

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND BUSHWALKING CLUB – Hey Bob Volume 2, 1960

The University of Queensland Bushwalking Club

Volume 2

August 1960

EDITORIAL

Every few years the club is spurred as eager fresher and fresherettes become keen energetic walkers. They get up before dawn to see the sunrise, they explore unknown areas, they go on extended trips in vacations. But, somehow within a few years their enthusiasm is waned and the older members are seldom seen on club trips.

Although the main walking force of the club is the younger members the reins are held by the 3rd and 4th years. There have been years when practically the whole committee were people who had ceased to go on club trips. To the newer members they were just the President or the Secretary, but not people they came to know personally. We do not want this type of committee. We want a bold committee one with people who will rush off to Barney and pull the chimney off the hut, will enthuse new members, and will walk with or even out walk the rest of the club.

The older members are more experienced and better acquainted with southern Queensland than anyone else. They have lost and found themselves more often than anyone else. They have spent more uncomfortable nights camped in the middle of ridges at the base of cliffs wondering if they will find a way round, and yet reaching the top next morning. The older members are needed to curb richless ideas, to encourage new members, to lead trips, and just because we hate to lose them.

The loss of interest of old members cannot be argued to be due to loss of youthful enthusiasm. The Brisbane Bushwalkers have many older members and married couples. The Tasmanian Clubs have many members past the prime of life. Bushwalking is not just a form of strenuous exercise; it is far more than this. It is a chance to enjoy the beauty and peace of our undisturbed bush, to sit around a camp fire and enjoy quiet companionship, or to lie in a warm sleeping bag and watch the clouds sweep past the stars. These pleasures increase not decrease after the first initial excitement of bushwalking has passed.

Judy Bryan

The cover shows Thunder (right) and Lighting Falls at head of Black Canyon.

(Photo by courtesy M. Upham. Block by courtesy of Forestry Dept.)

Scenes I have missed and Mists I have seen.

Arthur Rosser.

When I was just a young chap, and thought that fogs were those things which kept dying in the water tank and making the water taste funny, my mother pointed to the river flats one morning and said: “Son, that’s mist!”. “Ooh, Mummy!” I cried, excited, for I was a bright lad and interested in all things, “can I have another slice of Bread?”.

Twelve years later, I lay beside the creek on Mt. Barney, watching the soft glow of moonlight on the shoulder of East Peak as the moon rose behind it. Panic gripped me as swirling greyish clouds leapt into the moonlight, and my mother’s parting words rang in my ears: “Beware of bushfires, son!”.

Nowadays, should the smoke and flames come leaping at me, I would simply get out my bread and make toast, but my inclination at that time was to fling myself shrieking into the nearest pool of water. Waking my companions with a shout, I pointed a trembling finger at the clouds curling round the peak. “Pretty”, mumbled Bartholomai, and went back to sleep. “Food?” asked Wal hopefully. Wal only really lived 3 times a day. “Fire!” I yelled. There was a pause. “Mist.”, suggested Bird. Another pause.

“Mist?”

“Mist!” he said, firmly. “Oh”, I muttered. “Pretty”, I added brightly. A long relationship between mist and me had just begun.

When I joined the club as a Fresher, I became frantic to finish the Barney hut. At the hut in the May vacation, Ron Cox and I ran up East Peak to see the sun set. The sun descended on schedule, closely followed by a thick mist; we started down to the hut. To our horror, we found that, under cover of the mist, some thieving hound had pinched it. Swiftly zig-zagging back and forth all over the mountain, we eventually caught up with the culprit, but when we leapt shouting from the mist he dropped the hut and disappeared. The hut stands at that very spot to this day.

My first misty throughwalk was along Barney Spur under the leadership of Johnno Comino. To cut our way through the rainforest, we each took the lead for half an hour at a time, a system deliberately planned by Garth Lahey so that it would be my turn to lead when we came to the cutting grass covered bluff half-way along the spur. Since I was wearing shorts, and since Lahey feigned sickness whenever it was his turn to lead, I swore I would wreak an awful revenge. I charged off through the rainforest on my bleeding legs, whirling the machete above my head.

“If they can’t keep up with me,” I snarled, “let them find their own damn track!”. Over the misty top of the bluff I galloped, and down the other side, slipping and tripping over vines and rocks. When my half hour was up, I collapsed on a log and glanced back to see if the first of the others was in sight yet. Keith Scott and Cameron McPhee were standing quietly behind me. Johnno was saying a few words about radio valves to Garth, and Steph was lighting a cigarette. They all seemed rather impatient at the hold up. When the sun came out a few minutes later, to gleam on the blood running down my legs, we were facing towards Ballow, and nearly down in Barney Creek. We were supposed to be on our way to West Peak.

Confusing as it is, Queensland mist is not a patch in its Tasmanian counterpart. I saw some Tasmanian mist only last week. I was ambling out to get my morning milk when in came a short red bloke holding a large rectangular block of the stuff in a pair of pincers and hollering “HICE MAIRN”. I think he gate it to

the bloke in the next flat, but I'm not sure, because I was inside my flat and putting a chair under the doorknob in a flash. You cannot be too careful with that stuff – it's fierce. You ask Keith Scott.

Keith and I went through the Cradle Mountain Reserve with Peter Spradbrough and a bloke called George. We read in the local hut book a lot of eloquent remarks about the view from the top of Mt Ossa. "Best mountain view in Australia" they raved. "Glorious panorama of unrivalled beauty", they insisted. When we came to the Mt. Ossa turn off from the main track, George eyed us sternly.

"I came to do some bushwalking", he said firmly, "not to climb mountains", and he strode off towards the next hut. We took a while getting to the top, and the mist got sick of waiting and came down to meet us. When we finally stood triumphant on the summit of mighty Mt. Ossa we might just as well have been at home in bed with a sheet over our heads. Enjoying itself immensely, the mist then tried to kill us by condensing on our spectacles and distorting our vision so that we stepped confidently onto rocks and ledges which were somewhere else at the time. But we survived the trip down, and instead of coming home to the sunshine, we went to Federation Peak.

On the Picton route to Federation there is a long, high, exposed ridge with no vegetation to speak of, and a surface which offers the same firm footing as fresh spongecake. We were sneaking across, this trying not to attract attention because the mist, infuriated by our safe descent from Ossa, was hot on our trail, when a boisterous young gale from the Antarctic discovered us and passed the word around with a howl of joy. Every wind in southern Tasmania came rushing in to try and blast us off that ridge; they failed only because we had cunningly loaded our packs to weigh 60 lbs. in anticipation of just such an emergency. The mist, which was searching for us behind nearby Mt. Chapman, heard the commotion and came streaking for us, bringing some rain along with it. By lunchtime we were freezing and wet and could see only a few feet as we huddled behind a rock and listened to the wind roaring in fury, because we wouldn't come out and play. We began to think that perhaps we should have brought our raincoats.

We had to get down to the Craycroft Valley, or at least down to some trees to tie our tent down for the night. An hour after lunch we came to the top of what appeared to be a ridge disappearing into the mist.

"You beaut", I yelled back to Keith. "This is it! We'll be at the Craycroft in an hour". A look of joy crept over his blue, dripping, quivering face.

"Mate, you're a genius!" he said.

Quietly I agreed and we started down. Two days later we staggered out onto the Button grass at the Craycroft; our clothes were wet, our matches were wet, and so were our sleeping bags. I had broken one lens of my spectacles, and Keith was so cold his face disappeared if he stood against a patch of blue sky. We had a new respect for Tasmanian undergrowth.

The Banksia on Hinchinbrook Island is as bad as Tasmanian scrub, but Hinchinbrook mist is warm, dry and comfortable. Often the sunshine and mist and the mountains combined to offer Noela Hoerlein spectacular subjects for her camera, which was frustrating for us all because Noela was never ready. Like Comino, she used to throw her pack down cliffs and then remember the camera; but she lacked Cominos wild abandon when a good scene came up. He could reach his pack in one flaring dive and have food and equipment scattered all over the mountain and his camera out and his filters and whatnots on before he had finished screaming "The sun's out on Glennie's chair!!". But Noela was hopeless. By the time we had persuaded her to take a picture, and she had found her pack, and unwrapped her camera, and worked

out how to use it, and set it so that she had to take a picture, the sun had always gone out and the mist come down and Noela would accuse us of tricking her. In part, she blamed her camera, and got very cross with it, and once, in a rage, held it underwater while she crossed a stream one hundred yards wide. By the time we reached Mt. Diamantina, her camera was suffering from a nervous breakdown, and refused to work at all.

Even better than the scenes in the Hinchinbrook mist are those wonderful Barney mornings when the tops of Lindesay and Maroon and the lesser mountains rise from an undulating sea of cloud, or when mist banks up on the northern side of the mountain, to suddenly spill over the East-North saddle and sweep round the mountainside more unusual still, was the occasion when a thin mist reduced the sun's intensity just enough for us to see sunspots on its surface.

However, if mist does have advantages as far as scenery is concerned, these are its only advantages, as the Fresher bushwalker soon realizes when he first meets it. He is strolling carelessly along a mountain trail when he meets a quantity of grey mist going in the opposite direction. He stops in surprise.

"Hullo!" he says politely. There is no reply.

"Are you a Brisbane Bushwalker?" he asks, interested. Again, there is no reply.

Puzzled, he prods it with a forefinger. He puts his head into it experimentally, and notes in surprise that he cannot see out the other side. A happy thought occurs to him. He tries eating it. Disappointed when this fails, he nevertheless goes on to discover that it refuses to burn. Then he observes that if he stands in it long enough he gets wet. With a cry of delight, he realizes its true nature. But drinking it, even through a straw, proves frustrating, and swimming in it is impossible. Reluctantly he decides that it is a dead loss.

I agree with him completely. True the Hinchinbrook mist did give us some relief from the heat, but this was simply a mistake, and had it realized what it was doing, it would have stopped immediately. So when the clouds come down and the bushes begin to drip, Peter Reinmann takes the words right of my mouth when he looks up dolefully and mutters, "You rotten cow!".

Swan Ck – Cunningham’s Gap.

Peter Reinmann.

3 day through walk (Anzac Weekend 1960.)

Friday night. Had some scrapes with the local Warwick bodgies who seemed to lath the lose our acquaintance. Harassing tactics along the back roads of Yangan ensued. It was soon discovered that not only had we lost them, but ourselves. The stars were consulted but they were all foreign. So we drove on. About an hour alter we decided to camp.

Saturday. We accosted a bloke in a utility. He said that we were at 492-094 or words to that effect. This was cheering, as it meant that we were there.

Keith Scott and landrover drove us almost to the top of Mt. Huntley – Namely to the Sentenial Pt. – Huntley Saddle, along a road leading steeply up a spur from Swan Creek which may evidently did not think worth mentioning. We then extricated various arms, legs, bodies and packs from aforesaid vehicle and decided that the projected throughwalk (labelled “hard”) had better start.

Mt. Huntley, at the top was lunch time. Like all sensible beings, we then dozed off in the sun for an hour or so. For some geological reason, Mt. Huntley, like others in the neighborhood, is surrounded by cliffs. These seemed ungetable-downable so a convenient rope situated in a pack was found. A search was then made for the most awkward possible place to execute the rappel. Two grass trees turned up. Both were used in case one broke. They were situated on the very brink, necessitating a wonderfully awkward start. In addition, one had to climb down in between the two trees about which the rope was hooked athwart. This meant that each person had to sort out a great tangle of rope. In the process, Anne Johnman did a spectacular somersault in mid-air and was pulled up by the table ¼ of the way down. Unperturbed, she continued the descent upside down, exclaiming that the new found method completely eliminated burns.

We strolled northwards and camped on the second lump north of Huntley.

Sunday. It took several hours to wake up and to start going again. On Double top, we caught sight of a place where we though water ought to be. This was deemed necessary by a state of thirst. It was one of those peculiar creeks that were dry in some places and wet in others. It was lunch time again, and it saw people being most generous offering around “goodies” prior to the arduous climb up Spicers, not realizing that this was merely a weight transference from exterior to interior, the net gain being nil. Thus bloated we struggled up to the top. It was through clean rainforest up a spur. The view from the top is good.

Cliffs were again met on the descent of Spicers (started from about 100 feet west of the summit). The leader had a wonderful tree rappel all arranged over about the only overhang on the whole northern face, but the rotten stinkers decided to walk down a few yards to the right leaving him muttering incoherent things at the rear of the party. Judy Bryan chucked her pack down a cliff and asked Noela Hoerlein to catch it as it flew by. However, a slight error of judgement was committed, and the pack plunged spectacularly down the mountainside, with Judy hurling abuse after it. At this stage we decided to follow along a direct line from Mt. Spicer to Mt. Mitchell.

The pack had also followed this line, so this was a good thing. After retrieving it, and descending a little more we camped near water on a “mud flow” (ref. K. Warner). We did not think water would obligingly appear anywhere in Spicer’s Gap due to the prolonged drought, but there was oodles of it here and there.

Half the night we were alarmed at hearing “heybobs” from great distances varying places. We thought it might have been our Warwick friends coming to get us, but later discovered it was only Rosser roaming.

Monday. Another late (10 am) start was partaken of. After dragging a pool with Ken Warner’s singlet catching fish and tadpoles (we put them back), Rosser intercepted us and lead us to Keith Scott and landrover on the Spicer’s Gap road. This was a good excuse for having lunch. We conveniently left our packs in the back of the landrover with new unleashed power, surged up Mitchell up a long open forested ridge leading on to the main south western ridge going up the West Peak. This was very fast except for the cliffs near the top (avoided by walking around to the east) and rainforest along the top portion. Walked to east peak and ran down the track to the Gap, passing several startled tourists en-route.

Old people are fond of giving good advice; it consoles them for no longer being able to set the bad example.

INTO A SUNLESS LAND

Duncan McPhee

Beneath the surface of the earth lies a new and fascinating realm of exploration. For beneath the surface of the Karst landscape water and chemicals have sculptured in weird statues, chasms, caverns, spires and tunnels all hidden by an awful darkness never experienced on the natural surface of the earth. Here, in the blackness, the ceaseless corroding and eroding of limestone rock go on accompanied by a symphony of water sounds twisted and distorted by the frightening acoustical properties of caves. Hidden from the curiosity of man for countless ages, these strange sights cave formations – may reveal these mysteries to a select few. Select, because the study of caves – speleology – demands a certain experience before deep enjoyment may be gained. The most limiting selective factor is the difficulty of a normal civilized man to adapt himself to a simple natural environment and live comfortably there by means of own initiative and attitude of mind.

Bushwalking (immediately) groups suitable people together, and taches experience in and harmony with nature. Speleology is a natural extension of bushwalking, just as rock climbing and mountaineering are extensions, but caves tend to sharpen all the sense and kindle to a blaze the lust for genuine exploration. Caving embraces many forms of adventure, from boating in roaring underground rivers to complicated ascents and descents of difficult Chasms and the consequent care and invention of mechanical equipment.

The character of limestone formations varies considerably throughout Australia, a country rich in rare formations, although not rich in extensive limestone areas. Since water is a sculpturing force and tool, it is easily seen why areas of high rainfall have more wonderous caves from the strictly scenic point of view than those in drier climates. The cave areas of northern Australia are in arid regions and are impressive in the grandness of deep chasms and unadorned walls and spires. The caves are harsh and dry, with very few living formations. They have experienced savage scouring in the “wet” and seem to have been very much worn by mechanical corrasion, rather than the slow wearing (of solution) of the rock by acidic water. So do the caves of the East Coast vary with rainfall, and age of limestone, until that tiny, lovely wet island, Tasmania, cave scenery attains a pinnacle of splendour and adventure.

Between the Walls of Jerusalem, on the Northern edge of the central Reserve, and Bass Strait, and in the vicinity of the Messey River is an area of Karst topography which has contorted itself into incredible shapes on the surface, as though it could not contain the secret of the beauty underground. Streams and rivers no longer seem to follow the natural order of flowing along river valleys to the sea in an easily understood gradient. In wild confusion, streams in this area cross, divide underground cut chasms in mountains instead of going the easy way round, rivers disappear into black holes in the ground with a thunderous (never ceasing) roar, while four yards away a different stream, much smaller, emerges almost in line with the disappearing river. Aptly named, sink holes cover the idyllic landscape of soft green pastures backed by craggy, deep blue mountains with the every present tangle of forest in the middle distance.

In the tangled mossy rainforest at the foot of Westmorland Falls on the lower slopes of the Western Tiers the whole Westmorland stream was supposed to be swallowed by a gigantic black hole.

When one had descended into this hole it was reported that only twenty five yards could be gained before the stream vanished through an (impossible and) impenetrable wall of rock. Rady, and determined not o be disappointed if this report was indeed true, Tom Brown, Des Lyons and I walked swiftly and quietly

through the green gloom of the forest to the roaring, smoking maw of the chasm. At first, it was a frightening spectacle to see such force swallowed into quiet blackness, but the excitement of exploration subdued fear and drew us, fascinated, to the bottom of the hole. Here we lit our friendly kerosene searchlight and acetylene lamps and advanced boldly to the stream swallet. To our great delight the powerful lights revealed a low arch-way above the stream. We got rather wet crawling through the freezing constriction and then over some huge mossy boulders. As we emerged a sense of opening space made itself felt and we looked up. In this vast underground vault a pale green light from two hidden roof lights illuminated indirectly a portion of the cave, to give an impression of its stupendous size. Across the roof millions of glowworms simulated the night sky. A scene never to be forgotten. We followed the underground stream, seeing occasionally minute traces of the 15 lbs of fluoresceine dye placed in the chasm the previous day. Sometimes the stream disappeared into the porous floor of the passage and we would be reduced from erect walking, to stooping, to crawling and then into a flattener; always, however, it went, and we would suddenly return to the cold black stream roaring and gurgling through the well worn passages. On and on went the underground passage, always with that corner that one had to look around for fresh fantasy, but time had really beaten us and we had to return. We learned later we could have been exploring that passage for quite a time – the green dye took five days to emerge into the light of day after flowing swiftly underground. What sensuous delight to return from the cold black mystery of the underground, through the gloomy forest, to the calm serenity of the sweeping lush pastures in the late afternoon – the atmosphere golden and restful from the light of the setting sun.

Kubla Khan and Croesus were caves to take the breath away, so delicate and rare were the formations, and so dangerous and exciting was the journey to get there. Caves of such importance are always near underground streams and these streams are usually deep, narrow and difficult to navigate – especially waterfalls and constrictions – this is where the rubber boating sport comes in. But this is only a minute facet – the scope of experience interest and exploration limitless; so for high adventure, go deep underground.

This article should be read before P. Conaghan’s article on “The Ascent of East Crookneck”.

ARTIFICIAL CLIMBING

Ron Cox

In Artificial climbing as in any other difficult rock climbing, the climbers move only one at a time. While one man climbs, the other remains securely anchored to the rock at a stance and belays him on the rope which joins them – that is pays out or takes in the rope and remains ready to attempt to hold the climber should he fall.

The leader progresses by orthodox or free climbing on available foot and hand holds until the rock becomes either impossible or prohibitively dangerous. He then resorts to the techniques of Artificial climbing.

Providing there is a crack in the rock he hammers a steel Piton. Through the hole in the head of the Piton, he clips a metal snap link (Karabiner). This serves as a point of support on the rock. To the snap link he clips two etriers, a rope stirrups with a small wooden steps, and these provide him with artificial footholds.

Particularly on overhanging rock, it is impossible to stand in etriers long holding onto the rock without support. So, in artificial climbing, active use is made of the rope between climbers, which normally is only used as a safety line. Two climbing ropes are worn, one red, one white. Immediately after a piton has been inserted, the leader clips one of the ropes tied to his waist to the piton with a snap link. He then calls for tension on white and second pulls hard on the white rope, holding the leader by his waist to a snap link. The leader, standing in etriers, then has his hands free to hammer in the next piton higher up. Having placed it he attaches the other, red rope, and etriers to it by a snap link, calls for slack on the white, tension on red and steps up into the new etriers. The second slackens the white rope holding him to the lower piton and pulls on the red rope to hold him by the waist to the upper piton. The process is repeated with a piton every four or five feet until the difficult section of the rock is overcome.

The ropes are left to run through the snap links on the lower pitons as the leader works upwards. Should he fall, due, say to a piton coming out, he would only fall twice the distance to the next sound piton below him, and then be held on the rope, over it as a pulley by his second. The pitons act as running belays, safe guarding his process.

The climber is perfectly safe providing the pitons are round. A piton which is hard to hammer in and rings like a bell as it goes in, can be relied on implicitly. If it is easy to hammer or makes a dull sound it is unsafe, but it is often necessary to use it still, with care for progress. Pitons may be sound for the small loads (the climbers weight) involved in progress but unsafe for the shock loads produced should he fall.

The main difficulty is this form of climbing, apart from the exhaustion it produces for both the leader and the second, who has to maintain high tension on the ropes from a cramped stance for many hour (or days), is finding useful cracks. Often several cracks are tried before a piton can be placed.

EAST CROOKNECK

P.J. Conaghan

What really made it look so foreboding – this eastern face of Crookneck? Was it the cold gloomy shadow cast over the face – the shadow that hid all the intricate detail yet gave grace to its smooth vertical line – or perhaps it was the knowledge that it had never been climbed? Maybe all these things contributed to our feeling of silent awe as we stood below the mountain ready for our first attempt.

No one, as far as we know, has ever seriously attempted the climb, although Comino and Waring had repelled down the cliff years ago, and also climbed up fifteen feet to the first impasse. That was all we knew of attempts on the face.

The obvious line, the only line of weakness, is a deep crack, varying in width from 6 feet to a few inches, running the full height of the wall. This, we hoped, would provide a route through the lines of overhangs which blocked the face.

Five of us had come to climb on the mountain but only two of us would be on the East Face. Ron Cox, by far our most experienced climber, would lead on it. Over the past weeks, he had become quite proficient at Artificial climbing on the practice cliffs at Kangaroo Point. I was to act as his second for the day.

The ropes were soon organized and Ron started diagonally up a staircase of broken off columns, the steps four feet high. The first Artificial Climbing – full double rope and etrier technique on three shaky pitons – took him over the first overhang to a large foothold 30 feet up the face. He tried to go on vertically without success. A direct horizontal traverse of some 10 feet would bring him into the start of the Main East Face Crack – the line of weakness – but it would necessarily entail crossing a blank wall of almost holdless columns – this was decidedly unpromising. He searched for a place to insert a reliable piton but there were no cracks. The pitons below, although they'd taken his weight in the progress upwards, were very insecure and could not be trusted to hold him if he came off attempting the traverse.

Some hours later Ron was still on his large foothold. The horizontal traverse was the only way ahead, but after much more time spent inspecting it, he still could not bring himself to attempt it.

“Now if it were at Kangaroo Point and I had a top rope ----”. But there was no top rope so he came down and we started back to camp. We were almost numb with cold, from the biting wind, it has been cold, uninviting work.

Next day saw a late start and no further progress on the climb, the same traverse stopped him again. We returned to Brisbane, having climbed only 30 feet on the face for a weekend's work.

It was Jim Lydon who had the doubtful honour of belaying Ron up the previously pegged section and over the troublesome traverse in one very delicate attempt. An extremely high finger hold had made this possible. Once across Ron inserted a piton, moved round into the Main Crack and fastened a sling and a snap link to a chockstone giving himself two good running belays.

Out of the crack on the face again, he pitoned his way up to the first stance, an alcove in the chimney on top of a big chockstone, 50 feet above the ground. That was a good day's work – Jim started up, but it was soon too late to continue.

On the next attempt made by the same team, both of them got to the first stance and Ron made another 30 feet, - free climbing, then a couple of wooden wedges in a wide crack, then a good solid piton to go home off, for it was nearly dark. Oh how quickly these winter days go! But progress was being made at last.

Ron's opportunities to visit the Mountain usually found him searching for the much needed second. Those with transport, no matter how obsolete or unsuited it was for the project in hand, were his most favoured victims.

I wondered as the motor cycle shuddered to a stop, oozing oil from the joints and piled high with packs and us, just how many more times she was capable of doing this strenuous trip. Up the foothills and up the first pitch. Lunch in the first stance was certainly a welcome respite from climbing. The first pitch was much more strenuous than I had expected.

It was a good stance, sheltered as it was by a big overhang from falling rocks, but there was no room for the second to set, and he must stand on the chockstone for 5 or 6 hours. Anchor ropes from behind and below certainly restrict one's movements.

Ron had left the stance and was now working up above. By leaning hard on the anchors and looking up and out over the overhangs, I could just see his heels now and then as he progressed on the rock. Indeed it was relatively slow progress, but he was soon lost to sight. Just across the Main Crack and onto the left wall – up the buttress here, then back across the crack to the right wall, up, then back across to the left – so the route would meander up the general line of the Main Crack. It was Artificial Climbing here, pitons all the way. Footholds were decidedly lacking, the walls were smooth and defiant, broken only by the overhangs.

Only when he thought it was too dark to work, would Cox think of rappelling back to the stance. Then by torchlight we roped down to the ground and slid down the foothills, very tired, but pleased with the days effort. The 100 foot mark had been reached.

With Jim Lyndon again, Ron pegged another fifteen odd vertical feet on the next attempt. The drawback now was it took the best part of the day to regain the point reached on the previous attempt.

Several weeks later saw Graham Hardy playing out 100 feet of rope from the first stance to take Ron onto a large ledge – the second stance.

A large overhang had proved exhausting work. There was one slip, held from below by Graham without even noticing it, so much friction was there from the ropes running through snap links on the pitons, before he was over it again. After this it was easy work to the ledge.

Graham sent up a torch, for it was dark again. Two good pitons in the wall and Ron was on his way off.

What was now left to climb? Eighty feet – straight up the Main Crack and without any apparent major difficulties. The 18th of September saw three of us at the face. Ron had interested John Comino in the climb, sufficiently to bring him out of retirement from climbing. As was mentioned earlier, John had reconnoitered the route some years before, and had, on occasion, expressed trained optimism of its climbability.

It was a glorious day for the eighth attempt. The winter cold had gone from the face. The task for the day was to make the second stance and bivouac for the night, giving a full day for the last 80 feet,

Ron made the second stance, over familiar ground, in three hours, on a long rope to avoid using the first stance. Comino had not previously climbed Artificially and for a while was floundering in the technicalities. Adjectival phrases floated down consistently and at one stage, having already discarded his hat, he threatened to throw his etriers away too. He was soon, however, heard quietly praising the possibilities and efficiency of these mechanical contrivances and by late afternoon had joined Ron on the ledge.

Arriving jubilantly at the end of the last attempt, Ron had thought, it, by contrast with the rest of the face, to be very flat and very large, with plenty of room for three men. Now they measured it. It was three feet by two feet six – just capable of holding two.

Darkness caught us still roping up bivouac equipment to the stance, tent cover, sleeping bags, primus, fuel, water, food – all these were hauled up. Anchored to pitons and facing out from the wall, the boys had found room to sit down and fit a stove. Cooking, and indeed any movement, required the utmost care and deliberation.

It was very late when they were ready to try to sleep. Legs had to dangle over the 150 foot drop for there was no room on the ledge to stretch them. Anchor ropes suspending one from a piton aren't the most comfortable of night attire.

I retired to my own little protected ledge up under a large roof near the start of the climb. During the night, heavy showers of rain carried by a N-W wind fell. I wondered if the boys were getting wet on top. No! They would be alright, the wind was in their favour – the face above them would help keep out the rain.

It was dull at daylight, but later warm sunlight lit the rocks. Cramped bodies were preparing breakfast up on the ledge. They had spent an uncomfortable night, with little sleep, but were not wet. The lowering of rucksacks with the unnecessary gear took some time and it was late, about 11 am when Cox started the final pitch.

First up the Crack, then out on the wall, then back in the Crack again. A piton here and there was needed but progress was fairly quick for this face – 25 feet an hour. So the gap between Ron and the top narrowed.

About 1.30 I awoke started to find I had dozed off in my perch under the roof while sheltering from some big blocks Ron was sending down. I quickly climbed down the slope to view the proceedings. Ron was wedge in the exit chimney, about 20 feet from the top. It was easy now.

At 1.55 he crawled out of the chimney onto the crumpling slope at the top of the cliff.

It was almost dark when I joined John, who had belayed me up the face to the bivouac ledge. Hanging a torch around my neck I hurriedly resumed the climb, now belayed from above by Ron, according to Comino, time was becoming scarce. He was right, it was soon dark. Ron yelled directions from above – where to look for the next piton, or find essential holds. A flash of my torch would reveal the route for the next few feet, then followed moments of fumbling for holds as the torchlight danced fitfully, at waist level.

“Climb out of the chimney. Treat that wedge very gently, its not in far and split right through ---- “, the instructions continued from above. Then an easy chimney to the top.

A cold wind was blowing on top and the night was crystal clear. Stars sparkled brilliantly and a full moon was just rising from the ocean.

Now John started up. He must certainly welcome some action after spending over 24 hours on the ledge. Periodic bursts of light from below magnified his approach. He arrived at 8.30 pm festooned in a tangle of rope, etriers, wedges and links, collected on the way.

We scrambled up to the summit and made a short entry in the log.

“What’s the date?”

“I do not know, its Sunday isn’t it – 19th, 20th ?”

“Yes that’ll do”

“First Ascent East Crookneck – 8th attempt – 40 pitons, 7 wooden wedges – last man up at 8.30 pm”

We signed it.

We got lost going down the South Face, “Where’s the so and so track gone --?”. Adjective rich phrases accompanied the torchlight that pierced the night.

A huge gleaming mass stood out against the western sky. It was Beerwah, lit by a silver moon.

HINCHINBROOK ISLAND – January 1960

Keith Scott.

There were the Harts and the Smiths and the six of us; and we all stood around the jetty at Dungeness, leaning forward, holding our hats, and peering across the strait at the little ring of Hinchinbrook Island that was visible between the sea and the bottom of the cloud bank. And old Nobby said: “Yers’d never get over in this”. And young Nobby said: “We’d get yers over all right, but it’d be hell over there. Well see if we can get yers a shed at Lucinda.”

So we spent the next three days in a huge empty building at the Lucinda bulk sugar depot. We were awoken each morning by Nobby’s: “She should be right tomorrow”.

And on the fourth morning the sun was shining, and Nobby smiled as we rumbled round to Dungeness. And our hearts were gladdened as we looked across the blue water at our little boat, quietly riding the ripples. We slowly paddled out towards it, gazing with admiring eyes on this lovely vessel. And there on the deck was the old man, and Scrat, and Joe, and Trapper, and Muscles, and Mick, and Herbie, and Nits: all with their lines, and their rods, and their nets, and their traps; and they were all smiling as we climbed aboard and headed out to sea.

During our stay at Lucinda Point we had seen the mountains at the Southern end of Hinchinbrook Island, namely Diamantina, with its twin square boulders on the summit, and Stralock. Our view was restricted to the western slopes of these mountains, which were heavily forested, and, according to the locals, infested with forty-foot pythons. Now, as we moved round the southern tip, the eastern side of the island was slowly revealed. The country at once became more pleasant – yellow grass, or low scrub, with only patches of forest in the gullies. We were to learn later that this pleasant low scrub was the long dreaded Banksia, the word being derived from the Irish “banshee”, the shrieking, wailing fairy of Death.

We were greatly impressed by our first views of Mt. Bowen, with its many small sharp peaks, and apparently impossible ridges. Our intentions up to this moment had been to climb and descend the mountain by two ridges on which, to our knowledge, no one had ever been. The sight of these ridges however sent our senses reeling, and, with cries of “Let’s go up the way everyone else goes”, we hurriedly made new plans.

To the north of Zoe Bay is a small rocky island, Agnes Island, and, to the north of this, is a small sheltered bay, with a beach about a mile long. We anchored, climbed into the dinghy, and pushed off for the beach. We were astounded to see people moving along this beach. As we landed, we were even more astounded as the man, three children and two dogs stomped past us, acknowledging our existence only by their obvious annoyance. These, as far as we found, were the Island’s only human inhabitants – and only just human at that.

On a small creek at the southern end of the beach we made our base camp, leaving much of our food. During the afternoon we walked north along the beach, over the headland, and down to the next beach, at the southern end of which we camped. We found some coconuts along the beach, and spent the rest of the day chewing them and looking up at the silhouette of Mt. Bowen.

At the northern end of the beach is a headland formed by the end of a ridge which runs up to the Eastern side of Nina Peak. In the heat of the morning, we climbed this ridge to the top of Nina Peak. This provided

us with a pleasant view of Bowen, and, in particular, of the two ridges by which we were to ascend and descend the mountain. The former runs down from the Northern Peak to the north-east, almost joining on to Nina Peak. The latter runs from the same peak due east, forming the northern side of the valley of Warrawulla Creek, the normal route up the mountain. From our comfortable sit in the sea-breezes on Nina Peak, we decided to follow our original plans, and attempt these two ridges, partly because they had never been climbed before; but also because they were so obviously a real part of the mountain mass, with character that a creek could never have.

We descended, our route being, as for the rest of the trip where possible, via swimming holes spaced at half mile intervals. That night we camped on Warrawulla Creek about one mile from the beach. We rose early next morning to see the top of Bowen covered with cloud. We began walking about 6.00 am, and climbed up into the saddle between Nina Peak and the northern ridge of Bowen. From here we moved on to the ridge itself, and into the weather conditions that were to prevail for the next few days. There was a strong cool breeze, with light intermittent showers, and drifting clouds. We welcomed the change from the heat, and made good progress up the ridge, which had many bumps and pinnacles on it. It was a succession of peaks with slight drops over the top before the next peak. We would sit on one peak and look at the base of the next just showing below the cloud, and watch as the clouds drifted across. Slowly bit by bit, the ridge would be revealed, towering up and up, and finally ending in a black wall of rock.

However, there was always a way, and groping about in the mist, we eventually found ourselves on the top of a peak, high up on the ridge, which we remembered seeing from the beach. From this, through breaks in the clouds, we could see parts of Mt. Bowen, and got some idea of where North Peak was. We had planned to camp in the saddle between the North and West peaks, so we moved on up the ridge. We continually came to cliffs, and after several hours, and a good deal of trouble, we reached the saddle just below a great wall of rock on the western side of North Peak. Here, with a bit of clearing, and a water party, we had a comfortable camp.

The following day we walked out to the Western Peak. This is connected by a fairly low saddle to the Northern Peak. This peak provides an interesting view of the Western side of Bowen; being at some distance from the main mountain mass. The rest of the day was spent walking around to the saddle between North Peak and the main peak of Bowen. At this campsite in the scrub at the base of North Peak on its Southern side, we spent the next 3 days.

On the first of these days, we walked along the length of Bowen, from North Peak to the Thumb, and back to camp. The views on the way up to the summit, were truly inspiring. There were light grey, clouds drifting across the mountain, at about 200 feet. This left the high peaks, except the Summit which seems to have its own personal and permanent cloud cover, out of the clouds. And as the clouds drifted across we could see the long white curves of the beaches, with the breakers, silver in the glint of the morning sun.

Towards the summit we entered the cloud, and the views ceased for some time. From the highest point of Bowen to the saddle between the Southern peak and the Thumb, there is a stretch of Banksia to drive any man mad. Banksia grows at heights ranging from 3 to 8 feet. When dead it is like iron bars, when growing, like spring steel. However, it is easily cut, but progress is somewhat slow.

The Thumb is a very prominent peak on the Southern end of the mountain. From this, we had our first view of the mountain in the middle of the island. These mountains are in general devoid of any obvious interesting features. However, they provide a link between Bowen in the North and Diamantina in the

South, making it possible to traverse the length of the Island along a backbone of mountains. On the top of the Thumb, we found a large quartz crystal left there in 1954 by John Stephenson's party. We returned to camp to have our usual argument about who would get the water, and who would hold the lantern while the other chopped the wood.

The next day we looked about on the rocks of North Peak. On the North East side of the peak there is a thin pillar of rock about 40 feet high, and standing about 9 feet from the main peak. This pillar had never been climbed. We considered that it should be possible to leap across the gap onto the vertical side of the pillar, and, aided by the strong updraft of air, walk up the few feet to the top. Once on top, it would then become obvious how to get back again. Having satisfied ourselves that this was the easiest and safest way to climb the pillar, we coiled up our rope, and went home.

Our last day on Bowen was spent descending via the ridge running due East from North Peak. The top of the ridge is actually the East face of North Peak, and is quite precipitous. We rappelled down most of the way, and from the bottom looked back at this great dome of dark grey rock. All but about 12 feet of this rock wall could be climbed quite easily, while the one difficult pitch could be accomplished by reasonably capable rock-climbers.

The rest of the ridge was quite straightforward except for 2 or 3 cliffs which are easily, but slowly negotiated. The ridge also contains the Fingers. These are granite pillars about 30 or 40 feet high, and apparently unclimbable. But there is a smaller "finger" which has a very interesting form resembling a man's back wearing a blue shirt. This leans against the "finger", and it was found possible to climb this rock by stepping up on the shoulders of this back.

After the Fingers the ridge has little interest, and we moved quickly to the beach to be greeted by barking dogs. That night we feasted on the food store we had left on the beach, while the mosquitos and sandflies feasted on us.

The next morning we decided to leave this island of Vampires. So we built a raft and set off into the Pacific. After 50 yards it sank, so we returned to the beach. From this time on, the hate set in, and grew day by day, as each day passed, we were one day nearer home, and further from hell. Six days to go, as we waded through mangrove swamps, swan crocodile infested streams, and fled from wasps. Five days to go. Zoe Bay was behind us, Diamantina and Stralock ahead. Diamantina was a boring mound of meadows, swept by hurricanes, and shrouded in mist.

It is topped by 2 square boulders, side by side, about 50 feet high. Two of us tried to climb one of them, but gave up. Wiping the tropical snow from our eyes, we went on. Diamantina is joined by a low saddle to Hell. Banksia is about the only thing capable of growing among such misery, and here it thrives. Two days of hell and we were on the beach. One more night and good old Nobby would be along in his boat. We made camp on George's Point. As we were making camp, someone called "Come and have a look at this". So we strolled over and looked. Two miles down the beach I stopped running. Were we going to let a taipan force us to sleep on the water's edge?

Next morning, as the tide came in, we got up and wrung out our sleeping bags. At high tide that day, along came Nobby! Good old Nobby! We put on our packs and swam out through the breakers, brushing sharks aside, and climbed into the boat. We were out! We were back! And in a matter of hours we were on the train heading home.



WELL, NO: IT DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HAVING TOO MUCH – BUT I STILL SAY YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH!

The Snowy Mountains for Summer Bushwalking

Dr. N.C. Stevens.

In summer, many bushwalkers think of cooler climates, where they may walk long distances with energy to spare, where water is cool and abundant. Again, distance lends enchantment to the scene. Of the three areas that come to mind – New Zealand, Tasmania and the Australian Alps – the last-named, although not the most spectacular, is the most accessible and has the best weather.

The Snowy Mountains, that part of the Australian Alps within New South Wales, has interesting walking areas at altitudes from 3000 to 7000 feet. It is thus possible to choose areas with varying temperature ranges, walking conditions and scenery. From Cooma, 260 miles from Sydney, roads radiate west to Cabramurra (Hydro-electric Authority town) via New Adaminaby and Xiandra (site of old goldrush town) and south-west towards Kosciusko and Gutheca Dam via Jindabyne. A very hilly road, the Alpine Way, winds around the south-west of Kosciusko from Jindabyne by way of Thredbo Village and Dead Horse Gap to Geehi. There are bus services along most of these routes. A recently completed road from Cabramurra across Tumut Pond Dam and the Cooma River to the Upper Murray valley hitherto inaccessible country.

For those who like something different from the usual Australian Bush, I recommend the “tops” country, above 6000 feet. Here you will see some snowdrifts, shrunken remnants of the winter covering. These vary in size summer to summer. In the summer 1956-7, there wasn't much high country without snow and there was a substantial snowfall on Boxing Day! But last Christmas there was very little snow in drifts and even night temperatures were mild. However, frosts are normal in this country, even in mid-summer, and campers should be prepared for cold weather.

Above 6000 feet there are few trees and the country is covered in tussocky snow grass, with spagnum-moss bogs. Pure, cold water is always available, running down every depression. Alpine flowers and the graceful snow-gums are a source of delight to photographers and nature lovers.

Accommodation may usually be obtained at the Chalet, six miles from Kosciusko summit or at some of the ski club chalets a further six miles down the road. Short walks, taking in the glacial lakes and the high points such as Mt. Townsend and Mt. Twynam (both over 7000 feet) may be made from the Kosciusko road, but to really appreciate the high country, it is necessary to go further afield.

Throughwalkers can plan a 5 or 6 day walk from Cabramurra south to Kosciusko, a distance of between 40 and 50 miles. A very successful walk along this route was undertaken by a small party of club members a few years ago. They were dropped on the south side of Tumut Gorge near the junction of roads to Cooma and Happy Jacks at an altitude of nearly 5000 feet. To the south could be seen Jagungal (6700 feet) a prominent landmark, and on the horizon the snowcapped peaks around Kosciusko.

The country consists of open plains and low wooded ridges with some rocky pinnacles. Except for Jagungal and the high point near Kosciusko it is mostly between 5000 and 6000 feet: only one river valley need be crossed.

SOUTHWEST TASMANIA

Bruce Davis

There are few bushwalkers in Australia who have not heard of Tasmania's famed South-west, for its jagged peaks, alpine lakes and challenging terrain attract more visitors each year. Sir Edmund Hillary, after a recent visit to the area, said "This is some of the finest walking country in the world – I intend to return". His sentiments have been echoed by many, and the notes which follow are intended as a brief guide should you decide to see this grant area for yourself.

The secret of success in any expedition is preparation, for without correct equipment and techniques, progress can be disrupted and a good holiday ruined. Southwest Tasmania is no exception, for it lies in the path of the "Roaring Forties" and bright sunshine can be quickly followed by rain and sleet. Equipment requirements are simple – but they must be of the right type of comfort is to result, hence the notes below.

CLOTHING – due to the vagaries of weather, warm clothes are recommended. Long trousers should be worn, for if sleet and snakes do not deter you, the extremely wiry and prickly scrub will! You will need a strong hip length waterproof jacket since capes are useless when climbing or in high winds. Boots should be carefully checked, particular the fastening of soles and heels, for the soggy ground will pulp boots and remove nails in a short space of time. (Most parties carry a few wood screws and nails in case of emergencies). Every effort must be made to keep all equipment, particularly spare clothing and sleeping bags, as dry as possible. Store all such items in strong plastic bags and place them deep in your pack, not lashed on the outside where water and scrub will cause trouble.

EQUIPMENT – Golden tan or Willesden japara wall tents are regarded as standard. "A" tents do not provide enough room and are extremely difficult to anchor in the wet ground and high winds. The tents should have good overlap on the doors and one end sewn up. Storm guys fitted to the roof allow much more room and really anchor the tent during "blows". Even the best tents are no good unless properly pitched, so learn this process thoroughly.

Golden tan japara is very light and its attractive colour gives a cheerful appearance, but it will not stand a great deal of rubbing without leaking. However, a very roomy 3-man tent, 8 foot long (it allows you and your pack inside!) will weigh only 3 ½ lbs. Willesden japara is heavier but is extremely tough and waterproof.

At least one good hatchet should be carried by the party going Southwest as wood is not always easy to gather and tent poles must be chopped. Primuses are useful on some "high altitude" trips where tent sites are very exposed and bare. As the ground can be cold and damp, some bedding is required and a slasher or two in the party will be useful for cutting scrub for this purpose.

MAPS – There are a few state maps of the area which are reliable, but the Hobart Walking Club has a fairly comprehensive selection of its own maps for sale. These are listed in the current issue of the Clubs magazine "The Tasmanian Tramp" available at 3,- from G.P.O. Box 753H, Hobart. This and past issues of the magazine contain many useful articles on routes, equipment etc. the club will also supply data and advice on particular areas, provided sufficient time is allowed for preparation of information. As the demand for this and the map service is high during summer months, so we suggest early application.

ROUTES – All the above notes may seem to indicate difficulties of terrain and climate. It is worth repeating, however, that provided common sense is exercised in the use of techniques and equipment, few worries will result. A certain amount of bushcraft is required, since there are no huts and few well defined tracks, but the local clubs are doing all in their power to make your job easier. Tracks and routes are marked wherever possible with poles (stakes), blazes, rages tied to trees, number plates (aluminium, so wont rust) and stone cairns. In spite of this, some navigational skill is required and we suggest that you do not add to the confusion by blazing your own route unless you are sure that you are on the correct route.

ACCESS – Apart from air transport to Cox Bight (Port Davey) and Lake Pedder, the only access is via rough foot tracks from Maydena in the Derwent Valley and Geeveston in the Huon Valley. Either of these routes will require three days to travel to really get into the Southwest. The Aero Club of Southern Tasmania (P.O. Box 451A, Hobart) will supply transport per Piper Tri-Pacer (2 passengers) or Cessna 180 (3 passengers) whenever the weather is suitable, and one hour's flight will put you at Cox Bight or Lake Pedder. The cost is approximately 6.10 pounds to Pedder and 8 pounds to Cox's per person and the service can be recommended as safe and reliable. The Aero Club will also arrange airdrops and as a vast amount of experience has been accumulated, recovery is usually better than 90% of materials dropped. Early bookings are required.

PLANNING ITINERARIES – Tasmanian terrain is very deceptive and it is all too easy to plan a comprehensive tour and find that objectives are not stained due to slower progress. This should be borne in mind for while fourteen miles per day can be covered in one area, one mile per day is good going in others. Ample allowance should be made for weather and side trips, for an amazing variety of interesting places are often packed into small unsuspected areas.

SUGGESTED ITINERARIES – For the newcomer, there are several beautiful and varied routes which will serve as excellent introduction to the area and provide good experience. Two which can be particularly recommended are the Part Davey track (approximately 10-12 days) and Pedder to Mt. Picton route (approximately 10 days). As further experience is gained, the Frankland and Arthur Ranges, the Mt. Anne circuit, Federation Peak, Precipitous Bluff and South Coast routes can be tackled. Then there are many ranges which still remain relatively unknown. Here is opportunity for great adventure!

The Port Davey track runs from Maydena (about 60 miles from Hobart) to Lake Pedder and the Western Arthur Range, then to Long Bay on Bathurst Harbour, Port Davey. It is preferable to commence at the southern end by flying to Cox Bight and walking over to Port Davey. Arrangement can be made for Mr. Dennis King to transport you across the harbour and land you at Long Bay where the track commences (it would be an almost impossible task to walk around the huge area with its many large rivers). The track, although faint at first, improves gradually and pleasant easy walking prevails to Junction Creek, right at the foot of the magnificent Arthur Range. It is only one day's walk from here to Lake Pedder where a fortnight could be spent at least. As you would probably have less time than this there is plenty to see and do! Then on towards Maydena (3 days) with the majestic peak of Mt. Anne (4500 and highest in the Southwest) luring you aside for a day or two. As food could be airdropped at Junction Creek or landed at Pedder, at no stage of this journey would you need to be carrying more than six days' food!

If you prefer a still easier introduction, a fly-in-walk out trip to Lake Pedder and the Frankland Range is recommended, the track to Maydena being well marked. The Pedder-Picton route can be accomplished by flying to Lake Pedder, spending a few days there, then walking to Junction Creek and the Arthur Range.

Many excellent peaks are close to hand en route down the Arthur Plains and you will find alpine lakes and superb view of Mt. Anne, Federation Peak etc. during the journey. The Cracroft River must be crossed (a hazard in flood) and a long climb made up over a fairly exposed route on Mt. Picton before descending to the Huon River and good tracks, leading towards Geeveston. This route is not as well marked as the Davey track, but it is not unduly difficult. Each area has its own particular charm and such variety abounds that local walkers who have been visiting the region for the last thirty years still find plenty of new territory to visit! HOW ABOUT SEEING IT YOURSELF?



“THOSE STRANGE PEAKS”

Graham Baines

Rising sharply from the low-lying coastal plain, 44 miles north of Brisbane, the peaks of the Glass House Mountains present a truly magnificent sight. The peaks, volcanic in origin, number eleven, though there is some dispute as to whether Wild House Mountain and other low-lying hills belong to the same group. There is also some uncertainty as to the exact origin of the rocky outcrops which give teeth to an otherwise ordinary stretch of country.

Several theories have been put forwards as to just how the Glass Houses came to be. Most people consider the peaks to be volcanic necks or “plugs” – the hardened cores of long-extinct volcanoes whose outer coverings have disintegrated over the ages. A second school of thought argues that the mountains were formed by viscous lava oozing out of the ground from some subterranean reservoir of volcanic material. Others again consider the peaks to have resulted from a volcanic disturbance similar to the colossal eruption of Mount Pelee in 1904, when an enormous pillar of rock, not unlike Mount Coonowrin of the Glass House Mountains, rose two thousand feet perpendicularly into the air. Any of these theories could be the correct one. Maybe all three combined produced the final results.

Strange as it may seem, these peaks are by no means unique. Similar mountains such as the Puy de la Vierge in France and indeed many such groups in Eastern Australia do exist. The Flinders group of southeast Queensland, the Jim Crow group which lies between Rockhampton and Yeppoon, and groups at Springsure and Clermont, are of similar origin. But none is so spectacular nor has such a strange appeal as the famous Glass Houses, rising as they do sheer from the low coastal plains to show their strange silhouettes against the blue Queensland sky.

The history of the Glass House Mountains is no less romantic than their appearance. Cook named them in 1770. “... they are remarkable for the singular form of their elevation which very much resembled a glass-house, and for which reason I have called them the Glass Houses...” By this, Cook meant the glass furnaces in Yorkshire, where he spent his boyhood. It was not until 1799 that a passing explorer decided to cross overland from Moreton Bay in order to view the mountains at close range. That explorer was Matthew Flinders. After a nine-mile trek, he found himself at the base of Mount Beerburum, a 980 foot dome-shaped mountain grassed and timbered all over, with no rockfaces of any extent to provide obstacles for the inexperienced climber. Maybe Flinders didn't like heights. Anyway he returned promptly to his boat and described the mountain in his logbook as “inaccessible”. It was not until the 1930s that anyone gave any consideration to climbing the peaks. These people were the explorers Petrie, Leichhardt and Landsborough.

Andrew Petrie was the first man to ascend Mt. Beerwah, the highest of the Glass Houses, “Beerwah” being an aboriginal word meaning “highest”. His aboriginal guide would not accompany him to the summit, however, for fear the “debbil-debbil” who lived atop the mountain would kill him. The white man would be struck blind by the mountain spirit, added the aboriginal, so that he would not be able to see his way to the top again. In later life, Petrie did turn blind.

Mount Coonowrin, not surprisingly, was the last of the peaks in the area to be scaled. Many of the early pioneers stood at that mountain's base and with much conviction declared: “... this mountain will never be climbed”. More optimistic, however, Thomas Welsby at the turn of the century declared that it would

be possible to ascend the mountain by a zig-zag route up the north face until a certain overhanging rock was reached. This final obstacle could be overcome, he was sure, by using a rifle or a kite to pass a rope around this rock pinnacle. Today, there are five different routes up the mountain, and I have yet to see a “north-facer” with a kite or rifle included amongst his gear!

Being so readily accessible to the rock-climbing enthusiasts of Brisbane, the Glass Houses provide a “happy hunting ground” for those people who desire to spend their spare hours “cliff hanging”. For the neophytes there are scrambles up the west face of Mount Tibrogargan and Mount Ngungun; the more daring may ascend Beerwah, or even attempt the thrilling elevating ascent of Crookneck via the south face, while the more experienced climber will be happy to rope up and enjoy himself on Crookneck’s west face, a short but exhilarating climb; or even better spend a morning surveying potential routes – and there are many.

Perhaps the most interesting peak in the group is Mount Coonowrin (pronounced KOO-NOW-RIN) or, as it is affectionately known to its many friends – “Crookneck”. It reaches a little over twelve hundred feet into the sunny Queensland sky, and its steep – at times overhanging – walls provide the climber with several routes to the summit – routes for the beginner, the middle man, and the experienced. The summit area is very small. We could perhaps stand eight climbers side by side, but even then the end men would be in danger of being pushed over the side. They would feel much safer if they were permitted to hold onto the fifteen foot steel mast which stands atop the mountain. This mast, complete with a seven foot canvas pennant and small brass plaque, was erected by Senior Scouts in 1948 to commemorate the first ascent of the peak by any men, white or black, in 1910. Affixed to the bottom of the mast is a stainless steel case, weatherproof container for a climber’s logbook. Many and varied are the comments recorded in the book by climbers: “... Kath converted on Salmon’s Leap”, wrote one whose friend obviously became distressed at this point. Several mention companions left part way up the mountain, hair on end! There are entries by climbers from all states of Australia, from New Zealand and Europe. “A nice little hill”, says one Kiwi! Tucked into obscurity on one of the pages is the signature of Felic Benuzzi-one-time conqueror of Africa’s Mt. Kenya, known widely for his book “No Picnic on Mount Kenya”. From the summit of this mountain and from others in the group, one may enjoy an extensive view of the surrounding countryside. Round about the peaks are numerous pineapple farms and these, together with the large dark green areas which indicate forestry plantations of pine trees, make a patchwork of colour a little different from those which results from farmlands in general. Bribie, Moreton and Stradbroke Island in Moreton Bay can be seen with varying degrees of clearness, and on an exceptionally clear day the buildings of Brisbane may be seen.

A mile to the west of Crookneck lies Mount Beerwah (1823 feet), the highest of the group. The normal ascent of this mountain is made from the north. It is an interesting climb and certainly not a difficult one.

The highlight of this climb is “The Organ Pipes”, situated some two-thirds of the way up the mountain. A sheer cliff, hundred of feet high, and composed of massive columns of trachyte rock, has been eroded at its base and the resulting rock formation bears resemblance to an array of gigantic organ pipes. Here one finds small caves whose floors are piled feet deep with a fine grey felspar dust. All this is surrounded by a small forest of great trees and small shrubs, growing in a pocket of fertile soil and watered by springs issuing from the cliff base. It is the last thing one would expect to find on the mountain, which appears so barren when viewed from below.

Mount Tibrogargan – home of swallows – is situated close to and slightly west of the main coastal road to Cairns – the Bruce Highway. Many a car stops opposite this great outcrop, that its occupants may gaze up at the east face cut about by great fissures and pitted with numerous caves – not great caverns which one would expect to find Speleologists or fossil remains – just ordinary caves, high and dry (and how dry they can be in the height of summer!) a delight to the climber who drags his rucksack up the mountain so that he may spend the night there in the glow of a cosy campfire, to awaken to watch the sun rise over the sea. There's a place to find your soul.

Crookneck, Beerwah and Tibrogargan are the peaks most often climbed. The others – Ngungun, Tiberowuccum, Beerburrum, the Coochin Twins, Micketeenumalgrai (try that one!) and the Tunbubudla Twins offer nothing in the way of rock climbing apart from an occasional vertical face which can be easily scrambled around. Beerburrum is of interest because of the Forestry Lookout perched high on its summit. From this eerie the firewatcher has a sweeping view of the thousands of acres of softwoods which comprise the Beerburrum Forestry Area. Perched high above the world about him he leads a lonely yet peaceful existence, his only friend during those long hours on the mountain being a currawong which visits him during the day.

Echoes are responsible for many of the odd sounds heard among the mountains, but weird sounds sometimes emanate from other sources. Strange wailing sounds were once heard issuing forth from the summit of Crookneck. Puzzled locals later learned that they were the strains of bagpipes, carried there by a Scot who had deflated his instrument and rolled the pipes in the bag, eager to be the first to play the Scottish National Instrument from these high places.

They are not Matterhorns or Weissorns, these mountains; but, as long as they stand in their splendid rugged isolation they will remain objects of wonderment and admiration, and will ever be, as indeed they are today, the “happy hunting ground of climbers”.

EAGLES RIDGE AT NIGHT

Bill Bolton

It was a mad feeling of excitement and freedom from exams that prompted me to suggest a trip up Barney at the slide evenings at Judy's, but I was taken up very rapidly by Peter. In fact, it ended up our attempting Eagles Ridge, at night.

So at Friday night we found ourselves at Drynan's Hut, Peter, Judy and myself. We had food for a day, a rope, water, day packs. First we ate what food we weren't going to carry, then set out.

But glory of glories, before we got up the firs thill, Scott and his Land Rover came crawling over the "road" towards us, taking Arthur and Garth to the lower portals so that they could attempt Barabool the next day. It came ploughing off the road to miss a whole and right over a large stump. Arthur eventually dug it out and showed it to Keith who asked if that was all holding him up. We piled in and were off.

The Rover took us over the impossible road to the lower portals. To the Rover, I was converted until it got stuck in the creek. Up to our knees in freezing water, we splashed about in the impossible darkness until we found a large rock under the back structure. No amount of movement would get the vehicle away from us. Eventually we lifted the Rover and pulled the rock out. At this time, Keith told us he could turn the wheels anywhere. More investigation showed that the front protection bar was wedged on top of another rock.

Eventually we were on the other side, and away. In no time at all we were as far as we could go. Peter, Judy and I saddled up, to the accompaniment of a light drizzle of rain. Arthur and Garth headed for the creek of a camp spot. Keith bid adieu, and we were left, wet from the creek to begin.

We were not kept cold long. We belted through the early scrub with much abandon, getting a fine gossamer coating of spider webs as we did so, and with a feeling of exhilaration so common at the base of the mountain. It was supposed to be a full moon, but heavy mist above us obscured it, but enough light filtered through for us to see. We rested on our 1st eminence, and looked back to see the flow of the fire back where we had left.

As we climbed, the country changed slowly. We passed from the scrub to bits of rock, back to scrub, that became stompier and more scrubbier, with occasional gums. Up over our 1st bump, we sat down and looked around us. Water and Sal vital was imbibed and appropriate comments passed. The country presented to us was bathed in a faint light. It presented a twisted mass of darkened ridges and foliage. It was impossible to recognise anything unless we worked them out from where we were.

Onwards we went, up down, repelling down the last bit of rock before Tom's Tum. Up, up, the moon now showing brighter through the haze, as mist around us in the gullies lit up in an eerie way from the reflected light.

By now, everything was going slowly. There was no more dash in our steps, and when at last we reached Isolated Peak, we sank down gratefully, sweating a lot, to drink and eat. There was a cold wind blowing, but this was by far compensated by the scenery around us. For grateful minutes the mist cleared away from North peak. Allowing us to see our way up. At times, even East peak showed slyly through the mist. In the gullies, white mist glowed opalescently, while writhing movements in slow motion.

Small patches of thin mist hurtled across our visions as though they had a train to catch. It was now past 4 in the morning.

Down, down we went, while the moon now came, then hid from us. And all the time Peter led us down, down chimneys that Judy fell through, through scrub, where he became completely invisible. Then up. It seemed like hours that we climbed, while everything around us gradually lit up to the light of the piccini dawn, and the heavily shrouded horizon gave up a delicate pink. On, up, over through every step now needed concentration, every next step, I thought would bring us to the North-Leaning saddle, but each next step would tell me how wrong I was. Meanwhile, the sky was taking on the most wonderful blue colour, while the mist was becoming red.

“Up”, we gasped. “Try to get above the mist.” Maroon became a golden glow of rock, capped by red tinted cloud, then the red disappeared, the sun came up.

Eventually we came to the saddle.

North Peak fell beneath our feet, leaving only East, still bathed in mist, to be conquered. We found our way down to the saddle, and started up thinking, “20 mins from the hut”.

Footholds appeared that weren't there, the mountains sometimes tilted to put us off our balance, trees came away in our grasp so that we could not get over the rocks that put themselves in our path. Hours seemed to drag past. We were in the mist, then suddenly on familiar ground. Obtaining unknown reserves of energy we pushed on, to the top. Mist swirled around us, now no longer derisive, but jealously hiding any view. We all lay down on the rock and slept.

We woke suddenly with the sun beating down on us. For a few minutes we did not know where we were. The mis still swirled around us, except for a small clear patch in the north. Thank havens for that. Overtaking ourselves by it, we stumbled down towards the hut, rapidly getting below the mist.

At the hut we flaked out on the grass for a while it was heaven, until the ants found us. It was a funny state to be in. too tired to sleep peacefully. Abandoning sleep, we threw some wood on a fire, and Peter cooked up some passable stew. We then set about to wait for Keith, who was bringing up our food, and our sleeping bags.

During the afternoon, Arthur and Garth waltzed in, enthusiastic about Barabool. Still no Keith.

Evening came, still no Keith. It was raining very heavily by now, and we were thinking of Keith, Patty, Carol and the two new people staggering around in the rain. Arthur, dressed in shorts and sandals, bounced out into the rain to see if they were coming up south. He came back through the darkness with a negative.

The most plausible possibility was that the Land Rover had got stuck again, and a sleeping-bag-less night faced three of us, followed by a foodless day.

Then – a shout. But coming up Barney Gorge. Then we recognised Keith's and Carol's voices. It seemed ages before they were in the hut, telling us their woes. They had come up Rocky Creek, but had got lost. And Keith, like a magician, produced our sleeping bags and food.

Do your feet smell? Does your nose run? The you are made upside down.

Laugh and the world laughs with you. Snore, and you sleep alone.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE BARNEY HUT

Ted Teach.

You go into the mountains and what do you see? Australia as she really is; life in it prodigious variety, different from the life in our cities only in the comparative absence of the touch of man.

I profess to some knowledge of Architecture, of beauty, unity and reality as it applies and may be reapplied in the forms which can occur in the condition known as “space”. To me, the creation of the world is a mighty act of Divine Architecture. Think of this when next you go into the mountains.

Because of this, I dare to speak, with such authority as it gives me, about the hut on Barney. Unknowingly you have left a very disrespectful example of the “touch of man” on our lovely mountain. Exactly why, I cannot say, for it is a question of unity which in its oneness is extremely complex. But like it or not, I know more of this than thee where Architecture is concerned, and any act of man has Architecture in it from a certain point of view.

Do not be misled by our schools and their tawdry view that Architecture is limited to the provision of utility through function, durability through construction, and pleasure through form. Embarrass them sometime by asking of the concept of beauty: take the significance of pleasure through form out of the realm of the senses and rationality and into the realm of the intellect proper. Ask “Is Beauty, Truth; Truth, Beauty?”. They will only mumble something about aesthetics, or Freudian Symbolism, which, sad to say, is all that Scientism and materialism can offer. And this will remain so for as long as they continue to suffer from the delusion that the whole of the world is accessible to the sense, and presents mysteries and problems for our rationality alone to resolve.

If indeed you are content to get from the great effort of building but only those things which I chose to call the “school tawdry view”, then I am powerless to give you more. It can only be said that the very significance of what an everyday materialist must perforce deny is incomparably more than falls within his view and the significance of the beautiful which is the case in point – is not explicit in the hut as it stands, because no one involved in its building knew how to make it so, nor cared – under the “hammer blows of conditioning” which our society so effectively deals out – for its presence or absence.

So, essentially, it is the sense of Beauty that I would have you build into a new hut. But the ontology of Beauty – Beauty and its significance in the intellectual realm – I cannot give you. All the sacred books of all the societies of mankind are devoted to this cause; but only for those who have the eyes to see. However, in these societies, it was always the way of those who knew, even how little, to use their work to move closer and closer to the “Centre of all things” by the reality they could grasp in its doing, simultaneously leaving behind them objects for the contemplation of their fellows, who, while they might only sense the presence of the beautiful, had, in consequence, always at hand, this object or symbol as an intellectual touchstone.

In this manner the Architecture of the truly traditional societies was absorbed into the unity of the total social order, and served by way of the geometrical symbolism inherent in its very nature as a spatial entity, to surround members of the society with a basis for the contemplation of higher realities.

This Architecture, to the anguish of some, and the confusion of all, is absent in our society – which is as profane, probably, as a society can be, while still retaining some semblance of order. Instead, professors,

in a state of blissful ignorance, spout inanities of the most astounding nature, seemingly bent on the confusion of uniformity with unity: still it is their chosen way.

There is, to disregard all efforts of modernity to the contrary, a Supreme Unity, which is present in spite of all human delusions, a divine at the centre of all things (to use the language of spatial symbolism). There is an ultimate casual reality about which the Universe revolves; and this is a thought for contemplation, since a suitable form for a new hut would be circular in plan – it would have a centre. This centre would contain, symbolically, the germ of all the possibilities which could occur as the hut takes form. Position and dimensions in all directions would by some principle be determined. From the high point downwards, radiating out from a central axis, a new entity could occur, in which obedience to the way of all things would be explicit. It could be as natural as to the mountain as the yellow Everlastings which grow among the rocks on its ridges.

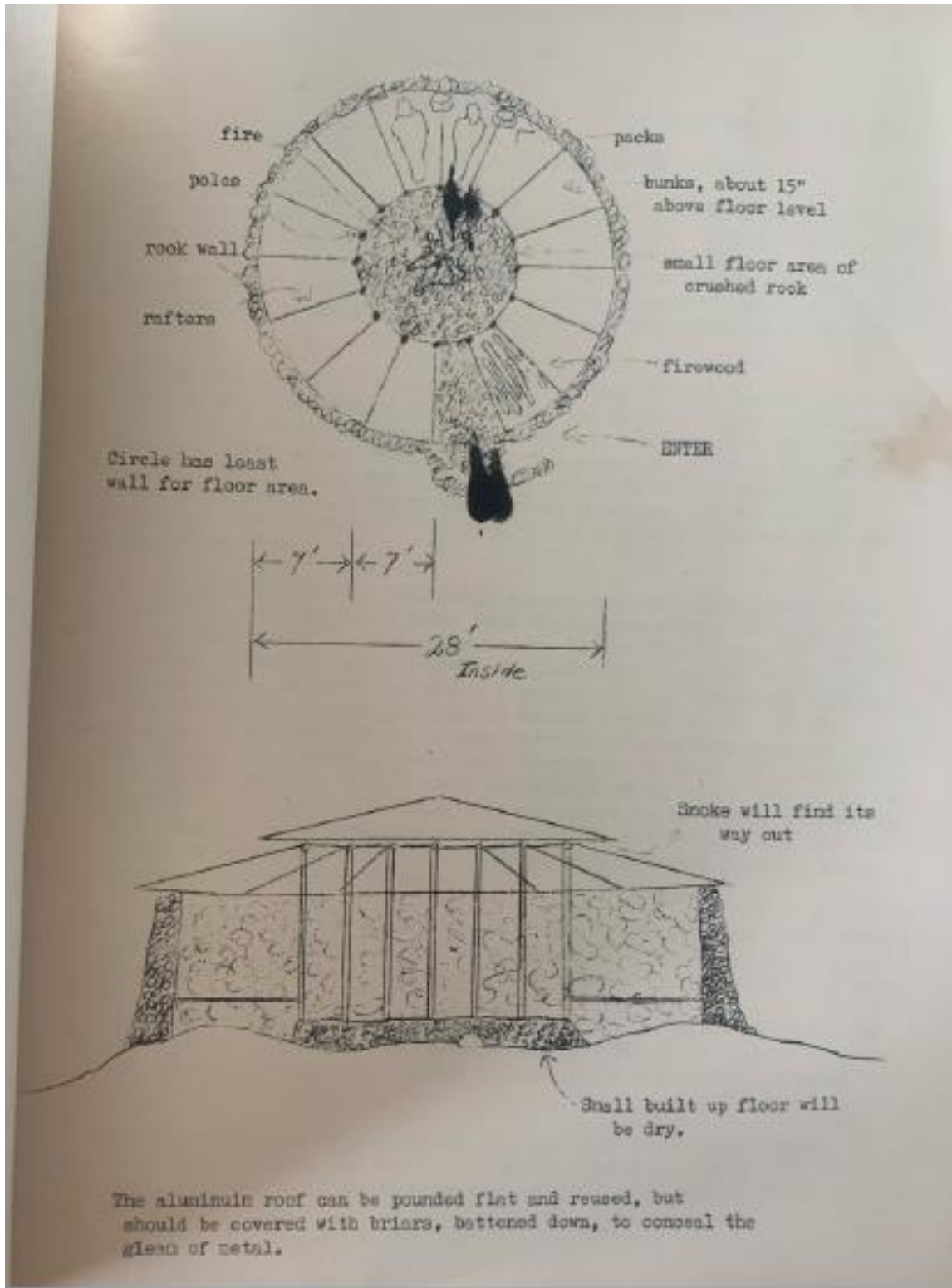
But if Architecture could be built with words, there would be no need for Architecture, would there? And here I am all involved in the “extreme complexity of unity” and historical aspects of art, attempting to say what I maintained earlier could not be said. And neither it can be, except by symbols in space or a difficult technical treatise, and then, only to those who are in possession of the necessary fundamental aspects of this mode of knowing.

Let what has gone before serve, if it will, as my explanation of one aspect, the essential aspect of the inadequacy of the hut. I have, after all, most of a lifetime to attempt the clarification of that mystery. Here it has only been possible to illustrate a tendency.

You have simply transplanted one of our rectilinear building habits on the mountain. Its walls would seriously hamper any tank that might happen along; its roof structure would happily support one; the floor is so wet that Charlie the Crayfish lives in a hole in it; the fireplace is almost unusable; the chimney catches fire; anyone sleeping in bunks built to fill the remaining spaces will be roasted should the fire be adequate warm those on the others; there will then be no place for the firewood, as there will be no place to put the packs. In short, in the rudimentary sense of function, it is chaotic.

As for the visual aspect, the stone, since it is of the mountain is fine – unity; the aluminum seen from East Peak is dreadful – disunity; the rectilinear plan among all the rounded rock and peak forms is dreadful – disunity. Only people with an underdeveloped regard for this lovely place could do such a thing to it.

I suggest that it be torn down (I will supply two sticks of gelignite free to any accomplice) and as a substitute erect the following:



ON BEING “THE ONE”

Rod Bucknell

“The One” is of course short for “The One who brings up the rear”.

This poor chap misses out on all the best of the fun on a bushwalk. Everyone accuses him of going last on purpose, on the ground that he is trying to escape all the hard work, which falls to the bloke who is leading. Actually, of course, he is sacrificing quite a lot by volunteering to take up this uncomfortable position. He misses out on all the fun of bashing a way through the undergrowth, swinging the machete in all directions, and of course all the glory that goes with being the bloke up in front.

The leader gets the credit for everything. He finds the way, locates logs for the others not to trip over, gypies for the others not to get stung on, and looses rocks for the others not to slide down the mountainside on. Everyone has a kind thought for the leader. When things go according to plan, they congratulate him on his good judgement etc., and when things go wrong they offer kindly advice and helpful suggestions. When thinking back on a good trip, everyone remembers who it was who led the way – but how many remember who took up the rear? The noble fellow who has volunteered to be The One just doesn't get a mention.

It is time the situation was rectified. A moments thought will make it clear just how much The One has to put up with. When the mob stops for a drink, he gets there last when all the mud has been stirred up and is probably lucky if he can find a place to slurp at all. When, half-way up a difficult climb the leader finds a little flat space where the party can have a breather, all make themselves comfortable as they reach the spot, while the poor chap at the end arrives to find all the sit-on-able space is occupied and has to make do with wrapping himself around a projecting bit of rock. Or a steep grassy slope, everyone belts ahead and gains height at a terrific rate. The last bloke somehow can never match up to the pace of all the others and finds himself panting up while they are flaked out in a shady spot way up ahead. They watch him as he struggles up, and no sooner does he reach the spot and thankfully sink to earth, that they spring to their feet murmuring something about resting and conquering and dash off again.

After a day of this sort of misery, the time at last comes to make camp. Naturally, when the last bloke arrives, all the good spots have been taken and he has to spread his groundsheet over an old tree root or a heap of rocks or in the middle of a patch of nettles.

It is hell I tell you! It takes a good deal more to be a tailender than to be a leader and its high time people realised this and gave The One a bit more consideration. If its essential for a party to have a leader, its every bit as necessary to have someone taking up the rear.

I have suffered! I ask no sympathy for all the agony I have gone through. If my little winge helps to ease the lot of those stout-hearted but ill-treated members of the bushwalking fraternity, the tailenders, I shall feel that my years of suffering have not been in vain.

THE IMPOSSIBLE TRIP EASTER 1960

Jim Hutton

Often I have asked myself why I go bushwalking, and generally come to the conclusion that it must be a streak of insanity. On this particular occasion it must have been more than a streak, it was complete insanity.

I issue a word of warning to all freshers before going on any trip – make sure your leader is completely sane, i.e., that won't get crazy ideas about doing the impossible:

Here I will give an account of what may happen otherwise.

A certain bod, Bill B, thought up this crazy trip and talked me into going, knowing well that because of my lack of knowledge of the country I may say yes. Unfortunately, I did say yes, and so did another bod, called Hugh. I don't think Hugh was complete insane like the leader, but he was mainly curious.

On Thursday night I was bundled uncomfortably into a Land Rover drive by that cunning old blighter, Keith Scott, who chuckled to himself as he dumped us in a paddock near Reynolds Creek. I offered to swap places with him but he wouldn't have it on, I see why now!

To start the crazy escapade we dashed off into the darkness crossed the Creek getting our feet wet then walked three miles of spear grass to fill our socks with seeds later coming back to the creek where there was no water. We then turned around and went back down the creek until we finally found water and the three dead bods climbing into the sack

Next morning we went up the creek again, and the crazy leader refused the suggestion to camp in a nice spot near the creek up there. He forced us up a steep ridge onto Glucose ridge in the sweltering heat, scared the wits out of some peace-loving kangaroos. Some time later we pulled up for a rest at a small cave below the cliffs of Lizards lookout but it was not long before the leader awoke me from my beautiful sleep and took off to find a way up the cliffs. I went back to sleep and some time later was again rudely awoken by that slave driving type leader yelling from the top of the cliff. Soon I was up with him and before long we were sitting admiring the view from Lizards lookout.

After lunch we went back into the rain forest and eventually dropped into Emu Creek where we were able to quench our thirsts. We followed the Creek down and soon came to a 2nd class road, i.e., overgrown with weeds. We followed this down the valley stopping at a good spot for a swim, and then on until dusk, when we camped in a nice spot by the river.

Next morning's climb took us up to a lookout where we got good views of "The Steamers" and Emu Vale and from here we climbed up to Cann's plain. From here we went into the unknown – at first the going was quite good in the rain forest S.W. or S. of the plain but soon this changed to raspberry and other fascinating vegetation. In our efforts to find a simple route we came across a timber track – going in the wrong direction but what does that matter – so off we went.

After a few hours in this road through nice bush we came to a Forestry Station and found we were heading for Tannymoral so we took a road heading over towards The Head and were going in fine style, sire feet and all, until the road ended. We dropped quickly into the creek, found a pool, had a swim, and then pushed on down the valley. In places we followed a 3rd class road which was so good that more often we

took the creek. After sidling towards the Head road at the foot of Wilson's Pk. Here we had the thrilling experience of having about 50 hereford steers charging down on us so we took off and charged down on them and in the tussle our hounourable leader lost his belt. From here 3 footsore bods trudged along the road over the saddle into the night and a threatening storm. Our leader muttered hopes of getting somewhere near the border fence before camping – poor disillusioned lad – within 01 mins we had all dropped dead (almost anyway) 12 hours solid for 2 days running was starting to tell especially on the feet.

Sleep partly revived us and next day we took off to Teviot falls – caught a glimpse and then sidled back to find the route up the cliffs. After a bit of rock climbing – they should have had more sense than to let me lead – we finally sidled further round and found the route up the normal easy ledge taking us up to the top of the cliffs. We visited the top of the fall and could not resist the blue cool water and shade – a very nice spot for a swim.

After much sidling, bushwalking, sidling and more bushwalking we finally came to the border fence with Wilsons peak towering on the right. Form here the going was straight forward along the fence to the border gate, and a short distance further we were overlooking Burnett Stn and Watson Ck. We dropped down S,W, over a saddle into Watson's Ck. And then left our packs and went up to the Watson Ck. falls for a swim. We then went back down Watson Ck. to the road and some hours later plodded round in the dark looking for a camp site at the foot of Mt. Ballow.

Next morning after a good breakfast we took off up the creek and later onto the ridge leading to Mt. Ballow. From the top we went along to the lookout and found a note Indic thing that Keith and his party had been and gone so we took off back along the ridge to Durramlee Pk. down a sort of ridge and onto Focal point. It was at this stage that I fell out of favour with the Gympie bush by running into two in short succession. I can recommend this as a sure method of taking your mind off all the minor worries, e.g., sore feet, thirst, sore shoulders etc. the pain of it will make you forget them all. If you haven't had this experience, try it – it's effective.

From the Focal point we had difficulty in following the ridge so eventually we ended up in the creek and then climbed back onto the ridge and followed the ridge to Monserrat lookout. Here we found a bag of high energy peanuts – labelled "eat these" and steamed off down the track. Bill went down to the Upper Portals to see if anyone was still there and Hugh and I beaded straight for the valley past Grace's Hut etc. We were still staggering into the dusk when a Land Rover came into view, and it was all over. For the last hour I had been dreaming of my legs fraying at the ends but it was not until Bill removed his sand shoes that I realised feet were not to be sniffed at. Yes, Bill's feet were a raw rotting mess and mine were sore from the heat and friction of 4 days 12 hours, solid going each day. I have never had sore feet in such a form before and never again if I can help it.

The impossible has been done but it took insanity to do it.

WHY TASMANIA?

A reverie based on fact.

(Editors Note: The views expressed in this article are not necessary those held by the editor, nor in fact, anyone but the writer.)

Why the yearly migration of bushwalkers to Tasmania in the summer months? What are they looking for? Why Tasmania?

If you were to ask one of these intrepid walkers his reasons for spending so much, to go so far, to such a hip joint like Tasmania, he would most likely be unable to explain. He may mumble something about the mountains or the weather or divert you from this underfined subject and mention the friendliness of the girls.

If you were to inquire further about the weather, for instance, he would point out that it didn't rain so much in summer, only one day in every three, not two as in winter. And the mountains? They would turn out to be 'terrific' or 'wonderful' or 'fantastic' or 'beaut' or some other unconstructive word.

So there you are no better off than when you started; probably more mystified. You seek further, ask more – more unenlightment. You are annoyed. What's so great about Frenchman's Cap – 'what a haul but we enjoyed it'; The Reserve – 'it rained all the time but it was worth it'; Federation Peak – 'we were lost for two days but it was just – aw I don't know – it was just fab'. You are frustrated, maddened. You try to forget about it. You cannot. You are stimulated, excited, nympholeptic; you have to find our yourself.

Adventure-story-like, your next holidays find you on your way to that beckoning isle, satisfying, that "Why climb Everest" "Because it is there" said Mallory' feeling. Abroad the POT (Princess of Tasmania) you feel lit is a good beginning. You are calculating, dubious, nervous, hell – you think – for the amount of money and time I am outlaying it had better be good. You disembark at Devonport, a pretty town. Here comes the ad – having no large industry; it owes it size and prosperity to the surrounding rich farming country and to the deep river providing a good port.

You find that you can hitch hike the length of the island to Hobart in at least five hours whether you be male or female. In the two months of summer there are many hitchhickers on the roads, as many girls as boys. The ability of females to hitch hike safely is singular to Tasmania, being most unadvisable on the mainland. This term "mainland" is impressed upon you from the beginning. You are a 'mainlander' – all the locals seem to know. Many conversations are prefixed by "You from the mainland?". They do not care whether you are from Brisbane, Melbourne or Perth it is all the same – the mainland. You are out; not one of the chosen few; you may as well be from Iceland. You can never be accepted. I met one fellow formerly from Sydney who had lived there for fourteen years yet he was still a mainlander. There is no spite in it they are on the whole the most friendly people in Australia. Generalizing (fatal mistake); as you go south in Australia people become less friendly, more materialistic, more sophisticated, better educated until you get to Tasmania where everything's reversed. There you find a great happy family; the people have a very insular, narrow minded outlook: thus fascinating. The singularity, uniqueness of the state makes it so absorbing.

You can only appreciate these differences to the full by living and working with them, but while hitchhiking you learn some of the structure. A word of warning: the 'big happy family' phrase is surprisingly

literal due to the widespread intermarriage. So have caution in talking derogatorily about someone, as the chances are he is the nephew or third cousin of the person you are talking to.

Being cut off for so long from the rest of Australia they have had to become largely a self-supporting community. So now that large mainland companies are buying and spreading to the island they have a whispered bitter feeling of their prosperity being exploited. In fact so restricted are some I have encountered, that they believe that Tasmania was supporting the economy of Australia with their exports of potatoes and apples. Conversely beware inciting their jingoistic tendencies by claiming, in reply, that Tasmania would quietly float away if one were to cut the Bass Strait telephone cable.

Some of the friendliness may be artificial as the government has realised the richness of the tourist trade and has exhorted people through the press and radio to be pleasant and helpful to tourists.

Being a true 'no public transport for me' outdoor type you get out on the road either heading to the west of the North Coast or to Cradle Mountain and the Central Highlands, or to Launceston then the East Coast. Quite likely as you walk up the first hill to find a good position to hitch from, a car will stop and the driver ask you if you want a lift. This is something that would never happen outside Tasmania. Depending on the month you will see peas being harvested or rows of hardy bent backs of all types of people dragging bags along scooping potatoes into them. If it is March the famous apples like sunbathers are reddening in the occasional sun. you may be jolted to see the almost white rather than brown sheep on almost green grass.

True to the colonial tradition, the British settlers and administrators in the island attempted to make the move from Britain less profound by anglicizing their surroundings. Therefore you find many English trees such as hawthorn, oak, chestnut, maple, ash as groves, hedges and avenues throughout the country side. They are usually centered on beautiful mansions of whitewashed stone often built by convicts.

Hobart fascinates you with the small docks the glass trams, the solidly attractive square sandstone buildings with black wrought iron, the surprising pontoon bridge across the Derwent and the towering presence of Mount Wellington beside you. You trek west to see the mines of the West Coast, the ghost towns, the unique appearance of Queenstown nestling in the awful encircling white rock mountains bare of vegetation from the poisonous fumes of the smelters. Your science fiction instinct aroused, it seems like another world; you half expect to find the town devoid of any life as a result of an atomic explosion. You finish your investigation of the inhabited parts of Tasmania and degrade yourself paying for a trip on the train north to Burnie. This cannot be avoided as there is no road.

This trip is rewarding – a typical tourist pamphlet phrase – as you rattle across foaming red rivers, through rugged gorges, and pretty green cuttings, seemingly parting the greenery as you sway along. Then there is "Wee Georgie". "Wee Georgie" is a miniature steam engine about four feet high which puffs up a two foot gauge track to Tullah, a small mining town. The whole town relies on him for everything from bread to beer as there is no road. You sit in a carriage seating two abreast and lurch from side to side as it steams along at 8-15 mph slowing down, like a car for pot holes, for the sages and worps in the line.

You finalise you circle back to D'port and at this point in Fitzgerald travelogue fashion we should say, in strong American accent, farewell to this beautiful country as the sun sets over the changing colour of the land. Back in Devonport, you're tired of touring and want to get at these hence always distant mountains. 30 miles inland begins the mass of elevated country referred to as "The Reserve" – ah, to grips, to grips. You buy masses of dried vegetables, milk and fruit and soups, rice, porridge etc. ah, you think,

these Devonportians don't realise how comfortable they are. Yes, roughing it, you mumble egotistically – salami, sugar, more rice. You reverie – I'll be a hero back home, wait till I tell those bed-chair-car-ridden people in Brisbane of my six day haul across the tops of Tasmania -vita-wheat, cheese, more rice.

You hitch hike up to Waldhiem Chalet the northern most point of the "Reserve" – officially Cradle Mountain – lake St. Clair National Park – nearly, if not the largest National Park in Australia. At Waldheim you are met by the prime exhibit – Franz, in his squashed Tyrolean Hat, S-shaped pipe with a lid, bead, coat with carved wooden buttons and large boots. He smilingly crushes your hand and welcomes you to Waldhiem in Austrian English. You tell him you're heading straight through and would he telephone the Ranger at the other end and tell him you should be out in six days. You ask about the weather with more vital intention than conversation. Franz is amazingly reliable and you can take his "fine tomorrow but then turn dirty" as fairly accurate. Unfortunately he was leaving this year so someone else may have replaced him in the mainly hermit-type existence. You prance off with the fifth bounce in your step. You religiously watch your progress on the map as you ascend the track towards Cradle Mountain. the track passes a thousand feet below the summit to which you must climb even if no others. Why? For posterity, for retrospection if nothing else. Trudging on, head almost literally in the clouds, in true mountaineering terms, the panorama spreads itself out before you and you see peaks reaching for the sky at random along the plateau, the resulting rivers accentuating the contours.

Five days alter you arrive at the Ranger's House at the bottom of Lake St. Clair feeling anything between exhilaration and depression, being usually directly proportional to the weather experienced. You need to have at least one full day to provide contrast and also to explain how some people can declare the walk as being pure hell having ever seen more than fifty yards.

The Reserve is delirious in its singularity. You walk the average eleven miles in five hours from hut to hut, usually climbing a thousand feet up to a gap and down to the next hut. Ignoring the slush and mud of the track pounded by thousands of boots, you gaze at mountains above you on either side with names Oakleigh, Achilles, Ossa, Thetis, West Pelion, Geryon, Cathedral. Acropolis and Olympus. You climb as many as you have time and strength for. You pass through myrtle forest and walk balancing on the roots washed bare by the hundred inch rainfall of the area. No matter what the weather, there is always the great comforting thought of the hut at the end of the day but always gathering wood half a mile before you get to it.

All (or, at least, much) social procedure and inhabitations are lost in the mountains; there are no introductions, conversations are instantaneous having such as vital talking point – bushwalking. Being at the end of the season I met only one fellow. He had an enormous pack for his small stature and bald head. He seemed to survive on tea and cigarettes. He had been walking for twelve days having come from the east, over rather rough country with his mate who had had to walk out to Lake St. Clair to return to work. But my friend had another weeks holiday, so I walked with him for a day in my direction. I would almost have to run to keep up with him on flat going but came an incline and he would become very slow and rely a lot on his walking staff. When steep he would stop every fifty yards and light up a cigarette, smoke it and on for another fifty yards. He smoked about 40 cigarettes a day and had two of his rucksack pockets full with at least twenty packets. That evening cooking our rice and dried vegs he laughed about all the weird types he had seen walk through the Reserve: about the fellow who wheeled his pack in a wheelbarrow. Another bloke who cause no end of trouble in the peak of the season with thirty odd tired people squeezed into a hut when he played rock 'n roll and opera on a gramophone he had brought along.

Another fellow who hauled his pack behind him slung on a pair of bamboo poles until they wore so short he had to resort to traditional methods. One year he and the Lake St. Clair ranger were carrying a new axe and broom up to Ducane Hut, they were sitting down resting about ten miles from the lake and a group of girls came past and asked what they had the broom for. He explained that they were sweeping the track. The girls continued remarking how well the Reserve was kept. My friends' age was fifty six and his mate was sixty. We went our different ways, probably never to meet again, each a little wiser.

After graduating from the Reserve Tasmania offers areas of much greater challenge. In particular the South-West. Look at a map of Tasmania Isle and you will see the complete south western quarter of the state uninhabited; there must be a reason for this, you think – there is – and what a compelling reason. The spectacular mountain, of the area – in fact, of Tasmania, - is Federation peak. Its thousand feet of white quartzite above its approaching rides has been magnetizing dozens of parties each year since it was first encroached upon in 1948. The six days, walking required to get there makes it a two to three week trip. This usually necessitates elaborate preparation months before, arranging food to be air-dropped in strategic places and buying equipment. Two days walk away from civilization you come across a sign on the seldom defined track saying "You are now entering Gods Own Country". These words define you developing mood very acutely. This mood is called the "Southwest Attitude"; it is a foreboding cynicism, of feeling of transiency where your success and enjoyment is tied up entirely with the weather which can change from sun to snow in almost a few hours.

The utter bliss of camping on Becharvaise Plateau , a small grassy area an hour or two from the top of Federation Peak 1200 feet sheer above, is clearly paid for in the six days haul and final nightmarish day of scrambling and clawing up Moss Ridge. At least one night you have spent bitterly cold in your sodden sleeping bag with the rain pounding the tent around you when you stutter through your chattering teeth the seldom and inevitable moan of all bushwalkers – "why did I ever come here when I could be so warm and secure in my bed at home?". All this is forgotten in the ambrosial (if sunny) day of exploring the Federation massif of cliffs and gullies and peaks and a hanging lake with no rucksack. Then comes the victorious but sad march back to civilization to people, cars, textbooks and noise.

Those in short, are the reasons why Tasmania.

roger ewer.

(Editorial note... when the author was questioned as to why the small letters for his name, he explained that he had not the presumption to laudify himself with capital letters)



TOWARDS BRIGHTER BUSHWALKING

Ron Cox

Old bushwalkers fade away and new generations take their place. A priceless store of knowledge is handed down over the years so that youth need not learn by experience as much as it elders did. However, although hints on what equipment to take, what clothing to wear, what to eat etc. are available, an important mass of information is generally withheld. I refer to the techniques for making your bushwalks more memorable. To help you, the future leaders of the club, in this respect, I will discuss the factors I consider important in the organisation of interesting trips.

I can tell you immediately, without fear of contradiction, that to ensure a successful trip, it is absolutely essential that they party be lighted. In the dark, the easiest ridge, the most open forest, the smallest mountain, take on a new nature.

Walks that stop when the sun goes down have little chance of inspiring fond memories in the years to come. No better example could be cited than R.P. Ewer's famous Logan's Ridge Trip, 1958. This excellent leader achieved the outstanding success of lengthening the climb of Mt. Barney via Logan's Ridge, normally done in 5 or 6 hours, to 28 hours. A brilliant performance, which could not have been possible had the party waited for daylight to climb the vertical buttresses and gulley's of this ridge. Then they would not have got lost and wandered onto the Barney East Face and it would have been another, but far less exciting story. Even Graham Hardy, veteran of many a perilous venture on rock, remembers it as a singularly unnerving experience.

It probably needs no mention that the most effective method the leader has at his disposal to ensure benighting of the party is the late start. No good leader lets his party leave camp before the sun is decently up. A deplorable tendency in this respect has developed of late in club trips. I have heard rumours of parties which broke camp as early as 10 am.

The next important point is the choice of route. This should require twice the time available to cover it comfortably. I will quote another example from 1958 the Golden Year of University Bushwalking, the original Glucose Ridge Trip. The route from Moogerah to Moogerah via Lizard Lookout and Panorama Point – was new, interesting varied in character – and long. So long, that what with water trips on the range, transport breakdowns etc. we did not arrive back in Brisbane until 5 am on Monday morning after being kept busy all the daylight hours and most of the hours of darkness of the weekend. Those who had to start work almost as soon as we arrived home will never forget the experience.

A recent, interesting example of choice of a long route was the marathon "Impossible" Easter Walk in the Main and Macpherson Ranges by B. Bolton, H. Dyerlee and J. Hutton. This was a nice try although severely lacking in many other respects. For instance, note that the party was all male. This brings me to another remark.

It is generally good policy to have several members of the more helpless sex along, preferably freshettes. This will always cause plenty of trouble. I well remember an outstanding climb of Caves Route, Tibrogargan, again in 1958. From the bottom to the top by this route has been done in thirty minutes by some of the more energetic Boy Scouts.

R.T. Fifoot and I managed to take 28 hours by the simple expedient of dragging along three very new fresherettes. The best part of the two night and one day was spent climbing. The fact that it was raining most of the time and we were carrying heavy rucksacks helped considerably. R. Reimann, an innocent throughwalker roped in because he had a car vividly recalls the constant fear that one of the fresherettes would slip off the wet rock and disappear into the night below. We even had anxious parents ringing each other up and racing up the mountain in cars when we were long overdue. In fact we received the great honour of a special censure by the President at the next club meeting.

This trip was entirely on rock. Any walk can be improved greatly by including a certain amount of rock work. Admittedly, trips which consisted entirely of walking have sometimes been successful but the leaders who can make such trips adventurous are very rare. Brisbane Bushwalkers maintain a cliff rescue squad which is always eager to help should you be too enthusiastic in this respect.

Losing the way is a common method used by many otherwise unimaginative leaders to brighten their trips. A good example was a trip led by the notorious throughwalker A. Rosser who became hopelessly lost at night in the rainforest on the top of Lost World. The party was very large and extended and as it crocodiled round and round in the dark I was hoping for the lead to find it had circled to join up the tail. Sadly this did not happen.

An interesting variation on this theme, not often employed, is to get lost while in transport between Brisbane and the bushwalking area. A classic case was that of the driver, best not named, who after depositing Carol Nix near her home in Ipswich at 3 am drove for miles looking for the way to Brisbane and to his astonishment arrived back at exactly the same spot at 3.30 am.

Weather conditions can often turn a dull trip into one to remember. The enterprising leader realizing that his party is looking to him to provide a good weekend's entertainment would do well to study the weather forecasts carefully and try to pick what non-walkers regards as 'bad' weather. No one who was on Mt. Lindesay last year will easily forget the difference a little rain and wind made. Those who stayed below and shied away from this interesting rock climb, merely because cloud covered the top 200 feet of the mountain all day, missed a very rewarding experience. Peter Reimann who has been snowbound in Southwest Tasmania was heard to remark that it was remarkably cold and wet on Lindesay that day.

I feel I should urge the inclusion of transport breakdowns and other irregularities in your program. The old Peanut Truck unknown, sadly, to newer members provided valuable service in this respect. It could always be relied on to give trouble mechanically. There are numerous little tricks which can be introduced to make the long road journeys entertaining. Once, on the way to Springbrook, a former president, Duncan Macphee, managed to get the truck he was driving impounded for general illegality. (Leaving people behind, either in Brisbane or at the other end has been used to add confusion to the transport arrangements).

There are numerous other factors I could discuss which lift bushwalks a little out of the ordinary but space is lacking. I might just mention falling rocks, which can be very exciting and snakes which can even be more exciting, particularly if someone is bitten. These factors are fairly uncontrollable, although for the former you could discretely pick rather loose ridges and for the latter you could include in the party someone like Bill Bolton who loves taking on tiger snakes with a short machete.

It is not suggested that, having read and learned these suggestions you can immediately go out and organize what will come to known as an Epic Trip. Like the composition of great music, although the rules of technique can be written down, as I have done for you here, it requires creative genius. Not everyone can run an Epic Trip. However, you can all brighten your bushwalks immeasurably with a little though and effort.

There is, however, one important quality of leadership where you, the future leaders have the advantage. No longer can I run an Epic Trip, or even an extraordinary trip. Because, the sheer nervous strain of getting all members of the party safely through one of these adventures is now too much for me. The last descent trip led showed clearly the onset of this failing. In heavy mist, wind and rain on Mt. Lindesay I turned a party of soaked, freezing club members back 200 feet from the top at dusk, because I wanted to get them started down the wet cliffs before pitch darkness set in. this is not the stuff Epic Trip leaders are made of.

As I said you have the advantage, because, alas, the leader of an epic trip requires, above all else, the mental stamina of Youth.

The straight and narrow is no road to go to
