



the mountaineer  
july 2005





**Above:** Grant, Anders and Dave on Feathertop – Lincoln Smith

**Front cover:** Laura and Pete seakayaking in the Whitsundays – Jim Anderson

**Below:** Party wave, Phillip Island – Jim Anderson





NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the **2005 Annual General Meeting** of Melbourne University Mountaineering Club Inc. will be held on **Tuesday 9 August at 6:30pm** in the Pavilion at Melbourne University (near the clubrooms, on the north side of the Oval).

THERE ARE no special motions to be attended to. Any Business other than ORDINARY BUSINESS to be included on the Agenda must be given IN WRITING to the SECRETARY via the Mountaineering mailbox in the Sports Centre, or BY EMAIL (below), NO LATER THAN 7 days prior to the meeting, (ie. before 7pm, Tuesday 2 August).

NOMINATIONS ARE HEREBY CALLED for all voting positions on the Incorporation's COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT. Nominations must be SIGNED by the PROPOSER, SECONDER and the NOMINEE, and must be placed in the nomination box in the Clubrooms, or handed to the RETURNING OFFICER, Hannah Lockie, before 4pm on Monday 8 August. If you would like more information regarding any position, please consult the current holder of that position, or the SECRETARY via email: [a.hyland@ugrad.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:a.hyland@ugrad.unimelb.edu.au)

**VOTING Positions:**

President	Bushwalking Convenor	Skiing Convenor
Vice-President	Canoeing Convenor	Conservation Convenor
Secretary	Caving Convenor	Gear Store Officer
Treasurer	Mountaineering Convenor	General Member
Assistant Treasurer	Rockclimbing Convenor	Publications Officer

**NON-VOTING positions:**

Canoe Polo Convenor	Canyoning Convenor	Rogaining Convenor
Hut Warden	IT Officer	Public Officer

**NOMINATION for COMMITTEE position 2005/2006**

I, ....., a member of Melbourne University Mountaineering Club Inc.,  
hereby nominate .....to be elected to the Incorporation's 2005/2006  
Committee of Management in the position of .....

Signature of Proposer: .....

Signature of Secunder: .....

Signature of Nominee: .....



# Minutes

## 1. Attendance:

### 1.1 Present

Estee Ashbridge, Mac Brunckhorst, Amanda Bush, Shannon Crack, Ben Croker, Tristan Croll, Felix Dance, Clare Davy, Cassandra Devine, Callum Eastwood, Carys Evans, Min Goh, Ian Gould, Lachlan Hick, Peter Hield, Kate Holling, Matthew Jeppesen, Laura Kneen, Michael Laity, Enmoore Lin, Peter Lockett, Min Manifold, Kat Martin, Rachael McCluskey, Kylie McInnes, Julie McInnes, Alaster Meehan, Sarah Neumann, Andrew Nurse, Ari Ofsevit, Andrew Oppenheim, Jasmine Rickards, Angus Robb, Ned Rogers, Fiona Russell, Lincoln Smith, Grant Schuster, Andy Selby Smith, Robyn Selby Smith, Dylan Shuttleworth, Kellie Smith, Dale Thistlewaite, Matthew Thomas, Martin Tomco, Alison Thomson, Tim Wallace, Alex Wedd, Hugh Williams.

### 1.1 Apologies

Kylie, Dylan and Callum will be late

## 2. Welcome

Meeting opened 7.05pm

## 3. Acceptance of previous minutes

The minutes are a true and accurate record of the last meeting,  
Proposed CE, Seconded SN – motion passed

## 4. Honorary life memberships

EL: criteria for life membership to MUMC, life members need to be passed at an AGM. A sub-committee including Alan Daly, John Chapman and Enmoore came up with seven nominations, based on traits such as; being iconic for MUMC, work on the club hut, contributions in and out of the club and in the wider community. Also three nominations from the 1980s were presented again as there are no clear records of whether these nominations were passed at that meeting.

No nominations for 1990s were presented as sub-committee felt that they do not have objective view. Suggested that these nominations be left for later years. GS: Could voting be done by the committee? Advised that the handout was incorrect. According to the constitution life members must be passed by  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote at the AGM. The committee can only approve yearly honorary membership.

DTh: objected to leaving out members from the 90s because we should be voting on life membership for people that we know. She was unhappy that she got no formal response after making a nomination and objected to making a decision based solely on a list

of achievements compiled by the sub-committee. CE apologised and reminded people that they were free to not vote.

GS: questioned the purpose of the sub-committee as it is not mentioned in the constitution.

MT: if nominations were only raised at the AGM proper research may not be done and deserving people would be missed. DTh: The sub-committee was not democratically elected.

EL read out each nominee, their achievements and contributions, questions were taken, and a vote was collected. See attached list of MUMC life members. Tom Kneen: posthumous nomination, died on Feathertop 1985, instrumental in building of the Hut, bushwalker and skier, author of the MUMC publication *The Victorian Alps*, VicWalk, Nth west spur track. Matt – Federations Hut – responsible for building hut  
Result: Passed

Nick White: initiated the environmental sub-committee previously there had been no conversation convenor, speleological association president and of MUMC 1960s, even people who disliked him agree that he should get life membership.

Enmoore – change in the club from working to undergrad hard to compare contributions  
Result: Passed

Jim Newlands: keeps anniversary list and dinner organisation going  
First ascent of Bard  
Result: Passed

Phil Waring: committee for 5 years, Bushwalkers S and R, Viwalk and BMTAB  
Author of many standards for bushwalking  
Result: passed

Peter Kneen: contribution to Hut design and construction also heavily involved in club,  
Matt T – designed Federation Hut as well  
Result: passed

John Chapman: bushwalker, climber, mountaineer  
Was photographer, co-editor and author of South West Tasmania publication  
Committee for 5 years, 2 as treasurer  
Result: passed

Frank Zgoznik: president and committee member in 80s  
Co-wrote MUMC safety codes  
Result: NOT passed

Rod Costigan: President VRA wrote rogaining standards  
10 years involvement in club



Decided to also vote on the life members from the 1980s.

Les Southwell – greenie, helped select hut site and wrote a book

Matt Thomas – book in clubrooms, photographer in wilderness Tassie, ‘Mountains in Paradise’

Result: passed

Faye Kerr: climber mountaineer, died in 1980s

Result: passed

Nick Reeves: Posthumous nomination. Died in NZ 1980s, editor of Mountaineer pub. Climber and mountaineer.

Also very active in the club, prime of his life.

Result: passed

EL – did DTh want to nominate someone?

DTh – no, but the process was unfair

## 5. 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

CE: Brad is organising a rogaine on the 27–28<sup>th</sup>

November. Any help would be appreciated, everyone should have got an email. Ideally MUMC is doing the catering. Information is on the website.

BD: invitations to the 60<sup>th</sup> Dinner should have been received by mail and email. So far only about 150 responses had been received with very few from current members. This could be due to people not having cheque books and might be improved by setting a time when people can pay in person.

CE: remind people to organise table so that they were sitting with the people they wanted to. Polo shirts and T-shirts would be available on the night but hats and caps were already available for \$15. Jasmine did the designs and received a ticket to the dinner.

AO: details about a special Mountaineer?

CE: a 60<sup>th</sup> history had been planned but would not be ready as no one had run with it.

## 6. Committee reports

Conservation

Cassandra Devine

Cassandra said she had been working on a letterbox in the clubrooms for the club members to write to relevant organisations. She would like for mountaineer to be on recycled paper but was not sure of the extra expense.

Mountaineering

Read by MT on behalf of Dylan Shuttleworth

Has been a slow year for Mountaineering, with only two club Members (Lincoln and Dale) making it over and up into the NZ Alps last summer. Cam Quinn met up with old-fart JB for a bit of ski-touring and mountaineering in Canada in April. I have fielded a few queries from the public about insurance for Mountaineering recently. Also advertising Sam Maffet’s talk this Thursday eve in Little Bourke St of the old-fart Kamchatka expedition.

Looking to run an Alpine Instruction weekend next weekend. Further, there have been murmurings of interest in various NZ trips this summer, so things are looking up. Best wishes to the new convenor.

Publications Officer.

Read by MT on behalf of Dylan Shuttleworth

The fact Dylan is not here at the moment (at a lecture) is also the thing he is blaming for getting only three of the four promised issues out in the last year. Thanks for everyone who contributed to the magazine, particularly after some early guffs: accidentally deleting parts of articles; mis-spelling names; and mis-crediting photos. I’ve learnt a lot about a lot of stuff –

Concepts such as ‘legal deposit’, typesetting and the (subjective) optimal character width of a line. The send-out address list last year was 428, this year 363, indicating (to me) a significant drop in club numbers. The recent article about paddling in Sweden seemed poignant when addressing the sense of not belonging to a club; I think there are some things we need to look at there. Although there is some criticism of the notion of the mag being sent out to several hundred people who are not actively involved in the club, I am/was motivated by seeing it as a tangible token of the club reaching out to the uninvolved, encouraging everyone to participate. I wish the next editor well in achieving this goal or any others they’re aiming for.

Hut Warden

Matt Thomas

Not much has happened recently but new on the toilet is that MUMC hut 3<sup>rd</sup> in line to get a toilet. This should happen over summer. Michelle and Bivouac are first and Parks will fly a toilet into Bivouac at same as Michelle is rebuilt

Federation Hut is being rebuilt and the toilet at MUMC will be completed at the same time. The toilet will be a fly out option the same as at Johnson’s hut, but smaller than at the Federation Hut site. It is supposed to separate liquids from solids and send liquids to the ground. These toilets have been trialled in Tassie. Tim requested a heated toilet.

Canoe polo

Julie McInnes

The novice team competed in the finals 2 seasons in row. The other team did reasonably well. MUMC has had 2 teams for the first 2 seasons with 3 being entered this season, N, D, and E are all doing well. The inter-university polo competition has begun with one competition being run at Monash. Hopefully this will continue probably on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month alternating between La Trobe, Monash, and Melbourne. This presents a cheaper way for people to play. In other news Susan Tegg is into the women’s K2 500m Flatwater final in the Olympics tonight!!!



## Bushwalking

Peter Hield

This year has been successful with two trips to Tassie both more than week, a trip to Stuart Island in NZ, a 16-day trip to the Larapinta track, 3 trips over easter and numerous weekend trips. There are lots of upcoming leaders, and more trips planned including a trip to Tassie over mid-semester break and trip to New Zealand at the end of year.

## Gear store

Kellie Smith

Lots of gear has been repaired. 17 tents are now back from Remote. Gear that has been stolen or damaged has been replaced out of this year's budget. Let us know if gear is damaged or if you feel anything else is required.

## Caving

Kat Martin

The highlight of the year has been a trip to Tassie which would not have been possible without ties to SUSS. Also a trip with WASD, and trips to Buchan exploring new caves that we hadn't done before. We have trips to Labertouche and also new areas in Victoria that we haven't got to yet.

## Climbing

Mac Brunckhorst and Ian Gould

We ran a learn-to-lead weekend in September last year. (Sarah: Mac continued the climbing convenor tradition and went paddling.) There were heaps of beginner trips at Cathedrals, Araps, and You Yangs etc. There are lots of upcoming leaders in the ranks. Mac has tried to combine mini golf and climbing.

## Paddling

Angus Robb

As far as I know it has been a fairly successful season. Anna and I were appointed convenors and we had a great first half of year while Anna was here. Some of the trips included Friends of Mitta weekend, Penrith, and the Cathedrals. Anna has gone overseas and I have been plagued by injury and haven't had opportunity to paddle. Lots of kayak gear has been bought including paddles and decks and new boats. There has been an ongoing problem with boatsheds access. Some keys have been lost over the year so we are down to one. Sarah has talked to sports centre about the extra keys going to the front desk and a new convenor's key, but they need to fit key tags and that might take a while.

We have asked about after hours drop off box, but this is unlikely. We will be following up about the keys and Sarah I will go in later this week.

## Skiing

Matt Jeppesen

There has been plenty of snow, but I haven't seen much of it (due to injury).

Thanks to Min, Cam, Greta, Dimi and Matt who didn't think they'd have to run trips and did anyway.

## Canyoning

Kylie McInnes

It has been a good year with 3 weeks of canyoning happening. Kat ran some trips to the Blueys, and Timmy's accident was handled really well and was not too much of an epic. Hopefully the next convenor will keep up the great rate of trips.

## Search and Rescue

Enmoore Lin

We have 9 new members. Dave Kneen was made a Field Officer this year. There was a huge MUMC turn out at the practices, rogaine, and steep snow and ice, out of 10 people 7 were MUMC. The search at Buffalo had 4 MUMC members but the first search was unsuccessful. The new delegate for Search and Rescue will be Ben Cebon.

## IT

Tristan Croll

I have spent time updating the web page and negotiating space plenty of space to work with and access to scripting so someone who knows what they are doing can set up heaps of stuff. The website has a new address and there is a new email list and web forum.

CE: Tristan has done a great job responding to problems  
SN: General congratulations MUMC has never been this web based before, Tristan has done an awesome job.

## Rogaining

Ben Cebon absent

## Vice President

Min Goh

The bushdance was a huge success. There have been lots of great beginner trips. It has been fantastic to see so many people returning from Cathedrals. The emphasis has been on having fun. Thanks to everyone.

## Treasurer

Fiona Russell

Copies of the treasurer's report are at front door.

This year there has been a surplus this year of \$2135, the bushdance broke even \$666,

The \$844.25 hall hire hasn't hit books yet. We are still \$60 up taking into account membership count is up. T-shirt sales up. However this might have been misallocated.



The conservation account has been closed by National Bank in May as it was inactive. This will be in next year's financial report.

JMc: Huge congratulations to Fiona for taking over the treasurer position and doing such a great job

GS: Why does MUMC contribute 50% to rogaining?

FR: This comes from Sports centre subsidy I have a breakdown.

GS: How does petty cash match exactly

FR: Petty cash is replaced as it is spent so if it doesn't balance then it is stolen

CE: Considering we have lost money the last two years this is good

FR: Part of the reason that we have a surplus could be that the uni games payment came in from last year

AO: Cathedrals expenditure is larger

FR: Kellie didn't need to pay camp fees last year and possibly more drivers so trip fees needed to be higher to cover this.

AO: What does the \$223 for AGM cover?

CE: Pies, pie warmer etc. Presumably this was reimbursed and went into funds

DT: Mountaineering gear hire proportionally much closer to allocation than other sports.

DP: Canyoning and caving 0 and skiing 160

FR: Due to not having access to all gear stores money wasn't banked regularly and potentially not labelled correctly.

MJ: skiing last year's season.

CE: Convenors need to take responsibility for collecting and banking money. Any more Qs ask the treasurer later.

#### President's report

CE: last year talked about thing that wanted to happen lost 2 out of 3 paddling keys but clubrooms keys replenished and sign in book sink closed and area more hygienic, 30-page document about space requirements for each sport and copies in pres and sec folders. This was passed on to the architect. The current discussions on a new pavilion are quite vague. It would be difficult for them to take away our storage but our common area is unique and under threat. The more that we use it the more we can justify having it.

SN: have a poll on the website asking about when people can commit to coming to lunchtimes. The clubrooms shut most times I have been in.

CE: Special thanks to Mac and Kellie for running the Cathedral trip. It was an enormous success. Kellie has only been in the club for a year and did a great job of running the trip. Thanks Min and Greta for the bushdance which was an incredible interclub event. Thanks Enmoore this year leaving S&R delegate been for 3 years success. We are particularly grateful for her removing an unwieldy statute, which is a huge success.

Thanks to the executive Jasmine, Fiona, Min and particularly Fiona for stepping up when Kate left. Finally thanks to Andrew O who is not on committee but is

looking after library even though not required to. Big thanks to Dylan for awesome Mountaineers.

There have been great trips run. Great overall effort has shown a large number of beginners coming back and the pub packed on Tuesday nights. Thanks to everyone.

#### 7. Open questions

GS: Who is responsible for changing key lists? This person should be in the clubrooms opening up front door to notice who is using key lists.

CE: key lists should be controlled by one person but this can be discussed by committee

Result of life membership all through except Frank Z  
Also record of post 1980 nominations going through

#### 8. Elections

CE: I declare all positions vacant

Andy Selby Smith as returning officer: there are no more than 2 candidates for any position so voting is by a preferred system and to be selected a person must get 50 percent plus 1.

##### Election results

President: Mac Brunkhorst

Vice president: Kat Martin

Treasurer: No nomination

Assistant Treasurer: Callum Eastwood

Secretary: Kellie Smith

Bushwalking: Ned Rogers

Canoeing: Grant Shuster

Caving convenor: Shannon Crack

Conservation convenor: Felix Dance

Rogaining Convenor: Alaster Meehan

Hut Warden: Matt Thomas

Canyoning: Al Thomson

Gear store officer: Vacant

General member: Vacant

Mountaineering Convenor: Dale Thistlewaite

Publications: Laura Kneen

Rock climbing Convenor: No nominations received

Skiing convenor: Jasmine Rickards

Public Officer: vacant

Search and Rescue: Ben Cebon

IT officer: vacant no nominations

Canoe Polo Convenor: no nominations

#### 9. Close



# Contents

**Convenor reports** 2

**Ski mountaineering**  
**Gran Paradiso Haute Route** 3  
Alex Shnaider

**Beautiful ephemeral** 5  
Jasmine Rickards

**Easter paddling at Penrith** 7  
Jim Anderson

**A thumb up for Japanese snow** 11  
Dave Kneen

**Car maintenance at MUMC** 14  
Stu Holloway

**The itchy and scratchy walk** 15  
Fiona Russell





## Presidential pontification

### Mac Brunkhorst

I hope you have all had a fun year so far and have gone on lots of mountaineering club trips. If you haven't, there is still time. The kayaking and skiing seasons are about to start and there will be more climbing later in the year. Bushwalking happens all the time so you have no excuses.

We have had a productive year with all the usual trips like Easter Arapiles, Cathedrals and all the others running successfully. There are many new enthusiastic faces around the clubrooms and participating in club activities.

Now is the time for a new committee, so if you think that you have what it takes you should run for a position.

A big thankyou to everyone who has helped out throughout the year especially the big jobs like Pie 'n' Slide night and the bushdance.

Good luck with the rest of the year and see you on a trip sometime.

## Mountaineering mumblings

### Dale Thistlewaite

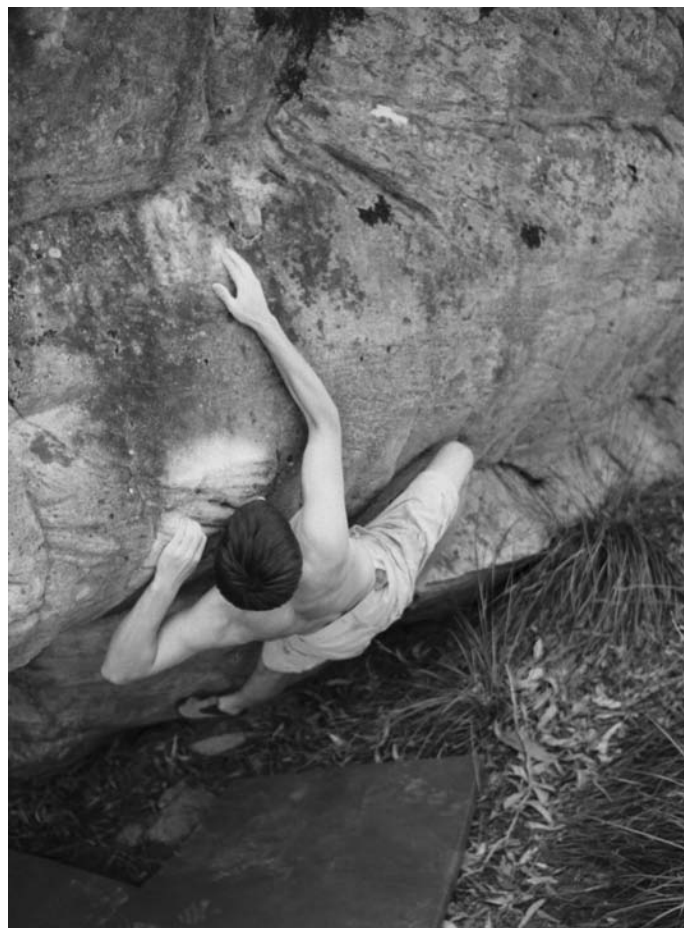
Well it's July now and what's a mountaineering convenor on a student budget to do? Not much at this time of year it seems, along with the rest of the club's mountaineers. Lacking the capital to fly to some far-flung ice-capped region, we are left to languish in wintery Melbourne. There's always the joys of skiing and rock-climbing to console us, and of course, that other great joy... planning the next alpine season.

I have some exciting alpine training trips planned for MUMC's aspiring alpinists. Following the success of our mountaineering skills and information evening last year I plan to run this again to give members some idea of the costs and logistics of a mountaineering trip to our closest mountain, NZ. Our honorary member and mountain guide Stuart Hollaway can no doubt be bullied into repeating his informative brief on weather forecasting, avalanche conditions and technical rope skills, including some hands-on demonstration and practice.

Next on the agenda is an alpine skills weekend at Arapiles, looking at efficient rope use on varied terrain, and fast and efficient climbing and descent techniques for use in an alpine setting.

And finally, for the more adventurous, a weekend of long adventure route climbing in a yet to be decided location in the Grampians – probably Mt Abrupt or Green Gap Pinnacle – to test our now razor-sharp route-finding, rope-management and climbing skills.

Hopefully all this prepares us admirably for a summer of adventures in the South Island. So for now this is your mountaineering convenor signing off. May all your alpine dreams feature bullet freezes, timely helicopters and summit chocolate.



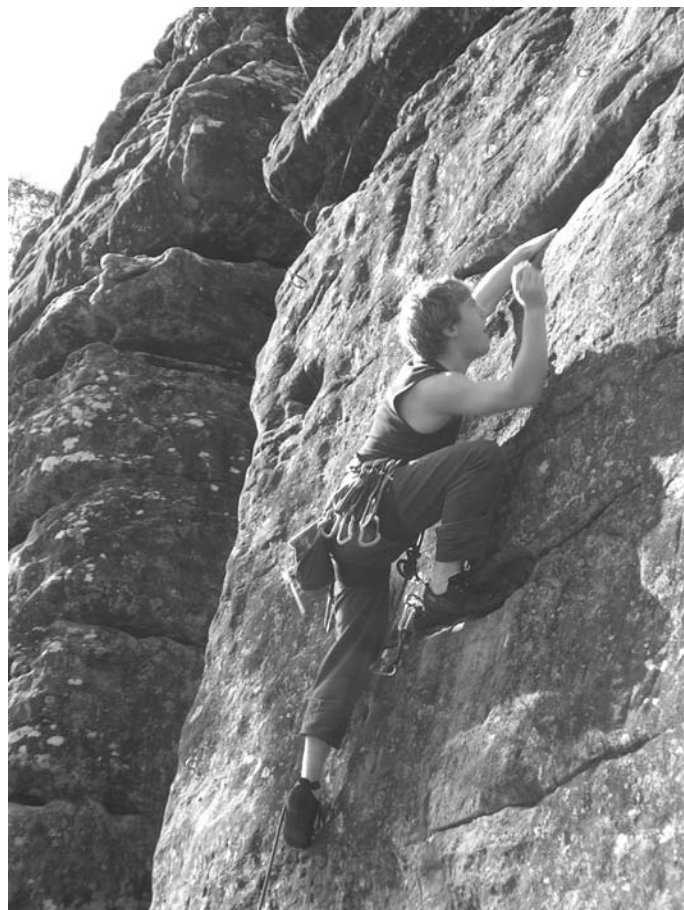
**Above:** Belgian import Stefan on Ministry of Love

**Opposite top:** Stu on the Amazing Boulder, Grampians

**Opposite bottom:** Stu on Cowboy Junkies, Nowra

Photographs by Lincoln Smith

**Below:** Lachlan, Thompson's Point, Nowra



# Ski mountaineering

## Gran Paradiso Haute Route, Italy

Alex Shnaider

### Members:

Marc Démolis (Guide, 'Le Pays d'en Haut', France)

Alex Shnaider (Australia)

G. Robinson (UK)

It was a clear spring morning in Chamonix, France when we began our four-day adventure. Driving 70 kilometres from Chamonix, crossing the Italian border under the Mont-Blanc massif we arrived at Le Pont at Valsavarenche Valley, Grand-Paradis National Park – the starting point of the trip.

### **Day 1: Ascent up to Vittorio-Emanuele II mountain hut**

Quickly unloading and sorting out all our ski and mountaineering gear, we put on the skis and left Le Pont (1960m). The track was quite flat for ten minutes, and then began to ascend gently through pine-tree forest. The higher we went, the more beautiful were the views on Ciarforon and Becca di Monciair summits. After about an hour of skinning up we had to take off the skis for a good portion of the trip, as the track became quite narrow and we were tired of 'skiing' on snow, grass and rocks. Some time later we were greeted by one of the local residents – a beautiful ibex, who was staring at us from around 10m away. Posing for a couple of photos, he got tired of the company of strange creatures walking uphill, carrying skis on their packs. About four hours into the ascent a strange-looking half-barrel human construction appeared: Vittorio-Emanuele II mountain hut, 2732m, our base camp for two nights. In its small 4–6 berth dorm-type rooms, it has the capacity to sleep up to 120 people! On arrival we were served hot tea; for dinner, a generous portion of lasagna, which turned out to be only an entrée, so it was followed by a meat dish and dessert! No-one seemed to be surprised at the level of luxury (considering the circumstances) – pastas, minestrone and beer are all taken for granted here. I guess they haven't experienced the huts in NZ and Aus.

Duration of the stage: 4 hours. Elevation change: 722 metres up, 0 metres down.

**Right:** statue of the Virgin Mary at the summit

**Opposite page**

**Top:** final descent

**Bottom:** Chamonix – homeland of mountaineering  
Photographs by Alex Shnaider

### **Day 2: Ascent of La Tresenta (3609m)**

We left the hut at dawn. The track went up close to a small frozen lake, then through moraines, before reaching Moncorvé glacier. It was a cold morning: -12 degrees, which felt like less than -20 degrees, taking into account the windchill factor. Marc had a few issues with the skins coming off one of his touring skis and in such conditions fixing it was a problem – the glue just did not stick. So he put on his crampons and started carrying the skis about 300 vertical metres from the summit. Soon Graham and myself also took off our skis. We left all the gear and roped up for a final push to the summit. La Tresenta turned out to be more of a challenge than we expected, as we were the first group to ascend after the snowfalls. Marc began the step-cutting: it was a combination of deep snow (well above knee level) and surface rock (too slippery and high for the crampons). I took a lead from Marc on quite a steep last section, about 150 vertical metres below the summit, swapping again just below the potentially avalanche-dangerous cornice below the summit. Exhausted, we reached the summit of Tresenta, facing the vertical rock face of the 'Becca di Moncorvé', and the summit of Gran Paradiso. Enjoying the view of Mount Blanc Massif, we had a couple of energy bars, took photos and started the descent to our gear-hiding place for lunch. Skiing back down to the hut was 'exciting': deep snow, crevasses, potential avalanches, rocks... but look at the bright side: it was easier and quicker than walking out. The return trip took us just over one hour and we were back in the hut just after 4pm.

Night at Vittorio-Emanuele II mountain hut. Duration of the stage: 10 hours. Elevation change: 877 metres up, 877 metres down.







### **Day 3: Ascent of Gran Paradiso (4061m) and descent to Pont (1960m)**

It is the highest day of the tour. Again, we left the hut at dawn, another cold morning. Up through moraines... we reached the Gran Paradiso glacier when the first rays of the sun touched the Mont-Blanc group summits in the distance. Accustomed to the ski-mountaineering uphill pace, we were climbing a little easier than the day before. After a good stop by the Becca di Moncorvé pass (3825m), a short steep slope led us to the summit plateau. A few last zigzags and we left our skis by 4000m, just below a small snowy opening. We roped up, put on the crampons and with the help of the ice axes easily reached the short rocky crossing just below the summit. There were two more three-person groups summiting that day. Letting the German group descend first, we scrambled to the summit using the fixed pro. At the top – a Virgin Mary statue with its supporting structure providing excellent grip at the windy peak. Fantastic views of the Alps across Switzerland, France, Italy and beyond...

Afterwards, a fantastic descent of 2000 metres (mixed skiing and walking) brought us, after a short stop by Vittorio-Emanuele II mountain hut, back to Pont. It was a long 12-hour day and to say that we were happy to find an excellent Italian meal, hot showers and a bottle of wine (my shout due to the first 4000m peak ascent) at comfortable Gran Paradiso inn would be an understatement.

Night at Gran Paradiso inn. Duration of the stage: 12 hours. Elevation change: 1329 metres up, 2101 metres down.

### **Day 4: Off-piste skiing near Chamonix**

We met for breakfast at the comfortable time of 8am and drove back to France to spend a day off-piste skiing at one of the resorts near the Swiss-French border. I was back in Chamonix before sunset to relax and spend another couple of days skiing and window-shopping in numerous outdoor shops.



# *Beautiful Ephemeral*

She trudges up the slope  
in the predawn gloom.  
Her skis are heavy, but  
comfortable, and the pole  
line is silhouetted against  
a clear sky. Apart from her  
breathing, and the rhythmic  
crunching of the snow, there  
is silence.

Without realising she misses  
a turn in the pole line and  
when she looks up she is  
standing on the brink of a  
cornice. A snowball breaks  
off the edge and tumbles  
down, sloughing off puffs of  
power.

Her heart skips a beat.

The snowball continues its  
bouncing trajectory until  
enveloped by the sea of cloud  
lapping over the valley.

Adrenaline pumps through  
her veins as she imagines the  
exhilarating drop, the powder  
snow spraying up as she  
lands, the wind screaming  
through her hair, eyes  
watering, teeth aching,  
jumping through every turn,  
the snow soft as air or icing  
sugar.

The sun rises.

It floods the slope with  
warmth. She feels her fingers  
throb.

An ice needle falls from the  
cornice flashing rainbows.  
As it lands it shatters into a  
thousand shards and splinters,  
which tinkle down the slope.

She imagines missing a turn, a  
terrifying headlong plummet,  
sinews tearing, bones popping  
like twigs, ice cramming itself  
in her eyes, ears, and nose.

She imagines the terrible slog  
back up the mountain. She  
looks back along the pole line  
and sees the frost sparkling  
in the sunshine. She knows  
how hard it can be to find the  
pole line in a blizzard and is  
reluctant. She looks back over  
the precipice and wonders if  
she even knows how to ski. All  
the time, underneath her feet,  
the cornice is slowly melting.

*Jasmine Rickards*





## *Midnight Ascent 2004*



# Easter paddling at Penrith

Jim Anderson

## Part 1 MUMC at the Freestyle Nationals

One common theme of most good paddling trips is that you never really know what you are in for: this was no exception. The group consisted of Pete (determined to star in as many categories as possible), Grant (keen to upstage Pete if only in his dreams), Kat (mostly just going along for the ride) and Jim (whose only motivation was to say that he had done something over Easter and therefore not be jealous of everyone's Easter stories).

**A trip like this requires planning:** Organising Thursday afternoon off work would be a good start due to the long drive. As we didn't have a plan until Wednesday night it was a bit late to ask for time off work for that afternoon (besides why waste time-off credit when it could be more useful on the Tuesday after Easter). Allowing time to get home, pack, have a shower and pick up boats, 6.30pm would be our meeting time for departure.

**Competition requires preparation:** Being familiar with your boat is a good place to start. When the idea of going to the Olympic course was thrown around at the pub on Tuesday, Pete, Grant and myself were all planning on taking the same boat. Pete had ordered a new boat three

months ago but it had not arrived yet so he had planned on using the club RAD. Grant usually paddles the Sub-7 but wanted a change and thought the club RAD would be good. Jim doesn't do freestyle so just wanted to take the boat most familiar, so the club RAD he took to New Zealand was the obvious choice. By Thursday Grant had bought Dave's Big Wheel, great, only two of us fighting over the one boat. Speaking of which, where is Pete? Has anyone seen Pete, Pete, where are you? Pete rang up to say that Anaconda had just informed him that the new boat was in and that he was off to pick it up. An hour later Pete rings up again... 'I've exceeded my credit card limit, help! I really want this boat!'.  
**Competition also requires mental focus and a relaxed state of mind:** A quick check of details and we will be ready to go...

Are we packed ?	Yes
Time please?	9.20pm
Where are we going?	Penrith, Sydney
How far is it?	About 900km
When do we have to be there?	Briefing at 7.30am
How fast does this tractor go?	.....





So it was established that if we only stopped for petrol we should be able to get there on time. Our first stop was at the Driver Reviver near Albury, where we found that the urn had been turned off and drained. It was already past midnight, we needed caffeine and we still had 600km to go. The SES gave us some sweet biscuits instead and sent us on our way to Albury for supplies. Somewhere near Yass we stopped again for fuel, caffeine and carbo-loading. Well, Pete went for the quality service station meat pie only to find his stomach was not used to such quality.

Sunrise, are we there yet? Not quite but we have turned off the Hume Highway so not long now. Arriving with ten minutes to spare we thought about resting and saving our energy for the big event. Instead some of us helped to set up chairs and tables while others thought about why it was that we had come here. Before long Kat had entered the event and Jim had become a chief official overseeing all the scoring for the event. With half an hour before the start of competition it will soon be time to realise the benefits of that competition strategy where all the hard work of disciplined training, preparation and focus will pay off... oops I mean realise that it's never too late to start. Time enough to start training, become familiar with equipment, put all that hard work of driving all night behind us and focus on breakfast. We were primed!

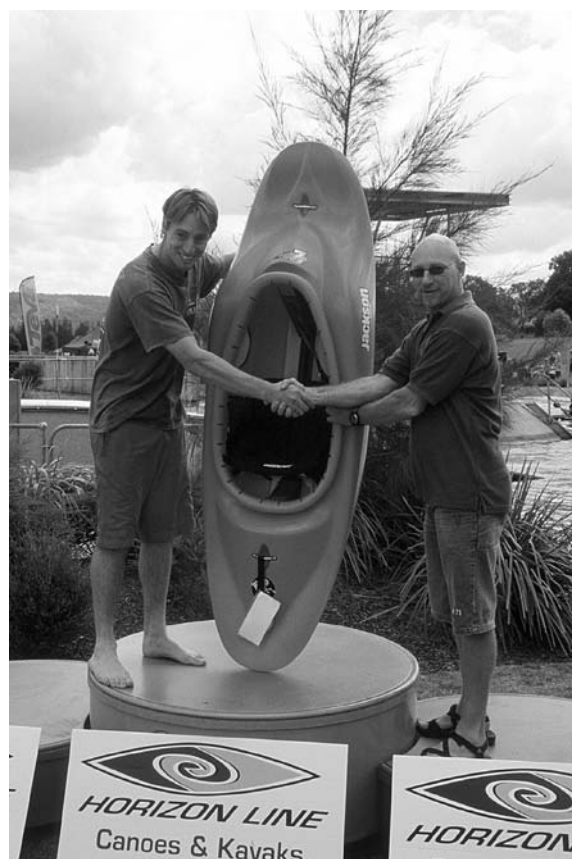
The event went smoothly, we think. Too tired to notice the minor details but Grant worked hard on moves that were not available for points, Pete put in a solid performance to finish 6th or 7th in the Men's K1 Open and Kat starred in the Women's K1 Open to take bronze. Just when we thought it was all over Pete won the spot prize of a new kayak. Pete would dearly like to thanks Horizon Line Canoes for sponsoring the event and because they give us good stuff and all blah blah blah. There was another sponsor of the event but they didn't give us any good stuff despite our best efforts. So here is another story.



**Above:** Pete attempts some air  
**Left:** Kat going for a flat-spin **Right:** Pete getting lucky  
Photographs by Jim Anderson

## Paddlerspeak for bumblies

<b>Penrith</b>	Penrith Whitewater is the artificial kayaking venue built for the Sydney Olympics
<b>RAD</b>	club kayak for playboating
<b>Sub-7</b>	another club playboat
<b>Freestyle</b>	discipline of kayaking that involves performing tricks (also called playboating)
<b>Anaconda</b>	big gear store in Bayswater where we go window shopping
<b>Deep Fryer</b>	a shallow rapid/feature at Penrith good for playboating and headbutting the bottom
<b>Mainwave</b>	largest rapid/feature at Penrith
<b>Phat plastic</b>	what good kayaks are made from
<b>Big wheel</b>	Grant's new playboat
<b>K1</b>	K for kayak, 1 for 1 person (C means canoe)
<b>Hole</b>	re-circulating water that will hold a kayak
<b>Sticky Hole</b>	a feature to avoid or practise holding your breath
<b>Boofing</b>	a technique for launching a kayak over a hole thus avoiding it
<b>Feature</b>	something on the river eg. wave, hole, pillow, waterfall etc
<b>Worked</b>	what happens when you get stuck in a hole and fun to watch
<b>Beating</b>	a severe working and even more fun to watch





## Part 2 Rafting for Social Justice

On completion of the Awards Ceremony for the Freestyle nationals, it was announced that entries to the 'un-named sponsor X' Easter Raft Challenge were still open. All we needed was a team of six to be in it to win it. So we hunted around and found Fraser (an ex-Victorian kayaker and part-time Penrith raft guide) willing to join in and Anita (some random paddler who took silver ahead of Kat) and we had a team. As most of us were from south of the River we called our team the 'Rampaging Mexicans'.

**Saturday: raft heats.** The heats consisted of all teams in each class: take off in a LeMans start, paddle down the course, paddle out into the lake around a buoy, flip the raft, flip it upright, climb back in, paddle back to the whitewater course, portage the raft to the top and finally paddle down the course to the finish. The top three rafts qualify for the finals on Sunday. Having mastered our raft flipping on the flat water the race was to be my first taste of rafting whitewater. We started on the grid at position 2 and held that placing with ease for the heats. However, that meant that we had to show up again for the semi-final on Sunday. We had planned to spend Sunday and Monday canyoning in the Blue Mountains but Fraser pointed out that we were playing for stakes. Each member of a winning team would win new quality river footwear (from the un-named sponsor 'X'). While Fraser desperately wanted new rafting shoes, the rest of us slowly warmed to the idea of

new footwear. My rafting shoes were starting to die after the heats and Pete's were not looking so flash anymore.

**Sunday morning: semi-final time.** The top two rafts go through to the final-final. As only two teams showed up we were guaranteed a spot in the final. The structure had now changed to one rapid sprint down the whitewater course with a choice of two upstream slalom gates thrown in. Starting again from position 2, we were no match for the opposition (who were all local raft guides) so we took our time to familiarise ourselves with the new course, run all the optional gates and have a surf on Jacks until the officials told us off for wasting time. Oh well, so much for driving to the Blueys for lunch, we now had to show up for the final that afternoon where the stakes had been raised again. During the semi-final my shoes had major blowouts, both of them were capital 'F' cactus, Pete tore the strapping of his booties, Kat lost one of hers and Grant got his caught in the car door. Not to mention Fraser feeling inadequate that he was the only Penrith raft guide without brand 'X' aqua-grippers and only a part-time guide at that!

**Sunday afternoon: a big crowd had gathered for the raft finals.** The course had been changed again as the gates were deemed to have been too easy for the semi-final. The first gate was on river left and looked straightforward, thus the one to aim for. The second gate on river right was in a micro-eddy about  $\frac{2}{3}$  the width of a raft and probably required the skill of a boatload of raft guides to catch. We lined up at the start early to practise our starts and



to intimidate the opposition. We then took up position at number 1 and convinced the other team that they had been demoted down the grid as they were late to line up. This was now the strategy we had resorted to to win those river shoes. At the start we took off neck-and-neck. They had a slight speed advantage but the pumps kicked in from the left and pushed us slightly ahead but locked together side-by-side. The jet from the pumps spun the interlocked rafts sideways, putting us ahead as we went down the first drop. But hitting the first wave sideways slowed us up and the other raft pushed us into a bollard putting us back side-by-side where we stayed for several rapids. Over mainwave, we were just where we wanted to be as the easy gate was on our side. However, rafts don't turn well and as the rafts were side-by-side we could not angle our way into the eddy below mainwave for the gate so we had to work hard to eddy out cleanly. I was back left and had the task of drawing hard to pull the raft across the eddy-line, at which point I lost my footing and drew myself out of the raft. I jumped back in so fast that we all made it through the gate, thus no time penalties were imposed and only Fraser on the raft noticed my absence. Meanwhile the other raft decided to try their luck at gate 2 knowing that they could not beat

us by doing gate 1. Like I said you needed to be a boat of raft guides to make gate 2. Unfortunately they were a boat of raft guides and they made us pay for our slow gate. So we say 'F you' to sponsor 'X' for discriminating against poor Mexicans. If we had good footwear we would have been more competitive. Instead they rewarded those with the advantage of good shoes with more good shoes that they don't even need. So much for a level playing field. The rich just get richer and the Mexicans just get wetter. At least us four can drive back across the river and put it all behind us. Fraser, on the other hand, shares a house with a raft guide who was on the winning men's team, suffer in ya wet clogs dude.

**Monday: are we still going canyoning?** Nahhh, blow this, let's go paddling instead and show those wankers in blow-up boats that phat plastic is where it's at. No holding back today, it's time to put it on the line and pull some new moves, scrape our heads on the bottom and call in sick for Tuesday. Then drive all day and plan our arrival back in Melbourne to coincide with pub-time at the Clyde for story time. 🏊



**Above:** carving it up on Deep Fryer  
**Left:** the rafts fight it out in the final

# A thumb up for Japanese snow

Dave Kneen

There are plenty of very good reasons to visit Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island – 12m annual snowfall sold me. My mate Andy (ex-Monash) and I spent two weeks in Japan in early March, skiing in Niseko for ten days then flying to Honshu, visiting friends and doing the tourist thing in Tokyo. Forgive me for indulging in a few stories and photos to whet your appetite!

Awoke on day one to 20cm fresh snow and bluebird skies. Should have savoured the moment – for the next five days it dumped nigh on continuously with snowfall measured in centimetres per hour. Brilliant! Temperatures hovering around -10°C ensured deep dry powder dawn 'til dusk and beyond – night skiing under green and yellow floodlights across the whole Christmas tree of a mountain, even off the piste. 'Nuclear power', one Aussie mused jealously. When the piste is knee-deep the tree runs are superb, the summit cone bottomless, face-shots and back-seat skiing aplenty. Then the requisite stretch-out, chilled beer and onsen – outdoor volcanic springs built up to understated but sublime public bath-houses. Restaurants and bars litter the mountain and town below – plentiful food and cheap, the freshest seafood, miso and noodles, rice and curries, imitation or interpretation western dishes too, I'm not sure which! Bars are small but lively, witness to the wholehearted clash of cultures as the Japanese and Aussies converse in a universal language, a ha'penny mix of businessmen, oil-riggers, physios, pearl-divers, old-school and new.

The days blurred by and the skies came back, piste cruising and exploring, views of the sea from a stone summit cross, snow falling gently on surfers in the water. Half-pipe and jumps to mix things up, confidence growing in the great conditions. Unfortunately it all came down late one afternoon with a crunch – gloves off to reveal my thumb



**Above:** Dave and Andy

**Opposite:** Skiing Miharashi

Aaaah; doh!; tee hee

**Below left:** Andy looking happy

**Below right:** volcano in sun

Photographs by Dave Kneen







gone a' wandering, nausea mixing with anger. Too soon it's hospital smells and x-rays, this one's going to need a plate – not again...

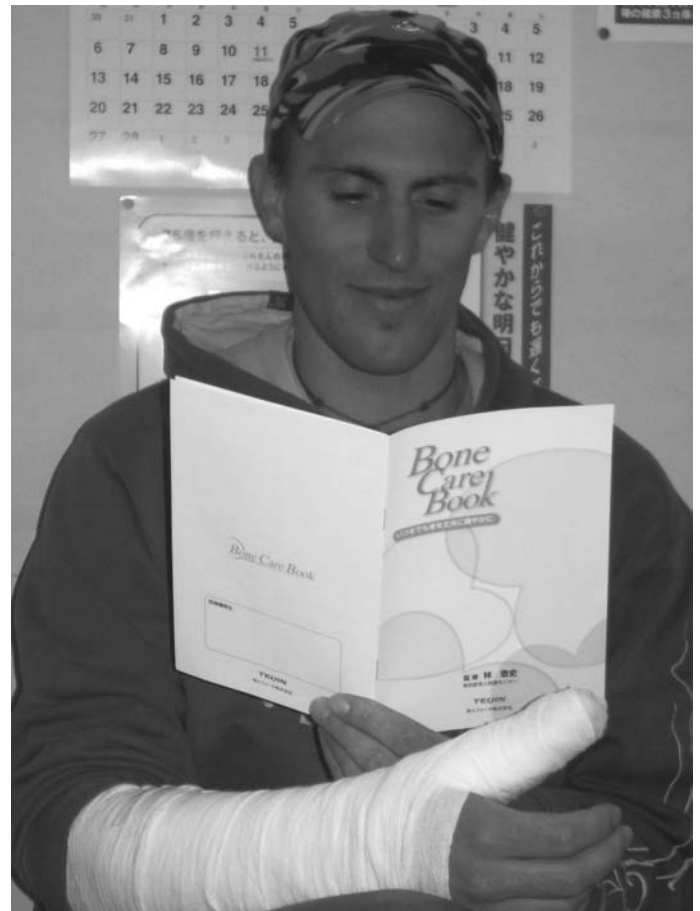
Tokyo! One oversized, infested, clockwork city with little visible planning but superb choreography. It manages to feel impersonal yet cosy all at once – the anonymity of 15 million souls, in subways, on street corners, bars and cafes; rubbing shoulders, feeling the pulse. Tiny alcoves transformed into bars fit for a dozen only, anonymous restaurants buried amongst the towers, four-level nightclubs drowning under elevated freeways and vegetable patches nestled by apartment blocks. What a city!

Back in Melbourne with a titanium thumb I'm in danger of becoming the archetypal ski snob – 'if the powder's not knee-deep I'm not leaving the tent!' But then I look at the maps and the photos on my wall, remember Victoria has some of the greatest backcountry telemarking in the world and reach for the waxing iron... hope to see you out there soon! 🏔️

**Right:** in hospital

**Below:** Dave on the ski fields

**Opposite:** Lincoln locking off slopers on the love boulder





# Car maintenance at MUMC

**Stu Holloway**

Shortly before midnight on the rain-soaked Hume just south of Euroa I hit debris on the road at nearly 100km/h. Barely keeping the big car under control, I made it to the side of the road along with two other cars. We cleared some debris, apparently from a truck, off the road. One of the other cars had blown both tyres on the right hand side but we were able to get going after replacing a blown tyre. It turned out that we also had serious damage to the undercarriage including a shattered exhaust and something that needed us to do push starts the rest of the way home. The repairs cost \$1000 but when I offered Alan money to help he waved it off, declaring that his 'car maintenance account had enough to cover it.'

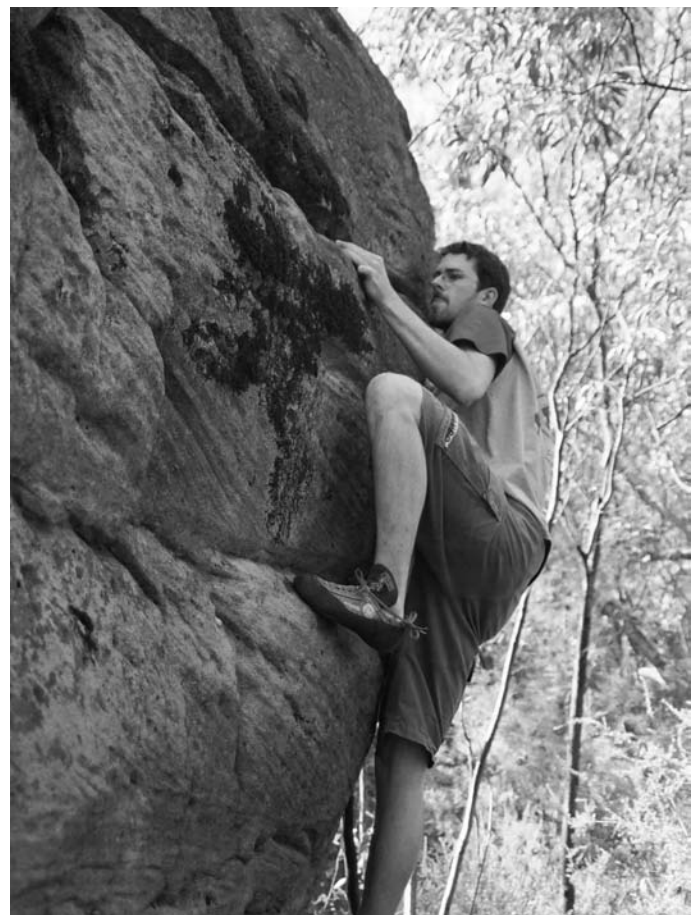
This minor accident is unusual in that it was expensive, and normal people aren't as organised as Alan Daley, but it illustrates three significant points about club trips. Firstly, driving is dangerous, especially as we tend to do long drives, often at night, frequently after sustained periods of exercise, sometimes in adverse road conditions and a lot of our members are young with limited driving experience. Secondly, the long distances involved in adventure sports in Melbourne, in contrast to Sydney, where you can do a lot off the train, make the availability of reliable cars essential to our activities every weekend. Finally, cars are expensive.

Even if you don't rip the bottom out, the actual cost of cars going on trips is a lot more than just petrol. Aside from the capital costs of buying a car, and the excess in the definitely-to-be-avoided event of a collision, the recurrent costs of registration, insurance and maintenance need to be added to petrol to understand the expenses borne by drivers supplying their cars for our trips. Some members are occasionally able to borrow parents' cars and may not be responsible for these expenses, but the majority of our trips are able to occur because a number of active members provide their cars week after week. It is in recognition of these costs that the club has long recommended a rate of car maintenance be charged, although the committee felt that recently there has been little discussion of how or why this is done, and consequently commissioned this article.

The RACV calculates that the average weekly cost of maintaining even a small car in Victoria is at least \$135. Their recommended private vehicle reimbursement costs, 'indicative of the cost to private motorists to own and operate a car for business use,' which include fuel costs, are 47.38 cents/km for small cars, 59.05 cents/km for medium cars and 62.19 cents/km for large cars. The Australian Taxation Office rates for claims based on the

cents/km method are 51, 61 and 62 respectively and the ATO regards small cars as those with an engine capacity of 1.6ltr or less and large cars as those of 2.6ltr or more.

The costs are varied and, to a degree, uncertain but, in recognition of the importance of drivers supplying cars, MUMC has and will continue to recommend that drivers calculate car costs as fuel for the trip plus a cents/km rate for maintenance and a fixed fee based on the duration of the trip. Drivers should keep track of the fuel expenses for the trip and the distance travelled. The committee is recommending maintenance be charged at a rate of 8 cents/km in general and 13 cents/km for driving on dirt roads or above ARC gates to recognise the additional demands placed on cars in these environments. The suggested 'fixed' fees to recognise insurance and registration costs are \$5/day, \$10/weekend or long weekend and \$20/week. The sum of fuel, the fixed fee and maintenance costs should be shared by the driver and passengers or, at the trip leader's discretion, pooled by all participants on a trip. In the event of a 'parent's car' on a trip it is encouraged that the owners should be offered the maintenance money, which they might choose to donate to one of the club's conservation projects.



# The itchy and scratchy walk

Fiona Russell

The Northern Prom for me had been the sort of place that had beckoned from maps with intrigue and romanticism for years. I imagined beautiful coves, given names like Tin Mine and Johnny Souey, long stretches of beach and swamp. Then this year, after a lifetime of driving down to Tidal River, I slung on my pack and headed down the Five Mile track to hike the lesser known of the two Prom circuits.

It was Easter, and just far enough into the year to desperately need a break away from Melbourne. Thumping hip deep through kangaroo grass, Melbourne seemed as far away as the other side of the world. It was our second morning, and after a mosquito-infested night at a secluded spot by Lower Barry Creek and a mysterious visit from the Easter Bunny, we bashed our way through thick Banksia and undergrowth out to the swamp. Five packs meandered across the swamp, ever marching on to the distant mountain. The distant mountain seemed to stay as distant as it had been early in the day and given that our campsite was on the other side, it seemed that a long day was inevitable. Yet gradually, each of us



settled into our own paces, our own thoughts and navigational ploys.

We were relatively isolated in the north. In four days, we saw just three other groups of people, and we knew all but one. We met Pete and Amanda for lunch in the swamp, and stumbled across a group of ex-MUMC oldies with sea kayaks at Tin Mine Cove, reminding us of the advantages of large cargo holds compared to packs when they pulled out tins of fruit for breakfast, which they generously shared as the moon set over the sea.

The walk is a mix of long beach walks with giant seastars and miniature crabs, cross-country semi-scrub bashing through banksias and across headlands, and a road walk across a patchwork of eucalypts, rainforest and open woodland. I developed a new respect for gaiters, those bits of material that I too often spurn at the bottom of my pack. The unpleasant prickly scrub had reclaimed the tracks to the extent that the old four-wheel drive track from Chinaman's Beach to Three Mile Beach had become two parallel foot tracks, separated by baby banksias with sharp serrated leaves.

And so, the secrets of the Northern Prom were revealed to me. It will still beckon from maps, but I now have images of my own – of sunrise reflecting as brightly off the sand as the sunshine through the clouds, of burntout banksias and endless coastline – to match the beautiful names.



**Above:**  
Fiona, Laura  
and Marina  
overlooking  
Five Mile Beach  
– Laura Kneen  
**Right:** seastar  
at Johnny  
Souey Cove  
– Fiona Russell  
**Opposite:**  
Kellie's kids  
getting into  
'kayking'  
**Back cover:**  
Bushfires at  
Mt Buffalo  
– Jim Anderson









