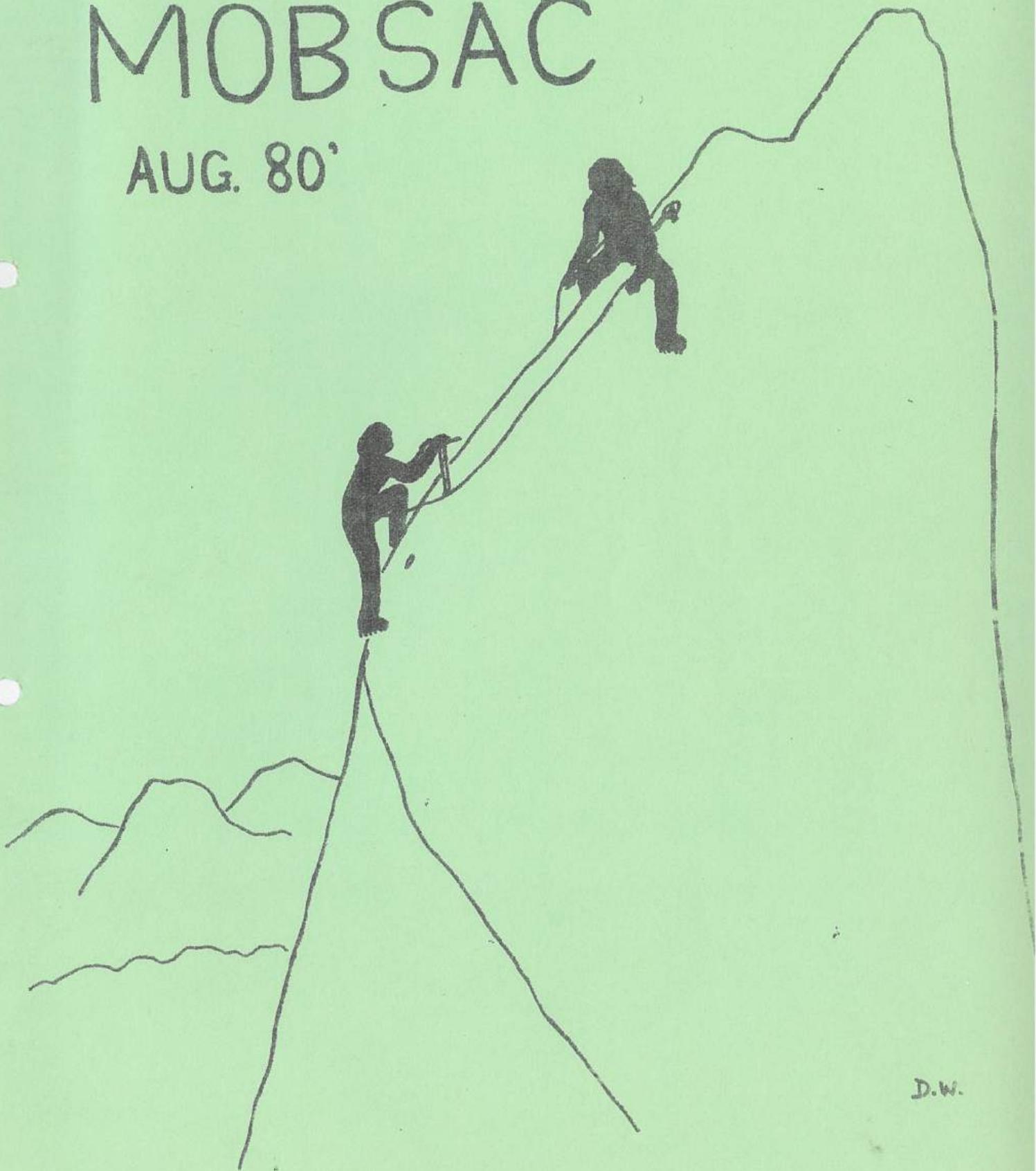


# MOBSAC

AUG. 80'



D.W.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES BUSHWALKING & MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

AT MY DESK .....

Unfortunately, the June issue had to be scrapped due to the overwhelming flood of promised articles that dried up before reaching me. This month the situation has improved somewhat, with a few last minute additions making up for a thin grey 'economic' issue. Ah well, times are hard! Thanks to those few remaining contributors we have in this club, and also to Norma and Joy for their ceaseless typing efforts.

DAVID WAGLAND

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GEAR CUSTODIAN: Peter Rigg (663 4488)

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE FUTURE OF THE KOSCIUSKO HUTS

The future of huts in the Kosciusko National Park has received a lot of publicity lately, and several important points have been overlooked in the heat of the argument. For what they are worth here are my thoughts.

There is no doubt that cross country skiing will continue to expand in the Snowy Mountains. Given this fact, a decision has to be made whether to provide accommodation in huts for all, or for a select few or for no one at all. The first course will require a continu-d increase in the number of huts in wilderness areas, a concept totally incompatible with wilderness values. To allow only certain people to use a hut while turning others away is hardly a desirable solution. The only alternative compatible with the aims of the National Park, is to remove huts whenever they become overused to the point where it is usual to find them overcrowded.

Many people acclaim the survival value of huts. In fact, the survival value of most huts is less than zero. The overwhelming causes of serious danger and death in our mountains are exhaustion and hypothermia. There is only one way to treat a sufferer of these conditions, and that is to camp on the spot. Every medical text on the matter agrees that the worst possible thing is to push on in the hope of reaching shelter. If a party has adequate tentage then survival prospects are excellent. A party with no tents in a crisis situation has the terrible choice of camping in the open or pushing on in the hope of finding a hut, and risking the loss of one or more party members. Such a grim prospect is especially serious for unfit people or inexperienced parties of skiers who lack proper skiing techniques and rapidly become exhausted in adverse conditions. In addition, the times when huts are most needed for shelter, that is, in blizzards, are precisely the times when huts are most difficult to find, as visibility is limited to a few tens of metres. This is especially true for inexperienced skiers who are not familiar with the location of the huts.

The inescapable conclusion is that the less experienced skiers, who are the most likely to get into trouble and to require shelter in huts, are also the people who need to be most independent of huts. People who venture into the mountains should either be very fit and competent skiers or should carry tents. Thus, the survival value of huts is less than zero in that they attract inexperienced and under-equipped people into areas where they would not normally go and where they should be fully equipped to camp out.

It is true that huts have a real recreational value. They are often pleasant places to be in poor conditions. However, this is only true if the hut is not crowded. Huts close to access points tend to be crowded and have frequent outbreaks of "Whites Wog" or "Schlink Shits" due to poor hygienic conditions.

Perhaps the best solution to the problem is to remove all huts within 15km of access points. This will prevent inexperienced parties from reaching the remaining huts unless they are fully equipped with tents. To cater for these people, properly maintained, inexpensive bunkhouses with basic but hygienic conditions could be constructed at carefully chosen locations a few kilometres from roads. This would enable beginners to learn to ski in safety and with low-priced, comfortable accommodation. As for the rest of the huts, those that become overcrowded should be removed unless there is some valid reason for retaining the hut (e.g. on historical grounds). However, with the easy chain of huts from the roads to the centre of wilderness areas removed, overcrowding in central huts would be less likely to occur because access would be more difficult and everyone would have tents. There is also a case for complete removal of huts in some areas to create what amounts to an untouched wilderness when the snow covers all evidence of man's activities.

cont.....

A GREAT PLACE TO SLEEP

The Plan was interesting but not particularly ambitious, basically it was to climb the West Wall of the Three Sisters at night and bivouac on top of the Second Sister. I had done the ascent last year and as a result thought I knew the route. Most of my climbing acquaintances didn't want to be a part of night climbing or had other engagements. In the end I found a kindred adventurous spirit in Scott.

Saturday noon saw us on the train to Katoomba with all our climbing and bivi gear. By the time we had reached the lookout I had changed my mind about carrying the bivi gear up the climb and instead had decided to cache it on the 2nd Sister. The easy traverse around the 1st Sister turned out to be interesting with a large sack on, but we soon had all our gear dropped off on top. We then moved down the Giant Staircase in failing light only to discover we had only one hand held torch between the two of us.

By the time we had fought our way along the base of the cliffs to the start of the West Wall, the sun had all but disappeared below the horizon. A quick scramble up the 1st broken pitch saw all the light gone and the flood lights operational. The floodlight made no real difference to the climb.

As I owned the headlamp and supposedly knew the route I lead up the 2nd Pitch and subsequently caused an incredible rope tangle which took 20 minutes to resolve. Scott came up the pitch finding difficulty seeing the downlite holds and choking on his torch held in his mouth. He arrived saying that I would have to down light all the pitches - he did, otherwise he would find himself climbing shadows instead of rock. The next pitch proved to be our downfall, I couldn't remember the route. After fruitlessly looking for a familiar landmark I attached an open V groove with rather too much gusto. After 15ft or so the holds ran out and only a thin sapling acted as a runner. I decided to retreat and while doing so a vital hold broke before I could replace my hand jamb. The resulting 20ft free fall and scrub roll ended with me sitting on the edge of a nasty drop and my second calling out - "Are you dead?!" After assuring Scott that I hadn't even received a scratch a lengthy discussion of about 20 seconds led to a conclusion of retreat while the single head lamp continued to function.

The walk back up the Giant Staircase was so bad in P.A.'s we simply continued into Katoomba and bought ourselves enormous bottles of coke. We then proceeded to have a buildering session on the local shopping centre complex. By the time we returned to the Three Sisters our feet were well and truly crushed, we really should have changed our P.A.'s, and the flood lights had gone out.

The Binouac was marvellous, the gentle breeze and relatively comfortable platform on top of the 2nd Sister was well worth the pains of the previous hours. But it was the sunrise which really made the whole weekend worthwhile and puts the top of the 2nd Sister, in my mind, as a great place to sleep.

ANTHONY HARDY  
8  
SECOND SCOTT VANTHOFF F.F.M.C.

The Future of the Kosciusko Huts (cont)

I think it's very important that pressure groups such as KHA should not get all the running on this issue. Write a submission to:

The National Parks & Wildlife Service  
Box N189, P.O.  
Grosvenor Street  
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2000

Also write a submission on the Summit Area and the Resort Areas if you get the time. The Resort Areas question will be the next big issue and the resort companies will be pushing very hard for new areas, e.g. Tate East Ridge. Its up to us to apply pressure in the opposite direction. No one else will.

ANDREW BLAKERS

June 1980

The future of the Kosciusko Huts is a complex issue. It is not simply a matter of preserving the huts, but of ensuring that they are used in a way that is consistent with the values of the National Park. The huts are a unique part of the park's heritage, and their future is a matter of national importance. The National Parks & Wildlife Service has a responsibility to ensure that the huts are maintained and used in a way that is consistent with the values of the park. This is a challenge, as the huts are in a remote and often difficult-to-access location. However, it is a challenge that must be met if we are to ensure that the huts are available for future generations to enjoy. The huts are a valuable part of the park's heritage, and their future is a matter of national importance. The National Parks & Wildlife Service has a responsibility to ensure that the huts are maintained and used in a way that is consistent with the values of the park. This is a challenge, as the huts are in a remote and often difficult-to-access location. However, it is a challenge that must be met if we are to ensure that the huts are available for future generations to enjoy.

### THE BUNNY



FIONA NESBITT

... Every July, Fiona, a legal secretary from Sydney, spends a couple of weeks at the snowfields. Not one to overdo the exertion bit, she tends to limit her skiing to the view of the slopes from the bistro balcony. Whenever she does venture out (expensively upholstered in the latest gear), the 'boobs and bottom' style of her skiing is guaranteed to turn more heads than any Olympian display of skill. Being able to feign helplessness at will, she is never short of attention from Fritz, or Rudi, or Helmut, or Gerhard. Many people are complaining about the high cost of skiing — but not Fiona. She never pays for a thing . . .

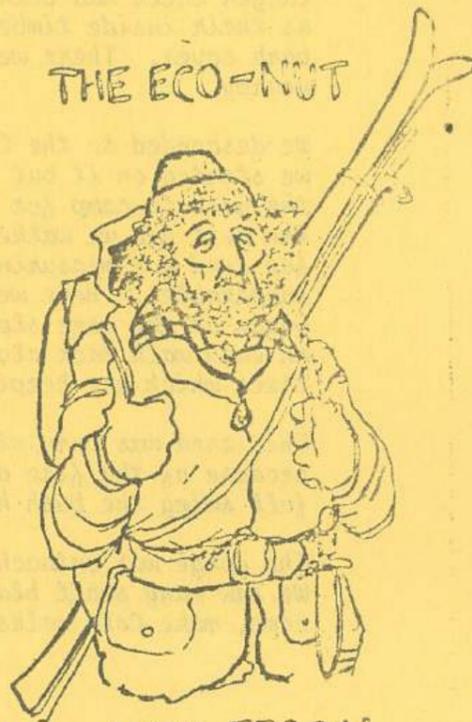
### THE MUG LAIR



SHELDON BRAITHWAITE

... A Disco proprietor by profession, he can be seen scooting up to the snow on weekends in his 280ZX (leased) with the Kneissls strapped to the roof and his little dolly strapped to the seat beside him. An accomplished skier, he is in the know with all the Thredbo establishment and always seems to be at the head of the queue. His favourite pastimes are showering unsuspecting daytrippers with powder on the turns and roundly abusing novices who blunder across his path . . .

### THE ECO-NUT



MIKE FERRAL

... A cross-country fanatic, Mike dismisses the downhill scene as an overpriced playground for city sybarites. He is a committed wilderness-freak. When he is not rafting down the Gordon, he can be seen pedalling up to the Snow on his ten-speed, camping gear in the panniers and skis lashed to the crossbar. Totally at home in the High Country, Mike has been known to exist for weeks at a time on mosses and lichens . . .

PRIOR

## .. ON THE SLOPES ..

### THE INSTRUCTOR



GERHARD SPLINT

... A bleached, sun-bronzed Teuton with a face carved from a mallee-root, Gerhard exists only for the snow and can converse endlessly on the subject of skiing (which is fortunate for him since he is totally ignorant about everything else). He keeps himself super-fit, not only on the slopes by day, but back at the chalet where he often exercises throughout the night. During the off-season, Gerhard rests his glands and watches war movies on the telly to keep his accent in shape . . .

### THE IDIOT



REG WHITBREAD

... From Ashgrove in Queensland, Reg is making his first trip to the snowfields on a Apex bus tour. Not much of an athlete to begin with, Reg has made heavy weather of the nursery slopes, devastating several ski classes as he ploughs his way manfully down the gentle grades. On the advice of several angry people, Reg has adjourned to the bar, joining the bus driver who suffered severe frostbite when trying to attach the chains while still wearing his thongs . . .

### THE NATURAL



WAYNE BRUCE

... A talented natural athlete, Wayne has decided to give skiing a bit of a go. Wearing jeans, surplus parka and rented equipment, he can be seen heading (like a homing pigeon — and against all advice) for the top of the steepest and most dangerous run. He only started skiing that morning; by lunchtime he was doing parallel turns and hopes to do a back somersault or two before it gets dark. To Gerhard Splint, Wayne is the sort of stuff of which nightmares are made . . .

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE GROSE - an account of the first ascent of  
'Reason Ship' 19M4, Grose Valley

All morning Anthony and I lie awake in the car in readiness for the 5.30a.m. start. However, outside the rain and mist continues to swirl around so it looks like no climbing. We sleep in until 8 o'clock and by this time the clouds are lifting. Of course it would be too late to start the climb with its difficult access and long walk out. Chances would be a night out in the open without sleeping bags, but I'm too impatient to put it off again so we hurriedly pack all the goodies and head down Pearce's Pass, accepting our fate.

Soon we are forcing our way through the tight undergrowth that lines the base of the cliff. It feels like a steam bath as the sun reaches the wet jungle. After about 2 hours we reach the bottom of the climb - a soaring 700 foot corner, permanently in shade. A month ago, several of us bailed out when we ran out of time. Now the two of us start the route at a ridiculously late hour, but this time there will be no fooling about.

Despite the dampness the first few pitches go quickly until an aid pin I'm standing on levers out. A 20 foot dive leaves me hanging on with a badly chopped up finger. The first-aid kit is dragged up and the raw flesh is soon covered with several layers of Leukoplast. The bulge is approached again and finally both of us arrive at the high point. After a short lunch break I swing around the roof that blocks the chimney, then continue up the corner. Higher up it overhangs and thins out so I traverse rightwards to a crack on the arête. 30 feet later this fizzles out but luckily some unprotected wall climbing leads to a welcome ledge.

Anthony comes up quite shaken but in control. He is followed by the sack which seems to jam on every projection. It sure is a tiring job hauling that dead weight up rock faces! Somewhat recovered I pull over the roof above the ledge and wander up a steep juggy wall to the shale band below the main overhangs. The climbing is all on "china plates" - large brittle protrusions which tend to break off when any weight is put on them. Just before A.J.H. reaches the shale he steps onto a hold which suddenly snaps off. I am pulled down as he swings freely across the wall. Nice pendulum there, but mind that rope! He manages to gain rock again and appears over the edge, shattered beyond recognition.

Above us, the main corner disappears into the overhangs as a black overhung groove so other ways through the roofs are looked for. As the sun sets I try a scary wall that leads to nowhere. Psyched out quickly, I downclimb to the shale band and attempt to traverse out, but again there is no escape. It looks like the only way up is that horrendous groove and as it almost is dark the pitch must be left until daylight (13 hours away).

The stars are across the sky as we set up the bivvy ledge, a mere 200 feet below the summit scrubfields. Working like little demons we soon create a little windbreak, tie ourselves onto the Casuarina bush and phase out into tropical dreams. A thousand feet below us the Grose River rumbles peacefully and a tiny red campfire comes to life.

cont .....

COLO

After getting away to a late start we left the car near Sir Brothers on the Culong Range at 2 pm.

We walked past Hollow Rock through the area that had been burnt out by the Christmas fires. Although the vegetation was regenerating a lot of the larger trees had been killed. Many that survived the fire were falling as their inside timber had been burnt out if there was a defect in their bark cover. There were few animals or birds, even when there was water nearby.

We descended to the Colo by the No. 1 track on the Colo Route map. Well, we started on it but ended up going down a steeper way on the north of the nose to camp for the night at the junction of Colo and Wollomi Rivers. The next day we walked down the Colo until we arrived at the H.E.C. flying fox used for measuring flow rates (which someone has managed to render inoperable). Here we had lunch in preparation for the ascent out of the Gorge up the scee slope onto Boorai Ridge. Once the top is reached it is an easy walk back along fire trails clambering over the many newly fallen trees which are keeping the 4-wheel drives out for the moment.

This area was very nice on past trips, but this trip was not as beautiful because of the fire damage. However, with the process of regeneration in full swing the bush had its own special charm.

The gorge was untouched by fires but will in future have a blackberry problem. We saw many small blackberry bushes starting to grow which will in years to come, make Colo walks more difficult on legs.

KEN WILSON  
KEN HAT  
FIONA CABELL

FEBRUARY 1980

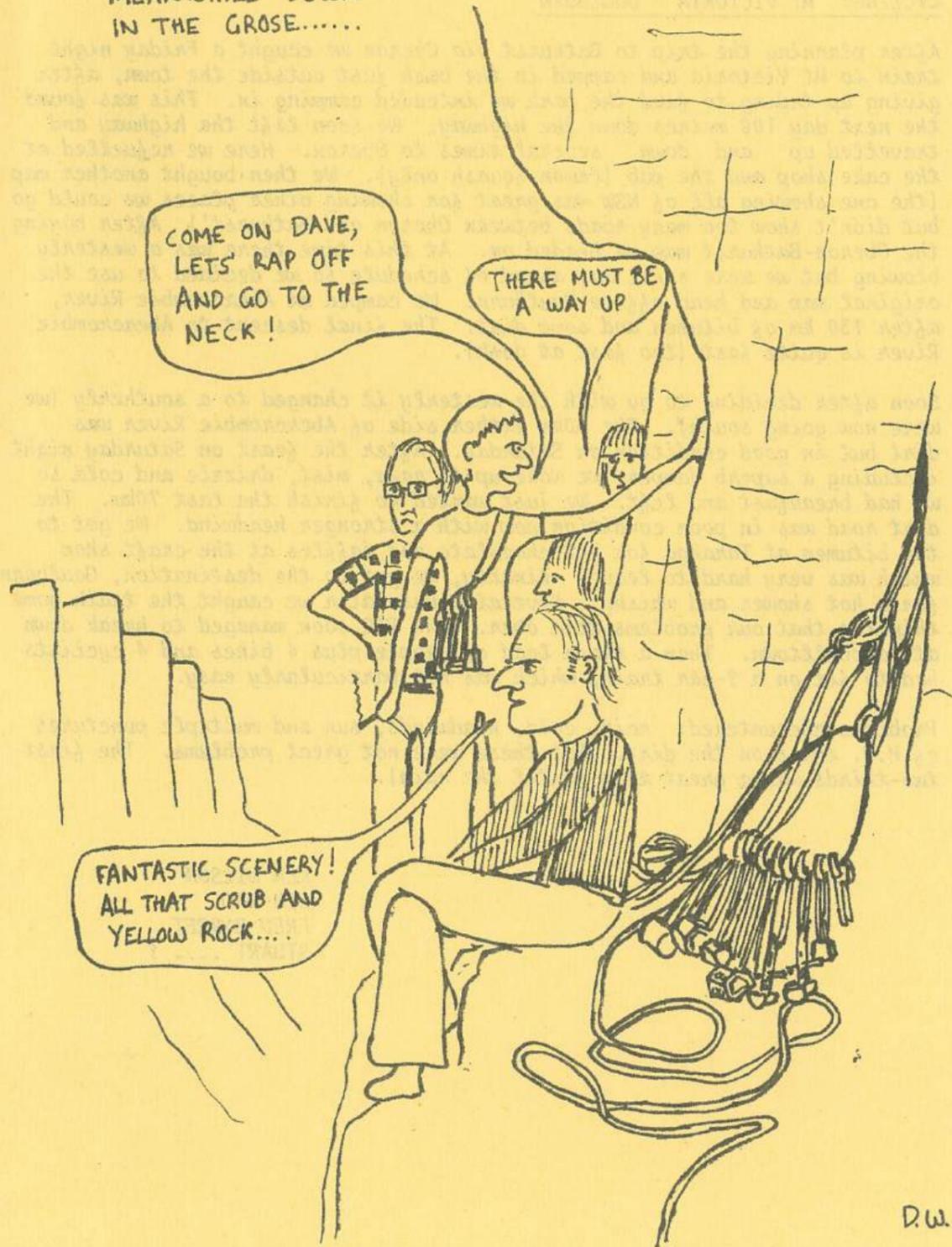
THE FUTURE GRINS

Cards flip over reflecting flames,  
faces glance around and stray,  
Coals are ploughed into ash  
as dreams of space fall into hand;  
a corner from a slow smoking log,  
they stare until its gone,  
sweetly smelling distance of age  
looking onto morning haze.

Two eyes engulfed in the glow  
lean and settle onto stone,  
smiling darkness is primed forth,  
jaded impatience now withdrawn;  
two retire to their warm pits,  
now left alone as the future grins;  
endless hard nailing ahead  
his plight is slowly taken in.

DAVID WAGLAND

MEANWHILE DOWN  
IN THE GROSE.....



### A Day in the Life of the Grose (cont)

On the wrong side of midnight cold air brushes my back, which we pass off as a "convection current, no worries". Gradually, the "convection current" increases to 15 knots, so to get warm we rush about stuffing clumps of grass down our shirts. Come to think about it, I forgot about that cool change mentioned a few days ago! Now all that remains is to lie in the embryo position, shivering and guessing the time. By 4am the wind is almost gale force, making the cold quite intense. Adding to the misery is the sight of fleecy clouds pacing across the horizon.

At sunrise the wind drops slightly and we move to the base of the groove after swallowing half a ham sandwich. Looking up - I'm not happy to face this sort of thing at 6.30 in the morning after shivering for over 6 hours - but there is nowhere else to go! The right wall leans over making each move awkward and strenuous. The aiders are hauled up and snail pace aiding proceeds up the intermittent crack. A.J.H. stands numble at belay as blocks and bushes fly out into space.

Large nuts take me through the roof to a small ledge. The crack above is full of crud and I am virtually out of gear but a curving line of holds on the left wall might be a possibility. An airy traverse out along the lip of the overhangs leads to a difficult mantleshelf 30 feet out from the last runner. This is followed by further delicate climbing back to the crack. Eventually, I get a 'Friend' to slot in and layback up to a grassy ledge.

A.J.H. jugs up to the grassy nest in the sky, hands over a rack of gear and clips into a confusion of slings and rope. The last pitch moves onto a juggy arete and gains the plateau. Too tired to shriek with emotion, I tie off the rope, lie down on the edge and stare into that huge valley. Our tattered life support capsule is winched up slowly and soon everything is sorted and packed for the 4 mile pitch back to the road. The wind is still quite strong but appears harmless now.

The ridge we follow offers easy walking until it runs into a canyon. Casually, we just rap into it hoping to walk up a gully on the other side. However, once we are in, there is no way out - either side 100 foot mossy walls hang over the dark abode. The only relief is the abundance of water as we were right on dehydration point. Everything is green and pretty, but we've got to walk down this damned stream towards the Grose until an opening is found. Female laughter is heard echoing down the canyon walls but it must be an audible illusion to wasted minds.

Soon a gully is discovered so we trudge waist-deep in greenery up to open country again. In no time we come across a fire trail and finally the Bells' Line of Road. A few miles of road lie between us and the car so we thumb a lift with a country girl in a mini. We jump in and the stench of dirt and sweat rises slowly to the roof.

"Where have you boys been?" she asks, wishing she'd never picked us up.

"Down in the Grose", we reply.

DAVID WAGLAND

P.S. The next big line to go is the striped headwall near Hathill Creek. Any volunteers???

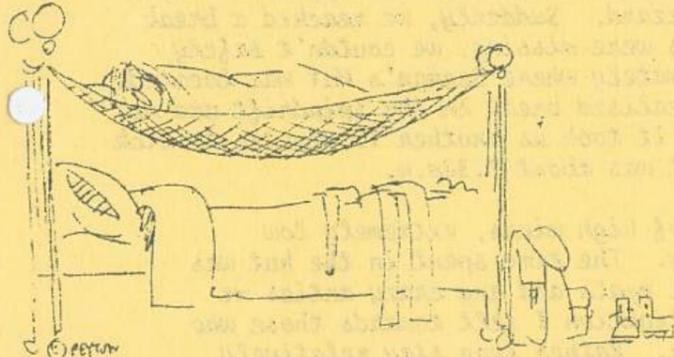
LINDA VINNING SENT IN THIS INTERESTING APPRAISAL OF THE HAMMOCK. THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE AT THE BOREE LOG BARBEQUE MIGHT REMEMBER LINDA'S HAMMOCK. HERE IS THE SOURCE OF HER INSPIRATION - NEW SCIENTIST, SEPTEMBER 1979).

## In praise of hammocks

Christina Dodwell

Before I left England to travel by Land-Rover through Africa, my godmother gave me a hammock. It was made of light-weight nylon and folded up no larger than a clenched fist. I didn't use it often when we drove across the Sahara Desert, though I remember moments of paradise while swinging in the hammock hung between palm trees at an oasis, munching freshly-picked dates, and looking out across oceans of sand dunes, or flat rocky wilderness. It wasn't until after the theft of the Land-Rover and the collapse of the expedition, that I really began to use my hammock. My journey continued through Africa with two wild horses and a donkey for the baggage.

On the first night that I spent under the stars there was a storm. I had noticed the storm's approach early in the evening, so I slung the hammock beneath some leafy mango trees, and tucked a sheet of plastic over my sleeping bag. It was strange lying suspended, rocking in gusts of wind, feeling the storm coming closer and gathering momentum. Lightning flashes illuminated the night clouds in multi-cumulus silhouettes. The leaves on my trees were rustling in the wind, which became cooler and stronger until it was howling along, tearing at everything in its path, and the branches strained sideways in its force. I heard a distant roll of thunder. The lightning flashed on and on, cracking the sky in jagged forks; several of them hit the earth and a bush on the horizon burst into flames. The wind became a gale, and thunder exploded overhead in deafening chaos. A new sound emerged, the hissing of rain as it swept across the land; large heavy raindrops blown in advance by the wind, splashed on my face. I pulled the plastic up to my chin and snuggled deeper into my sleeping bag. The storm howled and raged, it was marvellously wild, and the swaying hammock rocked me to sleep.



I woke to a lazy sunny morning and leaned out to pluck mangoes for breakfast.

The advantages of sleeping in a hammock are plentiful; for too often the ground is hard, or wet, or full of creepy-crawlies; and quite apart from all that, a hammock is very comfortable. It is best to use one large enough for you to stretch out diagonally across it, so that your body rests straight, not sagging. I learnt that from the Mexicans—there is seldom a bed in their villages, everyone uses hammocks, and married couples use double hammocks.

My hammock came in particularly useful when I found myself crossing a large town at 3 am; I was exhausted but all hotels were closed. I noticed the open entrance to a goods yard and offices, so went in and tied my hammock between the roof-rack of their delivery van and a loading hook. At 8 am I was woken by the arrival of the office staff, they were rather astonished to find me there, but very kindly offered me a cup of coffee and the use of their washrooms.

It is not always simple, even in the bush, to find somewhere for a hammock. If there are no trees, or no suitable ones, or too much undergrowth, it can lead to sleeping in weird and exciting places. I was once on a disused railway track, which

although very overgrown offered nowhere suitable until I came to a tunnel. It was an old messy archway, bordering a gaping black hole, intensely black, with a pinpoint of light at the far end. My hammock fitted conveniently across the mouth; the only noise was the eerie echo of water dripping into undisturbed pools; and my dreams were filled with images of the phantom express.

Lack of trees on another occasion forced me to sling the hammock on the brink of a cliff, overhanging a sheer fall. Way below me the cliffs ended in rocky barren confusion, while in three directions the views stretched out for about fifty miles across the lowlands. Dawn was a spectacle I shall never forget.

Generally there is a choice of places for the hammock, and the decision is important not only for strategic reasons like cover and view, but also for each place's intrinsic power. In the same way that when you walk into a room either you merely sit down on the first chair you see, or walk around and choose where to sit, you will find that certain places are quieter, while others are more powerful. You should choose according to your mood. On board the steamboat travelling up Lake Malawi I paced every deck looking for the right spot for my hammock, and finally settled at the point of the prow, slung from the outer rails.

Life without a hammock would have been very different, and I expect I would have spent many mundane, uncomfortable nights. Perhaps I would never have discovered the joy and exhilaration it inspires, or the depths of tranquility which bring peace of mind. There is little to equal a night beneath the Moon, lying swaying on the breeze, watching fireflies dancing among the reeds, and listening to the song of bullfrogs mingling with the distant pounding of drums in the forest.

Thank you, hammock.

## CYCLING: MT VICTORIA - GOULBURN

After planning the trip to Bathurst via Oberon we caught a Friday night train to Mt Victoria and camped in the bush just outside the town, after giving up trying to find the park we intended camping in. This was found the next day 100 metres down the highway. We soon left the highway and travelled up and down several times to Oberon. Here we refuelled at the cake shop and the pub (lemon squash only). We then bought another map (the one showing all of NSW was great for showing other places we could go but didn't show too many roads between Oberon and Bathurst!) After buying the Oberon-Bathurst map we headed on. At this time there was a westerly blowing but we were still way ahead of schedule so we decided to use the original map and head off to Goulburn. We camped at Abercrombie River, after 130 km of bitumen and some dirt. The final descent to Abercrombie River is quite fast (too fast at dusk).

Soon after deciding to go with the westerly it changed to a southerly (we were now going south). The 30km either side of Abercrombie River was dirt but in good condition on Saturday. After the feast on Saturday night including a superb damper, we woke up to rain, mist, drizzle and cold so we had breakfast and left. We just wanted to finish the last 70km. The dirt road was in poor condition now with a stronger headwind. We got to the bitumen at Taralga for hot chocolate and jaffles at the craft shop which was very hard to leave. Finally, we got to the destination, Goulburn, for a hot shower and whisky. Several hours later we caught the train home thinking that our problems were over. The PTC soon managed to break down at Campbelltown. Then a train load of people plus 4 bikes and 4 cyclists had to fit on a 2-car train, which was not particularly easy.

Problems encountered: rain, cold, headwinds, sun and multiple punctures of H.P. tyres on the dirt. But these were not great problems. The first two-thirds was a great trip (until the rain).

KEN WILSON  
KEN HAT  
FRED BARRET  
STUART .... ?

## A "Mountain Experience" (cont)

On the morning of the last day we were all up before sunrise and for once the sky was clear and the wind moderate. We were all soon outside prancing around, freezing, watching a beautiful sunrise high-lighting the spindrift and encrusting ice which lay on every object. We had got the packing routine down to a fine art the previous day and were soon skiing back down to the Snowy. The weather was clear but the ice sheets remained causing a few undignified downhill manouvres for all four of us. The final ski from the Snowy to Charlotts was pure bliss and made the past 3 days well worthwhile.

The weathermaps back at Charlotts quickly convinced us that this good weather was simply a 6 hour break between fronts. We therefore decided to go back to Sydney and s-on set off in slow snow conditions back to Perisher. The occasional glances at the enormous band of black cloud kept us moving and made a fitting backdrop out of Karl Stone's taxi as we drove back to Cooma.

During the five days we had spent in the snow the four of us had certainly had a 'Mountain Experience'. The tally for the period was - 1 frostbitten toe and a ruined pair of boots for Tony (later exchanged), a cold for Geoff, plenty of photos for David and the love of a new sport for myself.

ANTHONY HARDY

## A "MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCE"

The trip began in a hurry with a clearing of the weather and plenty of snow. The four of us, Dave, Geoff, Tony and myself all boarded the Cooma Mail and luckily got a nearly empty train.

On arrival in Cooma, we enquired about the relative cost of the taxis to the bus. The standard price was more expensive but when the taxi drivers saw that no one was going to go anyway one of them, Karl Stone, agreed to take us four, our skis and packs for the same price as the bus would have cost. We didn't regret the choice and comfortably went quickly up to Perisher while being subjected to deep philosophical discussions with Karl, a real character.

At Perisher, because we were carrying large packs containing ice climbing gear, our aim being to reach Blue Lake, we caught a Snow Cat up to Charlott's Pass. The weather was beautiful and we spent an hour getting used to the skis. It was the first time I had been on skis but the other three were simply getting back into form, this being their first skiing for the year. As we sorted out gear and decided to ski to Seaman's Hut with the camping gear and collect the ice climbing gear later that afternoon, the weather began to close in with some cloud cover and a little snow.

As we skied out of Charlotts and reached the ridge top the wind became stronger as it was to continue doing for the remainder of the day. The initial skiing to the Snowy River was a succession of falls and wild struggles to regain my feet with the pack continually pulling me back down again. Visability was decreasing all the time with the wind picking up causing me to fall even more often.

Eventually, we crossed the Snowy and started the uphill trudge to Seaman's Hut along the pole line. Unfortunately, the high winds had caused drifts of very dry powder snow indispersed with large sheets of ice. The result was an exhausting period of Herringboning and Side Stepping while battling the 30 knot wind. This was not the perfect conditions to learn to ski, a heavy pack, hard sheet ice and a blizzard. Suddenly, we reached a break in the pole line where about 10 poles were missing, we couldn't safely continue even though we knew approximately where Seaman's Hut was located. Then, however, there was a slight localised break in the spindrift and we saw the hut in the saddle above us. It took us another 15 minutes to kick our way up those 10 missing poles, it was about 2.30p.m.

The next 2½ days were a combination of high winds, extremely low temperatures, snow and low visability. The time spent in the hut was boring with the only relief being the meals and any crazy antics we could think of. This included an obligation I felt towards those who wanted the huts removed from the park. Rather than stay relatively warm and dry I periodically fought my way outside into the blizzard to wipe down the windows of sindrift and ice, without gloves of course.

Plans for the future when the weather cleared were suddenly crystalised when Tony announced that his new Alfa Touring boots had begun devulcanising at the toe making skiing dangerous if not impossible. Some quick use of elastoplast soon fixed them sufficiently to ski back to Charlotts at the first break in the weather. The morning of the second full day at Seaman's dawned clear and bright and a rush was made to pack everything and clear up the Hut. By the time we were clipping on our skis the wind was again blowing and before we had reached the 10 pole gap the wind was again gusting up to 30 knots. To continue would have been great training for the Himalayas but as this was the Australian Alps we returned to the Hut. Even though it wasn't the Himalayas it still took me 2½ hours to regain the feeling in my hands after only 10 minutes outside. We were stuck in the hut for another day and night.

In years gone by, climbing on the University Walls has been in the form of public demonstrations for the Mountaineering Club. These demonstrations included mass ascents of the Clancy Auditorium, abseiling and sky-hooking on the Applied Science Building, publicity stunts on Foundation Day and so on. More recently, the walls have been used purely for training purposes - a place to build up stamina and finger strength during boring week days.

Initially, it started on places such as the main walkway, the Newton Building and the Matthews Cafeteria Wall. However, last year Grant Hyland discovered a little gem during a devious clothes-line excursion behind Goldstein College. This 15 to 20 foot high brick wall, covered with irregular bumps of all shapes, stretch-s to the horizons of possibility. The traverse was the obvious plum to go, followed by variations and vertical routes up finger cracks and jugs. Lately, some extreme problems have been added that take the blank strips between the useable holds, eg. 'Relics of the Future', 'Stranded Harmony', 'Satin Passage', 'Withdrawn and Eyesore', 'Morning Savagery' and 'Flickering Indices'. It may seem unusual naming such microscopic miscarriage but somehow it conveys a sense of tidiness and order. The boulderer is free to be as contrived as the names allow.

Nearby, other hybrids of the 'College Wall' can be found, most notably the extremely thin traverse, 'Alien Tourist Tracks'. This route awaits completion as the climbing is at least grade 25! On the sandstone slabs facing the College Wall some low angle 'no-hands' problems exist. These all involve balancy moves and stemming.

The Matthews Cafeteria Wall, described earlier, is 6 feet high and composed of smooth sandstone blocks. A difficult low level traverse crosses this wall. Many large finger-holds have been eliminated which only adds to the confusion. The best way to climb here is to be squat and avoid hooking your chin onto the parking lot! Also be careful of the flocks of sheep that pass by and graze across the road. This can be very distracting sometimes. It certainly seems that out of all the people on campus, the 'greymen' ask the most intelligent questions! One up for the 'greymen'!

Above the Chemistry Lawn is a similar wall which hosts the hardest aid climb at the Uni. 'The John Croker Memorial Stoveleg Pitch' is a traverse across a 5 foot high wall involving a series of intricate small nut placements in sandy cracks. Originally freed, the climbing is at least M4 - desperate moves, hundreds of millimetres above the lawn! Other novelties are found amongst the figtrees near the 'College Wall'. The trunks of these huge trees have all sorts of flared cracks, pinch-grips, incuts, etc. - very reminiscent of Arapiles. Amazing but true, there is a 100 foot grade 12 that reaches the upper twigs of a tree.

Crack climbing is rarely practised although some spearing lines exist. The Applied Science Building has a set of shallow 'off-widths' that typify the style of strenuous climbing that is needed. The Heffron and Newton Buildings are as yet unclimbed. The latter has a 60 foot offhand crack that can only be tackled by squashing the base of your thumb and your toes between the sharp edges and shuffling upwards like a leech up a giant's leg. It has been the scene of many cement shattering falls. Maybe when we get a rack of No. 2 'Friends' together, the 'Newton Crack' can be led in safety.

I think that sums up most of the practice climbing that is possible at the Uni. Although it often lacks technicality, it is a reasonable substitute to Queens Park, Lindfield or the seacliffs, especially if one has a full timetable. Any interested space freaks are welcome to join us every Wednesday lunchtime between 12 & 2pm. Most likely we'll be bumblng across 'Alien Tourist Tracks' or flying off the 'College Wall'.

#### DAY WALK - BOUDDI NATIONAL PARK - BOX HEAD - TALLOW BEACH

This was an easy Sunday day-walk. Beautiful weather and relatively unspoilt area close to Sydney. Boxhead is on the northern border of Broken Bay, so the views from Boxhead encompass the ocean, Broken Bay, Lion Island, Woy Woy, Saratoga, Palm Beach and Pittwater as well as the yachts and fishing boats.

For such an accessible area there were very few people. The Beach is ½ km from the road and Box Head is 2 km from the road. We walked to Box Head and spent considerable time absorbing the view. As we were leaving, Bruce & Andy raced up. They had mistaken the Narrara Creek bridge for the Railway Bridge and so missed the meeting point. After some excellent advice from the tourist information centre they managed to catch up.

The party now descended to the rock platform and walked round to Tallow Beach viewing rocks, crabs, crabs, crabs, CRABS, crabs, seaweed, Curgeboy, sand, C S along the way.

R B  
A A  
B R  
S C

The rumour that I have a fixation about CRABS is not true!

During lunch on Tallow Beach, the silence was broken only by ? trail bikes which were unregistered (ie. unidentifiable). The water was warm for April and several of the party then had a surf. Others investigated rock platforms or beach sand.

After much resting we walked back ou. This area is to be recommended for a easy day walk or several if you're in the area.

BRUCE SPRY  
ANDREW BLAKERS  
& 11 OTHER WALKERS OF  
VARYING EXPERIENCE - 0.

that night as I had forgotten my sleeping bag. I shared a tent with Mark and had almost pushed him out by morning. In my sleep I had kept rolling closer to Mark who kept rolling away etc., so by morning he was pushed right across to one side of the tent.

On the Sunday we decided to climb Coolamon Gorge - it looks a bit like Bungonia Gorge but is only about 200 ft high. We picked a nice easy route and Malcolm started to lead. However, we soon had to abandon the line as the rock was really rotten and chose another line with slightly better rock. Despite having to be very careful about handholds (Mark pulled away rather a large part of the cliff with him once), it was really very enjoyable. What is there to compare to sitting on a ledge in the sun and looking at the scenery below and the rock face across from you.

Elaine Murphy.

Note: You must have a permit to go caving in the National Park.

### CAVING & CLIMBING AT COOLAMON

After deciding that I was going to work hard in the week off in May, it took Mark Foster two seconds to convince me to go climbing and caving for 4 days (15th-18th May). Mark and Malcolm Handel were going to climb at Booroomba for two days and then we were going to go down to Coolamon - northern part of the Snowy Mountains - to do some caving with SUSS (Sydney University Speleological Society).

We left for Canberra on Thursday morning and didn't arrive at Booroomba until fairly late afternoon. Too late to do any climbing but enough time to look around at the cliffs and to go up the practice slab - which was great fun for me as I have never climbed on granite before.

Friday for me was spent in obligation with my family while Mark and Malcolm went climbing. They climbed Big Boris and met some of the local climbers. They were then taken 'buildering' at Canberra University and arranged to meet that night to look at some slides. We saw some incredible slides of climbs up Integral crack, Equilibrium and counterbalance - slab climbing on granite looks rather suicidal.

We left early Saturday to get to Coolamon's. I had never been caving before so I was rather excited at the prospect. We did three caves, Coolamon's, Murray's and Barber's. Coolamon's was good in that you had to grovel in the dark, trying to avoid mud and wombats dung. A good introduction to caving. Murray's was much more of a tourist cave, but it had an alluring finish - a dead-end with a pool of water with an underwater passage leading to more caves. Barber's cave was fun, it is made up of passages going on different levels, so we didn't just go straight through, but did some exploring.

I had a very educational night around the campfire with all the SUSS members singing and reciting poetry and drinking 'Tia M'Chunda' (homemade Tia Maria). There seems to be some fundamental difference between cavers and bushwalkers. It was a very cold night and by nine you had to break the ice around the water bottle lid before you could get a drink. I froze

## BARRINGTON TOPS

This walk was tackled more or less the same way as described by Adrian Spragg in an earlier Mobsac (plenty of water though).

We left one car at Upper Chichester, then started from the Guest House, following the walking track along the river, then headed up until we joined the 4WD track just below Lagoon Dirch. Being winter, the gates here were locked, closing the Park to all traffic - probably the best time to see the area. Up to Carey's Peak for the first night and the view of the whole of the Hunter Valley, Muswellbrook to Newcastle and the coast, was worth the 3,800' odd climb. I had borrowed the club's Kiandra bag, apparently rated at +5°C - not quite enough.

The following day we walked to Mt Barrington (5200') then left the track to find a huge open grass plain, with alpine streams, mobs of kangaroos and brumbies. We followed the Barrington River down to Big Hole, then walked up to and along the Gloucester Tops trail till about 8.00pm.

Next morning we walked till the trail takes a radical detour north then scrub bashed S.E., finding open swamps. Following the Gloucester River till it crossed the Gloucester Tops Road, we then took this road south, uphill again, into the water-board catchment area to Mt. Nelson, then dropping sharply down to where we left the first car.

When we set out, there was only a wartime 1:63,000 map. Recently, the C.M.A. put out the 1:25,000 Barrington Tops map. The neighbouring Gloucester Tops map is still to come.

Incredible variation in vegetation on the way to and on top of the plateau - rainforest, antaric beech, snow gums, spagnum moss, open grassland, swamp, etc. - well worth a visit.

I went back five days later to make a day trip to Carey's Peak and back, and found 1-2" of snow, still falling lightly, but was still able to see the coast. The rest of the valley was in sunshine.

JAMES JOHNSON

## SKI TOURING IN VICTORIA

For Sydney people, skiing in Victoria sounds a bit far to go, when perhaps the best skiing in Australia can be found a lot closer. From Albury, which is a 6½ to 7 hour car trip or 10 hour train trip, you are within striking distance of Falls Creek and the Bogong High Plains, Mt. Hotham or Mt. Buffalo. All are about 2 hours by road from Albury.

It helps if you have a sister in Albury, but even if you don't, weekend trips to the Victorian Snowfields are not impossible. A tent is also helpful, but there are big camping prohibited areas, so you have to be careful.

The Bogong High Plains are best got at from Falls Creek which involves a drive through the Kiewa Valley to Mt. Beauty and then the climb up to Falls Creek. Along the road you get some impressive views of Mt. Bogong and the plains, while the valley itself is quite beautiful. Bogong is Victoria's highest mountain, and looks it.

The High Plains are quite extensive, so you can make many tours on them. There is a pole line that goes to Mt. Hotham and other marked routes. The classic route is from Mt. Hotham to Mt. Bogong; the ascent of Bogong being the crux. Falls Creek is quite good for beginners as well. There are some good trails and a good bowl area for learning. The only trouble with Falls Creek is that it is run by the Electricity Commission and it costs \$5 to get your car in for a day. But you can leave your car at Hovman's Gap, and ski from there.

Mt. Buffalo is run by the National Parks and Wildlife and only costs \$1 to get in. The skiing here is not as extensive but is another area of brilliant scenery and incredible atmosphere. Another good thing about Buffalo is that it is less crowded than Falls Creek or Hotham so you don't have to sit in queues. You don't get above the treeline at Buffalo which doesn't detract too much from the skiing as snowguns, wombats and streams aren't too bad to ski amongst.

I haven't been in any of the huts in Victoria but I've heard they're not too bad, being fairly well looked after and some being quite new. They're numerous so you can get shelter if your gear gets wet or tent blows away.

The best maps of the area are put out by Algonia guides (the best National Mapping have to offer is 1:100,000), and their book 'Ski Touring in Australia' has got some good maps, as well as some good ones of other areas, including Kosciusko. The book also is good reading with an account of a trip from Hotham to Bobong where Cleve Cole died after being trapped on Mt. Bogong.

TONY POPLER

11th August, 1980

TRIPS LIST

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

AUGUST

- 17th (Sunday) - Easy beginners day trip to Blue Gum Forest via Evans Lookout and return via Govetts Leap. Scenic views, rainforest and lyrebirds if we are lucky. GEORGE GEORGEVITS  
Ph: 663 1366
- 16th (Saturday) Medium walk in Royal National Park JUDY JOHNSON  
Ph: 95 1428
- 15-18 - Medium long ski tour PETER & ROBYN TUFT  
Ph: 698 7640
- 23-24 - Rogaining training
- 26-28 - Rogaining at New England University
- 30-31 - Bushwalk, easy - medium (suitable for beginners) MIKE DREW  
Ph: 663 2940

SEPTEMBER

- \* \* \* \* \*
- 6-8 - Ice Climbing, Blue Lake BRUCE SPRY  
524 5560
- 6-7 - Bushwalk DAVID BACKHOUSE  
Ph: 84 7481
- 9 - Meeting, floor 3, stage III, Member's lounge 6.30pm.
- 27-28 - Wentworth Falls - Katoomba via Mt. Solitary (Waratah season) - Medium/camera ROB JUNG  
Ph: 808 1692

OCTOBER

- \* \* \* \* \*
- 4-6 (long weekend) - Axeheads - Broken Rock (Kanangra) - hard ROB JUNG  
Ph: 808 1692
- 4-6 - Medium and long day ski trips, probably camp in main range, depending on snow conditions ANDY BLAKERS  
Ph: 399 5610
- 14 - Meeting, Floor 3, Stage III, Members lounge, 6.30pm.

\* \* \* \* \*

*ROB JUNG (808 1692) is looking for partners for 3 or 4 day ski trips in August & September. Also, he plans a day trip Dharung, the day is negotiable.*

*ANDY BLAKERS is looking for partners for several hard ski and bushwalking trips, negotiable.*

*NICK BENDELI skis most weekends, and will also be skiing from 23 August to 7 September. His number is 649 2178 (ring before 9pm).*

*CHECK the Sports Association Noticeboard (Hut E15c) for details of extra trips on this list and for extra walks lists.*

*MIKE DREW will produce a special Mobsac on food for September.*

15th August 1980

CLUB CONTACTS

MIKE DREW (President) 662 2940

JUDY JOHNSON (Secretary) 95 1428

ANDY BLAKERS (Walks Secretary) 399 5610

S & R Caves 476 6530

Tufts 666 8943 x 248(w) or 662 2358(w)

Bruce Spry 524 5560(h)

THE GEAR CUSTODIAN - Peter Rigg 663 4488

ANDY BLAKERS

30-31 September - Bushwalk, easy - medium (suitable for beginners) 663 2940  
30-31 September - Bushwalk, easy - medium (suitable for beginners) 663 2940  
30-31 September - Bushwalk, easy - medium (suitable for beginners) 663 2940

1-2 October - For Climbing, Blue Lake 663 2940  
3-4 October - Bushwalk 663 2940  
5-6 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm

7-8 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
9-10 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
11-12 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm

13-14 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
15-16 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
17-18 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm

19-20 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
21-22 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
23-24 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm

25-26 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
27-28 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
29-30 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm

31 October - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
1 November - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm  
2 November - Meeting, floor 3, State III, Members lounge, 6.30pm