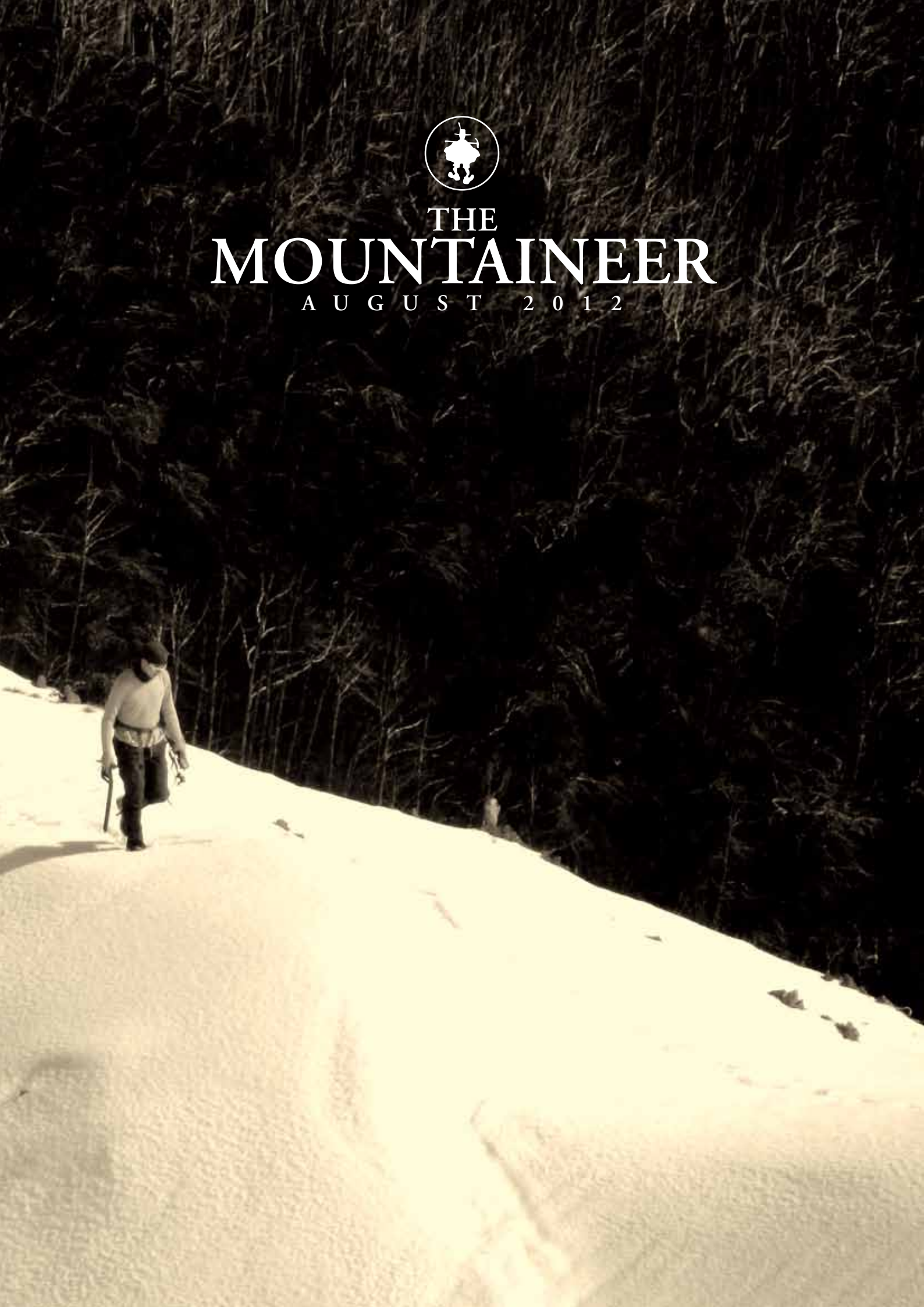




THE MOUNTAINEER

AUGUST 2012



THE MOUNTAINEER

AUGUST 2012



JOURNAL OF THE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

CONTENTS

- 3 Presidential Decree
- 4 Editorial
- 5 Barnacle Bill
- 6 From Our Club Officers

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10 The Last Kind of Hunger
STU HOLLAWAY | 34 The Bushwalker's Dilemma
MONA JOHN VON FREYEND |
| 12 Andersens
ANTHONY CUSKELLY | 40 West Coast Weeding
ALEX THOMPSON |
| 13 Japow
KARA HEALD | 43 Rescue 101
ANTHONY CUSKELLY |
| 15 OXOMan Interviews...
MITCHELL STEPHEN | 44 French Footwork
GAETAN RIOU |
| 16 Grand Traverse: New Zealand's
Highest Mile
DALE THISTLETHWAITE | 45 Learn to Lead
AARON LOWNDES AND KAROLINA KORVASOVA |
| 22 The Egg Memorial Route
GAETAN RIOU | 47 Grosed Out
DALE THISTLETHWAITE |
| 27 Folio: Wild Places, Wild Times
JESSE BATES | 52 Comic: Super-Safe Girlz
TESIA JANKOWSKI AND MONA JOHN VON FREYEND |
| 31 Vertically Challenged
CHELSEA BRUNCKHORST | 54 Vale: Bill Bewsher OXO
DALE THISTLETHWAITE |

COVER
Luke Gogolkiewicz walks towards Mt Feathertop's snowy summit on the annual Midnight Ascent pilgrimage. Photo by Romain Thevenot

ABOVE
Gaetan Riou on the slopes of Mt Green, New Zealand. Photo by Luke Gogolkiewicz



TANYA CRAIG
President

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

WELCOME BACK TO ANOTHER edition of the greatest magazine to feature a knobbly-kneed, feather-adorned, stock-cube-inspired mascot.

What's been going on? Well, MUMCers have been pretty busy over the past year, with a healthy dose of extended adventures in Tassie, the Blueys and the like. In its second year back, the Intro Trip was a huge success, and the addition of a rogaine to its line-up only increased the awesomeness.

We've had trips for climbers and walkers happening almost every weekend and paddling has been in boom-town, which is fantastic considering it was on the brink of disappearing from the club only a few years ago.

Slowly but surely the club is trying to return to its former glory days when we were leaders in things outdoorsy. We have made a significant step by announcing MUMC's first guidebook in many years. Thanks to the efforts of Stu Hollaway, Chelsea Brunckhorst and their gaggle of assistants—sometime soon(ish) you will be able to find a magnificent guidebook to climbing at Cape Woolamai in your favourite outdoors shop.

Speaking of glory, the MUMC Adventure Grant was designed to encourage MUMCers to embark on adventures of greater scale than our regular trips. With the latest round of applications only just in, people are already talking about their plans for next year's grant and the ideas are only getting more epic.

If you are heading out on an adventure soon, don't forget to bring your camera and get some snaps for *The Mountaineer* and the upcoming Pie & Slide Night. And if you need some inspiration, just head for Tassie—it's addictive.

Thanks everyone for an amazing year; now let's have another one!

Tanya Craig,
President.

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

MUMC ONLINE
Full colour PDF versions of past editions of *The Mountaineer*, as well as information about the club and how to join, can be found at our website:
mumc.org.au

MEETINGS & GENERAL ENQUIRIES
Regular meetings are held at the MUMC clubrooms each Tuesday at 7pm.
For specific questions about the club, contact the club secretary:
secretary@mumc.org.au

MAILING ADDRESS
MUMC
c/o MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SPORT
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
PARKVILLE VIC 3010
AUSTRALIA

CHASING PEAKS



PHOTO BY JESSE BATES

Despite it being nearly 12 years ago, the sight of my first real mountain remains seared in my memory. If the impression was a photograph, the ageing edges would be whitened and dog-eared, and its true colours warped by time. But as I remember it, it was the 5.45am hulking mass of Nepal's moonlit Annapurna I, incandescent under an amethyst sky, a roof dusted in twinkling stars. Despite the faded recollection, it remains one of the most magical moments in my life.

Mountains beguile many who are into the outdoors, and it is no surprise that some stellar peaks have captured the hearts of many an OXO. One of these OXOs was Eng Wu Ong, or 'Egg', as we came to know him. Egg was one of the most curious club characters of his era. Many MUMCers recall fondly his unrivalled obsession with gear and insatiable appetite for climbing—an appetite that, one day, would lead him to the mountains.

There I imagine he found the same things I did: serenity, clarity, that energy you find in that void between snow and cerulean skies. Sadly Egg also found his end, losing his footing some few hundred metres below Mt Aspiring's perfect summit.

I have often wondered how Egg felt in the last seconds before his fall. If he felt alone or uncertain about how the next few moments in his life would pan out.

As I look at the image I chose for this edition's contents page—of club member Gaetan Riou leading up the slopes of Mt Green, a lone figure on vanilla snow—my thoughts replay. How does he feel, leading into the unknown? With nothing but a single line tethering him to a distant companion?

I suppose, likely little different to how I feel each time I gaze up at a line: absentmindedly reaching for my chalk bag, taking my first tentative steps away from a silent partner, I don't know how the next few moments of my life will pan out.

On 25 January 2012, MUMC members Stu Hollaway, Gaetan Riou, Nathan Jancauskas and Luke Gogolkiewicz established the first ascent of Point MUMC, The Egg Memorial Route (NZ 4-). Gaetan tells their story on page 22 of this edition of *The Mountaineer*.

Chelsea Brunckhorst

editor

publications@mumc.org.au

THE MOUNTAINEER
AUGUST 2012

Established 1961

PUBLISHER Melbourne University Mountaineering Club
EDITOR Chelsea Brunckhorst publications@mumc.org.au
SUB-EDITOR Emily French
PROOFERS Mac Brunckhorst, Anthony Cuskelly, Kara Heald, Krissie Piskorz
ADVERTISING Chelsea Brunckhorst, Mona John Von Freyend
DESIGN & PRODUCTION Chelsea Brunckhorst

CONTRIBUTORS

Syed Shaffique Aljoofri, Bec Austin, Jesse Bates, Rose Beagley, Róisín Briscoe, BSAR/Monica Chapman, Tanya Craig, James Cristofaro, Anthony Cuskelly, Luke Gogolkiewicz, Kara Heald, Tom Heald, Stu Hollaway, Josh Howie, Tesia Jankowski, Mona John Von Freyend, Ryan Judd, Karolína Korvasová, Sean Ladiges, James Louw, Aaron Lowndes, Gaetan Riou, Mitchell Stephen, Sally Stokes, Romain Thevenot, Dale Thistlethwaite, Alex Thompson, Ben Webb

ENQUIRIES

Melbourne University Mountaineering Club
c/o Melbourne University Sport
University of Melbourne
PARKVILLE VIC 3010
Australia
publications@mumc.org.au

DISTRIBUTION Melbourne University Mountaineering Club

SUBSCRIPTION *The Mountaineer* is available exclusively to Melbourne University Mountaineering Club members. Visit mumc.org.au for membership details.

ADVERTISING Rates are available upon request. Contra deals are considered.

CONTRIBUTIONS All contributions (photography, news, short articles, features) are welcome. Send submissions to publications@mumc.org.au

PRINTING Minuteman Press, South Melbourne

The Mountaineer is published twice a year by Melbourne University Mountaineering Club.

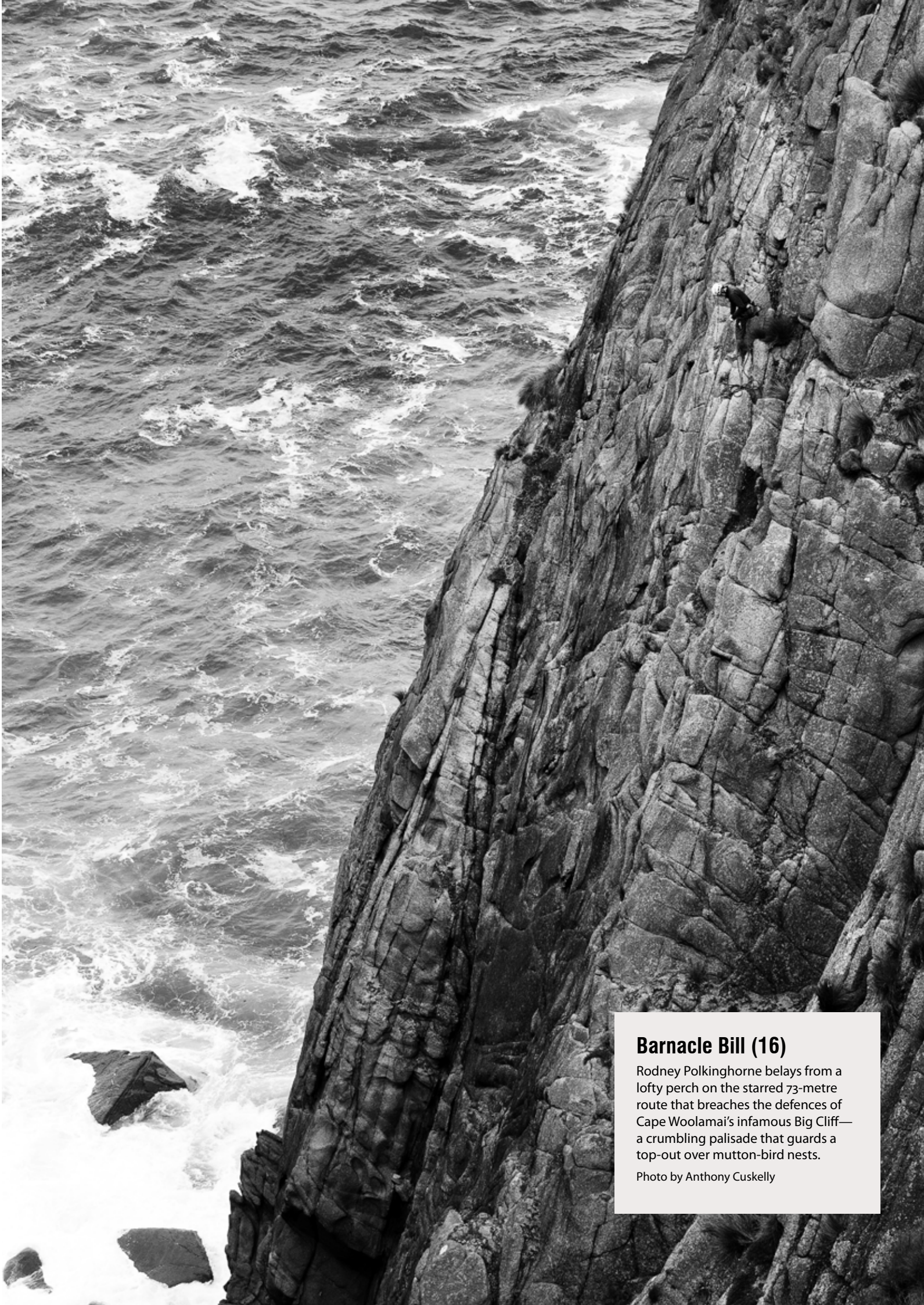
The Mountaineer is printed and produced in Australia. All rights reserved. Copyright 2012 Melbourne University Mountaineering Club. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB was founded in 1944 and aims to bring together those interested in outdoor activities such as bush-walking, rockclimbing, paddling, mountaineering, rogaining, conservation, caving and canyoning through trips and social activities. New members are welcome.

WARNING The activities described in *The Mountaineer* may be dangerous. Doing them without the proper training, knowledge and expertise can result in injury or death. Melbourne University Mountaineering Club makes no claims that information in *The Mountaineer* is accurate or verified. As such, the club, its authors and editors cannot be held responsible for any injuries or deaths resulting from incorrect or incomplete material. All articles represent the authors' views and not necessarily those of the publisher.

mumc.org.au

Paddy Pallin



Barnacle Bill (16)

Rodney Polkinghorne belays from a lofty perch on the starred 73-metre route that breaches the defences of Cape Woolamai's infamous Big Cliff—a crumbling palisade that guards a top-out over mutton-bird nests.

Photo by Anthony Cuskelly

ACTIVITY IN ALL THREE ROPE SPORTS



Rope Sports
Sean Ladiges
ropes@mumc.org.au

2012 has been a massive year for climbing so far, and we are only halfway through! I don't have space to discuss everything that has been going on, so here are the highlights...

Research is underway for Stu Hollaway and Chelsea Brunckhorst's guidebook for Cape Woolamai. The local crag is often overlooked, and we're hoping the publication will remind climbers about its fantastic adventure climbing.

Thanks to Aaron Lowndes, we ran another Learn to Lead course this year. For participants it involved four weekends of learning the ropes, starting with leading in a climbing gym and culminating in a multipitch climbing weekend at Arapiles.

Stu Hollaway has been helping the club's more experienced climbers advance their climbing knowledge and abilities. This year he ran a session on self-rescue at Camels Hump and a 'Close the Gap/Falling-Off' weekend at Arapiles, aimed at helping leaders push their trad-climbing limits.

MUMC members have volunteered their time to help CliffCare Victoria with trackwork at Mt Rosea, Arapiles and the You Yangs.

For more details on rockclimbing, email rockclimb@mumc.org.au

The first part of the year saw a number of beginner **CAVING** trips to Labertouche. This was followed up with an instructional weekend trip to Buchan to learn about vertical SRT (Single Rope Technique) caving.

After these beginner and instructional trips at the start of the year, we ran a very successful Easter trip to NSW (exploring caves in the Blueys) and a Snowy Mountains trip.

To give you something to look forward to at the end of Semester Two, we plan to run another multiday caving trip to NSW around New Year's to explore some new caving areas.

For more details on caving, email caving@mumc.org.au

The year started with a brilliant 10-day **CANYONING** trip to the Blue Mountains. This was the largest club canyoning trip in some time, and lots of first-timers made their way through some of the classic Blueys canyons, including Hole in the Wall, Empress and Butterbox.

Inspired by this trip, several OXOs looked for possible areas for canyoning in Victoria. Early in the year, Ben Webb, Rose Beagley and James Cristofaro made a descent of Bryce's Gorge near Licola and have been scouring the maps for new canyons to explore.

An Easter trip to Kanangra-Boyd National Park in NSW was planned, to try out the longer and more committing canyons on offer there. Unfortunately due to the extended rainfall in NSW this summer, the canyons were not accessible and the trip did not go ahead.

Another multiday trip to Kanangra-Boyd or the Blue Mountains is planned for the upcoming summer.

If you are interested in learning more about canyoning in the club, email canyoning@mumc.org.au

Sean Ladiges leads the fourth pitch of Whymper with Gaetan Riou belaying.

PHOTO BY SYED SHAFIQUE ALJOOFRI

MT FEATHERTOP HUT MAINTENANCE CONTINUES



PHOTO BY RYAN JUDD

Walking Sports
James Cristofaro
bushwalk@mumc.org.au

By far the most popular **BUSHWALKING** trips in the club this year have been daytrips or short weekend walks. But like previous years we've run some longer bushwalking trips to Tasmania over the Easter holiday period. Some intrepid MUMC members tackled Mt Anne in Southwest National Park and from what I've

heard, this trip was an exciting experience for all involved. It would be nice to see more of these multiday trips happening in Victoria—many people have approached me interested in such trips, we just need some leaders to put their hands up and pop a trip or two up on the website.

Volunteers have been busy at the **MUMC HUT** on Mt Feathertop, sanding and varnishing the upper mezzanine, re-painting the exterior of the hut and cleaning out the rainwater tanks, among other tasks. Alex Thompson has put in a stellar effort co-ordinating the hut's maintenance, and I

am told the visitor book in the hut is full of praise from hikers and ex-MUMC members alike. The trips have also given Alex a chance to continue the recent tradition of brewing beer in the hut in preparation for Midnight Ascent later this year.

ROGAINING has seen a large increase in popularity among MUMC members over the past few months. This I attribute chiefly to the efforts made by Alaster Meehan at the MUMC Introductory Trip this year. He organised and set a rogaine for the weekend, introducing our newest members to this exciting wilderness navigation sport. I would also like to thank both Adventure Junkie (adventurejunkie.com.au) who sponsored the rogaining event by loaning us a professional scoring system, and the Victorian Rogaining Association (vra.rogaine.asn.au) who lent us compasses.

The recent six-hour rogaine near Daylesford had a very large contingent of MUMCers, with both experienced and beginner rogainers attending. While many teams did well, a special mention should go to Eric Lambers and Sebastian Ward, who managed to score fourth overall on their second-ever rogaine.

2012 SKIING BEGINS



PHOTO JAMES LOUW COLLECTION

Snow Sports
James Louw
ski@mumc.org.au

If you've been pulling that doona closer to your chin on these freezing, wintry nights, rather than hibernating over this terrible un-summer, think about heading out into the white wonderland that beckons, untouched and captivatingly beautiful.

Early June snowfalls often see trips head up along southern Victoria's alps and move to more ambitious regions supportive of week-long or longer endeavours into the High Plains of Falls Creek, as well as Bogong and Mt Feathertop, or over the border

towards Kosciuszko, with the season extending into late-September.

If you have ever picked your way to the back of the clubrooms on a Tuesday night, you may have found our well-stocked ski store, where you can hire out a variety of touring, skating and telemark skis and snowshoes to suit just about every snow-oriented trip you desire.

With your hardware sorted, you can head to our partners in the bushwalking store, where you can hire snow tents, waterproof pants and jackets, warm sleeping bags and some comfy packs to hold it all. Then, with a smile on your face, you can click into your skis and head off! Chat to me in the club-rooms for more info.

FROM OUR CLUB OFFICERS

RISING LEVELS FOR CLUB PADDLING



PHOTO BY ROSE BEAGLEY

Paddling
Ben Webb

paddle@mumc.org.au

The quieter months of river kayaking have seen many beginners get their first taste of **WHITEWATER** on the Yarra and Goulburn rivers. James Cristofaro, Rose Beagley and I completed our Swiftwater Rescue Course in April, learning skills that are invaluable in running our Paddle Progression series for beginners. For the club's regular paddlers, recent standout runs include the Upper Rubicon and the Tara River (pictured), a run less travelled with beautiful rockslides and drops.

With floods throughout Gippsland just in time for the Queen's Birthday Weekend, Rose and I both took a step up, running Middle Creek and the Bundarra River. I also had the opportunity to go down the Cobungra River and get a taste of Victorian creeking at a perfect level. After that we journeyed all the way out to far eastern Victoria hoping for a run down the Buchan River, only to find out from a bartender that almost every track in the area was closed due to numerous trees coming down in the storms, making access impossible in the timeframe we had. So the Buchan remains elusive. It is an exciting time for MUMC paddling, as we begin returning to a level of self-sufficiency.

MITCHELL STEPHEN, canoe polo deputy: This year we have entered a C-grade team in the Melbourne Competition. At the Australian Canoeing National Championships over Easter, Simon Kingerlee played for the Victorian Social Team and I played for the Victorian U21 team—both teams won their divisions. We are always looking for new **CANOEPOLO** players—and we don't mind if you are a complete novice (there are grades suited to beginners). We train with Monash University at their pool on Thursday evenings, and occasionally at La Trobe University on a Tuesday evening. If you're interested, come chat to me in the clubrooms.

CLIMBING CONSERVATION RETURNS

Conservation
Josh Howie

conservation@mumc.org.au

This semester, combined climbing and conservation trips resumed, with club members volunteering for trackwork at Mt Rosea in the Grampians and in Pharos Gully at Mt Arapiles. These trips will continue next semester and hopefully we will also see combined bushwalking and conservation trips, where members can undertake work on bushwalking tracks.

Small groups went on two nest-boxing weekends with the Regent Honeyeater Project, and they had a lot of fun and saw lots of small marsupials, as well as evidence of a Brush-tailed Phascogale. Tree-planting season is fast approaching, and I hope that we can obtain the same good levels of participation as last year. There are currently up to six tree-planting weekends in the works, to take place between mid-July and late-September. These will be in the Lurg Hills, Little Desert and Lerderderg. Some will require registration well in advance, so get on our website and sign up (mumc.org.au).



PHOTO JOSH HOWIE COLLECTION

FROM OUR CLUB OFFICERS

A SUCCESSFUL SEASON FOR MUMC MOUNTAINEERING

Mountaineering
Dale Thistlethwaite

alpinism@mumc.org.au

After the success of the summer 2011–2012 season—which included the first ascent of Point MUMC, Mitchell Stephen's highly successful first season, and a grand traverse of Mt Cook (pictured)—the club has been busy preparing for the 2012 winter and summer courses. By the time this goes to print, the Backcountry Ski Skills/Avalanche Awareness Course and the New Zealand High Mountain Ski Tour should be done and dusted. But there's still time to sign up for the summer mountaineering course, which will be running again from 19 to 27 January 2013 for MUMC members looking to 'christen their crampons'. A very successful 'What is Mountaineering?' presentation was held on 1 May to give members an idea of what's involved in a typical first season in the New Zealand Alps. Thanks to everyone who came along and especially to Gaetan Riou, Luke Gogolkiewicz, Andy Green, Mitchell Stephen and Nathan Jancauskas, who starred in Stu Hollaway's highly entertaining video and helped out answering questions and providing commentary. Later in the year we will hold the more detailed annual 'Mountaineering Info Evening' in September, followed by the Pre-Alpine Instruction Trip at Arapiles in October. In addition MUMC mountaineers can look forward to the arrival of some new dry ropes, guidebooks and express ice screws for hire in the not too distant future. If you are interested in getting involved or you have questions, you can contact me at alpinism@mumc.org.au



PHOTO BY STU HOLLAWAY

Open Spaces Books



Walking, Rockclimbing, Cycling & Adventure.

osp.com.au
check out our newest titles

Guidebooks for places most people don't want to go.



DAYWALKS AROUND VICTORIA

GLENN TEMPEST

THE LAST KIND OF HUNGER

A new route on the Left Watchtower Face

BY STU HOLLAWAY

WE WERE LOOKING FOR an adventure, yearning to feel the tension between desire and fear. Hungry.

The opening bulge of the established first pitch (Watchtower Chimney Direct Start) provides a sobering start—after launching up cavalierly I feel the sloping edges above, then reach back down to place a solid RP before making the moves to gain the crack. Moving out past the corner, the jade–orange streak feels wildly slick and progress looks uncertain.

It is classic Watchtower Face climbing: small features yield a passage up a blank-looking wall and there is much more protection than you expect, although you still need to commit to the moves. With nervous elation and about half a bag of chalk I teeter upwards as each sequence precariously unfolds, leading to another smooth problem.

At two points a footledge runs from the corner across the wall, creating potential access to both Watchtower Chimney (12) and Take Five (20), but the features and my nerve hold steady to the slab all the way to the belay. My companions, Peter and Alice Arch, pick their way up the wall, laughing at the unlikelihood of the features and the absurdity of the high-stepping moves.

The way above remains a mystery. The tree-choked crack promises the easiest and least appealing option. To the right, discontinuous seams snake up a steep, lichen-flecked wall; to the left, edges and sidepulls end beneath a bulge on a blunt arête.

I head up the righthand wall, place some gear, grab a tiny flake and pull hard into the steepness above. Peter catches me; Alice catches the falling hold. The RP is good, the crumbling edge left behind is not.

I try other sequences and Peter catches me a couple more times. It is doable, but desperate. I make thin moves left to another set of cracks and snatch my way up fingerlocks to broken edges. Again doable, but with feet skating on flakes of lichen I think the pitch will never stay clean, so return to the belay.

Out left the rock is clean, the moves cool and the gear, in hidden fractures, is great. I launch up the bulge and into a blankness. I fall. After three more falls, I think I have it figured out.

Fingerlock, sidepull, work the feet up, reach over the bulge to a crystalline edge, paste left toe against crack, smear right foot super high. I crimp two tips against a knob of quartz and reef it violently down to near my waist while imagining my body releasing and floating up above my feet. Force and serenity. Tranquillity in expression.

For a brief moment I grasp the stillness.

I soar in elation.

I think: I commit therefore I am.

Desperately sliming the sloper at full extension, the world rushes

back into sweaty focus. Pedalling feebly I fail to raise either foot. It is like crimping on a salmon. Fighting the inexorable slide as my fingers grease the dish, I abandon hope and throw wildly at the rail.

I hang on the ropes.

I know: I am, but I am weak.

Too spent to complete the moves despite a number of attempts, I accept my indignity, traverse into the crack and make the hilarious struggle past the shrubbery to clear the bulge and reach the next ledge. The others arrive with a frosting of black soil decorating sweaty arms.

From the shade of the chimney I hoick my way onto the wall for the last pitch and lay a series of fictional RPs against the incipient seam of a thin flake. It is a study in self-delusion, but it leads upwards until a rounded pocket accepts a good cam and I can step right onto the water-streak. On the steepest part of the wall a tiny pocket winks open to accept a TCU, and a vertical wrinkle offers sidepulls to reach the slab above.

Like a lost explorer I had prepared for a stony desert but discovered Tahiti: warm and welcoming; beautiful and delicate, but reassuringly safe. It is a magic pitch of tenuous celebration.

We looked for an adventure; we were well rewarded. ☘

The Last Kind of Hunger (21, 90m)

Thoughtful and aesthetic climbing with good protection on brilliant rock. Harder and perhaps a bit more committing than Take Five (20), but without the runout at the start (although you want to concentrate for the start of pitch three). The line is obvious in the photo on page 273 of the current (2009) Mentz/Tempest guide. Descent: As for Take Five.

Start up Watchtower Chimney Direct Start, the bottomless crack 3m R of Take Five.

1) Take Watchtower Chimney Direct Start to the base of the corner, step left and head up the water-smooth slab (21) between the corner of Watchtower Chimney and the obvious streak of Take Five. At one point high on the pitch you can reach right to place a runner in the corner and continue climbing directly up the slab to belay on the small ledge as for Watchtower Chimney.

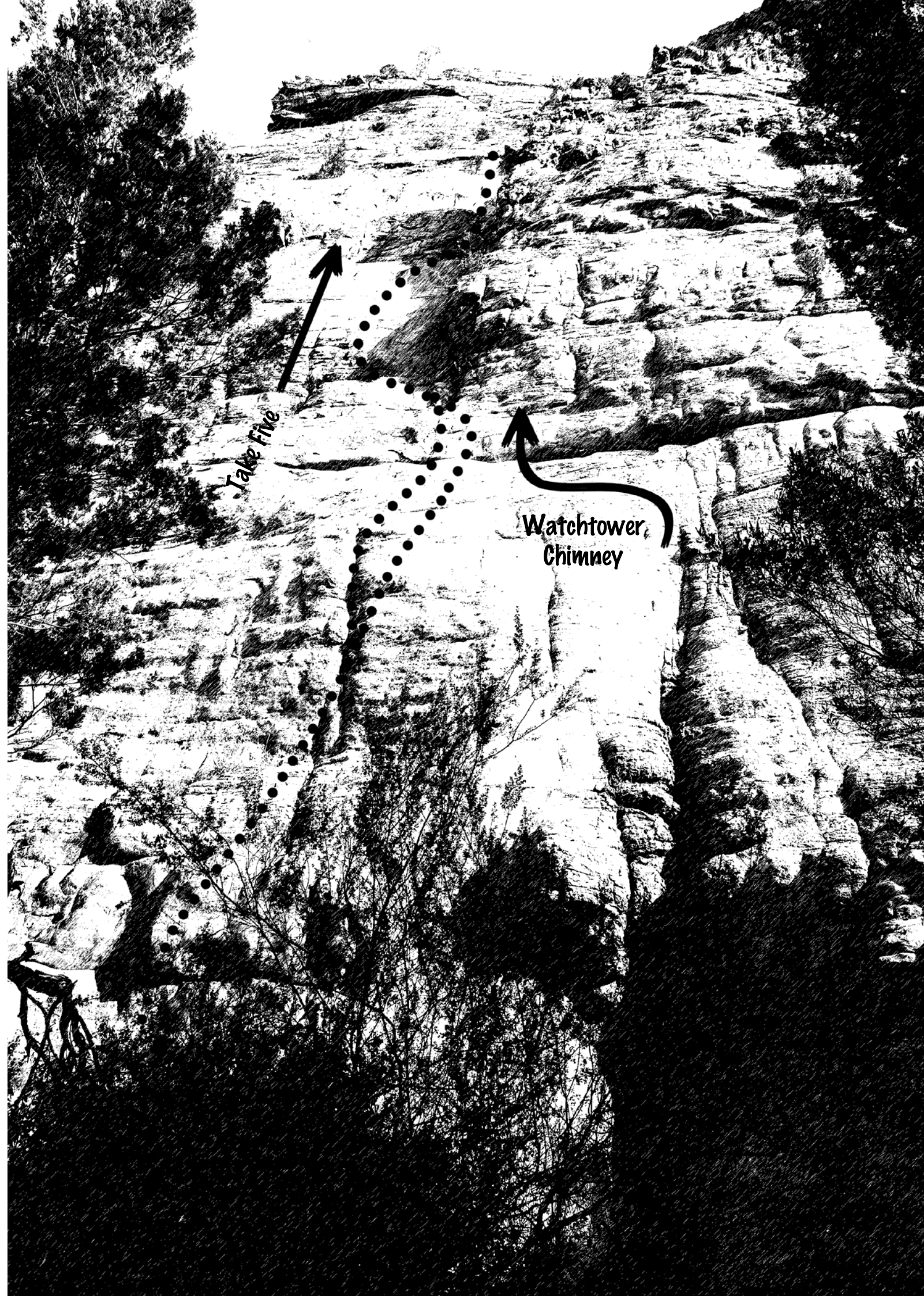
2) Head up left across the Pantouflage crack. Either climb seams up the blunt arête—excellent protection but hard with a slopey finish (24?, not led cleanly on 1st ascent)—traverse further left at grade 19 to follow Take Five or step back into the crack (the crux is the forestry required to exit back left onto the slab) to reach the ledge.

3) Move the belay into the bottom of the Driftwood chimney. From the base of the chimney, initially move up left towards Wall of the Afternoon Sun with poor pro for 5–6m, then step back right to head directly up the streak (18) to the hanging R-facing corner leading onto Rotten Row.

Follow Rotten Row, continue up the wall above or rappel from the rings about 8m R of the corner. There is a single U-bolt overhead at the base of the Driftwood chimney; a 60m abseil from this reaches the ground.

Gear: One set each of RPs and wires, one each hand- and fist-size cams, two each finger- to thin-hand-size cams, two to three sets of micro cams including the smallest pieces you can find, double ropes and plenty of draws.

—Stuart Hollaway, Peter Arch, Alice Arch, 4 April 2012.



ANDERSENS

You could explore Wonderland by yourself—or you could follow the White Rabbit



BY ANTHONY CUSKELLY

IF ANDERSENS IS THE Wonderland of Grampians bouldering, then Mac Brunckhorst was my White Rabbit. The rabbit hole in question was a 10-minute walk through the scrub along a well-worn path, under an overcast sky, to a large section of forest covered in boulders. Steep or slabby, easy or hard, they're all there on spectacularly solid, grippy sandstone.

With so many wonders so close together, it's easy to get distracted. We sampled the delights as we walked (we should have

quadrilled) to the 45-degree wall. Mac was interested in trying This Way Up (V6) and I thought the V4, 4:45, looked doable, with the added advantage of being about two metres away. With both of us attempting problems close to our limit (and Mac's fingertips being non-existent), we expected an eternal tea-time (to continue with the Wonderland theme)—but a couple of attempts each to work out the moves, and we were both done. I had a brief play on the V6, because it's nice to attempt the ridiculous.

We moved up the hill to where there were five problems in a small alcove. Mac did

BOULDERING

Mac Brunckhorst savours the delicate moves on Thumbs Up (V3) before tackling its tricky mantle.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY CUSKELLY

Recommended problems

SLAB 101 (V1): Trust your feet. After a couple of friction slab moves, it eases. Unusually slabby for the area.

GREY GUMS (V2): More like a miniature climb than a boulder problem, scamper up the near-vertical wall on thin sidepulls to the top. Being less than vertical, there's time to work out the moves as you go.

4:45 (V4): Apparently easy for a V4, with positive holds the whole way up. It's more about body position and technique than grip strength. And it looks awesome. Starting at the low flake under the 45-degree wall, the hardest moves are down low—then it's just fighting gravity until the interesting (but relatively easy) mantle.

three (he'd already done the other two), and I did four. The amount of tickage was starting to feel almost as ridiculous as croquet with flamingos, since bouldering can be more falling off the same moves repeatedly than sending everything in sight. Normally I tend to find bouldering a bit contrived, but Andersens is pleasantly free from that, and you could easily wander around trying everything that looks interesting.

I was keen to have a look at Sydney Highrise, a highball (roughly six-metre) V3, so we headed down in that direction, with Mac pointing me at a V1 and a V2 on the way. Sydney Highrise itself looked intimidating, so I tried George Street, another V3 nearby, while Mac rested his fingers. The rest of our group, Chelsea Brunckhorst and Kara Heald, turned up after their horse ride, and Chelsea got pretty close to sticking her V2 project. I gave up on the V3 and did the V2 instead as it had the same start moves. After that, we all jumped on a nearby V1 (although Kara didn't like the top-out).

At some point you have to wake up (I was starting to get shut down by V1s), so we started to leave... and then got distracted. Mac casually flashed Pinche and the Brain (V4), I almost worked out the crux, while the girls achieved a ridiculously balancey sit-start on a Vo. We finally managed to drag ourselves away (with tick lists for next time), driving home in the dark and grinning like Cheshire cats. ☘

SKIING

JAPOW

One last day in Niseko

BY KARA HEALD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTHONY CUSKELLY AND TOM HEALD

BEER, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, beep, beeeeeeeep!

Anthony Cuskelly: 'Ya-hooooo!'

Me: 'ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ.'

Five minutes later...

As the smell of tea and coffee fills our tiny studio apartment, I open one eye. A single eye, minus glasses, with blurry vision. I take in an excited Anthony making breakfast, drinking coffee, hopping into bright yellow board pants and doing the snow dance. This can only mean one thing... FRESH SNOW! I jump out of bed (or to be more accurate, crawl as fast as my sore legs will allow), eat breakfast, find my eyes and start putting on 10 layers of clothing.

10 minutes later...

Eventually, all clothing is in place. Now to find gloves, goggles, helmet, ski pass, lip balm, money, emergency chocolate.

Five minutes later...

Now we are ready to head to the heated ski-boot room, the hottest place in Niseko

‘Big fresh flakes are floating gently to the ground from a grey sky. The ski goddess has been kind overnight and 30 centimetres of fresh snow has fallen on our last day.’

(closely rivalled by the *onsens*, the local term for hot springs). By this stage of the holiday, we have learnt the ways of the boot room: do not put on jacket, helmet or gloves prior to putting on boots as you may pass out from heatstroke. Now to find our boots and start levering our feet in.

10 minutes later...

Skis and board boots are on, cranked up, and we're out the door.

Big fresh flakes are floating gently to the ground from a grey sky. The ski goddess has been kind overnight and 30 centimetres of fresh snow has fallen for our last day. We hop onto the ski bus, say hello to the politest bus driver in the world and make our way up the village, via the most delicious bakery, to find our ski pals Tom and Caroline.

Tom and Caroline are located, putting their ski boots on.

10 minutes later...

We're ready for the Family Chair, on to Centre Four, then up again on the Hooded Triple to find the first freshies of the day. We cruise our way down under the line of an old chair, with some excited 'Yews!' echoing across the snow and disappearing into the birch trees. The first run brings that magic feeling of floating over the snow, gentle turns being pushed on by a cushion of fresh powder. Excited grins meet at the bottom and we're on our way back up, this time going higher via the Pizza Boxes (single chairlifts with a seat the size of a pizza box



and no safety bar) and heading for the Slack Country (slang for easy-to-reach back country, off-piste just beyond the resort).

The grey skies are beginning to clear and Mt Yotei is peeking out from behind his cloud hat as we traverse our way out to Gate Four from the highest lift-accessible point on the mountain. We continue around the cornice and are greeted by the north-east face of Mt Niseko Annupuri. The tracks are minimal, so we whoop our way down the pristine slope, head for the lower birch trees and down to Jacksons. The boys hit some drops and we continue into the long traverse out through pretty birch forest into Hanazono.

Next up is a Hanazono hot-chocolate stop, nip through the park and back on

up we go. A visit to Blueberry Fields and Strawberry Fields (off-piste tree runs that are delicious in powder, but have no apparent relation to berries) is in order and Tom has an off-piste back flip to claim. The support team gets into place and are at the ready with GoPro, camera and video. Tom looks a little pale, but there's a slab of beer at stake. Hit one... over-rotation on to tails. Hit two... over-rotation on to bum. Hit three... CLAIM! High-fives all around and off we go for another powder run back down to Hanazono.

Late afternoon and the time comes for the last run, so we head back up to Gate Four. Mt Yotei now has his cloud hat off and blue skies welcome us at the top of the mountain for the last run of the holiday. We decide

Grey skies and fresh snow in Japan (previous page).

Anthony Cuskelly in for some air time (left).

Kara Heald, styling it (below left).

Mt Yotei (below right).

PHOTOS: LEFT BY TOM HEALD; ALL OTHERS BY ANTHONY CUSKELLY



on a slight change and opt for a different route with a hike out at the end. The perfect decision for the end of a perfect day; this route is less touched by other skiers and we have fresh tracks all the way down. Pausing mid-run in knee-deep snow, no one else around, surrounded by birch trees and the hushed silence that only snow can create, it is a magic moment. My skis float me down the last powder of the holiday and not even the hike out can remove the big smiles from our faces. ☺

OXOMAN INTERVIEWS...

Mitchell Stephen

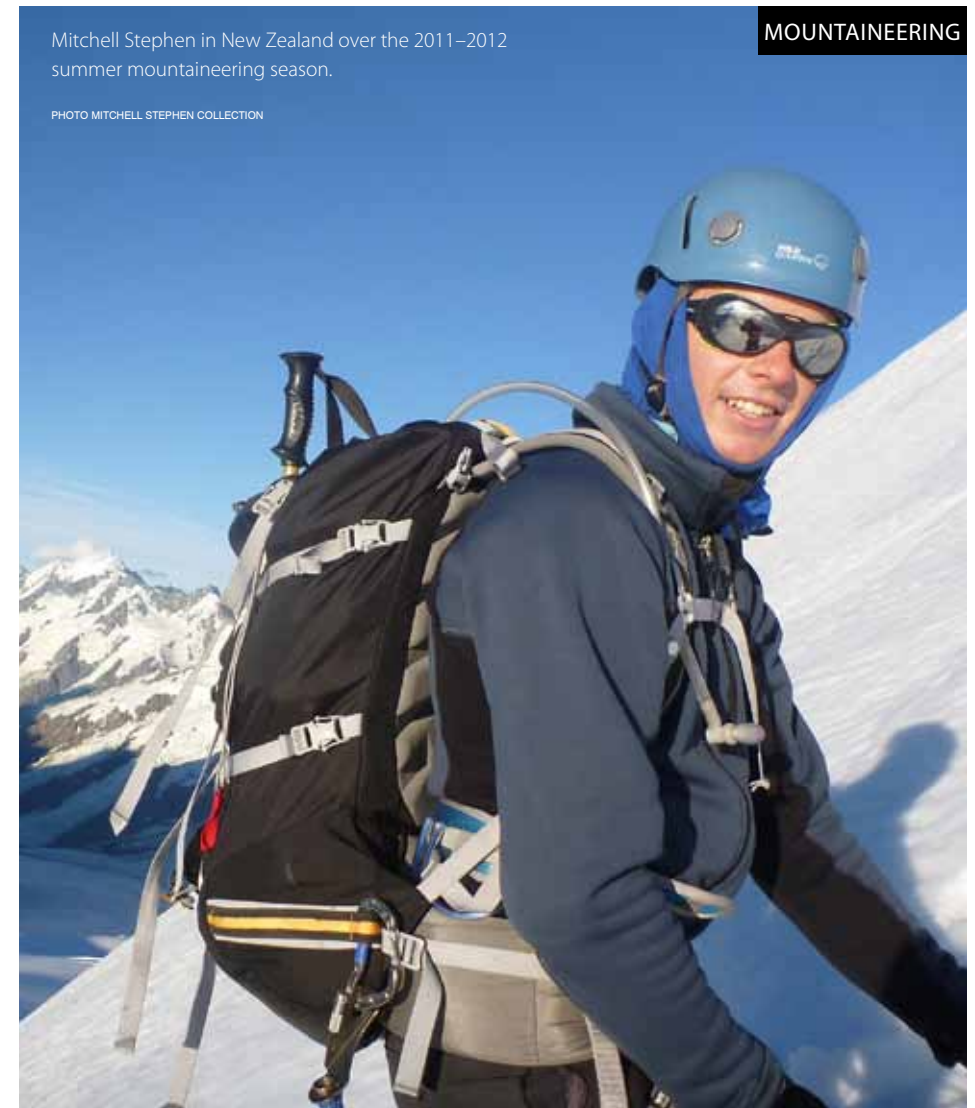
IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY this year, MITCHELL STEPHEN, 20, spent five weeks in New Zealand and attended MUMC's summer mountaineering course. His stay was roughly broken down into three periods of 10 nominal climbing days: instruction at Pioneer Hut (Fox Glacier), climbing from Centennial Hut (Fox Glacier), and climbing from Kelman Hut (Mt Cook).

WHEN I WAS 11 years old I watched *Touching the Void* at the cinemas. The next day I chucked a rope over a gum tree in our backyard and prussiked up it as Joe Simpson had done. My attempt ended with me slipping out of the leg loops and hanging from a length of rope under my arms as my cousins rolled around laughing. Seeing the movie, reading the associated books and hearing stories from my parents about their friend's exploits in the mountains really planted a seed.

I DID A DECENT amount of off-track hiking before I considered the course, so I had stamina with a pack on. My biggest weakness was a lack of rockclimbing experience, so this was where I focused most of my attention. Aerobically, I was already cycling to university most days, a 25- to 40-kilometre ride each way.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE WAS not splashing out too much on (Pata)Gucci gear before the course. It is easy to convince yourself you need the best gear, but in reality your standard bushwalking and rock-climbing kit is more than sufficient.

ANDY GREEN AND I took our first unguided climb slowly. Very slow. We followed the method Stu Hollaway had taught us, and plugged away. After a while we got into a rhythm and sped up. There was a feeling of excitement and trepidation similar to driving a car by yourself for the first time—the decisions we made could have very drastic consequences, and only your partner at the other end of the rope was there for you.



Mitchell Stephen in New Zealand over the 2011–2012 summer mountaineering season.

PHOTO MITCHELL STEPHEN COLLECTION

MOUNTAINEERING

ON ONE GLORIOUSLY SUNNY day, Andy and I were returning from a new route on a rock pillar. It was so warm that I had climbed in shorts and as a result got a very distinct tan line on my upper thighs from terrible sunburn.

A LEATHERMAN, CABLE TIES and strapping tape were my most handy bits of gear. With these I was able to fix a coffee percolator and then brew some real coffee that I found in the free-for-all box! I sure did miss real coffee.

AFTER EACH CLIMB, I looked forward to enjoying brie, salami, olives, crackers and wine on the hut's deck, looking up at the climb we just did. But stomaching oats with warm water and brown sugar for breakfast at 3am didn't agree with me.

WHAT YOU LEARN ON the course is applicable to many outdoor pursuits. Even if you never climb a mountain again, you will be a more efficient climber, a more informed walker and generally more prepared in the outdoors.

THERE IS A GREAT thrill in planning a climb and then doing it, followed by a great relief and warmth if you succeed or give it your best. In a way, completing a climb is similar to paddling a river—you don't conquer it, you merely complete it under certain conditions.

IF YOU'RE CONSIDERING THE course, become as fit as possible. Carry a pack and walk up and down hills for hours at a time. Be as proficient at rockclimbing as possible—it is critical to have decent rope-handling skills. Take over only the gear you need. ☺

Mitch's tick list

West Face of Humdinger (2796m), Grey Peak (2882m), Lendenfeld (3194m), Mt Jervois (2630m), Aigrette (2665m), Minarets (3031m), OXO Peak, Mt Aylmer (2699m), Hochstetter Dome (2827m), Mt Green (2837m), Mt Abel (2688m)

NEW ZEALAND'S HIGHEST MILE

GRAND TRAVERSE

In 1954 Faye Kerr was the first MUMC member to complete a Grand Traverse of New Zealand's highest peak. It took 58 years for another female club member to follow in her footsteps.

BY DALE THISTLETHWAITE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DALE THISTLETHWAITE
AND STU HOLLAWAY

THE GRAND TRAVERSE HAS a chequered and tragic history in MUMC. Of the 13 members who have seriously attempted it (i.e. reached the summit ridge) five have died in the attempt, and seven (now eight) have succeeded. In 1955 the 'three Johns' John Young, John Vidulich and John Hammond (all of them experienced mountaineers) disappeared while attempting the GT. The Three Johns Hut, on the site of the now Barron Saddle Hut, above the Mueller Glacier was built as a memorial. Then in 1965 Douglas Hatt and Russell Judge were killed while attempting the traverse; later, the MUMC Mt Feathertop Hut would be built in their memory.

But there were successes too, like that of Faye Kerr who, climbing with Max Cutcliffe, was the first MUMC member (male or female) to complete the route in the epic summer season of '53-'54—I could find no account of this ascent beyond Faye's staggering handwritten list of routes that she and Max completed in that year (including more than 10 10,000-foot peaks, a feat that the 1954 *New Zealand Alpine Club Journal* noted had only ever been accomplished by one other party, Englishman Harold Porter and his famous Swiss guide Marcel Kurtz back in the '30s), which was donated to the State Library of Victoria¹.

The next success was the party of four comprising George Edwards, Paddy Bodger, Rob Mitchell and Greg Martin, who in 1978, following the deaths of all members of the 1955 and 1965 attempting MUMC parties, were declared by Nick Reeves² to have broken the

'club hoodoo' surrounding the route when they made a successful traverse via Earle's Route.

Since 1978 it appears from available records that only two MUMC members have made the traverse: Stu Hollaway, completing the route twice, and now me. What struck me in researching for this article was how little about the climbing experience has changed. Greg Martin's account of his party's ascent in the 1978 copy of the then annual MUMC journal *Mountaineering* was remarkably reminiscent of mine. While Greg's party took a different path, technically not traversing because they both ascended and descended the Hooker Valley after travelling up Earle's Route and across the length of the ridge, much of their experience—the feelings particularly—remained common. I imagined what it must have taken in 1978 to gear up for a route that had that much baggage

attached to it and decided that Greg's team of four are remarkable men. What follows is an account of my ascent in 2011 with Stu, punctuated by excerpts from Greg's account of his ascent with the 'Hoodoo Gurus' (for want of a better name) in 1978.



I DON'T REMEMBER DECIDING that I wanted to do a Grand Traverse of Mt Cook. Stuart tells me that's how it happened and I don't doubt him—I would be lying if I said that most of the schemes ending with the two of us huddled in a bivvy stuffing ourselves with soup and couscous were not my idea (I'm an 'Ideas Man' that way).

It makes sense that it was my idea; it fits the pattern I've begun to unconsciously form when choosing alpine goals. I pick something I never imagined I could achieve, sheepishly suggest it to Stu, and proceed from there. I remember when I decided to climb Mt Tasman—it seemed ridiculous. A couple of years later I determined to climb Mt Cook and I casually dropped it into a conversation with Stu, half expecting to get a response along the lines of *The Castle's* 'Tell her she's dreaming.' I can still recall the shock when he said 'Okay.' Maybe the GT seemed like the next step. Maybe that hypnotising ridge seeped into my imagination while I sat in Plateau Hut and waited patiently for its moment to imprint itself on my suggestible mind.



THE SUMMER OF 2010 was my first attempt at the GT. On reflection it was probably never going to work out—emotionally exhausted from the aftermath of club member Egg's death, and desperately trying to distract myself, we trudged up a flooded Hooker Valley to Gardiner Hut only to be shut down by bad weather. That trip did give me some idea of what lay in store though, and I resolved to get fit and strong enough so that if I failed again next season, physical factors within my control wouldn't play a part.

In New Zealand December 2011, it was clearly meant to be. On our arrival a huge high-pressure system was building over the mountains and we rushed directly to Mt Cook. I would have liked some time to get my bearings, but conditions screamed 'NOW!' so only one full day after we arrived we were again trudging up the Hooker.

It is difficult to say who was more committed to our GT—myself and Stu, or our wonderful friends in New Zealand. From our Christchurch adoptive parents who supplied beautiful homemade dehydrated meals, to our team of Wanaka mountain-guide weather watchers who scanned metvuw.com for weeks before our arrival providing updates, to our local support crew of one in Mt Cook Village who, when we invaded her tiny one-room house, gave us her own bed and then kindly delivered our car from the start of the Hooker Valley track to the airport where we would emerge—we were deeply spoiled.

‘Of the 13 club members who have seriously attempted the GT, five have died in the attempt, and seven (now eight) have succeeded.

OUR GOAL FOR THE next day was a bivvy site below the summit of Middle Peak, rather grimly christened 'Middle Peak Hotel' after guide Jos Lang and her clients were trapped there for over a week. This reputation wasn't improved when climbers Mark Inglis and Phil Doole both lost their legs below the knee having spent 14 days also trapped there in 1982. We didn't get away super early—circulation issues and a tendency to get cold quick mean early starts aren't a great option for me, but we were out the door just before sunrise and heading back towards the base of our chosen ascent route—the North West Couloir.



The view north along the summit ridge as it appeared in 1978.

PHOTO SOURCE: THE 1978 EDITION OF MOUNTAINEERING

The trip to Gardiner Hut was easier than the previous year. No flooding and some canny route-finding through the ice fall meant we didn't have to suffer another dreaded ascent of 'the cables' on Pudding Rock. The next day's trip across the glacier from Gardiner Hut to Empress Hut was also a mostly leisurely few hours topped by an entertaining afternoon spent marvelling at the rotting contents of old food caches in the Empress fuel store (and wondering, on finding a particular alpinist's stash, how any one person could conceive that they would require that much 'goo'). Empress is a beautiful and remote place—with no air access allowed, everyone who has been there got there under their own steam.

1978: We reached Empress thankfully dumping the heavy packs with the thought that the climbing sacks would be much lighter. Two other climbers were there, with us just filling the small six-bunk hut ... For me, Empress has always held an aura of adventure and remoteness, even though at night one can glimpse the lights of the Hermitage Tourist Hotel from the door of the hut.³



The author and the view north along the summit ridge in 2011.

PHOTO BY STU HOLLAWAY



Stitch makes himself at home at Gardiner Hut (left).

Stu Hollaway low in the NW Couloir en-route to Low Peak (opposite).

PHOTOS BY DALE THISTLETHWAITE

1978: By the time we reached the rock daylight had well arrived. Reaching the ridge seemed to take a long time. We climbed on, enjoying the rock (except when dodging pieces dislodged by the rope above), sunshine and unfolding views.



STU WAS APPREHENSIVE ABOUT what would be required to gain the couloir, potentially a nasty schrund ice-climb, but we struck gold finding a relatively simple route by zigzagging all the way to one side and all the way back. What followed was many pitches of deeply enjoyable front-pointing. Conditions were stellar, with each tool making a satisfying ‘plunk’ as it penetrated the surface reassuringly. We zoomed up the couloir until it ran out. In good conditions the couloir extends all the way to Low Peak, but it had melted out sufficiently to make climbing the remainder of it slow and threatened by rock fall. We elected to do some rock pitches up the adjoining buttress to Low Peak. There had been significant snow fall in the preceding couple of weeks, but not low enough to fill the North West Couloir, however when our buttress joined the ridge some several hundred metres below Low Peak, this snow fall became brutally apparent. We trudged slowly through thigh-deep snow, sliding backwards heartbreakingly with every step. The sky clouded for a brief period, and when we reached the summit we were exhausted and could see nothing.

Stu looked dejected, and kind of worried. I tend not to totally trust my instincts on mountains; several times I have been heard to exclaim in a fit of pique ‘We’re going to die!’ only to have Stu

say ‘We’re not going to die,’ in much the same tone Arnie tells the child in *Kindergarten Cop* that his headache ‘Is not a tumour!’ But when Stu looks nervous, I get nervous. It wasn’t late, maybe 5pm. But we did have in front of us the descent to Porter Col and then the climb up to the bivvy site. I was also wrestling with my deeply held internal goal to ‘sched’⁴ from Middle Peak. The descent from Low Peak to Porter Col turned out to be a bit brutal. Unlike the last time Stu had completed it, the ridge was not snowed up, making it much steeper and slower going. We even abseiled one particularly tricky-looking rock step. While resting after the abseil, during a shameful moment of weakness, bleary-eyed and moaning, I stole Stu’s chocolate bar, stuffing it whole in my mouth—in a matter of minutes I was revived—and Stuart, bless him, was thrilled, while if positions had been reversed I can confidently say there would have been a death on that ridge for sure.

With my newfound chocolate energy, we plodded the last few hundred metres to Porter Col proper and then began the climb to Middle Peak Hotel. Despite appearing very close, our progress—having been travelling now for close on 15 hours—was painfully slow. And when I offered to break trail through the knee-deep snow the rest of the way, Stu looked so grateful that my guilt at the chocolate theft began to diminish. We arrived at Middle Peak Hotel just after 8pm, still in daylight. We’d missed sched, but there wasn’t a whisper of wind and the sky was clear. It seemed unlikely we would be enduring an extended stay, and for that we were very grateful. We ate an enormous dinner and more chocolate, and then fell asleep in our tiny bivvy tent atop ropes, cams, pots, billy grips and numerous other pokey implements.



1978: Eventually, by early evening, we reached the icecap as mist began to roll in around us. From here the summit was only about 400 feet above, but all we could see was steep ice disappearing above into the mist. Although an hour or so of daylight remained, the prospect of a bivvy on ice, or near the high peak of Cook, didn’t seem all that attractive (I had no foam mat), so we traversed to a rock outcrop ... Here we found enough individual sitting spaces, so after tying on securely we began the gymnastics of getting organised for the night without dropping anything ... we soon got settled on our uncomfortable perches.

The morning was dramatic ... The giant pyramid of Cook cast a triangular shadow miles out across the Tasman Sea. We could see much of the summit ridge, edged in gold, and the low peak of Cook was below us ... About 8am, a late start, we began climbing.



THE SUN RISES VERY early at the highest point in New Zealand, and we were woken by it, having once again eschewed the alpine start. By the time we’d eaten and packed our kit it was 8am and we were heading up the short slope to Middle Peak. To our delight we discovered a stonking set of tracks emerging from the East Ridge route and heading out as far as the eye could see along the ridge to High Peak. Gaining Middle Peak, we marvelled at the view in all directions, into both valleys and out to both seas. I’ve spoken before in *The Mountaineer* about types of fun (February 2010) and noted that mountaineering is often ‘Type 2 fun’—that is, not much fun at the time, but fun on reflection afterwards. The summit ridge of Mt Cook on 28 December 2011 was not Type 2 fun—it was pure, unadulterated Type 1 fun. There was so much awesomeness it was hard to know where to look (though at my feet became a popular choice because the desire not to plummet into either the Hooker or the Tasman Valley is rather gripping), but between that I stared down at the valleys, out to the ocean, and everywhere else besides with a grin from ear to ear.

Most of the traverse was a careful walk, while the steeper sections called for sideways front-pointing. When we reached High Peak, I just couldn’t believe that beautiful cap was the same crumbling heap I had looked at with suspicion from the Ngāi Tahu summit two years before. I hoped that I would never forget the view from New Zealand’s highest mile.

1978: We all enjoyed another hour on the summit, before leaving about 11am ... the entire ridge is higher than any other peak in New Zealand, so one really feels on the roof of the island.

WHEN WE BEGAN TO descend we met traffic—it was a great day for climbing Mt Cook, and we weren’t alone. Several parties on their way up curiously enquired where we’d come from—our reply of ‘the other side’ was met with warm congratulations. We reached Plateau Hut at a respectable hour and managed to fly out the next day, vaguely stunned by our achievement. My goal of two years was completed before we’d been in the country even a week.

1978: Thus ended the most protracted but also perhaps the most enjoyable climb that I have done. Living on the roof of New Zealand, waking to magnificent sunrises and mountain scenery, was a captivating experience. ☺

Dale Thistlethwaite became the second MUMC female to complete a Grand Traverse of Mt Cook. Her GT came just a year after the centenary of the first-ever Grand Traverse, made by pioneering Australian mountaineer Freda du Faur.

FOOTNOTES

1 The list is part of a collection of photos, stories and documents relating to Faye Kerr that were compiled and donated to the State Library of Victoria by her contemporary Ted Lovegrove.

2 Nick Reeves was himself tragically killed in 1980 in an avalanche on Annapurna III, on an expedition also attended by Faye Kerr.

3 Here Greg Martin refers to the previous Empress Hut, a small and rustic six-bunk affair built in 1953, used several times by Sir Edmund Hillary. This hut was replaced by the current 12-bunk hut in 1994. The new hut sits on a different site and it is no longer possible to see the Hermitage from its door. The old Empress Hut is now at the base of the mountain and forms part of the exhibit of the Mt Cook/Aoraki Visitor Centre.

4 Every evening during the summer months, the Department of Conservation (DOC) radios all the huts in the high alps—this is known as ‘sched.’ They check on climbers’ comings and goings, recording parties and their intentions, give a weather forecast and pass on any messages. The alpine day is punctuated by this brief contact with the outside world and everyone in the hut gathers around the radio in silence to listen to the forecast and hear which of their friends is where in other huts across the park. At the end of the sched, the DOC officer, having contacted all the huts, invites ‘any other parties in the Mt Cook National Park’ to make contact. I had an irresistible urge to press the ‘talk’ button on my radio and say ‘This is the Hollaway party of two from Middle Peak Hotel.’

THE *Egg* MEMORIAL ROUTE

The story of a first ascent



IN LATE JANUARY THIS year, I climbed my first mountains in New Zealand. Luke Gogolkiewicz, Nathan Jancauskas and I were on Fox Glacier to learn about snow craft in the midst of New Zealand's Southern Alps. Camped comfortably at Centennial Hut, we stayed on Fox Glacier for seven days, being taught by Stu Holloway how to climb on snow and ice, and travel safely on glaciated terrain. Stuart is a big advocate of learning by doing, so in the first four days, we found ourselves climbing some easy routes.

Not far from Centennial Hut, there is an attractive rock buttress that leads to a then unnamed peak on the right of Aigrette. Stu had been eyeing this off while we were learning the ropes—knowing he had a group with fairly strong climbing skills, Stuart decided to give it a go.



IT WAS A ROCK route, so an alpine start wasn't required—on the contrary, we wanted the rock to warm a bit. We left at around 10am, following an easy approach to reach a snow scoop at the base of our objective. In that cosy place we left our snow gear and put on our climbing shoes. It was going to be all rockclimbing.

The idea was that Stuart would go up first, seconded by Nathan. I was to follow, leading on the second rope, with Luke as a second. Stuart started on the obvious crack, but I decided to gain the face starting a bit further to the left, which led me to some easy slab-ish climbing. This first pitch ended on a big roomy ledge. I quickly realised that this was truly alpine climbing when I saw the ledge covered in loose rock. A little bit of cleaning was needed in order to avoid sending rocks on our seconders.

From there we could see a few options for the second pitch. Option one: starting on the right arête to then move onto the face and traverse to an obvious belay stance. Option two: jumping on a nice crack in the middle of the face, to then reach the aforementioned traverse and belay (this looked quite hard). Further left, it looked like a chimney would provide easy access to the belay stance. We chose option one, the arête and traverse—it looked like the most interesting and fun solution.

A short slab section allowed us to reach the bottom of the arête. From there, we climbed up a nice crack offering good protection. Following the crack on the left, a few delicate moves on small footholds took us onto the face. Still traversing left, the pitch finished

with a move around a bulge to reach the belay. Talking about it, Stuart and I thought it went at about grade 17, with leaving the crack to gain the face being the crux. Funny fact: that was my hardest lead on gear at the time. It looks like the mountains were a good catalyst for my climbing.

This second belay was a bit small to fit us four, but we squashed. The third pitch started with a lovely wide crack involving some nice bridging. The crux was avoiding sending a big block flying down onto our belayers. Alpine climbing seems to require a bit more precaution than regular cragging—we were always testing holds before pulling on them. That made the climbing interesting (some would say scary).

The next pitch had us back on the arête. It was now climbing with full exposure: nothing on the left, nothing on the right, but thin air. It was exhilarating. The climbing felt like a breeze—easy and enjoyable at a low grade. Unfortunately the pitch ended on a

small spike with no way forward. We had to rappel on the left of it to reach a cave, which provided a bit of shade for the belayers (who would have thought that mountaineering involved caving?). A short scramble through the cave took us to the base of the next pitch, back on rock.

A small traverse allowed us to once again reach an arête. We now had to cross 'the bridge': a big block perched between two sections of rock. Still on the arête, we sped through another easy section and wound up at a sheltered belay at the bottom of a steepening section. Face climbing led us across to

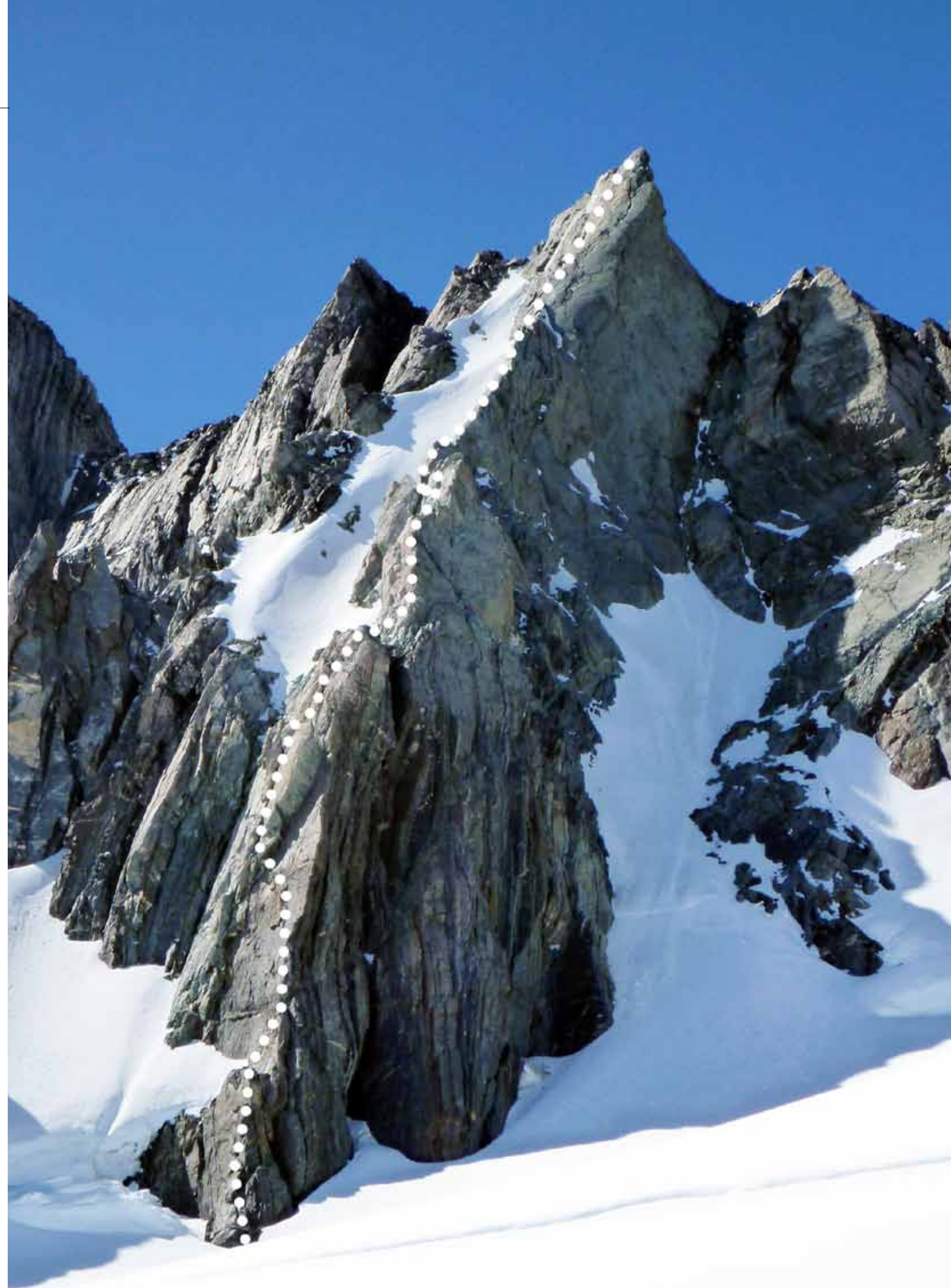
a perfect crack, a section of wonderful hand jamming that I thought wasn't long enough. As we reached higher ground, the rock started to deteriorate, and we had to take extra care not to dislodge loose bits.

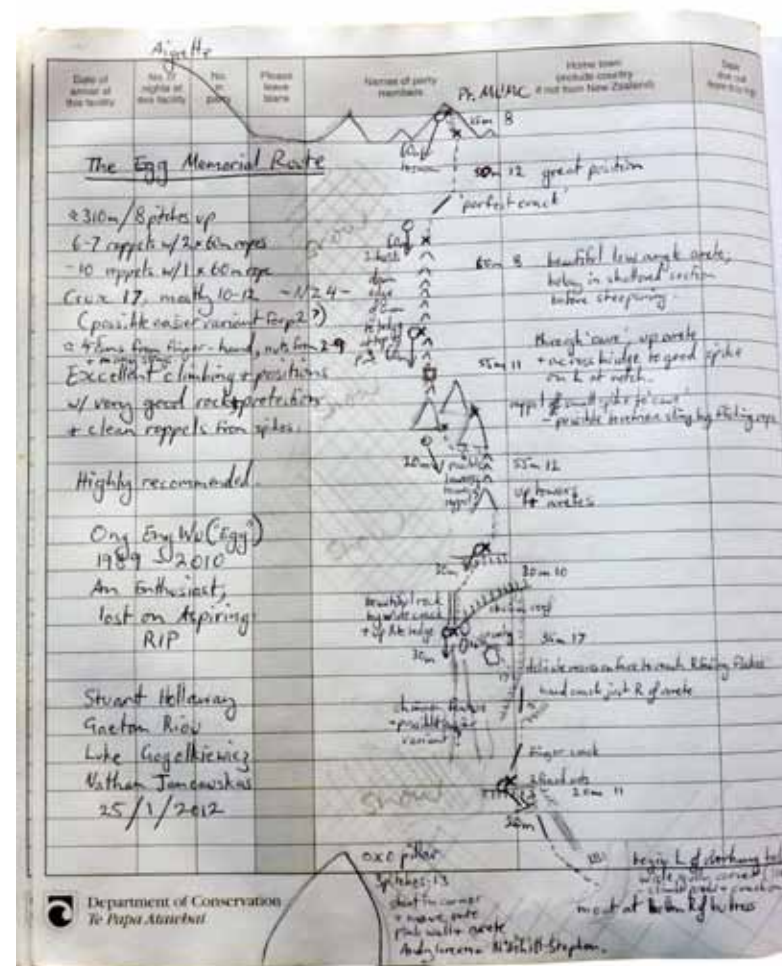
A pitch of about grade 12 led us to another big ledge—the perfect rest spot before making a bid for the top. All of us practically ran up the last 15 metres to reach the peak. The view was impressive, and when we looked down, there was simply a massive drop. It was well worth the climb.



WE DIDN'T LINGER LONG, because at the top we were only halfway—we still needed to get down. Stuart led the rappel—fortunately we could descend the snow slope to the left of the rock buttress. That made getting down quicker, although it wasn't pleasant walking down the snow in rockclimbing shoes.

'Sadly I was forced to abandon one of my favourite slings, the first one I bought. Oh well, it had a good life, and I'm sure it's enjoying the view now.'





The Egg Memorial Route (NZ4-, 310m)

The route is named in memory of Eng Wu 'Egg' Ong, who sadly passed away in 2010 while climbing Mt Aspiring. The route goes at about grade 17 (NZ 4-), the second pitch being the crux. There is potential for an easier variant that should make the route more consistent at about grade 12.

Descent: Six to seven rappels with two 60-metre ropes; 10 rappels with one 60-metre rope.

Gear: Four to five cams from finger- to hand-size, nuts from size two to nine, and many slings.

—Stuart Hollaway, Gaetan Riou, Luke Gogolkiewicz, Nathan Jancauskas, 25 January 2012.

The Egg Memorial Route follows a series of arêtes (previous page).

Nathan, Luke and Gaetan ditch their snow gear (above).

A hand-drawn topo (above right).

PHOTOS BY STU HOLLAWAY

Because we opened the route, there was obviously no established rappel. We had to build our own and leave some gear behind. Sadly I was forced to abandon one of my favourite slings; the first one I bought. Oh well, it had a good life, and I'm sure it's enjoying the view now.

A rappel is never really complete without a bit of stuck rope, and we started well with our ropes getting jammed on the first rappel. Stuart had to climb up a bit to retrieve them. The next four raps went without a hitch, but to throw in a last bit of excitement, our ropes decided to get stuck again on the last rappel. Luckily we managed to pull them free with some messing around and rope flicking.



FEELING PRETTY HAPPY ABOUT our new route, we started the walk back to the hut. It was late afternoon and by that time the snow had become quite soft. When travelling on a glacier this isn't good news—soft snow makes progress slow, but more importantly it means crevasses open.

Luke and I were on the first rope, leading the way carefully, avoiding crevasses. All was well until we heard Stuart yelling at us. Looking back, something looked out of place. Someone was missing. Nathan, who was leading the second rope, had fallen into a crevasse. We hurried back while Stuart started the rescue process. It became the perfect situation to practice a full crevasse rescue—we managed to get Nathan out quickly (once he managed to un-wedge himself). All this while, the two other parties at the hut were watching us while enjoying cups of wine. That was our last excitement for that full-on day, and we made it back to the hut without any further trouble, looking forward to some well-earned rest. ☺

FOLIO: WILD PLACES, WILD TIMES BY JESSE BATES



Sunrise at Mt Feathertop's MUMC Hut.

FOLIO: WILD PLACES, WILD TIMES BY JESSE BATES



Clockwise from opposite top:
Emma Harold in the saddle of Mt Fainter South.
Club members illustrate this year's MUMC motto,
'Clothing Optional', on the Great Ocean Walk.
Liv Johnson and Tim Tyers on a Featherstop trip.
Rose Beagley and Ben Webb at Pretty Valley Pondage,
Falls Creek.
James Cristofaro at the Razorback's southern end.
Melanie Oke at Diamantina Hut.
Gaetan Riou inside the MUMC Hut.



Clockwise from top:
An alpine view from Mt Feathertop.
Dawn at Mt Fainter South's summit.
MUMCers negotiate a rocky ridge at the Cathedrals.
Richard Bassett-Smith scales the domed MUMC Hut.
Luke Gogolkiewicz, Gaetan Riou, Mona John Von Freyend and Bec Austin outside the MUMC Hut.

VERTICALLY CHALLENGED



BY CHELSEA BRUNCKHORST
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STU HOLLAWAY

A self-described ‘grade six climber’ opens her mind to new possibilities

*A wise man will be the master of his mind.
A fool will be its slave.*
—Publius Syrus

THE GREAT CLIMBER **WOLFGANG** Güllich was fond of saying that ‘the brain is the most important muscle for climbing.’ The greatest weekend in my climbing career—not including the one when I ‘onsight belayed’ my (friend’s) hardest route—transpired this past May. It was right after my 27th birthday—a dreaded number, because

there is no longer any argument against the fact that you are in your *late* 20s. My hope of climbing my age was being swallowed into space much like an errant balloon. I had spent the good part of nearly three years fart-arsing around boulders and agonising over half-hearted leads that had matured into a routine: advance with creeping paranoia. The majority of these leads had been sub-10 (yes, Ewbank grades), which may put the absurdity of my doubts into perspective. Somehow I convinced longtime anti-fart-arse rock *fürher* Stu Hollaway to give me a



nudge (big kick). I told him I had spent enough time consolidating grade six (yes, Ewbank), and it was now time to step up. To grade seven, perhaps.



STU IS ALWAYS UP for a challenge, and soon after our conversation he announced the return of his alarmingly named ‘Falling-Off Weekend’: a weekend where he would entrap a small group of semi-determined pseudo-climbers (okay, it is possible I was the only participant to fit this description) and stretch—but not break—us.

Old Wolfie (see the start of this article) crossed my mind long before my feet even left the ground this weekend. It was one of those things, where simply committing to the weekend jump-started the brain. I was making good progress as a boulderer. Why not as a climber? I was so close to ticking my project boulder problem, The Animator (V4)—a sophisticated Grampians Track Side number that begins with the first move of the classic pant-soiler Sick Nutter (V5), and traverses leftwards on sloping holds. I had done both crux moves (for short people there are two), but frustratingly not from the start. But even the non-crux moves of that problem are way harder than anything I’d ever tried climbing. Nothing had even come close. So what was the problem? My conclusion was that my greatest barrier was my mind.

ON THE FIRST DAY of our ‘Falling-Off Weekend’, we thanked the Arapilesean weather gods by donning singlets and T-shirts in astonishing sunshine that had punctuated an age of dripping heavens—winter’s gloomy prelude. It was a day of marvellous climbing—Mitre Rock classics like Exodus (6), the absorbing Witch Hunt (14), Penny Dreadful (11) and, for the boys, Morgul Khan (18) and Salem (18). By five o’clock, the forecasted showers closed in on us like a curtain call.

Stu had spent this first day assessing our climbing, and over a Nati Pub meal (rudely terminated with the world’s worst desert—an old-boot flavoured ‘white chocolate cheesecake’) critiqued and gave us welcome feedback.

The second day was our designated ‘hardest oversight’ day. After warming up (overgripping my way up) the stellar Beautiful Possibilities (15)—not what I would have considered a warm-up previously—Stu declared he had the perfect route for me.



‘YOU’LL LOVE THIS CLIMB,’ he says with a mischievous glint. As I scurry behind him, I spy an odd collection of ashen bones in the dappled shade, poised like a macabre cairn. Ah, the remains of the last person Stu stuck on this climb, I think privately. I mutter a reply.

‘People often regard me with undue suspicion,’ he says in his characteristic gravelly voice.

‘I’m not sure if it’s undue.’

There is a hint of a chuckle. The thing that demarcates Stu Holloway from the rest of us is an ineffable air—the glowing aura of a man who knows a happy secret. Stu is a mountain man, and onlookers follow his zealous alpine ventures with a degree of envy—an inspired jealousy. You see, Stuart appears to hold the key to life—approaching the planet’s most daunting terrain like a child in a playground and life as a perennial recess.

Stu is wearing his ‘happy secret’ face as I rack up, ditching my heaviest gear as I eyeball the thin seam that is Golliwog’s Cakewalk, a short gem in a dank corner on Central Gully Left. Golliwog’s is a fantastic problem that screams out to my strengths: a combination of foot-jamming and balancey moves. Gingerly solving the slabby sequence, it is when my hand finds what I declare (loudly) as the ‘massive fuck-off jug’ near the top of the route that I realise what Stu’s secret is: an open mind and the belief that things are possible.



THIS ROUTE IS GRADE 17. Before this weekend, my hardest lead was a 12. I am fond of bouldering, so it is unlikely that ability was holding me back. I had never even tried leading anything harder. I realised even before I’d pulled on my pack that perfect pre-winter morning that I had been bound by my own ethics—the obsession with clean sendage and the unrelenting search for the perfect sequence, the purest movement. The values that I prided myself for were in fact holding me back. An invisible, Santa’s sack of worries I’d unknowingly been hauling up every climb. For many it is the fear of falling. For me, it was the fear of failure.

That day I went on to try the fiery Stoa Steps Out (18)—a style that totally contradicts my strengths—falling for the first time (*ever*) as I botched the sequence and barn-doored off good holds. Then, two things happened: my cam held and, when the moves became clear, I finished the route.



BEFORE THE WEEKEND, MY friend and *Vertical Life* editor, Ross Taylor, gave me a harness (doubtfully for my birthday, I am sure it was a happy mistake). When I got it I was over the moon, but part of me thought, ‘I guess this means I actually have to climb.’ (Boulderers don’t need harnesses...) As it turns out, the light outfitting and radical colours of Black Diamond’s Siren are diversions that take away from what others on the trip pointed out was the harness’ real power: the magical ability to make you climb five grades harder.

‘Now the floodgates will open,’ said a climber friend of mine, upon my return to Melbourne. ‘I can sense big plans for the spring.’

Yes, Stoats awaits my clean ascent—and many more climbs await a try. ☘

Two weeks later I sent Stoats. Thank you to Stu Holloway and Mac Brunckhorst, and well done to Mona John Von Freyend, Gaetan Riou and Rodney Polkinghorne, the other ‘Falling-Off Weekend’ participants who also broke their barriers—whatever they may have been.



Rodney Polkinghorne works the crux moves on Horrorscope (24) (top).

Mona John Von Freyend on The Stoa Steps Out (18) (above).

Gaetan Riou pulls through the final moves of Bam Bam (20) (opposite).

The author tiptoes up Golliwog’s Cakewalk (17) (previous page).

PHOTOS BY STU HOLLOWAY

The BUSHWALKER'S DILEMMA

Tasty, lightweight meals



BY MONA JOHN VON FREYEND, WITH SALLY STOKES,
DALE THISTLETHWAITE AND JESSE BATES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSE BATES

A hungry stomach seldom scorns plain food.
—Horace

But it won't say no to nice food either!
—Mona

LAST YEAR IN APRIL, I was planning a bushwalking trip to Tasmania. My mate Johannes Thiel and I planned to go to the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and cut across through the Never Never (has there ever been a cooler name for a valley?) to the Overland Track and back along Lees Paddock Track. This would be the longest self-supplied walk I had ever done. I had completed quite a few bushwalking trips prior, but usually they only lasted a weekend or the occasional three days, nothing longer than that.

When I was planning the whole thing, it didn't seem very hard. After all, you don't pack much more for five days than you do for two, apart from maybe a few extra bits like underwear and socks. The one thing, however, that had me pondering for quite a while was what to take for food. It would have to be light, since there was only so much weight each of us could carry, and it had to contain everything we would need from a nutritional perspective.

Of course we could have just bought the light, pre-prepared meals from the shops. But firstly they are relatively expensive, and secondly I have an inherent mistrust of anything that claims to be spag bol but only weighs five grams—surely that can't be right. (I have since been assured by several people that the meals actually taste quite all right, but the point about the cost remains). So there I was, trying to come up with easy, light, cheap, kilojoule- and nutrient-rich meals that would also mean we didn't have to eat the same thing every single day (you can get remarkably sick of mashed potatoes even on just a week-end trip!).

This article compiles some of the recipes I've come up with and some that are favourites of others in the club, as well as a few useful tips.

Tips and tricks

GOOD VALUE

A short(ish) bushwalk, like my five-day hike, will most likely not deplete your body's reserves and you will be relatively fine whatever you eat. But it doesn't hurt to pay attention to nutritional values to help you make the most out of your walk.

COUNTING KILOJOULES

When on a bushwalk, you will need more kilojoules a day than normal. As a general (and very rough) rule of thumb, I would calculate about 12,500 kilojoules for ladies and 16,700 kilojoules for guys. However, it all depends on your weight, the weight you are carrying, the terrain (you burn more on steeper terrain), the distance you're walking per day and the season (more in cold weather). Some of the websites listed on page 38 provide kilojoule/calorie calculators.

THE BIG THREE

When you plan your meals, try to cover these three food groups: protein, fats and sugars. The aforementioned websites listed on page 38 make an excellent read if you want more information.

PLUM-ING

For some reason bushwalking has a somewhat, ahem, blocking effect on my digestive system. It's probably the change in food (more carbs and much fewer veggies than normal), but I've found that eating dried fruit during the day helps a lot.

SOCK SPROUTS

I haven't tested this one yet, but I love the idea: one of the biggest annoyances about a long bushwalk is that you run out of 'fresh things' after the first few days, since fresh veggies just won't keep that long. For a solution to this problem, all you need is a thin sock, a handful of seeds (alfalfa, mung bean, cress, lentil or radish, for example) and a little water and, voilà, after three to four days, you can harvest your very own fresh sprouts full of vitamins. You only need to remember to dip your seed-filled sock, which dangles from the back of your pack, into water about three times a day. You should probably also watch out for mould carefully, just to be on the safe side!

Sally's suggestions

CHOOSE WISELY

Veggies need to be firm to carry well and not get squished. But don't bring anything that takes too much fuel to cook (carrots, broccoli, capsicum, sweet potato, etc). For longer trips I take the little packets of dried peas/carrots/corn from the supermarket. They cost under a dollar each, and when I arrive at camp I simply put them in a billy with water while I pitch a tent, and they are lovely and soft by the time I am ready to cook dinner.

REPACKAGE

For longer trips (seven to 10 days), remove your food from its packaging and stick them in ziplock bags. It sounds excessive, but when you see the 10 shopping bags shrink into two shopping bags you realise all the packaging left behind is rubbish you would otherwise have to carry out. As you empty the ziplock bags each day, they turn into handy rubbish bags.

CARRY SMART

I carry dried biscuits for lunches in a plastic lunch box and put it at the top of my pack with a hard cheese or tuna sachets or whatever you want with it, so that you're not having to unload half the pack each lunch stop—also without the lunch box the biscuits tend to be a bit pulverised by the end of the walk.

MEAT EATERS

Carry a salami stick and chop little pieces into a pasta or rice mix.

The extras

⌘ SALT AND PEPPER

⌘ If I have the space and don't have to worry about weight too much, I take a bit of **OLIVE OIL** in a small, water-tight container.

⌘ **GARLIC**—it is light to carry and makes every meal taste better and less bland. Just make sure every member of the party has some to avoid unnecessary blame for smelliness in the tents...

⌘ Dried herbs from the garden (such as **ROSEMARY**, **THYME** and **OREGANO**) are light and last long; equally useful is a bought herb mix from the supermarket, like Italian herbs.

⌘ Sachets of **CUP-A-SOUP** (or similar): great for when you arrive at the night's camping spot and are simply too famished, cold and tired to even think about cooking. The soup will warm you up and get you going again so you can deal with preparing the real meal later.

breakfast

Quick porridge sachets work really well. They only require hot water and two minutes of soaking. Add sliced, dried fruit and they're perfect on a cold morning in a tent in Tasmania's wilderness (funnily enough I wouldn't even consider eating this on a normal workday morning in Melbourne—way too sweet!).

TRY THIS

PACK PANCAKES

Buy instant pancake mix from the supermarket. Remove it from the bottle it comes in and store it in a ziplock bag. Add water and shake well. Remove from the bag and fry. For extra awesomeness, add little pieces of apple or raisins to the dough before frying.

lunch

Wraps are great for lunch. You can use Mountain Bread, which is super light and keeps up to two months. Fill them with sprouts, capsicum (only the first two days, and take them already sliced and cleaned to reduce space and weight), dried tomatoes, sunflower or pumpkin seeds and salami (the harder ones last very long). Hard cheeses also last surprisingly long—two to five days, depending on temperature.

SNACKS

Take muesli bars or make up your own trail mix out of mixed nuts (for protein and fat), raisins and dried fruit (for sugar) and chocolates (sugar and fat). One of the nice things about walking is that you are allowed, and practically required, to eat all day.

dinner

Miso Miso

BY MONA JOHN VON FREYEND

INGREDIENTS

2 sachets instant miso soup
1 pack udon noodles
½ pack dried mushrooms
A few slices ginger root
A few sunflower seeds
1 pack dry tofu (or buy normal tofu and press out the water between two boards overnight, before you take it on the hike)

METHOD

This is one of the fastest recipes. Soak the tofu in water for a few minutes (to reconstitute it). Add the instant miso soup, noodles, mushrooms, seeds and ginger to just over a litre of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. If you are cooking on an MSR Whisperlight or similar, cook it for five minutes and then let it soak in the hot water (with the stove turned off) for another five.

TIP>

You can fry the seeds beforehand for added flavour.

Stone Couscous

BY DALE THISTLETHWAITE

This recipe is light and keeps well, making it great for a mountaineering bivvy meal, or for long bushwalks. All the ingredients are available at the supermarket and you can assemble it at home, mixing all the elements in a single ziplock bag, minimising fuss in the field. It requires only boiling water to cook, making it great for conserving fuel and limiting washing up. The name ‘stone couscous’ is a reference to the old folk story ‘Stone Soup’ because it works fine with just a couple of elements but gets better with additions. The basic ingredients are couscous (3/4–1 cup dry per person) and Cup-a-Soup mix (1 sachet per person), but the beauty of the recipe is in the variations—these are endless. Two of my favourites follow.

INGREDIENTS (MEDITERRANEAN)

- 1.5 cups couscous
- 2 packets tomato Cup-a-Soup
- 100 grams biltong (my favourite is Canterbury Biltong (NZ), but beef jerky also works)
- 50 grams ‘Surprise’ vegetables (carrots, peas, corn—you can use fresh, hard veggies if eating within two days)
- A sprinkling of dehydrated onion
- 50 grams tasty cheese cut into cubes
- A pinch of dried ‘Italian herbs’ mix
- A handful of walnuts

INGREDIENTS (MUSHROOM RISOTTO)

- 1.5 cups couscous
- 1 cream of mushroom Cup-a-Soup
- 1 brown onion or spring veggie Cup-a-Soup
- 50 grams prosciutto, torn into strips
- A sprinkling of dehydrated onion
- A handful of dried porcini or shiitake mushrooms
- A pinch of dried thyme leaves
- A handful of pine nuts
- 50 grams ‘Surprise’ peas
- 50 grams cheese, grated or cubed (hard chevre or parmesan work well)

METHOD

At home before your walk, pre-assemble all ingredients in a ziplock bag. Empty the bag into a pot, add enough boiling water to cover, wait a few minutes until couscous and ‘Surprise’ veggies are soft (adding more water as necessary and perhaps heating a little if you’re snow camping), give it a quick stir and eat.

<FACT

At the end of the season, Stu Hollaway and I ate one of these bivvy meals (the one with biltong, not prosciutto), after it was stored in its ziplock bag for about four weeks. It was fine, and we lived long enough to give you this recipe.



Search It!

Useful websites for recipes and nutritional tips:

- mountainbread.com.au
- thru-hiker.com/articles/pack_light_eat_right.php
- thehikinglife.com/planning/food
- wildearth.com.au/general-food-needs-calories-vitamins-salt-a-80.html
- bushwalking.org.au/FAQ/FAQ_Food.htm

Indian Curry Hiker Meal

BY JESSE BATES

INGREDIENTS

Your favourite take-away curry

METHOD

Add water to the curry, and blend the mixture until smooth. Using a dehydrator, dehydrate. Using a coffee grinder, grind the dehydrated curry.

You now have a powdered curry that will rehydrate instantly with water (even cold water, if need be). It goes really well with Deb Instant Mashed Potatoes.

<TIP

Watch out for any fat content in the curry, because it has the potential to go rancid. If your favourite curry is very fatty, store it in the freezer until you go on your trip.

Dehydration is, of course, a great way to prepare all sorts of meals for hiking. Talk to the bushwalking gear store people for more ideas and about borrowing the club’s dehydrator.

The Non-Italian Risotto

BY MONA JOHN VON FREYEND

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pack Continental Risotto Mix
- ½ pack dried mushrooms
- A few dried tomatoes
- Fetta cheese

METHOD

Follow the instructions on the risotto pack. Of the remaining ingredients, add the dried mushrooms first to give them time to soak. Towards the end of the cooking time (about 20 minutes), add the sliced dried tomatoes and the fetta cheese.

<TIP

Don’t prepare this meal in the vicinity of the club’s Berton brothers or you will get severely told off for the use of (Greek!) fetta in an Italian dish. Be that as it may, I like it to add kilojoules and protein to the meal.

The Mushy Mix

BY MONA JOHN VON FREYEND

This one doesn’t look all that nice, but tastes quite all right.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pack mashed potatoes
- 1 pack freeze-dried peas and corn
- 1 tin salmon (this is somewhat heavy—you could swap it for dried fish from an Asian supermarket, or alternatively 2 boiled eggs)
- Oil (optional, but makes the mashed potatoes much nicer)

METHOD

Boil the dried peas and corn for a few minutes, according to package instructions. Add hot water and a little oil to the mashed potatoes. Stir, mixing everything together. ☺

West Coast WEEDING

Conservation at its best—Alex Thompson does some gardening in one of the remotest corners of Tasmania

BY ALEX THOMPSON

SINCE DISCOVERING THE WONDERS and joys of walking in Tasmania's South West, the rugged West Coast has lingered in my mind, as a dream to some day walk one of the most remote coastlines in Australia.

Last September I got the chance to not only walk part of the West Coast, but to do so with free helicopter rides. So despite already having 15 days of Tasmanian walking planned for the summer, I jumped at the chance. The only catch was I might have to pull out a few weeds along the way.

Sea Spurge and Marram Grass are weeds that are devastating coastal ecosystems all around Australia. They replace the native plants and overrun dunes, threatening native animals and birds by removing their habitat. SPRATS (Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams) is a volunteer group aimed at eradicating Sea Spurge and Marram Grass from the South West wilderness, over 600 kilometres of remote coastline stretching from Macquarie Harbour on the West Coast to Cockle Creek south of Hobart.



Storms rolling in towards Endeavour Bay (top).

Whale bones on Sanctuary Bay (above).

PHOTOS BY ALEX THOMPSON

The SPRATS base for most operations is Strahan, the most southerly town on the Tasmanian West Coast. After arriving there, we were briefed on what we would be doing and were trained to identify and remove the weeds—although it seemed as though the more important information was on crayfishing techniques and the best locations along the coast to catch them! For the rest of the afternoon we were free to explore the town before being treated to a delicious barbecue dinner.

We were all divided into 'sectors'. My sector was called 'Sector Five', and we were allocated an area with wilder terrain but less spurge—therefore we were only a small group, of four. It was com-

prised of a newly wed couple at the tail end of their honeymoon (Pat and Ada), another MUMCER called Cathy, and myself. For the first three days of the trip, we were allocated to help Sector Four (a group of nine) with their weeding before they headed north.

On the morning of deployment, we were the last group scheduled to leave, so we watched the chopper come and go (with Bruce the pilot clearly enjoying showing off by flying close between the airstrip buildings) until it was finally our turn. After a spectacular 15-minute ride, we were dumped on a beach about 40 kilometres south of Strahan with Sector Four, who were waiting for us so we could head in to find camp. We traipsed inland, walking up a dune and bashing through bracken towards a lagoon. While it felt unlikely that we'd find a nice spot from the beach, we were treated to a beautiful camping site on the lagoon with plenty of room for 13 people to camp.



THE THREE DAYS WE shared with Sector Four were all day trips, wandering along the coast and weeding. At first, we struggled to identify the Sea Spurge quickly, but soon we became expert spotters. And fortunately, once pulled out, Sea Spurge is relatively fragile and can just be left on the sand as long as the roots are not buried.

Dinner was always an enjoyable time; I was treated to everyone's leftover food and I heard many interesting tales from the other spratters, like Andy's two grand tours of the South West (and an epic month-long walk covering the Southern Ranges, the South

Coast Track and both the Arthurs) separated by a mere 40 years!

Too soon, day four arrived and we said our goodbyes to Sector Four and set off south towards Hibbs Lagoon. From here our trip ended up being somewhat more tiring than expected, due to the long cobble beaches and thick scrub between many bays. Despite the huge distance between us and any roads, there were continual signs of civilisation from ridiculous quantities of flotsam and jetsam washed up on every beach to occasional hints of an old and

overgrown track. At times we came across older parts of the area's history: when walking up creeks we found massive logs, likely to be Huon Pine, over 10 metres in length, jammed in place by the force of unimaginably strong storms, we thought. Later we found out that most of these were logged and floated down the Spero River, but lost to storms.

Highlights as we travelled onwards were many and widely varied. They included gourmet cooking, thanks to Pat's successful fishing expedition and Ada's wonderful preparation and cooking with ginger and fresh lemons. Another highlight was close encounters with the wildlife, including Tasmanian Devils. Watching them run around

on the beach and listening to them fighting at night is an experience that teaches you why they deserve their name. We also saw a large number of rather relaxed Tiger Snakes, seals sunning themselves on rocks and found an inordinate number of whale bones washed up. Of course no trip to Tasmania would be complete without a number of encounters of the scrubby kind—I now have far more experience in bashing through tea-tree forest than I desire.

'SPRATS is a volunteer group aimed at eradicating Sea Spurge and Marram Grass from the South West wilderness, over 600 kilometres of remote coastline.'



Weeding high on the dune above Hibbs Bay (this image).

Andy pulls up a spurge (below).

PHOTOS BY ALEX THOMPSON

By the end of day eight, there was much relief in reaching our final campsite: Endeavour Bay, two kilometres long. Despite bad weather, we spent the entirety of the day weeding, running up and down the large dune and trying to find the lucky last spurge of the trip. The next morning we were packed up on time and awaiting our rescue on the beach, watching menacing clouds roll in from the south. Alas, the clouds reached us before our lift out did, but Bruce arrived soon after. We had one detour to make—Pat and Ada lost one of their wedding rings at the first campsite, so Bruce pointed the chopper there. At first he attempted to land on the bracken-covered slopes behind the dune, before giving up and dropping the couple off on the beach to be collected later.



BACK IN CIVILISATION, WE traded stories with the other sectors. Sector One (who enjoyed a relaxed 10 days of base camping) were flooded by a storm surge on one night, but otherwise seemed to have a much more civilised time. While relaxing in the old Customs House, we were shown the remains of stencils from the 1980s—painted on the wooden floors, protesting the damming of the Franklin River—hidden under carpets in those days. Back at the height of the anti-dam protests, this building was one of the muster-ing points, where people gathered before heading off to protest the destruction of our wilderness.

Soon my adventure was over and we were all back on a bus to Hobart. I had a few extra days there, giving me a chance to burn up excess energy by climbing Mt Wellington in a 30-kilometre loop and taking an obligatory trip to the Cascade Brewery.

The call out for 2012–2013 season volunteers will go out soon. I highly encourage people of any ability to consider joining—it was an amazing experience and one I highly recommend. The only cost was that when I returned a month later to walk the Western Ar-thurs, I spent the first few days double-checking the ground for Sea Spurge if I spied any plant with even a hint of resemblance to it. ☘



Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams

SPRATS has been running since 2007 and has managed to remove mature spurge from 95 per cent of the coastline, how-ever there are still a number of sites, with seedlings and some mature plants, that require attention. For more information, visit wildcaretas.org.au or email conservation@mumc.org.au

RESCUE 101

Techniques to whip out when the shit hits the fan

ROCKCLIMBING



Rodney Polkinghorne and Sean Ladiges test some systems.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY CUSKELLY

ESCAPE THE BELAY
Tip two: tie off the belay so your hands are free, and you can actually do something useful. Being on the ‘victim’ end of this is simultaneously boring and scary, since you hope that the person practicing the tech-nique for the first time gets it right.

HAULING
Lowering your partner to the ground or a large ledge is usually the easiest and safest option. But if that fails, you may have to haul. In some situations, it’s better to help your partner past a crux, or onto the ledge you’re on. Using a 3:1 pulley system, a 70-kilogram Daniel Berton could haul a 90-kilogram me.

PASSING KNOTS
Lowering past a knot is a useful skill, especially if you have two ropes (or a dam-aged rope), so we practiced that as well. We also did some abseiling past knots, which is somewhat awkward even if you do it right. Lastly we tried some assisted abseils, which resulted in unexpected intimacy with Gaetan Riou.

The final lesson was probably the most im-portant: that a lot of rescues are avoidable, and the best rescue is the one you never have to do. ☘

BY ANTHONY CUSKELLY

I USUALLY RESERVE RAINY Sun-days for daywalks, mountainbiking or cosy cafés. But when Stu Hollaway, our resident mountaineering guide, offered to run a one-day self-rescue course for climbers, I didn’t say no to joining him and a few others at Mt Macedon’s Camels Hump.

Walking in, I deemed the probability of velociraptor attack fairly high. The Hump has that kind of feel—grey, mossy rock, the

occasional streak of slime, water dripping off the trees and slippery soil underfoot... it seemed the perfect place for an accident. So we created some. And here’s what we learned, in a nutshell:

PREPARATION
First Stu went through options for making your life easier if you ever have to rescue someone, most of which seem to revolve around thinking first and making your anchor do the work.

FRENCH FOOTWORK

ROCKCLIMBING

How to climb with your feet



BY GAETAN RIOU
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHELSEA BRUNCKHORST

LOTS OF PEOPLE SEEM to think that climbing is about pulling up with super grip strength, only using the upper body. We all seem to forget the importance of footwork.

All too often I see beginners pulling for handholds, totally neglecting their feet, resulting in their flailing around trying to figure out what to do next.

If you think about it, your legs are much stronger than your arms, so it makes sense to use them. Using mainly your hands and your arms to support your bodyweight will get you tired quickly. Using your legs to support your weight will save you energy, and that becomes more important when you start climbing overhangs and roofs.

WHEN YOU CLIMB, the movement should be initiated by your legs. The basic sequence goes something like this:

- Step up
- Find new hand holds
- Look for new foot holds
- Move your feet
- Step up again, and so on

You should always try to support your weight with your feet.

So what can you do to improve your footwork and use your legs? Let's have a look at some basic footwork.

EDGING

This means using the edge of your shoe (near your toes) to stand on the rock. Beginners often use the inside edge—don't forget that you can also use the outside edge.

SMEARING

There isn't always something protruding from the rock for you to stand on. Another way to use your foot is to smear: placing your foot flat on the wall and applying pressure. The more rubber in contact with the rock, the more effective smearing is. This technique uses friction—the more pressure the better. If you feel your foot slipping away, apply more pressure. Smearing is really useful when climbing slabs, where there isn't much to step on.

JAMMING

Jamming is specific to crack climbing. The idea is to jam your foot in the crack and put your weight on it. An effective way to do this is to insert your foot sideways, and twist it as you step up. It will lock your foot in the crack.

FLAGGING

This technique is not used to bear your weight, but to keep you in balance. The idea is to hold one foot against the wall as a counterbalance. You can also 'cross' flag: e.g. right foot flagging to your left side.

You can make the most of even the tiniest edges.

PHOTO BY CHELSEA BRUNCKHORST

HOOKING

Believe it or not, there are many ways to heel hook. Heel hooking and toe hooking are more advanced techniques, best explained in person. I mention them mostly as examples of more inventive ways to use your foot.

FOOT PLACEMENT

When placing your foot on a hold, use mostly the front half of your foot, trying to mainly to use your big toe and the area around it. Why is that? Climbing shoes are usually designed to provide you with maximum support on your big toe. It's also easier for you to feel what you're stepping on. Lastly, it will allow you to rotate your foot without having to change your foot placement.

LOOK

A really important trick for improving your footwork is to look! Yes, look. Look for a foot hold, chose one, and then place your foot on it.

SILENT FEET

A good exercise for working on your footwork in the gym is called 'Silent Feet'. As the name implies, the aim is to climb noiselessly. That means no smashing your foot on the wall, no flailing, or scraping around to find a foothold. Look for a foothold and decide which one you want to use. Once you make your decision, move your foot in a controlled manner to the chosen foothold.

WATCH AND LEARN

A last tip: watch climbers who are better than you. It's a good way to discover new techniques—all you have to do then is try to reproduce what they do.

I hope those tips will help you become a better climber. Next time you go climbing, try to think about your feet. I think all of us would benefit from better footwork—myself included. ☺

LTL

Learn to lead climb in 3.5 steps

ROCKCLIMBING



BY AARON LOWNDES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON LOWNDES
AND ANTHONY CUSKELLY

FOR MUMCERS BITTEN BY the 'climbing bug', in Semester One I ran a 3(.5)-part course to teach budding climbers how to lead climb outdoors on trad gear. Here follows a summary.

PREREQUISITES

To start with, participants had to master the clip-training board in the clubrooms, and

had to have been indoor climbing at least twice this year.

PART 0.5

Learning to lead belay. The first (0.5th) part of the course was a halfday at Cliff-hanger climbing gym in Altona. The aim was to teach top-rope climbers how to lead climb indoors, and how to belay a leader. After an hour or so of showing the basics, everyone had a go at climbing the short outdoor walls and clipping in as they went,

Karolína and Matěj rig up a hanging belay on Big Pointy while Sean Ladiges oozes up a V1.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY CUSKELLY

with a belayer (and a back-up) at the bottom, watching for a fall. Then it was time to do the really scary deed—falling. Everyone had a small, medium, large and larger fall, and luckily (or probably something to do with the really good belaying) no one was mortally wounded. Thanks to Gaetan Riou for volunteering to demonstrate all of the things you shouldn't do while lead climbing while I narrated, and for the face he gave when I asked him to Z-clip. This part of the course was popular enough that a repeat was run two weeks later (thanks Mona John Von Freyend and Tharatorn Supasiti) and, all up, 12 people learned this part of the series. Homework (yes, there was homework!) was to obtain a lead pass at any indoor climbing gym, which requires a practical test. No lead pass, then no learning the next part of the course—taking those skills outdoors.

PART 1

Sport climbing outdoors. A few short weeks later, I brought a small contingent of MUMCers to a rather poor example of a 'low-level sport-climbing crag close to Melbourne.' I say poor not because of the quality of the rock (good), nor because of the quality of the climbs (quite good), not even because of its location (one-hour drive), but because Camels Hump can only be loosely called a sport-climbing crag, and it's quite a stretch to call it a 'low-level' sport-climbing crag. While there are some bolts, most of the really easy climbs ideal for learning on are trad protected—something I didn't want to teach until Part 2 of the series. In situations like this, we simply make do with what we have. In the end we found that climbing on the Omega Block afforded three easy-ish climbs to learn on—one fully bolt protected but fairly hard (Wee Ripper, 17), one easy-ish climb protected by a single bolt (Wishful Thinking, 16), and a third (Remus, 8)... fully trad protected. So in the end, six learners and two leaders climbed and discussed their way into the late afternoon... then into the evening. MUMCers are no strangers to night-time walk-outs though, so even with a shortage

Karolína Korvasová styles her way up Remus (8), right.

PHOTO BY AARON LOWNDES

of headlamps we all made it back to the cars safely (it is a five-minute walk-out after all—not exactly epic).

Sport climbing on outdoor rock is my personal favourite style of climbing—it is where I can push my technical climbing limits without carrying lots of heavy trad equipment, without worrying about where to place my next piece. At the same time, learning to trad climb is a different game entirely, a wholly different level of enjoyment, and is essential if you want to be able to explore all manner of rock faces wherever you go.

PART 2

Trad climbing. While the first two parts were single-day (even halfday) courses, learning to place trad gear is the hardest, most involving and perhaps most rewarding thing to learn. For this we required two full days of teaching, and so we increased the number of leaders to four, and kept a 1:3 ratio of leaders to beginners. Thanks to the significant efforts by the additional leaders Rodney Polkinghorne, Anthony Cuskelly and Gaetan, 11 beginners* learned and practiced climbing while placing trad gear at two different areas in Arapiles, learned to place and use trad anchors, and to clean all the gear to return home. For the most part, anchors were the hardest part to teach/learn, and required the most practice. Personally I was pleasantly surprised that the standard of gear placing was so excellent right off the bat. It's usually a difficult skill to get the hang of, but nearly everyone had a handle on what a good/bad placement looks and feels like almost immediately.

* Beginners who met some prerequisites were allowed on this course, even if they didn't attend parts 0.5 or 1.

PART 3

Multipitch. If the previous part of the course was the most involved, then this final part, while taking almost as long, could be regarded as simple practice for the same skills, with a few extra bits thrown in. Like extreme heights, hanging belays and protecting your second on traverses. Like long, winding adventure routes where you leave your non-essential gear at the bottom of the wall in the morning, returning in the late evening to retrieve it by lamplight. Thanks go to Anthony and Sean Ladiges for braving entire days on the rock.

If sport climbing is my favourite style of climbing, then multipitch trad would come a very close second, or perhaps even on par. The wonderful feeling you get upon reaching the top of a hard sport climb is very good, but it can't quite match the feeling of crawling over the lip of a 14-pitch monster like The Grand Wall in Squamish, Canada.

CLIMBING IS MY PASSION. Most people who know me know this. But I also love seeing others get the same enjoyment from it. This is why I like teaching, and it is participants like the ones who attended this course who remind me why. I was pleasantly surprised at the dedication of all participants who put in the work required and came through it all the way to the end. I thank you all for bringing that satisfying feeling back to me. A big congratulations to Karolína, Matěj, Miriam, Aurore and Laura who stuck it out to complete the final part. The world (of solid rock) is now yours to explore and enjoy. 🌱



A Learner's Diary

By Karolína Korvasová

Sport climbing: Sport climbing feels a lot like dancing to me. Not having to think about protection too much, one can concentrate almost fully on climbing, trying to move up as efficiently and elegantly as possible and enjoying the empty space around. On the other hand, we also had to learn to cope with the daunting side of sport climbing—the fact that the bolts are preplaced and the grades in Victoria tend to be relatively high. Therefore you find yourself nervously looking at the next bolt above you, thinking: 'So faaaar?' We learned pretty fast that from a psychological point of view, this is still a much better strategy than looking at the last bolt below you and thinking the same!

The first part of the course was a very nice Sunday at Camels Hump. To be more precise I should say that we were actually pretending to sport climb on preplaced trad gear, which was good preparation for what was going to come. The practice fall on a nut I took that day definitely made it easier for me to trust trad gear later on.

Trad climbing: This was probably the biggest step up of the whole course. Feelings? Freedom. And, of course, with freedom comes responsibility. I regard both very positively, taking all the mental challenges that trad climbing involves as exciting problemsolving. Being exposed to stress and fear but still having to think rationally and stay calm and confident is a challenge that teaches you to control your mind. I love this aspect of climbing.

Suddenly there were many more things to think about—apart from looking for holds we needed to look down to see where our previous pieces of protection were and what would happen if we fell, look up at what's going to come and what gear we were going to need, thinking about rope drag, about protecting our partner and so on. Then we needed to process this information into a decision, take the corresponding action and move on, trusting that our decision was correct. This whole process obviously needs practice, but I think that we all enjoyed it right from the beginning.

Multipitch climbing: My favourite part of the course. We started with hanging-belay practice on some boulders. It felt pretty funny to establish a two-pitch climb on a boulder, but it was a very good idea, and I appreciated trying it for the first time low above the ground.

Multipitch climbing is like an expedition. When you get to the top, you are rewarded with a feeling of accomplishment and, unless you end up in the dark like we once managed, a magnificent view. We were also more confident than the weekend before, which made the climbing more enjoyable. With the added beauty of the climbs that we did, this weekend was superb.

Conclusions: Arapiles is probably the best place in the world to learn trad climbing, which together with nice weather and great people created an awesome experience. I was very excited before the course started, but even more after it was over. Thanks to Aaron, Gaetan, Anthony, Rodney, Sean and Mona!

GROSED OUT

Consider how many great stories begin with the sentiment 'It seemed like a good idea at the time.' This is not one of them. This is an account of two climbers' descent into self-inflicted exhaustion brought about by the inability of one of them to understand cumulative fatigue, and the endless good-natured suggestibility of the other.

BY DALE THISTLETHWAITE

IN TRUE BIBLICAL STYLE, it started with a flood. Our planned weeklong Fiji tropical holiday of lying on the beach drinking cheap cocktails interspersed with scuba diving (to keep it respectable) seemed problematic at best. With only a few days notice we pondered what else we could do. We settled on climbing in the Blue Mountains.

It had been nearly eight years since we'd been climbing in the Blue Mountains—a big enough interval to enable a range of Alzheimer's onsets, and with both of us climbing strongly, we reasoned the range of routes we could do had increased significantly, so there'd be plenty to keep us occupied.

We could have left it at that but, being the beagle that I am, I needed a goal. I didn't want to pick a particular route. Firstly if you don't get up the route, it can be a bit of a bummer for your holi-

day. Secondly it'd been so long since I last climbed at the Bluies, and there are so many awesome routes, I didn't want to spend the whole week desperately dogging one and miss out on all the others. Thirdly my climbing had changed so much since my last trip to the Bluies that I didn't have a clue which route to choose. So I reasoned that since everyone always says the best way to improve your climbing is to go climbing, the best way to improve your climbing more is to go climbing more, right? (The answer, it turns out, is 'Sort of'.) Anyway, to this end I chose a 'points goal'.

Points goals are simple—you accumulate points according to the grade of the climb and the number of pitches: a one-pitch grade 23 is 23 points, a three-pitch grade 10 is 30 points, etc. The rules are also simple: the grades and number of pitches must come from one guidebook. You can't build a belay every five metres on Tiptoe Ridge and call it 100 points, and you can't swap between different

guides for the same area, cherry picking higher grades for different routes. Stu and I had climbed to points goals before and found it helps focus you on efficient climbing and mileage. We'd often gone for 200-point weekends at Arapiles. I extrapolated from this; if two days of climbing equals 200 points, then seven days of climbing should be 700 points, right? (We'll call this decision MISTAKE 1.) It started benignly enough...

THE TALLY
143 167
DALE STU

FATIGUE RATING: What fatigue?

DAY 1: SHIPLEY UPPER

Today we decided to revisit an old favourite—Shipley Upper. The climbing is crimpy face routes and there are plenty of well-bolted sport routes at moderate grades. Being Easter Sunday it was a bit crowded, but everyone was keen to co-operate and we all danced around each other, ticking routes and enjoying the nice weather. Stu and I knocked off Pluck the Duck (17), Good Fortune (17), Burning Jowls (17), Stormy Monday (17), The Bandoline Grip (18), The Answer is Obvious (18), Country Special (19) and Scramble Syndrome (20). Then Stu climbed the fantastic looking No U Turn (24). Our goal seemed to be well within reach. That night we discussed plans for the next day. The weather was forecast fine, so I was keen to head to the Grose and check out one of the big sport routes that had been developed since our last visit. I didn't think it was possible we'd get seven days of weather good enough to climb (MISTAKE 2), so it seemed like a good idea to get on the eight-pitch adventure route while the going was good. Also, if the Grose route proved good, I was anxious to leave enough time to attempt a second climb in the valley. Stu was keen, and we retired at the respectable hour of 10pm, looking forward to the next day's adventures.

THE TALLY
262 286
DALE STU

FATIGUE RATING: Pleasing muscle soreness

DAY 2: GROSE VALLEY

We settled on Bunny Bucket Buttress (a 270-metre 18) for my intro to the Grose, and we couldn't have chosen better. The approach

to the climb is easier and shorter than the guide implies, and no dreaded bush-bashing was required. Although the climb was in full shade and the wind made it significantly colder than I would have liked, the route was a blast! It's been rebolted with rings all the way, but the original carrots still remain as a passing lane. The climbing is amazingly consistent, with five pitches of grade 18, two of grade eight and one of 13, and is the best I've ever encountered on an adventure route (much better than, for example, the Chimney Pots or Mt Abrupt). Also, in a pleasant change for New South Wales, the rock is very solid. When we topped out on the ridge glowing, we both thought a return trip was likely. At our holiday home, only a little fatigued, we planned day three. We both had routes we were keen to try at Shipley, and the style of climbing suits us both well. Also the weather forecast was marginal and the walk-in is short, so we resolved to return there.

THE TALLY
357 383
DALE STU

FATIGUE RATING: Less pleasing muscle soreness

DAY 3: SHIPLEY UPPER

The morning was a bit drizzly, so we kicked off the day with a seven-kilometre run towards one of the clifftop lookouts—the lookout turned out to be considerably further than seven kilometres and so we turned around before seeing anything, but the run was lovely all the same and gave the weather a chance to improve. I had spied an irresistible line on our first day at Shipley: These People Are Sandwiches (22). Everything about this climb said 'No': too steep for me, moves too big, a large overhang about a quarter of the way up... but the line is a gorgeous orange streak cutting through the greyness right next to a beautiful arête—my toddler brain screamed 'I want it! I want it! I want it!' We did a couple of adjacent warm-up routes: Pompadour (13), and Hold on to Your Hats (18), and then had at it. It was a good indication of how badly I'd chosen when Stu lobbed off it trying to put on the draws. Mmm. I battled my way to the top discarding any and all pride and a good deal of fingertip skin on the way (MISTAKE 3). Tails firmly between legs, we returned to the slabbiest routes. We both had far more success with the fabulous A Streaker Named Desire (23) and then Lardy Lady's Lats (19 to rap rings at half height, 22 all the way). Late in the afternoon we assessed our options for day four. Having left behind so much skin on the sandwich people, and with half the week still to go, we came up with a cunning plan—as cunning as a fox what used to be Professor of Cunning at Oxford University, but has moved on and is now working for the UN at the High Commission of International Cunning Planning—we decided to target the skin on a different part of our hands by spending the day jamming crack routes at Mt Piddington, reasoning that this counted as a 'day off' and would have us back on crimps rested and restored the following day (MISTAKE 4). I was keen to get back on the classic The Eternity

(18) and Stu (whose finger tips appeared to be holding up significantly better than mine despite me having lovingly moisturised mine every night) was happy to oblige. We went to bed a bit exhausted, but happy.

THE TALLY
486 534
DALE STU

FATIGUE RATING: Too tired to cook

DAY 4: MT PIDDINGTON

And so the jam fest began. On arriving at Piddo, we discovered that the warm-up routes we'd planned—The Carthaginian (15) and The Phantom (13)—were both occupied, so we jumped on Joseph (14). They were still occupied when we finished, so we went for the extremely challenging Psychopath (18), which has a section of crack climbing so pure I stood on a ledge considering it for a long time. The solution came when the party on The Carthaginian helpfully suggested I should just aid climb through—this shamed me so much that I replied I didn't believe the situation had gotten quite that desperate yet and enthusiastically hauled myself past the crux. After rapping down, The Carthaginian finally appeared free, so we scrambled up only to find the party we'd been waiting for belaying halfway up the first pitch—we scooted around them and finished up the arête. Returning to the base, we decided it was time to tackle The Eternity, a beautiful crack that has to be one of my favourite routes of all time. I regretted not having a third person around to take a photo. In what might be a world record, four pitches later the same party was still climbing The Phantom so, despairing, we decided to get on a great-looking crack, appropriately named for the time of year, Judas (19). The route finishes out to the right with a link-up with The Messiah's Exit (18)—this route was great, much better than it appears from the ground. Stu was so enthusiastic he declared he liked it even more than The Eternity. Then we headed further along the cliff to climb Tombstone Wall (15) followed by Flake Crack (17). Strangely Flake Crack was harder than I remembered, and I struggled to layback the flake—I wasn't exactly pumped, my arms just didn't seem to work very well, and I was relieved when I slumped onto the ledge without having peeled off (this should have been a sign of my body's coming rebellion, but I wasn't paying much attention, so chuffed was I with my hitherto unknown crack-climbing success). Next Stu climbed On Edge (22). By now it was sunset, but the world's slowest climbers had finally finished The Phantom, so we raced up it in the dying light and then walked slowly out of Piddo tired, but happy. Arriving back at Blackheath at 6pm, I decided, quite uncharacteristically, that I was too tired to cook. So we went out for dinner rehydrating with a bottle of Gamay Noir, which disappeared at an alarming rate. We collapsed into bed snoring by 8.30pm.

THE TALLY
543 595
DALE STU

FATIGUE RATING: Too tired to raise arms

DAY 5: SHIPLEY UPPER

Again the weather wasn't great, so we kicked off with another run, starting this time at a clifftop lookout in an attempt to ensure a view. This was also a bit of a FAIL (the track turned out to be largely slippery stairs) and we ended up, once again, running a road to nowhere. We headed back to the house and after breakfast the weather started to clear—there would be no resting. We sifted around putting off the inevitable, but found ourselves back at Shipley after lunch. Stu seemed to be holding up well, onsighting a route he'd chosen before the trip, Weak as I am (23), with ease. I, on the other hand, felt like the walking dead. The 'rest day' at Piddo had left my finger-tip skin, as predicted, much improved, pity about my shoulder and core muscles. I struggled up three routes: Original Hot Flyer (19), Jack High (19) and Hot Flyer Direct (19). I'm pretty sure I fell asleep for a moment on Hot Flyer and then came to, surprised to be off the ground. When I lowered off I realised I was cold, but the thought of raising my arms above my head to put on my fleece brought tears to my eyes so I stayed cold—who knew it was possible to be this tired? We headed home and discussed the next day. Since Andy Green was coming up to visit on Saturday, tomorrow was our last chance for a second route in the Grose, so when Stu suggested The West Face of the Mirrorball, a five-star 19, my mind said 'Yay!' and my body screamed 'Hell no!' I checked the guidebook. It turned out to be only four pitches—surely I could drag my carcass up a mere four pitches? Just the thought of it had me collapsing into bed. Stu stayed up watching our GoPro helmet-cam footage and pottering around—his demise was yet to come.

THE TALLY
651 725
DALE STU

FATIGUE RATING: Unable to form words

DAY 6: GROSE VALLEY

The approach to the lunch ledge was even quicker now that we were familiar with it, and we were rapping into The West Face of the Mirrorball by 10.30am. The rap, which heads down an impressive chimney formed by a free-standing but leaning pillar, which rests on

the main cliff, lands you only 100 metres from the base of the climb. Since we had only five bolt plates and the description called for 10, we headed up armed with a bunch of wires with the nuts pulled down. Stu bounded up and I prepared to follow. The climbing wasn't hard, but I found myself using every conceivable intermediate to minimise the effort required to ascend. At one point I made four foot moves and gained about 30 centimetres. I was exhausted. I looked at the rock and knew exactly what I needed to do, but my body just didn't want to. I pushed on. The route was, much like Bunny Bucket Buttress, awesome! We were back at the lunch ledge in time for lunch and the Blackheath Bakery squashy rhubarb cake had a restorative effect on me. I was still chasing 700 points—if I stopped climbing now, my target for tomorrow would be considerably bigger. What if it rained? What if I died of fatigue in my sleep? I couldn't afford to rest. A range of one-pitch sport routes start on the lunch ledge, and Stu and I decided, having walked in, to try and knock off some of them before heading back. I calculated what

THE TALLY
738 824
DALE STU

FATIGUE RATING: Well, I'm fine...

DAY 7: BARDENS LOOKOUT

Given the chilly weather, and the fact that Barden's doesn't get sun early, the morning called for eggs on toast. After polishing that off,

fived my 700th point. I smiled weakly, sat down, and then didn't move much.

Next up was Mike and Lorna Go to Town (19). Then Stu got on Sound and Vision (21) and Andy also had a go. I forfeited my opportunity in order to get away from the inane chatter of semi-naked climbing teenagers engaged in furious (and profane) flirting. As we headed around the corner to find a quieter spot for lunch, I realised with sadness that I'd gotten old. After lunch we headed up the route of the day, Electric Blue (19). Lowering off, my eyes started closing. Andy and Stu still looked like they had plenty left (despite Stu now being at 762 points), so I left them to tackle a considerably steeper wall and returned to the car. I sat down on the passenger side, flicked the central locking, reclined the seat and was asleep instantly. Every so often I was woken by a parade of boofheads observing loudly, 'Hey, there's someone asleep in that car!' but consciousness never lasted longer than a moment. Stu and Andy arrived back two hours later and I woke for good. They had mixed success, with Stu

onsighting both his routes, Scheme of Things (23) and Major Tom (23), while Andy was spanked on each of his.

I looked carefully at Stu for signs of fatigue, convinced at this point that I was indeed married to a cyborg—he looked fine, smiling, awake, fine. How? I am ashamed to admit I was more than a bit annoyed.

We got home and decided on pizza for dinner with a huge roast-beetroot salad and champagne to celebrate reaching our 700-point goal. Well, I had reached it with 738—Stu had smashed it with 824. After dinner we dispensed with a litre of icecream (MISTAKE 5) and, gorged, sat down on the couch. Andy gave us an update on life in Sydney and astronomy and his various outdoor adventures. We talked canyoning, climbing and mutual friends in Canberra, but Stu was uncharacteristically quiet. It wasn't until Andy directed a question to him that we realised he was completely asleep sitting upright on the couch and probably had been for some time. I did a little internal dance of satisfaction—he was finally worn out. 🌀



I thought I needed to ensure I got to 700, and so we did Hypothermia (17) (which I thought probably deserved more than two stars), and Jub Jub the Iguana (19). Stu reached his 700 points and sailed past dispensing easily with Scarred for Life (22). Was the man bionic? It seemed likely. That night after a trip to the Mt Vic Flicks, Andy arrived to visit. The next day we were planning to head to Bardens Lookout to tick a bunch of single-pitch sport routes. By 10pm I couldn't focus or speak. I excused myself and Andy and Stu stayed up chatting.

A panorama of the Grose Valley.

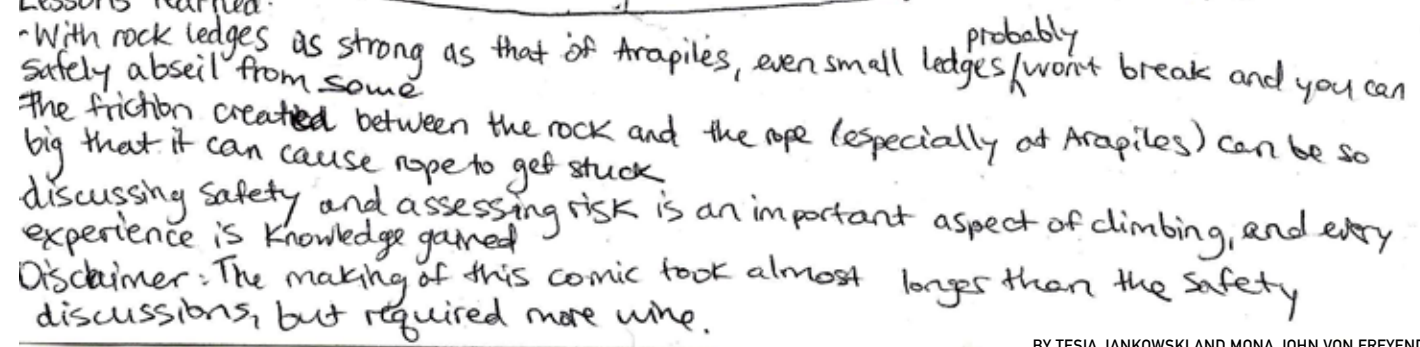
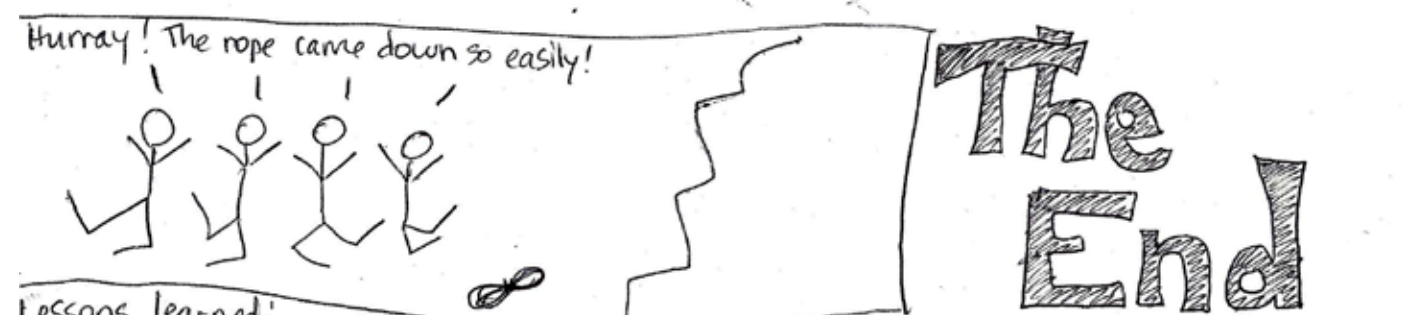
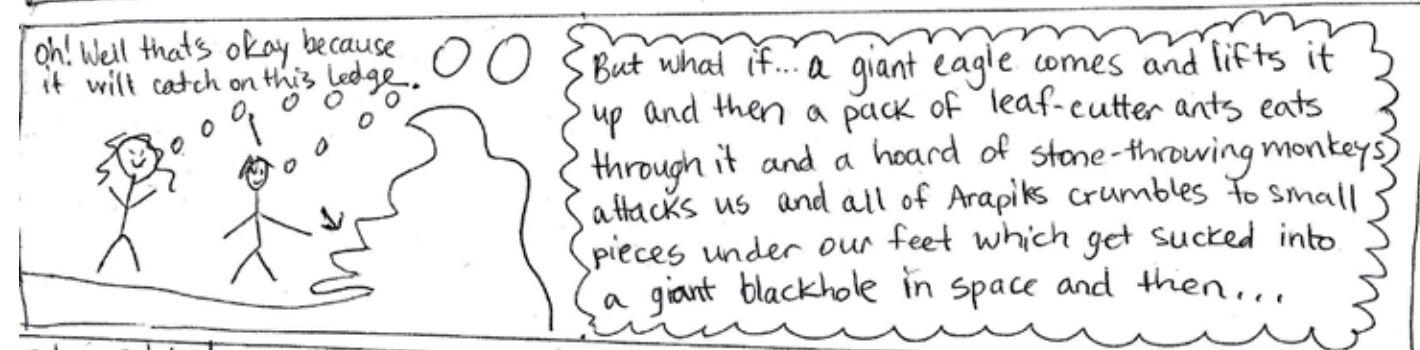
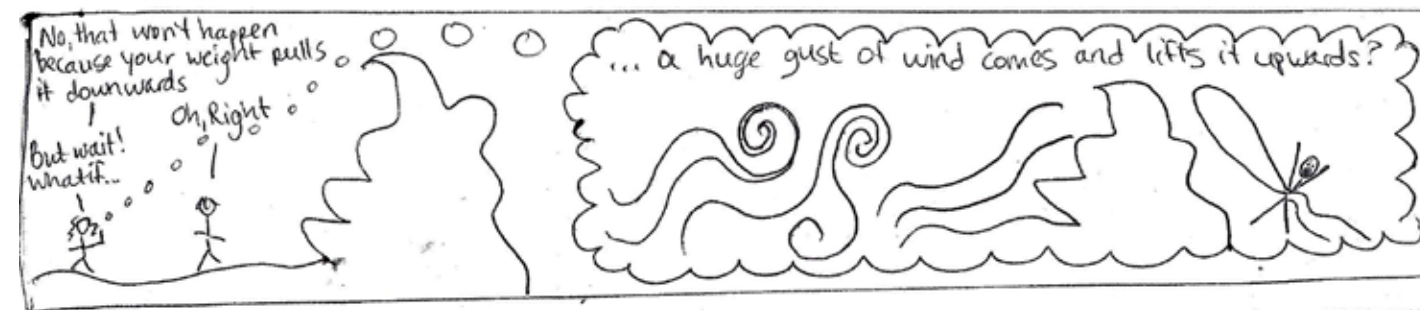
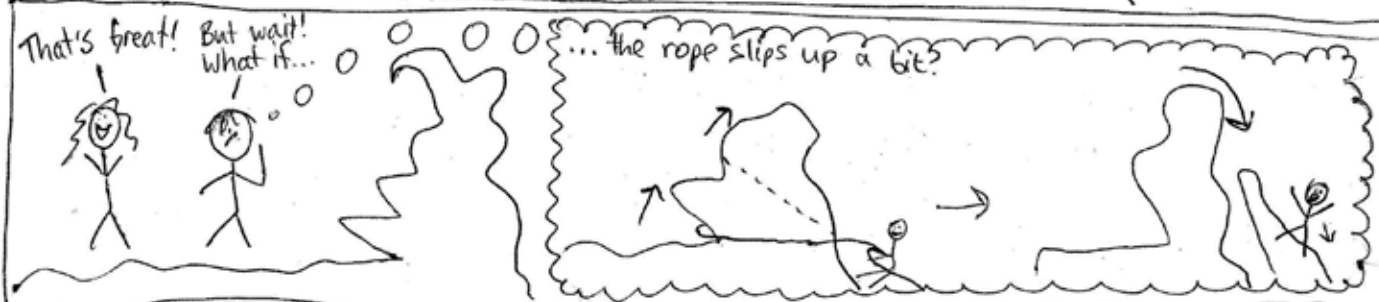
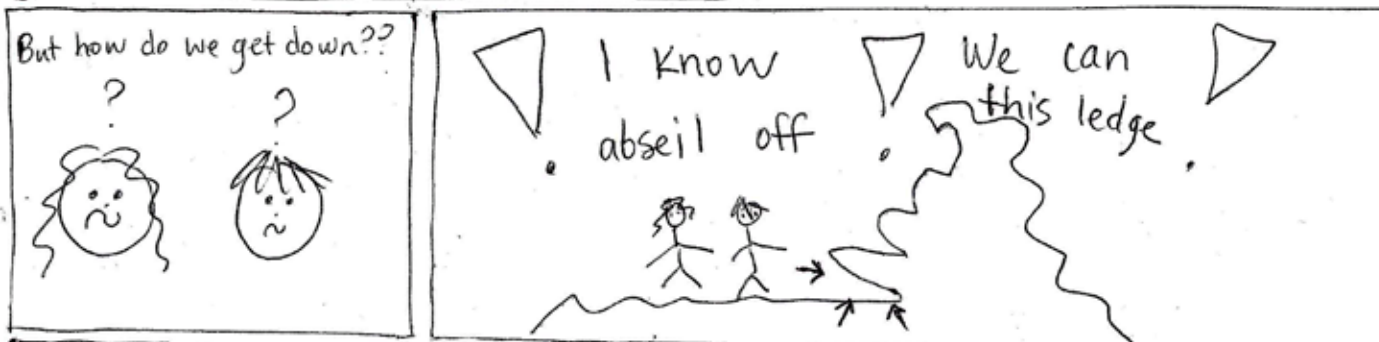
PHOTO BY DALE THISTLETHWAITE

we packed our lunches and headed out. The walk down the stairs to the crag, which I normally wouldn't have noticed, was nothing short of agonising to tired thighs, although we admired the considerable improvements made by the local council and sponsors in providing the stairs. Once at the crag we wondered what to climb. I can honestly say at this point I didn't care. I had 49 points left to get and I was utterly focused, convinced I might drop dead after achieving my goal. We headed up Jolly Good Fellow (18) and The Arrow and the Song (15), both of which I thought were pretty average compared to the rest of the week's climbing, but my fatigue probably did influence my perspective. The next route, Karinya (16), was much more interesting and after lowering off, a happy Stu high

So what did I learn?

- 700 points in seven days is NOTHING REMOTELY SIMILAR to 200 points in two days (probably because of the five extra days).
- Don't rely on rain for a rest day—if the weather stays fine, you'll end up like those apocryphal pommies at Arapiles who applied their 'climb every day it's fine and rest in the rain' theory (imported from the motherland), only to collapse on the 24th successive day of perfect weather.
- Clutching desperately at smeary holds on climbs too hard for you and peeling off is a great way to grate your finger skin—save it for day seven.
- Crack climbing is not a 'rest day'. Not ever.
- Three people can eat one litre of icecream, but they shouldn't. The fact that the 500 millilitres of it is described as 'sorbet' won't make you feel less stuffed.
- It's absolutely worth learning all these lessons the hard way!

This little story is based on a true event that happened on our first independent trad climb. At the top of the climb we needed to find a way to abseil down. Earlier that day we had been shown that you can sometimes abseil from rock ledges. However, being very safety-minded we put a lot of thought into what defines "sometimes"...



VALE: BILL BEWSHER OXO

BY DALE THISTLETHWAITE



Bill Bewsher celebrates at BSAR's 50th Anniversary Dinner.

PHOTO COURTESY BSAR, WITH THANKS TO MONICA CHAPMAN

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER Bill Bewsher joined MUMC in 1947. A keen adventurer, he initiated the first MUMC 24-Hour Walk (which led to the development of the sport of rogain) in 1950. The same year, Bill took part in the first ascent of Federation Peak by Victorians, and in 1955 was Officer-in-Charge of Mawson Station in Antarctica.

As well as pursuing his own adventures, Bill contributed tirelessly to the outdoors community, taking on the role of founding Convener of the Search and Rescue Section in the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (a section which later became Bush Search and Rescue Victoria, or BSAR) in 1949, holding the position until 1956. He was also involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Outward Bound and Bushwalking Victoria, where he served terms as President and Vice-President in the '50s and '60s. Bill passed away on 23 June 2012, aged 88.

The MUMC community wishes to extend condolences to Bill's friends and families—may his spirit of adventure live on. ☘

2012 MUMC PIE & SLIDE NIGHT COMING SOON mumc.org.au



MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

STU HOLLAWAY EXPLORES CAPE WOOLAMAI, PHILLIP ISLAND, VICTORIA.
PHOTO BY ROISIN BRISCOE



THE
MOUNTAINEER

AUGUST 2012

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
MUMC.ORG.AU