

The Mountaineer

Melbourne University Mountaineering Club, Inc – February 2004

Post Print approved pp337834/03052

Bushwalking; Canoe-polo; Canyoning;
Caving; Conservation; Mountaineering;
Paddling; Rock-climbing; Rogaining;
Search and Rescue; Skiing; Socialising.

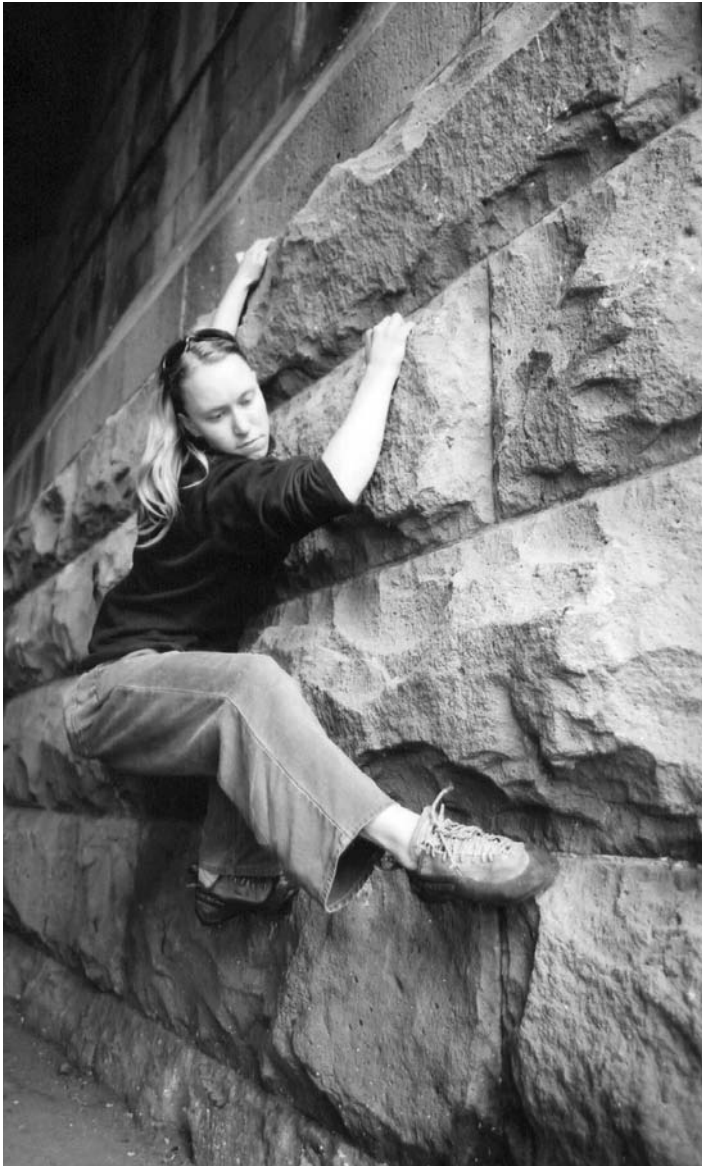


Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| President's Report - O Week 2004. | 3 |
| Editorial/Rant | 4 |
| Convenor Reports. | 5 |
| Climbing at MUMC — Mac | 6 |
| Return to Resignation — Alison Thomson | 7 |
| Bouldering for beginners — Mac | 9 |
| Paddling — Tim Wallace | 10 |
| Franklin River — Anna Hyland | 12 |
| Caving — Kat Martin | 14 |
| Tasmanian Caves — Kylie McInnes | 15 |
| Western Arthur's Trip — Peter Heild | 20 |
| September Daywalking — Andrew Oppenheim | 22 |
| Search and Rescue — Enmoore Lin | 23 |
| Paddling in the Top End — Tim Wallace | 24 |
| The indecisives go paddling....by Mr Brave | 25 |
| The Shuttle Bunny - A Guide to Paddling with Timmy and Dave — Deddles of MBC (and Evil Tim) | 26 |
| The Falling-off trip — Stu Hollaway | 30 |
| Mountains and Snow in Summer — Dale Thistlewaite | 32 |
| OXO old farts. | 34 |
| Further adventures and getting involved. | 35 |



President's Report - O Week 2004.



Cover and contents page photos by Lincoln Smith in Upper Tasman area, New Zealand.

Above, Carys bouldering along the Yarra – Andy Selby-Smith

Right, Robin S.S. carving up Mt Bogong – Dylan Shuttleworth.

Stop Press: Slush!

It's annoying the hole in my bum has now become a hole you can fit three fingers in! - Anon.

Hello there! This is the magazine of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club.. you're a member?? you signed a form, paid us money??..... No??...

So, you haven't been over to the clubrooms?? Probably haven't signed up for a trip yet... Haven't strapped into your first harness, boat or pair of skis. Haven't climbed your first mountain or paddled your first stream.....??

Okay, you're forgiven, University can be a busy place, plenty of people to meet, assignments to do...beer to drink??.... and it can be pretty intimidating wandering into the clubrooms at times..... but it's time to give it a go, let me start by dispelling some myths..!

- You don't need to have done any outdoorsy stuff before, the mountaineering club runs trips for complete beginners.
- You don't need much of your own equipment. The club owns all the technical equipment for the various sports,
- If you have done this sort of stuff before 'the club' provides an environment for you to meet common minded people, hire equipment and learn new skills.
- What you do need is some enthusiasm! The club isn't so much about taking people into the outdoors as much as it is about teaching people the skills so they can take themselves away.....

Have a read, see what you think and come over to the clubrooms and give some of this cool stuff a go....its addictive!

Carys Evans

MUMC President 🐛



Editorial/Rant

Welcome to the Mountaineering Club and to this issue of The Mountaineer. This magazine is the club's sporadic journal, normally published four times a year. It serves both to record what the club has been up to, and to inspire you to go out and do stuff. If you're ever interested, look for it at 796.52205 in the Baillieu or State Libraries. The 796.5 shelf in the ERC or Rowden White library is also a good spot for exam-time procrastination and diversion. Anyway, forget exams, it's still summer... !

MUMC is a great club to be a part of, and does some great things. Whilst there are few people who would get a kick out of doing everything the club does, the club is interested in any self-reliant adventure in the mountains and beyond... even to the flatness of the Nullarbor and its surprising cave systems. As an indication, in the last few years, members and alumni have been paddling, climbing and walking in all corners of the planet. We've done some huge stuff close to home and done some 'mundane' stuff in exotic locales, and vice-versa; stuff like paddling on the Yarra and mountaineering in the Andes, Rockies, Himalayas and both NZ and European Alps; climbing, walking and paddling all over the place, in Victoria and elsewhere (including canoe polo in suburban pools); stuff which would freak out your parent if they ever knew... Though sometimes it's called "research" (when someone else is paying) for some distant PhD, we're there, wherever it is, because we find beauty, challenge and fulfilment in the wilder places of the world.

Unfortunately, in my opinion, there aren't enough new people coming into the club, and the club doesn't do enough to encourage new people to become involved. If you are new, please make the effort to become involved! Go on trips (not just the mass March beginner trip) – register by putting your name down in the clubroom folders for the trips advertised there. Go on the trip, have fun, learn some skills and go again. Become expert and run trips yourself! Help out in running things by becoming involved in the committee by standing in some capacity at the AGM. Looking around a recent committee meeting, I would count only four of the dozen or so present as being 'normal' undergrads, the rest being graduates, higher degree candidates or 'Mature Age' students... and this is putting non-committee Evil Timmy into the 'normal' basket.

We organise trips (unofficially) by word of mouth at the pub on Tuesday evenings, by personal email and possibly through a commercial, 3rd party web-forum; and officially through the sign-up folders in the clubrooms. There is a club-wide email list, though sending permission for this is limited. The disadvantage of the unofficial methods is that news of the trip is narrow-cast, excluding anyone outside of the clique from going on the trip. This, and the focus of club meeting on Tuesday evenings (rather than

lunch-times), is to the benefit of people in the know or who can pop in to the clubrooms at that time and to the detriment of those who are new or who choose neither to return to campus, nor hang about uni for hours after their last lecture/tute/prac. The best way to become established is to go on trips – causing problems if the club's procedures don't encourage participation, no? The clubrooms are generally open at lunchtimes during semester, when student members (of all levels) could arrange trips; however this doesn't really happen. It should! That is my opinion, perhaps I'm imagining things; there are implicitly several other visions of how the club should run trips, though these are not communicated and (implicitly) conflict. It's also different in each sport, depending on exactly whether the active members are or are not at university.

As a club we haven't quite worked out how we should be using technology. I'm studying a PGradDip in Information Systems, and so am (over?-) interested in the interaction of people and technology. This magazine is itself a bit of a contradiction in an 'environmentally-aware' club, being produced in both physical and electronic format. As propaganda, I'm hoping new members will take the printed mag home and become enthused, and that former members will download the electronic copy (and not wreck some more trees through printing the .pdf).

Most higher degree students (and working people) have computers and email on their desks all day long; conversely, many undergrads aren't on-line quite as much and would not consider email the best medium for important messages ("I'd like to come on the trip", etc). It's easy to send an email and assume it has reached all the people it is meant to; much quicker than walking over to the clubrooms (15 mins from where I study) and writing something in a folder or on the chalkboard where interested members could see it. Which should we be doing? I believe this does influence the old issues of "How much notice should you give of running a trip?" and "How many people need access to the gear-store keys?"

The club is what we make it; to you it will be what you make of it. Whilst the Cathedrals trip is pretty-much served up on a plate, for anything more you'll have to get off your arse. Have a great, safe time with us.

Dylan Shuttleworth
d.shuttleworth@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au

PS. The next editions of the Mountaineer will be April and July. If you would like to see your tales of MUMC adventure in print, or even your pictures (print, slide or digital), please contribute to these upcoming editions. Thanks. 🌲



Convenor Reports.

Bushwalking — Peter Heild

Summer is usually the time of year when, free of the pressures of university, bushwalkers turn their attention to longer and more ambitious trips. And so it was this time, with several trips to both Tasmania and New Zealand. Andrew and Alison had an enjoyable time wandering on Stewart Island, while larger groups in Tasmania successfully traversed both the Western and Eastern Arthurs and the Denison Ranges. Despite seeing some snow, the weather was mostly kind, allowing for good relaxing walking and excellent photo opportunities. The bigger trips didn't entirely stop the smaller trips happening. Day and weekend walks also took advantage of the summer weather, with trips to Wilson's Prom and Mt Stirling.

The new semester is almost here, and already there are walks planned. Why not sign up to escape from Melbourne for a weekend outdoors. There are walks planned to the Baw Baw Plateau on 28th February, and in March to Mt Feathertop on the 5th to the 7th, a rogaine on the 13th and 14th, the introductory trip to the Cathedrals on the 21st, and a five day trip to Mallacoota over the Easter weekend. More trips are being planned, so check the folder in the clubrooms for updates. 🏔️



Mountaineering — Dylan Shuttleworth

MUMC Mountaineering had a quiet season this summer, with only two groups actually climbing in New Zealand. Of these, Lincoln Smith did a TMC with Mt Cook Guides and Dale Thistlewaite and Stu Hollaway climbed in the upper Tasman area. See Dale's article for more details. If you'd like to get into the mountains, Stu (who is a qualified guide) is proposing running an instructional course next summer. Further, I'm hoping to resurrect the Alpine Instruction weekend this year. This would probably be on Mt Feathertop in August... details to follow.

The NZAC has a new rate at Unwin Lodge for backpackers and others (\$25). To get the "Members of Affiliated

Clubs" rate (\$20), given their (deliberately) vague notion of an affiliated club, you have to look like you're going climbing; mentioning MUMC may help, it's all at the warden's discretion. The Big Fresh supermarket chain is now "New World" and is fairly dear unless you've got one of their loyalty cards. In Christchurch, the Pak'n'Save just up the road is better value.

I spent three weeks in NZ after Christmas and was greeted with Search and Rescue story on the front page of one of the papers for most of the time I was there. Most strange was a saga of two trampers lost in Arthur's Pass for a week, who had spent most of their time in rain and snow on a scree slope. The papers made much of their attempts to build shelter from their sleeping bags, without mentioning "tent", "bivvy bag" or the large plastic survival bags which DoC sell. Whatever the case, I guess there is a moral about travelling too light.

On a sad note, Dale Thistlewaite writes that this season saw the deaths of two of NZ's most respected mountain guides. Paul Scaife (51) and David Hiddleston (34) were senior guides and directors of Mount Aspiring Guides. David Gardner (40) who was beginning his guiding career and client Dr. Andrew Platt (51) were also killed in the same avalanche on Mt. Tasman (31/12/2003). Several members of the MUMC, past and present, knew these men as talented mountaineers and inspiring people. They will all be greatly missed and our sympathies extend to their families, friends and the guiding community. 🏔️

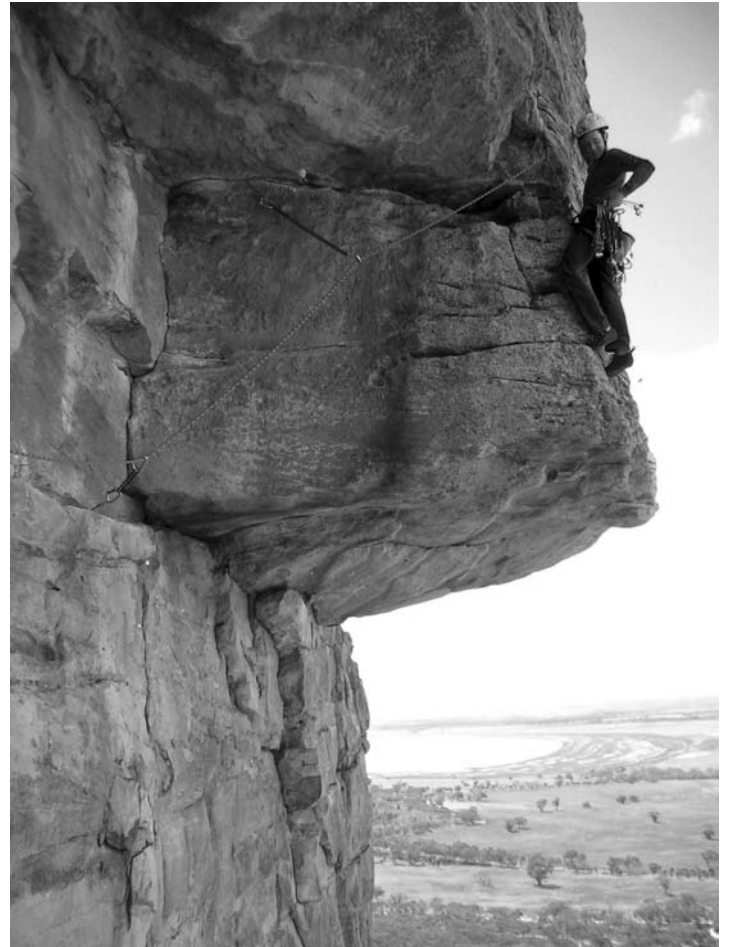
Left, TMC group in Upper Tasman – Lincoln Smith.
Right, Looking on Summer Snow in NZ's Gertrude Valley – Dylan S.



Climbing at MUMC — Mac



Never tried climbing? Thought you might like to give it a go? Then do it with MUMC! Here at MUMC we love to climb rocks. We climb rocks of all sizes from tiny little ones up to really big ones. We go places you probably never new existed, like Black Hill, Camels Hump, Ben Cairn, Mt Alexander; plus all your family favourites such as The Grampians, Mt Buffalo and The Arapiles Mountains. If you don't know anything about climbing rocks then we can teach you. If you can already climb come along anyway. Our members are all very friendly and only bite on special occasions, or if asked really nicely. There will be many top roping trips for beginners, a bouldering for beginners' trip and of course the famous Easter Arapiles trip, where you might get to do some multi pitch climbing as well. All of these are coming up in the next few months, plus many others throughout the year. You should get in early and sigh up for a climbing trip now! Just go to the clubrooms and look in the folder. It's that easy. And if climbing really isn't your cup of tea, how about Mini Golf instead. 🏌️



These photos wer taken at Mt Arapiles, in Western Victoria. The numerical grades indicate difficulty and range from 1 to (currently) 33. Stars (1, 2 or 3) indicate particularly enjoyable routes.

Top Left, Rachael on Piccolo (11*), Organ Pipes — Mac.

Top Right, Ian Gould on Golden Echo (18) — Tristan Croll.

Left, Leone in Clytemnaestra, (9) and Right on Agamemnon (10***), both in the Atridae — both Tristan Croll.



Return to Resignation

— Alison Thomson

“It’s just like climbing a ladder”

1999

I pinned my hopes on an asterisk. It was next to the word “Advanced” on a climbing trip sheet. At the bottom Paul Bowden had added “maybe a few beginners.” And that’s how I ended up alone on a ledge on the final pitch of Resignation, watching the stars come out - humiliated, afraid and utterly exhausted.

Resignation is a 3 star, 4 pitch, grade 15 on Tiger Wall at Mt Arapiles. The crux is a steep, run out and extremely exposed overhang on the 3rd pitch. On the final pitch (grade 11) there is a further, very straightforward overhang.

Having thrashed around at the crux for a small eternity, I was defeated by the final steepening. I had no strength remaining, and lacked sufficient technique to make use of the huge jugs above.

With no headtorch and me hanging from our only rope, Paul abandoned his attempts to explain how to prusik and tied me off. While he downclimbed Ali’s (the descent route) in the fading twilight, I cowered on a ledge, more embarrassed than frightened. An hour later Paul returned with Stu Walsh, a head torch and a second rope. By then, free from the pressure of the encroaching dark and Paul’s anxiety, I had managed to prusik the required 5m to the belay. The first thing Paul said to me was, “and you haven’t even taken apart the anchor!” Later I realised he was joking but at the time I wanted to cry. Stu gave me a hug and coaxed me down the descent route.

On hearing of this epic, Jill Fagan made me swear I would never return to Resignation until I could lead it.

* * * *

2003

I rack up for the first pitch in trepidation. Finally I will face a 4 year demon! Trying to save my strength for the overhang to come, I climb steadily and surely.

Soon I am following Tristan up the 2nd pitch, cursing the fact that we took water up with us. Words cannot describe how much I hate climbing with a bag (maybe a few four letter words would help!). The moves feel awkward, and I am beginning to get pumped, out of balance and using my arms for too much. I begin to despair about what is to come - this pitch is only grade 13! Several times during the diagonal traverse I think I am about to fall off.

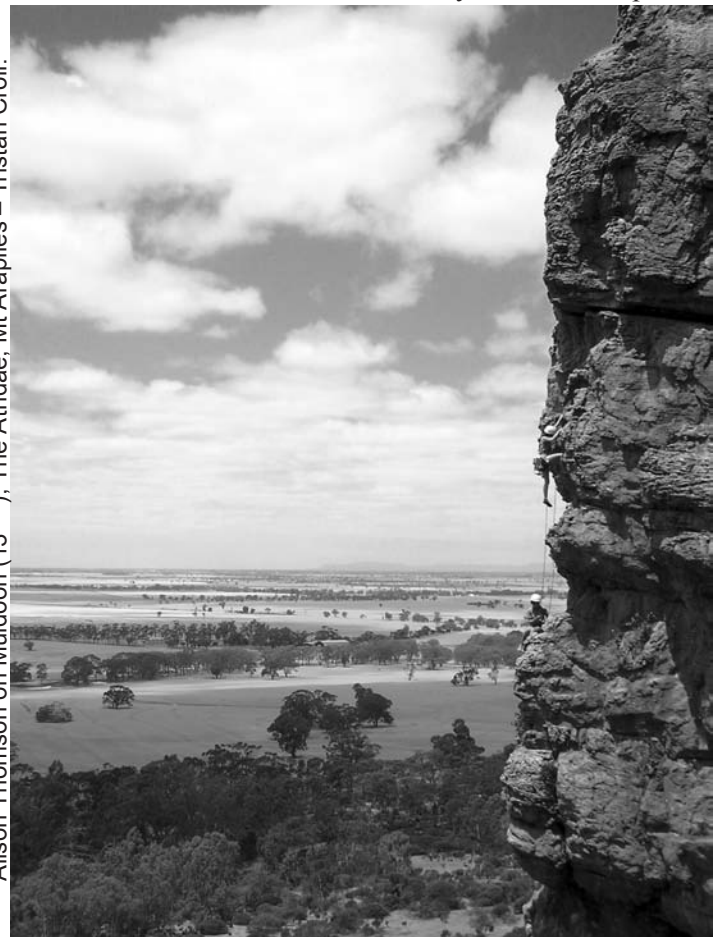
On reaching the belay I throw the bag down angrily, swearing to never take one up a multipitch again. My confidence bruised, I refuse to even look at the overhang I will soon be attempting. The belay ledge is both spacious and spectacular and, still deliberately facing outwards, I rest and rack the gear.

Steep overhangs will never be the climbing I am best at, though I enjoy them because they challenge me to climb at my limit. I am extremely grateful that the crux is very close to the belay - we can see and hear each other the entire time and I will not confront my demons alone.

“All the holds are positive. It’s just like climbing a ladder” says Tristan encouragingly, but I remain intimidated and sceptical. I cannot believe what I am about to do...

Beyond the anchor the gear is as solid as you can get, which is pretty important since there is a 5m run-out through the overhanging crux. I place a bombproof wire and a cam and clip them together (I certainly don’t need both but the extra cam makes me feel better!). I check to see where a fall would leave me - hanging in space a fair way below the belay - but it is a perfectly clean fall, exciting but not dangerous. Just below the overhang I get in another wire which is 90% satisfactory. Now I have placed

Alison Thomson on Muldoon (13***), The Atridae, Mt Arapiles – Tristan Croll.



more than enough protection. I tell myself that you could take screaming whippers onto the first two pieces, which is good, because I may well be about to have a screaming whipper.

Cautiously, I tiptoe out along the ledge towards the overhang. The entire sequence looks so unlikely! If it weren't for the plentiful chalk, I would never believe that a grade 15 went through this section. Deep breath. I've been climbing well lately - focused on all the right things: footwork, sequencing, finding rests. No rests through this section! Perhaps half a dozen steep moves before a small ledge and a slab.

Tentatively, I traverse out on to the overhang, but the jugs I am expecting aren't there! The holds are large but flat topped. I retreat back to the ledge for a quick whinge and more thinking time. "They get better," Tristan promises.

There is very little point going back and forth on these early moves - I will only get tired. I rehearse the sequence in my mind: left hand, step up, lock off, right hand... Since the fall is clearly safe I am glad there are no gear placements to distract me at the crux. Once I step out there will be no going back.

"OK Tristan, watch me lots." With a deep breath I traverse out once more. I reach up - jug. I concentrate on keeping my arms straight and getting my feet higher. Very calmly, Tristan says, "Can you just step over the rope?" and I look down to see it wrapped around my left ankle. "Shit." I have no choice but to waste precious strength and sort it out.

Another move takes me beyond the point of no return. It is steep and I know I must climb quickly before I run out of strength in my arms. Right hand up to the next jug - it is positive. Feet up and look to the next handhold - it's miles away, impossibly far. My strength is dissipating fast, and I don't trust myself to lock off and move up. I'm forced to throw out my planned sequence. What other options exist?

"Watch me." Not long now before I am too pumped to think clearly and climb well. Ungracefully I transfer my left hand to the same jug as my right. "Watch me." For a prolonged instant I cling there and contemplate falling. "Watch me." I reach up. Faith in my belayer. Faith that the next hold will be good. Faith that I am finally strong enough, in mind and body, to finish what I started four years ago. "WATCH ME!" I grasp the jug fiercely and continue. Twist sideways, work the feet. Another jug. Step up, rock over, reach up.

Suddenly it is done. I am pumped but proud that I never reached that point of sheer despera-

tion when you cling on without a plan or a way to move forward. Incredulous, relieved and ecstatic I stand at the foot of the slab. There is more to go, but the hardest part is over.

When Tristan reaches the next belay ledge, I sheepishly request to lead the fourth pitch too, and conquer my final demon. Though up until now the climb has felt like an oversight, one little alcove is all too familiar! I test the jugs above the steepening which once defeated me and almost laugh at how enormous they are. The gear is fiddly and the moves so simple that for a moment I am (stupidly) tempted not to bother placing anything. But I know that letting your guard down can have serious consequences and I don't want to stuff this up now, so I sort out two solid pieces. Laughing in triumph, I grasp the jugs and step up to a hands-free rest. After a final scramble, it is over. I have climbed Resignation.

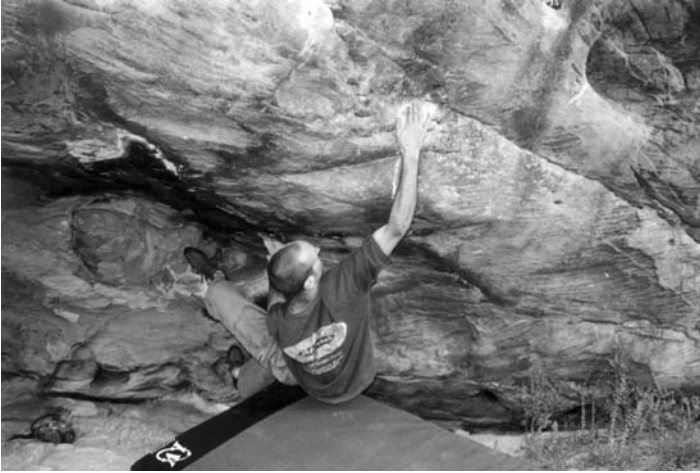
For me this climb has been a symbol of many things: victory and defeat, hope, fear and perseverance. I always knew I would return.

P.S. Please don't think after reading this that Paul is anything but a nice guy. Despite having an epic, I was safe the whole time. I consider him a great friend and a very skilful, experienced climber. He later taught me to lead climb. 🧗

Hannah on her onsight of Garden Gnome (18*), The Pharos - Tristan Croll.



Bouldering for beginners — Mac



Left, Climbing convenor Mac shows how it is done.

Below, Phil putting the technique into practice at Millennium Caves in the Grampians, belayed by Stu Hollaway – Tristan Croll.

Bottom, James Kassay is at the hollow mountain cave on Sleepy Hollow V12-13 Grampians Victoria – Mac.

Originally bouldering was just a way to train hard moves while not half way up a cliff, but now it is a sport in its own right. So what is bouldering I hear you say. Bouldering is climbing close to the ground, sometimes up to a few meters, with no rope or other fiddly gear, usually on small boulders or traversing (going sideways) along the bottom of a cliff. It is quite hassle free, you just need yourself a pair of shoes and a hunk of rock, a spotter (someone who tries to make you land correctly and slow your fall down a bit), and not be scared to fall off. An item which helps with the fear factor is a bouldering mat. Bouldering mats are designed to take some of the impact out of a fall and stop you from breaking yourself. They also double as a great bed or sun lounge when you are a bit tired and need a snooze in the sun. This is why bouldering is a great sport for climbers who have become lazy and can no longer be bothered tying into a rope and carrying loads of gear around. So if you are looking for an extreme sport which is highly technical and strenuous, but you spend most of your time sitting on your arse, eating food and lying in the sun, then bouldering is for you! 🐜



Paddling — Tim Wallace

Think you've got what it takes to paddle whitewater rapids in a kayak?...More to the point, think you DON'T have what it takes??? Think again – there is something for everyone in the whitewater world!



Class I

Moving water with few or no obstacles. Passages are wide open and easily seen from the river.

It's a calm Autumn day when we all meet at the boatsheds. Our river of choice – the Yarra. The sun is out and those newer to paddling practice their skills in the slow moving water. Stopping for lunch at Bob's rock, its amazing that despite being surrounded by bushland, we are only 30 minutes from the city.



Class II

Class II Rapids with small obstacles and regular features. Passages are open and obvious without scouting, but may require manoeuvring.

Early July finds us at the Mitta Mitta river, freezing our bits off. A group of experienced paddlers, with a few beginners in our midst, we set off down the river from the 'Pinball' rapid. At this level it's a tight class II – II+ run, and despite the fact that its bitterly cold, there is no wind and the sun is out. The river has changed since last time we paddled it, and the stark and desolate, recently fire ravaged scenery is compensation for not being able to feel our hands. At 6pm we return to our campsite on the banks of the Cobungra river and have a couple of beers. At 7pm its below zero and condensation on the side of the tent has frozen. At 8pm we decide its to cold to cook dinner and go to the pub instead.

Class III

Rapids with regular features that require manoeuvring to negotiate. Passages can be narrow and features such as holes and irregular waves must be run to negotiate the rapid. Risk of injury.

We'd been eyeing up the Jamieson for a while – and in late September there was a lot of water around, so we organised a big posse of 8 kayakers and 5 rafters. An amazing day was had by all; beautiful temperate forest, moss covered rocks, one exciting gorge and warm[ish] weather.

The river was high and moving fast, so we didn't really have to paddle that much, but the warm[ish] weather meant that the odd swimmer did not get too cold [or the odd 5 rafters...one rapid flipped the raft and scattered the rafters all through the gorge]. The gorge in particular was very good fun – 10 or so solid class III rapids in a row, no way out except to keep going!

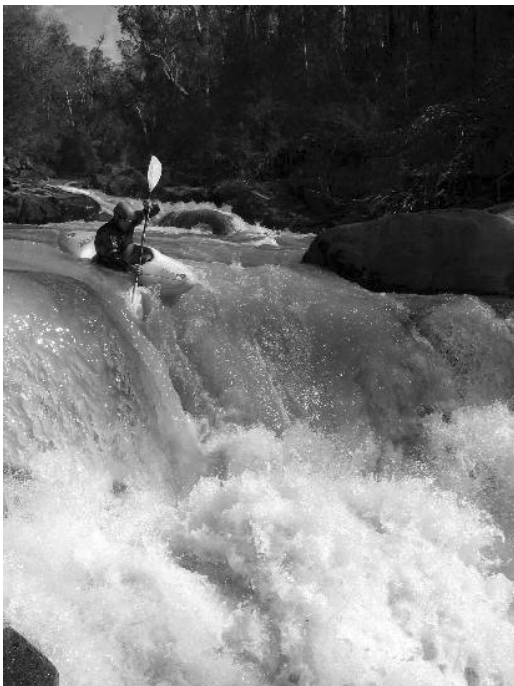
Class IV

Class IV Rapids with highly irregular features. Complicated passages that often include vertical drops and may require scouting to find safe passages. Linked manoeuvres are required in convoluted passages. Risk of injury and possible risk to your life.



Arriving at the Munyang Bend power station, the incessant hum of the hydroelectric power station put everyone on edge. We'd come to paddle Munyang, a section of the Snowy River high up in the Snowy mountains. Whilst most of the upper snowy is devoid of water owing to the Snowy Mountains Scheme, the 8km stretch from the Powerstation to Island Bend pondage is actually used to move water down the system and hence flows quite often. There are two levels; one turbine or two. One turbine is fun, class III – IV and a little rocky. Two turbines is fun, class III – IV and pushy – you could go for a very long swim - so make sure you don't.

The first 1 km is very steep and continuous. This, combined with the strong wind that was kicking up spray, cre-



Opposite page top, Paddling the Mitta Gorge at Low Level – Grant Schuster.

Opposite bottom, Matt Moore on the Munyang – Kat Martin

This page, top left, Dave Kneen on the Upper East Kiewa – Ben Patrick

Left, Jeff Bellis on the Upper East Kiewa – Ben Patrick

Right, visions of paddling discomfort and hell? – Peter Heild and Grant Schuster.

ated a very ominous feel. The team handled it fine, minus a couple of swims, and a couple of short hours later we were at the takeout.

Class V

Class V Rapids with violent and irregular features. Extremely congested passages that almost always require scouting to determine safe routes. Most class V rapids include vertical drops and require running large-scale features in a complex series of manoeuvres. Definite risk of serious injury and possible risk to your life.

Imagine spending 5 hours scared out of your brain paddling the equivalent of a whitewater rollercoaster with big drops and big consequences for making an error. It was late October and we found ourselves on the Upper East Kiewa at the highest level we had ever paddled it at. At one point Cam had a very lucky swim - Any swim on class V where you don't get hurt is lucky. The rapids were fast, continuous, powerful and hard; psychologically as well as physically demanding.

Class VI

The difficulties of class V taken to the extreme. Rapids with extremely violent and unpredictable features where experts require considerable advance scouting and planning to determine possible passages. All class VI rapids require the paddler(s) to negotiate vertical drops and very large features. Always a risk to your life. Generally only possible at certain water levels.

Maybe next year... 🐛



Franklin River — Anna Hyland

From its source in the mountains of central Tasmania, to its confluence with the Gordon, the Franklin is a majestic river.

Flanked by lush forest, its tannin-stained waters reflect dappled light onto overhanging canyon walls, flowing past waterfalls, pebbled beaches and quiet pools.

You might think that this ancient landscape would inspire “higher” thoughts in those who choose to paddle these waters. Unfortunately it seems, that this summer anyway, the Franklin was the back-drop to a fair bit of drunkenness, debauchery and just plain stupidity (and maybe a bit of paddling too.)

DAY ONE. Collingwood Bridge to, um, Collingwood Bridge. Via Strahan. Twice. CULPRIT: OK, OK, I admit, it was me. I said I was sorry, didn’t I?

Sometimes the epic begins before you even start paddling. This realisation came to me as Mel and I huddled under a dry bag on the side of the Lyell Highway. We had been trying unsuccessfully for the last half hour to hitch a ride into Strahan, where our cars had been left. And more cru-

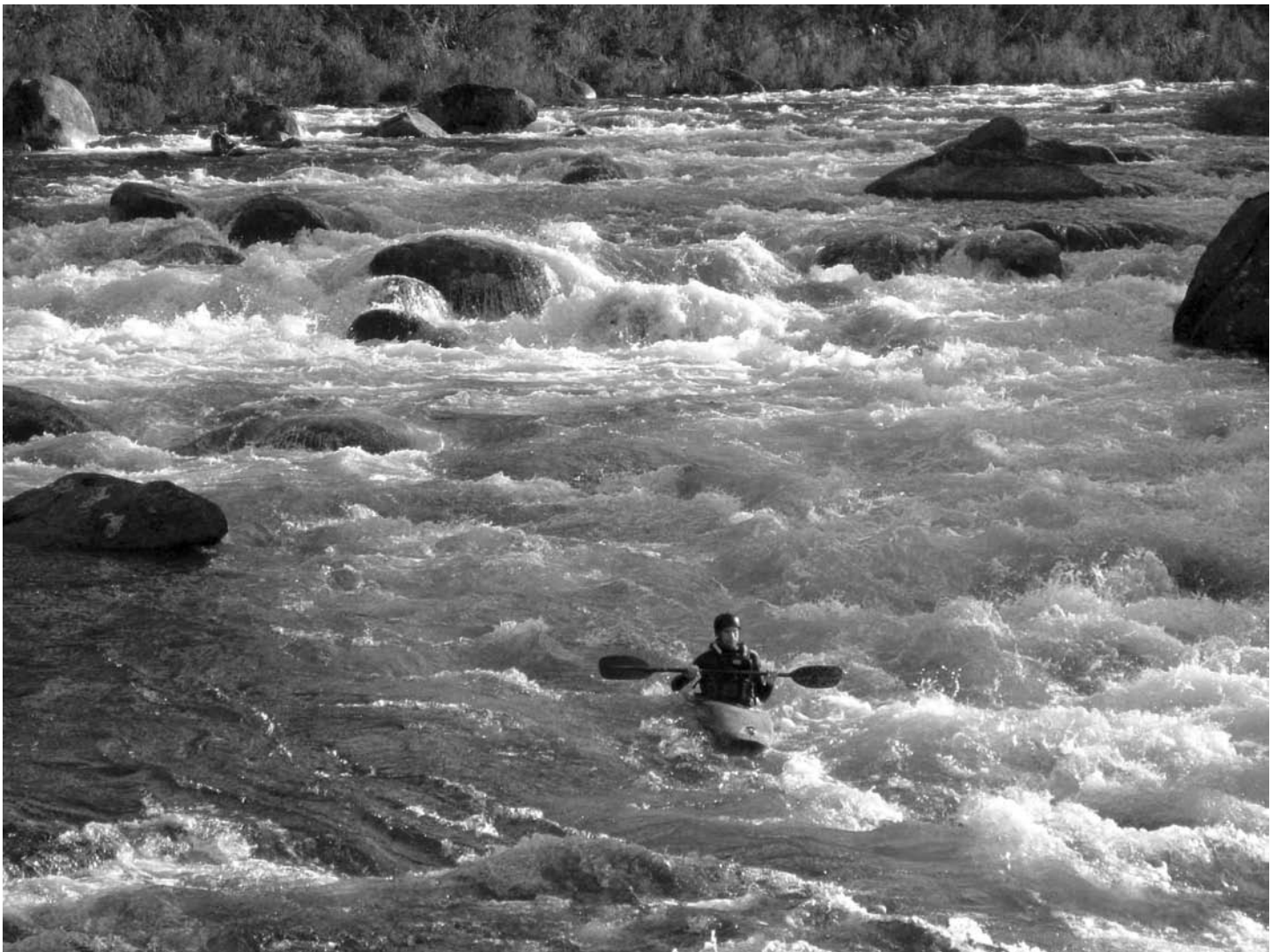
cially, where my HELMET had been left, thanks only to the stupidity of yours-truly.

To further illustrate the stupidity of the situation, it might be wise to add that as Mel and I tried in vain to keep off the driving rain, I was dressed in an orange bikini, a black garbage bag and a grass belt that Mel had plaited for me in a moment of boredom. We were exhorted many times to “show a bit of leg”, and thanks to the shortness of the garbage bag, I certainly tried. But somehow, I don’t think it helped our situation.

The helmet debacle took many hours to resolve, and in the process every member of our posse got to drive to Strahan at some stage in the day.

It was 7:30pm by the time we got back to the Collingwood bridge, this time with everyone in possession of helmets. As we arrived at the put-in, Greg emerged troll-like from under the bridge.

“Don’t even think about paddling.” Greg said. “Andy and I are already on to the cask.”



Day one starts and finishes at the put in.

DAY TWO. (New Year's Eve).

Collingwood Bridge to Irenabyss.

CULPRIT: Greg. And Tim. And Dan. And....

Thanks to Day One's fuck-up, we decide to paddle more today; past the Collingwood/Franklin confluence and on to the narrow gorge known as the Irenabyss. There is very little stupidity on the water today, apart from the stupidity inherent in scratching down shallow rapids and squeezing under log jams.

The weather is exceptional, and after a swim in the cool, deep waters of the Irenabyss we sit in the sun drinking cask port, cask wine and whisky. A lot of cask port, cask wine and whisky. Greg does us all proud by peaking early and hunting us a 'possum' (which looked suspiciously like a rock), which he throws proudly into our wok, splattering vege curry over everyone. Tim does his own version of peaking early, which involves passing out at around 9:30pm, waking up only briefly to welcome the New Year by very meekly announcing: "I am very, very drunk". Dan keeps the party going with rousing renditions of the classic folksong "Three Blind Jellyfish". Tim wakes up again briefly at 3am to announce that he has "Done something very, very embarrassing".

Day Three. Irenabyss to, eventually, Rafter's Race.

It is 2004. The idea of walking up Frenchman's Cap is given the arse. Tim can't remember anything from the night before so we don't get to find out what he did that was so embarrassing. By the time we get on the water it is well past lunchtime.

Day Four. Rafter's Race to the Coruscades.

The guidebook notes how the Great Ravine begins to make its presence felt in the rapids, which are gradually becoming larger. According to Dan, our largely vegetarian diet over the last few days is also making its presence felt, primarily in the workings of his digestive system.

Day Five. The Great Ravine. (cue ominous music...)

CULPRIT: Andy AKA Spunko.

Not content with getting surfed in a hole at the bottom of the Thunderush rapid, Andy chooses to run the Cauldron. Everyone else (perhaps wisely) chooses to walk their boats

Below, Anna Hyland and (opposite) Nick the Kiwi, on the Munyang – Kat Martin.



around to a huge boulder and seal-launch in below the rapid.

Andy discovers at the top of the chute that it is extremely shallow, manages to get his paddle wedged in a rock, then bounces pinball-style down the rocky, narrow, strainer-choked drop.

A stylish end to the Great Ravine.

Day Six and Seven. Mt McCall Haulageway to Sir John's Falls.

Any stupidity in the final two days of our trip is overshadowed by the stories of Matt and Kat who have paddled the Andrew in to meet us at the Mt McCall haulageway. The rapids on day six are fun, but as the river gets flatter and wider we choose to paddle out to Sir John's falls in two (rather than three) days.

No-one feels like paddling Sir John's Falls and so we miss the opportunity to end the trip on a truly stupid note: with someone over-rotating and landing on their head.

Day Eight. Sir John's Falls to Strahan (by yacht).

We board the yacht at 7:00am. Our boats and dry bags and rubbish bags full of various stuff form a small mountain on the deck of the yacht. It is unclear whether we will be allowed to eat the food that the yacht people provide.

"Help yourself to the beers in the fridge," offers the skipper.

We 'help ourselves' to breakfast beers at about 7:30am. A great end to a only-slightly-stupid trip. 🍻

Caving — Kat Martin

Welcome Stranger Cave — Kat Martin.



Soooo, you wanna know what caving's all about? Well if you like the idea of scrambling, sliding, climbing and crawling up, around, under or through muddy passages, winding tunnels, underground rivers and rock-piles then it sounds like caving is for you!

And that's just what we call horizontal caving. Vertical caving has the added fun of ropes! Once you've got a bit of experience under your belt you can abseil off a ledge into the dark depths of a chamber lit only by the torch on your helmet and discover what's at the bottom.

It's not all hard work though. Even on the more advanced trips there are frequent stops to admire pretty crystal formations, eat copious amounts of chocolate and lollies and even have the occasional mud-fight!

So come explore some of Victoria's best underground jungle gyms with MUMC!

Caving Trips coming up... Keep these dates free!

Feb 28 or 29: Day Trip to Lava Tubes for all levels, no previous experience or fitness required. Bring yourself and some old clothes, and have fun exploring the underground passages of the Lava Tubes at Mt Eccles

March 6 or 7: Day Trip to Labertouche, also a trip for all levels so no previous experience or fitness required. Bring yourself and some old clothes and have fun scrambling around and exploring the three levels of Labertouche cave. Warning! – may get muddy so be prepared for some good wholesome mud wallowing action (ok, so you don't HAVE to roll around in the mud but where's the fun in that?)

27-28 March:
Weekend Trip to Buchan. Priority will be given to people who have been on at least one other caving trip before and the trip is limited to 12 people. Located in Gippsland, Buchan is just one big underground jungle gym with cave entrances dotted all about the "Potholes Reserve". So be prepared for the usual scrambling about, exploring passages and the occasional pocket of pretty crystal formations. Also good mud-wallowing potential if you're into that sort of thing!



Pete learning SRT — Kat Martin.



Croesus Cave — Kat Martin.

During Semester: SRT training nights – learn single rope technique. This is what we use to travel up and down ropes in "vertical" caves so you'll be able to come on one of our "vertical" trips to Buchan coming up after the Easter break. Dates and times TBA

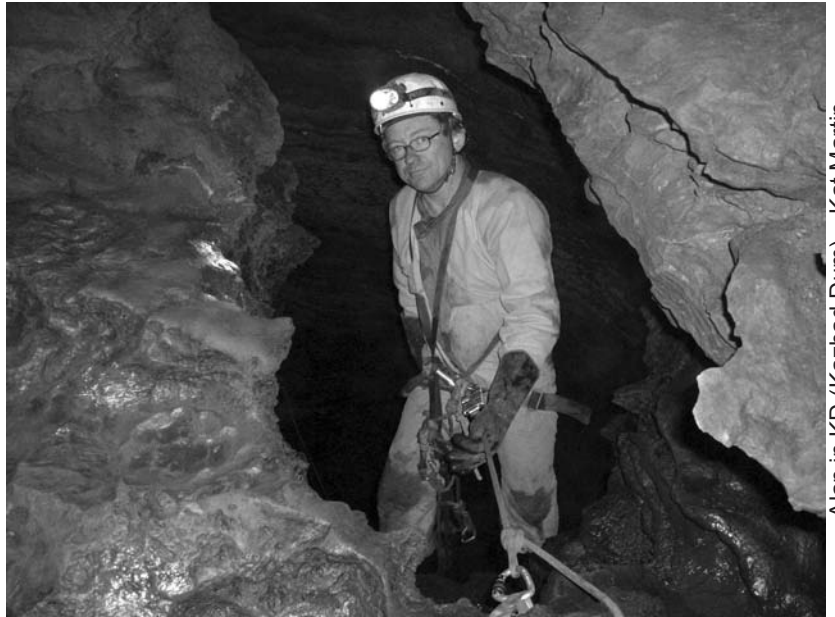
Easter break: No official trips planned as yet but there's bound to be something happening – keep an eye on the caving folder in the MUMC clubrooms for details of trips.

More details of all these trips can be found in the caving folder on the table in the MUMC clubrooms, so wonder in, say hello, see what's happening and sign up for a trip! 🐌

Tasmanian Caves — Kylie McInnes

It's amazing how far a couple of metres can seem when you are almost at full stretch - hands on one wall, feet on the other – traversing across a pool. Sure, the landing would have been in water, but no matter how gracefully you did it, landing face first in a crystal clear pool at the bottom of Kubla Khan cave would still be embarrassing. Fortunately, I didn't end up in the pool, and that section is now firmly planted in my memory as my favourite part of the cave. It was my first day of caving in Tasmania with Kat and a group of Sydney Uni Speleos (SUSS), and the beginning of an awesome trip.

Despite the rumours I'd heard about Tasmania's weather, and the heavy rain of the previous evening, Monday 22nd December was sunny. We also had a permit for Kubla Khan. Tony, Mike, Kat and I enjoyed the sunshine near the cars while Megan and Steve Bunton rigged the exit pitch. A quick dash up the hill, a 'who has the key?' moment, a couple of pitches and numerous footwash stations later, we were exploring the expansive depths of Kubla Khan. Being from Melbourne and not quite so used to seeing intact formations, it wasn't long before my jaw dropped in awe. Actually, my jaw probably could have fallen off for a while and I wouldn't have noticed. The Xanadu chamber, the Beghum and the Pleasure Dome were amazing. The Pleasure Dome was primarily dry, unlike the photographs I had seen of it. We didn't find the Silk Shop (much to Mike's disappointment), but the boot-scrubbing 'yoga' positions ensured that my desk-bound muscles were well-stretched before we reached Sally's Folly. Thanks to Steve for showing us how it was done (can be exciting if you are short!). Then it was into the river for a bit of a dip. Megan, complete with her floating



Alan in KD (Kazhad Dum) – Kat Martin.

ring, ensured that the packs didn't sink as we ferried them across one of the deeper pools just near the exit. A few more swims and another 'who has the key?' moment and we were on the other side of the gate climbing the stairs up to the exit pitch.

Croesus and Lynds were on the menu for day two, continuing our steady diet of pristine flowstone, stals and shawls for the trip. Croesus, being a streamway passage, required much wading through deceptively clear, cold pools. Decoration is abundant and beautiful. On the way out, amid many photographs, we unsuccessfully looked for the resident platypus, but found plenty of recent evidence that he still lives there.

Having heard a colourful description, I was expecting the waterfall at the start of Lynds to be several metres high and involve death-defying moves around a slippery overhang.

I was actually a little disappointed to discover that the traverse around the overhang is at water level on huge holds, and that the waterfall itself was not much taller than me. That said, the cave was rather spectacular – narrow and canyonlike, with black-and-white marbled limestone lining the walls and floor. Further up, the cave opened out again with more flowstone and pretties than you could shine a torch at.

Christmas Eve was a bit lazier. Heidi was still trying to sleep off her cold, Kat was getting a suntan and feeding her socks to the calves in the paddock next door, and I was just plain lazy. Not feeling so lazy, Alan, Megan, Mike, Tony, Henry, Caroline and Francois went to Marakoopa I & II. After a day of wandering around the reaches of the two tourist caves, they spent the evening



Formations in Kubla Khan – Kat Martin.

enlightening us on the occurrence of imbrication and how this can enhance your caving experience.

Christmas Day was sunny again. Tony, Heidi, Alex and Ray headed up to Cradle Mountain for a walk while Alan, Megan, Kat, Mike and I went to find Baldock's Cave and My Cave. Much of the decoration in Baldock's is damaged, but the muddy tunnels and trenches are quite fun for a short play underground. On emerging back into the sunshine, we

tried to find My Cave.

Mike, Kat and I spent some time searching for the cave, and then some more time searching for Megan and Alan before we decided to go and do Honeycomb Cave instead. Plans were foiled, however, by the farmer's locked gate on our way out (which had been

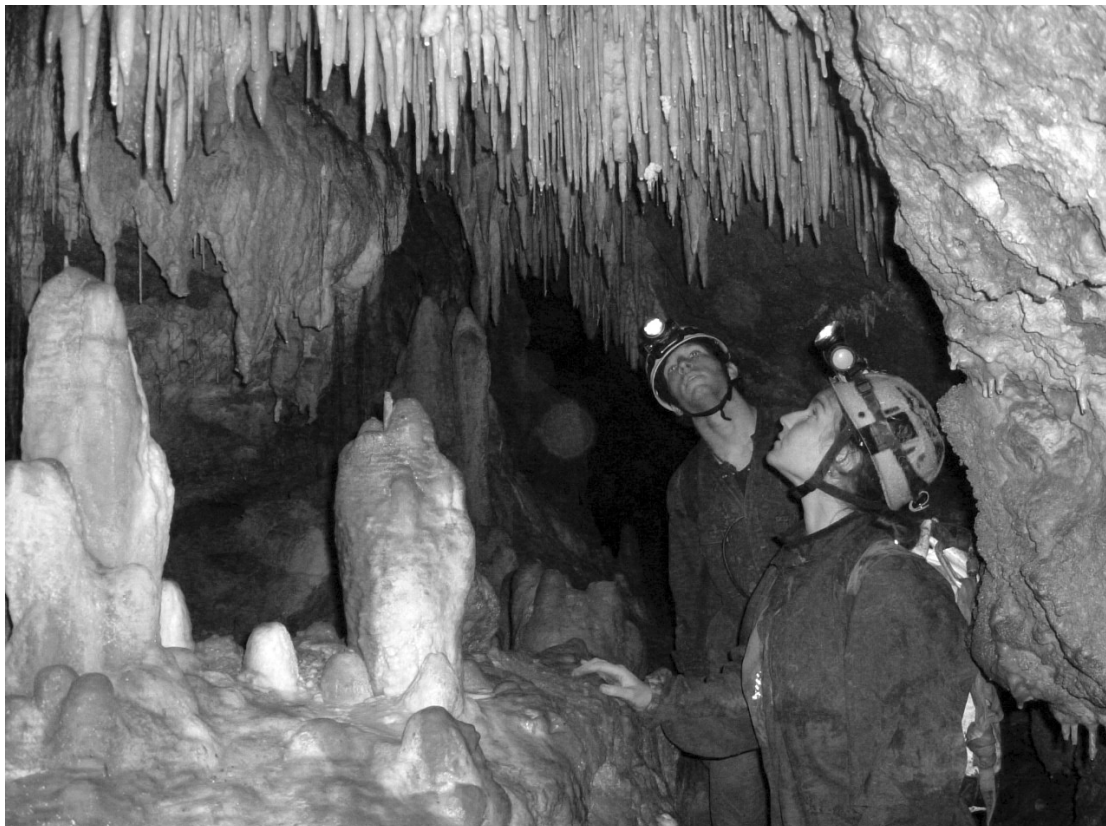
open on the way in) and Megan had the key. So we lazed in the sun while Alan found Megan, who thought she'd lost Alan, and neither of them found the cave. We eventually made it to Honeycomb, which involved large doses of mud, silliness and even some animal impressions from Mike and Alan. Later that evening, the campground barbecues took their time to cook our Christmas dinner of steak and vegetables, but the wait was worth it.

On Boxing Day, our numbers dwindled, leaving Alan, Megan, Kat, Tony and I to travel from Mole Creek down to Mt Field National Park. The next day, after a sluggish start, Alan, Megan, Kat and I headed off to find Owl Pot on the Nine Road. Despite excellent written directions, we decided that following the map(s) in Steve Bunton's guide book would be more exciting and attempted to follow the one that had the North arrow pointing West. After five hours of bush-bashing in the rain up not-so-dry valleys (so this is the weather Tassie is famous for!), we established that the area we were searching was distinctly lacking in limestone. We did eventually find the caves, exactly where the guidebook description put them: 2.5km from the Florentine Rd and not far from where we'd parked the car. Wet and cold, we retreated to the pub for dinner.

The following day, we decided that an attempt on Tassy Pot was worth the trip back up the Nine Road. Tony, having heard of our adventures from the previous day, decided he couldn't resist joining the fun. The first two drops can be rigged with one 85m rope and ends in a glorious mud-pit (boot-deep squelching through humic gloop). The next pitch is about 20m and could probably be climbed with a handline, but with slippery boots and rope bags it is more easily negotiated on a rope. We reached the top of the 71m

pitch and Megan began the descent. Unfortunately, after she and Tony had investigated rebelay options, we discovered that we hadn't brought enough bolts to complete the pitch.

Next morning, having driven up the Nine Road for the



Kylie & Mike in Baldocks Cave – Kat Martin

third consecutive day, Megan and Alan stuffed ropes and headed down Owl Pot while Tony and I finished Tassy Pot. The cave joins a streamway at the bottom that is several hundred metres long (upstream). The cave also continues downstream, though we didn't explore this. Kat strategically joined us back at the top of the 20m pitch just in time to help us carry the ropes out. Megan and Alan did the first three pitches of Owl Pot, before returning to the surface, regretting that they'd left the rope for the final waterfall pitch in the car.

On Tuesday 30th December, Ric Tunney and Janine McKinnon agreed to join us for a Slaughterhouse Pot – Growling Swallet through trip. Slaughterhouse Pot is reasonably narrow, with three permanently rigged pitches (lovely thick muddy ropes!). From the bottom of the pitches, a series of rifts and a couple of ladders lead to the main Growling Swallet streamway. We then followed the streamway up to the Growling Swallet entrance. There are several short, fun climbs and small waterfalls on the way out, which inspired Alan to declare that this was 'the Funnest cave in Funland!'. Back at the cars, Kat and I marvelled over the fact that such amazing caves could be done as daytrips from Hobart. We calculated that there would be

less travel involved in a weekend trip to the Junee-Florentine from Melbourne (including the drive to and from the airport in peak hour) than is required for a weekend trip to Buchan! Our enthusiasm was short-lived though - as Ric and Janine's Subaru disappeared over the hill in front of us, the Camira quietly rolled to a stop and refused to move. Despite Alan's gentle coaxing, the car wouldn't start. Half an hour later (we were just contemplating starting to walk out to the Maydena Road) Ric and Janine appeared. Fortunately for us, Ric was able to tow us back to the campground, where we called the hire car company (of course, we didn't take the car on unsealed roads) and the RACT. The man from the RACT tried to help, but politely admitted that, although this was the first car he hadn't been able to get going again in seven years, he didn't really have a clue.

At 6.30am the following morning, the entire campground was woken by the dulcet tones of a tow truck driver and his roaring engine. Kat, Tony and I slept in (or rather, hid, cringing) for a couple more hours while Alan and Megan accompanied the car into Hobart. When they arrived back with car in the early afternoon ('it was just a fuse!'), we headed off to Welcome Stranger, an old tourist cave. Complete with gates and plenty of crickets and spiders (believe it or not, named 'Hickmania Troglodytus') the stream cave is worth a visit. Though some is extensively damaged, there is still a bit of good decoration left. It was here that Pete was introduced to the joys of caving and cave mud, having cycled out from Hobart to join us. After several hours of exploring, we emerged into the sunshine. Pete decided that he'd had so much fun standing around in cold water holding flash guns that he'd come caving again. Consequently, not long before midnight on New Year's Eve, Pete found himself hanging from the rafters in the picnic shelter at the campground, trying to cross a re-belay for the first time.

After another lazy start, we decided that the Serpentine route in KD should be our first cave for 2004. The cave begins with serpentine passage, and much to our amazement, continued with these narrow, twisting rifts for most of the way down to the main streamway. Pete and Kat left us at the top of the third pitch and returned to the surface as they had to pick someone up from the airport in Hobart at 8pm. Tony, Megan, Alan and I continued down to the main streamway. We explored upstream to the bottom of the waterfall and downstream to the top of the next pitch before heading back out. We emerged from the cave and plodded back to the cars, only to find Pete and Kat waiting for us. It turned out that the fuel filter on Kat's car had a crack and her entire tank had emptied itself of petrol while we were down the cave. As a result, her car wouldn't start. We established that we had nothing to syphon petrol with from the hire car, so we decided we'd try and push/roll the car as far as we could. 12km later, we

left Kat's car behind and drove into Maydena for fuel. The friendly man at the Trading Post was kind enough to sell us a can of petrol when we knocked on his door at about 8.30pm. Having gaffa-taped up the fuel filter, we put the petrol in Kat's car and hoped for the best. She made it back to the campground and (as we found out later) actually made it 70km towards Hobart before the car ran out of petrol again. Apparently, they made it the airport at 12.30am.

The next morning, Megan and Alan decided it was time for another trip to Tassy Pot. Caroline and Francois had arrived at Mt Field the night before, having finally managed to get the Combi ('Priscilla') repaired and moving. Tony and I decided we'd visit Owl Pot, so we again found ourselves driving up the Nine Road. Owl Pot has four pitches, culminating in a 30m waterfall, with bolts so well placed that you don't even get wet! The mud caked, loose and spiky rocks in the stream passage at the bottom, however, are less than exciting. Returning to the surface, Tony and I found Caroline and Francois having another car drama as the Combi refused to start. Invisaging a repeat of the previous days' car problems, we were relieved when the engine finally putted into life. Alan and Megan soon

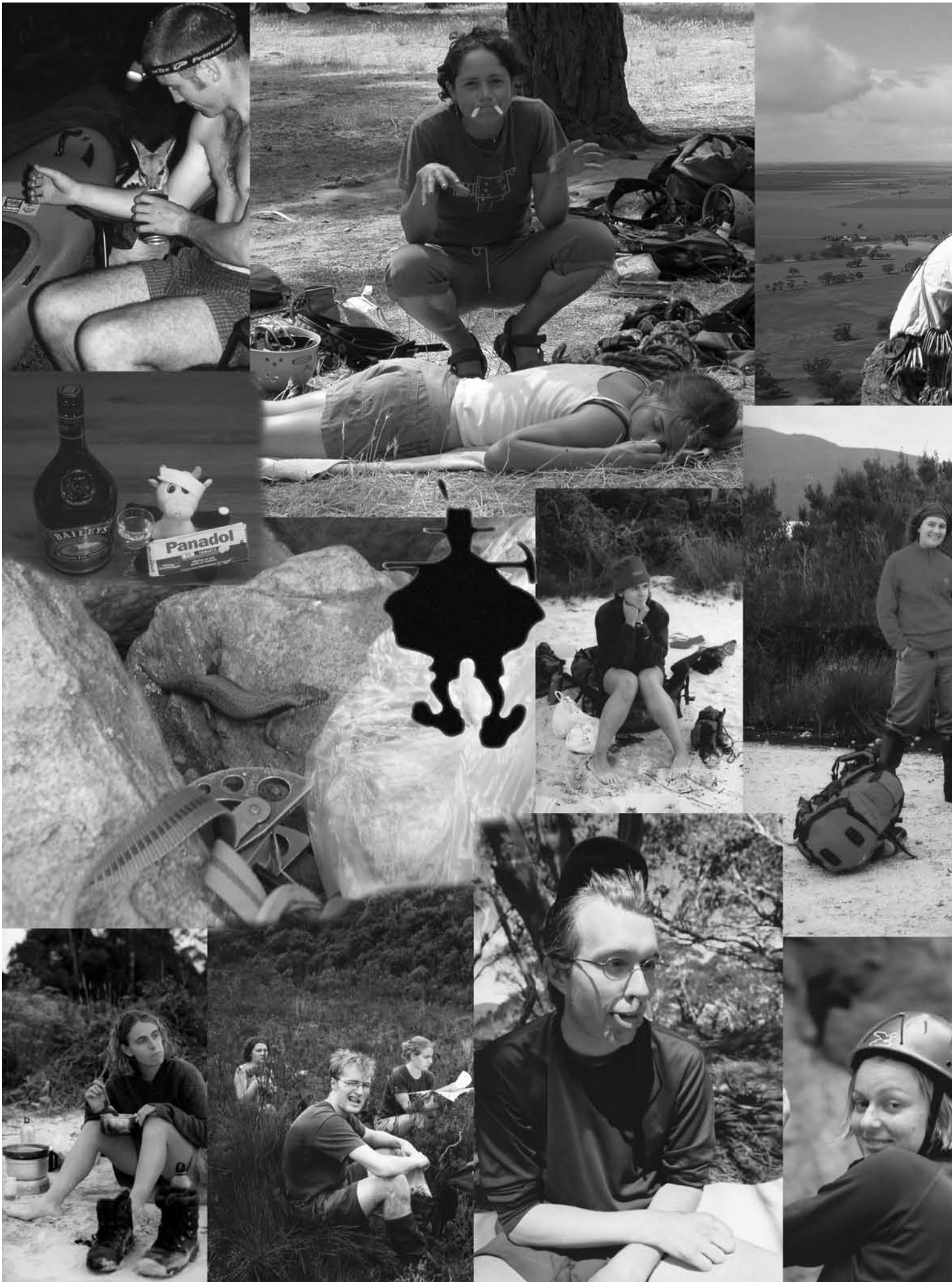


Kylie in Tassy Pot – Kat Martin.

emerged from Tassy Pot, and we all returned to the campground for some rope-washing fun in the river.

Saturday was bright and sunny and we all agreed that it was time for a walk up Mt Field. The tarn shelf walk is well worth the trip, especially if coming around the back via K Col and Newdegate Pass. It was still gloriously sunny when we finally packed up the tents the next morning for the trip back to the mainland.

It's amazing how little time I'd been sitting back at my computer before I started dreaming about the next time I'll get back underground. Thanks heaps to Megan, Alan and everyone else for letting a couple of Melbourne girls (and Pete) join the fun! 🐜





piccies in print — Submit them to the next Mountaineer!

Western Arthur's Trip — Peter Heild

Pete Crockett, Felix Dance, Dan Ervin, SS Foo, Luke Robinson, Jeremy Silver, Jess Sloane and Pete Heild. The dates were Dec 10th to Dec 21st.

It all began on a Wednesday evening. Last minute checking and packing, an overnight ferry ride and a long drive saw the eight of us at Scott's Peak, ready to start our traverse of the Western Arthur Range, in the remote South West of Tasmania. We had nine days for the walk, including the walk in and out, which would give us seven days on the range. If the weather lived up to its reputation, we would need all of them. We had checked the Devonport papers, which showed two cold fronts coming over followed by a high pressure system, so it wasn't all bad news.

We walked the nine kilometres to Junction Creek on Thursday afternoon, an easy walk over undulating terrain on a well made path. Tasmania had had an unusually dry November, so the path was mostly above water with only a few boggy patches. Even the cold fronts held off, with only light showers. The omens were good, and we were all looking forward to the main event, despite the disparaging comments of a couple of locals who had just finished the walk. The day, which had begun in an uncomfortable seat on the ferry, ended with us eating Jeremy's fruit cake and playing cards in the wilderness. A definite improvement.

The same two locals woke us as they passed through at 7.30 the following morning, warning that we would need an early start to make it up onto the ridge. We packed up quickly and continued following the Port Davey Track for another three kilometres before beginning the ascent of Moraine 'A'. This proved to be a slog up the spur, gaining us about 750m of height in a little over 2km. The cold front began to show its teeth, with the wind increasing and the showers getting heavier as we gained height. Just below the top, I chose possibly the worst lunch spot of all time. The wind was having a significant cooling effect by this time, and fearing that it was going to get a lot worse as we reached the crest of the ridge and lost the shelter of its lee side, I decided we should take shelter behind a large boulder. The shelter turned out to resemble a wind tunnel, and we shivered through a very cold lunch, only to find the top of the ridge was eerily calm. We descended to our camp at Lake Cygnus as the rain turned to hail, and spent the rest of the day hiding in our tents.

On Saturday, we woke to find snow on the tents, and more falling from the sky. It was very pretty in its own way, but foretold a cold and wet day to follow. We were planning only a short walk to Lake Oberon, so that we could make use of Sunday's promised high pressure system for the difficult section beyond. We began the walk in weather that couldn't decide if it was raining, hailing, sleeting or snowing, and sometimes seemed to be doing all four at the same

time. Views were restricted by the cloud, but the rocky landscape was impressive all the same. Dan (a geology student) was in his element, and told anyone who would listen that "we're in a shear zone", while SS preferred to concentrate on keeping warm, complaining that Singaporeans weren't built for such temperatures. A steep downwards scramble ending directly under a small waterfall saw us at Lake Oberon, to join the two groups already there in waiting for a break in the weather.

We woke early in anticipation of the promised good weather, only to find more rain and even stronger wind, prompting most of us to go back to sleep. The conditions were not fit to go in either direction, so all three groups passed the day sleeping and playing cards. An invitation to a game from the two girls who lived in Sweden was the only thing that would persuade Luke to leave his tent, and the fact that they actually came from Brisbane did nothing to damp his enthusiasm. The route ahead was reconnoitred in the brief dry periods, to the point where it reached a small cliff, which was very difficult to climb while wet. Towards the end of the day, cabin fever was perhaps beginning to set in, with Felix revealing more about himself than was wise. Apparently he knows all about wearing high heels and dreams about blowing up changing rooms full of naked footballers and watching their bits go everywhere. All taken out of context, he says, but the rest of us aren't so sure.

The high pressure system, which by Sunday evening was assuming mythical proportions, finally arrived on Monday. The sun shone, the wind disappeared and the only cloud was a few wisps around the peaks. The temperature, which had so far been hovering just above zero, climbed rapidly to 25 and stayed there, providing ideal conditions for drying wet gear. The next two days were the most challenging section of the walk, with steep ascents and descents and a lot of scrambling. The path involved a strange mixture of rock climbing and tree climbing, and could change between the two with remarkable rapidity. It took us two hours to reach the summit of Mt Pagasus (1063m), a whole kilometre from our campsite, and then the packs had to be hauled past a pile of boulders, as the path led through a hole small enough to challenge anyone who had eaten too much breakfast. The "Swedish girls" had had to return as they had run out of time, but Steve (aka "that guy"), who was walking by himself, became semi attached to our group and made good use of our pack hauling rope. Descending the final steep section of Mt Capricorn, we were overtaken by another lone walker, who was swiftly nicknamed "Elvis Gonzales", which captured nicely his combination of immense speed down the treacherously large mud steps and his resemblance to the King. The walking was a pleasure, and we continued at a slow but steady pace to make the campsite at High Moor in good time, even almost

catching Elvis, who seemed to struggle a bit on the flatter sections.

The good weather continued the next day as we traversed the Beggary Bumps and climbed Mt Taurus (1011m) before descending to Haven Lake. Lunch included an unexpected vitamin intake, as Felix pulled out a kilo of fresh carrots, which he had bought in Devonport. By day six, they were apparently surplus to requirements. We completed the 3.5km in just under six hours (quicker than expected!), and as time was getting short due to our enforced delay at Lake Oberon, we continued on to Lake Sirona, perched high up on the ridge beyond Haven Lake. The day was rounded off nicely with a second fruit cake (thanks to Felix and his capacity for carrying immense amounts of heavy food) and possibly the world's first chocolate chip custard, as hot chocolate powder doesn't dissolve well in custard.

The next day was also planned to be a big one to make up lost time, and we were woken early by Jess singing, demonstrating conclusively why she wasn't accepted for the school choir. The valleys were full of cloud, making for spectacular views along the range as it seemed to float in its own world.

We descended to Lake Vesta, where Luke and Dan left us, preferring a day by the lake and a leisurely decent of Moraine 'K' to the long haul along the remainder of the ridge. The rest of us made good time on the climb up to Promontory Lake, where we topped up our water bottles before battling the scrub on the side of Mt Phoenix. The views from the top were amazing, as the last of the cloud had cleared, making almost the entire walk visible, both behind and ahead of us. Centaurus Ridge afforded relatively easy walking to take us to the slopes of West Portal. Distant thunder could be heard as we climbed, which fortunately remained distant enough for a quick scramble to the summit of the highest mountain of the range (1158m) before crossing the Craggs of Andromeda and battling with yet more scrub on the track down the aptly named Lucifer Ridge. The thunder finally

caught us as we arrived at the Lake Rosanne campsite, and the sun, which had kindly stayed just long enough for us to complete the most dramatic section of the walk, retreated behind the clouds once more.

All that remained really was the walk out, which was to take two and a half days. We descended from the range via the rest of Lucifer Ridge to Pass Creek in a steady drizzle, and then got a taste of what the Arthur Plains (which could be more accurately renamed the Arthur Swamp) is famous for. The path regularly disappeared into large muddy puddles which may or may not have had bottoms. It also had a tendency to multiply into several paths, and often it was guesswork as to which was the right one. We eventually found the Cracroft Crossing campsite, where the lack of fruit cake didn't stop us enjoying what is definitely the world's first strawberry chip custard.



Group in mist near Promontory Lake, Western Arthurs – Peter Heild.

Amazingly, the sun made a return the next day for the long slog across the swamp to junction creek, picking up Luke and Dan along the way. The Arthurs ridge was spectacular and forbidding, prompting many comments on how it had taken us six days to go one way, and we were now going back the same distance in one. The mud was still there in large quantities, and Jeremy enjoyed a return to his mud wallowing childhood, seeming to actively seek out the deepest bits. Fortunately he didn't disappear entirely, despite some close calls, and we made it safely back to our old campsite at Junction Creek. This was a strange repeat of just over a week earlier, except that this time people were asking our advice, and there was more than a little envy of those who were just setting out. 🐼

September Daywalking — Andrew Oppenheim

Readers can be forgiven for not asking about my trip report for the last Saturday in September in 2002. Past attempts at interesting tales had been ‘Eight eccentrics evade a storm at Mt Difficult’, and ‘Several slip and slide down Mt Juliet’. Actually, tsk tsk, I was running a trip for another organization that year. But here is the report for 2003.

In the middle of the month, I came to the clubrooms from dining with bushwalking convenor Pete at the abbey at Newman and said, hello Matthew, yes it’s been some time. Neither of us had done much walking with the club recently, so his idea was to go away on a daywalk. His skiing and my exam marking led us to choose Grand Final day. Essential details (a likely location) went on a sheet in the folder, so the trip was happening.

I woke at dawn and passed the duty phone to a bleary-eyed staff member before driving out east through the suburbs. A forecast of 15 with a storm was difficult to interpret, so various gear was in the boot. Matthew had moved, which meant a visit his new house, well-situated above a lake. I realised that my emergency rations needed to be improved because there is now a chocolate available off the shelf that is a whopping 85% cocoa.

No one else had seized the magnificent opportunity to go walking, so Matthew decided to bring Bess the dog along also. I had already eaten the supplies from Parkville so continued my way through the slice menu of the bakery at Healesville, adding a double choc chip biscuit as well. It rained in the carpark, often a good guide to the weather for the day. We drove on, to be greeted by snow on the back of the Black Spur. Now that was better.

We had decided on Mt Torbreck. Torbreck, named after some forest in Scotland. Its summit at more than 1500 metres is the highest point between Melbourne and the ‘High Country’. Not often mentioned in books and newspapers though. To get there we made our way alongside the Goulburn river, turning at the Snobs Creek pub. The creek valley is long and the sides steep, and the Torbreck range is its eastern flank.



How many bushwalkers does it take to make a custard? – Peter Heild.

On Conn Gap Road, we parked under a blackwood that was in flower but had been dusted by the morning’s snow, and started up the road. At the gap, now suf-

ficiently warmed up, we began the walk up the ridge. Snow had conveniently covered the blackberries that hazard the first section. Bess had not seen much of it before and was straining at the leash in front. The top of Conn Hill was gained and the tree trunks were full of colour, some held in basins made in the snow.

The ridge line drops through Cabbage Tree Gap (have yet to locate these) and then up again to the main mountain. We met several galleries of rounded boulders that seemed content to watch us pass. When on the edge of the ridge they provide good look-outs and at least one small tunnel. Once, we had a misty view over the way we had come, and beyond, past a empty gap from logging, to partial sightings of Bill Head and Mt Bullfight in the distance, imposing guardians of the upper valley. Wonderful.

The patches of brilliant blue sky and warm sun that appeared every half hour were doubly welcomed after their absence. For such moments, patience is required, and often some walking. On a detour into the snowgums we saw an open plain on the east side, as if for the first time. So there’s a trip in a coming year. I have yet to see the plane either, one did crash up here decades ago. In deeper snow that had a light and fresh top our ungainly steps were no match for the running and scrambling of Bess, but we all walked up the summit cairn about three hours after starting.

Thoughts of lunch were entertained but the stop was only for photographs. With the summit achieved, we began to notice that it actually was cold. Returning along the ridge, the wind and snow were biting into the other side of my face, the one that had been getting cold but not hit all morning. At the mossy pole marking the junction of the ridge with the track down off it, lunch was a five minute snack with backs to the wind, entertaining memories of food from recent club trips to the mountain. Scallops, asparagus risotto, champagne and warm coffee all came to my mind. Bess was more interested in the pizza roll in Matthew’s pack.

The hop and skip down to Barnewall ‘plains’ is an abrupt descent through the snowgums. The weather began to clear and we had bright sunshine as we entered the more open ash country. Matthew and Bess had to wait for me as I paused for contemplation and tried my hand at picture taking. They were being sociable with colourfully-attired people up from the Eildon road. We thawed out on the track back down to the car, no longer able to see over the regrowth but not yet able to see through it either. On the trip home, the rain had freshened up the country and we had superb views of the Cathedrals in afternoon sun. 🐾

Search rules mean no photos...
However, the climbers have found a rope swing on the Wimmera River – Mac.



Search and Rescue — Enmoore Lin

Ever wanted to help look for people lost in the bush? If so, join Bushwalkers Search and Rescue! BSAR is a group of volunteer bushwalkers and ski-tourers who help the Victoria Police search for people lost in remote areas. It was formed in 1949 as the search and rescue section of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (VicWalk) and has been involved in over 80 searches.

BSAR contributes small, self-sufficient search groups that can navigate accurately off-track and stay out overnight. Volunteers can be called out at short notice, in poor weather conditions and in rough terrain. Call-outs usually happen at night and you might have as little as 2 hours to fully equip yourself for 2 days of searching and to get to that Police bus. BSAR now has SMS and email alert systems that can give a bit of extra warning ahead of the telephone call-out – thank god for modern technology! Of course, you can always say ‘no’ to a search and invariably, you’ll end up spending the next couple of days catching news snippets and feeling incredibly guilty.

So, how do you join?

First, you have to fulfil the entry criteria – there’s a list

posted on the S&R noticeboard in the clubrooms. MUMC has stricter entry guidelines than what BSAR demands, but you basically have to be physically fit, be experienced at bushwalking, be competent at off-track navigation and be capable of being independent in the bush. If you ski or have mountaineering experience, that’s an added bonus. It might all sound a little daunting, but you don’t have to be a superhero or anything like that. To get in on the MUMC list, you also have to go on a search practice to get an idea of what it’s all about. There’s one held every year, alternating between bush and snow locations. The 2004 Practice is on 1-2 May and will involve the 12 hour rogaine.

MUMC is by far the most active club in BSAR. We usually contribute around a third of all BSAR searchers on any given call-out and have members in senior positions who coordinate searches and liaise with police. We want to continue being really active, so if you are interested in joining BSAR or want more info, contact Enmoore Lin (enmoorelin@yahoo.com), MUMC’s Search and Rescue Delegate. If you don’t think you’ve got the experience or skills to join yet, go on some trips and you soon will! 🐾

Paddling in the Top End —

Tim Wallace



Apparently if a saltwater crocodile is harassing you whilst kayaking, you charge them. The theory is that they think that you are bigger than them and retreat. I was wary to, as this information was obtained from the owner of a kayak almost four meters long and I wondered if my two point two meter long kayak would be up to scratch.

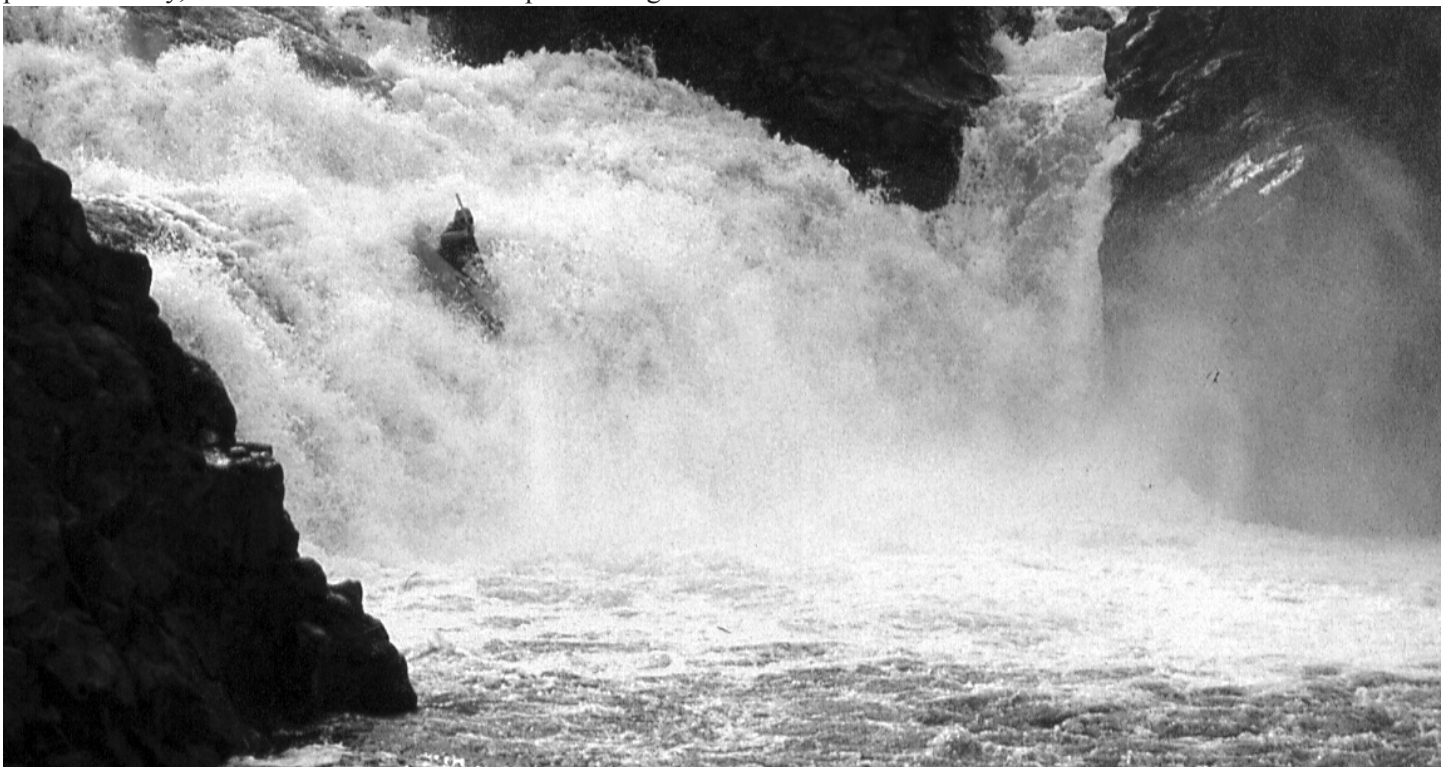
Paddling in NT is something quite different. The rivers are often big, brown and infested with crocs. The roads you want to use to access the rivers often have the aforesaid rivers flowing a couple of meters over the top of them, and the weather varies from deliciously warm to frigging hot and stinky.

After a day of poking around we found ourselves at Edith falls. Expecting more of a falls and less of a gorge, we were pleasantly surprised to find a kilometre of enjoyable class IV boating. A forty minute walk-in brought us to the put in. Initially, the channel snuck a twisted path through

overhanging Pandanus trees, before opening up in to the gorge scenery we were more familiar with. A couple of fun class III drops found us at a large horizon line. We knew this drop – had seen it on the walk in. Consisting of a ramp about six meters long and a vertical drop of four meters at the end, there wasn't much to it, but with an overall drop of nine meters or so it was good fun! I got slammed at the bottom and rolled up a bit winded, but it was such good fun!

The next big drop was probably about the same height but had a very hard & pushy lead in, very marginal & narrow line that you had to be on. With luck on your side and finding yourself on line, all that was required for the final ten meter drop was to hope that the slabby shelf two thirds of the way down wouldn't hurt too much when you landed on it. Not warmed up enough for class VI, we decided to portage. A few class III rapids and the end was in sight. From the bank, the channel narrowed down, went over a couple of drops spat us out of the gorge via the final four meter waterfall. This was run successfully by both of us with the added incentive that should the first person swim in the pool, there was no backup and the possibility of crocodiles...

Despite our best efforts, we didn't actually get to do any more paddling or get eaten by crocodiles...quite the opposite – on our “native species appreciation night [BBQ]” the tables were turned on the table when we had croc for our entrée.... 🦎



The indecisives go paddling....by Mr Brave

‘How many emails does it take to organise a paddling trip?!’

It’s midday Friday. An email goes around suggesting we meet at the boatsheds about 6pm because the group heading to the Mitta will be there with a key. After two days of email ping-pong and much indecision, we’d agreed on a day trip/short weekend trip instead of a full weekend. We were going to paddle the Delatite, or the King, or the Big, or the Jamieson... or we could just work it out later...

At 6pm Friday, I arrive at the boatsheds. Fiona has pulled out the last of the vaguely respectable paddles and decks and Derek and I agree to pick her up from her place. Kat and Kate arrive ten minutes later. We spend ages talking about which rivers are up - more indecision - and eventually load boats onto the cars and get ready to head off. Kat and Kate head for the computer lab to check the river levels and directions for the Jamieson. Derek and I go to pick up Fiona.

At 7.45pm, Fiona, Derek and I are sitting in Yogi Di Dhaba, a neat little Indian place on Lygon St. We’ve ordered dinner and are waiting for Kat and Kate to join us. They’d gone to Kat’s house to check the internet and spent some time trying to convince Rob Pollock to come paddling too, so that we’d have enough experienced people to paddle the Jamieson. But then we’d need a 4WD with clearance for the car shuttle, and it was pretty short notice....

At 8.20pm, we’re still sitting in Yogi Di Dhaba. We’ve finally decided that if we start with the Big River in the morning, we can paddle the Delatite in the afternoon. Both seem to be at okay levels, so it’s a plan. We agree to meet at Coles in Healesville to shop for food.

Sometime after 9.30pm, we’re standing in front of the icecream fridge at Coles. We’ve got baskets full of lunch, breakfast and chocolate, but we decide we need dessert. Unfortunately, full-size Magnums only come in packets of three, Drumsticks are in packets of four and everything else is a packet of six. More indecision....

It’s late. We’re waiting outside the Taggerty Community Hall, at the Eildon turn-off. Kat and Kate had to go back to Healesville for petrol, because they forgot to fill up. Eventually, they arrive, having taken a detour via the Phantom Falls, which is apparently on the way to Marysville....?

It’s very late. We arrive at the campground on the Big River. It’s raining pretty heavily. Fortunately, the boggy swamp around the cars can only mean that the river level shouldn’t drop too much before morning.

It’s 6.30am. The people camped next to us are singing a version of Waltzing Matilda with verses about first and third years at the top of their lungs. I make a mental note to thank them for letting me sleep in.

It’s 8am. Kate has worked out that we need to be on the river by 9am if we want to get to the Delatite as well. After some boat adjustments and car-shuttle shannanigans, we are on the river not too far behind schedule. It turns out that the early morning singers are a large group of Outdoor Ed. students from Bendigo. We have to move quickly to beat the rafts onto the river.

It’s 10am. We run the last rapid twice, because we can. The river is at a good level, bouncy but relaxing. We quickly load boats onto the cars again and, still wearing decks and wet-suits, we head for Merrijig.

It’s midday. It’s hailing. We squash into the back of Kat’s car to have lunch at the put-in for the Delatite. More car-shuttle games, and we’re on the water. The first part of the section meanders along a few different people’s backyards, between trees and down through a mini-gorge. The rapids are fairly continuous and provide great fun paddling. The river opens out a bit, and we can see the road again. There is a small drop, fairly shallow. I watch Fiona bounce over a rock. I end up wobbling over the same rock and just manage to stay up. I turn around to see Derek paddling behind me, and Kate’s boat upside down. As she rolls, there is blood on her face, lots of it, and my first thought is that I hope it’s not her nose again....

Fortunately, it’s not her nose. She has a cut above her eye-brow, but it is pretty deep. Kate, in her usual style, says ‘It’s fine, lets keep paddling!’. The bleeding stops, so we paddle another 100m down to the Buller Road bridge in Merrijig. We decide that we should get off the river and Derek successfully hitches a ride back to his car at the put-in. Kat and Kate walk over to the Merrijig Motor Inn Resort to find some ice for Kate’s head while Fiona and Derek collect the other car. I wait with the boats. It starts raining again.

It’s 3.20pm. The nurse in the Mansfield hospital eyes us suspiciously until Kate takes her beanie off. Kat, Derek, Fiona and I read dodgy magazine articles and watch the footy while Kate gets stitched up. After an hour and a lengthy detour to the Mansfield bakery, we start the drive back to Melbourne.

* * * *

It’s 11am. I watch the usual Sunday crowd of cyclists getting their coffee fix in the sun outside Thesherman’s. Kate looks to be enjoying her long black, but she’s still wearing a beanie. Fiona, Kate and I try to make up the words to a theme song to go with Kate’s new nickname, Mr Bump. Apparently we all have nicknames and theme songs from Kat and Kate’s car trip home, but don’t necessarily agree on those yet. Relaxing in the sunshine though, we do agree on one thing: the Delatite was great fun and we should definitely paddle it again.



The Shuttle Bunny - A Guide to Paddling with Timmy and Dave. — Deddles of MBC (and Evil Tim)

Bed Interaction - The process whereby some part of a boater's head, usually a forehead (if your name is Mel or Ruth) or nose (if your name is Kate) or teeth (if your name is Mel), comes into contact with the riverbed (Evil Tim, pers. comm).

In the recent Bull'n'Bush (magazine of the MBC), an article appeared describing the "Mid Semester Break Boating Trip 2002". The article focused on the wonders of boating (and rightly so), but failed to do justice to the epic proportions of the trip. However, unlike other Wallis/Wallace epics you may have read/heard about, a significant proportion of this epic was due to my car and my head.

When Timmy first sent out his initial "Paddling Extravaganza" e-mail, I remember reading it briefly and then putting it in my 'kayaking' folder. Some weeks later when my best friend asks me whether I can come to her uni ball, I vaguely remember that there's something important on the date she's suggesting but am unsure. Consequently, she buys me a ticket about the same time I re-read Timmy's e-mail. Fortunately for me, my best friend has given up on me being normal long ago (about the time we met in year 8) and is not too upset when I decide to go on a paddling trip for 9 days instead.

At Timmy's 21st, Elissa and I discuss how I am going to cope being the only girl on the trip. Elissa gets her words mixed up and "10 guys and 1 girl" becomes "10 girls and 1 guy". Suddenly we have Rob's, Dave's and Dan's undivided attention.

Friends of the The Mitta Mitta Weekend

After attempting to paddle the Mitta on four previous occasions, I am very excited. I ignore the little voice in my mind that reminds me of the King-the last grade three river I paddled - a trip that resulted in 11 stitches and my 'Harry Potter' scar.

10 minutes into the Gorge section I go over, set up, and wack my right cheek on a rock before rolling up and heading for the nearest eddy. Dave signals "are you okay?" and I nod. "No blood? OK, lets keep moving". About 5 minutes later, Dave turns around to sit on a wave and I am too close behind him. The front of his Dom flicks up and crashed into my right chin. By this time I've cracked it with the Mitta and my paddling goes up a notch. Timmy tries to cheer me up. Pete tells me to watch out for the surprise drop on Gobbler. I cruise down the waterfall and through Gobbler 1 thinking that Pete is getting over protective only to yell "whoa" as I go over the surprise drop on Gobbler 2 to the amusement of Pete and Dave at the bottom.

By this time my eyes are constantly scanning the banks for the cows Timmy promised me would signal the end of the river. After repacking my car, Dave, Timmy and I head for Omeo to meet Matt. Dave finds a packet of mint slice in my car and I discover I can't eat them. Seeing my distress, Dave consumes the entire packet so I won't have to look at them. At Omeo we pick up Matt and head for Bogong Village and the Kiewas, stopping on the way to look at the drops on the Upper Upper Cobungra. Dave is highly optimistic: "they'd be runnable with more water, look you'd have to boof sideways at the bottom of that drop and then..." I remain unconvinced - those drops look awfully big.

We stop for dinner at the pub in Bright and I wander over to ask the bar man for some ice. He asks me what happened: "A rock?". At this point Dave walks past.

"He didn't beat you up did he?"

"Well actually..."

"Would you like me to fix him up for you?" I laugh and the portly, short barman with white hair retracts his offer.

Timmy, Dave and Matt are kind enough to help me eat my chips and lasagne.



We go looking for petrol but everything is shut. Driving back into town we pass Timmy and Matt going the other way and wonder briefly why they don't stop and turn around to follow us. 20 minutes later, 15km out of Bright, and with the help of Mr Melways we realise we are going in the wrong direction.

The East Kiewa (Rocky Valley)

In the morning, I'm feeling slightly the worse for wear (read scared out of my mind) and decide to let the guys tackle the Rocky Valley branch of the East Kiewa's by themselves. We realise that all Dave's rescue gear went home with his playboat and all my rescue gear went home with Cary. After pulling Matt's car apart (clothes, vests, more clothes, wetsuits, yet more clothes...) I finally find Timmy's throwbag in my car. I walk up the track to the gauging station to wait for Timmy, Dave and Matt to come down the drops. The "gorge drop" on the Rocky Valley Kiewa is bizarre - from the gauging station it looks like there isn't enough room to run it - all you see is the paddle blades flash above the rocks. I have just decided that the muffin I bought from the bakery looks really good when I hear a whistle and Dave appears on the rocks. He and Tim run the drop OK but Matt confusion is evident when he tries to roll up without one of his paddle blades and he goes for a swim. They all climb up the gauging station.

"Muffin! Yum! Can I? Ta"

I walk back to the cars with the broken paddle, and ask 3 girls picnicking whether three kayakers have been passed yet. They look at me as if I'm insane: "kayakers?"

At the pull out, Matt and Dave are ecstatically happy. Timmy has the nonchalance of one who has cruised this run many times before. We say goodbye to Matt and jump into my car, which at this stage is still working fine, and head for Jindabyne and the Thredbo River.

At the pub we re-read the guide book (which has now become our bible and which Timmy can recite backwards) and eat out amazingly complex dinner of pies, chips, hamburgers, sausages and eggs etc. (well it must have been good - it took an hour to make). Dave and Timmy attempt to make me feel bad about not contributing my bra to the collection of bras stapled to the roof. Dave is upset when we joke that I am the brains of the trio, but is happy when I comment that that must make him the brawn. We cruise through to Narrigo campsite and after setting up camp, we go bush bashing, cask wine in hand, to look for the 2m waterfall that is meant to be nearby. We don't find the waterfall.

The Thredbo (1):

The guidebook says the Thredbo is highly technical Grade 3 up to 4 in some bits. [But we largely ignore it as it was written by a bunch of beard strokers in fibreglass suicide pods - we know better of course]. The water is flowing [through] the culverts [concrete pipes] so we cruise down the first bit (nice and flat) but then I start to run into problems. The river is low, the rapids are more technical than anything I've ever paddled and I'm having trouble making the eddies. I go for a swim and it's [fucking] FREEZING. While I'm struggling with my deck, I stupidly let go of my paddle and it floats off downstream. We get the split out and keep moving. A little while later I swim

again. Timmy rescues my paddle. Dave bush bashes my boat around and I have to go back for my paddle. Timmy tells me I have to more aggressive. On the next rapid I find myself literally hanging off my paddle [the very expensive MUMC split paddle], the bottom wedged in a rock, the top wedged in a tree over a drop which is too narrow for my boat to fit through upright. In the background I can vaguely hear Timmy yelling something about getting out of the boat. Luckily I have Inspector Gadget arms and stretch them until I can reach my deck pull without letting go of my paddle. A rapid later and this time I'm pinned again though less seriously and near the bank. Timmy announces we need to have a "conference" but I've already decided to walk out. Dave offers to help me carry my boat out but I'm worried that it's getting late (read: am trying desperately to collect the shreds of my ego) and refuse.

I spend the afternoon quite pleasantly at the Ski Tube, fighting a crow for my block of cheese and fall asleep in the sun on the riverbank. When I wake up it's getting late and there's no sign of Timmy or Dave. I worry briefly and then walk back to the car for food, arriving back at the pull out just in time to see them cruise round the corner. The first thing Dave says is "you would have hated it!" and I immediately feel better. Timmy wants to know why I'm not nude sunbathing. Dave and Timmy then tell me about the Thredbo and the grade six rapid "that we walked 'cause we didn't want to, well, die". We discuss the logistics of stewing a wombat whole in a cask of wine. We think Timmy's 10L-birthday cask may just be enough but are unable to locate a wombat. Skippy and Co has arrived in force and we briefly discuss the option of a whole pan-fried joey instead [mmm...].

Dave knows of a campsite in Jindabyne with showers and a SPA and I'm all for it. On arrival we scare the hell out of the campsite owner who thought she'd locked the door. We camp next to a family with two small children. When I comment that I think Robyn's a pretty name for a girl, both Timmy and Dave back away slowly.

In the morning we head for the Eucumbene and on the way, decided to paddle the Yarangobilly, which flows through a cave and apparently ends in a thermal pool, instead. We search for the lower put in for the Yarangobilly and give up. How far can it be down the whole river really? 100m down the Yarangobilly and we are really short of water. Timmy says he's going back. Dave and I decide to try and keep paddling but 50m down the river we have literally run out of water. We walk the boats back to the car, picnic by the river. Deciding there's nowhere we can paddle in the afternoon, we head for the thermal pools, which turn out only to be thermal relative to the river temperature. None the less, we dive in and amuse other swimmers by conducting a "life-ring rodeo". We head back to the campsite for a spa only to find the spa is "under maintenance". Luckily we have picked up a slab on the way home. At the end of dinner, Dave wants to know how many of the empty bot-

tles on the table are mine. "Two....". "Right....." Timmy and Dave tell me that there is a section of the Threadbo between where I walked out and Gnariga that I would be fine on. I tentatively agree. We have in depth discussions about various important things including whether the Passion Palace is soundproof.

The Threadbo (2)

The next morning sees me trying to take as much time as possible to get changed into as much of my paddling gear as I can find - thermals, wetsuit, cag, all of it goes on in an attempt to stall. Worse yet, I can't find Sarah's purple beanie, which I found on the top of my car at the Kiewa, and the object that has become my safety blanket. Dave announces his back is sore and he'll do the car shuttle. Timmy and I shoulder our boats and head down to the river. Upon reaching a really thick stretch of scrub, Timmy simply picks up the GT and throws it over. Imagining my boat stuck halfway down the slope in scrub higher than me I go to pick up my boat again. Dave tells me not to be silly, picks up the infra-red and throws it down the hill. I wonder if it will stop before it hits the river.

Timmy tells me it is better if I go first. I wonder if he has gone completely mad. Me? Grade three rapids? First? We meander down and things are OK. I go for a swim. I also try to second guess Tim and fail miserably:

Me (while eddied out): "Which side, right or left?"

Timmy: "You pick. The one with the most water is usually good"

Me: "Which side did you paddle it the other day?"

Timmy: "I went right, Dave went left"

Me (thought): Damn

Me: "Timmy, I can't see"

Timmy: "So get closer!"

Me (thought): Damn

I miss an eddy and bail when I think I'm about to go over a drop upside down, only to swim in a nice pool. Later I swim again (so much for the roll!) when I go over and have my most recent "Bed Interaction". Coming up for air and all I can think is NOT AGAIN! Timmy wants to know if I lost consciousness and tells me to cheer up. I want to know how far we are from Narrigo and the car. Timmy tells me it's not far and after I empty my boat we head off. In fact the campsite is only a few minutes round the corner. I am all for a photo of me covered in blood and in my boat but Dave has the camera and has fallen asleep in the sun. We borrow a first aid kit from the Parks people, Dave and Timmy feed me chocolate and Dave patches me up. We take photos and Dave is reluctant to get in them: "But I didn't have anything to do with this one!"

The Upper Snowy - Munyang

After, we head off for Guthega and the Munyang section of the Upper Snowy. We look at Munyang from the vantage point around from the power station and Timmy's excitement goes up 20 notches. All you can see is white. We get to the power station and climb over the fence, ignoring the "Danger" signs, to look at the river. It is running at one turbine. The guy who runs the power station comes down and confirms what we have guessed and then, as an after thought, tells us off for ignoring the signs. He also tells us they are due to start the second turbine sometime in the afternoon. I re-read the guide book, which says the river is much harder at 2 turbines, to Timmy and Dave, and then watch them disappear through a river of white. I spend the next 15 minutes trying to convince the guy in the Guthega power station not to turn the hydro on. He is not very helpful:

Power Station Guy: "They knew it was going on"

Me: "But they're lunatics! They do this all the time!"
[nice try though]

In the end I give up and drive around to the vantage point where I sit for about 2-3 hours. In the end I decide I must have missed them. Ten minutes down the road, going up a hill, on a flat stretch only about 50 meters from corners either way, my car dies. Great. In the end I sit by my car and wait. Eventually a Nice Family From Qld in a 4WD turn up and are a little surprised to see me (read: stare at me when I wave at them, stare at me even more when I explain). They want to know if I'm all right and help me get my car off the road. They drive me to Island Bend where I am meant to meet Dave and Timmy. We run into them on the main road. They have cruised down Munyang in 2 hours and have spent the last 1 wandering round Island Bend asking people whether they've seen me.

Hippies: "A girl.....noooo....we haven't seen a girl for about 10 days.....".

Timmy and Dave eventually run into a guy named Rodney (who turns out to be into mountaineering and ski touring) and ask if he can drive down the road to see if he can find me. Me and the NFFQld miss Rodney by about half a minute. The NFFQld drive Dave and I back to my car, Timmy nearly beats us there on his bike. We (read Dave and Rodney) try various things to get my car going and then Rodney drives me up higher so I can ring the NRMA. The tow truck comes and we transfer everything from my car - neatly packed in bags of course - onto the campsite at Island Bend. I look for the tent pegs and give up - who needs them anyway? I am woken by the Passion Palace lifting an inch off the ground.

The whole tent lifts up and both Dave and I dive for the front together. We eventually find the pegs. We discuss

the probability of Hannah and Co. landing at our campsite after being blown off the main range.

The NRMA tell us they have to wait for a part and because it is a public holiday on Monday it might not come in. Timmy rides to Guthega to check the level on the Upper Snowy and managers to scum food, clothing and a ride home from other boaters. He also comes home with the news that the Upper Snowy - Charlott's Pass to Guthega, is UP. Dave and I go for a walk down to the river and consider catching a kangaroo for dinner. Dave is enthusiastic until he realises that up close the kangaroo is taller than he is. In the end we improvise with half a kg of carrots, half a bag of rice, half a bottle of laksa and half a bottle of patakas. Not too bad actually. Timmy's MSR goes up in a ball of fire and I nearly fall off the table in surprise.

In the morning, Timmy and Dave convince Rodney to drive their boats to Perisher and begin to hitchhike their way to Charlott's Pass. I'm not sure who was more surprised when Pete, Alex and Matt came barreling round the corner on their way to paddle Munyang. Rodney drops me into Jindabyne to collect my car (diagnosis? we put so much stuff in the boot, it disconnected the wires of the fuel pump) and I drive to the pull out to meet them. Pete comes paddling across the pondage, sees me standing on the top of the hill and yells "I love you Ruth" but my elation is short lived when I realise it's the car they're all in love with. [They all proceed to get in it, crank up the heating and drink beer]. Matt looks near frozen solid - his deck popped and he managed to roll up but that didn't stop his boat filling with [freshly melted] water. We head back to Island Bend and cook Skippy with all the trimmings. Tim's 10L-cask wine is quickly finished off but there's still not a wombat in sight.

In the morning, the guys decide to paddle Munyang - this time at two turbines. Their faces when they get off say it all!

Summary: Listen to more experienced boaters on paddling trips, be prepared to fight for a bite of all yummy food, if you want two awesome guys to go boating with give Timmy [0438 747 203] and Dave [0401 136 198] a call, give me a call if you need a shuttle bunny [0429 001 617].

Disclaimer: Some events in this account may be slightly exaggerated.

[It should also be clarified, that Ruth does actually paddle, lots actually, and with that considered, her ratio of paddling trips to 'facial bed interactions' [we call them head jobs] is not as astronomically high as it may seem [Kate W is another story]. Also, another great thing about Ruth is that she arguably eats more meat than anyone else I know. Vegetarians back away slowly in her presence]. 🍌

The Falling-off trip — Stu Hollaway

Stu Hollaway working on Two Tribes (24), Grampians — Tristan Croll



The falling off trip is a simple enough concept; everybody gets on routes at their limit and goes for it. In a supportive environment, climbing as part of a team with similar goals creates a great experience. It tends to produce dramatic, heavy breathing, hard fighting sends or sudden flights.

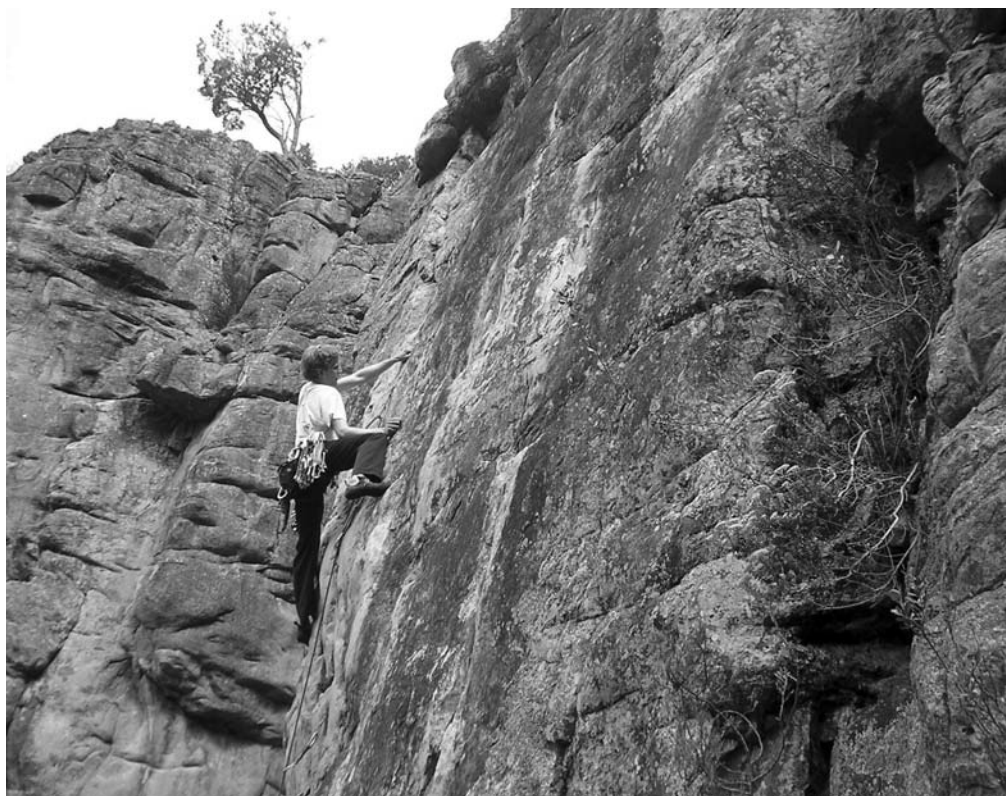
We started up Major Mitchell Gully, a steep, black wall that looks pretty forgettable, but actually contains tremendous climbing on great rock. This shady crag is conveniently close to camp and has been made all the more attractive by the efforts of the Natimuk Bolting Fairies.

We were supposed to be warming up conservatively by starting down a couple of grades, but people were quickly climbing pretty close to their limits. Hannah made a solid ascent of Kamikaze with Remko, while Tristan led Lachlan up Firedance. I warmed up on Kinkaid, which was then led by Lachlan, and subsequently Hannah who pulled the rope and climbed clipping his gear. Meanwhile Tristan's attempt to onsight Slap the Philanthropist was brought to a sudden end by the pumpy fingercrack through the headwall, so he dogged the

gear in, scoped the crux moves and lowered off from the anchors to have a rest. I promptly exploded my wrist on the slopers of Slap Happy, earning me a month off climbing and encouraging me to focus on coaching for the rest of the trip, but at least there had been some falling off. Tristan comfortably dispatched his project and the others tried the top-rope with varying success before we headed down for lunch.

The day had grown appallingly hot, so so plans for the afternoon were changed. We sweated our way up into the Organ Pipes Gully to try a few other routes to prepare for the Sunday. After a lot of lying around in the shade to recover from the walk and a Brave Sir Robin off Frenzy, Tristan cruised Cadenza, Lachlan dogged the exciting and pumpy Aardvark and Hannah held on up the awkward Mudeye. Storm clouds were building over the mountain as we wandered back to the Pines to catch up with Mac's gear placing team and head into Nati for dinner.

Sunday was marked out for individual projects. Each climber had a route picked out for them which they led supported by the rest of the group who would then follow on a top rope. Hannah took a long time settling before battling it out stance to stance to send the bulgey Garden Gnome and lift her onsight gear standard by two grades. Lachlan, whose initial project, Vanoise, had to be replaced because of the overnight rain, cruised the exciting start of Dazed and Confused before working backwards and forwards around the crux. Finally he committed to the heel hook and picked his way up the rest of the wall for his hardest gear flash by a grade or two.



Tristan finishing off In Lemon Butter (22) after whipping off on his onsight attempt - he redpointed it later that day..

These successes were very impressive but the lack of falling was a bit disturbing. Thankfully, despite pulling aggressively through the crux layback down low, Tristan blew off the last hard move of In Lemon Butter and rode a couple of metres onto a number two rock. He climbed through the rest of the route, rearranged the protection for easy clipping and lowered off to recover for an hour while the others thrashed on a top rope and Remko led the rarely noticed Pibroch. Tristan capped off the weekend by calmly sending the route.



Lachlan on Dazed and Confused (20), Arapiles – Tristan Croll

Some observations from the trip to think about in your climbing.

Preparation

- be systematic in arranging your gear – you should be able to find a piece one handed without looking
- don't tangle yourself up with lots of slings etc
- scope routes for moves/stances/cruxes/gear

Climbing

- climb stance to stance – try not to hang around fiddling with gear on cruxish moves
- sometimes you need to return to stances to rest after trying moves or placing gear
- climb fast through hard sections
- don't hang on with both hands – try to shake out and recover
- concentrate on your feet, look for body positions which allow you to rest/relax/recover

Gear

- learn to pick gear by sight and touch – either the 1st or 2nd piece you try should be good >90% of the time
- leaders should not spend much time taking gear out of the rock – look for good gear, place it, clip it and climb
- be realistic about what you are expecting of gear – not every wire needs to be multi-directional and if you yank a cam aggressively from side to side it will move – look for solutions rather than trying to create problems

Going for it

- beginners and intermediates almost never fall off – they let go – don't let go!
- if attempting to onsight or redpoint you have to try really hard – don't give up
- don't let go, keep trying to move upward – being pumped is noisy and painful
- if your eyes aren't watering, you can move your fingers, lift your arms or form words you are probably not pumped – keep fighting.
- keep the rope clear of your legs – you don't want a fall to be nasty.
- try to have more than one good piece between you and the ground (back up or equalise pieces if needed) – you don't want a fall to be nasty.
- get a good belayer – someone who is calm, encouraging, able to make suggestions and keep you focused.
- get a good belayer – someone who won't pull you off and will catch you (and learn to be a good belayer so they will want to climb with you)

Brave Sir Robin (“when danger reared its ugly head, brave Sir Robin turned and fled”)

- trying hard routes often involves failing – have a range of strategies for getting safely off a climb and hopefully getting most of your gear back.
- aiding gear in might let you make an ascent.
- get used to downclimbing – it is a valuable skill.
- make decisions evaluating your abilities, desires and the climbs – don't put yourself somewhere you don't want to be, but if you do, stay calm and use your experience to get out of it. 🐼

Mountains and Snow in Summer — Dale Thistlewaite

Well 2004 wasn't exactly what you'd call a big year in mountaineering for the Mountaineering Club. After having two TMC's (Technical Mountaineering Course) worth of club members in NZ last summer, this summer everyone seemed a little "mountained-out" - either that or last year's trip sufficiently scared them that they are afraid to return without the one most essential piece of survival equipment on any mountaineering trip – a gold VISA card (preferably belonging to someone else).

But not to be deterred by NZ weather or financial crisis, I flung caution to the wind and grabbing my new ultra-light-weight La Sportiva mountaineering boots, a home-made plum pudding, my fleecy hut booties and my trusty guide-slave Stu, I launched into the unknown world of extreme adventure with nothing but sixty geese worth of down jacket and a fully equipped alpine hut separating me from the elements.

For those who don't know me, I'm not one to forgo my creature comforts in pursuit of the next challenge in the great outdoors. For those readers who've walked the Wilson's Prom circuit track in four hours, in the middle of winter, in a blizzard, wearing nothing but a neoprene g-string – firstly, What are you crazy?!? And secondly, thankyou for not inviting me, I hate that stuff. Suffering

for suffering's sake has never been appealing to me, and that's why I like mountaineering, especially in NZ. I've only been this season and last, and both seasons I did actually climb, but I have it on good authority that it's possible to spend an entire season getting drunk in Mt. Cook village without the weather ever threatening to relent to the point that you might have to strap on a crampon.

However, even the best-laid plans sometimes go astray, and hence climbing did actually occur on my climbing holiday. After arriving at Mt. Cook village from Christchurch in a friend's van, a "hi-ace" I believed to be of dubious structural and mechanical integrity, we soon hooked ourselves up with a flight to Kelman Hut. When this flight was bumped forwards by three hours a mad rush to fit six kilograms of chocolate into two full banana boxes ensued.



Stu Hollaway in the Upper Tasman area – Dale Thistlewaite.

Once this task had been successfully accomplished I felt the first and most serious potential disaster of the trip had been averted and I breathed a long sigh of relief.

Arriving at Kelman Hut we found the accommodation somewhat cramped, but we squished in like everyone else, determined to enjoy ourselves. While I can't say that the hut conversation was up to the excellent standard of last year, (thankyou Min, Jasmine, Andrew, Ben, Kath, Andrea, Dimi etc.), there was the standard alpine hilarity: over-full toilet, exploding MSR's and no reading material aside from a few well-thumbed copies of FHM. Incidentally, should anyone want a full account of "Battle of the Hair Colours – Who Looks Best Holding a Chainsaw, Blondes or Brunettes?" I will be more than happy to oblige.

Anyway, the next morning Stu and I headed out to 9144 keen to scope the snow colour, having seen a few fool-hardy individuals head up it at 4pm the previous afternoon. After a pleasantly short walk across the glacier, the stone-fall at the bottom of the colour convinced us that the rock buttress was looking more than inviting and we ambled up that instead. Arriving at the top a few short hours later in beautiful sunny weather we broke open the Whitman's Bitter Orange Choccy and thanked the Gods for a glorious start to our season. Our companions Nick and Anthea (owners of the aforementioned van) had headed up Alymer, intending to traverse to Hochstedder, and we could see their small triumphant figures on the summit of Aylmer as we sat on our summit utterly content.

Day two was equally wonderful. Buoyed by our success we headed across to Aylmer at sunrise. Three and a half pitches, two snow anchors, and most excitingly, two ice screws and some front-pointing later, we reached the summit of Aylmer and looked down the impressive ridge to Hochstedder and beyond. Though it was nice and early, the sun had some real bite, so we decided to leave Hochstedder for another day and returned to the hut.



Three days of bad weather, no ascents, and some serious card games later, we flew out to Mt. Cook village and Stu and I bussed down to Christchurch eager for some nice weather, a day at the beach and Christmas with friends. The visit to Christchurch, during which we enjoyed the fabulous hospitality of NZ mountain guide John Entwistle and wife Kate, naturally involved a trip to Christchurch's own answer to Werribee Gorge – Britten Crag. Merely looking at this uninspiring pile of choss gave me the shivers, but remarkably, none of it fell off and it actually provided some extremely worthwhile climbing in the 17-30 grade range. Soon it was time to head back to Cook and for Stu and I to pursue our own separate adventures. Stu met his first group of clients and I headed down south to Te Anau to start my solo journey on the Kepler Track.

This is the second year I have planned a mountaineering trip in this way: a short concentrated period of mountaineering followed, or preceded by, some solo bushwalking. Last year I climbed from Centennial Hut, Fox Glaceir,

and completed the Routeburn Track. This year I climbed from Kelman Hut, Tasman Glacier, and walked the Kepler Track. I thoroughly recommend planning a mountaineering trip like this. Weather can all but cripple climbing plans, especially on a short trip, but if you have some paddling, walking, rock-climbing etc. planned, even a trip where only a couple of alpine routes are ticked can prove most rewarding.

We are, after all, a mountaineering club, so grab your down jacket, hut booties, favourite novel and pioneering spirit and settle into a season of hot chocolate and bad weather sleep-ins! 🐼



OXO old farts.

Jobs and girlfriends on hold, **JP Renut** and 2 friends travelled 5 months this summer in US and Mexico, in their home-converted, Dodge 72 motherhome. They climbed such places as Smith Rocks, City of Rocks, Grand Tetons, Boulder, Indian Creek and Yosemite. They kayaked a few noteworthy rivers and learned to surf on the California and Baja California coast, while truly experiencing rural America.

Adam Leavesley has been in Canada... In July he walked the West Coast Trail on Vancouver Island, then the Skyline Trail in Jasper National Park and the Brazeau Loop in Jasper and Banff National Parks. Then some day-walks at Elk Island National Park and a months volunteer bird-banding in the Sleeping Giant Regional Park on Lake Superior.

While in New Zealand, he met up with an old MUMC mate, **John Henzell** who has just climbed Observation Hill in Antarctica. He finally got to go there after many years of applying and although the peak is apparently not a big deal he was pretty stoked just to be there.

Still in the frozen North, **Ralph Gailis** enjoyed skiing into Emerald Lake at Yoho National Park B.C., though wouldn't say it was anything extreme (although exotic).

Hannah Lockie is currently there too, working in one of the Alberta resorts. She and **Cam Quinn** are planning an Alaskan Odyssey for April-July.

Kath Hammond hooked up with **Katrine Wilson** and two Norwegian mates for a summer of climbing and adventures in South Africa.

Steve Curtain skied his bum off in the Canadian Rockies last Canadian (2002-03) winter. Although winter arrived late he thoroughly enjoyed the Whistler back-country, a tour to Lake O'Hara near Kicking Horse Pass, Fernie, Sunshine, Panorama and some lovely skating in Canmore.

Dan Colborne, Sam Maffett, Steve Curtain (all MUMC) and two friends Stuart Coleman and Jarrod Paine are off to Russia in late March 2004 to tele-ski volcanic peaks on the Kamchatka Peninsula. See www.geocities.com/kamchatkaexpedition for all the juice.

Sam Maffett was up to a few things about 12 months ago - 6 weeks ski mountaineering in the Alps including 8 days on the Haute Route Chamonix - Zermat and onto Saas Fee and 6 days in the central Swiss Alps.

Don't know how Dan's training is going: Had a beer at each of Kalgoorlie's 31 pubs in one day. Does that count?

Stuart Hollaway writes:

In the past year or so that I can think of MUMC or associates have climbed the following attractive things - Min, Jasmine, Ben

& Andrew climbed a buch of stuff incl Minarets, Lendenfeld Haidinger and Moonshine Buttress, Kath/Dimi etc did Minarets and Aspiring.

Nick M and Stu did the west face of Aspiring in less than 10 hours round trip from French Ridge hut and the Bowen Allen corner in the darrans

Phil B soloed SW ridge Aspiring

Nick, Phil and Stu did Astrolabe (6--17) on Drake (2nd ascent?)

John Entwistle and Stu climbed O sole mio (6/23) on the Grand Capucin while Phil and Jaquie did a link up of the Swiss route w O sole mio (5+/19)

Phil and Stu made winter ascents of the Charlet-Ghilini (6-) on Pre de Bar and a bad conditions ascent of the Frendo spur (5) of the midi.

Having shifted from a small town in Wester Ross (surrounded by Munros), **Joel Bartley** is now in Aviemore working as a lifyt at Cairn Gorm Mountain. It is apparently raining and the snow is disappearing rapidly. No mountaineering epics yet but he's recently travelled around Central Europe. Drunk lots of beer in Czech, skied the Stubai Glaciers in Austria, and extreme caving (NOT) in Slovenia taking an mini electric train through the passages.

Niko Wiesner is working at Sietas shipyard in Hamburg, designing container ships and trying to do as much "mountaineering" in the dead flat north of Germany.

"Last year I spent 10 days in March XC Skiing together with my brother Seb and my mate Sven in southern Norway (in Setesdalheiane Region north of Christiansand). Awsome smooth landscapes completely covered in snow in the southern part and rocky steep parts in the north made this tour to an unforgettable souvenir. Most of the times we tried to move along frozen lakes and the sides of riverbeds. The nights we mostly spent without any others in the cosy unserviced huts of the norwegian outdoor association spread about 4 to 6 walking hours from each other. There we got spoiled with beds, basic cooking facilities and wood for cosy temperatures.

"From sunny first days to misty and snowstormy days at the end the last two day brought us warm temperatures in the lower areas. Beside a three hour detour round a not-any-more-frozen-for-skiing-lake the snow got that sticky that our pace was slowed to snail-speed. Only 2k's away from the cosy hostel offering tremendous breakies we had to dig a bivy in the snow at midnight just before a steep decent into the lower valley. After a night under the clear sky the next morning the snow was that bad that it took us 4 hours for the last two k's... In the north-summer (August) I did some mountaineering on the glaciers of the austrian alps in the Stubai valley and some mixed mountain hikes and climbs near Obersdorf, Germany, with my love Iris and my best mate Thorsten." 🐌



Further adventures and getting involved.

The clubrooms are open at lunchtimes during semester and (most popular) on Tuesday evenings between 7 and 8pm. The Tuesday evening gathering often then proceeds to one of the local pubs.

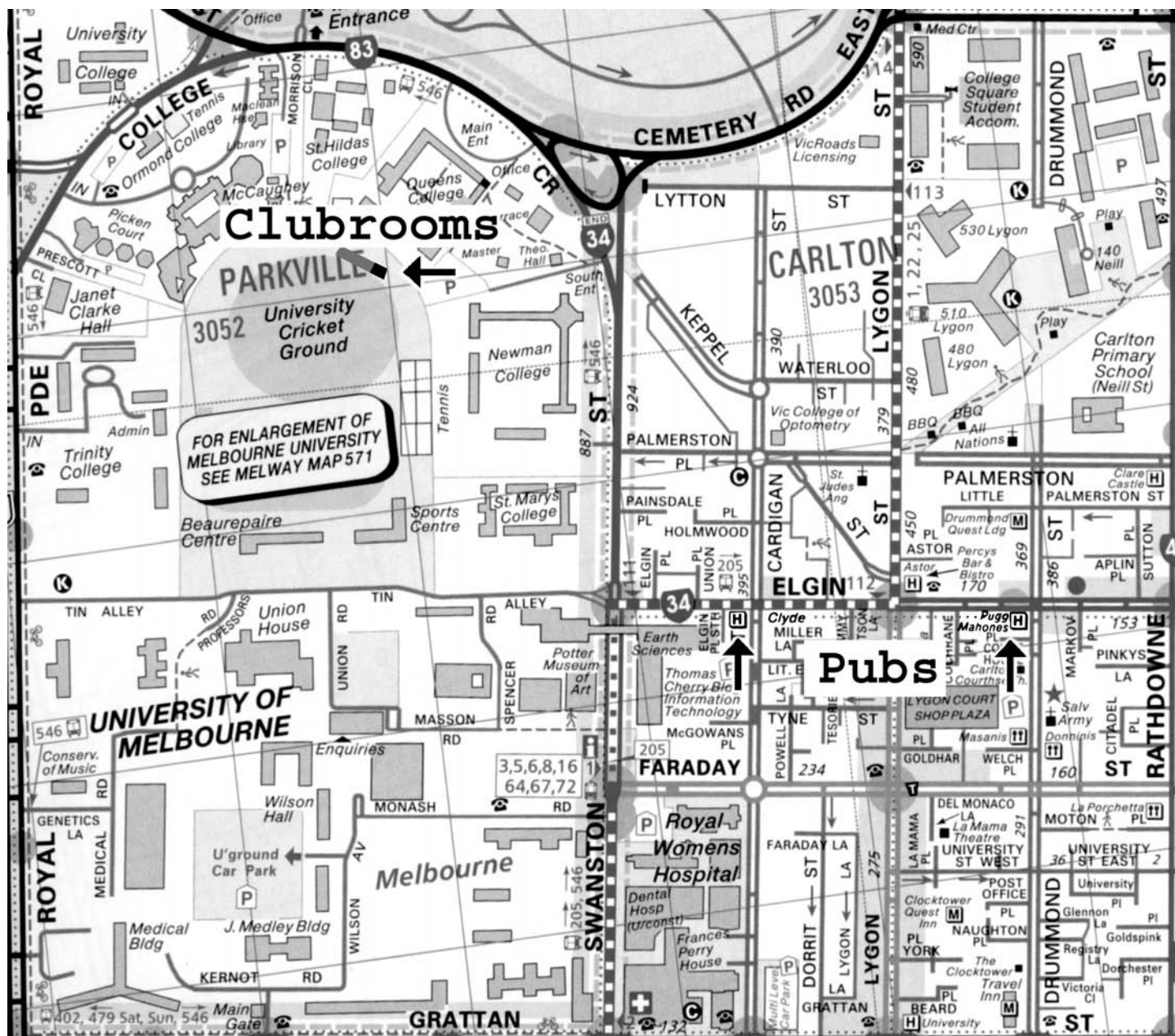
The “Which Pub?” Saga has been raging for years, since the old favourite, The Clyde, was bought by Lion Nathan, stopped serving Carlton Draught and became a nightclub. For the past year we’ve been in Pug Mahones, though with The Clyde now serving Carlton and with tables and carpet, etc, the gathering may revert there. The Clyde has the advantage of being closer to the tram stop too.

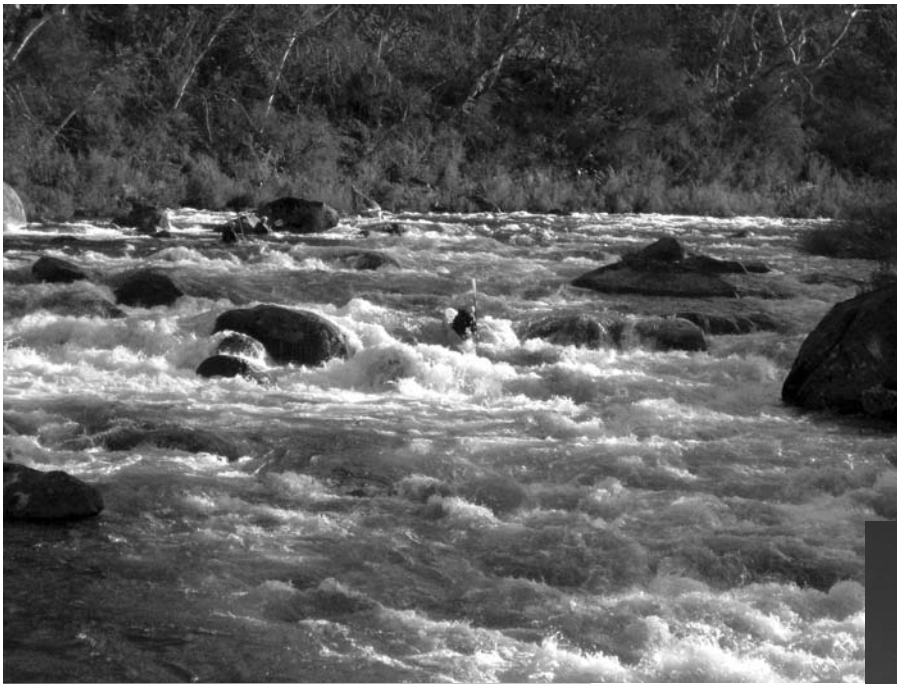
The club’s web-site is shortly moving from <http://ariel.unimelb.edu.au/~mumc/> to another address, probably <http://mumc.sports.unimelb.edu.au/>. It is proposed

that these changes will facilitate a bit more content on the site as we’ll have more space. The club also has an email list, which you can subscribe to through the web-site. The email addresses written on membership forms should be entered into the list automatically – visit the web-site to change your address if it changes from what was on the membership form.

Talking of addresses, the July issue of The Mountaineer (with details of the AGM) is posted out to members at the address on the membership forms. Please let the secretary know of any change of address so that you get your copy.

Most of all, though, go on trips, learn things and have fun! [Then write something about the trip for the next magazine and send it in with some photos!] — Editor Dylan. 🍷





Top Left, Tim Wallace on the Munyang
– Kat Martin.

Bottom Left, Tasmanian sea-scape
– Andy Selby-Smith.

Below, The Matterhorn from Zermatt
– Dylan Shuttleworth.

Bottom, Sunset over the Fang Butress,
Mt Arapiles – Mac.

