



THE
MOUNTAINEER
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70TH ANNIVERSARY





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EDITOR Olivia Grover Johnson

SUB-EDITORS Teng Donghao, Andrew Corson, Imogen Stafford

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Ryan Judd (cover photo), Emilie Duncan, Rowan Dunn, Olivia Grover Johnson, Mitchell Stephen, David Heng, Stuart Hollaway, Syske Hillenius, Anja Fuechtbauer, Luke Frisken, Dani Curnow-Andreasen, Elaine Gardiner, Ben Webb, Heidi Wong, Ti-Jung Chang, Aaron Lowndes, Ruvini Vithanage, Teng Donghao

ENQUIRIES

Melbourne University Mountaineering Club

c/o Melbourne University Sport

University of Melbourne

PARKVILLE VIC 3010

Australia

publications@mumc.org.au

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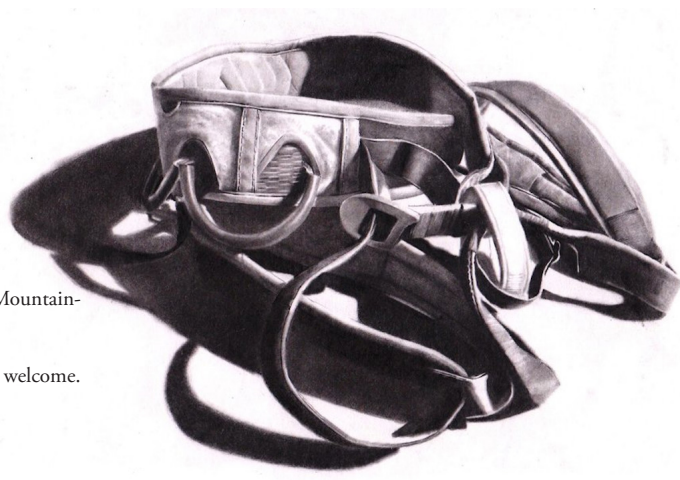
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MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB was founded in 1944 and aims to bring together those interested in outdoor activities such as bushwalking, rockclimbing, paddling, mountaineering, regaining, conservation, caving and canyoning through trips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

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EDITOR'S NOTE

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER
LIV GROVER JOHNSON



I've only just stepped into the role of Publications officer, and have actually never done anything like this before. It's a very new thing for me. So as you might imagine, this, my first Mountaineer, has been quite a big project, and has had a very steep learning curve. I've had to figure out what program to use, how to use it, and above all, collect articles and photographs from as many club members as possible. You may then ask how I fell into this position; I've been an MUMC member for almost four years, and on the committee as a general member for two of them, but still felt like I hadn't started to give back to the club what it has given to me. I have, in fact, been collecting articles and stories since the beginning of this year. I'm not even really sure why I did that, but it meant that I already had half the material that I needed when I started this job in earnest.

When I started out, I asked the committee team what they thought the Mountaineer was really meant for: Year book? Historical Record? Advertising to new members? Advertising to Melbourne Uni Sport? A celebration of our trips, endeavours and daring over the months passed? It would have to be some combination of all of these things, but above all, I think it has to be inspiring.

I want our publication to inspire Oxos to dare to go on bigger and bolder adventures – to go further, deeper into the wilderness, to uncover new routes, to challenge themselves. Many of the submissions to this edition tell stories about bigger adventures, and I hope they'll lead you to dream of more.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OUTGOING PRESIDENT JAMES CRISTOFARO



When first I joined MUMC I had a simple goal: I wanted to find a group of people to regularly go hiking with me. As it is with many decisions, I was unaware of the impact this action would have on the rest of my life. In that first year, I made many new friends and went on thrilling hikes to remote stretches of Victoria and Tasmania. I had achieved the simple goal I was striving for, but I now yearned for something more. Adventure.

I would not have described myself as an adventurous person, yet nonetheless I was craving it. I found myself daydreaming of adventures in the duller moments of university lectures. Over the next year I went on my first kayaking and canyoning trips; more importantly I was coaxed into leading my first hiking trip with the club too. I was just searching for adventure, yet I also saw in myself moments undiscovered reserves of self-confidence and leadership during adversity - on some of the more fearsome trips, even glimpses of daring. Yet again, these are traits I would not have normally attribute to myself, but they were unarguably present.

Fast forward to the present day: I'm reflecting on a year of presidency and adventure within MUMC. Once again, I have found I've discovered personal skills and overcome challenges I never thought I was capable of. Something important has changed though: this time I am not surprised. This realisation is not unique and, like many in of the older members in MUMC, I now understand that these experiences and life changing moments are what make our club so special.

INCOMING PRESIDENT RICHARD BASSETT-SMITH



70 years of club history - but history is made of the stories we share with those who succeed us. When members part ways, so too do their tales of adventure. It is these stories that last in our memories which define MUMC.

What of the names on the plaques at the Mt. Feathertop Memorial Hut? Those are the names of members who were once active in their time with the club, but what are their stories? They were once members like you and I, despite their time being cut short. How many current members know of Eng Wu, Ong's (a.k.a. "Egg") story, now four years passed?

Therefore, I ask of you, as a past or present OXO, to share with us one of your untold stories for The Mountaineer - look back on past adventures and inspire others for the next. You cannot just be a name on a plaque, here today, then gone and forgotten.



OFFICER REPORTS

MOUNTAINEERING

GAETAN RIOU



What an exciting year for Mountaineering! Three MUMC summer alpine courses in New Zealand saw a staggering twelve members hit the icy peaks. Each course was a big success, with most participants getting straight back on the slopes to consolidate their skills after their courses ended. Huge thanks must go to Dale Thistlethwaite and Richard Bassett-Smith, whose contributions to the pre-alpine skills weekend run by Stuart Hollaway and myself were much appreciated by all.

The coming NZ climbing season is looking just as strong as the last, with two more courses running. This summer will also see the first MUMC mountaineering camp! Kelman Hut on the Tasman Glacier may as well fly an OXO flag as nearly twenty MUMC mountaineers will pile in to spend some time consolidating and growing their skills.

With the resurgence of interest in Mountaineering, I have furthered Dale's efforts to renew ageing gear. The club now has a few brand new kits, with the coming year hopefully delivering more.

MUMC Mountaineering is looking strong! I hope it continues that way for years to come.

SKIING

RYAN JUDD



The 2014 ski season has been fantastic. The snow has been consistently good, despite a late start, opening up many of the less reliable destinations for trips. At least one ski trip has been run every weekend since mid-July. Beginner trips to Lake Mountain and The Bogong High Plains have seen plenty more members out on skis, and camping in the snow, than in recent years. Advanced trips have also been run, including an epic day traverse of Mount Buller's West Ridge and Mount Stirling, and a three day tour from Bogong Village over the Fainters and descending via Mount McKay.

Due to the popularity of snow trips this year, there have been some issues supplying members with the club's most modern equipment. A successful ski maintenance and waxing evening was well attended and ensured the upkeep of existing skis, but work is needed to build a stronger inventory that can better support great snow seasons in the future. As for the new ski store itself, outfitting is mostly complete with only a few modifications left to make before the next ski season.

ROPES

TOM DORRINGTON



The construction of our own bouldering wall has been a massive boon for the climbing sports! Huge thanks to Richard Bassett-Smith who spent a large part of his summer constructing it. Perhaps due to the new facilities, there has been heightened interest in climbing this year. Many beginner climbing trips have run and on one particular weekend more than forty members were out climbing on club trips!

Another round of thanks to Aaron Lowndes for again running his Learn-to-Lead series of trips, teaching climbers to lead trad over the course of four weekends. All other experienced climbers who have been running trips also deserve recognition.

Competition climbing has seen strong results from MUMC this year, with success in both the State and National titles. Notable performances came from Julian Goad and Gaetan Riou, for winning the open B state title and finishing third in the open B national title respectively.

Back in the club rooms, the gear store has seen much of its older gear being replaced. Now there's no excuse! Grab Mum's car, borrow some shiny-new gear and get out there climbing!





OFFICER REPORTS

WALKING

DANIEL COCKER



The year kicked off with a successful Intro Trip which saw plenty of beginners getting their first taste of MUMC. Trips numbers and participation remained strong through the beginning of semester one, but faded prematurely due to the small number of leaders supporting the sport, before the snow stole the show for the rest of winter. Thanks to Dale and Claire Hembrow for running so many popular day walks throughout the year.

MUMC's 'Tent City', held at the end of last year, provided a long-overdue opportunity to audit the club's tents, resulting in a handful of repairs and many retirements. Updates to first aid kits and sleeping bags round out a successful year in the gear store; thanks go to Dani Curnow-Andreasen, Sytske Hiltenius and Loren Leong for their help with the week-to-week running of the store. Rodney Polkinghorne's organisation of Rogaining saw a team of OXOs at each event.

Midnight ascent finished off the year in style as members both new and old trooped up the North West Spur. Kudos to Mitch Stephen for pioneering the club's first mixed kayaking and snow trip!

CONSERVATION

KRISSIE PISKORZ



Having conservation as one of the official club activities is one of the things that set MUMC apart from other uni outdoor clubs. Over the past year, OXOs have continued to make a contribution to protecting and restoring natural environment, and I'm proud to have been part of this effort. Ray Thomas of Regent Honeyeater Project visited the clubrooms and gave a talk about Lurg Hills fauna and ecology – definitely a highlight!

We've helped restore native vegetation in Victoria's west as part of *Project Hindmarsh*, in the Lurg Hills with the Regent Honeyeater Project, and in the Otways with the Conservation Ecology Centre. These trips are renown for their great atmosphere; laughs, bush dancing, 'tales from the wild' swapped between members of various outdoors clubs.

Other activities include: Willow Hunt on the Bogong High Plains, grass tree and wildlife monitoring with the Victorian National Parks Association, lyrebird surveys, nest box monitoring in the Lurg Hills, and SPRATS which combines work to eradicate sea spurge in the Tasmanian wilderness with a unique opportunity for remote, off-track hiking.

PADDLING

MITCHELL STEPHEN



Paddling leaders have unfortunately been scarce this year, resulting in a smaller number of trips running than normal. Every trip that did run however was exceedingly well attended, with demand far outstripping supply! Now would be a great time for some new leaders to hit the scene and really get people involved!

Despite the small number of trips, a lot of exciting work has been going on behind the scenes of paddling at MUMC. The new boat shed is well on the way to being completely kitted out, and much of the club's old and antiquated equipment – boats, paddles, life jackets, helmets and spray decks – is in the process of being retired and replaced. Expect a wave of new safety gear and a consolidation of the kayak fleet over the next couple of years!

Also on the horizon is the potential to access \$10,000 to \$15,000 of funding raised through student service and amenities fees for the purchase of a fleet of rafts! This would be an exciting opportunity to open up paddling sports to many more members, especially beginners. Stay tuned!



COMMITTEE 2014-15



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RICHARD BASSETT-SMITH



Vice-President
RYAN JUDD



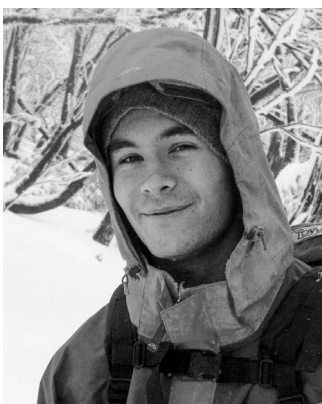
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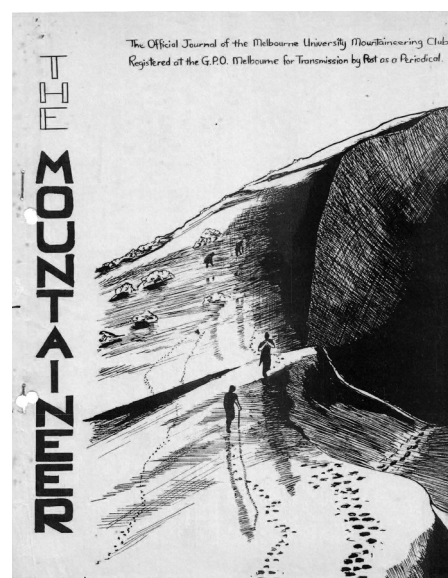
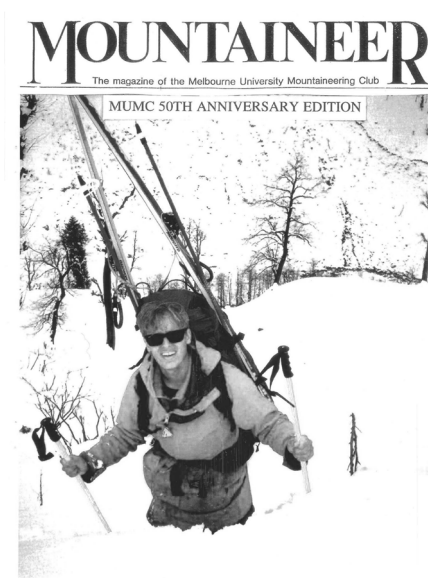
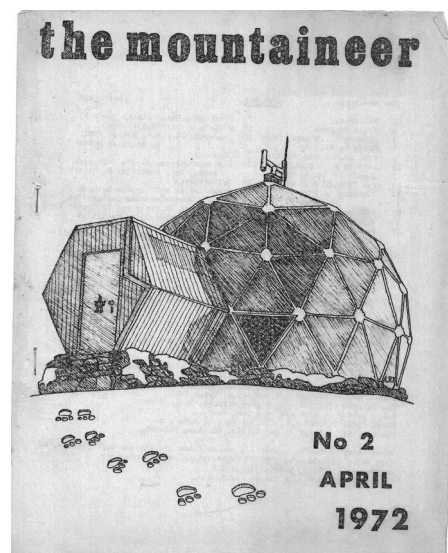
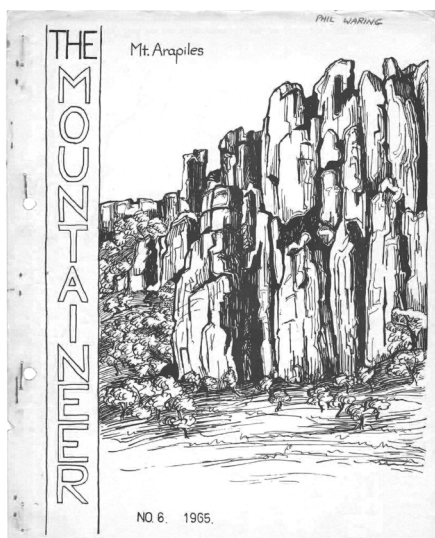


General Member
TI-JUNG CHANG



General Member
TIM TYERS





HAPPY 70TH BIRTHDAY MUMC!

MONA JOHN VON FREYEND

MUMC isn't your ordinary Uni club.

Being an OXO connects one in so many ways and I think most of us have found at least a few friends for life in the club. I suppose, considering I'm about to get married to Aaron, whom I met at the club, you could accuse me of taking the whole OXO-connections thing to the next level.

But this is not what I wanted to talk about. I wanted to reflect on all the little ways OXO connections come to play. All those little stories everyone has. Like when Heather Couper meets a former member in Perth in the supermarket. Or the time Martin Bolland went to a rogaïne in the Northern

Territory and sure enough one of the cars there had the MUMC sticker on it. The story of Daniel Hearnden, who learnt only after he joined the club that his mum toured around Africa in her 20s for a year with an MUMC OXO man badge on the side of her pack and whose step-dad once pulled out a map of the Bogong alpine area published by the club back in the '60s.

Or the tale of one of my former work colleagues who was a club member in the 70s and whose parents had met in the club 20 or so years previously. Apparently her daughter now refuses to join the club because the grandmother expects her to find her partner in marriage at MUMC. I guess it can also backfire.

Personally, I have walked in New Zealand through an underground river

– Cave Stream at Castle Hill – when somebody passed me rather fast. Turns out it was Taner Kucukyuruk and Nicole, fellow OXOs. Where else would you meet an OXO other than in an underground river in New Zealand?!

Aaron and I have also spent a climbing holiday in Germany with friends we met at the club, who came from Finland, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Germany. OXO connections reach far, and they last a long time.

So with all this I would like to say: I hope the club remains strong for a very long time and will continue to be so much more than just an ordinary uni club to many OXOs to come.

Happy Birthday MUMC!



ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES: OXO

DALE THISTLETHWAITE

When Liv told me she couldn't imagine anyone better placed to contribute a nostalgic article on MUMC for the 70th anniversary edition, I immediately thought: "That's a fancy way of saying I'm old!" But soon, my far too healthy self-esteem kicked in and I realised what she was actually trying to say was that as an active member of fifteen years, I am an unrivalled expert on the taxonomy of the oxo; I am to filthy bushwalkers what Mendel was to peas; I am to geodesic dome dwellers what Watson and Crick were to the double helix — but more. As an MUMC honorary life member I am not just the scientist, but also the subject, a living embodiment of all things oxo; the mouthpiece, as it were, for a complex and proud, if perverse, species. I emerged from my musings triumphant, prepared to speak with ultimate authority - here goes nothing.

My choice of the term species to describe oxos is quite deliberate; a species is often defined as "a group of individuals that actually or potentially interbreed in nature." Anyone who's ever attended an anniversary dinner and played the "stand-up if you married an oxo, or are the child of two oxos" game knows that we're "actually" quite a successfully interbreeding bunch, and anyone who's ever attended Midnight Ascent can see all too clearly the "potential" interbreeding unfolding around them.

All good scientists need research assistants, and I am no exception. My research for this study relied on the vast network of internet enabled oxos to answer one of the more vexing questions facing our species — who named it? By tradition, the right to name a new species is given to the first scientific describer of the species. Is there lurking



out there in history a Bob or Barbara Oxo? As it turns out - d no.

I consulted older oxos and found some assumed that the name came from the stock cubes, deducing that early MUMC members had backcountry cooking tastes that leaned invariably towards beef. However, I could find no scientific precedent for naming a species after its primary food source and so this line of reasoning was quickly, and thankfully, discarded.

Oxo Don Fell noted that he and his companions had used "Oxo" as a greeting when encountering other like-minded parties in the bush or mountains, and also for testing echoes, distinguishing themselves from "the far calls of unrefined walking clubs." Other oxos concurred that they had used "Oxo" as a call, raising the romantic possibility that our species was named after its song like the Kea or the Morepork.

But oxo Tony Kerr sited an early recollection of the use of 'oxo' going back to a trip to Matlock, led by Professor Cherry. Members of the trip had been using the response "Ox!" as a frequent retort to certain comments and claims made by other members - this puzzled the Professor for a while. Eventually he

turned to one of the party members and asked:

"What does this 'Ox' mean?"

"Well Prof, you know that an ox is like a bull?"

To which the professor replied "Oh, I see..."

So it seems we must conclude that oxos are likely to have been named after their bullshit detector... from ox to oxo, from a retort, to a slang word, to a call sign - the exact circumstances of these transitions are not known. But somewhere along the way, from its use as a bush call, to its first recorded association in the 60's with the Tyrolean mountaineer silhouette who would become oxoman, oxo became our name.

So after observing our species over the past fifteen years what changes have I noticed in its behaviours, habitat and development? Well within the species there do seem to have emerged several distinct genera distinguished by their ecology, morphology or biogeography.

In 1999 when I joined the MUMC the exemplar of Oxo Tabernus was hut warden Matt Thomas; as passionate about that geodesic dome as I imagined any being ever could be, we feared he was the last of his kind, but then another



specimen, Dan Hearnden, came along and matched that passion - his wife Flick even declaring at their wedding that she accepted she would always be the second love in Dan's life.

Similarly my observations have identified another distinct genus *Oxo Propono Digitalis*, the first specimen I saw in the wild was Steve Chan. He took on the Mountaineer and devoted much time, energy and expertise to transforming it from a respectable circular to a full blown publication, he also pioneered the website; I remember discussing with other oxos what we'd do when he bowed out, but then miraculously a second specimen, Chelsea Brunckhorst (nee Eaw), was discovered to continue the professionalization of the club's publications that he'd begun, releasing our first guide book for many years and upgrading and cementing our presence on social media.

What of the evolution of the rest of the species - the membership? Our genus richness has diversified over time with the traditional dominance of the engineering and science student population being challenged by doctors, tradespeople, educators, editors, and even (gasp!) lawyers, accountants and commerce students. The genus *Oxo Mons Montis*, once on the brink of extinction with only a single convenor remaining, has thrived; there is now a group of active mountaineers in the club large enough to run an advanced trip of oxos returning to NZ for their second, third, or fourth seasonal migration.

Our Tuesday night foraging range has shifted distinctly south-west with a change of clubrooms and pub, though we took several of our original nesting materials (couches) with us even if we probably should have left them behind. Our courting rituals sadly no longer include the impressive plumage displays and dancing once seen annually at the bush dance, but classic feeding

and preening behaviours continue at Midnight Ascent. Our dominance hierarchy and its organisation has been revised countless times through constitutional updates and the creating and abolishing of various committee positions - both these activities proving favourite behaviours of oxos over time. While making the above observations I realised one of the great pleasures of having been a member for so long is noticing, not how much MUMC and oxos have changed, but how little they have - how much members of our breed across generations have in common. The motivations and joys we share are clearly fundamental values in the life of our species. I think of conversations I've had over the years with some of the MUMC members who joined when I did, but then moved on; many left because they figured it was a university club and therefore the time had come for some fresh faces to take the helm, but others were a bit jaded and doubted the motivation and enthusiasm of the younger generation, clearly suffering from a serious case of the "*good old days*." The funny thing is, the longer I hang around, the less evidence I find to support the idea that MUMC's best days are behind it, or that it was all better when we were young. I look at the commitment and enthusiasm of Mitch, in fighting for a new clubrooms, or Richard, in kitting out and adapting our new space, and I can see that whatever drove people with passion to contribute to MUMC in 2004, still drives them in 2014, it's probably the same thing that drove them in 1964, and it'll likely still be driving them in 2034 - our species is far from extinction in body and spirit. When we raise our glasses on October 11, we'll rightly acknowledge and fondly remember our shared past, but let's not forget to also celebrate the promise of MUMC's future.



FROM THE ALUMNI

MICHAEL FELLER

I joined MUMC in 1964 and soon got actively involved, serving on the committee for a couple of years as Trips Secretary. After completing a couple of degrees I went to Canada to complete a Ph.D. After returning back to Australia I got a faculty position at Melbourne Uni and became active with MUMC again, serving on the committee in the late 70s for 4 years as Conservation Officer, during which time I was made an honorary life member of the club. I can honestly say that nothing has influenced my entire life as much as MUMC.

It was on an MUMC bushwalking trip that I met some MUMC mountain climbers who got me interested in mountaineering in New Zealand, which I did for my last 3 summers as a Melbourne Uni student. This got me interested in seeing the world's mountains, so I went to Canada to climb mountains and do a Ph.D. on the side. My field at Melbourne Uni had been chemistry but all my mountaineering and bushwalking trips convinced me that I didn't want to spend my life in a laboratory in the city but rather in the bush.

In Canada, I switched to forest ecology, in which I have worked ever since. It was on an MUMC bushwalking trip in 1968 to the Bluff that I witnessed extensive clearfelling and burning of ash forests that had been pristine a couple of years earlier. I was so angered that I went to the then Forests Commission to complain about their forest management. I was fobbed off by someone who told me why science supported what they were doing. I thought I should try to understand the science to see if the Forests Commission's justifications for their management were valid. This is

why I entered forestry and specialised in forest ecology.

Intending to try to improve forest management in Victoria and improve steadily deteriorating conditions for bushwalkers and wilderness lovers there, I became a lecturer in Melbourne Uni's Forestry Department in 1975, and Conservation Officer for both MUMC and the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs. My conservation activities on behalf of MUMC and the FVWC resulted in me losing my Melbourne Uni job in 1979 for political reasons, so I returned to a faculty position at the University of British Columbia in Canada, where I completed my working life and served as Editor for the British Columbia Mountaineering Club from 1980 to the present, although my love of the Victorian bush, developed from numerous MUMC trips, has led me home, where I have lived, between forays to British Columbia, for the last couple of years.

A year of my life was spent helping to build the MUMC Feathertop hut and Mt. Feathertop became a shrine to me - a place that I visited on occasional trips back from Canada and more recently now that I am home. I met my future wife, an MUMC member, on an MUMC trip to Feathertop. Mt. Feathertop helped to call me back from Canada. I see that Feathertop has even lured MUMC kayakers there - good luck!

Thus, MUMC has been the dominant influence of my lifestyle, of where I've lived, of my career, and of most of my extra-curricular interests and activities.

JACQUELINE GEELEN (NEE CUTTER)

MUMC has been a huge part of my life. Although I already loved the outdoors, I didn't really know much about anything until a few older members of the club took me under their wing and pretty soon I was out and about, galivanting across the countryside almost every weekend and holiday break. Doing all the things I had dreamed of as a teenager. Climbing, caving, canyoning mainly; but I gave most things a try. :) Along the way I made some of my best life long friends, met my husband and even met the people who would point me in the right direction to end up in my dream job. If I had not joined MUMC, my marks might have been better but life would be a lot more boring. :) We still get out and about when we can, but it's a bit different. Now I get to enjoy the outdoors at a slower pace as I introduce my kids to some of the amazing places I was introduced to during my time with MUMC.





FROM THE ALUMNI

DAVID ROGERS

I was enjoying fish'n'chips with my mate outside his own family's fish'n'chip shop in Benalla, the town where I grew up. I observed a small group of 3 likely travellers who seemed like the outdoorsey types with several in Scarpa hiking boots. Lo and behold if one didn't turn around and reveal the OXO man on a green t-shirt! I hollered out (not too loudly!) "*Who's president of MUMC these days?*"

Well, that chance encounter resulted in a decent chat outside the shop with the 3 charming characters in the balmy spring air, and sharing of some MUMC stories and current events. Subsequently, Richard did suggest I might like to offer assistance at the classic 'Pie & Slide' night .. one of my personal favourites from my days in the club .. a great chance to relax, see some amazing pix and hear some captivating stories .. and eat some delish pies! Having been an avid photographer I heartily agreed.

So it turned out that there I was in front of the old club, talking, 'judging' and

mingling with a bunch of fresh faces, feeling as though it was almost like yesterday that I was involved with the club, running trips, attending committee meetings and even doing my stint as President. It certainly felt like the familiar family of enthusiastic individuals that I immersed myself in so gladly and every weekend, embarking on some new fresh adventure, whether on rock, up mountain or down ski-slope! What an amazing time it was, that formed my character, introduced me to the greater Australia and whetted my appetite for soul-searching and exploring, which today has not diminished but simply been re-directed into many other avenues of my life - and most importantly the valuable friendships I made within the club. Thanks I say to the spirit of the club .. may it live on for decades to come!

I hope I can still be in the loop with fellow ex-members and share adventures yet .. so thanks also for inviting me back !"

RICHARD SALMONS, MUMC 90s

When I applied for DFAT I had to answer a question about a time I had to deal with an emergency. I told of a mountaineering trip in NZ with Dave Kneen (President, 2xxx) in which Dave broke his arm crossing the main divide and we had quite an adventure making our way to Plateau Hut in one piece. I later found myself in my interview at DFAT, and was all set to answer foreign policy questions, but instead they eagerly asked, "What happened to Dave's arm?" So I told the rest of the story, and ended up with a new job!



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FROM OUR NEW MEMBERS

ASTRID GLASER

I was lucky enough to get a PhD position in the same lab as Betty, who told me about MUMC even before I got to Australia. So, instead of anxiously trying to find my way around Melbourne, worrying about work, life and everything in this strange new place, I got to spend my first weekend in Australia kayaking on the Yarra! Admittedly, to a bystander it must have looked more like paddle-slapping the water in an attempt to avoid going in circles, but it was fun nonetheless. The club made me feel welcome and connected right from the start.

Since then, I have experienced the slightly terrifying beauty of multi-pitch climbing on Mount Arapiles, the cold waters of NSW's canyons and various

daytrips around Melbourne. My first attempts at cross-country skiing were just a few weeks ago; even though it should be second nature to an Austrian, I rather felt like a fish that just had been handed a unicycle. However, you can improve a lot in one day – especially if there are more experienced and patient OXOs around who happily share their wisdom. By the end of the day I had risen to toddler's-first-step levels at least!

Currently, my family and friends are taking bets whether I'll be coming back home after my PhD. But with the pictures they've seen and stories they've heard from my MUMC trips hardly anyone is willing to put their money on Austria.



EMILIE DUNCAN

So I'm Emilie. I've been in the club for about a year, though I disappeared for a bit, but hopefully I'm back! I'm a bit of a muddle as to where I'm from and what I do, but for now I'll say I'm a Londoner doing science-y stuff at Melbourne.

HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT MUMC?

I went in search of it; I wanted to get

outdoors. However, it took me an entire semester to find it and go to a Tuesday meeting! I particularly sought to take up rock climbing, as I had garnered from stories of my apparently unstoppable pre-walking climbing ability that I would automatically be amazing at it. Though unfortunately that wasn't the case, I have loved having the chance to try and I hope to at least become somewhat proficient!

WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE FOR ADVENTURES IN THE FUTURE?

I have several plans - not yet sure how realistic they are! I imagine wandering around the Mongolian steppe towards the Stans or the Himalayas. I also imagine, perhaps due to a National Geographic article, surviving the Alaskan wilderness in a kayak on the Yukon. Oh and I'd love to give this mountaineering thing a try! However, with current navigational, horse riding, kayaking abili-

ties and fitness level, any attempts may result in death. I either need to stay in the club to up-skill, or drag some of you knowledgeable lot along with me! In terms of more concrete plans I do hope to do some walking in New Zealand over the summer.





FROM OUR NEW MEMBERS

ROWAN DUNN



I've always been drawn to natural landscapes and exploring the great outdoors, however, through the combination of being raised by "home body" parents, focusing on studies, and growing up in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, this side of me has been neglected. Having started climbing the previous year and hearing of the MUMC, I decided that it was finally time to unleash my inner adventurer!

Having come from a different university (Latrobe), and not knowing any current members, the prospect of joining and getting started within the club was daunting at first. However I

quickly found the members of MUMC to be very welcoming and this encouraged me to become quite an active member. I also found the diversity of MUMC members to be incredible, and as a result was always learning new and interesting things from new and old MUMC members alike. And finally, the willingness of trip leaders to impart their sport-specific knowledge and encourage newbies like myself to participate in as many sports as possible has been amazing!

Funnily enough, having joined the club predominately to improve my climbing, I am yet to go on a climbing trip! So far I have been on trips for hiking, kayaking, conservation, skiing and caving, with plans to cross a few more sports off my list before the end of the year!

Before the year ends, I hope to try my hand at rogaining and some outdoor climbing (finally!), and am also looking forward to organising my own hiking trip to the Overland track in Tasmania towards the end of the year. But as for next year, who knows!

MOHAMED NASHER



I grew up in Yemen, and studied at university in Egypt, before I came to Australia.

There is always a variety of interesting outdoor trips: conservation, bushwalking, kayaking, rock climbing, skiing and also mountaineering. It has long tradition of crazy trips such as Midnight Ascent. I have experienced ski-touring and camping overnight in the snow for the first time. It was also my first time at the snow. It is very important to learn how to get up again after falling, especially when carrying a pack.

I think it is a privilege to be member of the club. It provides the opportunity to explore nature, learn new outdoor skills, meet new friends, keep fit and enjoy weekends in a friendly environment.



SIMONE MIZZI

After joining MUMC, I was fortunate enough to go on my first cross country skiing trip. I had been to the snow once previously, but had only experienced tobogganing surrounded by hordes of children half my size. As it was my first time on skis, I was quite nervous but very excited. I thought that the numer-

ous falls would be the difficult part of the day, but my biggest struggle was getting up awkwardly when I was halfway down a slope. All though it was slow progress, we made it to the end of the track and I think by the end of the day I had gotten the hang of things and actually ended up having heaps of fun!

ACQUISITION OF CLUBROOMS

MITCHELL STEPHEN

When I joined the club in 2010 there was some talk of a new clubrooms, of redeveloping the football pavilion that MUMC occupied one end of.

To the members who had been around a while, this was old news, another repeat of the cycle. Someone would champion a movement to redevelop the “pavvy”, plans would be drawn up, costings done and then not enough money found, and so the project would be shoved back into the too hard basket.

The one constant with the redevelopment plans was that MUMC always seemed to be mysteriously left out of the final design. This necessitated that we keep in contact with Melbourne University Sport (MUS) and our ears to the ground for rumors of upcoming plans.

However overtime, a culture developed within MUMC, where it was viewed that the less we had to do with MUS, the better off we were. But we weren't!

Some history.

In mid- to late 2012, I attended my first Melbourne University Sports Association (MUSA) meeting. MUSA is a volunteer organisation that seeks to act in a similar way to a union, representing the needs of university sports clubs, working towards more equitable distributions of funding and helping to resolve conflicts.

At this meeting the Director of Sport gave his usual report, it included words to the effect of: “work on the Main Oval Pavilion Redevelopment (MOPR) is progressing well, it should be demolished in 2 months time and construction finished by Grand Final day next year.”

What? What about MUMC?

There is no mention of MUMC in those plans!

The plan of being better off by having less to do with MUS had spectacularly

back fired. In 2 months time we would have no clubrooms, with all of the gear having to be stored in the boatsheds.

By not attending regular MUSA and MUS meetings and forums, not reading MUS strategic plans thoroughly enough and not maintaining a positive relationship with MUS staff, we had been unaware of the latest plans. This meant that we missed the opportunity to speak to the design consultants and timely comment on earlier design proposals.

In response to this a few of us got together and frantically started formulating plans, writing letters, sending emails and attending meetings.

We were able to secure a guarantee from MUS Director of Sport Tim Lee that a new clubrooms would be found that was “like for like or better” than what we currently had. The MOPR project had progressed too far for MUMC to feature in the final design as it already had approvals from the council and other planning authorities.

Emily Dixon from Property and Campus Services went out of her way to assist MUMC in finding a new and suitable clubrooms in the Parkville precinct.

Once we had a new clubrooms the work was not over. We still had to relocate everything and fit out the clubrooms. We have done an enormous amount already, such as the bouldering wall, boat storage racks, ski racks and soon to come, a theatre!





BUILDING A BOULDERING WALL

RICHARD BASSETT-SMITH

The bouldering wall was the last thing that I had planned to do for MUMC. I would have liked to build a bookcase for the library and finish refurbishing the rest of the clubrooms first. However, when I asked the members what we could do to improve and develop the character of the clubrooms, the only answer I received was a cry for a bouldering wall! How do you even begin to build one of those?

My imagination took off, my mind ticking over, as I began to ponder the question: how would I do it? I asked for two days to have a plan ready, and warned the committee that there would be a sudden proposal for a large sum of money. That weekend, I found myself at Mt. Arapiles and I started talking over the idea with Sean Ladiges at breakfast on Sunday morning down in the Pines.

From having no plan at all, to develop-



ing a concept and getting the committee to approve some funding took 10 days.

The materials I needed arrived on Thursday, and demolition took place on Friday evening, but not before using the opportunity for some dry tooling, which couldn't be missed. Axes and crampons found their way out of the mountaineering gear store into the wall with some swift strikes - much to the delight of some of our members.

On Saturday, the plan was to fix timber battons to the double brick wall.

Sean arrived with the fancy, but expensive, Hilti hardware - one drill bit cost a hefty \$60. Holes were drilled and cleaned, and the just-as-pricey Hilti bolts and glue were set into the bricks. It didn't seem like much to show for a whole day's work, but it was, at last, the start of our new boulderig wall.

Plans were chopped and changed on Sunday morning, and we added two more big timber beams to bulk up the structural component. The climber themselves decided to turn up, much my surprise! Usually it's pretty rare to see them anywhere but at the crag. Aaron Lowndes' late addition to the project was an elaborately designed crack machine.

Three weeks of long, hard days took their toll, exhaustion began to set in - then one day, I walked in and realised that it was finished! All but for one small detail - the climbers had no holds!

MUMC BOULDER BASH

THARATORN SUPASITI

Starting out as an idea between Richard and Sean, the MUMC bouldering wall got bigger and grander. And what better way to celebrate the resurrection of the wall than to have our very own boulder bash! The format is used in many fun bouldering competitions. Each route has a difficulty point. A climber gets that point if he completes the route from the ground, and extra half a point if he did it on his first shot. Generally,

there is a time limit of two hours, but we set aside six hours to those who cannot come at the start. As bouldering is a problem-solving competition, only top six routes are counted towards the final score.

The problems were set. In the afternoon of early May, many MUMCers, young and old, converged to a little building on Berkeley Street to test their problem-solving skills. Excitement and the reverberation of Richard's circular saw filled the stagnant air. It was a time to start. Many beginners made the mistake of climbing too hard too early and

were later shown by our life member, Stu, how to properly warm up and flash hard problems. Overall, we saw a future Daniel Woods in the making, but most importantly, many had fun. Even Richard took a break to climb on his creation. A big thanks to Roisin, Aaron, Anthony, Gaetan and especially Romain. Without his army of power tools, we may have ended up spending all night setting 28 routes with just three allen keys. Lastly, without Richard and several others, we may never have had a bouldering wall at all.



COMPETITION RESULTS

CLIMBING

LEADING LADDER ROUND 1 (28TH JAN – 16TH FEB)

Roisin Briscoe (4th, Open A)
Aaron Lowndes (1st, Open A)
Gaetan Riou (7th, Open A)
Tharatorn Supasiti (9th Open A)

Liv Grover Johnson (1st Open B)
Mona John von Freyend (3rd, Open B)
Heidi Wong (7th, Open B)

LEADING LADDER ROUND 2 (8TH APRIL – 18TH MAY)

Roisin Briscoe (2nd, Open A)
Aaron Lowndes (1st, Open A)
Gaetan Riou (7th, Open A)

Liv Grover Johnson (3rd, Open B)

LEADING LADDER ROUND 3 (2ND – 22ND JUNE)

Roisin Briscoe (3rd, Open A)
Aaron Lowndes (1st, Open A)
Gaetan Riou (7th, Open A)

Liv Grover Johnson (1st, Open B)
Mona John von Freyend (4th, Open B)

VICTORIAN STATE LEAD TITLES (1ST MARCH)

Aaron Lowndes (6th Open A)
Gaetan Riou (14th Open A)
Tharatorn Supasiti (15th Open A)
Julian Goad (2nd, Open B)
James Cosgriff (17th Open B)
Liv Grover Johnson (4th Open B)
Anja Fuchtbauer (5th Open B)

QLD STATE LEAD TITLES - 17TH - 18TH MAY

Roisin Briscoe (12th Open A)

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL LEAD (18TH AND 19TH JUNE)

Aaron Lowndes (12th Open A)
Roisin Briscoe (15th Open A)
Gaetan Riou (3rd Open B)
James Cosgriff (12th Open B)
Heidi Wong (2nd Open B)

BOULDERING

BAYSIDE BOULDER BASH (29TH MARCH 2014)

Shaffique Aljoofri (35)
Gaetan Riou (33.5)
Roisin Briscoe (33)

LACTIC BOULDERING COMPETITION (6TH JUN - 30TH AUG)

James Cosgriff (51)
Heidi Wong (37)
Shaffique Aljoofri (36)





FALLING UPWARDS

STUART HOLLOWAY

One of the things I like about climbing is that it is a cheap hobby. You don't need to register a team, you don't need to pay to use the field, and you don't need lots of expensive gear. A reasonable rack, rope and personal set up can be had for well under \$1500 and you are good for years of fun. It is much cheaper than skiing or paddling and you certainly don't want to do the budget on bike riding, cricket, golf, scuba diving or sailing.

The equipment is fairly cheap, light and

doesn't need to be replaced too often. Above all else, it is fabulously, thrillingly, functional. It actually works and this is the fantastic development that moved climbing from a fairly committing endeavour to a really casual recreation. The development of equipment systems that actually work expanded the type of fun you can have climbing.

Any activity where difficulty and danger are inextricably linked inevitably becomes boring or fatal.

The brilliance of climbing with modern equipment is that we can choose the kind of uncertainty we seek. From the commitment of unprotected mind-control horror shows to the casual gymnastic fun of steep sport climbing, cliffs offer the opportunity to drain your fingers, forearms, calves or nerves depending on mood and inclination.

There are some climbers whose mood and inclination should make the sport even cheaper. In Victoria there are many climbers who see the rope as another of those hallowed objects, like the good scissors and the couch that isn't for sitting on; something to carry and fret over but not to actually put to use in the catching of a fall.

A lot of people climb and don't fall. They enjoy the activity and the environment and the people and it enriches their lives. This is a marvellous thing. Perhaps it is far better to climb and not fall in the fear that it is unsafe than to fall without having had the fear to determine that it is safe.

Climbing is inevitably a struggle against gravity and thus we can only ever be temporarily successful. Defeat is certain however much we seek to sneak around the crux, so there is, perhaps, more fun to be had if we accept the fall.

The first time the climber hits this point of commitment, unable to advance, unable to return, could well be the first cold, sweaty embrace of fear.

The reaction begins in the amygdala, which triggers a neural response in the hypothalamus. The initial reaction is followed by activation of the pituitary gland and secretion of the hormone ACTH. The adrenal gland is activated almost simultaneously and releases the neurotransmitter epinephrine. The release of chemical messengers results in the production of the hormone cortisol, which increases blood pressure, blood sugar, and suppresses the immune system. Catecholamine hormones, such as adrenaline (epinephrine) or noradrenaline (norepinephrine), facilitate immediate physical reactions associated with a preparation for violent muscular action. These include the following:

- Acceleration of heart and lung action
- Constriction of blood vessels in many parts of the body
- Liberation of metabolic energy sources (particularly fat and glycogen) for muscular action
- Dilation of blood vessels for muscles
- Auditory exclusion (loss of hearing)
- Tunnel vision (loss of peripheral vision)
- Shaking

The physiological changes that occur during the fight or flight response are activated in order to give the body increased strength and speed in anticipation of fighting or running.

There is not a lot of glamour in the fearful, foot-peddling fury of the frightened climber pawing pumped at the exit jugs before belly flopping onto a ledge, but I found once the whimpering subsided the endorphins remained. Similarly, I once captured the bedwetting essence of a frightened boy-scout as I screeched





like a shaved cat for 10 metres off the back wall of The Bluffs.

Struggling to turn the roof on Mari a then MUMC president shrieked, for the umpteenth time, “watch me”, which elicited the hilarious response from Howling Wolf: “he’s watching, we’re watching, everybody is watching you scream.” In contrast, our new president is a silent assassin who will drop horrifying distances without warning or whim. Too much fear is toxic, clouding judgment, obscuring footholds, causing climbers to grip too hard and breathe too shallow, but for as long as

rock is hard and acceleration sudden, some fear is still your friend. Despite this, the gear is usually good, the catch is usually soft and the ropes never break (though it might cut), so you should double up the runners, breathe deep and go for it.

This is what we saw on the Oxo Big Air weekend at Araps when a big team of climbers committed to leaving the gear behind and fighting for the onsight. There was some squealing, much puffing, some good catches and plenty of people lifting their onsight level by 2-3 Ewbank grades.

I like all types of climbing – casual or committed; easy or hard. My favourite climbing occurs around the point of engagement: hard but uncertain; safe enough but not secure. I am master of neither my fate nor my fear, but I don’t screech or shake much anymore and sometimes, I know I will fall and believe that I might not.

This, above all, is what I seek climbing in the interplay of time, muscle, gravity, landscape and imagination – a state of grace: my mind fallen but body still climbing; movement outside of fear or time; falling upwards.

CLIMB LIKE A GIRL!

ANTHONY CUSKELLY

As with the rest of life, there’s no room in climbing for sexism.

And yet, we see it all the time. “*You climb like a girl*”. “*But I’m a girl, I’m weak*”. That’s bullshit.

Let me give you an example. I’m male, 188cm, 90kg, with 10 years climbing experience both in Australia and overseas. I can build an anchor blindfolded and remember move and gear beta on half the climbs I’ve ever done.

My little sister outclimbs me by 3 grades.

That’s right. She’s 30cm shorter, 35kg lighter, and only has half my experience. So why’s she so much better?

Physiologically, she’s lighter, has better core strength, more flexible, her small fingers fit in most holds better. She gets less cramped on a lot of tight moves, and less leverage on steep climbs. Her power to weight ratio is enormously better than mine.

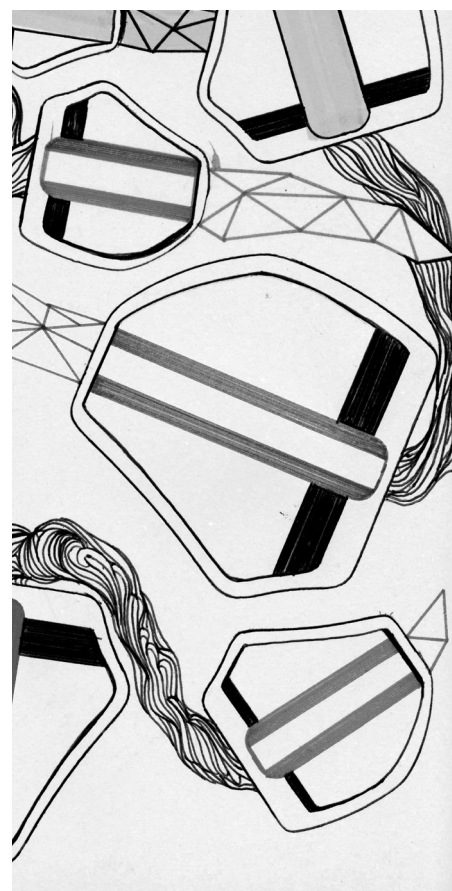
Psychologically, she’s more determined,

better at reading sequences, and less bothered about falling. Her footwork is better, and she inch closer to the wall, partially because she’s so much smaller.

What can I do better? On vertical walls, I can sometimes reach through sequences that she can’t, though this disappears on steeper climbs. I’m better on big open-handed holds, though her crimping is way better than mine. I’m better at placing gear, but that’s purely experience. I’ve naturally got more strength, but a couple of years training has nullified that. Overall it’s not surprising she’s doing so well.

The youngest climber ever to climb grade 31 is a girl (Angie Scarth-Johnson). The first person to free El Capitan (Lynn Hill) and the first person to flash the crux pitch (29, on weird gear) of Ozymandias were both women. Hazel Findlay, Monique Forestier, and Sasha de Guilian are all pushing the boundaries of what’s possible or sensible in the sport.

So look to use your advantages and work your weaknesses, whatever body



and brain you’ve got to work with.

Personally, I try and climb like a girl.





24 HOURS FOR 24 YEARS

JACK

We walked from 9:45 am on May 2nd until 9:47 am on May 3rd, from Mt. Feathertop to Mt. Bogong, the highest Mountain in Victoria in 1986. This walk has a bit of an MUMC history, as it has been attempted to finish this route within 24 hours by at least two other groups in the past. The first group was in 1999, these guys however put their sleeping time on “hold” and continue to count the next morning. Despite resting, they bailed out. The other group in 2007 did what we did: walking straight.

They finished in just over 27 hours. I met the others at a meeting of the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club. I’m Jack, a graduate student at the Uni, and the others, Gopi, Taner, and Judith, are taking time off/travelling in Australia. We were a diverse group: Gopi an Indian, Taner an Australian with strong Turkish roots, Judith a German, and I, an American. Judith’s 24th birthday was on Saturday, so the unofficial theme was “24 hours for 24 years.”

We camped on Thursday night near the base of Mt. Feathertop. After mak-

ing final preparations we drove to the starting point and got underway at 9:45 am on the dot, with a collective feeling of nervous excitement. The hike began with a steady climb up Mt. Feathertop. As we got higher, a slight drizzle turned into sleet and snow, and we enjoyed watching Gopi experience his first snow. We took a break at the MUMC hut. If we wanted to make it within the estimated time, we figured we could roughly break for 15-20 minutes every 5 hours in order to eat, drink and regain motivation.

We pushed on to the summit, taking a shortcut off track. It felt great to be off trail following a ridgeline to a summit, above tree-line, with sleet biting my face. We had fun at the summit, taking a few swigs of Jim Beam bourbon. Gopi had his second new experience by having his first taste of whiskey. He did not enjoy it.

Next we had a descent down the back of Mt. Feathertop following the surprisingly pleasant Razorback Trail. When the next ascent began, a caloric deficit and exhaustion set Gopi in a bad state and he said he didn’t think he

could go on, but we convinced him to relax and eat in the relative warmth of the hut before we made any decisions. After we all ate, we decided to walk to the next hut which was adjacent to a road. We left the hut, into a still, black night with no moon and a steady snow, and walked on through puddles that had turned into small lakes. Gopi was regaining his spirits, but after 12 hours he decided that the best course of action was for him to bail out. He got a fire going and we ate some dinner as we warmed our feet. Judith was especially cold in summer running shoes.

I took a caffeine pill to help get me through the night. After a long break (nearly an hour), we abandoned the warmth of the fire and trekked back out into the cold. At 12 am we stopped and wished Judith a happy birthday, and celebrated with some red wine and our favorite Whittaker’s chocolate. It was delicious.

After Taner also agreed to a caffeine pill we walked the High Plains in chatty spirits on an uneventful trek. Our next planned stop was a hut just before a





steep descent to the Big River, which separates the Bogong High Plains from the slopes of Mt. Bogong itself. After 4 hours since we had left Gopi, we discovered to our disappointment that in fact no hut existed; it had been burnt down years prior. That's how 3 am found us sitting on logs around a cold fire pit, eating skittles and drinking whiskey in the rain. We headed off down to the river, and between the steep slope, wet leaves, and the dark, we had a tough time. It was probably the lowest point of the walk for most of us. Nearly two hours (and only a couple of kilometers) after we left the last hut site, we finally reached the river, which, befitting the change in our luck, had no bridge, only a chain to hold onto as we walked barefoot through the water. Just before crossing it, Judith did something that would be very beneficial for her pierc-

in autopilot at this point, and fighting mental exhaustion. Judith mentioned that through this ascent for about 80 minutes she literally counted up to 100 and down again, then sang some random song in her head and did it all over again to distract herself from the fact that she was at the limit of her physical and mental strength. Somehow the early light of pre-dawn that began to light the surrounding forest was more depressing than the dark, and at 6am, I was at my most fatigued, hallucinating the appearance of the hut at every turn.

Meanwhile, Judith declared that she saw another group of hikers on the mountain, which she described to me in detail. They were rocks.

Finally, at the hut we discovered that we had only two and a half hours if we wanted to make the 24 hour mark, and

finish, with what we thought was only 5km left. As the trail became less steep we broke into a trailrun, confident in finishing with time to spare. We soon realized that we were still quite far from the bottom, and I checked the time: 9:39 am! Only 6 minutes to go. It was going to be close. I pushed it, trying to ignore the blisters and damaged toenails that were screaming at me to stop running. Ahead of me, Taner was slowing down, and at 9:45, the 24 hour mark, he screamed a profanity at the mountain and stopped running. At 9:47 am I reached the bottom. A few people hiking up Mt. Bogong this morning looked at us strangely as we came barreling down the trail. I explained to them what we were doing, and enjoyed their impressed look. Yelling up that the end was in sight, I sat down, completely exhausted but satisfied. Taner and Judith finished a few minutes later. Taner somewhat upset about missing the 24 hour mark, but Judith looking happy. We all griped about the mistake on the map which marked the last section as 5km when it was clearly longer, a blip on an otherwise impressive walk.

FINISHING TIMES:

Jack: 24:02h

Taner: 24:05h

Judith: 24:08h



ing pain caused by wet and cold conditions: she lost control and fell halfway into the river. Thankfully, it was neither very deep nor fast-flowing, and except for Judith now being entirely soaked, we all crossed it uneventfully. As we sat on the opposite bank of the river, anticipating the long climb that lay ahead, and for the first time being behind our self-imposed schedule, I think we were all feeling a little down. I found two leaches on my hand, which both fascinated and disgusted me since I had never seen one before. Judith was quiet. I knew that this section, a nearly 1000m ascent in the latest and coldest hours of the night, preceded by a steep downhill, would be difficult. After a brief break, we headed up Mt. Bogong. I was

we had to keep our long yearned real break - 10 hours since we had left Gopi - short.

Time for the final push. After a bit of a slow start, we all picked up when we broke tree-line and followed a broad ridge up to the summit. The view opened up after hours of terrible visibility, and we could see the other slopes of Mt. Bogong and the surrounding mountains, and it was clear how much higher we were than the surrounding country. To our surprise, we had reached the summit about 12 minutes ahead of our estimated time.

We joyfully finished off the whiskey, took pictures and reflected on the walk, then headed down a steep trail to the





MOROKA RIVER EXPLORATIONS

MITCHELL STEPHEN

Moroka River
7 large waterfalls
3 days of challenging class IV-V boating
Gorge sections with no escape, but
down river
20m plus abseils
Located in Victoria
What isn't there to be excited about?

I first discovered the Moroka River area whilst pouring over maps in preparation for a trip into Lake Tali Karng. The remoteness, lack of accessible tracks, steep gradient and relatively large high-plains catchment area all stirred something inside me.

Subsequent trips hiking and four wheel driving in the Wonnongatta valley to the north and east further stirred my interest.

TRIP 1: EASTER 2013
(Christian Slattery, Jonathan Cawood and Mitchell Stephen)

Christian had a party on the Thursday night, so the decision was made to avoid all of the long weekend traffic and leave Melbourne at about 5am, Friday morning, to get to the river before lunchtime. The party turned out to be rather good, and 5am came around with Christian stumbling along drunkenly from Donvale to his home in Warrandyte, leaving Jono the fun job of trying to find him en route.

The 5 hour car ride provided Christian an opportunity to sleep, sober up and moan about his ever-increasing hang-over.

We got to the car park and the river was looking low, but the beta we had received suggested it would, so we were not too disheartened. They had received more than 50mm of rain the day before, so we were hopeful that this



would be enough to bring the river up to a paddable level.

After a pleasant hike in, a swim in the cool water was well earned and proved to be a successful way of sobering up Christian. We braved the icy water to check the depth of where we would land in our kayaks. Unfortunately, there were a series of rock shelves about 80cm below the water, which would have a major disagreement with your spine and head. It wasn't safely paddable at this level.

At higher flows, you would be able to launch out and 'boof', a technique where you propel your boat out over a drop and land flat in the aerated water below. Done correctly, these are safe landings that generally prevent you from being sucked behind the curtain of a waterfall and enable you to land in shallower water.

We returned to the car disheartened and drove around to the top of a four wheel drive track that we hoped would lead us 30 kilometres downstream from the waterfall we had visited. We were planning to put a vehicle at the bottom

of this track when we paddled the river in the future, so it was worth checking out. The track deteriorated significantly. It was very overgrown and there were many fallen trees across it. After a few kilometres we had to make a many point turn on the narrow track and retreat back to the main road. We later learned that this track had been closed.

Further disheartened, we decided to camp up for the night, before a quick trip into Lake Tali Karng the next day. Moroka disappointment number 1.

TRIP 2: SEPTEMBER 2013
(Jonathan Cawood, Dan Eags, Jarred Atkin and Mitchell Stephen)

Having had some fun (and some hopefully-never-to-be-repeated-scary-as-all-hell) experiences on the Kiewa rivers at higher flows over the past few months, we decided to head up to Anglers Rest on the Mitta Mitta River. From here we could paddle the lower volume Bundarra (III) and Cobungra (IV) creeks, have some easy fun on the Mitta Mitta River...and spend each night in the warm pub drinking ice cold beer.



But in true Victorian style, the rivers kept on dropping and the forecast rain never materialised. Saturday consisted of a bony run without incident on the Cobungra, which left us barely satisfied and keen for something more challenging. Pub talk turned to the Moroka River and the 6m “hike and huck” drop at the start of the section - plans were altered for Sunday.

Whilst sort of on the way home, in reality the Moroka River was a 200km plus detour, 160km of which was gravel and mud. There had been no recent snow, so the road from the west was open and we assumed that that would mean the road from the south was also open.

Having not planned to come into this area, we didn't have any maps and were thus navigating with a Melways and GPS coordinates from an iPhone. We made it onto the correct roads and were feeling good, right up until the locked gate 5km from where we wanted to park. Bugger!

We contemplated how long it would take us to walk the 5km to the car park, the 3km in to the waterfall and the same distance back out, all on muddy tracks, whilst carrying kayaks. It was after lunch, we still had a 5 hour drive home and we weren't even sure if the waterfall would be flowing enough to paddle – we bailed.

Moroka disappointment number 2.

TRIP 3: EASTER 2014

Christian Slattery, Steven Birkett, Emmilie Goulter, Gleb Belov, Will Tanders, Jack, Jamie and Mitchell Stephen)

The kayaks were left at home; abseil gear chucked in. Steve brought a machete and I feared most of the group didn't really know what they were in for.

With a dry summer and little autumn rain, I was hoping for low river levels so that we could walk and scramble down the river bed. Starting at Horseyard Flat, my original intention was to travel

roughly 30km down the river and then head west up an overgrown track for 10km, to a second car. This 30km was relatively unknown as very few hikers venture below the gorge. I was expecting a copious amount of blackberries and frustratingly dense vegetation.

The Easter break gave us 4 days to complete this, which seemed like plenty. The plan was to travel light and fast – think one sleeping bag between 2-3, one stove, one tarp etc. But, as usual, things change. Instead of leaving on Thursday night, one car decided to leave super early Friday morning, which turned into mid-morning after car troubles, which resulted in them arriving in the afternoon, by which time the rain had set in and the temperature had plummeted.

No one felt like setting off on a sodden hike down a river with little clothing, no tents and the imminent threat of snow. So what other options did we have than to light a big fire and hit the beers? Gleb felt particularly energetic





and went off on a reccie down the river, but the news wasn't good: the fastest he could go along the river bed was about 1km per hour. Saturday morning was chilly, but the rain had passed and there were clear skies. If we were going to do it, we had to make a start.

We eventually got moving by 11am, made short work of the 3km trek to the first falls (6m) and continued on a partial path to the second falls (4m). From here the track faded and by the time we got to the third falls (11m) we were rock-hopping along the bank and clambering along fallen trees in the ever steepening gorge. The fourth falls presented a greater challenge as it was a sheer 15m cliff. We took a late and well-earned lunch break, but it was becoming evident that we would have to cut this mission short.

The simple solution would have been to chuck the packs over the edge and leap after them into the water, but that is not without significant risks. Instead, we lowered the packs and down-climbed

along some exposed goat tracks that materialised after a couple of hundred meters of bush bashing above the cliffs.

After another hour of scrambling and boulder-hopping, we arrived at the top of the fifth falls, with a number in the group visibly exhausted. These falls were the most spectacular yet, with water cascading 20m down into a large pool, before exiting through a narrow neck. The opposite bank was cliff-like and very intimidating. Travel on that side was impossible. On our side, river left, we faced a steep slope above a cliff line that only eased off after a few hundred meters, where it met a creek line. The only feasible way of continuing our venture, was to get out the abseil gear and commit to whatever else lay downstream. But as a group we didn't like this idea.

At 4pm we aborted our hike, climbing up to the 1090 feature and then contouring around to find the track back to camp. The last few kilometres were done by torchlight; altogether we did

12km in 8 hours that day. Moroka disappointment number 3.

While we were up in the area we decided to hike into Lake Tali Karng again. Christian and I drove the cars around to the Wellington River end, whilst the others started hiking in from the high plains side. For some reason Christian and I thought it would be a good idea to attempt to skol a beer at each of the 16 river crossings on the hike in. But that's another story for another time.

The next mission was to head into the fifth falls and head down from there, hopefully past the sixth and seventh and down to our original take out. We will travel faster and lighter and I would be inclined to limit the group size to four people.

What will venture number 4 entail?



GAMMON RANGES EXPEDITION

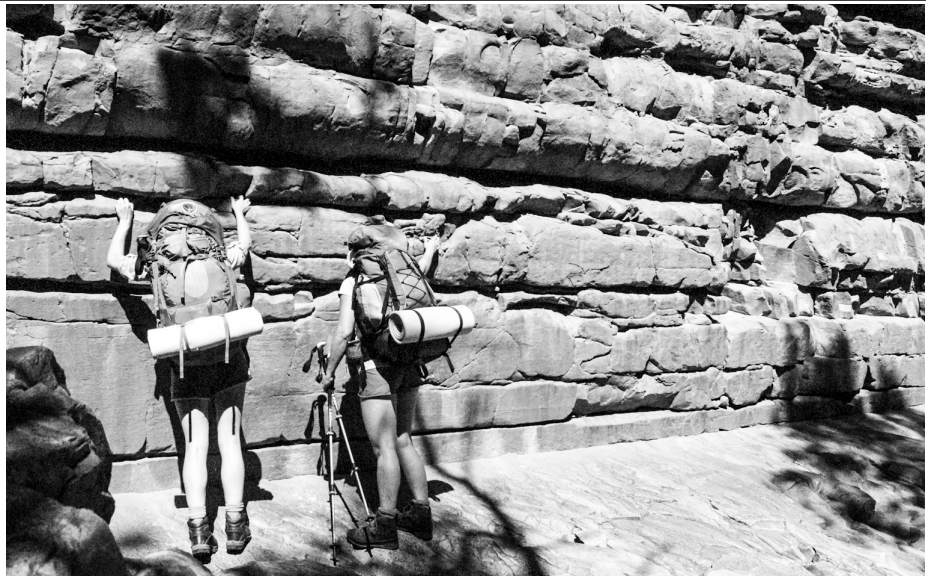
MONA JOHN VON FREYEND

I wanted to go on an adventure.

That's what I told the other girls at some point in January. I wanted a proper adventurous walk, something not easily accessible. Something remote and wild and memorable.

None of us had ever heard of the Gammon Ranges, before Dani suggested a walk there. Googling didn't supply much information apart from copious pictures of snakes. It turned out that an extremely rare form of carpet python makes its home in the Gammon Ranges. Who knew that Australia also hosts non-venomous snakes?! I certainly didn't.

So after some planning, many googled-oc packing lists and some frantic purchases, off we went. We had 10 days to get to the Gammon Ranges – an “easy drive” of 10 hours west and 10 hours north, complete the 5 day circuit walk, and drive back.



The walk was all the guidebook had promised and more. Beautiful red rocks, rugged gorges, dry mountain ridges, sleeping under the open sky and generally a wonderfully remote and empty countryside. We didn't meet a single person once we set out on the walk. Our legs were sore from jumping from stone to stone in the riverbed, we were scratched from branches and spinifex and we were ridiculously dirty. The question remains: whatever possessed me to wear a white T-shirt on a 5 day desert walk? It didn't stay white. In fact

it hasn't been white since.

Elaine summed it all up best on day 4: “*Let me guess what the guidebook describes for today: walk up a dry riverbed. Climb a mostly dry waterfall. Climb out of the riverbed onto a mountain ridge for a view. Climb back into the riverbed. Climb down a waterfall. Walk down a dry riverbed. Find water. Camp.*”

It was great and I think I can safely say that we all enjoyed it to no end.

ANJA FUECHTBAUER

SATURDAY, 19 APRIL 2014 - DAY 2 | MORE DRIVING

As the sun set, we left the sealed road behind us. We drove around some hills and there it was: the wind mill. The hills were bathed in a warm, golden light and the windmill seemed to stand, reflecting on the hills.

We pushed on into the night, and the road turned from rough to rougher. Liv called on some inner instinct to guide us through along the 4WD track. Her skills were rather impressive – not only did she battle with a rocky road and dry creek beds in the dark night, but

she also had to cope with music blasting out of the loud speakers, Elaine being racked with fits of uncontrollable laughter, whilst also fighting against her seat belt that had the tendency to strangle its user on uneven ground. Mona was filming and looking out for wildlife on the track, and I think Dani and I were probably squealing with delight at the same time. Somehow, we managed to arrive at the campground.

SUNDAY, 20 APRIL 2014 - DAY 3 | WALKING DAY 1 | BUNYIP CHASM AND MT JOHN ROBERTS

The Easter bunny came this morning,

but the chocolate he'd left in our shoes was already melting by 8 in the morning. We set off with high hopes from Loch Ness Well. After 15 mins, we were lost. Chapman's book had described 'easy walking' along a riverbed. If this was easy walking, what's to come? We had made a wrong turn right at the very start, which we corrected by scrambling over a ridge, and down the other side where we found the riverbed that we were supposed to be in. We kept walking until the entrance to Bunyip Chasm, where we gladly dropped our packs, and after some Easterly hot crossed, went off exploring.



GAMMON RANGES EXPEDITION

Shelf after shelf of red rock glowed in the afternoon sun. At the end of the chasm the guidebook said to '*climb the waterfall*'. Thankfully, there was merely a dribble of water. However, wet stone is very slippery and I was firstly not very keen on the climb. The way to the summit was half scramble, half climbing, and it just did not end. Liv and Dani were amazingly quick, but I struggled a lot with the big backpack on. But we did it! Nobody got thrown off the loose rock and we could enjoy lovely views through the valley.

MONDAY, 21 APRIL 2014 - DAY 4 | WALKING DAY 2 |

We followed the dry riverbed up, seeing nothing but a roo which jumped off. We jumped on too. With Dani navigating, counting riverbeds to the left and right, we kept walking up and up in search of water. The first pool that we came across was not so nice, being decorated with floating poo. We kept going and after discovering more pools, which were equally disappointing due to carcasses and other dead animals, we went to climb up to shelf chasm.

Back in camp our 'doctor-to-be' showed us her ankles, which were badly swollen with some sort of allergic rash. This, along with a terrible toothache, made my little blister seem very small.

That night we made a fire and drank some of *Our Scottish Lady* whisky.

TUESDAY, 22 APRIL 2014 - DAY 5 | WALKING DAY 3 |

We had breakfast, measured our water and then left for the next part of the journey. It wasn't supposed to be a long walk, but the mood suggested solid type 2 fun. Maybe even type 3. My legs felt heavy and it was already very warm in the morning. At the peak of one the larger hills (Cleft Peak), we found a log book, which we searched for signs of previous MUMC entries. And indeed we found them: 1983, 1994 and 1998. We also enjoyed Liv's surprise snack -

'Saline'. You mix it with water and it gets all bubbly. So refreshing.

At the bottom we dropped our bags once more. At this stage we were almost out of water and at Rover Rockhole had a 90% chance of it. Well there was no water to be found. We climbed for nearly an hour upstream in search of water, and eventually we did find some, but it was desperately in need of treatment

WEDNESDAY, 23 APRIL 2014 - DAY 6 | WALKING DAY 4

We haven't not seen a single soul. It was a weird feeling to rely so heavily on these plastic containers to carry our precious water.

We hopped on and the gorges become narrower and steeper. We kept walking, and crossed a rock formation called the bathtub. This was followed by 'the Terraces': massive steps carved out of the stone by water over a long period of time. We climbed on till we were in dense scrub. I forgot my gaiters in the camp and only Mona and Elaine had some sort of protection when we started bashing our way up to Prow Point

(997m). Surprisingly, both Liv and Dani came out almost unscratched. The view on top was amazing. We had a photo session and sat down for lunch. The flies were relentless and swarmed all around us to land on our fresh bleeding scratches and have their own feast.

Almost 3 pm. We had to get back, and get water. I knew Mona and I had head torches but I wasn't too keen on rock hopping at night. So back down we went. Past the dead goat, through the Terraces and the bathtub and back to our precious drinking bottles. Everyone knew we had to walk a fair way up again while we went to our bottles so I started some singing sessions. That lifted the spirits and also distracted me from my painful left ankle. The riverbeds, climbing, and big steps took their toll. I ended up behind the group with watery eyes determined not to cry. One of my personal lows. I assume the blister on my right foot made me use the left one even more.

We reached the bottles and had a quick rest before I hushed them up to continue with our mission. It was almost





GAMMON RANGES EXPEDITION

5.15pm and the sun would go down soon. So we kept singing and chatting to get water and walked back to camp. It was still a tiny bit light but still we almost missed the camp spot. The evening was spent with another bonfire, polishing off the whiskey Mona had brought and having Dani's surprise ingredient 'Roche'. Nomnomnom! We found a big log in the river that we burnt down during the course of the night and then couldn't wait to crawl in our sleeping bags. Another clear night sky with lots of stars. Stones falling and the sound of something approaching brought me only laughter when mentioning George the goat. One shooting star later, however, I was fast asleep.

THURSDAY , 24 APRIL 2014 - DAY 7 | WALKING DAY 5

The last hiking day. We had the longest distance that day, but also the lightest packs. We started walking rather quietly. I walked over some stones and rolled my right ankle. It hurt. And everyone was quiet for a moment, aware of the 10+ km walk we had to go that day. Would it be ok? Then, all at once, we all started getting busy. I pulled off the shoe and Liv gave me a bandage and painkillers and the girls started grabbing stuff from my backpack. Not five minutes later I was slightly limping with one of Mona's walking poles. Could not have done it without them. The drugs kicked in and the walking got better. I started making jokes and all to try and break the silence that had started after the accident. It worked. We walked and the riverbed got wider and wider. We saw more goats and a blue tongued lizard that Mona tried to catch. The lizard was not convinced and tried to bite her. More trees, flowers and bushes, as we walked along the South Branch which turned into Halowie Creek until Worta Pound showed up on the left and we could finally leave river rocks behind us. Couldn't have done it for another day. We had our last lunch on a little hill with flies buzzing around us. While

munching my food I was thinking of all the descriptions John Chapman had put in his book which let me mumbling 'John Chapman, you son of a bitch'. This created amusement on all sides and I had to repeat it for the video camera.

After a last glimpse over the plains we marched on. Not long and we reached the 4WD track. Elaine enthusiastically threw herself on the ground, glad the riverbeds were over. We dropped the bags and walked to the car. I mucked around with my camera. I had left the walking pole behind with the bags. Well, one minute later I rolled my ankle again. *Seriously?* The adventure was far from over on that day. Back at the car we officially gave Mona the title for the most scratched legs and documented this accordingly. Back in the car and off we went, but not for very long before getting stuck at a section of dirt 4WD track that went uphill. Some pushing, sticks and stones later, we managed to drive past. We drove till Napabunha, the biggest (population of 60) Aboriginal community around. We just wanted to have a quick stop and maybe read the signs and information tables that were available. The town was pretty much empty. Walking into what seemed to be the tourist information, a non-Aboriginal, yes white, person came out. He was a pastor who held the dawn service for ANZAC day the next morning. When walking back to the car we saw that we actually had a flat tire. So we emptied the whole car, got the tire and changed it. There was an elderly Aboriginal with his tiny barking dog on his front veranda. He seemed drunk, but friendly drunk. He tried to tighten the spare tire after Elaine had already done so, without success. So he shouted that she must be a truly strong woman, said his goodbyes, and left. We kept driving into the sunset with max of 60km/h till Copley. The mechanic wasn't available anymore that time of the day but surely would be at ANZAC day?! We paid \$10 for the campground



next to a noisy road (well for the out-back that is) and had our dinner - and wine :) We talked about the tire that needed to be changed the next morning and I tried to explain that sometimes it can't be just changed but that it sometimes needs a weight in the tire to make it go round, but instead of '*not going round*' I said '*bonkers*' and for some inexplicable reason, everyone burst into laughter. A lot of laughter. And it has become a thing now. Oh dear!

FRIDAY , 25 APRIL 2014 - DAY 8 | DRIVING DAY 3

It's shower day! And it has never felt better! We got the tire fixed up, packed and were on the road once again. Homebound.



STAIRWAY TO HELL

TESSA LOUWERENS

Distance: 0 km, Time: 36 hours, Grade: not easy

No matter how well you prepare, some things are beyond our control, such as the weather. The picture-perfect skyline the day before turned out to be an omen for something less picturesque and so we found ourselves halfway down the Larapinta Trail, hiding in the tent. Just my luck to get rain in the desert, apparently for the first time in three months.

We soon realized that this was not just an isolated shower and if we still wanted to walk 31km today, there was no option but to head out and hope that it would clear up. Besides, the Dutch will not be deterred by a 'little' rain! After a short lunch break in the drop toilet, the only place that offered some shelter from the relentless rain, we resigned ourselves to a cold, wet walk and doubled our pace in the hope that this would warm us up. I remember cursing the heat just a few days ago, but the rainy day made me appreciate the sun again.

When we finally reached the next campsite I discovered to my dismay that my sleeping bag had gotten wet. So we huddled up together in the remaining sleeping bag, and had some Milo and Tim Tam Slams* in an attempt to lift our spirits.

*(*To my understanding, making a proper slam is a rite of passage when you're in Australia. I've heard it being described as 'an orgasm in your mouth' but I dare say it tastes much better than that.)*

Unfortunately the next morning it was still raining and our clothes were soaked. Going over the mountains in these conditions wouldn't be much fun, so we decided to sit it out. Boredom is

the main enemy at this point, especially since I am not known for my abilities to sit still for an extended period. Luckily, I'd brought a book. One of the chapters in John Krakauer's *Eiger Dreams* is entitled "On Being Tentbound"—a humorous essay that seems quite appropriate in this situation. Krakauer points out, "*Books provide a happy escape for they possess an ounce-of-weight to minute-of-entertainment ratio that compares quite favorably to intoxicants.*" That was fortunate, since our beers were finished.

Flipping through the pages, I was soon dozing off and it was already noon when I woke up. Sleeping is a great way to pass the time! But Krakauer warns of the danger: "*There can...be too much of a good thing. Even those with a gift for sloth must finally arrive at the point where sleeping further becomes impossible.*" Sad but true. Back in my teenage days, I could easily sleep for 14 hours straight. Now, after a meager 6 hours, I was wide awake.

So what came next? Social creatures as we were, we primarily turned to our tent mates for relief from dullness. Being cooped up in a small, damp and smelly tent is a good way to judge someone's character. Luckily, my travel mate had a good sense of humor, a vital asset in these situations. We passed the time playing games with matchsticks, solving riddles and telling stories. "*Of course, there are dangers here too,*" Krakauer noted. "*Even more important than an ability to entertain is a personality that doesn't annoy.*" One thing I discovered: my tiny two person tent seemed to shrink even further when you cram two soaked girls and their smelly socks in there for over 24 hours. People tend to get quite territorial when they are confined to a small space and the 50cm wide sleeping mat becomes your private kingdom. Respecting personal space is crucial.

In the end I got through this very long

day in one piece thanks to a good book, medium slovenly skills, some matchsticks, Tim Tams and, most importantly, a great tent mate to share Milo, stories and a sleeping bag with.



COLLECTED STORIES: WINTER 2014

EMILIE DUNCAN

Being a bit of a novice, I'm never really sure how far away death is; if I fall, will I just bruise my knee or tumble to my death? Although initially impervious to that outcome (having never before snow shoe-d and so never before slipped), after a bit of a slide I lost all trust in these new big funny shoes of mine. Every step came with the expectation that I would be going for a little ski!

We started off the day quite snowless at the bottom and wound our way up the mountain/hill (depending on your point of origin) until the snow appeared

a wee bit before our lunch stop, at 'Federation Hut'. The day had been quite patchy, but the patches now joined to form a nice cloud quilt. As such, the traverse to the MUMC Memorial Hut was completely in the hands of our leaders, who then succeeded in getting a bit lost!

We were quickly joined by the night as we slid on bottoms down bits of hill and then back up them. Getting lost was kind of fun, apart from the slight anxiety that we might shoot off the cliff. Eventually, upon checking a bit of sad, disintegrating map, Dani, Dan

and Tim decided it was best to retrace our steps. It seemed the compasses were in fact behaving, and we were back on track.

It was my first time at the MUMC Memorial Hut; very sophisticated indeed! An embellished mirror at the sink, candelabra and even two storeys! It also seemed to be holding better against the elements than my own home. As tea was essential, I made several cups as the others ate. The next day the clouds had left and we were able to see our lovely surroundings which, as a first-timer, was a lovely surprise!





COLLECTED STORIES: WINTER 2014

MOHAMED NASHER

The weekend trip to Edmondson's hut at Falls creek was an amazing trip; beyond my expectations!

The first day was cloudy and every thing was white, we were just blotches of colour in an endless white space.

The track was perfect for first time cross-country skiers, like me. My big-

gest problem at the beginning was that whenever I tried to enjoy the scenery - wondering about the spectacular whirling white wonderland - I would fall! Gradually, I became more stable, after learning some tips from Liv.

As always, on a hiking or ski-touring experience, the best moment is the time when you finally arrive at the hut. Time to warm up and have a delicious dinner. We started cooking after setting up the tents, and succeeded in lighting a fire a fire with wet wood. The food was really tasty. We then had a wonderful time

chatting and playing card games. The game was a crazy one, perfectly abstract in this setting: with dukes, captains, assassins, and ambassadors!

The following day, we journeyed back. It was a wonderful sunny day with blue sky, and there were more time to enjoy skiing, the snowy landscape, take photos and make snow angels. It was truly one of the best trip experiences I have had.

SONG MINGWEI

Storm.
2:30 a.m.
-25°C.

I could not tell the color of the sky.
Dark?

Because the altitude here was 5,300m, we were extremely close to the stratosphere.

White, maybe? Because the snow was so heavy that the sky looked like a white ceiling.

Or yellow, actually.

Because I was in the mountaineering tent, and the color of the Kailas tent was yellow.

The storm was so serious that our tents were buried within 30 minutes. The poles of the tents groaned and whispered in weird voices.

I was the team leader of the mountaineering club, but I had never experienced anything like this, even though this is my seventh mountaineering trip in three years. We decided to attack the summit earlier than planned, right then!

As soon as the team came out of the tents, the tents couldn't hold on anymore, they were destroyed one by one. We were shocked. Most of our gear was still in the tents.





FIRST SNOW FALL: STIRLING

LUKE FRISKEN

TRIP MEMBERS:

Liv Grover Johnson
Richard Basset-Smith
Julian Goad
Luke Frisken

I've never seen this much snow! Excitement grew proportionally to the depth of the snow, as we trudged our way up Bluff spur towards the summit of Mt Stirling, and memorable weekend of backcountry skiing. By the looks of things, we were the first people heading up the track today, and it felt great to be cleaving powder snow, leaving fresh tracks behind.

Part way up the mountain, our skis began to stop sliding, snow was building up underneath them. Naturally, we tried to find something to blame our predicament on: "Ryan, why didn't you wax the skis!?" One of us is going to have to go to the bottom to get us some wax! Ryan reassured us, as his group caught up to ours, that it was just the conditions; things would be better at the top.

I've never tried telemark skiing before; as a first timer, I really enjoyed watching people who look like they know what they're doing. While we were at Stanley Bowl on the Eastern flank of Stirling, it was beautiful watching fellow OXOs carving it up, dancing one foot in front of the other, fading into the obscurity of falling snow. I discovered that walking back up again after each run was a real chore, but it was windy and cold and the activity keeps you warm.

That night I learned what the guy ropes on tents are for. The snow kept falling, and although we pushed it off the roof of our tent, the space inside available for us to sleep grew smaller as the fallen



snow squashed us from the sides. After Julian had dug our way out of a good 30cm of snow (with much excitement and laughing) into the morning light, it became obvious that something was seriously wrong with the shape of our buried tent. A pole had snapped. Mental note: next time use the guy ropes! I also learned that it's possible to use your skis and poles if you don't have enough snow pegs. After spending all weekend chasing Richard through the trees, losing Liv in the white-out (she was just at the hut having hot-chocolate), and several face-plants and hilarious stacks, I felt that the bar had been set very high for the rest of this ski-season. Can't wait to get back up there!





DON'T EAT CHICKEN FROM ALDI

REBECCA AUSTIN

People say that Queensland has the best weather, but let me tell you that there is a distinct lack of snow in wintertime. To compensate, Tim and I decided to come all the way down from Brisbane for a crazy weekend snow adventure. Our team consisted of myself, Tim Carter, Dave Blundy, Liv Grover Johnson, Richard Basset-Smith, Ryan Judd, Alex Thompson, Rosie Moore and Jason Ma.



Dave, Tim and I drove up to Falls Creek on the Friday morning. We then made our way over the dam wall and Heathy spur towards Johnsons Hut. It was the warmest and sunniest day in the snow I've ever had. Sadly however, half way there Dave had the misfortune of throwing up his lunch. Re-distribution of the weight in the packs made him feel a lot happier and we continued on our way.

The descent into Johnston hut was a bit steeper than we were anticipating and, with the snow starting to harden, it made for some exciting falls. I took a nice face plant down the slope and

couldn't move under the weight of my pack! In an attempt to avoid injury Tim and I walked the last few hundred metres down the slope.

That night, despite running outside once more to make technicolour snow, Dave managed to keep down some chicken broth and diluted non-alcoholic ginger beer. Meanwhile Tim and I feasted on cream cheese and tuna pasta followed up with Tim Tams and whisky to warm us up!

The next morning, the temperature had

dropped to -6 degrees. We took it easy and didn't get skiing until about 10am. Surprisingly Dave was feeling full of energy and had a bit of summit fever. He convinced Tim and I that we should ski up to the summit of Mt Nelse. The summit was lacking in snow so we had to walk the last ten metres. We had an amazing view — all the way over to the main range in NSW and to Mt Bogong. Pleased with ourselves for having achieved the summit we had a fun run all the way back down to our packs.

As Dave, Tim and I skied towards Fitzgerald hut we saw the funniest sight:

Sprawled out on a large patch on grass were our friends huddled in their sleeping bags! Apparently they had sun baked and snoozed the afternoon away waiting for us to arrive. When the clouds came in they decided it was too good a spot to give up and so got their sleeping bags out.

There was a lovely hill of snow behind the campsite so Tim, Liv and I went exploring. I attempted a few telemark turns with a few tips from Liv, but will need a lot of practice. There was a small cornice forming which Ryan said was fun to ski. I wasn't game but Liv tried her luck. We heard a squeal and waited to see Liv coming down the slope but she'd bailed at the last moment. At the urging of Tim, we skied down to Kelly's hut through the trees. Liv left an invitation to MUMC's 70th birthday in the log book. Hopefully some ex-MUMCers will see it. That night we gathered around the fire and caught up on news and gossip.

We woke in the morning to a thick mist covering the area. Alex informed us that there was a large weather event on the way and that we should get packed up. Sad to leave our little camping area we rugged up against the chill and started out. It was a complete white out. We lost the pole line at one point thinking it was further down the slope but luckily Richard stayed up high and found the next one. It also started to sleet closer to the dam wall. However, as Dave said "I would have been disappointed if we didn't have foul weather for a least one day!"

Thanks to everyone for a really fun weekend!

PS. We later learnt that Dave had got food poisoning from an Aldi roast chicken.



FLINDERS RANGES

IVAN CARLISLE

During the July break five Oxos – Sytske Hillenius, James Cristofaro, Siqi Wu, Lingling Sun and Ivan Carlisle – sought respite from the Melbourne winter and ventured to the Flinders Ranges, the largest mountain range in South Australia, where conditions promised to be mild.

Wendy, James's kangaroo-proof Subaru Forrester, was to be our journey's transport, which we packed into so efficiently; James decided to fill all remaining voids with the entirety of his earthly possessions to keep the logistics inter-

esting.

En route to Adelaide, our layover destination, we visited the Pink Lake near Dimboola, where we ate lunch with blue tongue lizards and marvelled at the water's pinkness, which is secreted by microscopic algae.

Arriving in the Flinders Ranges at dusk meant James's driving prowess was called to the fore, as he steered us through an onslaught of marauding roos, whose populations have exploded since the demise of the dingoes in the area. One managed to hit us, but both it and Wendy escaped unscathed. Sytske's suggestion to walk Wilkawillina Gorge as our first outing in the ranges proved we were in luck to have her

as the trip's chief architect. The 22 kilometre return journey unravelled like a 'best of' of all the Flinders has to offer. Unique geological features abounded as we ventured through creek beds and past cliffs, and wandered over rolling hills. Lingling located *Archaeocyatha* fossils in the creek's limestone rocks, as a trip of goats paraded on an adjacent hillside. Later Sytske spotted a Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby, and we delighted in the fact James missed it, as he had been excited by the prospect of seeing one all day.

Some off-track overnight walking was up next, and so we set out on the Heyesen trail before taking a line up Mt Alexander. Sir Hans Heyesen (who Ivan can claim as a twig on the periphery of his





family tree) was a painter famous for his watercolours; many of which depicted the Flinders Ranges landscape, which inspired him so. Dedicated to Sir Hans Heysen, the Heysen Trail is 1,200 kilometers long and runs from Parachilna Gorge in the Flinders Ranges, via the Adelaide Hills to Cape Jervis on the Fleurieu Peninsula. Needless to say, our overnight jaunt only incorporated a few kilometres of that epic route. We left the Heysen trail at some farm ruins and weaved our way through hilly terrain before ascending Mt Alexander. We made camp on a shoulder of the mountain in gusty winds, which dissipated almost as soon as our tents were up, and enjoyed an evening around the camp fire. The following day we ventured up rocky terrain to the summit

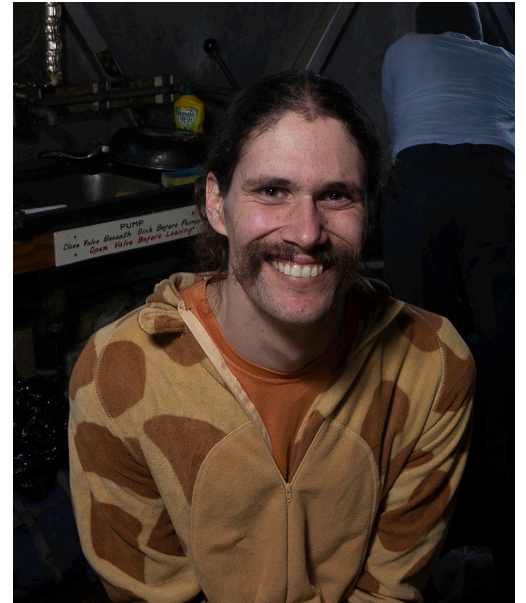
to appreciate a well-earned 360 degree vista.

A morning's reconnaissance mission to Moonarie unveiled an amphitheatre of inspiring lines and planted the seed for a possible return dedicated climbing trip. Nearby the Arkaroo Rock Hike gave us the opportunity to view rock paintings of the Adnyamathanha – the indigenous people of the Flinders Ranges. In the evening of the same day we ventured into the Bunyeroo Gorge, before camping nearby.

Our final adventure in the Flinders Ranges was of course ascending St Mary's Peak, which overlooks Wilpena Pound and is the highest point in the range. We took the direct route up

and the loop route back, making for an 18km return walk. For James this brought back memories of a family vacation when he was a child. Likewise for Ivan it was a walk of nostalgia, having last done it as part of the 1st / 8th Blackburn Scout group – the Wangala Walkers – on his eleventh birthday. Siqu, a marathon runner, who had finally had enough of our leisurely pace, decided it was best done as a jog.





MIDNIGHT ASCENT

2014









The Franklin River
RYAN JUDD, JANUARY 2014





RED ROCKS AND SPINIFEX

MUMC ADVENTURE GRANT 2013-14
PURNULULU NATIONAL PARK, KIMBERLEY, WA





TIM TYERS
DANIELLE CURNOW-ANDREASEN
DANIEL COCKER

PREPARATION

After months of permit applications, anxious emails, and waiting, permission was granted for a ten day, totally off-track hike through the wilderness of the Osmond Ranges, located in the north of the Purnululu national park. In contrast to the Bungle Bungle range to the south, the Osmond Range is little known and even less explored. It has been ten years since the last known visitors left their tracks in this remote area of Western Australia.

With permits secured, the excitement began to build. Curries and stews were cooked, joined by fruits and other culinary delights in the dehydrator racks. Ten days of hard-yakka in the bush requires an intimidating menu and all credit goes to Dani and Dan for pro-

ducing some of the finest dishes the Osmond Ranges have ever known. Upon commencing the walk we were equipped with a video camera, still camera, sat phone, PLB and a set of solar panels. To ensure they all stayed with us for ten days, credit goes to Dan for diligently ensuring all devices remained happily charged and attempting to capture every moment on camera. It should be noted that some of the natural wonders discovered in the Osmond Ranges could not be fully appreciated without certain amounts of nudity, and as a result some photos are for the benefit only of our own memories.

On a more serious note, water was going to be an issue. Ten days of food, while weighty, can easily be carried by fit, healthy, seasoned hikers (we use the terms loosely). Ten days of water however, of the order of fifty litres is another story. So minds and thoughts were turned to the acquisition of water. To solve the problem we turned (as do

most people) to Google, who, in their ever generous nature, had taken the trouble of photographing the entire national park from the air. And so it was, using Google Earth, that we ascertained the location of many likely pools of water (and deceptively water-like shadows) that would serve to enable the circuitous route that was planned through the Osmond Ranges.

With high spirits, a boot full (literally) of food and packs, Redgum blaring from the stereo and a video camera held aloft through the window, we headed from Kununurra towards the Osmond Ranges. At this point each of us felt a little pang of patriotism, for as the foothills were conquered by the great rumble of the diesel engine, the wonderfully carved and brilliantly coloured facade of the Bungle Bungles lay dead ahead of us. In the face of such a landscape who would not be glad to be Australian?

At this point it was time to face the fact





that getting around for the next ten days would require a lot more than a slight depression of the driver's big toe and a little diesel. Beginning the next day each of us would be hauling their entire array of required equipment, water and food over, under or through whatever lay in our way. On day one, with ten days of sustenance still in our packs, this would be quite a task. After rolling our mats out onto the gravel of the Echidna Gorge carpark, we gazed at a hemisphere of twinkling stars, wondering what the days in front of us would hold.

At about six thirty in the morning of hike day one, we were ready. Each of us had stowed a small mountain of food, water and equipment into our packs. The packs weighed heavy on our backs but could not quell the smiles on our faces as we stood at the 'observation point' looking out on the Osmond Ranges. After a quick photo we took our first heavy steps away from the signposted track and towards the infin-

ity of open space. Some tourists looked at us like we were slightly mad. Immediately our knees were impaled by spinifex. We all said "ow", then we remembered this was an adventure grant and we were adventurers so we didn't complain again (well at least not too much).

At this point it is worth reiterating just how much thought and planning went into ensuring we would find enough water. Each hiker was laden with ten litres, an amount which would permit a day's exploration leaving enough to retrace steps the next day should a water source not be found. Given that each hiker was resigned to toiling beneath this weight for the duration of the trip it was with considerable (and probably excessive) joy that we relieved ourselves of five litres each upon finding a muddy puddle at the bottom of a river bed about 1.5 hours into the hike. This puddle existed even where Google Earth had not promised water, and so we concluded that water must be

more abundant than we had originally thought. All remaining fears and concerns were banished shortly after when the pools of water were no longer small enough to prevent us from swimming. It was a good moment, and one that our backs cherished. The rest of the day saw us following the creek bed until late afternoon when the sky coloured and we decided to make camp. Mats were rolled out and a pot of dahl was revived over the stove. Sleep came quickly.

DAY TWO BEGAN EARLY as the sun snuck above the horizon. After eating some muesli and re-living our battles against unfortunately located rocks and lumps under our mats from the night before, we were on our way. Plans for the morning revolved around navigating to a tangle of contour lines that we had highlighted orange on our map. Before leaving Melbourne, it had been decided that interesting gorges or land formations would likely manifest themselves as densely packed contours and so many guilty areas were earmarked





for investigation. What we found blew our minds.

MUMC Paradise Gorge, as it was affectionately christened, began simply and unassumingly. The mouth of the gorge was obscured by trees and reeds, expelling nothing more than a small stream of water which smelled distinctly of decomposition. However, water was water, and we were happy just to find more of it. A quick snack break and another glance at the map inspired us to walk a little way upstream into the gorge and check it out. Good thing we did. Not twenty metres upstream everything changed. The trees were gone, the smell was gone, but the water was not. There before us, in all its majesty and sandwiched between walls of rock was a perfectly clear and deep pool. Each of us was awestruck at the quality of our find. On the opposing side of the pool, and accessible only by a swim, was a large natural spillway which led up further into the gorge. Each of us felt like our birthday had come early, and wearing suits appropriate for the occasion we dove in to explore. Climbing the spillway revealed many more crystal clear pools and each one made us happier. We left the gorge convinced we had found the best the Kimberley had to offer on just the second day of the trip. But the Kimberley was full of surprises and there was plenty more for us to find.

DAY THREE WAS THE DAY we were to leave Osmond Creek and begin our journey over the ranges. What looked like a promising gorge on the map was both a confusion and disappointment. Light packs were to be things of our dreams as we filled to capacity from a murky and most uninspiring pool.

The rest of that day shall be summarised in a minimum of words, for reading them will portray exactly its nature: we climbed a big steep hill. In the delirium that accompanied our climb each member of the party developed a fantasy as to what might exist on the other side of the ridge: lush green grass, flowing rivers, groves of tropical fruit and a slurpee machine were all we required. As fate would have it none of these things were



waiting for us at the top, but in their place nature had carved us a perfectly flat boulder sitting atop the mighty hill. The boulder, perfectly sized for three mats became our camp for the night, and from this 'Eagles Nest' we watched the shadows draw out along the flat

Spinifex would be
native to hell,
if hell had plants

plains hundreds of metres below us until the sun gave way to a moonlit night.

DAY FOUR. THE MARATHON. As the sun rose over the Kimberley plains we climbed down from the Eagles Nest and followed the compass needle north. Before long we found ourselves overlooking a vast plain. In the distance, and standing tall and clear of everything else was a lone mountain, Mount John. The panorama in front of us bore too great a resemblance to scenes from The Lion King to not pay it homage, and so Mount John was renamed to Mount Kili (Kilimanjaro's little brother) and the plain to 'Savannah Plain'. And as we crossed the Savannah all manner of landscapes presented themselves to us: spare moonscape, barren rock, mini

gorges and waste deep marshes. The Kimberley, we agreed, had it all.

We saw more of the Kimberley that day than any of us would have liked. Water never came. We trudged on through the hours but every hope of water was dashed as each river in turn showed up dry and dusty. By the time we finally stumbled onto Horse Creek, a full eleven hours after starting out that morning, with nearly two normal days' worth of distance behind us, and the sun already set, we all collapsed. The unappealing ditch we were forced to call home for the night is loved by none, but that night three weary travellers lay there willingly and drifted off to sleep as the mosquitoes feasted.

DAY FIVE, being the day after the Marathon, and the half-way day of the trip, was unanimously voted a rest day. We would travel only in the morning and find a nice place to camp shortly after lunch then rest. That is what we did, stopping early after spying a shady campsite across the river. We had spotted several crocs from our track atop the cliffs, but contrary to common wisdom this made us keener on the campsite!

DAY SIX. By this point we were all well rested and getting very used to being in the Ranges. Throwing a mat on the ground to sleep, eating breakfast in bed



then walking all day was just normal. None of us expected another short day, but there was no way we could walk past what we were to find that morning. The Gorge of Eden. The name captures it all. High red cliffs. Countless pools of crystal clear water flowing into each other. Endless streams. Waterfalls. Perfection. The ecstasy of Paradise Gorge was nothing compared to this. For hours we walked at snail pace up the gorge which refused to end, taking in every detail and appreciating every unique pool or waterfall. Eventually we found ourselves almost numbed to the continual beauty, completely unable to absorb anything more. When we rounded a bend in the gorge and found ourselves face to face with the most perfect campsite that could be imagined, complete with overhanging rock roof, perfectly secluded sandy beach and an inviting private swimming pool, we could handle no more and decided to make camp. It was just after lunch. The afternoon was spent lazily cooling off in the water, and watching the resident bowerbird attempt to woo the local ladies with his crazy dance moves and various sensual objects (bowerbird ladies apparently dig dead leaves and

white pebbles). Dan, feeling guilty for having cramped the bird's style, collected an offering of white pebbles for him to further pimp out his bower, and hopefully seal a deal once we departed.

DAY SEVEN SAW US LEAVING the last of the Gorge of Eden behind us and following Horse Creek to its source. With the shady gorge behind us we were once again toiling under the sun and pushing our way through the bush. With sweat dripping and legs stinging, all we were yearning for was an escape from the savage rays. The Osmond Ranges, in what we were beginning to take as standard fashion, was willing to oblige, and dished out to us one last treasure. Not one of us could have believed it, but this next find was to trump all the others. Paradise Gorge, The Eagle's Nest, The Gorge of Eden; all were to take a back seat, for Jurassic Gorge was about to hit the scene. Words can scarcely describe the impact of its beauty. Palm trees and ferns rose out of a rich fertile soil, itself riddled with clear streams, to form a shady canopy overhead. Immense red cliffs rose on all sides to create an amphitheatre of the gods. The gorge culminated in what

must be Mother Nature's finest work; a crystal blue rock-pool fed by cascading torrents of warm spring water that spilled from the cliffs above. Not one of us could have imagined a more idyllic place, and it was our very great pleasure to dive into the warm pool, and lie on the smooth rock ledges, bathing in the sun as water coursed over our bodies delivering warmth from the depths of the Osmond bed-rock.

As the sun passed overhead, the mighty cliffs threw our gorge into shade. With reluctance we pulled ourselves from the warm water and reclined. Each hiker pledged to return to this natural Shangri La one day, then turned their back. Returning to the dry slopes of spinifex above we walked until it was time to camp.

THE REMAINING DAYS OF THE TRIP were full of more adventures and interesting finds, but none measured up to the gorges of the previous days. As day seven turned into day eight, and eight into nine, we began to feel attached to the land. Our packs were now light, having each eaten through the majority of our cargo, and the going was



easier. Each hiker was now a master of the terrain and no longer felt phased by plains of spinifex, or rocky cliffs that stood in their way. The Osmond Ranges harboured a great deal of wonderful treasures, but demanded sweat and determination in return for one's passage between them. As we sat atop Camp Hill at the end of day nine and looked towards the Bungle Bungles, each of us

felt we had earned our rewards. The car, waiting patiently some six kilometres to the south, would mark the end of an epic adventure which had tried, captivated and rewarded three hikers who will remember it for years to come.







Mt. Buffalo, looking at the Horn
DAVID HENG





BENJAMIN WEBB

It's been a while now since I have been a regular on Tuesday nights, almost 2 years; I still think of MUMC as a kind of home, a family, a place to find new friends and adventures, a place where conversations (ones that I actually find interesting!) seem to flow effortlessly. I want to share with you this journey that I am on, because I am certain without the club, its inspirational members, and incredible opportunities to learn and push your-self, there is no way I would be here right now.

It started as a small idea. A desire really; "I wanted to go paddling". It slowly and surely grew; I want to go paddling, but I want to feel like I am doing something too.... It took form; I want to help protect rivers. It found a focus; South America sounds good! Río Marañón, source of the Amazon will soon be submerged below 20 ill-conceived hydroelectric dams. What can I do to help this little known issue, with enormous potential for destruction? It was worrying quitting my job and jumping on a plane with nothing but a vague idea and the money I had saved from my first year working as a graduate engineer. It ran counter to most of the things that I had learned, had been told, the expectation of what I was 'supposed' to do next. Looking back now, those worries were not warranted; I feel better about my future than ever before. I have learned so many new skills, gained so much unique experience this year, if I want to walk into an interview again, I feel like I have a lot more to talk about than when I was a fresh faced graduate with one year's experience under my belt.

I had written up a website, came up with some ideas of what I might be able to do to help save this river; I was trying to do some fundraising, but never really expected it to work. I had already consoled myself about failing, thinking that at least I had tried. Sitting with friends in Pucon, Chile, on 7th Feb this year, I can still remember how dumbfounded

I was to realise that we had surpassed the \$5k target need-ed to get the project off the ground. Oh Shit... Now I actually have to do it... I can't let down all these people who have believed in me enough to donate hard cash. That is when the real challenge began.

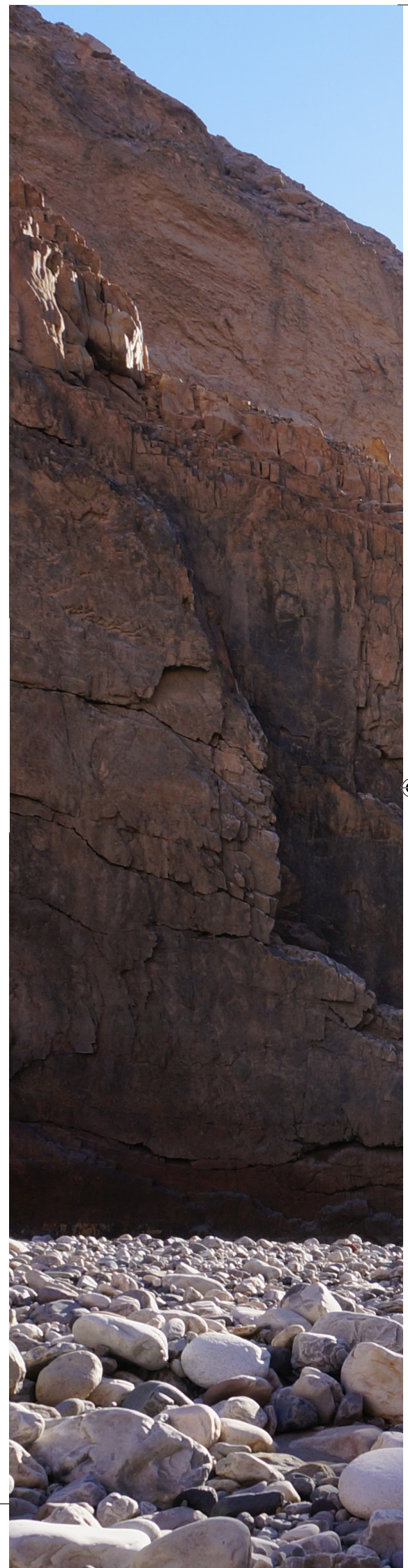
I would liken the experience to stumbling up Mt Feathertop in the dark for the first time, having forgotten a head-torch, and breaking trail through a decent blanket of snow. I had a vague idea of where I wanted to go, knowing for sure I would eventually get there, but never completely certain if I was on the right track.

After months of learning Spanish, getting to know the rivers of Peru and meeting the people who will help me on this journey, I am feeling pretty good

It started as a small idea... A desire really; I wanted to go paddling

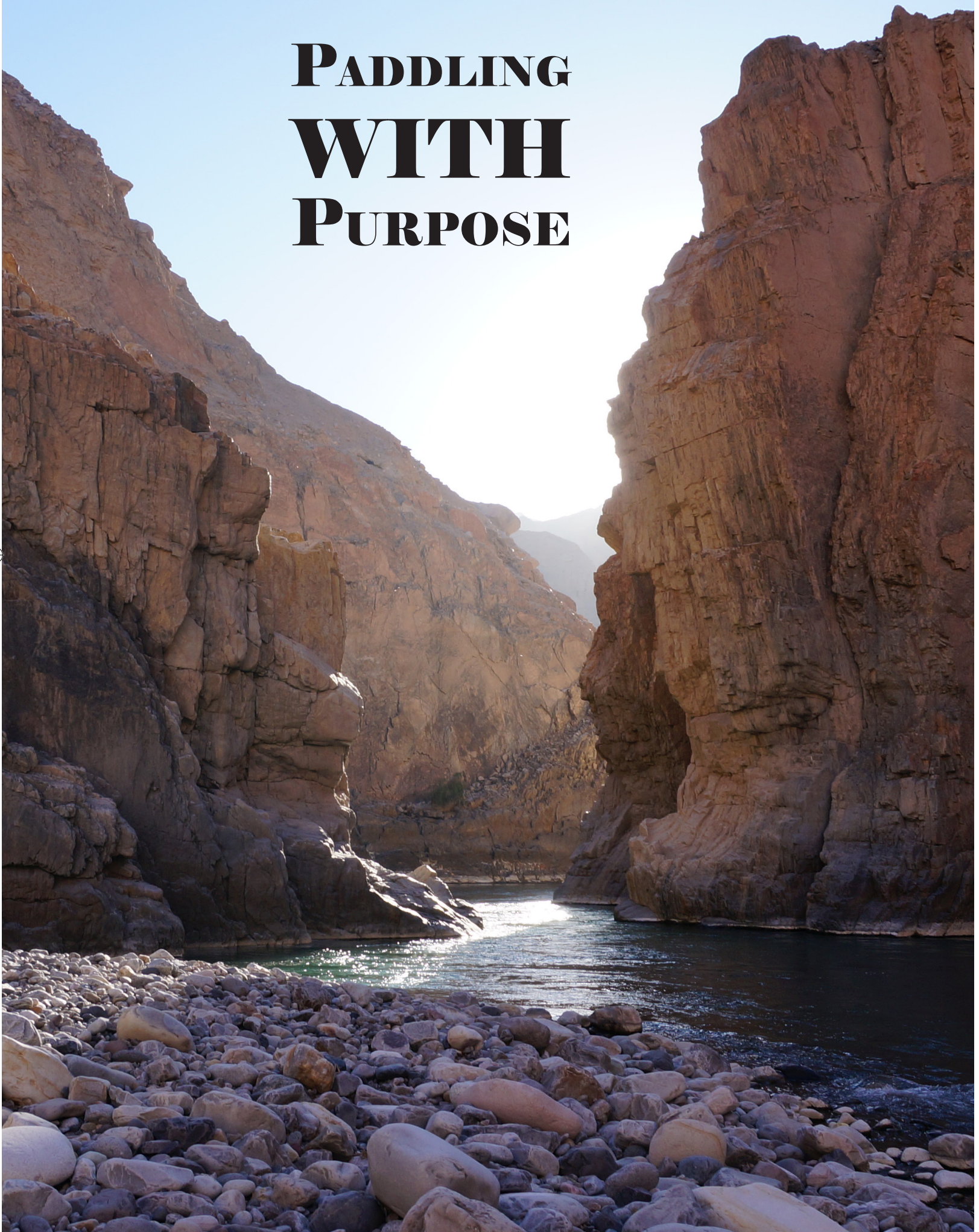
about it all. I recently shared my idea with environmental organisations here in Peru, hoping that we could work together for mutual benefit (I have an awesome idea, motivation, some funding, and some useful skills, but lack the network, Spanish language and experience in advocacy). Now, I am super excited to be working with a Peruvian non-profit organisation to advocate for a free flowing Río Marañón. Conservamos por Naturaleza also happen to have a massive focus on inspiring young people to get outdoors, giving them an appreciation of natural places in hope that this will guide their decisions in the future. After all, if the people who really appreciate and love the outdoors don't stand up for the environment, who will?

With this new network of skills, experience and contacts the project looks like it will turn out better than I ever could have anticipated. In June 2015 we will be taking a group of universi-





PADDLING WITH PURPOSE





ty-age Peruvians on a 3 week journey down the Marañón. We will be filming and documenting along the way, using all that we capture to show the rest of Peru how important this place is, and inspiring and building capacity in this team to represent environmental causes in the future. In September 2014, we will start a massive media campaign in order to find and select our team of future environmentalists. Once we have the team, they will get to work learning about the issues and start promoting the river for the 8 months leading up to our expedition.

There have been some enormous challenges, many useful lessons along the way, and a lot of hard days too. I wouldn't trade it though. There have been countless opportunities to get on new and demanding rivers. Highlights in Peru have been Ríos Colca & Cotahuasi, which included ridiculous amounts of hot springs and using donkeys to shuttle our boats to the starting point. And, of course, stunning white-water. I have floated through enormous canyons with my mouth wide open in awe, astounded by the geology, the way the earth has been pushed, pulled and folded on itself; I have never seen

anything like the Colca Canyon before. The month spent floating down the Rio Marañón was also pretty cool. Having so much time to get into a daily rhythm of life on the river; meeting with local people and visiting stunning little riverside villages. Each of these deserves a write-up of its own. What Chile is to short, steep waterfall runs, Peru is to long, expedition style adventures.

Looking ahead, the trip in October is probably going to be the most challenging that I have ever done. In order to

elicit donations out of people to raise funding for the project, for some reason I made a few wild promises about an expedition to the source of the Amazon. This will be a high altitude cycling, hiking and paddling adventure, centred around the Cordillera Huayhuash, where the Marañón begins as just a trickle. We plan to start kayaking as soon as there is enough water to float a boat. In 2015 it looks like there will be a few more opportunities to work with the local people of the Marañón, but this side project is still taking shape





- stay tuned.

At the risk of sounding incredibly tacky, if you, like me, feel something calling you away from what most people consider the real world, if you find yourself in the unique position where you can, then I highly recommend following your heart. There is definitely a different world out there, but more and more often than not, I find myself thinking that there is no such thing as the real world; just some places that seem more manufactured and controlled by the minds and rules of people than others. There is probably a good

reason you have the urge to go, and lessons gained through travel and creating your own path can be unique and incredibly valuable. Paraphrasing people who are much wiser than me, travel is the only way you can spend money that will actually make you richer; and the most dangerous risk of all, is the risk of spending your life not doing what you want, on the bet you can buy yourself the freedom to do it later. I think though, if you are creative, there are ways of having your cake and eating it too.

All in all, everything is looking pretty

good. I'm pretty stoked to be able to spend a couple of years paddling the rivers of South America as a glorified paddling bum and it feels great to be learning about conservation and environmental advocacy.

If you want more info on the project or to keep up to date with how it all develops, sign up to: www.paddling-with-purpose.com

WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

JULIAN GOAD

"Where Angels Fear to Tread" is the most direct route up the 230m Angels buttress, located in the gorge at Mt Buffalo, and goes at grade 17. It was one of the first climbs I had heard/read about at Buffalo and I knew it had a reputation for being a mean, ankle-shredding crack. Knowing this, I had no intention of climbing it on my first visit to Buffalo and instead, on day one, headed to the Hump, to climb the "Initiation" with Betty, which gave a nice introduction to jamming granite cracks with little pain or shredding.

As we finished the climb, Mark suggested we check out the underwater river cave near the gorge, as we were all pretty tired from climbing. Although I have a great fear of caving, I was able to get my first glimpse of the gorge's massive granite walls. I was no longer tired; it was bigger and more impressive than anything I had ever seen in person.

In the hopes that I could sneak in an-





other climb before sunset, I posed the question to the group: "Anyone keen for another climb?" To my surprise, Richard responded with a cheeky grin; "We could go climb Angels?"

My first response was that he was joking, but after a bit of discussion the joke slowly turned into a plan and within a few minutes we were getting ready for the night ahead of us. Given the fading daylight, we practically ran down the path towards the bottom of the

On top of the skin-shredding jams, and the increasing dehydration, it was also about one in the morning

buttress, taking a casualty on the way – Richard's 3 litre water bladder - and managed to arrive with about half an hour of light remaining. Richard started the first pitch and made it about ten metres before exclaiming that he couldn't find the route. This baffled me, because it was meant to be continuous cracks the whole way; the guide book stating that when one ended, another one conveniently began. Richard then continued up to the left another 30 or so metres and shouted out "Safe!"

I made my way up the corner and was traumatised to see that Richard had leaded what I would later learn to be the much bolder and harder "direct start", a ten metre upwards traverse on sloppy seams that cut through the blank granite, which required very technical and delicate moves to get through, and not a single piece of protection in sight. Even seconding this section, I was incredibly happy to reach the crack and power on towards the anchor point. It was now completely dark and also my turn to lead. Switching on my head torch, I made my way up a steep section of crack, placing gear about every metre, and fizzling out after fifteen metres of demanding jamming to set up a belay and pass the baton back to Richard. As Richard followed me up and took the lead, I took in the amazing view

and isolation of the gorge. By this point, the clouds had moved on, flooding the gorge with light from the full moon. I enjoyed the exposure of our position, shouting down the valley and hearing the echo bounce back a second later from the north wall, creating the impression of another party climbing Ozymandias and shouting back at us.

I continued up after Richard's fifty metre pitch, cleaning his gear which was spaced about five to eight metres apart, a vast difference to my attempt on the previous pitch. By the time I made it to the next belay, I was far too tired to lead and gave the next pitch to Richard. Thankfully for me, he had no problem in leading it and again I got to enjoy the location as I belayed him. The more we climbed, however, the more the climbing turned from type one fun (being just normal fun) to type two fun (fun later on when looking back on it).

My ankles were well taped, but we didn't have enough tape to properly protect hands. The two strips across my hand were disintegrating every pitch, making the jams increasingly painful. The demanding nature of the climbing made me consume far too much water and I was about to finish the last of the litre I had brought up, swearing at the recent loss of the bladder. On top of the skin shredding jams and increasing dehydration, it was also about one in the morning, and even though I was very tired we were only half way up the buttress. I made it to Richard at the next belay and he generously shared some of his water with me.

I decided it was time for me to do some of the work and got ready to make it up the next pitch. Before this point it had been glorious jamming crack; although demanding, I would say type two fun. What I was about to lead was pushing the boundary of type 2 fun to type 3 fun, which is not fun at all, just necessary to access type 1 and type 2 fun. It was a bottomless chimney, which took a sizable amount of effort to actually get into, followed by very tight chimneying with gear getting stuck along the way, which saw me beached-whaling onto the ledge at the top.

After I regained my breath, I continued on to the bridging up the next section, against the pinnacle and the main wall, only to be faced with a horrible-looking off-width crack in front of me. I was determined to finish my pitch, so I gave every last bit of energy into making it up this crack. Unfortunately that only got me 2 metres before I could no longer push against the sides of the off-width. I slowly slid back down to where I started; Angels had defeated me.

Thankfully I had Richard who made quick work of the off width, at which I didn't even bother making a second attempt; instead grigri-ing up the rope to the next belay. At this point, the only reason I didn't fall asleep on the ledge was my body's urgent demand for water, so we continued up the last pitch. Again we were a bit off-route, but thanks to some amazing traverse moves from Richard (with sceptical protection - one piece involving a totem sitting on two lobes), we made it to the top...of the buttress.

We still had the walk up Burston's Crèvasse to look forward to, a complicated maze-like gully that neither of us had been through before. We navigated the track laughing at ourselves and ignoring the pain, focused on getting to the tap of water waiting in the car park. We stumbled in just before five in the morning and drank litres of water, before falling asleep on the ground where we stood, without removing our harnesses or gear. Although this may have been the most excruciatingly painful climb I've ever completed, enduring the pain made topping out far more rewarding. And as the memory of the pain has faded, all that is left is a sense of pride and accomplishment that will stick with me for many days to come.





OVERLAND IN WINTER

TI-JUNG CHANG

The overland track from Cradle Mountain to Lake St. Clair at the Central High Land of Tasmania is a very popular track that I believe many MUMC members have walked. Cossy, Andrew and I decided it was our time and we were doing it in winter. It didn't take us long to plan this overland trip, since we didn't have to make a reservation for walking. All it took were a few phone calls, flight bookings

over the internet, and a meeting between three of us before we were on our way to Tasmania.

After a 2-hour bus ride, we arrived at the Cradle Mountain National Park Visitor Centre and since we didn't want to hang around for the rest of the day we decided to start walking straight away. After all, it was only 10km of the steepest part of the track. Easy, right?

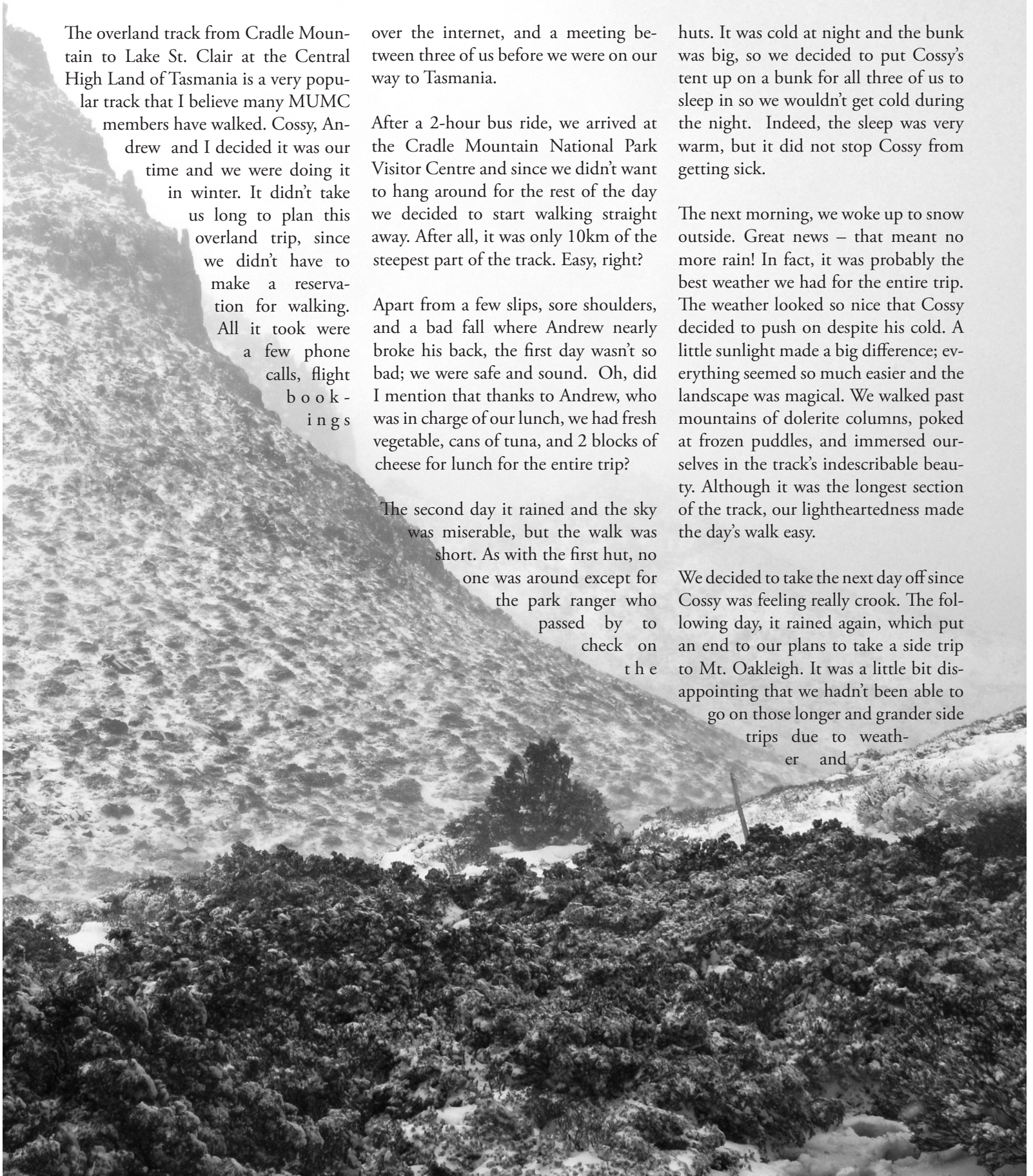
Apart from a few slips, sore shoulders, and a bad fall where Andrew nearly broke his back, the first day wasn't so bad; we were safe and sound. Oh, did I mention that thanks to Andrew, who was in charge of our lunch, we had fresh vegetable, cans of tuna, and 2 blocks of cheese for lunch for the entire trip?

The second day it rained and the sky was miserable, but the walk was short. As with the first hut, no one was around except for the park ranger who passed by to check on the

huts. It was cold at night and the bunk was big, so we decided to put Cossy's tent up on a bunk for all three of us to sleep in so we wouldn't get cold during the night. Indeed, the sleep was very warm, but it did not stop Cossy from getting sick.

The next morning, we woke up to snow outside. Great news – that meant no more rain! In fact, it was probably the best weather we had for the entire trip. The weather looked so nice that Cossy decided to push on despite his cold. A little sunlight made a big difference; everything seemed so much easier and the landscape was magical. We walked past mountains of dolerite columns, poked at frozen puddles, and immersed ourselves in the track's indescribable beauty. Although it was the longest section of the track, our lightheartedness made the day's walk easy.

We decided to take the next day off since Cossy was feeling really crook. The following day, it rained again, which put an end to our plans to take a side trip to Mt. Oakleigh. It was a little bit disappointing that we hadn't been able to go on those longer and grander side trips due to weather and





limited daylight hours. All that day, Andrew and I gazed up at those sharp, pointed crags of Mt. Oakleigh, thinking that they looked so magnificent, and wondering if anyone had climbed those peaks.

On the fifth day, we had to get going to stay on schedule. It was the coldest and windiest day of the trip, and also the grandest; we planned to summit Mt. Ossa, the tallest mountain in Tasmania (1617m).

We dropped our pack and only took the essentials as we started this side-trip. It was ok to walk at first, with only wind and knee-high snow to bother us.

Thankfully, the track was still easy to make out under its winter coat. As we ascended Mt. Doris, the wind became stronger and stronger; I started to have difficulty seeing the track in front of me, and had to seek out the track markers to know where I was going.

When we arrived at the saddle, the wind was so strong that I could barely stand straight. The snow was blustering and blowing in all directions, snowflakes stung at my eyes. I looked at Andrew ahead of me and he seemed keen to keep on going. I looked up Mt. Ossa before me and there were so many clouds and so much snow; I couldn't even see the top of it! Right then and there I decided to go back to the overland track and carry on to the next hut. What's the point if you can't see anything from the top? I didn't even think we could make it through the saddle.

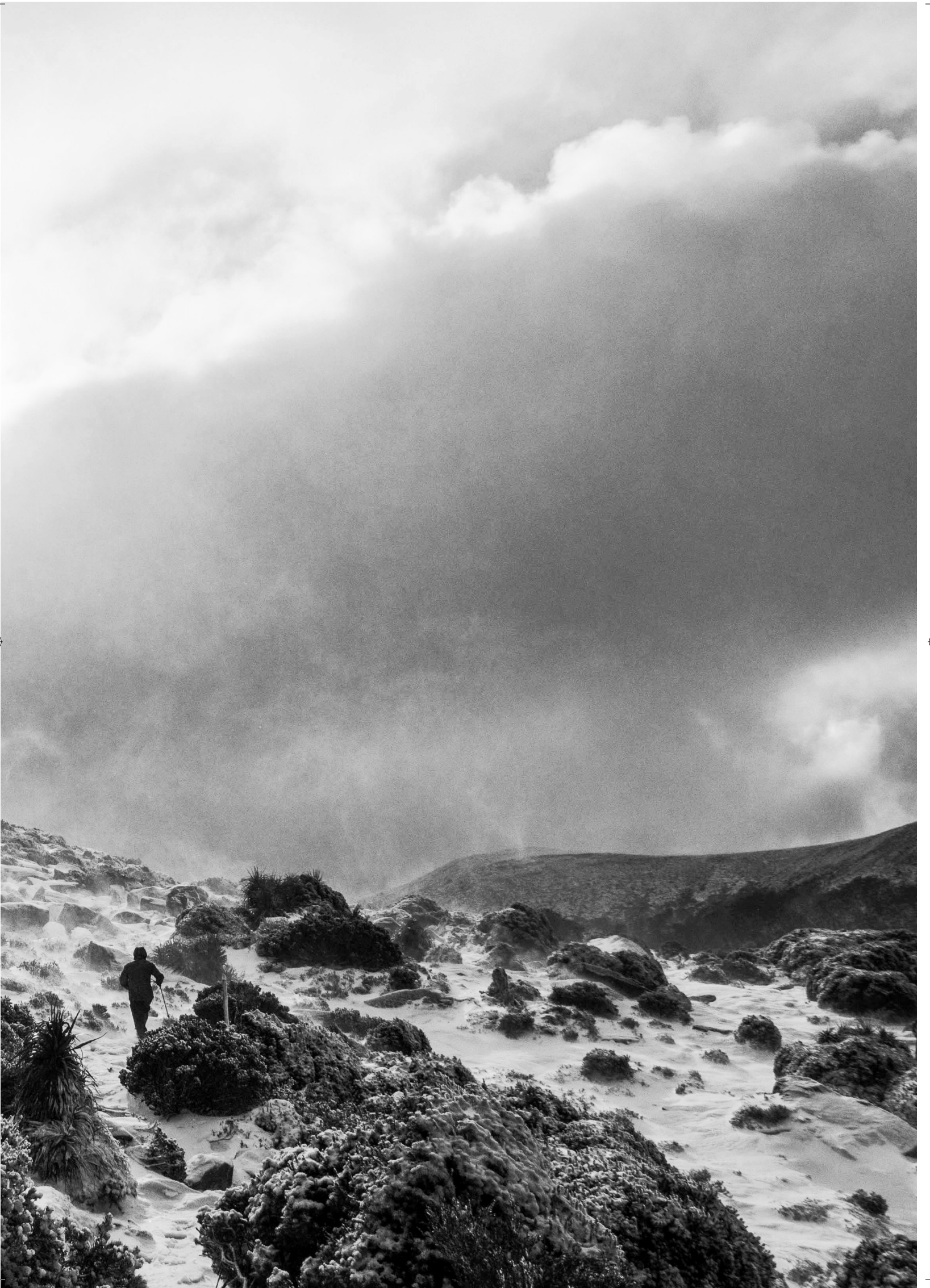
The rest of the track was easy walking, but by no means less attractive. The scenery kept changing as we descended and was something different every day. On the last night before the end of the

track, we stayed at the Echo Point Hut. It was the cosiest hut on the track and by far our favourite. That probably had something to do with the fireplace in the hut, and having the shores of Lake St. Claire reaching right up to the hut. Lake St. Claire is a glacial lake, meaning it was carved out to a glacier a long time ago. It is also the deepest lake in all of Australia, with the maximum depth of 167m.

I was thrilled to see Lake St Claire because it meant that a hot shower and food were just another day, and 16km away. By then, none of us had cleaned ourselves for a week. My excitement was so great and the lake was so tranquil that I just want to immerse myself in it, so I decided to jump in. At first, the two boys thought I was nuts, but I was so determined to go in the water, so in the end Cossy and Andrew just could not resist the wonderful madness!

Looking back at this trip, I am really glad that we did it during the winter. Yes, I probably could have done more side trips if it was summer. But rain, wind and snow just made it more adventurous and a little bit more irresistible. On the way back to Melbourne, I was already beginning to wonder where my next adventure would be.







TENT BOUND

TESSA LOUWERENS

My nose feels cold and I am pulling my head further into the hood of my sleeping bag, trying to ignore the shouting outside the tent. "Final wake-up call!" Pff, I used to be pretty good at getting up early, but after traveling with some laid back surfers for a while my rhythm has shifted. I really should get up though if I want to make the 5 am bus that will take me to the starting point of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Luckily it's a 40 minute bus ride, so plenty time for an additional powernap.

As the bus approaches the park the sun is breaking through the clouds and it seems it will be a perfect day. I understand I'm quite lucky because the last few days the weather conditions were so bad that it was impossible to walk the trail. New Zealand's weather can be quite schizophrenic and the best way to cope with this is by dressing onion-style; wearing as many layers as possible.

The Alpine Crossing is a 19,4 kilometer tramping track that traverses a rough volcanic landscape which, since catching the eye of Peter Jackson, is better known as 'Mordor' (although on such a

radiant day it doesn't look nearly as sinister). Three active volcanoes - Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe en Tongariro- rise high above the arid plateau. With on average one large eruption every 50 years, Ruapehu (2797 meters) is one of the world's most active volcanoes and the largest in New Zealand. The last catastrophe took place in 1995, so I should be good (although I am pretty sure my statistics teacher would disagree).

The first part of the track involves walking up a gentle incline alongside running streams and around the edges of old lava flows. The real hike begins at the foot of the Devil's Staircase; which you might expect to lead down, but alas, runs steeply up. Sweaty and stripped of all my layers I reach the top, or should I say bottom? I've actually just reached the base of Ngauruhoe (aka 'Mount Doom'), which can be climbed as a side trip. There is no marked track to the top, so I have to find my way scrambling up the loose rubble, carefully avoiding any falling rocks dislodged by others on the steep slopes above me. "Stairs are for pussies, this is the real thing!" After a strenuous but not too difficult climb, don't know what those Hobbits were

fuzzing about, I reach the crater. The views from here are stunning but I can't linger too long, because unlike Frodo and Sam I don't have the luxury of an eagle and I actually have a bus to catch.

From the base of the volcano the track follows a narrow ridge towards the Red Crater, from where I have an excellent view over the spectacular Emerald Lake. The turquoise water looks very inviting, especially on such a warm day, but I'll have to resist the temptation as these lakes are sulphurous.

After the lakes it's all downhill through tussock tundra to the car park where the bus is waiting to take me straight to the hot pools!





GEAR REVIEW: BD CARABINER

LUKE FRISKEN

I recently had the misfortune of cutting the sheath of my brand new rope, mid-way along the sheath, whilst catching Richard on lead in the city gym. How might this have happened? Climbing gyms are carefully controlled environments; the quick draws on the wall that get used during lead climbing are likely checked for damage, or excessive wear and replaced on a regular basis. The holds are not sharp, and the climbs are designed in a way that has relatively low rope wear. It's hard to imagine such a thing happening indoors.

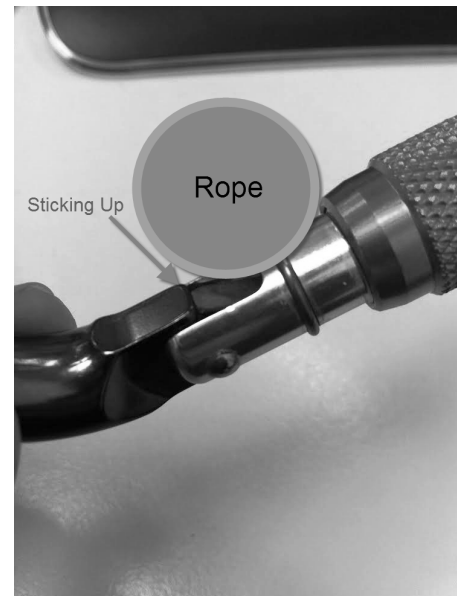


We soon discovered that while belaying the falling climber, the belay carabiner had flipped over and became cross-loaded. This is a situation whereby the load on the carabiner is across its short axis, with either the rope, or the harness pulling directly on the gate of the biner. One thing to note is that carabiners are usually rated to only a fraction of their strength when they are loaded in this way, so this is a situation that should be avoided. Carabiners used for belaying are normally an asymmetrical shape, where one end is smaller than the other. This helps to prevent cross loading.

In my case, my biner had a sharp edge on the gate, next to the hinge. Evidence for this was found; there were strands of sheath material wedged in the hinge. This just goes to show that for some carabiner designs, it is possible for the rope to become wedged and trapped in this position. The lip on the body of the biner helped to stop the rope sliding off the gate as it was loaded during the fall. As the rope travelled over the gate in this position, the sharp edges cut the sheath, leaving material wedged in the hinge.

The carabiner brand were very helpful, and replaced the rope, so no hard feelings there, but I have several things to take away from this which I'd like to share:

ALWAYS CHECK YOUR OWN NEW EQUIPMENT FOR DEFECTS. In this case, it seems likely that it was a problem with



the design, which I would not have been able to recognise, but it is entirely possible that a new piece of equipment could have obvious dangerous defects, which a quick scan would detect. I tend to place a large amount of trust in the equipment we use while climbing, especially when it is new, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't check it before we use it.

Carabiner designs, while tried and tested, could be improved. A simple bevel on this sharp edge would have greatly reduced its potential to cut a rope.

Save up and get yourself a special belay carabiner such as the Gridlock from Black Diamond or the Belay Master from DMM. If used correctly, these eliminate the possibility of cross-loading occurring while belaying your partner.



HAIL GRAVITY!

STUART HOLLOWAY

We, who are about to rappel, salute you!

Giusto Gervasutti is a cult figure in the history of alpinism. One of the heroes of the silver age, he is part of a cultural lineage linking Mummery, Preuss and Cassin with Bonatti, Messner and Prof-it, each in turn redefining what alpinism is and could be. He survived the war but was killed while retreating from a visionary attempt on Mt Blanc du Tacul via the pillar that is now named in his honour.

“Tous les grands chefs meurent en rappel” (all the great leaders are killed abseiling) is the grim reminder inscribed on the summit cross of an aiguille in the alps and this warning has become sadly more rather than less pertinent to climbers despite the passing of years and the development of techniques and equipment (harnesses, belay devices, friction hitches) to mitigate the hazards or rappel descents.

Even a cursory read of the annual publication “Accidents in North American Mountaineering” (which despite its name includes crag climbing) reveals a couple of key facets of modern carelessness that reinforce the inscription’s ancient wisdom. First, a large percentage of accidents involves abseiling where there are a number of different opportunities for climbers to make mistakes. And second, abseil accidents are overwhelmingly catastrophic.

Reading the 2013 edition reveals both complexity and simplicity. People find an array of ways to screw up - not connecting the rope to the anchor, connecting only one strand to the belay device, not connecting the belay device to the harness, abseiling off the ends of the rope - and get themselves killed (and

very occasionally someone is even a bit unlucky) but arguably every lowering and rappelling accident reported this year (except possibly one who became jammed in a waterfall for unidentified reasons) could have been avoided if those about to rappel had ensured that there were knots in the end of the rope and that they had fully loaded the system to test it before disconnecting from their previous anchor.

The reported accidents this year are much in keeping with those of the previous decade or so.

Significant numbers of serious accidents occur each year sport climbing from climbers being lowered off the end of the rope. Climbers fall by rappelling off the ends of ropes - whether they lost control of their abseil, the ropes were unexpectedly uneven or otherwise didn’t reach the anticipated ground. The consequences of all these problems can be reduced by ensuring that the ends of the ropes are knotted. Particularly when sport climbing, be conscious of rope length and tie the end of the rope to something - either the rope bag or the belayer.

The other accidents are fundamentally failures to connect the whole system properly. In sport climbing this occurs either when a climber doesn’t properly thread the anchors and retie the rope to the harness to lower or when the climber prepares to lower but the belayer has taken him or her off belay expecting a rappel. To abseil you need an adequate anchor, the rope must be connected to it and threaded (both strands) through your belay device, clipped to a carabiner and connected to the strong point of your harness which must be securely done up. You should also have knots in the end of the rope (unless you can see both strands lying on the ground) and should (probably, usually - but there are some exceptions -) have some kind of back up, either a prussic hitch or bot-

tom break. That is a lot of chances to mess up.

In both cases, the accident would be avoided if the climber fully loaded the system while still connected (with some slack) to the anchor by a separate lead. This test is simple and quick and is perhaps the check most likely to save the life of any recreational climber. Being suitably connected to the anchor while organising an abseil also addresses the other common abseil fatality (although no example was not reported in AIN-AM2013) - throwing ropes off the top of a cliff and forgetting to let go.

I spend a lot of my time telling people to speed up their climbing, but approaching abseils I slow down. What I have written in bold is the check I apply at every rappel. I start at the top - at the anchor - and work down through the system to my back up and end knots. I say it and touch each element in turn. I do this every time and without disruption or distraction. I do it to my partners as well. Going fast is about not wasting time rather than skipping steps.

Mick Hopkinson - known to club members for his paddling school on the Buller River - once wrote a book which featured 3 rules for instructing abseiling: you should be able to place and evaluate your own anchors; you should have had a personal friend killed abseiling; and you should hate abseiling. He told me that instructional abseiling should be an industrial process. For me, the value of his lesson is the realisation that personal abseiling should also be an industrial process. You should do the same thing each time, every time, so that it is automatic, hopefully no matter how tired or frightened you might get.

You can get into more significant trouble with abseil descents. You must find adequate anchors and this can be difficult. Similarly, the ability to minimise

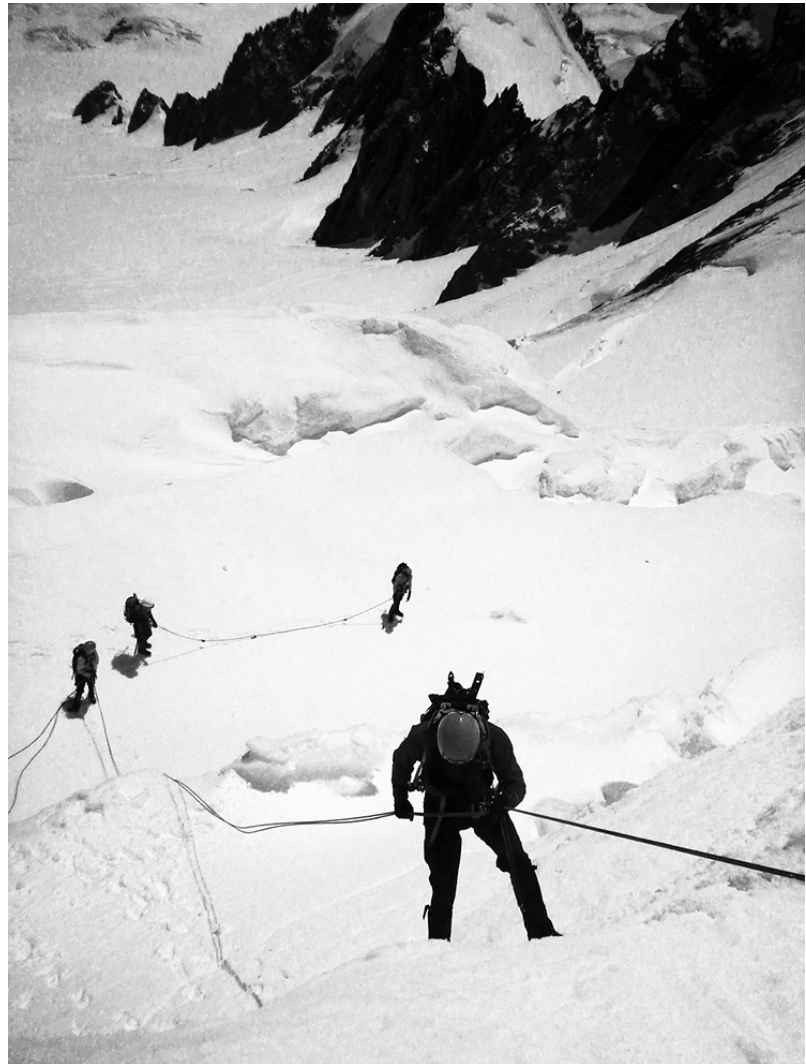


and respond to rope hang-ups/snags is important and draws on a range of sometimes sophisticated techniques. If you find yourself in this sort of terrain, your margins of safety are dramatically reduced compared to an ordinary day at the crag. The final lesson of Giusto Gervasutti, lost while trying to retrieve stuck ropes retreating from the Tacul, is that any of us can fall, but the particular lesson of AINAM2013 is that you should worry about the ordinary things that you do all the time rather than the obscure and difficult possibilities of advanced climbing.

Two things in particular stand out to me this year.

The first was the relative inexperience of the victims. Unlike Gervasutti, none of these accidents were on desperate storm harried retreats from mountain faces. They were nearly all on pretty much routine days at ordinary crags (or canyons). If you are reading *The Mountaineer*, this is pretty much you and this is not how we want to see your name in print. Having survived the war and climbing at the height of his powers, Gervasutti's fall shook the climbing community across borders and imbued his memory with the mythic, unfulfilled dead-rock-star promise of new possibilities which would be embraced and realised by Rebuffat and Bonatti. In contrast, if one of us repeats these all too common errors, we will be, like the entries in AINAM2013, merely a statistic concealing a devastated circle of family and friends.

The second is the reaffirmation that these accidents are all easily avoided. The most important equipment is on top of your neck. The most important technique is the discipline to focus it, every time.





RECIPE COLLECTION

ELAINE GARDINER

To prepare food for a multiday trek, the ideal situation is to get your hands on a dehydrator and dehydrate your own meals. However, if you can't beg, borrow or steal a dehydrator, all is not lost and there are a bunch of lightweight, cheap, tasty meals you can prepare using ingredients commonly found in the supermarket. Here are a couple we made on our trip:

Dear Reader,

You are cordially invited to MUMC's annual night of nights

★ Midnight Ascent ★

this year with a touch of class or a tasteful onesie.

Fête à la Montagne

Entrée

Consommé de Poisson

Main

Osso Baco

Dessert

Poffertjes

Boissons

Martini de Café



Entrée

Spicy carrot and ginger soup

Mains

Gnocchi with cauliflower alfredo

Dessert

Fig and blueberry vegan cheesecake

Drinks

Mulled wine

Aaron Lowndes, Sytske Hilkenius, James Cristofaro,
Josh Howie, Liv Grover Johnson, Anja Föchtbauer

UDON NOODLE SOUP

~ \$3.20/person, ~160g/person

INGREDIENTS: Dried udon noodles (90g/p)
miso soup sachets (1/p.)
dried mushrooms (25g/p)
dried peas (25g/p)

Pre-Trip Preparation: take everything out of its packaging and put it in a ziplock bag (leave miso in sachets).

Meal Preparation: put all the ingredients in a pot with about 1 cup of water per person.
Then boil until the noodles are ready to eat.

Serve and eat hot!!

Tip: put the peas in water earlier in the day to allow them to fully rehydrate.

MEDITERRANEAN COUSCOUS

~\$2.50/person, ~215g/person.

INGREDIENTS:

- couscous 1/2 cup / p.
- cup-of-soup (tomato) 1sachet / p.
- almonds 30g / p.
- Raisins 50g / p.
- Italian herbs - to taste.

Pre-trip Preparation

- take couscous out of packaging, measure sufficient quantities for group, put into ziplock bag
- take cup of soup, put into ziplock bag with couscous
- add some Italian herbs to ziplock
- in a separate ziplock bag, take almonds and raisins.

Meal preparation:

- boil water in a pan (1cup for every cup of couscous)
- once boiled, take off stove and pour in →

Thai Red Curry

~ \$3.20/person, ~180g/person

INGREDIENTS:

- Rice noodles 80g/person
- Thai red curry paste 50g sachet for 4-5p
- coconut milk powder sachet 50g for 4-5p
- Dehydrated peas and corn 50g / p.
- Dried shiitake mushrooms 25g / p.

Pre-Trip Preparation:

- remove peas, corn and mushrooms from packaging and put into one ziplock bag.
- measure out sufficient rice noodles for the group and put in a ziplock bag along with sachets of curry paste and coconut milk powder

Meal Preparation:

- boil water in pot along with peas, corn and mushrooms until well hydrated
- Add the rice noodles, cook until soft.
- Drain about half the water, add curry paste and coconut milk
- Serve hot!

Tip: if this meal is at the beginning of the trip, bring some fresh vegetables to mix in.

- the couscous mixture
- put the lid on and leave to stand until the couscous has settled
- stir in almonds and raisins
- serve.

Tip: if you have this meal at the start of your trip, try adding some feta cheese!



THE SALLOW WILLOW

SALLY STEAD

They arrived on a smokey updraft,
no luggage in hand,
just the endosperm on their backs.
As the haze cleared and the red glow dimmed,
the Sallow Willow's could not believe their luck.
Thin, crisp mountain air.
Rich, peaty, spring soaked soils.
The uninterrupted rays of altitude.
Paradise!

The natives heard before sighting them.
A foreign accent; clipped, slurred, unclear.
Sharing stories with the dock and the sorrel,
Tales of life in the foothills,
and the motherland.
The Willows bathed in the sunshine,
and drank from the spring.
They bathed. And drank. Bathed and drank.
All the while a growing shade was cast
upon the apprehensive natives.
Trigger plants clicked their tongues,
Orchids put on their bravest faces,
the Sphagnum laboured to emanated calm.

But the kurrajong,
from his charred snow gum perch,
felt the tension in the bog below.
He wondered, was there enough sun,
and soil and water for both old and new?
The bog had already endured much.
With the drought and fires,
the cattle and the deer.
He worried for his friends,
but there was little he could do.
One February morning
The silence of photosynthesis was broken,
by squelching, stomping footsteps.

A small army of secateur wielding,
gloved, humans swept across the bog.
The gleam of hunt, shimmered in their eyes.
A shout rang out as one seized its prize
The sallow willow whimpered,
as it was thrust into the air in a fist of glory.
In the sea of bottle green tones,
the willow's European complexion,
did little to hide prey from predator
Roots grappled, seeking shelter,
from the slashing shears.
But this was to no avail.

After two days of sap-shed,
The hunters retreated, satisfied at last.
In gratitude and reverence,
The pincushion daisies bowed their heads,
the snow gums clapped their foliage.
For the first time in years,
the natives enjoyed an uninterrupted view,
of the sun setting over the bog.





