

ESPERANZA





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Editorial.

This is the first MOBSAC for 1975, continuing the chronicle of club activities, information, etc.. Both clubs have received an influx of new members: the established members sincerely hope these newcomers are getting the feel of things. If not, make your needs known; otherwise you will be overlooked. If there are not enough climbs/walks of your standard, say so. Even better, offer to lead some trips yourself.

Meanwhile, we hope that you are gathering the skills necessary for safe movement in the bush and on rock. With winter approaching, proper care is necessary, the correct equipment essential, and basic knowledge a must. Again, if information on these is not forthcoming, ask - to advise is one of the functions of the clubs.

Happy walking/climbing.

Charlie Morris.

Two interesting facts in explanation:

- (1) Blisters pain often subsides if you keep walking after the initial excruciating agony. Why?

Mind over matter?
Perhaps. Also these points.

pain is thought to be caused by kinins; substances released during tissue damage to which the body develops what is known in medical jargon as tachyphylaxis.

That is, the body develops tolerance to these substances very rapidly. Thus pain is no longer felt.

Interesting isn't it?

- (2) Ever belted your leg badly when walking, climbing, etc.? Thought you'd never walk on or out? Intense pain and suffering?

feeling very noble you suffered to walk around, knowing you'd have to go on anyway? ... and it didn't hurt as much (or at all).

Ever wonder why?

When you bruise your leg you've just caused vessel damage which results in increased transudation into the interstitial fluid of that leg. This increased fluid is normally returned by the body to the circulating blood by lymph flow, the pump action of which is dependent on the "muscle pump". That is, activity of your leg muscles serves to constrict the lymphatic channels and thus cause lymph flow.

If you do as you may be tempted to do - lie down in the pain and suffering and feel sorry for yourself, or furious, angry, or excessively clumsy, then you will be compounding your problem.

Failure of muscle pump activity at the time when the requirements for lymph removal are increased will result in swelling and PAIN.

Movement will aid lymph flow and hence reduce pain.

(Assume no bones broken).

Also interesting

LYNN THOMPSON

A month in the life of a Club member

"Is the university club active?" is a question that many newcomers to the club ask themselves, and probably answer it in the negative. Why is that so? Mainly from the number of walks on the program, hardly anybody does anything. Secondly, from the number of walks discussed during "Walks Talks", not many trips have eventuated. So how could the newcomer think anything else, but the fact that the club is inactive.

However, if he/she is keen, then he/she will soon discover the undercurrent that flows beneath the surface. The dozen or so people who constantly lead trips every weekend, such that a score, or more, are doing something all the time. Who are they? You will quickly find them! Can you join them considering they are so much more experienced? Yes! provided you show KEENNESS and PERSEVERANCE.

The following account is a month's chapter taken at random. Hopefully it will demonstrate the above points, as NONE of those trips were mentioned on the program, but just organized on the spur of the moment.

28-1/10/74. Decided to go climbing to Frog Buttress (Queensland) with R.V., B squared and D.C. 1000 miles of driving for a climbing weekend!

5-8/10/74. Were going snow and ice climbing at Mt. Feathertop with A.H., however, English decided otherwise and we ended up in Albina for a fantastic four day Langlauf lead.

13/10/74. Why not go climbing at Nargowneck with G.C. for the day? Why not indeed? Let's go.

15-18/10/74. The snow cover is fantastic and the lectures are boring. So why not escape the drudgery of lectures and go skiing midweek to Schlink Hilton and Jagungal, when all the crowds are gone? Only S.K. and N.H. were game enough to come.

20/10/74. Just came back from Schlink, however the Kalang Falls - West Wall Supercrawl was waiting. So off with R.V. to Kenangra walls to attempt what had not been attempted before. Nineteen hours later the supercrawl had succumbed to the valiant efforts of the two mad-keen ones.

21-25/10/74. The heat was too much, the snow was too good and the work was even more boring. Why not give Falls Creek (Victoria) a try at downhill skiing? Monday night saw me with S.K. and N.H. driving to that state down under ready for four days of skiing in the Parisher area after having had a disappointing look at Falls Creek and Thredbo.

In conclusion, all I can say is that you join us out there. Whether it is gawpit creek at two o'clock a.m., the top of Jagungal, or the bottom of the Black Hole, we hope to hear from you.

At the appropriate moment "FOR PIES"

In the meantime

TERRANCE CHRODES

NICK B.

AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAINEERING

During the summer vacation, all good bushwalkers and mountaineers usually head for the hills: the former to the legendary "south-west" of Tasmania, the latter to the equally fabled alpine areas of New Zealand. Having been to the south-west for two successive summers, I resolved to head for New Zealand this time (1975). Having decided to go I thought it was worthwhile doing one of the mountaineering courses available, so that I could go into the alpine areas. What follows is a description of the course; others who are contemplating a similar course of action will know what to expect of such a course. The course was run by Geoff Wyatt from Mountain Recreation. Length of course: 6 days. Cost: N.Z.\$75.

DAY 1: met Geoff and his assistant instructor, Colin Strong plus 7 other prospective handy mountaineers in Queenstown. Load up the van with bread, cabbages and bodies, and headed for the Rees valley. Stopped halfway to look at view, and in particular to look at the white-capped peaks of Mt. Earnslaw rising to 9,300 ft., a rise of 8,000 ft. from where we were standing. Finally, after a few miles on the Rees valley road, the van stopped. Out we piled, load up with packs, bread, cabbages etc., and headed off up the valley. A stop en route was called to practise different techniques of river crossing, a matter of some importance in a country where rivers are normally raging torrents.

We reached base camp sited on the valley floor in the beech forest, several hours later. Everybody soon had long trousers on, and sleeves rolled down: the sandflies (gnat-sized bloodsuckers) were quite active. We met the two further members of the course: they had already walked in. After a huge meal, we went to bed, contemplating our fate for tomorrow: a 5,000 ft. climb, with packs.

DAY 2: the sandflies had us out of bed quite early. Gear was sorted out into approximately even piles, and off we set. The climb up through the beech forest was on a graded track: hot, but pleasant. We stopped for water in Kea basin. Then back to the unrelenting slog up, up. The going was now much steeper, no shade from the trees: we were above the tree line. Periodic stops to let those behind catch up. Lunch was a very welcome sight at a small turn, just at the end of the vegetation line. Onto the scree slopes now - cursed things to climb up. Soon, the first snow patch. On with boots, gaiters, and out with the ice-axe. Climbing was easier now - the body accepted its fate and didn't protest so much. Snow and rock patches alternated. It started to drizzle. Across an ice-patch. Over the final saddle - and there was the night's bivie spot. A sort of flattened hollow in the scree slopes comprising the saddle. A small hut, already occupied, was perched to one side. The drizzle continued, a cold wind whistled through the saddle: a noticeable depression set in amongst the group at the thought of a cold, wet night. A substantial dinner helped dispel this somewhat.

After dinner, we grabbed our ice-axes and headed for the nearest snow slope. Here, we learnt the self-arrest, a technique basic to snowcraft. We learnt it falling to the right, then to the left, then to the back, the front, sideways, always. This was followed by practising glissading, or skiing without skis. This was great fun. The activity warmed us up and took our minds off the weather, which meanwhile had cleared. We returned to the bivvie, found sheltered spots to sleep, and watched in turn a superb sunset and a skyful of brilliant stars.

DAY 3: after devouring massive servings of the proverbial porridge, we packed day-packs and headed for the snow slopes on the south-east face of Earnslaw. A few hours were spent practising, belaying, using an ice-axe driven in the snow as the anchor point. Again figures were bouncing gleefully down the slope, while their partner struggled to arrest them.

With a prepared belay this was easy: but with both partners moving, the second had to know what he was about to establish a dynamic belay in a matter of a few seconds. The sight of two people on a rope bouncing off down the slope, one screaming "falling!" and the other "bloody hell!" occurred several times, as evidence of this.

After lunch, we set off across the snow field to exercise our new found skills. A small cliff required a fixed belay. On a second small cliff, I established the belay while my partner, the only girl on the course, led up, and when almost on top, very suddenly fell down. She immediately burst into tears: Geoff came up and reassured her. After a brief rest, she led up again, this time making it (she was considerably cheered by the fact that the leader of the party on our right, a big husky male rockclimber, fell off twice). We came eventually to a steep snow slope, which led onto the ridge going to the summit. Fixed belays were maintained at all times on the slope. Once the ridge was gained, it was a rock scramble to the top. Whilst on the ridge, entertainment was provided by the rock avalanches falling approximately 2,000 ft down the south face of the mountain. The peak was reached just as the weather closed in. (Murphy's Law again). Once in a while it lifted, revealing superb views all round. Feeling very pleased with ourselves, we set off down the north east face, scrambling down cliffs and scree slopes. By the time the bivvie was reached, the weather had cleared again. Since the hut was now empty, some of us moved in.

DAY 4: to-day, we were to return to base camp in the afternoon. In the morning, we had a choice of further snow work on a trip to a peak by the name of Sir William, or ice work on a peak called Leavy. I opted for the latter. On the way to the Leavy slopes, we startled a chamois on a snow slope. It bounded off at great speed: however, it soon hit a large ice patch, over which it gingerly picked its way. The animals respected the ice also! For a few hours, we cramponed our way up and down a moderate ice slope, gradually increasing both skill and confidence. Long breaks, sitting on the rocks, looking at the valley 5,000 feet below, yarning, and sunbaking, helped pass the time. After lunch, it was onto a steep ice slope, with fixed belays established by ice screws necessary. We "front pointed" on the crampons, the leader showering his unfortunate second with great showers of ice crystals as he set up the next belay. The second, while enduring this, sat on the ice, contemplating nature and the incidence of piles in ice climbers. The practice was great: this is what we came to do.

On reaching the top, we could see across the valley, the Sir William party descending from the peak (they didn't actually make the top). We hopped down to the bivvie, saddled up, and headed for the valley floor. Descending the snow slopes was great fun - glissading all the way. The rest of the descent was more of a punishment - by the bottom, our legs felt like jelly. We crawled into base camp and collapsed: no sign of the other party. Dinner revived us, and we staggered off to bed as the other party arrived in dribs and drabs.

DAY 5: we spent the morning quietly, resting aching bodies. A bit of prussiking practice was the most active happening. After lunch, it was back up the mountains: this time the destination was a saddle in the Forbes range. Once more, a slow crawl up through the beech forest, across the alpine vegetation, to the rock and snow. On the snow field, we roped up as for glacier work, to practise the technique. The climb to the saddle was gradual: a pleasant meander across snow and ice patches, discussing crevasses, how to fall into them, etc. The bivvie spot reached, sites were prepared. Some eager mountaineers decided to construct a snow cave for the night. While dinner was being prepared, and the cavers were digging, I wandered up a small peak behind the bivvie

sight. I had a full 360° view, with perfect weather. To the north at my feet lay the Dart Valley, approximately 5,000 feet below. Opposite this were the jagged, white-capped peaks of the Barrier range. To the north-east, Mt. Aspiring stood out clearly. To the east, rugged but brown peaks stretched away. To the south, the Rees valley, with the Forbes range and Earnslaw. I was content. A kea, circling round, came and perched about 2 ft away. I half-heartedly threw a stone at it. Not to be outdone, the bird picked up stones and threw them over the edge of the peak. Back down for tea, and into bed, to again admire a sky full of stars. Later that night, express train-like gusts of wind occasionally disturbed us.

DAY 6: the rising sun and tormenting wind drove us out of bed. To our amazement, a herd of goats were sunning themselves on the summit of one of the Ozonac twins, above us, further around the range. Two of them had a half-hearted fight during breakfast. To-day was for crevasse rescue practice: we joked about which one of us would be tossed into the slot (in the event, we all finished up going in!). The gathering clouds indicated foul weather coming.

Once roped up, we moved down the snow field to some lovely big slots in the ice. The principle of the operation was explained, and my partner told to jump in: I had to hold him, and then do the honours in rescuing him. Since we were the first pair to perform, we received considerable help from Geoff. Geoff showed what should be done while I showed what should not be done. When my partner was up, we reversed roles: I dangled in mid-air, with icy drops running down my back as water melting on the lip of the crevasse fell.

Next was demonstration of the "unconscious partner" technique. Back to the saddle for lunch. The afternoon was spent climbing some of the local peaks. Finally came the long descent to the valley floor, via the "Big Slip". Tomorrow was the day of the walk out, back to the fleshpots of Queenstown. The introduction to mountaineering was over.

CHARLIE MORRIS.

DUMBANO:

The Disappointment of a Dream.

Rumour had it that Dumbano is:

"The coldest and darkest canyon I've ever done."

"It is really narrow, in some places we had to take our packs off and squeeze through."

"At the end of this long swim, we were confronted with this 150' foot abseil, so we backed off because we were too exhausted."

"The walking in and out is really difficult, navigation is so hard, getting lost is so easy."

"Dumbano is so difficult that it took us all day to proceed one mile."

"There is this tunnel swim with a 90 foot abseil in the middle of it."

My imagination inflamed by such talk had caught fire and I was determined to do what sounded like the ultimate canyoning trip. Accordingly, plans were set, however they always backfired. Over years UNSWEW groups repeatedly tried and failed. They kept on getting washed away. Finally January long weekend '75 saw a valiant effort by UNSWEW to explore the upper reaches of Dumbano Creek,

After a late start from Sydney and an even later arrival, the group sat pessimistically in the car, their ardour dampened by the falling rain. At last the rain eased. Listening to the exhorting supplications to go ahead, uttered by Felis Domesticus, we started at noon. At two we stopped for lunch and joined the FAKAWE tribe. Somewhere in Dumbano we were. Where? Our whereabouts was inconclusive. At half past two it started raining again. Whilst we were proceeding downstream, one member decided to take the high, arboreal (laborious?) way, in preference to a cold swim. Next minute, after a slip and a thud in midair, a voice was heard, "Felis Domesticus, can I jump into the water? Caaaan I I I ...?" SPLASH! That ended the monkeying around for the weekend. At 3.30 the rain was increasing, so we decided to retreat into a cave and watch the tempest.

Sunday dawned hot and sunny. Ideal canyoning weather. Encumbered by kilos, ropes and every weapon in a canyoner's arsenal, we heavily proceeded to test Dumbano's defence system. Soon a canyon appeared. Narrow. Cold. Constricted. Winding. Cold. Blue. Red. Green. Cold. Swim after wade. Wade after swim. It just went on. Just beautiful and exhilarating. In the afternoon the canyon relented for a 100 metres. Enough for an overhang and a good campsite.

Monday. Time was running out. We had to return, but we also wanted to see "just what is around the corner." For one hour we continued. It was: Green. Red. Blue. Cold. Winding. Constricted. Cold. Narrow. Just magnificent, and we had to return to civilization and to more mundane tasks.

The upper section had been seen, now remained the middle section. The section consisting of the long swim and the 150 foot drop. The tunnel with the 90 foot abseil. The really challenging section. Would I be up to it?

I was quite scared when six weeks later, a combined effort of Sydney Uni. and UNSWEW saw a party through. Our entry point into the canyon was a 90 foot abseil at a junction. At the junction the canyon was so narrow that you could jump across it, if it wasn't for the exposure.

Abseiling down one could easily touch both walls. After the abseil, again we experienced the deep winding, constricted swims. The swims were so constricted now that occasionally the overhanging walls completely enclosed the pools, such that we were swimming in tunnels of blackness. It was superb.

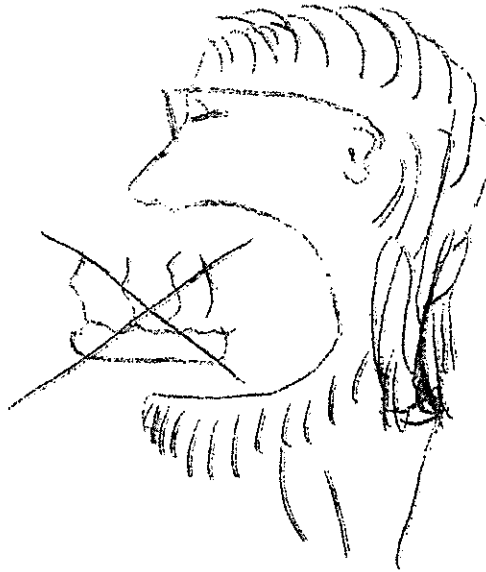
A little way later, the canyon disappeared and it became a pleasant creek. We pleasantly continued downstream. An unexpected surprise was a small canyon on the right. Its exit was overgrown. Inside it was a perfect black tunnel. Beyond? We don't know, and we will never find out. We did not have time. The 150 foot abseil and the tunnel swim with the 90 foot abseil awaited us. We relentlessly, but pleasantly continued downstream.

At last a 75 foot drop in a canyon. We abseiled. A tunnel. Narrow and dark. It opened up, but closed again. It opened briefly then quickly enclosed us. It went on and on and gradually the tunnel aspect disappeared. A bit of canyon was left. A 12 foot water jump. BANZAI! A 30 foot abseil. Great. Quicksand. Not so great. The 150 foot must be around the corner. No it must be around the next corner. Maybe the next corner?

Or the corner after that? The canyon disappeared and we were left in a boulder strewn gorge. No 150 foot abseil. No tunnel swim with a 90 foot drop. Our exit came into view. We climbed out. Five hours of scrubwalking later and we were back at the car.

We were disappointed that Dumbano did not have more. However what it had was plenty. Over two weekends it managed to keep us in thrills and wonders, to provide a tremendous canyoning experience.

NICK B.



WILDERNESS

The track did not go far before fading out altogether - it had never been clear. I kept going along beside the creek, keeping close to it as there was no other reference feature - the overcast hid the sun, the massive trees hid the slope of the mountain ahead, and the scattered tree ferns prevented a view of more than a few dozen paces in any direction. Even the perfectly level ground gave no hint as to the direction of the lagoon.

After several minutes I turned back, being deterred from further progress by the incredible wanderings of the creek, which tripled the distance one had to go, and robbed one of all sense of direction. I soon came near to panic - trying to cut across the base of a meander, I seemed unable to find the creek again. With no hint of the right way to go, other than my own failing sense of direction, I rushed back towards what I believed to be the general area of the creek. When I saw the water in the bed below I swallowed with relief, and followed the bank around every one of its tortuous bends until I stood again on the shore of the lagoon, thankfully taking in the open space above the water.

The forest was not dense - there were wide spaces between adjacent trees and ferns - but the closeness of the leaves above, and the damp darkness beneath them, gave rise to a prehistoric fear of the unknown.

The next day it rained. Between the mountain on one side and the lagoon on the other we were trapped. There was no way we could go on, up the mountain which was clad in cloud. And we had no desire to try and camp on its top in bad weather, exposed to the wind and rain and short of firewood. Nor could we return down the lagoon to the beach - it had taken an afternoon to wade up from the beach on the coast, past the dense scrub on the shores, and we had had to wear jackets for warmth even in that fine weather. Again, we had no desire to do the return trip through the now deeper, colder water on a day of bitter wind and rain. So we stayed camped in the forest between the lagoon and the mountain.

That night a snarling growl close by the tent interrupted our sleep with an apprehensive awakening. It was followed shortly by a sound of splintering branches and dull thumping, then silence. Though somewhat disconcerted, drowsiness overcame our anxiety/curiosity and we slept again till morning.

High overcast (that is, higher than the mountain) and calm air augered well for an ascent. But we no longer had time to complete the full traverse of the ranges - this would be a one-day dash to the summit and back, before we returned to the coast and the well-worn track.

Somewhere between early and mid morning we began to follow the track that had faded out for me two days earlier. Actually it was not so much a track as a route marked by tape every so often, leading across among the tree ferns and myrtles towards the base of the mountain. Progress was slow, the markers were hard to find.

After something less than an hour a hillside loomed up through the trees. The creek, whose tortuous path we had crossed several times, led straight to the base of this almost clifflike slope, and vanished back into a large cave. Or should one say, emerged from the cave, as the water flowed out and away towards the lagoon. The cave was dark, especially so as little or no direct light penetrated the trees above and around its mouth. We had neither torch nor time, and continued on to begin the long climb.

Several false starts preceded the discovery of a way up the rocky slope (or scrubby cliff). Some more big holes in the limestone appeared halfway up - they may or may not have led to caves. On the crest of the ridge there were more markers, leading up towards the summit. The vegetation changed as we climbed. Near the bottom low, dense tangled scrub covered strange limestone terrain of shallow fissures and ridges - not big enough to fall down, and not deep enough to fall far, but irregular enough to give the clumsy sprained ankles or worse. Tall, clean eucalypts emerged above the scrub.

Beyond, the scrub gave way to fern as the ridge narrowed and the rock disappeared beneath the thick humus. The trees became denser, and the forest became darker and damper. The grade was easy, but fairly regular. It steepened dramatically at a most spectacular fallen tree. This massive log had split lengthwise into three. We walked along the bottom section, in the little gully between the two side sections which rose above our heads.

Above and beyond the trees began to grow smaller but closer. Further up still many were no longer growing, but lying in tangled piles across the hillside. Mosses grew with ever increasing profusion as the trees became denser and more stunted. Pandanus and scoparia began to appear, and we knew that we were in the true high level region.

Occasionally as we had climbed we had caught glimpses of the cliffs above. They appeared with increasing frequency, and we suddenly emerged at their base among a profusion of blue markers. Sliding between scoparia and the dolerite we rapidly reached a massive gully running steeply up through the cliffs - an obvious route up.

The first stage, scrambling up over grass and low scrub, was easy. The vegetation and broken rock provided secure holds. A small creek tumbled and cascaded over the bare rock beside us in the centre of the gully. At the top of the grass the gully turned to the left, and we looked up to see that what remained to be climbed was further than what we had at first thought to be the total. Further, it appeared even steeper than the section we had just climbed, which meant that it was approaching the vertical. We pressed on anyway.

A little rock scrambling around a small waterfall proved quite an obstacle for those of shorter stature, and did little for morale - a return would be difficult if further progress was impossible. A promising side gully appeared to the left - it was wide, grassy, and not so steep. When we reached the head of the grass we found the top of the gully surrounded by high cliffs. Looking back at the main gully as we retraced our steps towards it was an impressive sight. Its head was high above to the left, and its unbroken line plunged straight down before us at a terrifying grade before vanishing down the way we had climbed. It was hard to grasp that we had been more or less cheerfully scrambling over that fearful slope, virtually unaware of its real grade.

Nevertheless we continued up the main gully, after sending one of the party up to check whether it was in fact a feasible route - there was no point in the less agile climbing up only to have to return. It was actually quite easy. A long stretch of tussocky grass among broken rock was followed by several short vertical pitches. A light rope gave aid and confidence for this final section, before we emerged on the ridge at the head of the gully.

But we didn't look at the view - yet. Heads down, we rushed eagerly over the boulders leading to the summit, still a short distance above. As each reached the cairn, he gave a mighty yell of victory - a childish action perhaps, but a natural release for the stress built up in that gully.

Below us lay the world. On one side was the lagoon, with the beach and the island spotted ocean beyond one end. Rays of sun made visible

by a rain shower over the lagoon linked the water and the sky with slanting parallel lines of light. On the far side of the lagoon, and in every other direction, lay range after range of mountains. Some were massive chains of irregular but rounded humps, like the back of a sleeping animal. Others sent needlelike pinnacles to touch and penetrate the cloud. Some were just knifeblades of two cliffs back to back. And others were breast-like, smooth and cleanly rounded.

We could have stayed for hours, but it was already mid-afternoon.

The descent was difficult. There was no desire to return down the gully we had climbed, and we had left the route guide at the campsite - extended study had committed the ascent route to memory, and we had intended to return the same way.

We set off along the narrow jagged plateau, looking for a suitable gully. One massive gash in the cliffs plummeted vertically down, and was passed without hesitation. In a muddy bowl there was a campsite, where even the scoparis shuddered in the wind. We too shuddered at the thought of such a camp, and continued.

A cairn above a feasible looking gully sent us downwards to find reassuring signs of human passage on the rocks and leaf litter. Vague memories of route guide instructions to "hide out of the gully onto an inconspicuous ramp" caused uneasiness as the wear marks faded away. The scrub faded away too, and water trickled over a series of low drops, about waist or shoulder high, before dropping down a little waterfall.

As usual, no-one wanted to go back the way we had come (time was now running short anyway) and the waterfall did look negotiable. The side walls were rough, more or less dry, and close enough to chimney down. We were wearing waterproofs for protection from the wind, so no-one was wet by the trickling water. At the bottom I felt more worried than at any time earlier - if we now met a really impassable waterfall, to backtrack would be well nigh impossible.

As it happened, the creek ran off down through the relatively innocuous scrub, and we left it behind as we sidled along the rapidly falling base of the cliffs.

Some time later, with no further incident, we reached the base of our ascent gully, and beyond it the head of the taped route. We felt at home, but the camp was still thousands of feet below. At dusk we reached the creek emerging from the cave, and raced through the now almost dark forest towards our camp.

The markers were invisible in the gloom, but some sixth sense, which I lacked earlier, now told us the way. I stepped towards the last creek crossing, a massive log quite near the camp, via a smaller but still large log at its end. I rode it into the water with sounds of splintering and splashes, as it collapsed beneath me.

It was a most demoralising and unfitting to a day of great achievement.

Peter Tuft

(The mountain was Precipitous Bluff, on the South Coast of Tasmania)

