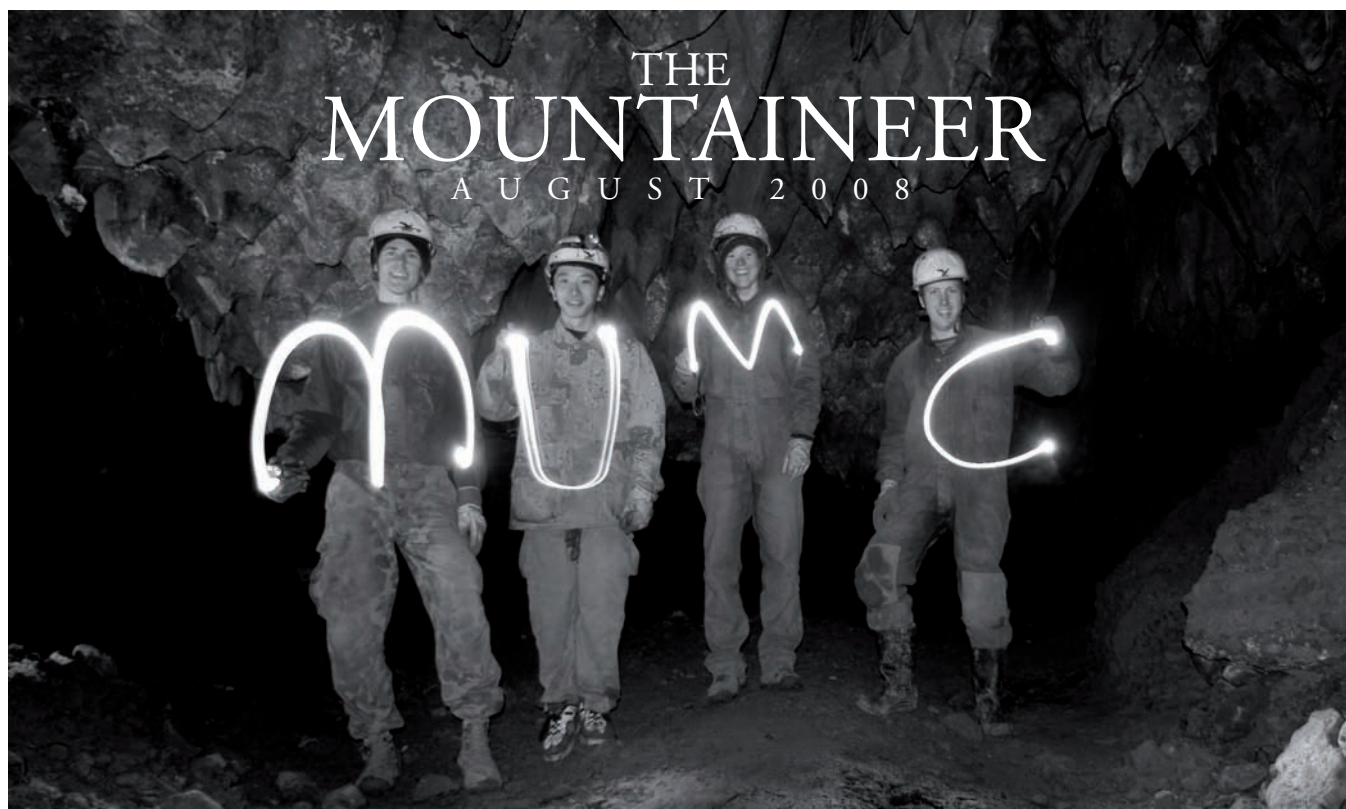




THE
MOUNTAINEER
AUGUST 2008



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COVER

Looking towards Whale Rock. Tidal River. 4x5 Fuji Provia 100F, Schneider 90mm.

This photograph by Tim Shawcross is part of the Wilson's Promontory Photo Essay appearing in this issue.

ABOVE

Deep in the Eagles Nest cave at Yarrangobilly, Lincoln Smith, Steve Chan, Greta Raymant, and Shannon Crack spell out the clubs initials. The formation behind them is the dragon's teeth. Look for a feature article on this trip in a future *Mountaineer*.



MATTHEW ADAMS
Acting President

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

LET ME JUST start by saying that this is in part a tribute to the current president from whom I took over the reins four or so months ago. Without Jen's drive and leadership during the start of her term I believe we would not have such an exuberant and active club.

The club is currently going strong with glorious dumps of snow on the mountains and water in the rivers. It is great to continually see so many new and old faces within the club supporting the fine tradition and ongoing culture or addiction to the extreme and sedate sports fringe. The clubs passionate convenors have been working hard over the last six months to keep each of the sports stocked with a healthy balance of both introductory and advanced trips and the numbers at every Tuesday nights regular meetings are a good indicator of member participation across the board.

If you have not seen our wonderful club site then rush to it as it is a fantastic source of information on more than just the upcoming club trips. I encourage you to explore the forums and soon the photo galleries which allow all club members to post their recent trip pictures for the edification and amusement of all. We also have a wealth of knowledge relevant to each of the clubs sports which might be a good start when preparing for the next club trip. The next time you see our spiky haired webmaster Steve, give him your feedback or a hug for this amazing piece of online trickery.

One part of the club which is running very hot currently is our gear store. If you have borrowed gear from the club in the past you might realise that there have been a great many changes to this much loved (and abused) club asset. The work of the climbing, caving, skiing, kayaking and especially the general gear store committee members have brought a new level of efficiency and transparency to the maintenance, hiring, and returning of gear. In general the club is generous and very open with gear and this has worked in our many members favour but in return for this service we ask that all our members continue to be vigilant and take care of this club resource so that the many present and future members of the club can continue to enjoy our wonderful gear.

In closing, the club has had a wonderful summer, autumn, and now winter but there is yet more to come. If getting high and partying is your thing then you can't go past the midnight ascent which pushes your partying tendencies to the extremes of cold, and altitude for hilarious fun. While on your trips don't forget to take some photos if the opportunity presents as the club pie and slide night will be a good chance to show these pickies off and possibly win some prizes. Finally, it is a while off but this years bush-dancing Christmas party will be going off like never before (possibly because this is the first time we have combined the two events) and should be a hoot. I look forward to seeing you all soon and catching up your amazing adventures.

CONTACTING THE EDITOR

For questions about this publication or the contents thereof:
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Publications Officer
publications@mumc.org.au

MUMC ONLINE

Full colour PDF versions of this and past *Mountaineers*, as well as information about the club and how to join can be found on the website:
www.mumc.org.au

MEETINGS AND GENERAL ENQUIRIES

For specific questions about the Club, contact the club secretary:
secretary@mumc.org.au

Regular meetings are held at the MUMC club rooms each Tuesday at 7:00 pm.

MAILING ADDRESS

MUMC
c/o MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SPORT
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
PARKVILLE VIC 3010

FROM OUR CLUB CONVENORS

Kayaking

Andrew Nurse

kayaking@mumc.org.au

THE MUMC 2007/08 paddling season experienced the wrath of the Australian draught, and a substantial lack of rainfall. Some beginner trips were run to the Goulburn river and later to the upper Yarra, where the challenge was to pick the line of least resistance through the rocks.

In MUMC tradition, we headed to the pool to teach our newest crew of paddlers the basic skills for whitewater paddling. It was very encouraging to witness a new crew of kayakers keen to learn the craft, and within the space of a few weeks were rolling with confidence. With winter now upon us and spring around the corner, we wait with bated breath for our favourite rivers to begin flowing.

Mountaineering

Dale Thistlethwaite

mountaineering@mumc.org.au



ANOTHER SUMMER MOUNTAINEERING season will kick off in just a few months time. Several MUMC members are starting to put in place tentative plans for their trips to New Zealand in Nov–Feb so if you are new to mountaineering and interested in getting involved, now is the time for action. Come along to the clubrooms and have a chat, then get in as much ski-touring, bushwalking and rock climbing as you can to brush-up your snow, navigation and rope/anchor skills.

I will be running the annual MUMC mountaineering information session shortly (watch the website for details) and all aspiring mountaineers/innocent bystanders are most welcome to attend.

Bushwalking

Samuel Flewett

bushwalking@mumc.org.au

BUSHWALKING GOT OFF to a rip roaring start this year, with trips running most weekends up until the exam period. Since the last Mountaineer, there have been trips to more than ten destinations all over Victoria as well as day trips near Melbourne. Bigger trips include the five passes trip near Mt Aspiring National Park in NZ, and the South Coast Track in Tasmania.

At the moment while there is snow on the ground, most bushwalkers including myself are still going walking albeit with skis strapped to our feet. If you don't like the idea of being out in the cold, there are still trips going out to the lower altitude parts of Victoria, and once the snow has melted, bushwalking will be back in full force. A couple trips are planned to the Mt Bogong area—the highest point in Victoria. As summer approaches, I will be holding an information session about organising and running summer trips to nice cool places such as Tasmania and NZ.

Rock Climbing

Alice Leppitt

climbing@mumc.org.au

SO IT IS winter, rainy, windy and not very conducive for climbing. After a successful warmer season with beginner trips, independent trips and teaching some people to lead, climbing trips have slowed. Whilst the extra-keen are still heading out to find some rock, other climbers are trying out skiing and paddling. However, climbing will continue! In semester two, hopefully we will have a combined beginner trip with bushwalking, more people learning to lead, and we are all looking forward to the annual week-long trip to the Blue Mountains in the September break. So as the weather heats up, so will the climbing!

Bush Search and Rescue

Alison Thomson

bsar@mumc.org.au

BUSH SEARCH AND Rescue (BSAR) is a voluntary organisation comprised of experienced bushwalkers and ski tourers who assist Police on searches in remote areas, such as the recent large scale search at Dom Dom. Many of MUMC's most experienced members and ex-members are also involved with BSAR.

Anyone who would like to be involved in BSAR is encouraged to attend the upcoming training session in September (full details online). This weekend will include navigation practice and specific BSAR training e.g. search techniques, using a GPS, and radio procedures. Attendance at a training weekend is one of the requirements for being included on the BSAR search callout list.

For more information about BSAR (including eligibility criteria), visit www.bsar.org, talk to me on a Tuesday night at the clubrooms, or email bsar@mumc.org.au.

Skiing

Pete Crockett
skiing@mumc.org.au

MUMCERS HAVE PROVED once again that if there is snow on the ground they will find it and ski it. In just one month, mumc trips have visited Falls Creek and the Bogong High Plains, Mt Stirling, Lake Mountain, Mt Baw Baw and Mt Feathertop. A Telemark Clinic run by resident instructor Lincoln Smith meant several 'proto' telemarkers were able to refine their style and start lining up their back ski somewhere near their front.

At the time of writing it is just the beginning of the ski season, and by the end of August the list of mountains skied should grow. Plans are afoot for August and beyond with journeys to the Fainters, the Main Range, Mt Bogong and many more in the offing.

For those people who were 'beginners' back in early July, it is great to see you gaining confidence and venturing further afield. Hopefully by the end of the season some new trip leaders will have lead their first ski trip - do not be afraid to do so. Several trip leaders so far have helped ensure everybody who wants to ski has the opportunity - many thanks to them. Lets hope more snowfalls are thrust our way from the Antarctic snow machine. Take care in the snow and spend as much time as you can there while it lasts!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVERY YEAR, MUMC plans a bushwalking trip lit by the full moon, which kicks off a full weekend of winter backcountry fun: Midnight Ascent. Driving from Melbourne, club members arrive at the base of the North West Spur of Mt. Feathertop just as the moon is high over head. A few hours later, tired walkers layout their sleeping bags in the dry comfort of the Club's own backcountry hut.

Waking to a snowy wonderland, there are many opportunities for fun. Cross country skiing, enjoying the expansive views from Mt. Feathertop, snowball fights, or just a quiet afternoon in the Club hut await those who have braved the night. A grand feast is the order of the evening, with elaborate costumes or formal dress the typical attire.

Spaces will fill fast, so please make sure you're on the list by emailing or speaking with the organiser, Dan Hearnden.

Midnight Ascent Friday, 15th August, 2008

Dan Hearnden
gear-store@mumc.org.au

THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL General Meeting will be held in the Cricket Pavillion next to the Clubrooms. The meeting will begin promptly at **7 pm on Wednesday, August 27th**. Light dinner will be available. This meeting is very important for the club, and **all members are strongly encouraged to attend.**

A special resolution is before the club. Any business other than Ordinary Business to be included on the Agenda must be given in writing to the Secretary via post to the address on page 1, or email (secretary@mumc.org.au) no later than seven days prior to the meeting.

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting are on page 30.

Annual General Meeting Wednesday, 27 August 2008

president@mumc.org.au

NOTICE OF SPECIAL Resolution to alter the Constitution:

A vote will be held at the Annual General Meeting on changing the Financial Year End from 30 April to 30 June. The intention is to simplify our financial reporting and budgeting by aligning our reports with university semesters. A 75% majority of members voting at the meeting is required for the motion to be passed.

Notice of Special Resolution Dave Ellis

treasurer@mumc.org.au

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS for all voting positions on the Incorporation's Committee of Management: Nominations are to be submitted in writing, and must be signed by the Proposer, Seconder, and the Nominee. Nominations must be passed in the Nominations Box in the Clubrooms, or handed to the Returning Officer. Nominations must be submitted by 8:00 pm Tuesday, August 26th.

Committee Nominations Returning Officer

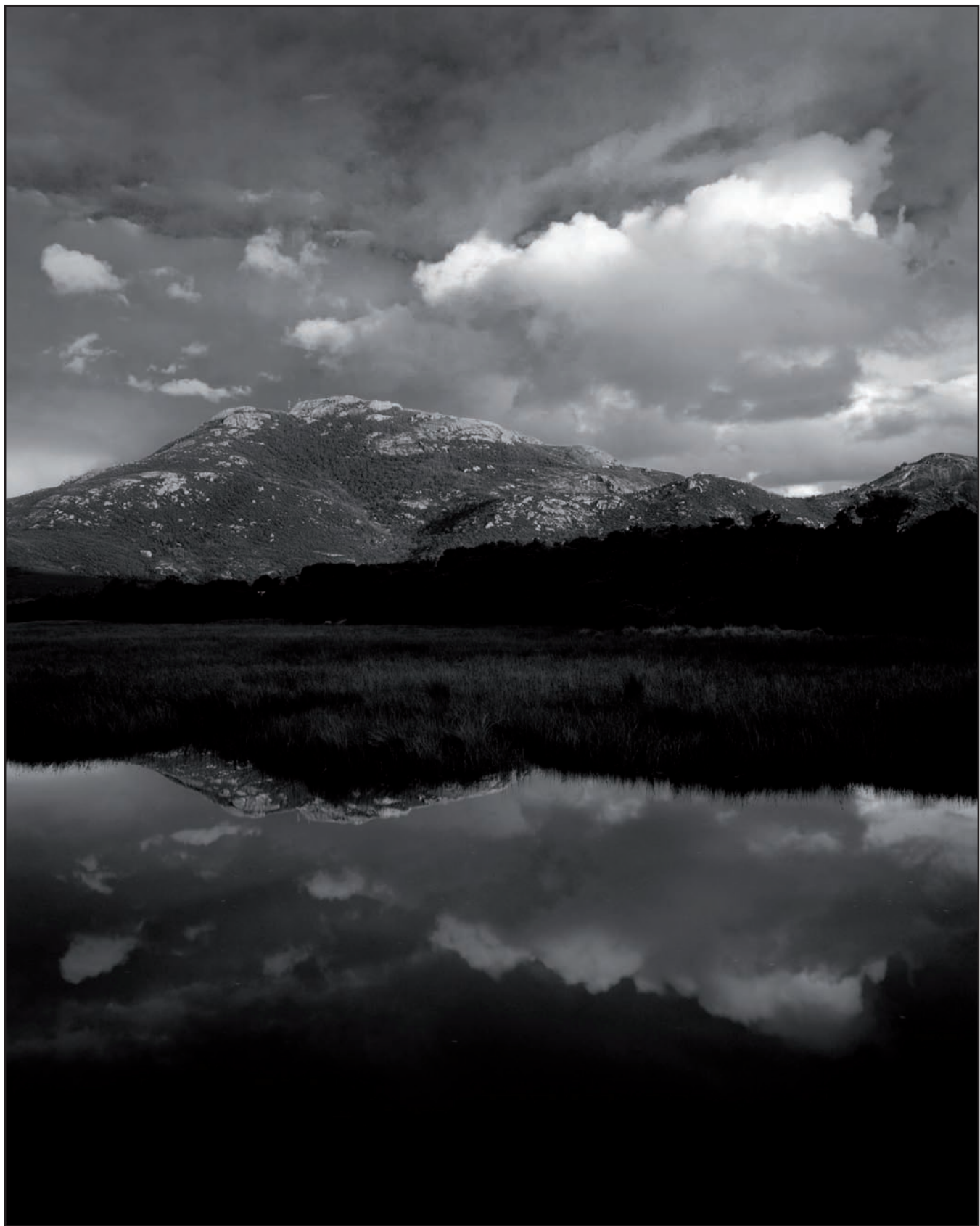




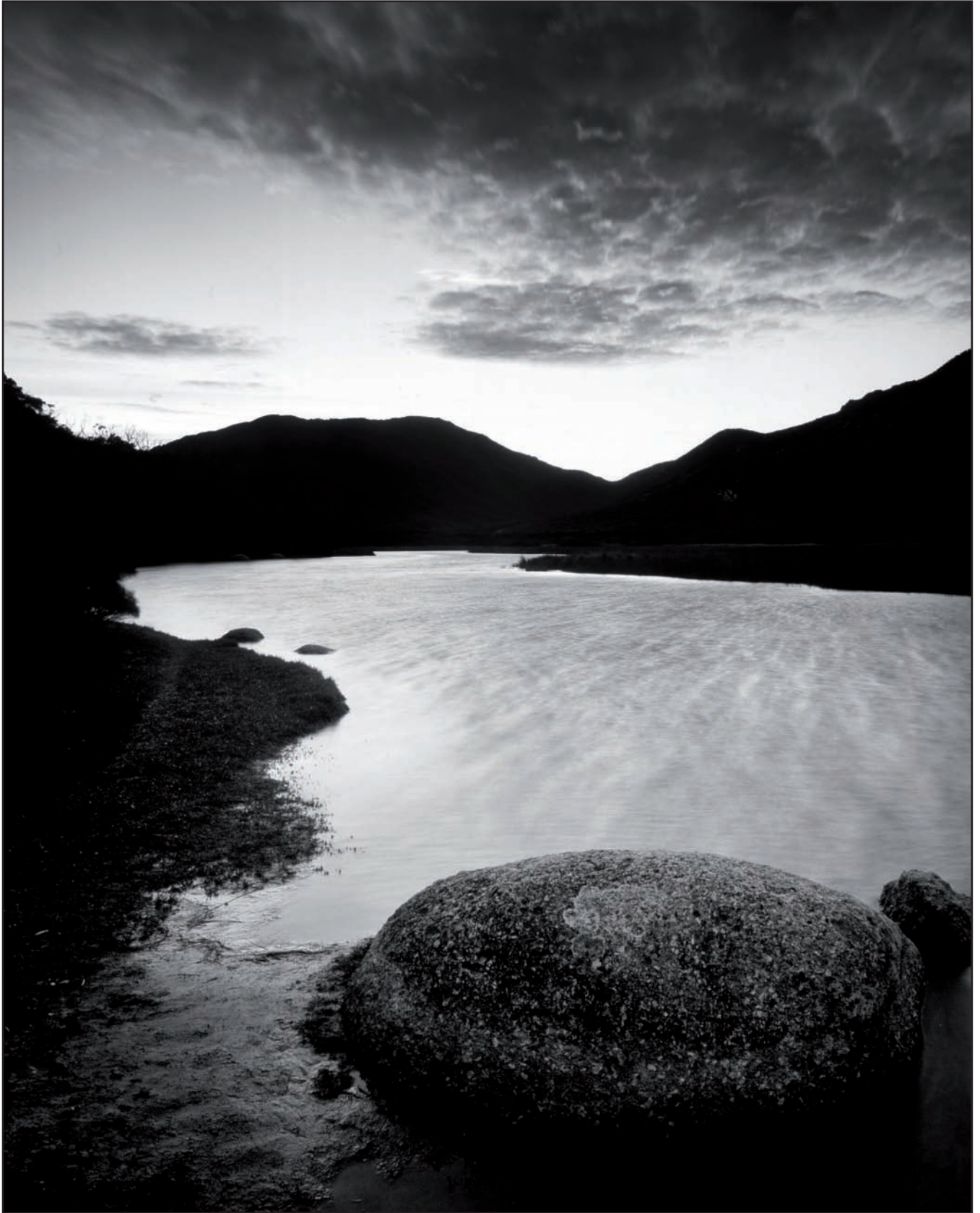
WILSON'S PROMONTORY MARCH 29-30TH, 2008

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM SHAWCROSS

Clearing Storm. Tidal River - 4x5 Fuji Provia 100F, Fujinon 135mm



Evening Reflections. Tidal River - 4x5 Fuji Provia 100F, Schneider 90mm



Dawn. Tidal River - 4x5 Fuji Provia 100F, Schneider 90mm



Refuge Cove - Digital Capture



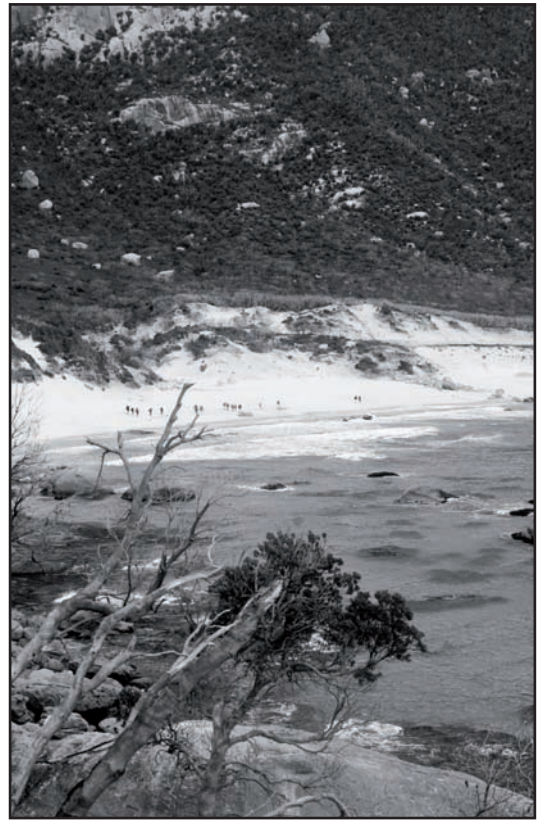
Little Oberon Bay - Digital Capture



First Light, Little Waterloo Bay - 4x5 Fuji Provia 100F, Fujinon 135mm



Hiking along Refuge Cove - Digital Capture



Approaching Little Oberon Bay- Digital Capture



Pre Dawn, Little Waterloo Bay - 4x5 Fuji Provia 100F, Fujinon 135mm

THE WEEKEND WAS perhaps not meant to happen. Dom and Dave hit a kangaroo on the way up late Friday night. Both the roo and the car needed burials. Not a pleasant experience for all concerned.

Pauly, Sam, Michelle and Simon drove up Saturday morning to pick up the poor beggars and try to for-

seconds from the cliff, and you are often alone (though the pit toilet seems to always be full so bring a shovel!). The rock has loads of vertical cracks which chew up various body parts and spit them out—gnarled, dented and aching. It hurts, but it's the only way up.

Most of the climbs there are legal terms (G.B.H., The Jury Box, etc). Subpoena (to be summoned) looked like a good first grade 17

THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF PURSUING PAIN IN THE NAME OF PLEASURE

get about the experience by doing something that truly focuses the mind—climbing rock.

Black Ian's Rocks are between the Gariwerd/Grampians and Djurite/Mt Arapiles (sort of). It's a great place to hang out once you've done a bit of mileage at Arapiles—the rock is good, the camping is 30

(medium-hard) for me to lead... from the guidebook description at least. Seeing it up close and personal, however, made me want to go and get the shovel. A clean, vertical crack about a fist wide, tucked into a corner with seemingly not much else to hold on to. Gathering all the cams I could muster, I

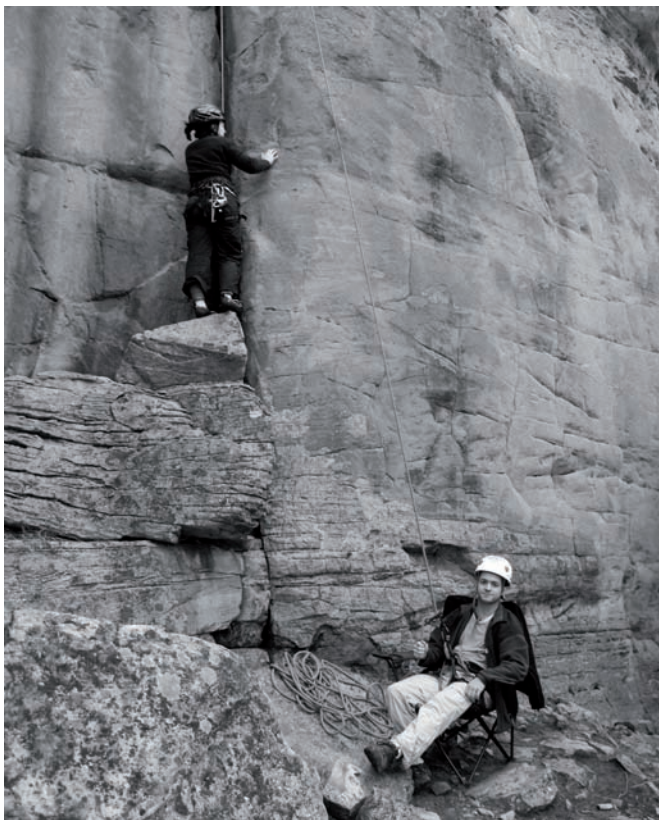
Sam Ogborn disappearing down the hole on Chancery Lane, grade 18.





Sam Ogborn looks down upon Subpoena (grade 19) which he has just completed.

Stepping carefully left, Paul Glennie, loaded with gear, has his fists jammed deep in Subpoena's crack.



muttered “bring it, mo fo” to myself a couple of times, and grunted/whimpered my way up. It helped greatly to have Dave continually telling me how ‘hot’ I looked. It’s interesting how people interact with their climbing partners—just how much encouragement is asked for, given, or ‘required’.

The strength of mind (much more so than body) required for climbing really appeals to me. Sometimes you feel great, but

sometimes you feel terrible out there. And then things just ain’t fun. But something just keeps pushing you to ‘get it back’, because you know when things are going well, you feel on top of the world, and that’s worth trying for. The interesting thing is figuring out how to control the mind, and what works best for you. Yep, to be a strong climber, you need a strong mind...cryptic crossword here I come.

Sam Ogborn is quite relaxed while belaying Michelle Bassett on Chancery Lane, grade 18.

FIRST SNOW, LAST LIGHT



BY DANIEL HEARNDEN

IT'S 5:30 AM Saturday morning and I gingerly crawl out of bed and into a strong cup of coffee. OK, slightly awake now; awake enough to realise I have a house guest. I mumble a "good morning" to Su Li and pass her a coffee. We bundle our gear together, hop in the car and pick up the rest of the crew from the city. Can't fail to notice the unrelenting rain outside as we head out of the city.

After driving half way across the state, we reach Bright. Indecision hits as we

contemplate driving up to the Razorback or starting lower down at Bungalow spur. My head says no, the weather is too bad for the razorback, but somehow I make the call to give it a go. My first bad decision of the weekend. The second bad decision comes only minutes later, as I ignore the 'chains required' sign at the foot of the Mt Hotham road. In my mind I am still picturing a light dusting of snow like I had this time the year before. 'Lemon' count so far: two (scarcity, familiarity). We make it as far as the tree line before I have to stop deluding myself. The snow is too heavy and it is getting dangerous to

continue. After a hairy three point turn on a snow covered road with no chains, we head back down the mountain with our tails between our legs, kicking myself mentally for making such a bad call.

At 1 pm we are finally ready to start walking up Bungalow spur. A late start, but still achievable. I contemplate the 1200 meter ascent ahead of us as I strap four two meter long planks of wood to my back (part of the new door I plan to eventually build for the club hut). Sui Li takes two more planks and the last one is shared between the rest of the group as we walk. The weather turns out to be perfect for walking at a fast pace. Before we know it we've seen our first snow, probably at no more than 1100 meters elevation. By the time we reach Federation Hut, we are walking in a good 20 centimeter coverage... After a break, we hit almost 5 pm and I start to worry about our remaining daylight. The last leg of our trip around to the MUMC Hut is still another 3 kilometers. People are tired, but in good spirits. The novelty of walking in fresh powder snow keeps people distracted from wanting to hurt me.

With the temperature dropping and the light beginning to fade, we head off past the old 'cross-roads' snow gum and

take the traversing track around to the North-West Spur. The snow is settled in for the night; there is little wind and the visibility drops. Each step is now in fresh untracked snow. With everyone else following behind, gazing ahead into the weather becomes surreal. I imagine what this would be like if I didn't know the area; if I didn't know I had a safe refuge waiting for me... About half way across my thoughts turn back to the here and now as both my legs begin to cramp from fatigue and extra weight of the wood strapped to my back. A few seconds of panic hit me as I worry about being able to make it to the hut. Breath, relax, wait for the others to catch up... Okay, good to go. I look back and count the head torches of those behind; 8 brave souls, everyone accounted for. We push onwards through the gloom and snow, onto the NW spur and finally reach the hut with the light completely gone.

Finally at our refuge, we scrape off the snow from our clothes and get the feeling back into our cold fingers. Utterly exhausted I remember one of the other reasons my pack was so heavy and proceed to unpack port, TimTams and various other treats. We have most definitely earned this...



Lachie Currie on 'Auto de Fe.' 'No Road Between,' featured in this article, climbs the twin white streaks on the dark rock to the climber's left.



NO ROAD BETWEEN

STU HOLLOWAY

ON A CHAIR in the cold morning sunshine, surrounded by bottles and memories, I wait for Lachie to stumble out of his tent. I expect to put the draws onto Spasm for him today. Earlier, John and Ben charged towards Kachoong; John wants to do it before he heads home to meet his new granddaughter, Olive. Tomorrow Ben and I are needed back at school. Yesterday Nick and Anthea flew to Europe. Our small camp is nearing dissolution. John heads over to meet them next month, but Brede will not be there. Just as she is not here. Weeks ago John's bitter-sweet arrival brought stories of the funeral we could not attend and our anguish has permeated the encampment. Another beautiful day builds over the mountain, the bluffs burning orange above the gums against a soft blue Wimmera sky.

Eventually Lachie shambles over. Young and bold and strong, he climbs dynamically, rarely settling on his feet or reversing moves, so he is fast and exciting and he could fall off at any stage. Halfway through his coffee, he finally decides not to face the day.

"Bit cold this morning. Be dark and windy in that chasm."

"You want an adventure?"

"Why not?"

In confession we reveal ourselves as we fear

we have been. In the act of faith we declare ourselves: as we are, as we hope to be. Between them we went looking for something new.

"At least there will be no one on the route," Lachie quipped as we hiked to the base.

"I wonder how long 'til I chicken out?"
"We'll find out soon."

I head just left of the brushed streak, straight up the slab on lovely rock. Classic Watchtower Faces: moderate climbing with great moves and good, but spaced, protection. A tricky move through the small diagonal overlap leads up to the ledge below the water streak. A nut twisted in a shallow hole, in lieu of the small tricam or duct-taped skyhook that would have been perfect. A few moves more and a small cam in a slick, flaring break. Two pulls past shallow crimps, stuff the smallest TCU into a cut in the mountain's skin and step onto a foot-stance.

The wall blanks out. Footholds too high, grips marginal and slopey, protection dubious, I come to a halt. Testing the moves I shuffle around on the ledge, fondle the slopes, pull on the edges, brush the possibilities with chalk, step up and back, look down and up and find myself where I wanted. Teetering between fear and desire I try to find what I need.

The rain washed rock offers only bad crimps to rock through an insecure high step. I pull, but can't initiate the weight

transfer. Lachie calls encouragement up the rope. I tense myself again, but can't commit. I shake and shuffle, testing will against cowardice, then see the crack. Leaning far and low out to the right, I fish a #5 RP into *Auto de Fe*. Third time around I pull over the unlikely foot and drive up to satisfying edges. I find a #1 RP next to a jug, jump to a hold and press through to stand on a good incut.

The exit is technical, but from a solid stance I slice a micro-wire into an eyebrow overhead, twist it sideways and tug as much as I dare without any hand holds. A deep breath, a pull, a shallow crack feature and feet scrabbling past the smoothness as I slap for smears on the ledge, and I'm up.

Someone has doubtless been here before. We like to think we are different... but everyone's fingers sweat more when the holds slope. There is no road between fear and desire. I may struggle to hold the line, but sometimes, when climbing gets interesting, I glimpse myself as I'd like to be.

It is nothing really, but suspended by the anchor I am nakedly exultant, happy to be, for a moment, more than my weakness.

"Brilliant climbing," beamed Lachie as he finished the pitch. "Glad it was you and not me."

I'm glad it was me too.

ESCAPING A CLIMB:

RAPPING OFF A BOLT HANGER

BY STU HOLLOWAY

TRYING ROUTES THAT are hard for you always sets up the strong possibility of failure. It is important to take a calm and determined approach to hard climbing as success will often only come after protracted effort and trying several sequences to overcome crux sections—a little bit of aid can go a long way in situations where the climb is more important than the moves. It is also important to have some strategies for escaping off climbs if necessary.

Retreating off routes with bolts is quick,

cheap and casual compared to many of the situations in which you could find yourself. Rings and U-bolts are particularly nice as you can just thread them and get lowered or rappel off. Other bolts generally require you to leave behind some extra gear, whether tie-off cord or biners to get down without cutting the rope or having it jam. This shonky looking trick lets you rappel off fixed hangers, even the sharp ones now common at Arapiles, without losing any gear.



Clip yourself to the bolt so your partner can take you off belay.

Pull up about enough rope to reach the ground, tie a figure of eight on a bight and clip it to something so you can't drop the rope.



Untie from your end of the rope and thread it through the hanger, moving from the side with the bolt towards the ground.



Unclip the knot and jam it against the bolt hanger. The knot should sit over the shaft of the bolt.

Make sure the strand that drops down through the hanger reaches the ground.



Connect your rappel device to this strand and pull it in tight against the bolt so that your weight is on the device and you can unclip from the bolt.



This can take a bit of jiggling if the biner is pinched under the rope, so try to keep them separate.



Rappel to the ground, disconnect from the rope and retrieve it by pulling on the strand that runs directly to the knot wedged against the hanger.

AMAZING JOURNEYS, SPECIAL FRIENDS



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY GREEN

NEW ZEALAND WEATHER is some of the most intense I've experienced in the world, and at the moment it was giving us a piece of its mind on rain. Crammed in a small tent within sight of not one, but two nice huts was not exactly the way I'd planned to start the trip. However, the constant sound of rolling

boulders carried by the torrent separating our tents from those huts eliminated all possibility of reaching them.

We had already moved our tent because of a stream, which had formed on what appeared an excellent tent pad. Now the rain fell with such ferocity that even the prospect of a trip behind the nearest tree was disheartening. The vestibule became the kitchen, and the pantry was what we could reach from the tent. The mountain

radio weather suggested at least another 24 hours of pounding. A small two person tent is hardly the place to spend a lot of time with the girlfriends of two other guys.

AMONG THE MANY trips with MUMC and the Canterbury University Tramping Club (CUTC) I've found some of my best friends. It is no accident that outdoor ed-



A typical view up the Francis River. Snowy Peak is aptly named, with the Garden Of Eden behind it. The river's characteristic turquoise colour belies the water's high glacial flour content. This fine dust is ground from solid rock by the Colin Campbell Glacier, which is also the source of the water. The terminal moraine of the glacier is the dark rock fields below the snow.

er touched snow. My first trip with him was also my first time in crampons, and we learned to use avalanche transceivers.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about people who are seriously interested in the outdoors is their personality, and this was no exception for Greta Raymant, another good friend I've met through the Club.

IT IS A small world of people seriously interested in the outdoors. Friends interconnect, and one evening Greta is asking me if I'm interested in going on a trip to the Garden of Eden. Her friend Alex from New Zealand and some guy in Australia are planning a trip there. I told her, "Of course I'm interested in going; I'm the guy in Australia!"

Alex had been extremely interested in my proposed trip to the Garden of Eden and Garden of Alah since I first mentioned it. This remote ice plateau on the South Island of New Zealand is little known even to locals. The eastern gateway is Erewhon Station (that's roughly nowhere), while the western gateway is so overgrown that even routine visitors to the Gardens find themselves lost.

Other friends would take more time to convince. James Pettengel told me of a group trapped on the Gardens for two weeks waiting for the weather to clear, dehydrating whilst surrounded by frozen water. Five weeks later, he was keen. Another person commented on his harrowing escape after an attempt from the West Coast where wire bridges were swept out 10 metres horizontally by the wind, and he was swept away crossing a side stream.

Shortly before our first planned attempt, Alex had to pull out because of glacier guide training at Fox Glacier scheduled for the same week. Then I fractured my wrist snow boarding. Was this an omen of bad luck to come?

WHEN I CAME to visit Australia, I made a point to go to the Clubrooms. Alison, whom I liked from the start, asked if I'd ever placed an ice screw (no) and sug-

ucation is so effective at teaching leadership and teamwork: demanding situations show different sides of people.

Alex Ross and I met through a botched trip to climb Malte Brunn, the South Island's third highest peak. While Dave Manning toiled along the impossibly long west ridge approach to that climb, Alex, her mate Josh, and I were high on petrol fumes, ice climbing, and beautiful weather on the Annette Plateau.

Another new friend, James Pettengel, was the classic Kiwi with antics like balancing six boxes of pizza and a crate (Aussies would call it a slab) on his bike for a committee meeting. Carrying his tramping axe, two ice tools, crampons, shovel, probe, beacon, tent, stove and most of the regular gear compliment to Cameron Hut, he took a tumble because he was enjoying the scenery and not the track. His girl friend, Eva, carried the food. We nev-

Despite hundred kilometer per hour winds and stinging spin-drift, Alex and her friend Josh are still smiling after the previous day's ice climbing. This was my first trip ice climbing, and the wind scoops of the Annette Plateau south of Mt Cook were a great destination. The wind scoop is a beautiful and other worldly ice formation created from bergschrunds by wind. Alex, Josh and I shared the close quarters of a single tent, an excellent situation except for my petrol soaked sleeping bag, courtesy of a leaking fuel bottle. On this trip, I quickly recognised Alex's prudent conservatism.



High on the shoulder of Mt Howitt with the Cross Cut Saw on the left, Alison Thomson hikes into the cloudburst. On this first bushwalk in Australia, I was treated to one of the best back-country huts, poetry recitals with Victoria's finest, and of course the company of several good friends from the club.



The varying stages of our troubled approach to the Garden of Eden (opposite). Roger prepares dinner standing in the stream which formed through our campsite, which is just visible in the clouds, from below McCoy hut, and enjoys the finally revealed Snowy Peak and ice of the Gardens from the upper Francis River Valley.

gested I try to take a mountaineering course while I was still in New Zealand. Coming to Australia to start school a few months later, I was still recovering from my fracture. I had to explain to Alice that I wasn't a beginner climber, but rather had been climbing 17-19's before fracturing my wrist. So I went on my first trip with MUMC to Werribe Gorge, and soon had several rock climbing friends in the club.

Plans for the "Gardens Trip" continued. Alex and I discussed potential trip members via email across the Tasman. Alex rustled up her friend Roger, a glaciologist from Dunedin. I pinned down Matt, who

Planning for six days in the backcountry, with four days of extra food and fuel is an expedition in itself. Al's dehydrator ran night and day with the fruits and vegetables of the market. A combination of gear from two clubs, MUMC and CUTC, would support us, and the final estimate of 5.75 litres of fuel would ensure we didn't stop drinking no matter how bad the weather got. Unfortunately, the Kiwi Quarantine made me throw out half of our carefully dehydrated food.

WHEN ALISON ASKED if I had placed an ice screw, I hardly expected to find myself in such tight quarters with her in an extremely remote part of New Zealand six months later. But here we were. I'd trusted Alex's judgement on the tent (we'd be tight, but it would work), and Al had trusted mine.

"It's a Minaret? We'll never get three people in it!" she scolded me as we settled down in the tiny tent at Erewhon station. Alex was staying in the truck with her boy while she had the chance.

"We'll be in a hut the first night. And once we get to the Gardens, we'll be able to build a snow cave," I tried to reassure her. She wasn't convinced, but at least I'd deflated her anger. I consider group dynamics potentially the biggest obstacle to a difficult and remote trip, and I wasn't going to have it fail before we even left the cars.

Two days in the tent in the rain, during which time we hadn't killed each other, hadn't gotten wet, and even had Alex's boy visit from the other tent for a couple hours, showed me Alison was willing to make it work. I breathed a sigh of relief, although I think I lost a little of her trust.

carries 10 days food with ease. The dates kept changing, until Alison would also be able to make it, but James P. (now president of CUTC) was spending time with his family and could only promise us free run of their well stocked gear locker. Alex's boy James (Alex always coyly refers to them as "friends") was the last addition.

LATE ON THE second day, the rain stopped. Now it was simply a waiting game: how fast would the river drop? After many consultations, we decided we could wait 24 hours before our patience would start to wane. Like Al, I wanted this to work, so I set about trying to get a good vantage point on the river where I could pick out a potential crossing point, which I found only a few hundred meters from the tents.

James and Roger, with considerable river crossing experience, took more convincing. "This only gets us across this braid, and you can't see the others well enough to know if they'll be passable," they argued.

I decided to take the reverse psychology approach. "Everybody is looking pretty down after all the time in the tent, and we might not even be able to get across the other braids, so maybe we should just start back." The sun came out, as if on queue. We crossed all the river's braids in less than an hour.

THE AIR WAS opaque. What had been tantalising views of ice on Snowy Peak and the beautiful Froude Range was now potato soup. But we were camped in the moraine, so close to our goal, and we'd decided to make the attempt that day. We'd



push the route as far as possible, and then wait to see if it would clear.

We walked up the terminal moraine past nicer campsites than ours (why didn't we push a little further last night?), then onto a tricky and unstable moraine wall. The regular sound of falling rocks kept our eyes darting around in the gloom as we crossed a flat field strewn with unusually large and lonely boulders. Moving into the characteristic hills of ice covered with a thin layer of rocks brought back my general uneasiness with this kind of terrain to mix with the nerve-racking rock falls and ominous fog.

"We're off course. We should be on that ridge over there." Roger, compass in hand,

Alison and Alex each enjoy their books in the cramped but dry quarters of our tent. I had forgotten a book, so the two girls shamelessly agreed to us all reading aloud. Alison eloquently described just how small the space was when she told me "Lincoln would never sleep this close to me" after describing waking in the night to the sound of my breath just inches from her face. Fortunately, both Alex and Alison proved to be excellent tent partners.





disagreed (I almost never trust someone with a compass in their hand). I let it go. It wasn't looking promising anyway.

Finally, a white patch appeared in the fog in front of us. White ice (ice not covered by rock). But it was strewn with rocks which had fallen from above. Some of them were disquietingly big. And we could hear others falling all around us. Also visible was the stream draining the Wee McGregor Glacier, which was to be our ascent route. We should have been on that other ridge. But it didn't matter now.

Waiting was useless; the groups morale was gone. Al's eagerness to wait it out was far outweighed by the rest of the group. I kept my own feelings to myself, and told everyone we should take a group picture

A MAN, A WOMAN, A ROPE AND A RIVER...

ONE OF THE BEST DAY TRIPS I HAVE EVER DONE.

BY ALISON THOMSON

After our disproportionately tent-bound odyssey in the Clyde Valley, Andy and I arrived at Arthurs Pass desperate to climb something, and happily the weather obliged. We settled on climbing Avalanche Peak via the tourist track (though for rea-

sonably fit and adventurous tourists only), traversing the ridge to Mt Bealey, and descending into Rough Creek via another track. As we were preparing to leave, the portly and jovial manager of the YHA rocked up, surmised that we were heading for the mountains, and enquired as to our plans. Once we recounted them, he enthused about altering the descent so as to experience

"the best scree slope in the world". Conveniently, we could see said scree slope from our current position in the valley (how's that for ease of route-finding?), and as we were admiring it, the YHA man spied

pointing out that we weren't actually a couple.

Soon I was bounding up the steep, but well defined track up Avalanche, relishing the crisp mountain air and the freedom of movement accorded by leather hiking boots after a week of clomping around the Clyde Valley in plastic mountaineering boots weighing several kilos. At a rocky outcrop just below the summit, we shared lunch with some playful and curious keas. Once over the summit, we could admire the surrounding mountains in their full glory. The wind subsided enough that we could peruse the map and identify the local peaks, and Andy reminisced over a route he'd done over Mt Rolleston and pointed out its key features.

Next we traversed towards Mt Bealey, along a ridge which soon morphed from open and grassy to rocky, narrow and thought-provoking. Mildly technical rock scrambling ensued for several hundred metres and I savoured the purity of moving without ropes, and the exposure which was exciting but not scary.

On reaching the giant scree slope, I had by now accumulated enough experience to tighten my gaiters before heading down, so this time my "rock collection" was a lot more manageable. The scree slope lived up to all its hype, and it was possible to "ski" down most of it without stopping, which is both efficient and fun.

We discovered that the "creek" was



A Kea keeps Andy Green company on the rocks after eating lunch. These seemingly cute relatives of the parrot are actually very mischievous, stealing anything at hand for their own devices, particularly compasses, boots, and food. Mt. Rolleston is in the background.

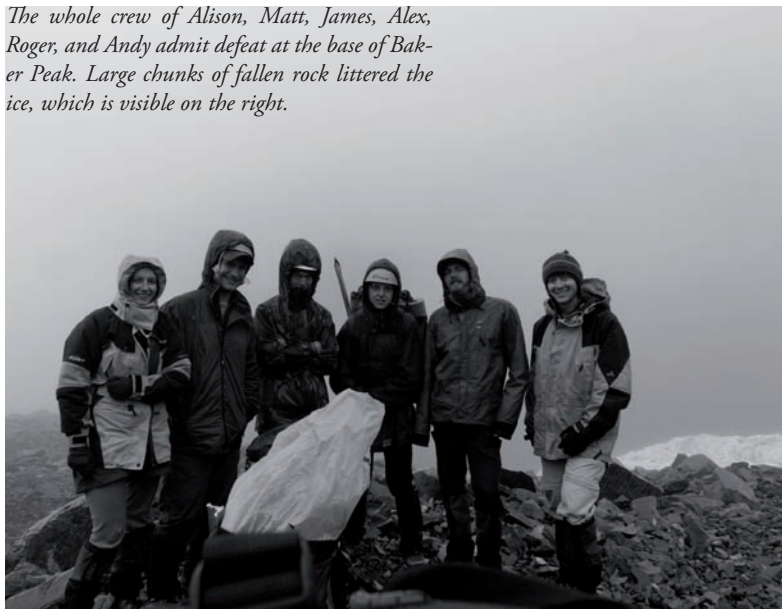
the fused piece of climbing rope which Andy was wearing as a necklace. He doubled up laughing and quipped, "A man, a woman, a rope and a river... who knows what might happen?", and I decided not to rain on the parade by

before we headed back.

IT'S NOT THE destination, it's the journey: the shared experiences with old and new friends, the beautiful scenery along the way, and the time for introspection. I'm not really a mountaineer, because I don't climb peaks. They are to often a goal, a destination, the rest of the experience insignificant and forgotten. The trip to the Gardens was a great success: it brought me a life long friend.

Matt Ellis conveys the mood of our trip up the Colin Campbell Glacier in the dense fog. Behind him would be a glacial lake and the Froude Range. Cairns, compasses and GPS kept track of our location in the low visibility.

The whole crew of Alison, Matt, James, Alex, Roger, and Andy admit defeat at the base of Baker Peak. Large chunks of fallen rock littered the ice, which is visible on the right.



more like a canyon, requiring boulder hopping, negotiating large pools, and sliding down miniature waterfalls. Fortunately I have honed such skills canyoning in the Blue Mountains, so these obstacles just added to my enjoyment. The burbling creek was ice-cold but aesthetically stunning, with its banks full of soft rocky curves carved out by the water, making the finale to our day far more pleasant than the wet, bush-bashing horror show I had imagined based on the guidebook description.

As we scrambled down the creek, we kept ourselves entertained by concocting amusing comebacks to the YHA manager. Apparently Andy had been tempted to respond with, "actually I'm quite good friends with her boyfriend" but like me, had opted not to spoil the illusion. We agreed that in the right circumstances (involving different company and sunnier weather) that the setting was perfect for his romantic insinuations. I recounted to Andy the tale of a paddling trip down

the King in which we caught a naked couple red-handed on a boulder in the slalom rapid.

In the fading light we headed for the local pub in Arthurs Pass, which is affectionately known as "The Wobbly Kea". And so ended one of the most satisfying day trips I have ever done. We had covered a great deal of varying terrain, in good weather and against the gorgeous alpine backdrop of Mt Rolleston and its companions. The trip had been technical enough to be interesting, yet easy enough that most of the way we could chat and admire the scenery.

I glanced around for the YHA man, and though he was nowhere in sight, I had finally thought of a suitable comeback: "We really enjoyed the route you suggested".

Alison enjoys the view of endless peaks from Mt Bealey. Andy and Al spent considerable time trying to identify all of them, before Alison commented, "I can't believe how many there are: we don't have this problem in Australia. Her ice axe, strapped to the pack, wasn't used all season, a first in several years."



TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF RHYMNEY



Wen-Jie eats grapes with Emma during a moment's respite for lunch. The rolling farm land on which the course was laid out makes for a panoramic vista. The organisers requested permission for the event from 75 separate land holders, and all agreed to allow the rogainers access to their land. Because of the difficulties of requesting access rights from so many people, this was the first rogaine on farm land in years.

BY WEN-JIE YANG

ON A CERTAIN weekend close to the full moon, a large bunch of MUMC people found themselves at a cricket oval turned campsite near Ararat. For such a remote place, there was a surprisingly large number of people, from muscular elderly types to young but infinitely less muscular types like myself. But my reasoning is that the old people simply have scores more years than me to build up their muscles and stamina, right?

It was the gathering place for the start of the Rhymney Reef Rogaine. The teams with a definite competitive streak were

discussing route plans, blister prevention, marathon-style running and sleep deprivation; my team (Kim Ely, Emma Bland and me), however, was still grappling with contacting our maps. We were looking forward to Hash House dinner, breakfast, lunch, warm tent, sleeping bag, walking at a decent pace and a couple of checkpoints sprinkled in between. Not that we didn't want to do well! It was just that we displayed our competitiveness differently, for example through sabotage, with Kim wearing a bright orange beanie to mislead gullible people who might think it was a checkpoint. I really had a fantastic team, and we worked perfectly together; we discussed where to go, reached a decision and Kim took the bearing, with Emma and me double checking. This was all done surprising fast for such a democratic process.

We spotted a lot of animals along the route we took during daylight, like cows and sheep (as in a lot of such animals from these two species), and evidence of their existence when they weren't actually there, like poo: little black pellets, big, brown, dinner plate sized coils (sometimes still on the steamy side), big brown coils with a hiking-bootprint in the middle. Hours long trekking meant a long and unbroken opportunity to study these specimens. There would also be the creepy moments when a whole flock of sheep would identically face and stare at you. And stare...

The MUMC Melbourne teams won the University Challenge, and enjoy a celebratory drink with the trophy. From left to right, they are Emma Bland, Kim Ely, Wen-Jie Yang, Nick, Alaster Meehan, James, and Emma. Alaster and Nick had to come back early to retrieve a forgotten head torch on the first evening: even the best forget important safety gear on occasion.



and stare. Unless you've had that same experience, it is hard to convey the uneasy and hair-raising feeling I got from a group of statues all boring their eyes into me. Anyway, there were also the rabbit holes, which complemented the diggings of long ago miners—both of which seemed to reach out regularly to grab my foot and bring me crashing down. Not only that, I managed to fall down while standing still a one point, though I do point out I was standing on a slope with loose leaf litter lying around.

Rogaining across farmland was also an exercise in gymnastics and flexibility. Not only did we have to swing legs high above gashing barb wire (making me sincerely regret being short and having short legs), but electric fences (sometimes combined with barb wire) forced us to climb onto 1.5m poles, balance on top and jump back down again. Emma, while trying to

Emma carefully crosses a section of barbed wire fence. Because the rogaine was on farmland, fences crossed and re-crossed the land, seemingly barring progress at every step.



Helping to set up the large marque Alison Thomson stands waiting for directions. This marque would keep the kitchen and volunteers dry through the rainy event.



Unsure of what we might ultimately need, the volunteers decided to bring everything from the VRA locker. Thanks to the exceptional organisation of the Association, everything was easy move and find. And for a large event like a 24 hour, almost everything gets used.

BY ANDY GREEN

The excitement of my first rogaine wasn't quite enough to encourage me to consider a 24 hour as my second rogaine. But I still wanted to get out and try my hand at some night navigation. So Alison Thomson's suggestion that I volunteer to help with catering was just the opportunity get lost in the dark without consequences I needed. Among the four other volunteers from MUMC was Helen Dufler, also wanting to try her

hand at some night time navigation in anticipation of a roving 15 or 24 hour in the future.

Working to keep hot food ready for people continuously for 24 hours, no matter the weather, is quite a tall order. The Victorian Rogaining Association's incredible organisation, and large storage locker full of gear makes this much easier. Al put us down for the graveyard shift, and packed a bottle of wine to keep spirits light.

In the early evening, just as it was getting dark, we all headed out for

some night navigation practice. The first checkpoint was dead obvious on the top of the nearest hill, and we found it just as it got dark. The second checkpoint took us a few minutes of looking at the map, before realising we were standing next to it. The third checkpoint eluded us entirely, only being discovered as we started walking home.

Clearly my night navigation will need some practice, but now that I've put my volunteer effort in, I'll have plenty of guilt free rogaines to practice on.

Emma Bland ticks off a checkpoint with the Nav-Light system. This electronic system makes score keeping easy, provides nearly instantaneous results, and the detailed report allows teams to analyse their strategy. This checkpoint is worth 70 points, making it one of the more difficult ones to find on the course.



ing, where mornings are slow and lazy. But porridge and other warm food put Emma, Kim and me to rights, and we walked cheerfully, relatively cramp and limp free for the rest of the morning, knocking up another line of checkpoints.

Overall we clocked 16 hours of walking, 50 kilometres, a chocolate bar for 3rd place in the women's competition, and (I thought) a completely random wine glass with Rogaining Association Something stencilled on it. I reckon I need to win several more times before I can get enough to use them as a set though. But I have to say our team's achievements were largely due to Kim, who also taught us useful skills in navigation and took embarrassing photos of us to publish in the rogaining newsletter. In the end, Alaster was happy because we (Melb Uni) beat Vic Uni; Kim was happy because we (our team) did so well, getting over 2000 points; I was happy because there was a lot of food; and Emma is always happy anyway. The volunteer team also looked contented, even though they had been working day and night; I suppose the sherry they brought along helped.

Rogaining is a great sport, different to bushwalking and therefore with its own advantages. For example, I can carry a light pack for once and the promise of instant warm food at the Hash House is a real bonus. None of this nonsense of setting up camp, getting out pots, cooking, eating, washing up: nope, just stick out the bowl and it gets magically filled. I, personally, enjoyed the night walking and seeing a different world under the moon and also the deck chair in front of the fire was a good place to be.



Hash house volunteers Helen Dulfér, Al Thomson, and Andrew Oppenheim test out their night navigation skills while taking a break from cooking. Navigation after dark can be considerably more difficult because it is hard to see the lay of the land and the brightly coloured checkpoint makers. A full moon helps considerably, but clouds and rain eliminated that advantage on this particular event.

execute this manoeuvre, managed to zap herself, fall down and tear open her pant leg. Oh and scream really, really loudly. Luckily she wasn't hurt and thus, it makes a funny anecdote to tell now and at future parties. There were also the commando style scuttles under barbed wire when going over might mean scrambling for a tetanus injection.

At around 10 pm, we decided it was time to turn in, not only because we missed a checkpoint by getting lost, but because we were hungry. Muesli bars, nuts and even chocolate only go so far. Plus, there was a promise of a warm fire and then bed after dinner. But because we really were dedicated rogainers (just not up to the point of walking all night), we set our alarm clocks for 6 in the morning, which I thought was real commitment, considering my experiences in bushwalk-

Jun, also a volunteer, checks the list of teams who have passed this checkpoint. Although the Nav-Light system tracks team progress through the course, paper logs are kept at each checkpoint in case of difficulty with the electronic system and to help locate lost parties, should the need arise.



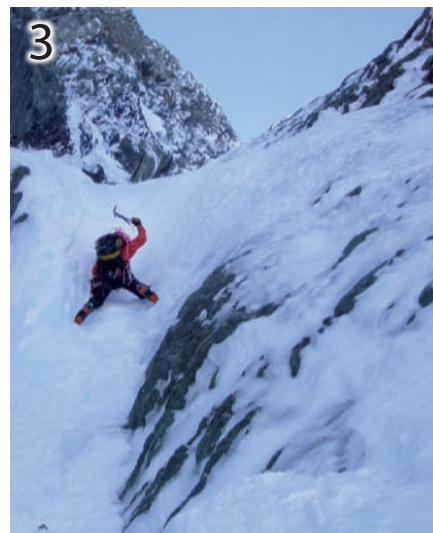
BY JESSICA TREVITT

n

HELI-ALPINISM

40 HOURS OUT OF FOX VILLAGE

BY STU HOLLOWAY



We flew into the mountains in great weather (1) to land at Pioneer Hut and went for a ski to check out the conditions (2). Gary and I headed up the central couloir (NZ Grade 5+) on the south face of Douglas Peak (3 & 4), while Nick (5) and Anthea climbed the left couloir (NZ Grade 5-). The routes join high on the face (6) where another couple of easier pitches lead to the summit with great views (7).



7



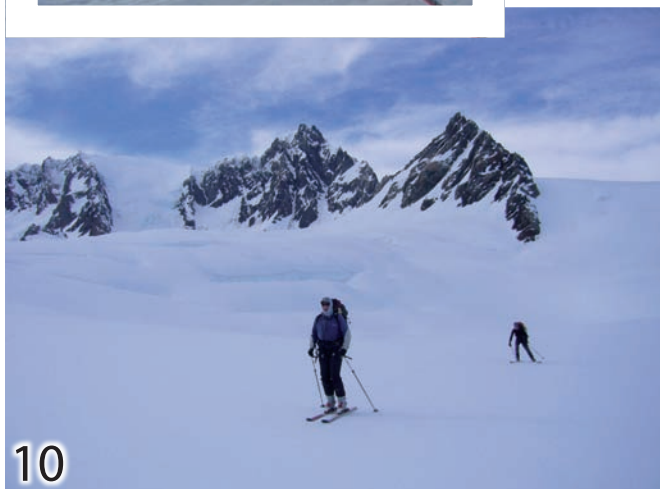
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9



11



10



12

We rappelled the route (8) and, after getting pummelled by loose snow and ice blocks as the afternoon warmed up, we were glad to get back to our skis at the bottom (9).

The next morning we cruised down the glacier (10) and past the avalanche debris (11) to meet our chopper (12) from Chancellor Hut.

WARMER WEATHER

BY DAVID FETTLING

OUTSIDE THE WINDOWS, at first, is blackness, as the heater hums and the train clatters along the tracks. Then a slither of yellow appears out the eastern windows, and the gnarled silhouettes of acacias appear. With daylight, the train is crossing bridges over enormous dry riverbeds surrounded by rocky hills, chugging, hour after hour, through a world of scrub and sand, entirely without fences, heading north and west, toward the Northern Territory. I envisage a newspaperless three weeks amid the winter sun, the gorges and rock formations and arid woodlands of the MacDonnell Ranges and of Uluru, then the waterbirds and crocodiles and tropical air of the Top End. It was always my intention to beat the cane-toads to Kakadu National Park, but what can you do?

In my book-bag, the contents of which are spread before me here in the train, are *Dreams From My Father* by Barack Obama, the possible next American president and, with Rudd more disappointing by the day, the possible last great hope of mankind to prevent irreversible climate change; and a book on that very subject, *Climate Code Red*. A maudlin-looking polar bear is on the cover.

Over the desert, the sun is high in the sky.

I WALK UP a dry riverbed at Ellery Creek, on a carpet of smooth pebbles, in the shade of river red-gums. Birds are everywhere: wrens, finches, doves, Port Lincoln parrots, and more birds of prey than I've ever seen in one place. They're hunting reptiles, apparently; Central Australia has more reptiles than anywhere else in the world.

I soon settle into a healthy pattern of Red Centre-exploring by day, Obama-reading by night. In *Dreams From My Father*, Obama repeatedly mentions the nostalgia for the early sixties sense of American promise, invoked by Martin Luther King and the Kennedys, that so infuses his campaign. The sense is palpable

that if he gets in—touch-wood—American history will resume the trajectory it seemed to be on back then, before the trio of bullets. Aren't the date coincidences hair-raising? When Obama secured the delegates for the Democratic nomination, it was 40 years—to the week—since Bobby Kennedy's assassination. When he accepts formally that nomination in Denver in August, it will be 45 years—to the day—since Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech.

I put away about fifty pages on our second night of camping. Every chapter or so I get up, walk a short distance, and shine my head-torch on the spinifex plain, where dingoes, eyes bright pin-pricks in the light, dash here and there. Later on in the night, rival packs of them howl at each other from different cliff faces, as I sit by the campsite's communal fire.

I read another thirty pages at Ormiston Gorge before, at dusk, I go wandering. Between two impossibly high rust-red rock walls, some long-ago landslide has resulted in a cascade of rocks piled up along one side. Rock-wallabies, at least twenty, hop amongst large boulders and bottle-green ghost gums, sometimes coming to lap water at the pool next to me.

I make a genuine effort to stay away from the news. But there is internet, obscenely-priced, at Glen Helen, and I go websurfing for my fix:

"I chose to run in this election—at this moment—because of what Dr. King called 'the fierce urgency of now.' Because we are at a defining moment in our history. Our nation is at war. Our planet is in peril."

He is ahead in all the important swing-states: Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida. He is ahead in Virginia—Virginia!—the heart of the slave-holding Confederacy. The man has inspired such feverish press coverage, he provides such a contrast with McCain's tepid rallies, Obamamania is hard to resist.

We camp at Palm Valley, and wake to a pair of Pink Cockatoos in the tree directly above the tent. One, to entertain the crowd, makes a point of hanging upside down off the branch of the ghost

gum, wings spread out to show off his salmon-pink underside, crimson crest outstretched.

I SIT IN the mid-morning sunshine, prior to leaving Ormiston, and read my climate change book. It's raging against the emerging consensus, led by Nicholas Stern, that the world's effort should focus on limiting warming to three degrees. Stern's thesis is "chilling: to limit the rise to two degrees was, in his opinion, too challenging ... he suggested going for a three-degree target. Yet a three-degree rise would likely destroy most ecosystems and take global warming beyond the control of human action."

We arrive at Uluru and walk around its base. The track, in one or two spots, follows the rock into its nooks and crannies, which are forested gullies. During rain, the water rushes down grooves in the rock and into pools, now dry. Often these are the Aboriginal spiritual sites, where rock-art is found. We walk around the eastern side of the rock in the late afternoon, in the artificial twilight caused by Uluru's shadow. The scene is almost meadowy: a blanket of yellow spinifex dotted with mulga trees.

Yulara, the tourist town closest to Uluru, has a newsagency. The Age reports an emaciated polar bear literally washed ashore on Iceland, (which, despite its name, is not a conducive or typical habitat for them), and, after the media took photos, was promptly shot.

THE GHAN CLATTERS north. I sit at the window reading *Dreams From My Father*, where, I'm discovering, Obama comes across as a very different quantity to how he's typified by his detractors. Hillary Clinton frequently belittled Obama's 'hope and change' mantra, inferring that Obama thought putting him in the White House would automatically solve all problems. "Let's just get everybody together" she said, "the sky will open. Light will come down. Celestial choirs will sing and ... everything will be perfect."

Instead, there is a bleakness to Obama's book that is startling. Obama dwells on his Indonesian stepfather, Lolo. He recalls how Lolo made a point of killing a chicken in front of the young Obama, explaining to Obama's mother that "the boy should know where his dinner is coming from," and reprimanded Obama for giving money to a beggar: there was no way he could give money to all beggars, Lolo argued, so Obama may as well save his money. Lolo, Obama says, originally dreamed to take a role in Indonesia's government to help better his country, but became disillusioned, reconciled to the imperfect status quo. Obama himself appears torn. He describes alternating between feverish effort and defeatism. As a student in California, he made a lauded speech on apartheid, but when congratulated by a fellow student afterwards, he became defensive, declared it had made no real difference. As an organiser in Chicago, he describes working himself into the ground one day, and declaring all effort pointless the next.

Meanwhile, *Climate Code Red* uncannily lists all the places I want to visit and then explains how climate change will wreck them. The Amazon: "if the changing climate were to produce four or five years of drought in the Amazon, it might become sufficiently dry for wildfires to destroy much of the rainforest and for burning carbon to pour into the skies." Other scenarios for the Barrier Reef, the Arctic, the Antarctic, and sub-Saharan Africa, set to be amalgamated into Saharan Africa.

The silhouettes of the trees outside the train are getting taller, the undergrowth out there in the dark looks denser.

AT THE WETLANDS known as Yellow Water, crocodiles swim laconically through the water or lie, gaping, in the muddy, reedy shallows. In the midst of aquatic pastures of bright green buffalo grass, water-birds walk singly or in groups, like an avian Serengeti: egrets, spoonbills, herons, geese and ducks. The sunrise tints the water and reeds and gum-trees gold and pink. Kingfishers watch proceedings from trees, occasionally swooping down

to the water and flying back clutching a fish. We see two sea eagles watching from high up in dead trees, two brolga cranes in the distance. Jacanas—Jesus-birds—walk across the lilies. In mid-morning, we head for the 4WD track to the Twin and Jim Jim Falls.

You used to be able to swim up the creek to the Twin Falls, but not any more: now you must take a boat. "Was there any particular trigger?" I ask the boat guy. "Crocs," he says. We pass a cave that is an Aboriginal sacred site, and a sandy bank under a cliff where freshwater crocodiles and highly endangered pig-nosed turtles lay eggs. Water and white spray cascade down the rock-face.

To get to Jim Jim Falls, we cross a small rock-strewn stream, climb a steep hill, amidst jungly vegetation and a bevy of small, brilliant blue butterflies; to the top, and across slabs of black rock, like a bad Hollywood dinosaur movie set; then savannah-type country, where a black wallaroo hops across the path in front of us: and finally the falls. We swim in a stream fed by an underground spring and surrounded by rocks—crocodile-proof, touch-wood.

At mid-afternoon we drive up to the East Alligator River, and reach Ubirr at sunset, a hill with an emerald-green flood plain on one side, and the rocky crags of Arnhem Land on the other. Slits of water between the buffalo grass glint with setting sun. Parrots wheel up and down the line of dark green trees that must hide a major river. What looks like a bettong hops along in the grass far below. The sky is pink. "It is unknown what effect climate change will have on Kakadu," reads a plaque at the site.

At dark we head back to the campsite, make the fire and cook dinner, and lather on the anti-Ross River Fever spray.

Knock knock.

A bloke comes in dragging surplus logs to donate to our fire—he is going to bed, he says. He sees my Obama book, lit by my head-torch.

"You reckon he's gunna win?"

"Maybe. McCain's got appeal, though."

"Surely he's gunna get shot pretty soon?"

he says. He wishes us a good night and a good trip, and disappears into the night.

THE PLANE LIFTS off before the dawn. Yellow light pours in from the eastern-facing windows of the plane; on the other side, I look out my window at blackness to the west.

I'm up to the chapter where Obama discovers the church of Reverend Jeremiah Wright. It's here, apparently, that Obama picked up one of his more famous phrases, one that, again, seems to have been simplified into a sort of shorthand for naive optimism, when in fact it signifies anything but:

"The title of Reverend Wright's sermon that morning was 'The Audacity of Hope'.... the pastor described going to a museum and being confronted by a painting titled Hope.

"The painting depicts a harpist," Reverend Wright explained, 'a woman who at first glance appears to be sitting atop a great mountain. Until you take a closer look and see that the woman is bruised and bloodied, dressed in tattered rags, the harp reduced to a single frayed string. Your eye is then drawn down to the scene below ...where everywhere are the ravages of famine, the drumbeat of war, a world groaning under strife and deprivation...

"...And yet consider once again the painting before us. Hope! ...[T]hat harpist is looking upwards...She dares to hope...She has the audacity...to make music...and praise God...on the one string...she has left..."

According to Obama, hope is audacious, because things are dire: because, even if we try, the cause may be lost anyway. There's light on one side of this plane and darkness on the other, beauty on the horizon and horror on the printed page. The world's special places are on course to melt or burn or simply disappear; the world's current leadership is set on gradualism; the White House is the last string the world has left. The pilot announces we're nearing Melbourne. We bank through cloud and begin our descent.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MUMC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 30 AUGUST 2007

Meeting opened 6.43pm, Lincoln Smith presiding, Stuart Hollaway returning officer

Apologies

Simon McKenzie (nominates David Rochwerger as proxy vote), Michelle Bassett, Grace Phang (will be late)

Present

Dhugal Bissett, Stephan Chan, Eugenie Chung, Oliver Clarke, Shannon Crack, Peter Crockett, Claire Davy, Jane Davy, Helen Dulfer, David Ellis, Paul Glennie, Bronwyn Hradsky, Stu Hollaway, Alice Leppitt, Alaster Meehan, Andrew Nurse, Andrew Oppenheim, Grace Phang, Greta Raymant, David Rochwerger, Grant Schuster, Jennifer Sheridan, Lincoln Smith, Dale Thistlethwaite, Alison Thomson, Kathryn Whalley

Minutes from Previous AGM

Lincoln: I motion that last year's AGM minutes are a true and accurate representation of what was said.

Jen: Second

Motion passed without objection.

Reports

President

Lincoln: The aim of this year has been to look at how VSU would affect the club. The club has coped quite well. We are still doing well financially and membership level is similar to previous years. A full financial picture won't be available until next year after a full year of VSU has elapsed and it will take a few years to see the long term effects.

A substantial amount of the committee's time this year was also devoted dealing with the actions of one member. The incident occurred during o-week and involved one member burning another with a figure 8. From this the committee has begun putting in place a system to deal with members who transgress.

There are a lot of new names in the nominations for the next committee. It is great to see new members stepping up and getting involved. All major technical convenor roles have been filled with a few notable vacancies in the executive.

When people walk into the clubrooms they ask to speak to convenor's, not the president and it is good to see newer members in these roles. Older members might like to consider volunteering for

empty executive positions.

I would like to thank all members of the outgoing committee. On occasion it has been a trying year.

Treasurer

David R: We have weathered the intro of VSU fairly well but have only seen the effects of half a year. We are still in profit by \$9,217 but that is about \$6,000 down from last year. There was less income from memberships but more from gear hire, in particular from the ski hire, to offset this.

NAB did not correctly credit our account for a previous cash deposit until this year. There is also an accidental cheque deposit where we deposited a cheque to ourselves. Income from pie'n'slide night was not banked in this financial year. There was no Bush Dance this year (2007).

We deposited \$20,000 into an ING Direct account. This has generated about \$800 in interest. The Australian Ethical fund has generated around \$4,000.

Around \$1,500 in cheques were written this year. There are a number of unrepresented cheques outstanding from the last three years including a cheque to ourselves from the 60th dinner T-shirts.

Alison: Why isn't gear hire recorded by sport?

Dave R: There were two gear hire deposits not recording which sport they were from. They may have been from multiple sports.

Dale: This is very annoying. Specific gear hire figures are used in deciding the budget for each sport.

Shannon: It is up to the convenor to ensure gear hire is banked correctly.

Mac: No, it is up to the treasurer.

Dale: I move that the minutes are a true and accurate reflection of the club's accounts.

Alaster: I second.

Motion passed without objection

Bushwalking

Lincoln: Marina is now in Sydney and resigned as Bushwalking convenor a month ago.

Andrew: Bushwalking's status in club is diminished and its future debatable. Only one extended club trip occurred (to the Tasmania's south coast in Easter). I don't recall any others. There have been regular overnight trips to standard areas and Marina ran many day trips, including to areas the club hasn't normally visited. Many trips were organised informally on Tuesday nights. Next year it would be good to see more formal organised trips run.

Climbing

Lincoln: Simon is away but has forwarded the following statement

"..."

Kayaking

Jen: Kayaking has done well considering the effects of last years drought. With the drought and lack of trips no intermediate paddlers have come through. This put pressure on the few existing intermediate and older paddlers. There were however lots of beginners this year, some of who will hopefully progress to leaders next year.

VSU has resulted in the regular pool sessions at Brunswick pool being cancelled. These sessions had provided a regular place to learn to roll and to gauge peoples' ability. We have been able to have a few pool sessions at Kensington pool. The focus on these sessions has shifted from a social event to more of a focus on training technique in the time available. We have introduced a uniform roll technique so all leaders do and teach in the same manner. We also have videos demonstrating this technique.

There have been beginner's trips to the Yarra at the start of the year and intermediate trips in the recent rains. There will be more beginner trips when the snow melts.

Mac: Sounds like pretty much it.

Skiing

Alison: It has been a great season with ski trips every weekend. Thank you to Joel Bartley for the snow (he had two broken wrists). When he eventually skied in August the snow worsened only to return when he suffered a hernia.

There were more than 282 trips away when counted per person. If what people did at resorts was counted this figure would be well over 300.

Notable trips include a group of 21 on a trip to Baw Baw and 15 people going to Stirling. Greta ran a trip to the razorback which hasn't been done in a while. Thank you to Lincoln, Greta, Alan Daley and Joel Bartley for running a telemark clinic. Less successful was a skate clinic that only I took part in.

This year we ran an info sessions modelled on Dale's mountaineering info night. There is now a list on the web site of what to take.

We have began replacing the old 3 pin leather bindings with new plastic boots and cables. These are more expensive but should last longer. 2 new snow shoes were purchased bringing the total number to 4

in order to have a full car load.

Caving

Shannon: Quite a few new people tried vertical caving this year. There were a number of beginner's trips after o-week. There have still been trips regularly since then, often joint with LUMC or interstate clubs. Things have been quiet in the last few months due to skiing.

Mountaineering

Dale: This has been my third year as mountaineering convenor. The assents completed this year by club members are: "..."

Matty Doyle unfortunately lost an ice axe. An info session ran on the 17 October last year. Despite being well advertised it was more well attended by Latrobe.

Another info session will run this year on 12 September. It will give an overview of gear, etc.. I have also invited members of RMIT, NZAC, Latrobe and Monash clubs.

I might also run an alpine climbing technique course covering things such as crevasse rescue if there is enough interest.

Glenn Pennycook who runs www.iclimb.co.nz has offered very cheap gear to club members this year.

Conservation

Bronwyn: A couple of tree planting trips occurred earlier this year. There have not been many trips this end of year due to everyone skiing. I was away over summer, but tried to encourage others to go on trips.

I am currently drafting a letter about the River Resgum National Park.

Canyoning

Alison: There was a trip to the Blue Mountains last year with about half a dozen participants. Lincoln and Al run some more serious trips to ... and ... canyons and will go again soon. There are not many other experienced canyons in the club.

Mac: We have Kylie and Jasmine.

Stu: They didn't do much any more.

Alison: Juc Cutter, another older member also has experience. I am going to buy some maps and guides of some of canyons to encourage others to take the sport up.

Canoe Polo

Greta: This year there was one team in E grade, including two new polo players. They came third and just missed out on the finals. This season there is no team entered. A lot of that is due to fact that no one wanted to be a point of contact with club. Hopefully next year the committee can encourage members to take up canoe polo again.

Rogaining

Alaster: This is my last year as Rogaining convenor. However, quite a few extra people became involved in Rogaining this

year. In the first 6 hour rogaine we had 16 competitors.

We unfortunately lost the Victorian Rogaining trophy to Victoria University in April this year. They do well in this rogaine because they have a lot more competitors than us. It is compulsory for students from some of their courses to participate.

There is a more casual competition that adds up the scores of each rogaine over the course of the year. Melbourne University is well ahead in this competition with a score more than all the other universities combined.

This is the first year the university students have been able to apply for funding to go to the Australian Championships. We had one team successful in receiving this funding.

Phil Caldwell came in 6th in one rogaine.

Hut Warden

Lincoln: We not have a hut warden present.

Alison: A new toilet has been installed thanks to parks. It is a fly in, fly out model.

There are some major problems with the hut and we need to run a hut maintenance trip when the snow has gone. The rubber sheeting around the outside needs replacing in sections. This will involve unpling the rocks on top first. The roof also needs repainting and checking to see if waterproof. The old fire extinguisher has already been removed to be checked. It has been replaced with a fire blanket. The extinguished will be returned once checked.

IT

Steve: We implemented a new database this year. It is much faster than the previous one. A new web site will be launched in January 2008. That's about it.

Publications

Stuart: This year's Mountaineers have been the best since the 1980s.

Steve: There were 3 mountaineers this year. I will pass down template to the next publications officer.

Alison: The Mountaineer has looked very professional this year. We have been considering making an ultimate o-week edition to be available every year.

Round of applause for Steve's efforts on The Mountaineer.

Other Business

Membership Prices

Lincoln: The club gave the committee the power to set prices for last year only. We need to be able to do this on a more permanent bases. I motion "that the annual subscription for membership of MUMC be set at \$20 for students, and \$50 for non-students".

Mac: I second.

Motion passed without objection.

Dale: We need active members. You can't go a trips with non active members.

Elections

Lincoln: The committee can function next year but there is a vacancy for the role of president.

Dale: It is passed disappointing no one has a vision for club and would like to step up. At the first incoming committee meeting there is an opportunity for people to turn up and volunteer to fill empty roles. If you didn't want to stand at the AGM you should come to that meeting.

Alison: You can run for things jointly but not for president or vice-president. At this stage you could volunteer to run even if only around for half a year. The president's role is to provide the vision and is not so much an admin. role. A lot is delegated but it is better if people are on campus.

Lincoln: There are no contested positions so no need to vote.

2007/2008 Committee Nominations

Executive (voting)

President:	none
Vice President:	none
Secretary:	Grace Phang
Treasurer:	Dave Ellis
Assistant Treasurer:	none

Convenors (voting)

Bushwalking:	Sam Flewett
Rock Climbing:	none
Canoeing (kayaking):	Kat Martin & Andrew Nurse (joint)
Ski Touring:	Greta Raymant & Pete Crockett (joint)
Caving:	Lincoln Smith
Mountaineering:	Dale Thistlethwaite

Other (voting)

Publications:	Dhugal Bissett
Gear Store Officer:	none
General Member:	Helen Duffer

Non-Voting

Canyoning:	none
Canoe Polo:	none
Rogaining:	none
Hut Warden:	none
IT officer:	none

Stuart: I declare the previous committee dissolved and appoint those nominated as the new committee.

Grace: Thank you to Lincoln and previous committee. Can the new committee stay back to discuss next meeting.

Stuart: Many thanks to Mac, Alison and Lincoln who have given many years of service.

Meeting closed 7.35pm

THE OTHER BLUE MOUNTAINS

The club's climbing convenor tells us about a late fall climbing trip to a less popular climbing destination.

BY ALICE LEPPITT AND TIM WALLACE

COMMON WISDOM HOLDS that the Blue Mountains is a user-friendly place to climb: conventional, well-bolted climbs with generally straightforward access. They are often seen as something in opposition to the more pure, correct forms of climbing to be found in our own state of Victoria.

In late May, Tim and I drove the thousand kilometers for five days of user-friendly bolt clipping. However, after three days of this we yearned to do some 'real' climbing. No one would go to Mt Arapiles to go ice climbing. So, being in the Bluies, there wasn't much point hunting down intimidating traditionally protected lines—surely there had to be some bolted ones! With this in mind we headed to Pierces Pass. Our objective was the five star classic Weazleburger: why on earth they chose a five system instead of three, seven or twenty-one star system is beyond us, but by all accounts Weazleburger was a modern classic.

Accessing the route via a thirty minute walk down to the 'lunch ledge', we elected to hit up a three star grade 20 single pitch route to 'warm up'. Given it was almost the beginning of winter, the cliff was in the shade and it was blowing a gale – all we did was get colder. From the lunch ledge, you conveniently rap down directly above Weazleburger. A friend who lives in the Blue Mountains had informed us that a 'better' approach was to scramble further along the ledge to another rap station. So we got down on all fours and precariously crawled across a very narrow shale band, a section of especially crappy rock that comfortably falls off the 100+ meter drop if you touch it. We came upon a new looking rap station and decided it was the right one and set up our rope.

Tim set off first with the rack, taking his time. He tried to establish where, exactly, we were. He had with him 15 quickdraws and a selection of cams and wires—we had intentions to do a single pitch traditionally protected route as a warm up first. This

additional equipment proved to be quite handy when Tim reached the end of the rope 30 meters down. Dangling in space approximately 80 meters off the deck, there was no rap station in site. Luckily he was able to fabricate a dubious anchor system in the shaley choss that happened to coincide with the end of the rope. With Tim free from the rope, I was able to set up the second 60 meter rope so we could rap 60 meters down to a ledge, which Tim though might contain a rap station. Happily his prognosis proved correct and we were soon safely on the ground.

Tim having just genuinely feared for his life, it seemed only fair that I was the next to endanger themselves. I have a natural attraction to arêtes—their square cut beauty and the stylish technique they encourage—I reckon they're the best climbs around. Named 'Old Skool', the first ascent was by the pioneer of modern climbing in the Grosse (the valley Pierces Pass is contained in), Mike Law. We found out later that he "over-stars all of his routes so they will actually get repeated" and that all of the routes in the Grosse are graded to take into account length, belays, loose rock etc as well as technical difficulty. This struck us as being odd—in Victoria the most heinous piece of old school nonsense might at best have a cryptic reference to its 'sporting' or 'technical' nature.

I started climbing and more or less straight away was amongst it. At around six meters, one or two meters short of clipping the first bashed in carrot (only the most popular routes get glue-ins or expansion bolts), I knocked off a block the size of a basketball with my foot—luckily I was holding on to something solid! Having clipped the bolt, I started breathing at a regular rate and sauntered up the fairly run-out although completely delicious arête. After around 40 meters of fantastic climbing I topped out and Tim scuttled up after me. Being a free standing pinnacle we rapped off to the ground and headed to the base of Weazleburger.

I generally consider grade 21 to be my on-sight limit. Whilst I was very pleased to have fired the previous climb ground

up, I was also very unnerved. This wasn't the Blue Mountains I knew and as our next proposed route would go grade 21, 23, 21, I was concerned. Owing to the quality of the rock, conventional (lots and lots) mountain bolting would cause most routes at Pierces Pass to collapse into the Grosse River below under the combined weight of all that steel. That said, from the ground up we were looking at glued in, moderately spaced rings.

Starting as a somewhat desperate slab (ooh it was nice), the route then launched up a fantastic red wall—40 meters of amazing incut edges, side pulls and glorious friction—I'd do that again! I was pretty pleased when I reached the ledge. At this point Tim was quite intimidated. Further upward progression was entirely dependent on him being able to climb through the crux in the next pitch. Tim reckoned this pitch was the best on the climb—thin face climbing, outrageous exposure, fantastic moves. As it happened he managed to climb through this physical and psychological bottleneck. Although he fell a couple of times on the crux a few meters off the ledge, it was an acceptable accomplishment. It also meant we only had a pitch of grade 21 between us and success!

A bit tired and hungry, however very motivated by Tim's lead, I set off on the last pitch. Continuing to be an impressive climb, this pitch offered an exposed, overhanging, juggy section before easing off to top out onto the lunch ledge. Topping out was exhilarating but also a relief—if we hadn't gotten through the grade 23 pitch, it would have meant rapping back down and racing the winter light out on a 120 meter grade 19. Nevertheless we successfully completed the climb and Tim even had time to race up a four star, single pitch grade 21 above the ledge. I'm saving that one for next time—I was wrecked!

A pleasant walk out of Pierces Pass completed a day of adrenaline, adventure, uncertainty and excitement – exactly what we were looking for in the other Blue Mountains!



BY HELEN DULFER
PHOTOS BY ANDREW NURSE

WE HAVE PLAYERS. We have kayaks, paddles, decks, life jackets and helmets with protective wiring for our faces. We have a ball and goals. Now all we need to do is work out how the hell you actually play canoe polo!

As the pool rolling sessions came to a close at the end of May I started to investigate the idea of starting an MUMC canoe polo team. I found support, help and advice from a number of ex-canoe-polo-players and before long I found myself recruiting team members within the club for a sport that I had never even watched. Well, it should be an interesting experience...

I was excited to find that we would need more than one team to accommodate all the people interested in playing and I subsequently found myself under a pile of paperwork. While I was capable of answering emails, filling in forms and generally organising the team, it became evident that my knowledge of the sport was extremely limited.

The answer: a training session!

On a Sunday afternoon in the middle of June, MUMC's new canoe polo recruits took a break from their exam study and made their way to the banks of the Maribyrnong River. David Pillekers, who is a key organiser of the Melbourne Canoe Polo Competition, gave us an excellent break down of the many rules and hand singles involved in the game. We then hit the water and learnt a number of valuable lessons and skills, including throwing and catching a ball whilst in a kayak, defensive

setups, goal keeping, and shooting.

By the end of the session everyone had a better idea of what they were getting themselves into and everyone was still enthusiastic to be on the team. Mission accomplished. However, it was obvious that our new skills could not match that of the national team that began training as we left the river! At least there is room for improvement.

The new OXO canoe polo teams are now awaiting the commencement of the season. Thank you to everyone at Canoeing Victoria and MUMC who have helped get MUMC back into the competition. I'm sure that the first few games will prove to be very entertaining and amusing for everyone involved.

There is one thing I know for certain: not only is canoe polo an amusing conversation topic with just about anyone outside the club, but coupled with ro-gaining (competitive orienteering, *not* the regrowing of hair) on my CV, it should provide me with some very interesting job interviews!



YOU PLAY IN A POOL, RIGHT?

Helen Dulfer, the Club's Canoe Polo Convenor, describes the return of the sport to mumc and the two teams first practice session on the Maribyrnong River in July.

After scoring a goal in the practice session, Meghan Bishop paddles up to retrieve the ball from the net. The goals are rectangular nets suspended two metres above the water. The goalie waits under the goal holding his paddle above his head so that he can block incoming shots on goal.



Helen Dulfer gives Emma Bland a hold so she can recover from being tipped into the river, while David empties her canoe (below). Players often jostle and bump each other's boats for control of the ball, which can end upside down. Emma swims to the shore with Lauren Chester, ending an exciting afternoon (above).



THE MOUNTAINEER

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