brown) sugar
1/2 block *Sahib's* coconut cream
4tbs water

Method

Sauté garlic in oil. When lightly golden, add peanut butter, sugar and *Tabasco*. Stir, and add coconut milk and water. Keep gently stirring and heating until oil begins to separate from the sauce. Serve over a delectable stir fry on brown rice.

Alan's Magic Emergency Carbonara

Ingredients – to serve 2 hungry, or 3-4

hopeful hikers
1/2 a 250mL *Nalgene* milk powder
1/3 Parmesan cheese
3 rashers prosciutto sliced into squares
1tsp egg powder
black pepper
1 packet spaghetti/fettuccinni
large pot of water

Method

Boil water. Cook pasta in vigorously boiling water until *al dente*. Drain (not well, not perfectly), and quickly add well mixed *Nalgene* contents, stirring through the pasta. Serve. Time = 12mins, add another 5mins if you have to set up a bloody MSR!!!

Risotto

Ingredients – to serve 2

2 1/2 cups boiling water
1 *Massel* Ultracube – vegetable, chicken or fish (all vegetarian)
3/4 cup Arborio rice
1 brown onion
olive oil or butter
beans
capsicum
tinned salmon
whatever...

Method

Boil water first, add crushed stock cube and reserve, preferably lightly simmering on another stove: Trangia is best. Gently

sauté onion and rice in a generous portion of oil/butter. As soon as onion is translucent, add 1/3 cup stock, and once absorbed/boiled away, add another 1/3 cup. Add carrot or other root vegetables at this point. After the next 2 such additions, add capsicum or beans, after the next 2, add tinned fish. Test the rice for that magic balance between resistance and tenderness. When you believe all is right, serve with a garnish of fresh parsley and a fresh, dry white, chilled in a nearby creek.

Alan's Famous Banana Curry

EXCLUSIVE

SECRET INGREDIENT REVEALED

Ingredients – to serve 4

oil
1 large brown onion
The usual vegies: zucchini,
broccoli,
sweet potato,
carrot,
jerusalem artichoke,
beans,
lebanese eggplant,
snow peas
1/3 packet banana chips
water
1 block *Sahib's* coconut cream
curry powder
250g macadamia nuts (face it: a number
of these will be eaten before they
make it into the curry!!)

small pot of water
a generous 1/3 cup brown/white rice per
person = 1 1/3 cups

Method

Open wine to breathe. Start water to boil for rice. Sauté onion and garlic in oil until onion is translucent. Add other vegies (except broccoli and snow peas. Also note that carrot does take a little longer to cook, and is best of added to oil before any other vegies), then a little water just as the vegies have absorbed all the oil. Now add the curry powder, coconut cream and a little more water (plus broccoli if applicable). Your rice should now be on and cooking. Once the coconut liquid has begun to simmer, add the banana chips, and any snow peas. Cook for about 6 minutes, until vegies are tender, then add nuts. Serve on a bed of steaming hot rice, with a glass of chunky cabernet sauvignon.

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Assiff Kebab's Horoscopes

What's your Kebab this month?

Aquarius (January 21 – February 19)

Your obsession with medieval wheelbarrows has gone too far. And maybe it's time you let grandma out of the basement. She's starting to smell.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

It's not until you realise Fluffy is missing and you cough up a fur-ball that you realise your house-mate's secret recipe for Dim Sims was a little suspect. You will set new distance records for projectile vomiting. Move out now.

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

You will run into your ex. It's amazing how much damage you can do at 60km/h. He/she will forgive you. Get married. Have 17 children. Eat them.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

The Purchase of a new Gore Tex has made you irresistible to others. Your partner may become jealous but pay no attention. There's plenty of fish in the sea. Why not eat all of them?

Gemini (May 22 – June 22)

Your investment in a Bolivian Green Skivvy factory is not paying dividends. In hindsight orange would have been a better choice. Pull out now. Put your money in something more blue-chip, like the Bedazzler.

Cancer (June 23 – July 23)

You will have copious amounts of amazing

sex, although you should try it with people sometime. The zookeeper is not happy.

Leo (July 24 – August 23)

When Saturn aligns with Pluto up near Uranus in between the newly discovered Oxo Mento stars your phone will ring. Do not answer it.

Go out and buy a big present for your closest friend who descends from the Middle East.

Virgo (August 24 – September 23)

You'll be overcome by deranged thoughts that you are a Middle Eastern terrorist with a fast-food as your surname. Shish and Doner say hi.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Photocopying your ass will get you places.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

You will buy a magical lucky ticket in tattslotto!! You won't win.

But you'll meet the partner of your dreams in the newsagent!! It won't go anywhere – you're ugly.

Sagittarius (November 23 – December 22)

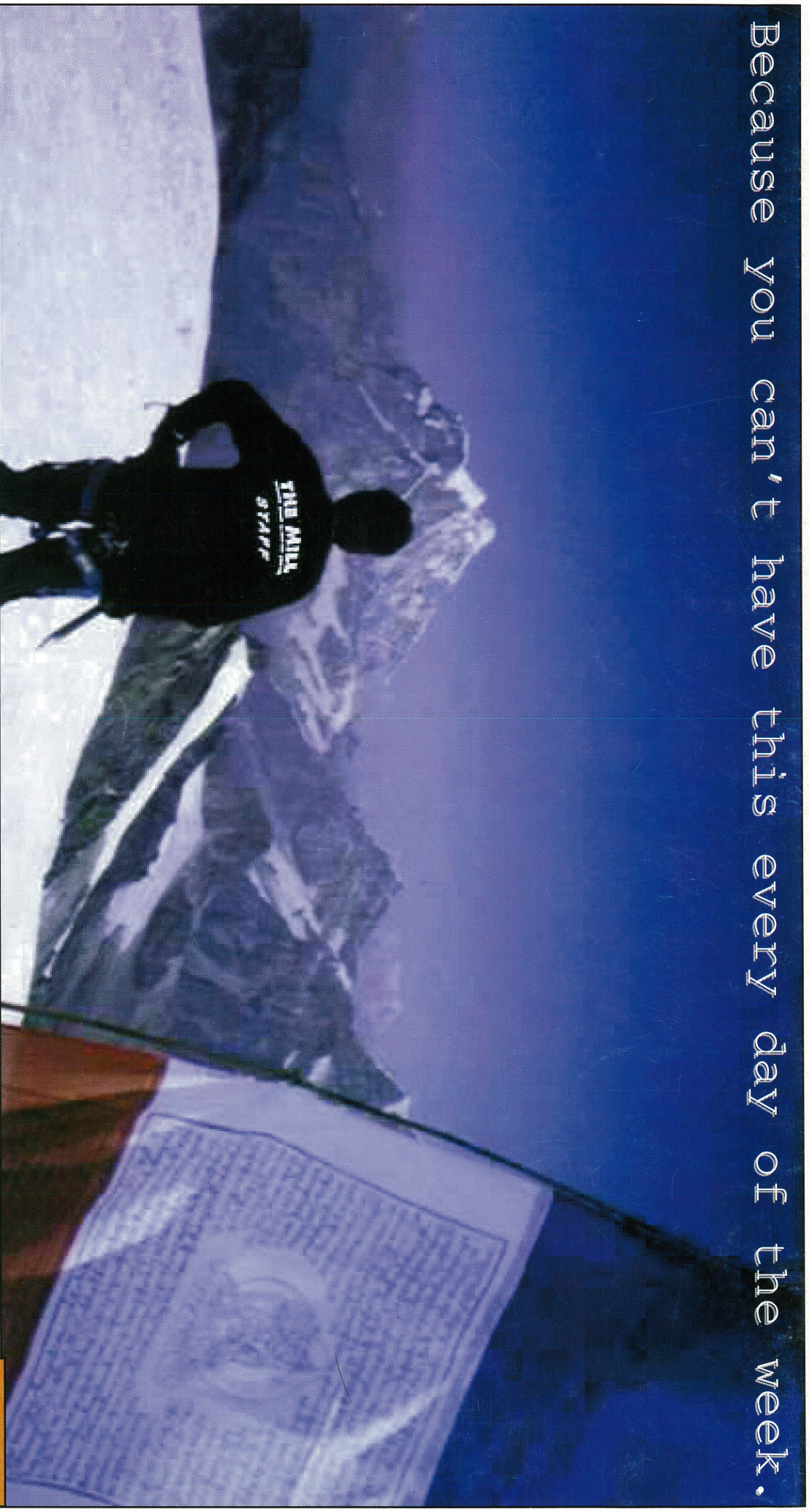
Expand your cereal horizons. Look beyond the museli. Discover new foodstuffs. Be a rebel – try toast.

Capricorn (December 23 – January 19)

Don't read horoscopes this month. They're full of shit.



Because you can't have this every day of the week.



Staff member Nick Ping (past member of MUMC) at the summit of "Ramdung", Nepal 5998m. (April 1999)

We'd all love to reach a summit like this, but on a weekday in Melbourne it can get bit tricky. We don't pretend to have anything as awe inspiring or thrilling as mountaineering. But if you are into climbing, we do have the best facilities, the widest variation of grades and we're just 2kms out of the city. Our route setters like Nick Ping in the picture above walk it like they talk it. So we think you'll enjoy climbing their routes. If not the same thrill as mountaineering, it's a great way to continue challenging yourself.

THE MILL Indoor Rock-Climbing Centre 78 Oxford Street Collingwood 3067 PH (03) 9419 4709 www.themill.com.au

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