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EDITORIAL

Lucy Harrison

This magazine was instituted three years ago in order that club members might have a vehicle through which they could express, if they wished, bushwalking experiences, which they felt were worthwhile, or definitely not worthwhile. The first magazine brought forth examples of both of these, notably Keith Scott's poem "Conn's Plains" and Phillip Smith's article "I was a Bushwalker". Of course each magazine has not been composed entirely of articles which were the natural flowering of the lyrical impulse. A certain amount of bullying has gone on, on the part of the editors, but I think the bullied have usually, in the end, been glad of the effort they have been forced to make. And there have always been some spontaneous offerings, written by people who really burned to say some things; for example Ron Cox's "A letter to the Editor" and the contributions to the hut controversy.

After only 3 years the magazine has already reached the stage where it can be of "historical" interest. With the old hut now demolished, one can see the irony of Arthur Rosser's prophecy at the conclusion of "The History of the Barney Hut" in which he says, "Never mind Mungo; he has a secret fear. It is his belief that one weekend he will climb MT. Barney to find that some tidy little boy scout has used the hut, then burned, bashed and buried it. And he could be right – it is just the sort of thing that would happen."

The quality of the production of the magazine has improved from year to year and with it the cost. In 1959 and 1960 it was merely renewed. In 1960 we had our first real cover. 1961 showed a vast improvement, with an attractive lithic printing. This year the magazine has acquired for itself a commercialized type of name, "Hey Bob", which however is appropriate to the club because it is our call, and appropriate to the magazine because it signifies some sort of communication.

With the improvement of the magazine we have been faced with the problem of its commercial prospects – should we pursue them or not? I am definitely of the opinion that the club should not try to make a business proposition out of the magazine.

Firstly, no student can afford the time and work which the organization and distribution of such a magazine would demand.

Secondly, I feel the magazine should be for the benefit of every club member who wishes to write. It should be produced for the writers as much as for the readers. If we wish to commercialize we shall have to seek a high standard of copy, and probably go outside the club to get a sufficient number, and numbers of club contributions will have to be rejected. This, I feel, is wrong. The magazine should serve the club, not the public.

Our gratitude is, of course, due to non-club members who, by their patronage, allow us to produce the magazine.

However, before we make the choice of further commercialization or not, it is necessary to reach an equilibrium at which sales returns equal cost of production. Last year's large losses have driven this home.

We hope, this year, to have brought the magazine to a state of equilibrium in which the quality of contents and production are improved.

*[the rest is not photographed correctly, and thus incomprehensible]*

A FORTNIGHT IN CHAMONIX

Peter Reimann

Every summer the population of Chamonix swells to many times its original number. Its streets are thronged with tourists who buy postcards and souvenirs or sit at pavement cafes and eat magnificent French meals. The rack railway terminus 6,000 feet up at the Montenvers hotel disgorges them to descend in conducted parties to the Mer de Glace to wonder at the ice-grottos and formations of the Glacier, or to drink wine under the hot French sun while enjoying the vista over the overshadowing west face of the Dru or across the valley to the jagged outline of the Aiguille Rouges. If affluent enough they may catch the telepherique to take them up to the 12,600 ft. Aiguille du Midi and thence, suspended by a swaying wire several thousand feet above the soaring depths, across the Glacier du Geant – and gaze in awe at Mont Blanc, the summit of Europe or the famous Chamonix Aiguilles, those huge red granite rock bastions which tower aggressively skywards. Then they may continue on across the frontier to Courmayeur in Italy.

Yes, there is plenty for the tourist to do in Chamonix. But there is even more for the climber, and “the season” sees them converge on this centre from all over Europe. The camping ground at Chamonix is full of mountain tents – the base camp and refuge for when the weather on the peaks turns bad. From here, paths zig-zag up through the shaded pine forests and grassy slopes to the various huts; or the lazy may catch the rack railway, ski-lift or telepherique if one exists. And from the huts lie the mountains and all the hundreds of climbs that may be done on them.

Some climbs are very popular, but fortunately the majority are not. Generally the popular climbs are those most accessible to the huts, or the classic climbs of the district – those that everybody reads about. This season all the higher rock routes were iced up, so the tendency was to steer clear of these and concentrate on the lower rock climbs or the vertical rock walls which would not hold any ice, or to give the rock climbing a miss completely and head for the snow and ice.

The east face of the Grand Capucin was both a steep rock wall and a climb that is highly publicized. There was even a film made about it. It therefore had all the makings of a popular route – but our two friends who set off to try it did not realise exactly how popular it would be. On arriving at the bottom of the face they discovered no less than thirteen other parties waiting to set off. They bivouacked for a night waiting to start at the end of the queue and when their food ran out they finally gave up in disgust.

Our more humble first attempt was a low altitude rock climb on the Aiguille de L’M 9,300 ft high. The route was labeled “difficile” in the guidebook – about equivalent to an English “severe”. This mountain had the doubtful honour of being closest to the Montenvers Hotel and it was about as overrun as a Welsh crag on a Bank holiday weekend. There were Irish, Dutch, Germans, English and above all, the French shouting instructions at one another more than anyone else, and surrounded by the [Incomprehensible to read ...] smelling “Gaulois” cigarettes.

They were always immaculately dressed, but you could always tell an Englishman: his unruly beard, tattered clothes and unprepossessing appearance would stand out a mile off. Behind us was a French guide who would get impatient with his client at each stance and literally haul him up bodily on the rope instead of letting him surmount the difficulties himself. At the strenuous eighty foot crack half-way up we decided to haul our rucksacks up separately, and the guide who had been breathing fire down our heels ever since the bottom could not wait, and pushed past us to proceed up the crack in the middle of this

operation getting everyone's ropes tangled up the process. Despite these incidents we really reveled in the superb rock-climbing afforded by the grooves, cracks chimneys and slabs of this Chamonix granite.

The 12,500 foot Aiguille du Chardonnet by the Forbes arete was a classic, and we knew it would be popular too. So we craftily set our alarm for 1.30am which is earlier than required for this climb, hoping to thereby be the first on the mountain. Unfortunately the shattering noise of the alarm woke everyone else up in the room too, who forthwith also got up. It therefore developed into another rat-race, and the orange dawn saw queues forming at the gendarmes and a long procession edging along the mile long knife-edged ice arete. All the steps had been cut, so it was little more than a lengthy plod and the all important art of route-finding was entirely non-existent. However we did get back to the hut again by the astonishing time of 9.00 am.

After this we considered ourselves experts in foretelling which climbs would be popular and why; and so we removed ourselves to more unmolested areas and spent the rest of our fortnight scaling three more peaks without seeing another soul, nor yet even their tracks. The best set off from the base of the mountain as the dawn broke over Switzerland turning red. As the sun rose the chill of the night's frost was transformed into a burning inferno and everywhere dripping water announced the progress of the day's thaw, and the snow in the sun turned to porridge. Time raced by as we moved up rock pitches, kicked steps up the snowy arete and hacked steps in the ice coated rock further up. And at each stance you'd face out over the wild profusion of the Swiss Alps – mountain upon mountain. And there on the horizon was the Matterhorn thrusting itself up like a great tooth, yet dwarfed by the greater bulk of the Monte Rosa. Here indeed was mountaineering to its perfection.

Like the climbs the huts also varied in popularity. And again it was largely a matter of accessibility. The Albert Premier hut was a palatial brick dwelling situated on a rock island on the glacier at 8,900 feet. Being not far up the path from a ski-lift it was not only popular with climbers but also tourists, and these two elements conflicted sorely. During the long sleepless nights the sounds of voluble French shouting would echo back and forth along the corridors, punctuated at intervals by slamming doors. And then, feeling like a shattered wreck of human frailty you'd have to get up at 1.30 am.

The Durier hut however was a complete contrast. Situated in the Col du Miage at 11,00 feet on the western approaches to Mont Blanc it had taken us an arduous day to reach it. It was only a metal box eight feet square and we at first mistook it for a large boulder. Above the doorway was a stern notice asking one not to walk about on the roof with crampons on. The place was completely deserted which was fortunate as we filled the place to capacity. Here was real peace and serenity, and you could sit on the rocks outside the door with your bare feet dangling over the precipice, and gaze down at the delectable Les Coutamines valley 8,00 feet below.

The Argentiere hut is, I suppose, typical of the more ordinary variety – a two storied wooden affair with a guardian and his wife who would cook delicious meals if one wished. On the rail of the terrace outside one could hang one's socks out to dry and admire the peaceful view of the magnificent Aiguille Verte opposite with the steep ice face of the Coutourier Couloir sweeping gracefully and unrelentingly from glacier to summit. This hut was not so popular probably due to the 6,000 foot climb up from the valley it entailed, and its quietness contrasted greatly with the detestable Albert Premiere hut.

Perhaps the greatest imponderable of all in such places is the weather. It had seemed to have established a three day cycle of alternate good and inclement weather. One would thus climb furiously during the

opportunity afforded by the fine weather and then descend to Chamonix at the first sign of the impending storm, and fortify oneself with food, sleep, wine and hot showers. And one would pay frequent visits to the window of the Bureau des Guides to speculate upon the oscillations of the needle of the barometer. For our last climb we had lined up an ambitious traverse of eight of the Mont Blanc peaks. We thought we had the vicissitudes of the weather taped by this, so optimistically climbed up from Les Coutamines on a blazing hot afternoon. However we blundered seriously with our weather forecasting. The next day gave us a thunderstorm, an avalanche and a rock fall – each encounter unnervingly close – together with hail, mist and soft snow thrown in for good measure. So we made our escape down the glacier du Miage and bade farewell to the angry mountains.

And that evening we were on the night train to Paris feeling warm and dry as the rain beat down on the window panes. It had been a good holiday but it was only enough for a mere introduction to this vast and complicated chain of Mont Blanc. Two weeks was far too short to do justice to the place, and now any further plans would have to wait until next year. And so we crossed the Channel back to a long, hard winter.

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On the Summit.

“then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.”

John Keats

COALSTOUN LAKES – MT. WALSH, May 1960

Ken Warner

I awoke at 5 am with the frenzied wail of the alarm still ringing in my ears, and in a somnambulistic fashion set about packing the car and collecting passengers.

By Petrie, our small party – Gordon Grigg, Judy Bryan and myself – was recovering from the intoxicating effects of deep sleep, and breakfast was gladly partaken of. After two further breakfasts, at Caboolture and Landsborough, we indulged in a little exercise at the Kondalilla National Park. This consisted of swings, slippery slides, and see-saws; and while the female member of the party claimed exhaustion and sought escape in slumber, the old man was dragged to the bottom of the falls by youthful vigour and enthusiasm. It was not that he objected to the walk down, but he knew by long experience the old adage, known only to bushwalkers and ships passengers, that what goes down must come back up.

After lunch, at Nambour, Gympie, and Maryborough, the old car rolled through Biggenden and stopped at a spot which the experienced navigator described as B.111242. After a large tea of soup, fresh steak, potatoes and peas, the party decided that the canvas seats of the local cinema were more conducive to deep sleep than the hard ground at B.111242. Pudding of tinned fruit salad was slurped in the conventional style during Interval. Having been ejected by the Manager of the Theatre at the close of proceedings the party drove in silence back to B.111242 where they unrolled sleeping bags and surrendered to the all embracing Goodness of slumber.

Next morning the old members of the party were treated to a ready cooked breakfast by tough and enthusiasm, on the condition that they dragged themselves from their sleeping bag to eat it. Thus having ensued an early start to the day he took no further interest in the necessary, but onerous activities of washing up and packing up.

The car creaked and sagged as each new article of luggage was piled high in it, and with three bushwalkers squeezed into the interstices it laboured on to Coalstoun Lakes. Stopping at an important looking crossroad, the occupants feel out and proceeded to look for the volcanic bombs for which the area is noted. Unfortunately those found were all large, and embedded in about three feet of soil; and after leaving holes of a size which any golfer would be justified proud, they abandoned the attempt and trudged up the hill to the first of the lakes. Here the female member waded through twenty yards of mud and a further twenty yards of mud, covered with ankle-deep icy cold water, and proceeded to swim. A convenient log was found enabling them to emerge relatively clean and sweet smelling, and they hastily dragged on their abandoned clothes.

A search for the second lake was then instituted, and after much scrambling it was found hiding behind some large trees. On the return trip as the party was looking for an easier way out more lantana was encountered. At this stage the cunning of the old member showed itself, and with a cry of “Bomb! Bomb!” the two keen geologists set about collecting these interesting specimens, leaving the female member to force a way through the thick scrub.

The additional load of a dozen bombs nearly proved the car’s undoing, but it struggled manfully on the Ban Ban Springs, and then to Barambah Creek, where the party enjoyed a quiet swim in the company of several curious cows.

The car was then driven back to Coalstoun Lakes Township and forced up a terrible track along Sandy Creek by these brutal bushwalkers. As it collapsed at the fourth ford they set up camp and attacked a meal of gigantic proportions. By common consent pudding was postponed until breakfast.

By reason of the large meal consumed the night before it was 10.15 am before the gallant party again got under way. Having chased a herd of cows several miles up the creek they sat down and contemplated the absence of Coongara Falls and the hut, both plainly marked on their inadequate map. As a consolation the party ate lunch and filling their water bottles from a stagnant pool, in which floated several dead cane toads, struggled up a ridge to the base of Coongara Rock by 4 pm. A discussion ensued as to whether or not the rock should be climbed. Youth and enthusiasm had to bow to the majority who favoured a descent into the creek, an early tea, and uninjured bodies. The party ran down the slope, preceded by a great avalanche of rocks, and camped by another stagnant pool, again occupied by several of the species *Buffo Mortis*. By a unanimous decision it was decided not to put up the tent. At midnight they awoke to the sound of gently dropping rain, arose, and erected the tent; and after a lengthy discussion on igloo construction, they drifted into an uneasy wet sleep.

An error in navigation next morning resulted in the party wandering around aimlessly for two hours until youth and enthusiasm, well in the lead, stumbled upon a road. Within a hundred yards this widened to become a veritable highway, and good progress was made till they reached a hut. The presence of a rain-water tank, plus the inclemency of the weather, demanded lunch in its shelter.

The party made good progress along the Ban Ban Range in the afternoon, occasionally slowing down to crawl through thick lantana. As they were rejoicing in leaving civilisation far behind, and returning to the joys of unadulterated bush living, another road was found crossing their path at right angles. Ignoring its presence, and pretending it did not exist, they climbed the next bump in the range, and turned north to get on to the Bluff Range. Within minutes they again stumbled upon this horrible scar of civilization, this time bedecked with a hut, of an ugliness rivalled by only one other in Queensland. Cursing all mankind, mainly because this particular member of the race had not seen fit to build a rain-water tank, they pushed north into recently burnt country.

As the aged member – still no doubt lost in thought of the disgraceful monstrosities which humanity has inflicted on the face of a beautiful earth – was wandering down a ridge leading back to the valley, he was arrested by shouts from youth and enthusiasm, claiming he had found the required saddle to take them on to the Bluff Range a half mile back. Darkness fell as they reached the saddle, together with a lot of rain, deeming it necessary to camp in the back goo of a recent bush-fire.

No amount of shaking next morning would loosen the damp black mess from their ground-sheets, sleeping bags and bodies, so a disconsolate crew trudged ever northwards along the range. As the waters falling from above were insufficient to quench their sizable thirsts, or to wash their filthy bodies, at midday in a convenient saddle a water-party was pronounced necessary. A system of signals was arranged – one “Heybob” for water and two “Heybobs” for good flowing water – and the female baggage was left on the ridge top with the water bottles, to relay signals. Age and experience tripped down the slope to the west, and youth and enthusiasm down that to the east. About 200’ down the western slope age and experience came across a sandy gully. As it appeared to get sandier downstream, he followed it up a little way to a small rock pool about eighteen inches in diameter and a foot deep. This contained in order of importance: - about three gallons for strongly discoloured and sour-smelling water, sundry rotting eucalypt vegetation – hence the aforementioned discolouration and smell – and two dead cane toads floating half out of the



water; whether due to the low S.G. of bloated cane toad or the high S.G. of the near solid water, he was unable to ascertain.

Rapidly calculating that if he had come down 200', youth and enthusiasm, must, by this time, be 400' down on the other side, thus necessitating a total climb of 600' on his part, which would no doubt produce undesirable psychological effects in his aged mind and possibly undermine the happiness and unity of the whole party, he let out two resounding "Heybobs" and was happy to hear them answered in a trembling soprano from the top of the slope. He hastily rid the pool of its undesirable foreign matter, ignored the numerous "heybobs" from the other side of the ridge, and say proudly beside his pool, where he was joined by the other members of the party a few minutes later. Unkind remarks as to the quantity and quality of the water, - it appeared youth and enthusiasm had found a beautifully cool and clear flowing creek on the other side – prompted the old man not to disclose the nature of the previous occupants of the pool. After the party had quenched their raging thirsts and scooped handfuls of the gelatinous fluid into their water bottles, youth and enthusiasm took a bath in that remaining, thus rending it completely unfit for human consumption for the next decade.

The party then navigated north by compass and instinct, along the Bluff Range, with a strong easterly wind bringing vast quantities of rain and mist to harry them. In the mid-afternoon they cheered considerably, as they noted the wind had swung to the west and they swung along forcefully, waiting for the change such a wind must surely bring. Two hours later when the compass was again consulted they found the wind was still coming from the east, and the aged member, remembering his Secondary School training in Trigonometry was able to inform them that they had been walking south for the last two hours. With a sinking feeling they retraced their steps, and camped as night fell, with cliffs plunging down beneath them on three sides. The horrors of this night have been described in last year's Magazine, but the pleasures of the next morning have yet to be recorded.

The long hoped for westerly change had arrived. Biggenden lay below us, and the Trig. Station of Mt. Walsh was visible across the gorge.

Breakfasting rapidly, we scrambled round via a saddle to the summit ridge, ignoring the strong wind trying to blow us off. We reached the summit at 10 am celebrated the achievement with the last of the fizzy, and started the long trip home in a very happy frame of mind.

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“Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy.  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride,  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide ....”

William Shakespeare

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To the Fresherette

“Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove,  
That hills and valleys, dale and field,  
And all the craggy mountains yield.”

Christopher Marlowe

TRAVERSING THE WESTERN ARTHURS

By Pat Conaghan

The Western Arthurs in South-West Tasmania constitute one of the most rugged, and most provocative mountain chains in Australia. Yet strangely enough they have remained seldom visited, while every year hordes of pilgrims battle southwards to Federation Peak, in full view of their imposing sweep. Seen from Mt. Picton on a fine sunny day, the range forms a twelve mile-long profile, not unlike the jagged teeth of some gigantic saw.

I had first gazed in wonder and admiration at this scene from Mt. Picton in 1958 when returning from a trip to Federation Peak, but it was not until Christmas 1960 that I had the opportunity to visit the range. My companions, Barry Higgins and John Elliot, two veteran Sou-westers, had invited me into their party to traverse the Western Arthurs from west to east. This, however, was only the first stage of their trip. Their novel round-about route, beginning at Lake Pedder, would eventually take them to Port Davey, over country which is amongst the wildest in Tasmania.

Glance at the accompanying map of the Western Arthurs and you will see a long roughly straight chain of unnamed peaks studded with similar number of unnamed lakes. A little study of the map will no doubt show you that here we have a youthful glacial landscape, complete with ice formed lakes, horns, valleys and moraines. The moraines form the ridges running at right-angles to the divide, and these, in general, are the highroads to the peaks. Usually they are symmetrical open button-grass ridges, or leads as they are known in the south.

Apart from one or two specific names, the peaks have been numbered from west to east. Similarly the northern leads providing access to the range from the Arthur Plains have been lettered, thus indicating the limited amount of exploration in the area.

Higgins has been organizing this trip for some months ahead and at last all was in order. He had personally helped drop high level fooddrops on two points of the range, probably the first ever dropped in these mountains. On Christmas Eve the three of us were winging our way from Hobart to the white sands of Lake Pedder, under darkening skies that were the prelude of an oncoming gale.

That night we spent at Junction Creek camp, and on Christmas Day pushed onward to the top of the range at its westerly extension. We camped by the first of the numerous high level lakes, that we were to find so much a part of Western Arthur scenery.

It was not a large lake compared with others in the range, but its setting was idyllic. One could have spent days camping by its waters on the soft alpine meadow above its white quartzite beach. The slopes nearby were a riot with colours of the numerous native wildflowers. John, our expert horticulturist, was forever telling me their many names, such as *Geum renifolium*, *Richea dracophylla*, and common ones such as *Blandfordia* and *Hewardia*, and others too, with names as musical to hear as were their colours delightful to see.

In the lakes swarmed the curious Anapsides, those ancient may-legged crustaceans, formerly thought to be extinct many millions of years ago. One could sit and watch their playful antics in the clear red-brown water for hours and never notice the time fly by.

To describe our journey along the entire length of the range would be far too involved and lengthy. Needless to say we were kept very active while the weather was fine and could not pass any major peak without climbing to the summit. Some days we spent reconnoitering without packs a full day's route ahead from our camp. We did this on our second day on the range, and later from our camp on High Moor.

In between these two days however was one when we clambered onward between the quartzite towers of Mt. Hayes, skirted Square Lake just under Peak H., (the highest in the Western Arthurs) and camped for the night at Lake Arthur, the ultimate jewel of the Western Arthurs. Lake Arthur and environs is one of those beautiful spots that is impossible to adequately describe.

The end of my diary entry for the day reads: "Camp site is on the rock bar at southern outlet of Lake Arthur on small flat alpine meadow. Beautiful sunset as sun sank into the Southern Ocean through high clouds. This is the most beautiful spot we have so far found in the Western Arthurs. The peaks of 15, 16, 17 and H are huge glacial horns surrounding Lake Arthur which is about 50 acres in extent and very placid, mirroring the encircling peaks. A low sea mist crept into all the southern valleys. Bed by 11 pm." Barry was theorizing on how things would be when he came back to this spot in his old age to retire. John and I both agreed with him that it is certainly was the perfect place.

From Lake Arthur we dragged ourselves eastward on the hottest day I have ever experienced in the Arthurs. Tasmania was having a drought (in fact it proved to be the driest summer on record) and there was practically no water on the range except for that in the lakes. On this stretch however, the lakes were tantalizingly far below and not easily accessible from our high-level traverse. We had carried water in the morning but by the afternoon it had gone and we very quickly became dehydrated. At every saddle we would drop our packs and stagger down the scrubby slopes vainly searching for a tiny trickle. So dry was the ridge that even the mosses, normally sprouting water from the rock slabs, were almost totally dry.

That evening on nightfall we crawled up to High Moor, early anticipating finding our first food-drop and, we hoped, a local water supply. Jubilantly we discovered that both were there waiting for us, that night we all slept very soundly.

For some time now we had found no evidence of former climbers. The least peak that we found cairned was Peak H, but all the peaks east of this appeared to have been virgin. We knew that Lake Arthur had been visited before, but there was no sign of the peaks thereabout (excepting Peak H.) having been climbed. This was especially so of the next section, east of High Moor, a low scrubby section of the range known as the "Beggary Bumps". No one had ever been over this section before as far as we knew, although a M.U.M.C. party had tried to get through it from the east about ten years before but had failed.

Next day, descending from our pre-breakfast ascent of Peaks 21 and 22 John suggested we do a day's "reccy" through the "Bumps" and establish a route through the first rocky section ("Big Beggary") which looked as if it could prove somewhat difficult. Visibility that day was terribly restricted. The drought was now joined by bushfires away to the north-west of Mt. Anne, and dense smoke-laden skies blotted out all the distant peaks, while the sun was a merciless shimmering red disc.

By 4.50 pm John and I were back from our "reccy" to find Barry waiting for us with a brew of tea. He had stayed in camp to do some mending jobs while John and I established a rather involved and tortuous route through "Rocky Beggary", or the western mile or so of the "Bumps".

This section consisted of several scrubby peaks separated by usually narrow steep gashes and flanked by precipitous scrubby slopes. We had cut and cairned a route through, so that next day it took only 1 ½ hours to do this section with packs.

Eastward from here, however, was “Low Beggary” – a mile or so of scorparia-covered bumpy ridge which proved as dry and arduous as any part of the range before it. We prayed hopefully that the next lake we planned to camp on that night, the next one along the range, would be a high-level lake. Providentially it was, and here we found an old campsite by its northern shore set amid tall old scrub trees of scoparia and pandani. That afternoon we scrambled along the outlying ridge to Mt. Fay (as marked on accompanying map) which we found had been cairned. Below, in a really gigantic cirque nestled Lake Old, the last lake draining south. The floor of the cirque was littered with ghostly white trunks of old King Billy pines, probably killed in some terrible bush fire of the past.

Back at our lake-camp we spend several more days while a typical south-west gale kept us confined to the tents. On New Yeas Day the sun came out and we climbed the strange complement of towers comprising Peak 25 West. From here we could see that the weather was on the mend. Away in the distance stood the white profile of Frenchmans Cap while just across the Arthur Plains to the north rose the smooth red cones of Mts. Anne and Sarah Jane.

Two more days spent finishing the traverse, mostly in bad weather, and we arrived with aching legs at Pass Creek where we were immediately exposed to a terrible temptation.

The weather had fined up again that afternoon as we descended from West Portal. Even from high up on the ridge above the Pass Creek campsite we could see the gaily coloured little bundles that were air-drops down on the plain. As we walked amongst the litter one perceived dozens of tins of canned beer scattered ignominiously all over the air-drop zone. Those Melbourne boys on “Redder” were just plain lucky we were men of such high moral character, as the urge to split one or two open and relish the contents was naturally terribly strong.

Now the weather turned very bad again, so we sat on our air-drop tins by the comfort of the fire rather than spend a cramped day in the tents.

The time had come for me to say farewell to my two firm friends who still had many grueling miles ahead of them before they would reach their destination at King’s Homestead on Port Davey from where they would fly home. After I had taken my leave and retreated over Mt. Picton back to Hobart, Barry and John continued on their way. After a brief sortie to the Needles in the Eastern Arthurs they traversed Mt. Hopetown from north Range to the east of Federation. From here they crossed the headwaters of Norold Mountains, eventually reaching Port Davey on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1961.

Some day I hope to return to the Western Arthurs, for nowhere I found such compact beauty and rugged grandeur in the hills. Perhaps I will join Barry Higgins and retire to the tranquility and peace of Lake Arthur. Together we could smoke our pipes at sunset and watch the Anaspides playing in the crystal water. They seem to know a good spot when they find one – and they’ve been around for at least 300 million years.

#### *Historical Notes on Wester Arthur Traverses*

- a. 1950 – 51. M.U.M.C. party led by B. Bewsher spent 6 weeks in Eastern and Western Arthurs. This party attempted to traverse the Western Arthurs from east to west, but gave the traverse away

at Beggary, having traversed from West Portal to Peak 25. They then traversed the section from Lake Arthur to the western end of the range.

- b. 1960 – 61. B. Higgings, J. Elliot, and P. Conaghan completed the first full traverse of the range from west to east, with ascents of all major peaks.
- c. Dec. 1961. J. Elliot (L.W.C.) and A. Cross (H.W.C.) completed first full traverse from east to west, mainly in bad weather.
- d. Feb. 1961. H.W.C. party Bruce and Rosalie Davies, L. Johnston, J. Wythes, R. Dargaville, I. Nilsen completed the second full west-east traverse experiencing much bad weather also.

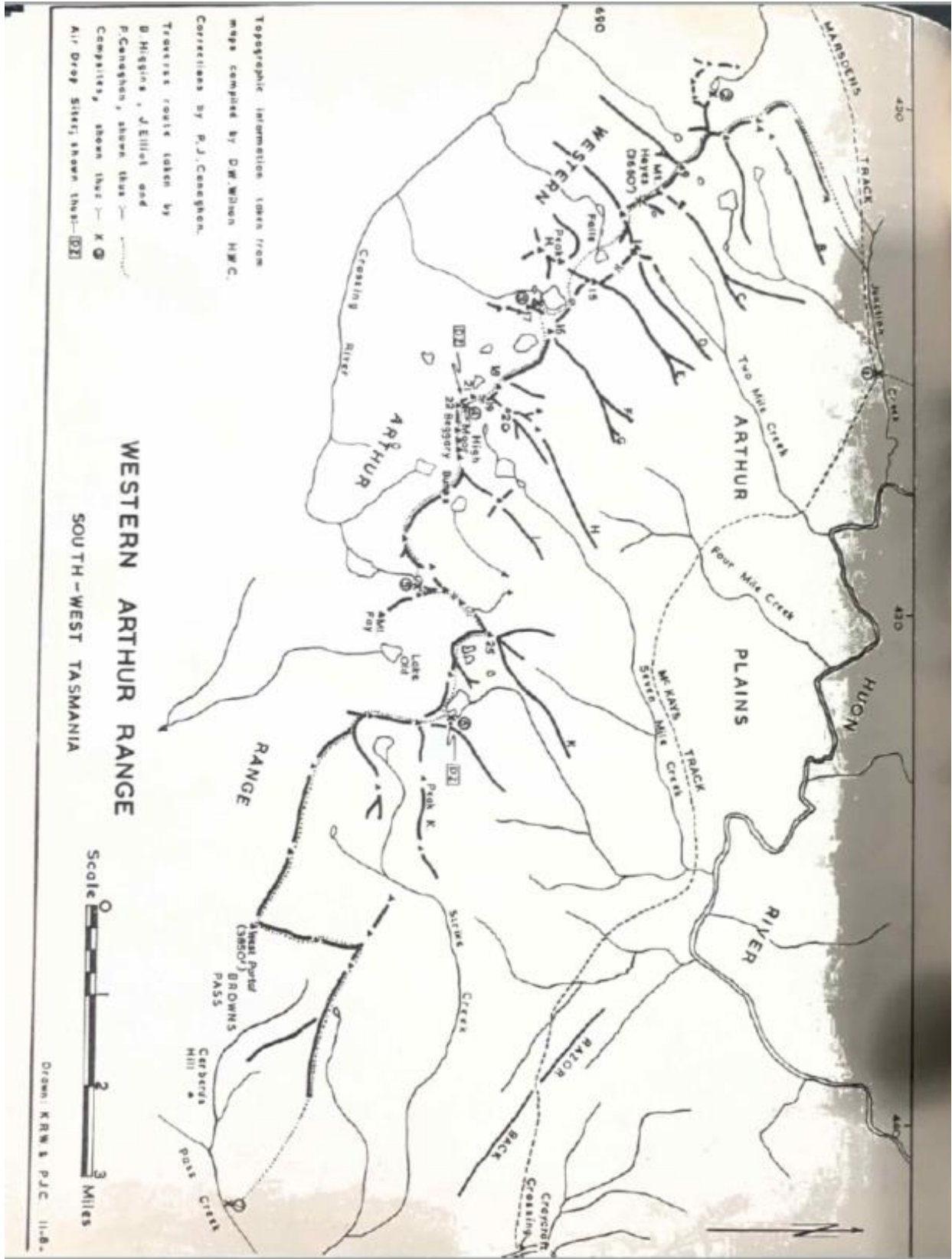
Many partial traverses, and visits to various sections of the range had been made over the years, mainly by H.W.C. members. This pioneering work was done by such personalities as Ron Smith (who was responsible for the systemic numbering of the peaks in the range), Jim and Una Brown, Jock Turner and groups led by Bruce Davis.

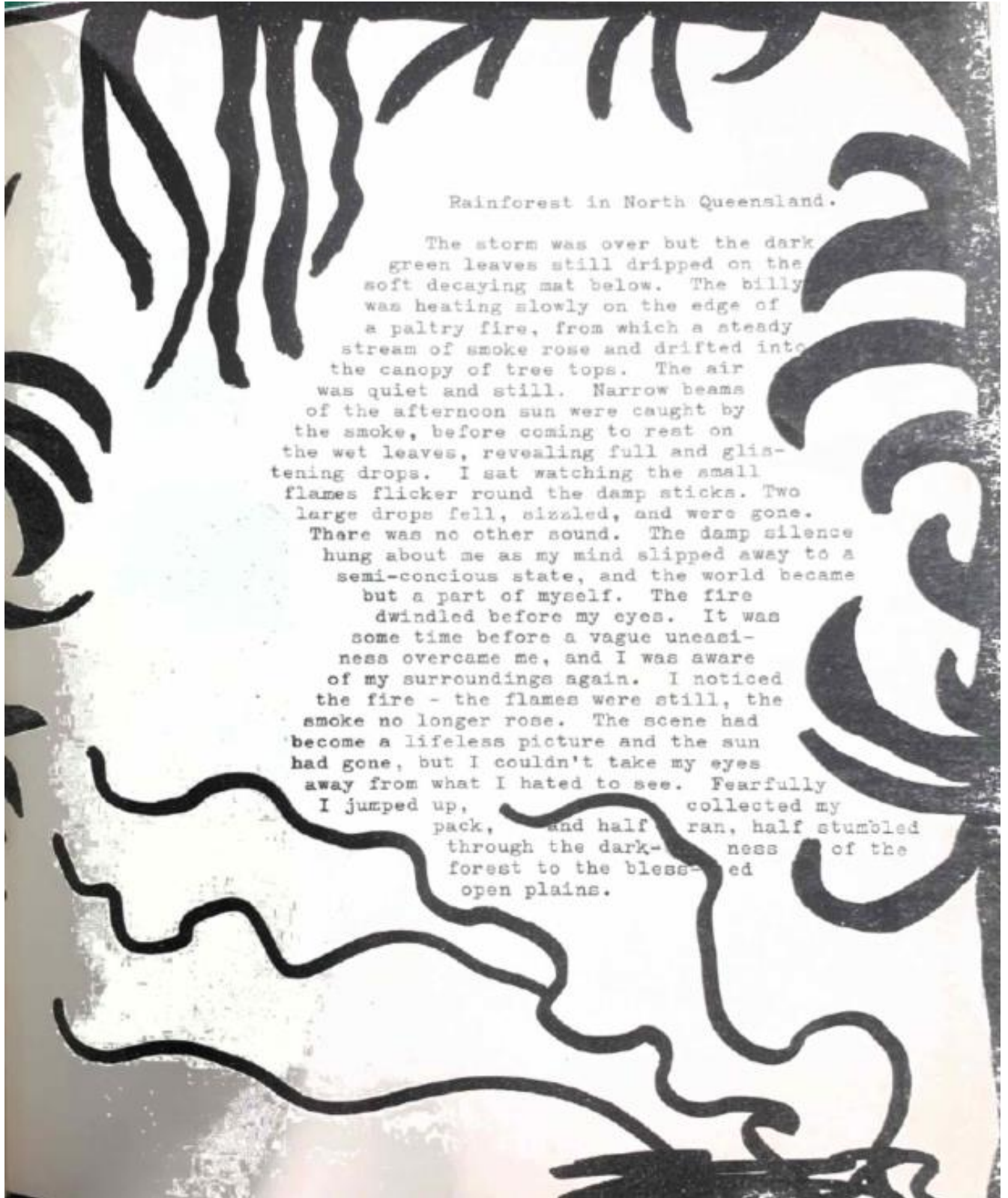
*Available Information on Western Arthurs*

Maps: H.W.C. “Eastern and Western Arthurs” map (scale 1 mile – 1 inch – price 4/-). Available from Map Custodian, H.W.C., G.P.O. Box 753H, Hobart. (see below also under route guides).

Air Photos: Runs 3, 4 and 5 “South West” Series. These are high-level (21,000 ft.) photos. Available from Lands and Survey Office, Hobart.

Route Guides: No concise route guide is yet available. H.W.C. may shortly be issuing a brief route guide as part of their main South West series. Detailed route information is however contained in a booklet produced by David W. Wilson, which incorporates the writers log of the first west-east traverse, together with two maps. One map shows entire established route along the range. The second is a detailed inset maps of the “Big Beggary” section showing established route through this. This is available from David at 21 Bath Street, Battery Point, Hobart.





Rainforest in North Queensland.

The storm was over but the dark green leaves still dripped on the soft decaying mat below. The billy was heating slowly on the edge of a paltry fire, from which a steady stream of smoke rose and drifted into the canopy of tree tops. The air was quiet and still. Narrow beams of the afternoon sun were caught by the smoke, before coming to rest on the wet leaves, revealing full and glistening drops. I sat watching the small flames flicker round the damp sticks. Two large drops fell, sizzled, and were gone. There was no other sound. The damp silence hung about me as my mind slipped away to a semi-conscious state, and the world became but a part of myself. The fire dwindled before my eyes. It was some time before a vague uneasiness overcame me, and I was aware of my surroundings again. I noticed the fire - the flames were still, the smoke no longer rose. The scene had become a lifeless picture and the sun had gone, but I couldn't take my eyes away from what I hated to see. Fearfully I jumped up, collected my pack, and half ran, half stumbled through the darkness of the forest to the blessed open plains.



MT. ASPIRING IN A WEEKEND

Barry Smith

Friday 6 pm, and at last the vet's car swung into the Veterinary Club Headquarters – I was free! I rushed in, grabbed pack and ice axe and was soon on the Main Road to Dunedin, waving my thumb at the passing motorists.

All went well until one hundred miles further south, I decided not to tempt fate any more and boarded the railcar in Oamaru. On board were Dave Elphick and Ivan McDonald and we yarned the miles away until we reached Dunedin. On the station platform a beaming Wilson cantered forward in his multipatched trousers, oblivious to the glances of the conventionally dressed public.

A few brief moments of packing the car, a visit to the police station to see if we could help in a search for a plane missing in our area, and we were off. Through the darkness the miles sped by into hundreds, dawn arrived, and soon after, on Saturday morning, we arrived at the Matukituki valley.

The weather was perfect and the beautiful Matuki Valley sparkled in an early morning dew. Soon breakfast was over and we were moving rapidly up the valley under our 40 lb. packs. This valley is one of the most beautiful in New Zealand. Unlike the shingly Canterbury river beds, here the bush comes right down and the green grass extends right to the river's edge. Aspiring hut was reached – we paused briefly to jot our notes in the hut book and then moved on. Above this hut, the valley surpasses all in its splendour – bush tracks lead to beautiful flats and camp sites which must be paradise to the snow-burned mountaineers.

Twenty miles from the car we reached the head of the valley and began a strenuous climb to Bevan Col at 6,500 ft. As we climbed on the slabby, glaciated rock, the nearby peaks fell away below us, opening up grand views of the surrounding higher peaks. The sun was sinking low when we reached Bevan Col – Aspiring now lay before us, across the Bonar Glacier, its majestic symmetry glowing in the setting sun. Dave and I moved on across the Bonar in search of a good route, as our start next morning was to be in darkness. Then back to the Col where Jim and Ivan had prepared tea.

We snatched some brief hours of sleep before the alarm jangled our weary bodies into action again. By 3.30 am we were striding out over the now bronzed Bonar Glacier, in the last rays of moonlight. The crunch of crampons on the ice and the steady breathing were the only sounds which broke the silence. Dawn arrived and we climbed upwards, no on Aspiring's flank above the Bonar. Not much was said, each of us occupied by our own thoughts. The N.W. ridge was reached – off came the crampons and we moved together on easy rock. It was exhilarating to be gaining height so rapidly and so early. The last quarter of the ridge was on ice again so we strapped on crampons and moved onwards.

Some steps made by an earlier party were still visible and these helped. Finally nothing of the ridge lay before us – only the downward serrations of the Coxcombe Ridge. We were on top, 9,990 ft., and the time was 9.30 am. Jim and I rested, watching Dave and Ivan toiling up the last section of the ridge. Not a cloud or a breath of mind – all around us were peaks and bush valleys. To the south lay majestic Mt. Tutoko, a promise of next season and to the North, Mt. Cook Summit Ridge reminded us of the right out, at 12,00 feet. Jim and I had had that Christmas. We rested for half an hour with one eye on our watches. We had to be back in Christchurch early the next morning.

From the summit down was to be a continuous race against time. Away we went and the race war was on. A couple of hours later we were back at our car and packing our bags, snatching a bite to eat, and away again. By now our [...] were really tuned to the terrain; we sped down the upper slope, reaching or leaping downwards from slab to slab. Then the valley [...] – twenty miles to go. Heads down and tails up, was the story [...] – even though the beauty of the valley did not escape us.

The car – through the dark – sealed roads – strangled roads – weary roads – 100 miles, Oamaru – train gone – 50 miles, Tinaru – train gone – 40 miles, Armburton – there it was – packs grabbed and all aboard – a brief cheerio for Jim – 50 miles, home – one and a half hours to pack – [...] Airport – plane to Wellington – plane to Sydney – to King’s Cross – midnight Monday – still King’s Cross – Ah! Those legs!

ON MOUNTAINS AND MEN

Doug Clague

For one such as myself to list the names of mountains among my personal friends, may, to a lesser experience of you, seem ridiculous. Furthermore, of I were to state that every mountain has its individual personality, you may think that I had drifted off into the realms of fantasy.

[...] consider the above sentences for a few moments and compare the mountains with your friends. Those of you who have only attended a few trips to different areas and perhaps have only been in the bush a short time, you will love the bush. This I regard as mere infatuation on your [...] love a thing you must be very familiar with it in all of its [...] being familiar with all of its relevant peculiarities.

To be [...] -sunny-day-Jonny with a dry bed (impossible) at night is to fail to fully appreciate or perceive the personality of the country. Without fully appreciation in personality how can you simply state you love your country. Surely love is deeper than this.

I'm queer. I admit, but I love to climb Barney in raging winds, driving rain and bitter cold; to stumble exhausted into the hut, and to wake in the morning to see brilliant sunshine with mist writing in the valleys and enhancing the scene. I have been buffeted by Barney in one of her more boisterous moods and have been repaid tenfold with beauty and health. Thus I have experienced her foul (?), boisterous, frolicking and care-free moods.

While speaking of health my mountains are also my most able physicians even though they still use Nature's age-old remedies. Often I have left on a trip feeling dejected, fed up with study, and fed up with all that civilization stands for. Next morning I wake up feeling wonderful as though I had been reunited with an old friend. She has thus first regenerated my mind and in a few days to follow she rejuvenates my whole body so that I am able to return to my books and studies as a contented man.

Those of you who have never been fortunate enough to experience this (wait until after exams) cannot realize the depth of the pleasure that you have to look forward to. I could not put this last subject in more appropriate words than does the poet Leonard Mann, who in his poem "The Man Without Grace", says –  
"The streets had robbed him of his body's health. And now the bush sprang on him from its stealth. And gave to him his body back again. But snatched away the thing he called his soul."

For some mountains I have a much greater affection than for others even as you regard some people greater friends than others. Some mountains do not interest me – neither do some people.

To me Crookneck has no great fascination but to such notable identities as Ron Cox, Pat Conaghan, and Gordon Grigg she no doubt means a lot and holds a portion of their hearts. This association has grown over the year. They have tested each other and each has no doubt found the other wanton (or wanting). After ascending the east face I doubt if their feelings would have entirely been of personal achievement or conquest but rather of affection for their former opponent. If this feeling is absent they are nought but egoists.

Once you truly love a mountain she will show you her innermost secrets (so will a good friend) that are hidden from the hurried walker (or casual friend). Little plants hidden beneath rocks, gorgeous flowers

sheltering in her valleys, fascinating insects and timid birds and animals. These are her dowry and our heritage, but how few, how very few ever even see let alone appreciate these things.

The athletic (?) types see a mountain and race to the top. They are “men”. They arrive “hours ahead of the others” but in their haste they frightened the animals and birds and see nothing, as though the old mountain does not wish to disclose her treasures to them. They have climbed and conquered her. Conquered what? Her cliffs and peaks? Perhaps, yes, but not her spirit.

The wiser (more mature?) walker on the other hand strolls up the mountain noting much and arrives hours after the others with the excuse that he had just taken his time. But is an excuse necessary when he has gained full benefit from his climb? I doubt it. As Grahame Baines aptly puts it, “Records are for the athletic track”.

Surely those who spend weeks on end racing around in the macadamized jungle (with less interesting animals) could just relax for a few moments to dwell on the beauty of their surroundings instead of racing off as though it was a matter of life and death or they had to catch the last bus. I strongly suspect that they have forgotten the Art of relaxing. These people should relax and learn to love their mountains and then they would not have to boast about climbing such and such in a near record time to boost their ego as they would be inwardly satisfied.

Bushwalking, if you are a genuine walker and not just interested in finding the toughest or fastest route from point A to point B, must, in time, foster a love for one’s country. Love for one’s country is the Father of patriotism and patriotism in the people of a country augers well for that country’s future.

Thus, if you can fully realize the personality of the mountains and feel as much affection for them as you do for your close friends, no matter where you are or how trying the conditions you will be happy because you are with your lover – your country.

STRETCHER PATIENT

Noel Eberhardt

“Easy Throughwalk” the circular had said, and it certainly seemed so at first. The night walk up to the Mt. Cordeaux saddle and the ascent of this peak the following morning were quite easy, as was the day’s walk along the Main Range. It seemed as though it was going to be an easy and most enjoyable walk.

On the Saturday afternoon, however, I got the first warning of the impending trouble, as I was weakening very quickly and beginning to feel very sick. At first I put this down to drinking too much cold water but when I vomited blood the situation seemed very bad. All the night I was sick.

The following morning I told Ken Warner I was sick and this immediately caused speculation as to the trouble. Several theories were put forward but as we had no medical students on the walk the Veterinary Science students had to diagnose. This did not help much as everyone had a different opinion and in the end I had innumerable disorders.

At first I walked without my pack, but I became slower and slower, having rests very frequently; the last two rests I had were then yards apart.

When I could go no further I called to Doug Clague who built a stretcher out of shirts and an old groundsheet, and although it needed periodic repairs it managed to bear my weight for several miles. Several of the buttons on the shirts however gave way under the strain and rope had to be used for more support.

By this time most of the party had gone on and there were only two or three boys to carry me. Bill Stephenson was sent on to bring back some more while I was carried as far as possible by the ones who remained.

It was very hard to get used to being carried. When the going became very hard I felt as though I should get up and help them every time I looked at their straining arms and their faces distorted with the effort. Soon it became clear that two bearers could not carry me far, so when we reached some level ground I was made comfortable and left to await the arrival of some more bearers.

By this time I had lost quite an amount of blood and went into a state of shock and became exceedingly cold even though wearing several sweaters and being inside a sleeping bag. My memory of this part of this trip is also hazy in parts and all I remember is a series of hills covered with rocks and equally rocky gullies in between. Despite this the ride was very comfortable even though several of the bearers said that they would rather carry the stretcher than be carried.

As night fell progress was slowed but I could now see the fires at the top of Laidley Creek falls and the Pinnacle. They seemed quite close but we approached them with agonising slowness. We finally arrived at the top of the falls where I was handed over to a fresh party.

The first obstacle was the falls, under which I had to be carried. It was decided to run through the falls to keep reasonably dry. This was a good plan but the leaders got held up by a step up at the other side and the rear bearers and myself got very wet and some choice comments were to be heard for some time. Now the route was along the base of the cliffs of the razorback. This slope was very steep and the carrying must have been very difficult. We arrived at Hole in the Wall at midnight.

The route now was over the pinnock, where a fresh party of bearers took over, and down a terrible grassy ridge which would have been hard enough to walk down let alone carry a stretcher. During the descent of this ridge the girls would scout ahead and find the best route. This was no easy task and the rests were very frequent. One such rest I remember particularly well as I was put down on a green ants nest and was stung badly before being set down elsewhere. There are large distances of this descent I cannot remember and I am sure I must have blacked out as I certainly could not have gone to sleep.

Going down this ridge was most discouraging as far as progress was concerned. We could see the camp fire at the bottom but it never seemed to get any closer and the only other breaks in the darkness were the occasional flashed of light from the torches.

The sunrise that Monday morning was very beautiful – all golden over the low lying cloud banks and such a change from the oppressive darkness of the preceding hours.

Soon there were people coming towards us from the direction of the camp and the ordeal was over. Never was I so glad to get back from a bushwalk.

I must now thank all who carried me or carried extra packs during those twenty hours. Also I would like to thank the girls who helped by finding the easiest route and thus making the carrying easier on this “Easy Throughwalk” which became a true Epic.

MY MOST UNFORGETTABLE TRIP

Dawn Abraham

Regrettably I had missed the Club trip to Canungra Creek – Mystery Trail on Queen’s Birthday weekend 1961 so when I was invited to do the same trip in January, 1962 I jumped at the chance. What could be better than a rain forest trip in summer. It seemed such an interesting trip too. I was very anxious to see the Coomera Gorge.

It was to be a three and a half day trip, so we would have plenty of time to extend the trip or make any little detours. We were due to leave my place at 7 am. Saturday morning. However this had to be modified slightly because the other two members of the party were patiently waiting for each other at different points several miles apart – a slight misunderstanding in arrangements.

I had mentioned the trip to a friend a few days before –

“Where are you going?”

“Lamington.”

“It’ll rain.”

“I hope not.”

“Of course it will. It always rains in Lamington.”

In due course we arrived at O’Reilly’s and made our way down to Blue Pool. I didn’t recognize it – there was about twice as much water in it as when I had seen it last. Just as well they have those little sign posts. The sky was overcast but that only made more pleasant cooler walking. We decided to lunch at Blue Pool and just as we were settled and happily masticating, it started to rain. It wasn’t very heavy – just enough to give bread which had to last 3 days a good change of going mildewed.

There is a track marked on the map for the greater part of the journey. [...] waste not to use this, so set out to follow it. It is a very good track in parts but has the nasty habit of disappearing at the most embarrassing times, leaving you suspended about 15 feet up a cliff or in some equally unpleasant position.

Because of the idiosyncrasies of the track we had a second plan of action. This was to rock-hop up the creek. However this proved impracticable also, because there was so much water – after the recent heavy rains, that there just weren’t enough rocks to hop on. The third plan of action was to paddle in the creek and although rather successful was also mildly uncomfortable.

Our leader had a rather horrifying experience on the first night. He was attacked in bed by one of those blue crayfish. Alone and armed only with a stick he managed to beat off the aggressor, and force him to retreat into the creek.

I carefully dried my sandals by the fire to avoid the unpleasantness of cold wet sandals in the morning. After breakfast we plunged straight into the creek to get to the other side. Then as if that wasn’t bad enough we walked only about 5 yards before plunging back to the other side where we stayed for some considerable distances.

A description of this trip would not be complete without some mention of the leeches. One expects a few leeches on a rain forest trip. However, when it comes to sharing your blood volume equally with the leeches I think it is a little excessive. Even this was not the worst part, the multitude of bites itched for days afterwards. Another thing I had against these leeches was their superior intelligence. They didn't bite on the ankles like most of their species where they can be easily pulled off, but crawled up our legs to the groin where you have to remove your trousers to get at them.

It rained of course and we spent quite a lot of time wading in the water nearly up to our waists. Each one of us took at least one accidental bath. (One member even had a voluntary bath. Poor chap! I think the strain was a bit much). With all this water around we ended up with one wet set of clothes which we put out for the morning, in order to have dry clothes for sleeping. Only those who have experienced it know the agony of climbing into wet, cold clothes in the morning.

When we reached the Coomera River our intrepid leader consulted the map and discovered some White Caves "only about 200 yards along the track". He had seen pictures of these caves and they were worth a visit so we set off along the track. We had walked a good deal further than 200 yards before any of us became suspicious about the Caves. However they were on the map and adopting the well known bushwalking doctrine that they couldn't be much further we pressed on optimistically. Imagine our surprise when we came out on the main road to Binna Burra. I was beginning to lose all faith in maps when someone found a sign post pointing to white Caves down another track. They were quite interesting.

We spent the third night camped at the bottom of the Mystery Trail. It is marked by 2 cairns and a well made tourist type fire place. During the night I half woke to find a large tuft of air on the top of my head quite soaked. I also dimly perceived a small river flowing diagonally across the corner of my ground sheet so I moved to the side and went back to sleep. A little while later I was awakened by a shout of: "Dawn are you awake. My tent's collapsed and I am soaked and sitting in water. Can I come over with you?". At this point I realized that I was sleeping in a couple of inches of water. All three of us spent the next few hours sitting in my tent while the rain poured down from a thunderstorm and the water seeped through our sleeping bags. A waterfall had appeared over the big rock and we were camped in the bed of the creek. I remember once reading an article about how to select a campsite. One of the rules was "Never camp in a dry creek bed". I thought "What rubbish! Who would be stupid enough to do that?". Now I know!

Next morning we set out to find the Mystery Trail – fully confident. I might add of course, its location is a mystery. We couldn't find it anyhow. We zig-zagged up and down the slope a couple of times and even got as far as the base of the cliffs but they didn't look very inviting from our angle so we were forced to give up and go all the way back to Binna Burra. We arrived at 8 pm, had the best meal I have ever eaten, and then set off along the Border Trail at 9 pm. It was black as pitch and we pounded our feet to pieces on the hard graded track. After 3 ½ days of being wet they were in no condition for this.

Just as the grey light of dawn was filtering through the trees we arrived back at O'Reilly's, in time to say "Good Morning" to the little paddy melons playing on the grass. Now we all started thinking about dry clothes to wear home. I had a sweater and two handkerchief (men's size). However I couldn't manage an artistic arrangement so decided wet trousers would have to do. Dozens of tiny leeches had hitched a ride back on my socks. They were impossible to dislodge so I put sandals and socks in a plastic bag and took them all home. Mother was pleased.



Finally I arrived home feeling like a zombie and much too tired to sleep. My feet were too sore to suffer the indignity of walking and really did resemble plates of meat.

My recollections of the trip are as follows. I have never before seen so many waterfalls, blue crayfish, leeches or snakes. I have never before carried so much water in my pack and hope I never shall again.

\*\*\*\*

“Coldly afflicted,  
My feet were by frost benumbed  
Chill its chains are; chafing sights  
Hew my heart round and hunger begot  
Mere-weary mood.”

From “The Seafarer” – anonymous old English poem.

PERSISTANCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER

Von Earle

“Cissy” shall be her name. (Although she has been called by so many names which I really don’t think we’ll put in here.)

‘Twas a dullish day – lazy “to-bed-with-book” type, and the few of us who had shirked the climb up Buchanan’s Fort were all for a quiet rest – but NOT Cissy! The wo main time-taker-uppers of man had rubbed off on her – food and fellowship.

Cissy strolled (now you all know how a cow would stroll) into camp about – (well I don’t know what time it was, on account of – well I just didn’t know). However she strolled into camp about then and stood and looked with her big cowie eyes (they were the only ones she had( and that was all right. Then she decided to discover what there was to be discovered – whatever this was.

Thinks Cissy: “People = Food. (I won’t eat people!) – but man-oh-man – lead me to the food!!”

“It” was a burnt-black-bottomed billy, half full of cold, ooie porridge – but not to worry, Cissy loved it, even if her nose was squashed to fit into the billy. Emptied, it made a most comfortable shoe for front left foot (or whatever that thing under the front left corner of a cow is called). Tight fit needed a hard pull to get it off, but friend Judy managed, only to have to come streaking back to rescue a fork – apparently Cissy has heard her “uman friends discussing a “fork-dinner”, and thought she’d found one, as a follow-up to porridge.

“But what is this? An open pack? Hay-oh! Ummn – bread, biscuits, cheese...” “Shoo! – Get out, cow!”. Flap flap of ‘uman arms, and swish of ‘uman ‘at on nose. (Cissy raises her head and chews the hat). Poke with stick (softly) on rump (steak). Poke again (wee bit harder). Whack! (She gets the message).

Not far though, and not for long. Back again to share some sausages, fish, egg and cheese goo, tomato, onion and potato (called “hash with the girls”) and then to down a billy-full of asparagus soup. Who’d bother with grass then there’s a banquet for the taking (if not for the asking)? \*You’d be a silly cow to refuse, eh?)

“They’re a weird mob, them ‘umans. Eat a wee bit of their dinner, and they begin a-whining, just cause a cow has eaten the batter-makings of the pineapple fritters.”

And then gets the spoon in too. So in goes a ‘uman ‘and to scratch around and get it out, and “it” all covered with delicious raw batter-makings. “Never mind, I’ll show ‘em,” grins Cissy. Crunch, crack, and a ‘uman turns to see red liquid dripping from Cissy’s lips. “It’s chewing a knife! Man the panic stations!! Now Cissy, come, spit it out. There’s a good cow-girl.” And with this, she obliged – one chewed-up plastic tube of tomato sauce!

“Ry-King biscuits and pineapple,” thinks Cissy. “Pineapple!” thinks ‘uman, and together they dive, and ‘uman gets the pineapple, plus butt in bottom (but it didn’t hurt). By now it was all part of the game, and Cissy’s pranks were met with gleeful giggles. She wouldn’t be banished – well no further away than the fence (and wasn’t it just great to scratch on?)

Now the day is almost over. The adventures are back, swims have been swum, and ‘appy ‘umans pile into cars and drive into the gathering gloom. With much regret we say “Farewell” to Cissy the persister. Is that a tear glistening, or only the thought of more ‘umans ‘oped for?

MOUNT BARNEY – FOR THE “ARISTOCRATS”

John Minter

Apart from “Peasant’s Ridge” there are about a score of routes by which Barney can be climbed, without necessitating the use of about half-a-mile of rope for repelling down the East Wall and other similar unlikely routes. This article is dedicated to those peasants who do not wish to be labelled such and would like to climb a real mountain by a route worthy of it.

Here are a number of suggestions: (refer to the accompanying map and move in a clockwise direction from the extreme west).

The Upper Portals just below the junction of Mt. Barney and Back Creeks can be used as an ideal starting-point for a few of the lesser-known routes up the mountain. The Portals themselves cannot be negotiated with packs but a short detour by the hills on the north bank, followed by a short rock-hop down Mt. Barney Creek brings us to the junction with Barrabool Creek which is only half-a-mile from the Portals.

- A. If we now follow this creek, which incidentally provides us with some very easy and enjoyable slab walking in its lower reaches, up to the summit of Barrabool we will probably take days to bash through the thick rain forest
- B. But if we turn to the ridge on the west after the second creek comes in on the left we can reach Barrabool by a rather long and arduous, but nevertheless interesting routes.
- C. However, a much quicker if stiffer route begins where the first creek enters from the left at the foot of some most delightful cascades on the main creek which is to the west of the direct ridge route.
- D. The creek coming in on the left at this point is unknown to me but probably provides a relatively easy route up to the saddle between Barrabool and West Peak. Barrabool itself is an interesting flat summit not visited as often as it should be, particularly as it is less than two hours’ journey from the hut. The Lower Portals can be reached from the hut via Barrabool quite easily in a day if we descend by the direct ridge route (b).
- E. The next ridge (Midget Ridge) is an old favourite of the club’s but is much better traversed down rather than up. Below Midget Peak the ridge divides: one branch putting the Upper Portals within easy reach, and the other making the Lower Portals accessible.
- F. The next way up the mountain is the best non-ridge route, namely that via Barney Gorge which can be travelled up in 2 ½ easy hours, but I have also been with a party that took nearly ten hours. This is spectacular route with two great advantages – one is an excellent swimming-pool and lunch spot at the bottom, and secondly it leads one straight to the hut at its top end. The Gorge has two or three places that require care: One is a waterfall near the bottom where the creek swings from a north-west to north direction which can be by-passed by a fairly easy chimney on the east side or by a hazardous slag slope on the west side. (Ask “Hank” if you wish to go straight up the centre!) The second difficult patch, about half-way up, must be carefully traversed on the east side and after this one has opportunities of enjoying the climb and the views of the peaks almost immediately above; Midget, Leaning and North Peaks are all prominent.
- G. Leaning Peak is not reached by the ridge beginning on the east of Barney Gorge but by the ridge running up from the west side of Barney’s beautiful waterfall. The creek between these two ridges lands one in great difficulties, however Leaning Ridge, although requiring the use of a rope in two places is not exceptionally difficult, and it does contain one possible camp site. It is also possible

- to camp at the top before repelling off the summit – (about 75 feet down and an easy repel as it does not begin on a vertical slope) – and continuing one’s journey to the hut.
- H. The creek feeding the waterfall provides an easy route to the saddle to the south-west of Isolated Peak but the waterfall itself is left to the east both when ascending and descending. The Moonlight Slabs, above the Waterfall, described by Ron Cox in U.Q.B.W.C. Magazine 1961, offer delightful walking to the saddle.
  - I. Eagles Ridge is normally reached from Drinans Hut or the Lower Portals, as it is from here that the whole length of the ridge can be traversed. A fast party can do the ridge in a day with the help of a rope and an early start. This is definitely the King of Barney’s ridges and everyone should travel on it at least once even if camp has to be set up in Isolated’s saddle. A little repelling may be necessary before Tom’s Tum, and it is very difficult to climb off the end of Isolated Peak, but with care a more southerly route off the end of the Peak will solve the problem.
  - J. The next ridge, North-east, is quite interesting.
  - K. And it parallels an easily negotiated creek which has its source near the North – Isolated Saddle. The slabs on the upper part of Eagles Ridge are negotiable with only slight difficulty (no rope required) on the south side. From the top of the slabs to North Peak is easy going,
  - L. As is North Ridge itself, which leads one almost to the summit of North Peak. This is an excellent, open, little-used ridge commanding splendid views, which a fast party should have no difficulty in climbing in half a day.
  - M. Rocky Creek is a favourite “down” route but is neither as easy nor as scenic as that of the next creek to the north, and as it is excessively steep at the end it is not recommended as an “up” route. This incidentally used to be regarded as Barney’s easy route, but at one point on the way down a rope would not come amiss!
  - N. Adjoining Rocky Creek is Barney’s classic hard route, namely Logan’s Ridge, a route on which club parties frequently come to grief. I recommend four ways out of this difficulty:
    - a. Start early.
    - b. Don’t begin serious climbing until Rocky Creek is reached, and then move up the ridge on your left hand.
    - c. When climbing to within about 500 feet of the summit never go to the left of the ridge when in difficulty but always go right.
    - d. On the last part (above the level of North Peak) don’t get off the ridge at all but keep climbing “chimneys” – four one after another will land you on the summit of East Peak. I personally don’t recommend travelling down this route without a rope but it is safe as an “up” route.
  - O. The next possible route is South-east Ridge, with its subsidiaries. It is a good half-day’s journey for any party but is easily reached by striking up the slope on the west immediately after the last road crossing of Logan River. If when descending this ridge the correct turning to the east is not taken the party may land in difficulties as the ridge becomes very steep and ends in very dense undergrowth, mainly ferns.
  - P. Cunningham’s or Mezzanine, is the next ridge and is easily reached, just by striking right (on the way up) immediately before the “washed away” part of the timber track is reached. Except with an experience party a rope is advisable as the razorback on this ridge, the best example on Barney, finishes with a slight drop that requires care. This section occurs below the 2,000 foot contour and much more easy climbing is necessary before the hut is reached.

- Q. The next route for those reading this article is only recommended as a way off Barney and is described as such. Move from hut into Rum Jungle rain forest and then immediately travel south down Eden Creek whose waters are soon encountered. This is the prettiest creek on Barney and contains some very “Open rain forest”. When the way down becomes blocked strike right on to Savage’s Ridge.
- R. From the forestry hut near Cronan Creek Savage’s Ridge is reached by following the road which crosses Cronan Creek twice before it goes up the ridge. This is a very open ridge and commands good views of Ernest and Lindsay and splendid views of West Peak’s south wall. If the road is followed too far any turn right will eventually bring one to the Savage Point.
- S. Finally Burrajum and Barney Spur provide us with the longest route to Barney, both from the point of view of time and distance. This is also recommended as an “up” route as then the best part of the journey comes at the end. Burrajum can be reached, quite easily, from Cronan Creek, or with greater difficulty (ask Don Potts) from either Ernest or Ballow. It joins Savage’s route near Savage Point and from here the ridge can be followed, with a small party, straight up a most interesting, (and cold) “Chimney” on the West Peak, or else the west side of the peak can be avoided by going through dense undergrowth (this route recommended with large or inexperienced parties) until the Barrabool-West Peak saddle is reached from where West Peak can be easily climbed. From there to the hut the route is slow but fairly easy.

If this account encourages even just one member in the club to vow, as I have, not to use “Peasants’ Ridge” except in emergency, I shall consider it has been worth while writing.

A REAL MOUNTAIN MUST BE CLIMBED IN A WORHTY MANNER.

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Editor’s Note:

This article was written by a bushrunner from way back. Times given throughout the article are for a small fast party in the peak of condition with light packs and pursued by the Barney Monster.

For the sake of completion, and to avoid offending all users of the so-called “Peasants’ Ridge”, including myself: South Ridge as shown on the map offers an easy direct route, with a well defined track, to the East-West Saddle and thence to the hut.

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“Meaneth alway my mind’s lust  
That I fare forth, that I afar hence  
Seek out a foreign fastness.  
For this there’s no mood-lofty man over earth’s midst,  
Not though he be given his good, but will have  
in his youth greed ...”

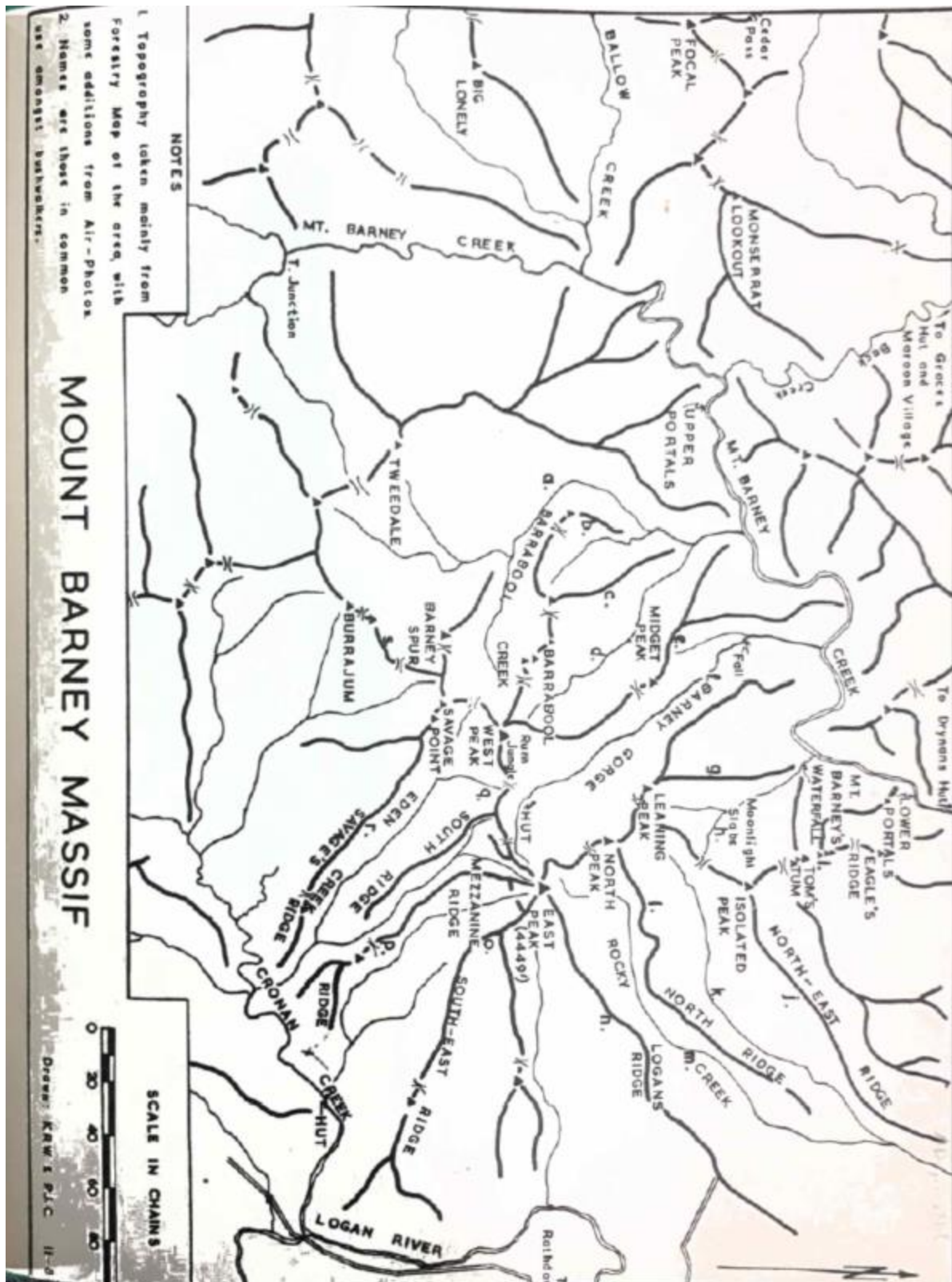
From “The Seafarer”

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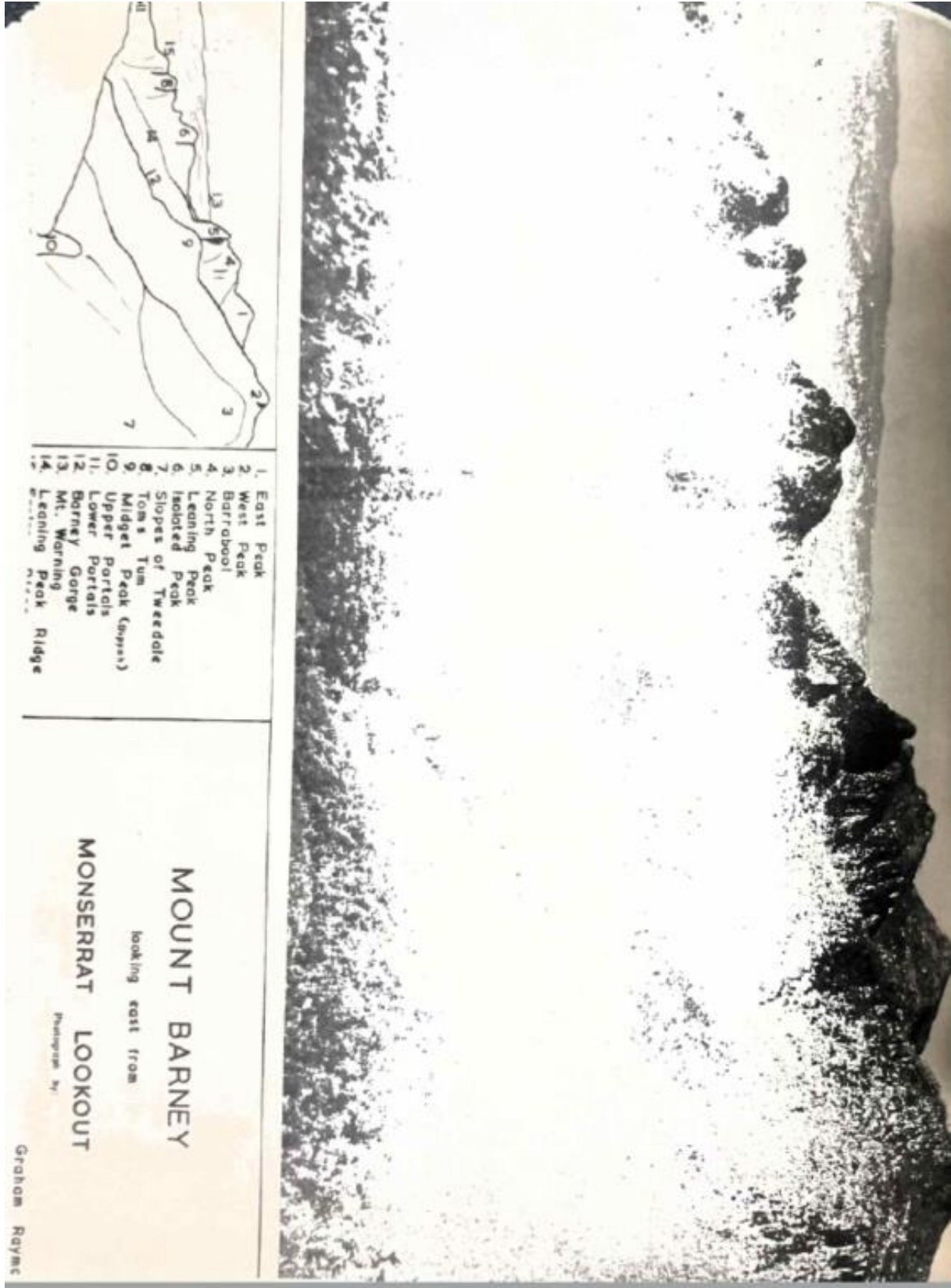
N.P.A. SPEAKS

“He who shall hurt the little wren  
Shall never be belov’d my men.  
He who the ox to wrath has moved  
Shall never be by woman loved.”

William Blake







CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITION

Duncan McPhee

After many interesting, although theoretical, meetings throughout the year, it was not until the early days of October, 1955 that Geoff Goadby announced that he and Ian McLoad had bought, with the expedition funds, an aged, battered, and comfortable Austin service car, fitted with a reasonably new Perkins Diesel engine.

Next meeting I arrived punctually outside Geoff's office, only to find the usual entrance locked and the building in darkness. Just as I thought it was the wrong night, and unusual mechanical sound emanating from the upper portion of the city suddenly intensified. With a roar like a locomotive this faded parlour car, with a driver working heavily at the steering wheel, rounded the corner with difficulty and came to reset at the opposite kerb. The astonishing silence of the city at night was noteworthy after the engine was shut off. Paquita Day and Ian McLoad arrived and we all become immediately engrossed in the possibilities of its restoration. A cautious drive around a city block demonstrated that the heavy clutch would develop huge left leg muscles, while the "hair trigger" accelerator indicated a light right toe. The steering wheel was well nigh impossible to turn.

Although described as a "bomb", our enthusiasm was boundless, from here was the tangible unifying tool for our objective: the climbing of Ayer's Rock – Central Australia. As we were all financially restricted the restoration of "the bus" and the accessories had to be adapted from cheap second hand materials, and yet be compact and useful, and as light as possible. Old cars were cannibalized for parts; old aircraft fuel tanks were bought for a few shillings, for fuel and water. Some expensive spare parts were generously lent to us for the trip, and, in return for advertisements painted all over our bus (now painted gaily in University colours of royal blue and yellow gold) we were given food, tins, linoleum, mosquito netting, and paint for the bus. The firms also paid for their own professional signwriting on the bus. Man many nights and weekends were spent in Harold Clayton's garage, near the Indooroopilly bridge, inventing, learning a new skill, and making the unimagined number of gadgets require to make an expedition car work better. Among many other jobs done better by a woman, Paquita and her sisters decorated the boot lid with a University badge, and the words – "Ayer's Rock – University of Queensland Bushwalking Club". We were asked in Alice Springs: "Is that an ad. too?".

Our starting date was set for the 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1955, and, after getting through a vast amount of work, to really began to look, by the first few days of December, as if we might make our starting date. Then a shattering disappointment that looked as though it might ruin the trip, and even pretend it occurred. We had decided to limit the party to ten, as that was all the bus could carry in comfort and safety. The costs, with ten people, were quite reasonable, but if one person dropped out at the last moment, it meant that costs would be higher for all on the trop.

Just at this critical time, three people found that they had to drop out, and with only seven of us facing costs of 1000 pounds, things looked very black. The situation was desperate so that a very likely subject was grabbed, and persuaded with the help of an oxy-acetylene torch, that Ayer's Rock would be a good thing to see.

Eventually we returned to our full strength of ten people: two girls (Paquita Day and Sue Foote), and eight blokes (Geoff Goadby, Ian McLoad, Graham Lucas, Tony White, Neville Stallman, Eddie Tesch, Sid Goodchild, and myself).

Two days before leaving, Geoff and I made some wheels tracks from steel mesh, which had been donated. The mesh had to be cut into suitable lengths and widths, and then electrically welded. Although we had acquired a degree of skill at oxy-acetylene welding, arc welding was totally new to us. It was difficult to strike an arc on the thin wire mesh, while trying to peer through the welding shield. To get an accurate start we momentarily took away the shield – sometimes the arc flashed. We paid dearly for our foolishness, for that night we suffered from “sand and grit” in our eyes – the effect of ultra-violet burns.

At last Friday evening arrived, a hurried assembly of all loose parts – pick up one of the party at home – fond family farewells – last minute advice – down to the Kidney Lawn, George Street (the traditional assembly point) – and there we had our official send off. The Musical Society, the Bushwalkers, and parents, all gave us a rousing farewell, reminiscent of a long voyage. After this dramatic goodbye, we crept back to the garage. Here we packed the food, sorted equipment, filled the water and fuel tanks, packed the baggage, built food racks, fitted two more headlights, and mounted the spare wheel beneath the chassis. The bus stood in chaos, looking like a new toy standing free of its paper and cardboard wrapping.

At 2.25 am on Saturday morning, the last of the baggage was bundled in, personnel mounted to their seats, the engine was started, the four headlights and two sidelights switched on, and we were rolling. The expedition had begun at last. Not one of us was sleepy.

At 4.15 am the bus pulled into a side road at Marburg, all doors opened, sleeping bags were thrown by the side of the road, and in a moment, all were asleep.

I regained consciousness with something sticky and unpleasant padding over my hot face. The sun was high and flies had taken a liking to hot sleeping faces. I felt just like the others looked. After a long drink of water, and breakfast, the day seemed happier. Organizing the food from the chaos of the previous night left very little difference in the appearance of the store, which replaced the original rear seat.

Geoff and Ian both agreed that the best salami sausage could be had for the best price “along the Toowoomba road”. It was understandable that the shopkeeper thought he did not hear correctly, when four already disreputable looking people strode into his modest shop, and, pointing to the rows of salami sausages slung from the ceiling, announced: “We’ll take the lot”.

The bus was running very well, even with ten pairs of ears keenly and critically listening for some unusual knock or rattle, which might herald disaster. At Toowoomba the engine and chassis were checked once again, and the oil changed; all by a competent mechanic at a service station. We were taking no chances. At Dalby, before lunch, we refueled, while most of us calculated that we were doing fifteen miles per gallon, loaded to capacity: only three miles per gallon less than the going when empty. The comparison of prices of diesel fuel and petrol confirmed our wisdom in preferring a more economical diesel motor.

On then, through mile after mile of monotonous scrub and scattered glass along the straight bitumen road. Three miles from Condamine the bitumen finished, and at 3.55 pm as Eddie was driving the six-ton monster for the first time over rough roads, there was a savage bang from the rear tyre – our first blow-out. We were well prepared for something like this, with three spare tyres on top, and a spare wheel slung beneath. All we had to do was jack up the bus, take off the dual rear wheels, replace the inner wheel, and

we could be off. What really happened was that as the dual wheels were taken off, the bus rolled gently forward off the jacks, and buried the brake drum in the sand. What would we do now, with help far away, and our own jacks buried beneath the axle. Eddie was first to recover, and, before we fully realised what had happened, he was in the recover, and, before we fully realised what had happened, he was in the bush across the road cutting down a tall grey-gum tree. Soon with a huge dead tree stump as a fulcrum, and the grey-gum as the lever with one end beneath the hub, we gradually raised the bus until the jacks could be properly positioned; and this time, the wheels chocked. It took a long time to change the tyre. We were very inexperienced. Paquita and Sue cooked a wonderful dinner that night, and, after eight o'clock onward again, taking care to leave nothing behind but our torn tyre.

The next day we gained the open Maranoa downs, and the temperature rose. We fixed a couple of punctures that afternoon, a process that just seemed to go on from one stop to the next, throughout Western Queensland. We bought a new tyre at Roma; I was aghast at its price. After dinner that night, I was driving with all four headlights dazzling the road ahead. We were hurrying to get over the black soil before some easterly storms caught us. Some bog patches were negotiated by sheer momentum. Soon the road surface deteriorated, becoming corrugated and potholed. The steering wheel, always stiff, kept whipping one way and then the other. It was heavy going keeping the speeding bus out of the potholes. The continuous vibration rattled the lights and their wiring loose, so that the lights grew dim, and threw their beams at odd angles. We were travelling faster than was wise, for suddenly, a huge pothole, the full width of the road, appeared in the dim light. It was impossible to stop in time, the bus plunged in, reared up the other side, and when we hit the road again, it felt like being dropped onto concrete from a great height. Amazingly enough, no springs were broken and no damage done, but it took us some time to fix the lights.

Next morning we washed our clothes, bathed in the Warrego River at Charleville, and fixed a puncture saved from the previous night. What a haven. At Charleville, Tony Whyte established himself as the best lemonade drinker in the west. On across the plains to dusty Augathella and thence to Tambo, where the "heatwaves dance forever" and there is not a tree for miles. The journey to Blackall proved very hot and dusty. Some semblance of order was being achieved among the food and sleeping gear in the store behind the seating area and even a bed was made up on top of this for use during the day. The boot of the bus held all our cumbersome tools and equipment while racks below the floor held smaller maintenance tools and spare parts. All clothes and personal gear were stowed in suitcases beneath the tarpaulin on the roof. The front seat was reserved for the driver and the navigator. At Blackall we were the centre of interest for the town loiterers as the gaily decorated bus, now somewhat dusty and travel stained, pulled up at a service station and then dusty people commandeered a tap and started to wash themselves and their clothes and fill water bags. Hot sulphureous water came out of the tap but it tasted bearable if some lost tools were replaced and we adjourned for the night to the burr infested banks of the Barcoo River. As we left the service station, the bus had to be pushed to get it going – the smooth running of this team of ten was now a joy to watch. That night the starter motor was induced to function once again by simply taking it to pieces and reassembling it.

Between Blackall and Longreach the temperature rose well over the century and it was a relief to have our usual cool lunch out of a tin washed down with large quantities of lemonade (supplied by Tony) in the shade of the park at Longreach. Somebody happened to look under the bus after lunch and to our horror discovered a broken spring leaf. This was another art at which we were to become very proficient – replacing spring leaves. That afternoon, replacing the spring in a shade temperature of 118 degrees

Fahrenheit for the first time proved a long and tedious process; especially as only hot sulphureous bore water was available to drink. It had to be cooled in the bags and then drunk with small quantities of café meal and felt much better. Leaving Longreach an hour after sunset, we swerved around a corner, the rear store door opened, and our cutlery box sprayed its contents onto the road with a nerve shattering crash. We were glad to leave.

I fell asleep as the evening cool swept into the bus. I awoke at twelve o'clock because the engine had stopped. Yes! We had had another blowout. We were all tired and past caring so that it took two hours of hilarity to repair the tyre. I then drove and Sue navigated. The road was sandy and the bus, which always had a tendency to crab along the road, skidded and slid from side to side, and sometimes tended to bog, so that a good speed had to be maintained. There was always the hazard of hitting kangaroos at night as they would sometimes almost jump onto the lights from the darkness beside the road. Thousands of spiders were on the march on the road and their ruby bright eyes looked eerie as they faced the dazzling lights. Although we were travelling over a dead level, featureless plain, and were approaching a bright light apparently a mile away, even after more than half an hour's travel, it would not appear any closer. I had the feeling that on all sides mountain ranges were closing in. Suddenly the headlights picked out the figure of a man standing in the middle of the road with his hand raised to stop us. At three o'clock in the morning a man standing stock still in the middle of the road without moving was just not natural – my flesh crawled. It was, however, only a very life-like sign indicating a homestead away to the west, and was erected on the edge of the road. At 3.35 am, there was a terrific explosion! I wondered afterwards how much more my nerves could stand. We had another blow-out. We had repaired the blown tyre earlier in the evening with a sleeve and this is what had blown through the small tear in the tyre. Again doors opened, people staggered out, fell into sleeping bags, and were asleep – a well learnt process. A train was heard and this immediately explained the light that never got nearer. Its great intensity, seen through the clear atmosphere for many miles, made it seem an ordinary light quite close. At dawn, once again, slowly and painfully, the bus was jacked up and the tyre replaced with one from the roof. We threw away the ice-chest, it had been useless. At Winston that morning we bought four new tyres and spent the rest of the day fitting them.

Fitting the tyres was tiring work, and after a quick dinner in that featureless, stony plain, I climbed onto the bed in the store and dozed. We were trying to make up for time lost in repairs, so decided to drive well into the night. It must have been about 1 am when I awoke after the bus received a heavy thump. There was a ghastly rattle, and the machine stopped. A big kangaroo had jumped into us, or we had jumped into him. He was gone in an instant, seemingly unharmed, but we had received a black eye (one headlight knocked out), a bent mudguard, and the fan badly bent and the radiator damaged. Eddie Tesch, always full of energy, and I (who had had a rest) effected repairs, including panel beating, while the others went to sleep beside the road.

A later start in the morning. Sid would always blow a whistle when we were due to mount the vehicle, and move off. What a trail of dust we would leave and how tired we were getting of these endless hot plains. So delighted were we to see our first hill for many, many miles, that everybody took a photograph of it. Cloncurry! A wash, fill water tanks, wash clothes, move out of town, eat, swim in a mud hole; it was now a routine.

From Cloncurry to Mt. Isa the road was tortured by mountains and huge jagged metalliferous rocks. We counted the gear changes – 200 in the hour, while the thermometer, swinging free in the cabin beside the

engine, registered 150 degrees Fahrenheit and we sucked water from the water bags continuously. Towards evening, we stopped to help a heavily loaded semi-trailer get out of a bog in the stones of one of the many narrow creek-crossings. The driver was an immensely strong individual and to our astonishment bent the handle of our shovel as though it were wire. With a quick pull he straightened it again. After much advice, patient stone packing, pushing by all of us, and after nearly capsizing the whole rig, we eventually managed to retrieve the seemingly hopeless situation and got the truck moving again.

After the “horror stretch”; “life’s pleasant ease”. We camped that night in Mt. Isa, unknowingly beside the rubbish top, but we had now become hardened and were not concerned. After washing in a nearby stream we bought more supplies, inquired about the Camooweal Caves, and set off on a fine bitumen road to Camooweal.

Just before dark, we found the entrance to our first cave. An enormous quantity of rope was rigged up to negotiate the 40 foot overhang which existed just inside the pothole’s mouth. Most of us had never been in a cave before, and were greatly impressed by the staggering heights and depths these caverns reached below the surface, which seemed merely a flat plain. 280 feet below the entrance, Geoff lowered himself down through the roof of the cave on a rope to the floor, and, before he knew it, he was standing knee deep in water. It was so clear and still it was invisible.

The distance from Camooweal to Alice Springs, although considerable, was negotiated very swiftly and smoothly. We now had new tyres and bitumen roads – what could go wrong? Alice Springs was an oasis, after the monotony of the desert vegetation, and we relaxed here most of the day. What a contrast to feel again the cool softness of green, well mown lawns, and to see the water sprays in the deep shadows of the peperinas.

Unfortunately, we were limited by time, so, into the desert again to traverse the three hundred miles to “The Rock”.

In the purple haze of the late afternoon the next day – away to the west could be seen the distinctive flat topped tor, Mt. Connor, sixty miles our side of Ayer’s Rock. At last, our objective was nearly attained. That night we stayed and had a bath in a huge galvanised tank at a homestead called “Curtain Springs”. The homestead was a framework of saplings with a flat roof of desert oaks forming a mat about eighteen inches thick. The bathroom was enclosed with galvanised iron, while there seemed to be no other walls, and the floor was the desert itself. We all used the same bath water, the girls first. It was then taken in relays with two guys in together. I was at the end of the line, and the water looked like it. The owners of the station entertained us with a squeeze box, while we, in turn, sang a few songs. Aussie Andrews, our host, told us of the expeditions he had guided looking for Lasseter’s lost gold reef. He thought of it “all bunkum”. We drove a few more miles closer that night before going to sleep in the red sand.

Although it is fine soft red sand, the road to the rock is very stable, and car tracks could be seen where no vehicles had travelled for nearly four months. “Never go to the Red Centre in summer”, we were warned, but here we were, and the weather was mild and clear with a cool breeze blowing across the vast salt pan, Lake Armardeus, a hundred miles to the north. It gives the atmosphere a sea-side flavour. It seemed hours of monotonous driving through the sand dunes until we decided to stop the bus, just for a look over one of the dunes. We raced to the top, and, at last, there it was, and the bus was driven with gusto.

Some of the corners were difficult to negotiate and often shovels had to be wielded where the bus drove straight ahead at a corner, ploughing into the soft sand.

Eventually, a few low dunes, some thick bushes, and then, dramatically, only three miles away was the huge red natural sculpture of Ayer's Rock. The rock could only be a part of this beautiful desert country of red sand, yellow spinifex, grey-green athol pines and desert oaks. None of this country looks forbidding, like the cold mountains – it is warm, soft, rounded, and fertile. What an awesome atmosphere of eternity this gigantic monolith, has, as the wind rustles through the scales spalled from the surface by the extremes of heat and cold. It was difficult to realise its size, as, all that day, we slowly circled the massif. We filled water tanks at the permanent water-hole Maggi Springs. Even to the white man, little concerned with the power of nature, Ayer's Rock is a mystical place. The gentle wind and water which have cut away this awful domination of the plain, give some comprehension of geological time. The aborigine, who invested the rock with the power of an oracle, pained the cave walls so that the spirit of the monolith should help him to successfully hunt goanna, emu, or kangaroo. How much do we lose of the mysticism of nature, when, unlike the aborigine, we remain aloof, independent of the hunt (in nature) for food and independent of nature's shelter. Many poetic stores of the origin of the rock and the caves were traditional among the aborigines. Stories linked closely with the animals, birds, and insects, as integral parts of the land.

Of course, we had to pretend to conquer the rock by climbing to the summit and leaving our names in the bottle.

The end of the day, seen from the summit, was full of poetic fascination as light and shadow changed colour, radically softening the distant domes of MT. Olga, the red, grey, and purple plain, and the jagged parallel ridges on top of the rock. Big pools of water between some of these ridges were like ones beside the sea, while a hidden grove of trees was a treasure trove. How exhilarating to be on top where the wind is so keen, and the air so clear. It was an unforgettable sunset; the Rawlinson Range was like black nature in sculpture, with the deep red sky as a back ground. The wind roared all night and we slept fitfully, for the summit was very hard. A short rain squall at dawn made us huddle together for warmth.

The objective had been obtained, the ambition satisfied, but unknown to us then, the return journey had more adventures in store: but these were another story.

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“The hills are high and the voice goes very far,  
they heard it echo thirty leagues away. Charles heard it,  
and all his companions.”

From “The Song of Roland”

ELERGY WRITTEN ON THE KIDNEY LAWN

Andy Brooks

The rabble heralds the end of parting day  
The noisy mob run quickly to their cars,  
The lecturers homeward plod their weary way,  
And leave the kidney-lawn to bushwalkers and me.

Now fades the glimmering city from our sight,  
And all the air an icy stillness holds,  
Save where the bus engine drones in the night,  
And drowsy 'walkers put their arms in folds.

The boats of many, the pride of some,  
And all that each would ever like to do  
Are all discussed in fun.  
And the journey's end draws near, too.

Some mountain, Barney, that with gleaming hut,  
The little tyrants of Boy Scouts withstood;  
Some mighty mountaineer here may climb,  
Many a bushwalker here may cook his food.

Full many a sunrise from East Peak is seen,  
The dark unclimbed rock face below.  
Full many a bushwalker here has been  
To try to climb East Face for show.

Let not the Spelios mock our useless toil,  
Our hopeful joys; or make us falter,  
Nor anyone talk with a disdainful smile,  
About the annals of a Bushwalker.



EMU CREEK TO CUNNINGHAMS GAP

Rod Timmins

Progress to Emu Creek last Easter was slow, even by the normally accepted, through unofficial, club standards. The usual late start from the Kidney Lawn was enhanced on the way by stops at Aratula, to make the T.V. set go fuzzy; Cunningham's Gap, to let some people off; Warwick, to find Arthur and the Armidillians (pardon the spelling, that's just the way it sounds); a stop when we finally did find them, and others when cars became stuck in creeks, ran out of petrol, and so on.

We finally did get there at about three in the morning and slept till six-thirty, when our leader (curse the fellow) said we should start early.

This is a very bad habit!

Adoption of this procedure thoroughly ruins chances of epic quality trips, and should be avoided at all costs.

Despite our grumblers, our leader was adamant and we departed. Navigation was easy here as we had the creek to follow and could even determine our progress with some accuracy by the Steamers alongside. During the trip we were afforded some quite good views of this formation from Panorama Point and thereabouts where the full length of the structure is plainly visible.

Arriving at the top of the range, and after quite some discussion as to where we were, we stopped at Lizard's Lookout for lunch. The haze spoiled an otherwise very enjoyable view, including Barney; though it, as usual, had its head in the clouds.

A dry camp that night gave promise that the trip would become a little more lively. However, our ignoble leader became the perpetrator of a dreadful crime against our band the following morning. He arose and bade us follow – on empty stomachs!

He only finally consented to breakfast on what half the party thought was Panorama Point. The other half decided that the next bump was so named, and perhaps it did offer a better panorama.

Stops this day were numerous. We had been so discouraged by the walk before breakfast that the rest of the morning's walk covered about half the distance that we had made before breakfast.

Late that afternoon we arrived on top of Mt. Huntley, had some fizzy and fell, slipped, and generally proceeded down from there to Swan Creek and camped there, amidst the snakes.

The following morning we left late. No one rose before about eight o'clock and then Easter Bunny Baker came and offered us goodies. I tried a Mellah for breakfast and it came out rather like chocolate soup. Around this time we passed Doug and party proceeding in the other direction but never came closer than shouting distance.

We ambled along the range to Doubletop, where I tried to make like Ferdinand and rammed my skull at the mountain. Somewhat dazed, I sat down to lunch. We walked little further that afternoon, though not on my account. The afternoon was mostly occupied with descending into another Eden, going by the name of Hell Hole Creek. We did have a good campsite, though, despite efforts of certain members of the party

to put the fire out by the ingenious method of disturbing the blazing firewood and so upsetting billies and the like onto it. This procedure seemed to work no matter how far from the fire the certain party walked.

Our leader at this time discovered a skull and spent half the night and a considerable portion of the following morning in a frantic search for a mandible. When we did leave, we set out to conquer Spicer's Peak. The nettles were a little thick!

Lunch was in Spicer's Gap and we were now on the last leg of the trip. Around this time we were also on our last legs but managed quite good time to the track on Mt. Mitchell. The six of us stood on the track and all seemed to suddenly feel very light hearted. In fact, had anyone come along the track just at that precise moment he would have justifiably strapped us all up in straightjackets. As it was, two did come along the track about five minutes later and regarded us in an odd fashion.

John Baker now revealed further goodies. A whole large tin of pears. This, and much fizzy was consumer and we ran up and down Mitchell in short order. We arrived at The Gap at five-thirty.

This was one of the few trips in my experience that stuck to schedule and was, in fact, a most enjoyable trip. This is, despite the lack of really late walking, and the time we walked before breakfast. I can recommend it to anyone rash enough to try it.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

Bill Cameron

Bert Anderson's article "A Walk along the Scenic Rim" (U.Q.B.W.C. 1961) takes me back to a certain evening early in January, 1949. At that time I was working in the Forestry gang camped near O'Reilly's and with me during the University vacation was Deryck Firth. Life, in general, consisted of weekends spent exploring and week-days spent recovering therefrom – on the axe, pick and hoe.

On this particular weekend we were investigating branches of Christmas Creek, and my diary Saturday reads as follows: "North Branch Xmas Creek to Thorackban: Check 0620; Junction 0630; 6' falls 0730; Cascades; 10' Falls 0830; Creek on left 0840; 20' Falls 0900; Lunch to 1000; Cascades; 25' Falls 1025; 10' Falls 1045 (3/4 hour to negotiate); 50' Falls 1115; 8' Cascade; 25' Falls and junction 1200; lunch ½ hour.' Widgee Track 1400."

As we descended Throakban into the head of the Albert we could see a great bank of clouds over the sea to the south-east, and guessed that the monsoon was almost on us. We camped at Ratatat, which Arthur Groom had established as an emergency store and camp to cover the western section of the Park (In fact, as I remember, three of Bert's party had been involved in the carrying therefore a couple of years earlier).

Now Ratatat even in those days was not as lively as the corner of Queen and Edward, and as we relaxed by the fire before cooking the evening meal, we were rather mystified to hear coo-ees echoing around the upper Albert, and even more so when these five weird characters filed into the clearing. Of course, in the "Disposals" or "Pre-Scientific" bushwalking era there were some unusual systems to be seen, but somehow or other I can't remember seeing such a mixed bag as Bert's gang, as regards footwear, clothing and, especially, packs. Anyway someone said "Dr. Livingstone, I presume", there were introductions where necessary, and we all settled down to cook and to discuss the Scenic River, bushwalking equipment, and, no doubt, beer and women. We were particularly fascinated by Bert's rock-climber's belt ring and pack; Jim's highly scientific dietary set-up, consisting of dozens of little tins of this and that; and Gus' waterproof clothing.

By next morning the wet season was with us in earnest and we all went along together as far as the border track in steady rain.

It was not a momentous event, no doubt, but somehow or other incidents like this often outlast much more world-shaking ones.

RAIN-FOREST

Lucy Harrison

In the forest the vines hung looping down,  
The tree-tops merged but yet the half-hid sun  
Sent slanting rays piercing the foliage  
Making the leaves gleam yellow, the earth rich brown,  
Among the darkneses that lay between.  
The leaf-mold under-foot was soft and damp,  
Red berries shone within it here and there,  
And were echoed far more grandly from above  
Where bright clusters hid among the tree tops tall.  
The green ferns bent their fronds down to the ground,  
In shadowed patterns where the sun crept through.  
The spindley saplings, delicate in form  
But strong in texture and tenacity,  
Held their outbursts of leaves far down among  
The huge red trunks of the great forest trees,  
And waited for the chance of life and growth.  
The people came, happily, easily,  
Pushing aside the ferns, treading the mould,  
Admiring glimpses of the sky above  
And the stout, flattened, fin-like buttresses  
Emerging at the bases of the trees.  
Their voices broke the silence of the soil,  
Which the birds chattering had intensified.  
Appreciative, aimless, half-unthinking,  
Yet extending through the silence of the trees  
Their half-unknown but living personality.

SOUTH WEST A – HEYBOB

Gordon Grigg

The tail-light of the hire-car receded into the night, and the foreign sound of its engine shortly left the air. The feeling of the bush closed in, and our feet scuffed the loose earth as we walked down to the river. Moonlight illuminated the outline of the sluggish black Huon, and the star-filled sky was the subject of the first great decision of the trip – would we put up the tent? We had been told that in Southwest Tasmania one must always put up the tent, but the stars blinked above us, and soon we were stretched out under them, - well after that we always put up the tent.

As we dried out our sleeping bags over a miserable fire in the mist and rain next morning, we thought of the days to come. We were on the way to Federation Peak, that great white fang at the southern end of the Eastern Arthurs Range, and this was the beginnings of the most slap-happy trip ever to this, “God’s Own Country”. The following account is a record of this visit.

Our guide for the trip was neither tall nor reliable. He was in the form of a few sheets of typewritten paper, and carefully avoided any doubtful issues on the location of the route. Our party was four in number; two Zoologists, a Geologist, and an Arts Femme. Thus we were equipped to cope with any diverse situations which might present themselves, and all of them did.

For the first few days we could only get lost. The mist relentlessly enclosed us, and so the “obvious low saddles”, and “high bare ridges”, which our Guide insisted he could see, were quite invisible to us. Then came that wonderful morning when the mists cleared from Mt. Picton and the azure of the sky was revealed. Our hearts sung, for our moods were very much dominated by the weather. This optimism continued down Blandfordia Ridge, and across the Craycroft lowlands to the bottom of Luckman’s Lead. Then, as we followed the tops of the Eastern Arthurs down to Goon Moor (our first air drop), our thoughts were gloomy, and enclosed in the thick mist, horizontal rain, wind, and cold.

Finally, late one afternoon, we staggered out past the Four Peaks onto the russet Thwaites Plateau. Federation reared upwards in front of us, its grey walls majestic and cool in the warm sunlight. The moss and alpine grass was soft under our feet, and the air was cool and exciting. As we put down our loads on the apron of moss beside Hanging Lake, a cold wind, straight from Antarctica, howled across our campsite, and our fingers fumbled with tent pegs and ropes. The wind was fierce, and soon we had so many stones to weigh down the tents that the camp looked more like a fort. Shortly we were in our respective tents, and one of the nightly inter-tent conversations had begun (these conversations were always shouted and often heated).

“What’s for tea?”

“What have we got?”

“Rice”

“Ugh! What about the Tropical Fruit Salad from the air drop?”

“Let’s keep it for the top of the Peak.” (This from the Arts Femme).

“How about a tin of Plum Pudding?”

“Let’s have that then, with cream, and also a tin of meat, and we’d better have a packet Instant Potato.”

Soon the primuses (or “primi”) were growling and a little later we slept a deep bushwalkers sleep while the silence closed in.

The next day dawned fine and clear. This was definitely the day for climbing the peak. We set off along the Southern Traverse, got lost, and eventually relocated ourselves. At last the great moment arrived, and at about 2.30 pm, we clambered up the climbing Gully to the summit, just ready for lunch at the top.

After a few days loafing about at Hanging Lake, the weather suddenly broke. It found the Arts Femme and myself high on the S.W. Rib of Federation, and the Geologist and the other Zoologist deep in their sleeping bags. We arrived back at camp damper than usual and copied their example, but not for long. Our mossy substratum was only a few inches thick above the bedrock, and the water table began to rise. The other Zoologist’s reaction was simply to throw out a sea anchor and bury himself deeper in his downy tube. The Geologist and Zoologist however, being men of action and ingenuity, and basking in the praise from the Arts Femme, dashed bravely out into the rain, and clad only in jumpers, dug enormous storm drains. The situation was soon under control, but instead of spending the night in comfort, the tent began to leak, so an extra heavy meal was deemed necessary to prevent any member of the party floating off down to the lake during the night.

A temporary break allowed us to shift camp around to Bechervaise Plateau the next day. The night was cold, and in the morning, both Zoologists (who now shared a tent) protested that they had slept with their feet higher than their head, even though they were at opposite ends of the tent. This is practically impossible.

I should point out here that I am definitely not the right shape for living in a tent, and always encounter great difficulties in contracting enough to turn around without rubbing the walls. Consequently, I was sliding backwards out of the tent one morning, and when my seat landed on the ground outside – SNOW! But it was summer, unless we’d slept for six months (imagine sleeping for six months with your feet higher than your head).

The Arts Femme and I ran in it, jumped in it, crunched in it; in all 3” of it! The weather the next day deemed another day in bed necessary and then we started the trip home via Moss Ridge. This ridge is remarkable in having a lot of little cliffs about ten feet high, sometimes more. The passage of many people has removed all handholds etc., and so the usual procedure was to dig hands and feet into the dirt, and sort of slide off, vainly clutching at nothing, and waiving appendages in mid-air. Since our packs were far heavier than we were, we always landed on these at the bottom – such is the benefit of a heavy pack (we couldn’t bear to leave those pitons behind).

The rain had turned the “Dead Stick Country” into a sodden plain, and our passage across these lowlands beside the West Craycroft River was hampered by the height of Wilsmicro Lead, up which we hoped to climb that evening. It did not seem to get any closer. Lunch that day was memorable, because the Geologist’s last tobacco floated gaily off downstream while he was bumping his way cross a log.

Wilsmicro Lead leads up onto the Picton Range, and our trip would be nearly completed by a traverse along this, and a fairly rapid progress was possible because of the lack of vegetation at that height. Then we were back on familiar ground.

As I sit here in the comfort of my own room, it is hard to conjure up a picture of the peak as it is now, for the seasons have changed and winter must have worked its miracles in the gullies and on the ridges. I wonder what the lake looks like now, and what about the ledges picked out in white? Now perhaps next winter, ...

A LITTLE ALLITERATION

Andy Brooks

Madly they marched on midst the mire and the mud on this murky night. Slipping, sliding, sloshing, through the slimy slop that completely covered this treacherous tree-lined track; whilst the wild west wind whistled terribly in the tall tree tops, and the wretched rain ran in rivulets down their soaked skin.

Crazily they crept on to the campsite with a mile or more to march in the mire. The leader stopped and carefully checked his chaffed cheeks and lanky legs for leeches. Then came a piercing cry from a grimy girl-walker: “Let go my leg! You lousy little leech!” and with a filthy forefinger she removed the wretched little rascal.

Onward they went, while the vegetation dripped and dangled damply onto their sodden sweaters and their sacks clung incredibly to their battered backs, as they slid helplessly over this horrible, hideous, soft slippery slimy, squelchy, scrounge!

Wearily they reached the welcome waterfall where they were to camp. Their tents clung clumsily to the cliff that stretched up endlessly into an expanse of dank dreary darkness.

As their heads “hit the hay” they thought: “Ah! This is heaven – all the awful agonies of another outing – the beautiful beginning of the best bushwalk we have ever had!”



STAY, STAY BRIEF TORCH

Barry Baker

This is tale told by an idiot – proof of which is to be had merely by reading on.

One long weekend in June the club chose to run a “walk” through Lamington. On this particular occasion my social activities clashed and I missed the excitement and exercise. However all year I harboured a grudge against that walk and made up my mind to conquer it in January, when I contracted John and Dawn. Nobody else could be persuaded – Keith Scott’s comment being, “No fear, it always rains at Lamington.” Just to prove everyone wrong we set out with Lennox Walker’s weather forecast of electric storms echoing in our ears.

Early on Saturday (7 am) I arranged to meet John; but owing to my stupid directions we both waited for half an hour until my sleuthing apparatus located they prey, standing in the drizzle. Arriving at O’Reilly’s still in the drizzle, we set off down the track to Blue Pool and East Canungra Creek. We finally camped on East Canungra Creek opposite the Hanging Gardens – no incidents and still in the drizzle! That night my tent collapsed and the morning found my sleeping bag somewhat damp. On setting out we passed the Giant’s Stairway which was the most impressive water scene of an extremely damp trip, and reached Curtain Falls. Then straight over the Darlington Range and camped on a creek 100 yards from the Coomera River – still in the drizzle! Clothes and us by now beginning to smell of the damp. The following day we raced up to the White Caves – twice as far as expected and still in the drizzle. Back to the Coomera and waded up same, rock-hopping in water up to our waists – most exhilarating and it could provide quite a counter to water-skiing if the ad. boys only knew. Incidentally still drizzling!! Camped at the foot of the Mystery Track on perfectly dry land, had tea and retired to bed.

About half an hour alter awakened to find my sleeping bag part of a creek. All around there was a magnificent storm howling; rain pelting down through the jungle roof, lightning and thunder crashing around every five seconds. Everything I possessed was wet, while the others were not quite in the stream but in great danger without realizing it. My humble abode was quickly relinquished for the safety of Keith’s tent (lent by the unsuspecting lad to Dawn). Soon however the tent merely sheltered a covering of water three inches deep. Dawn then became violently busy and shifted the tent to a pile of rocks, which were at least above water level but terribly, terribly hard. As everything I had was wet I swapped groundsheets for a double plastic, then while the others settled down in reasonably dry sleeping-bags I shivered in my wet clothes inside a bag of plastic. Wonder upon wonders I slept but whenever I chanced to wake I found my bones well dinted by those dry rocks. The downpour had stopped but the drizzle which had by now become the accustomed norm continued. Incidentally Keith’s tent s not large enough to keep three dry, so be warned all ye other fools.

About 4 o’clock I arose and by about 4.30 had managed to persuade my peripheral circulation to recommence activity after its recent freeze anesthetic. By about 5 o’clock I had talked John into coming up the Coomera Gorge – Dawn was too mentally exhausted after the rigours of the night. We wared up the Gorge as far as the Gwongorenda Falls and returned in about two hours, picked up our packs (weighted down considerably with all the excess water) and commenced on our search for the Mystery Track. Now much had been said about the finding of this track and we anticipated quite a little bother; so were not too discouraged when we did not immediately find it. However after charging up the almost vertical slope, covered with a dense matting of grass and ferns, for the second time our enthusiasm was

a little daunted and we ‘wisely’ decided to return to the Coomera swim down to the Forestry Track and thence to Binna Burra and back to O’Reilly’s. Incidentally the drizzle now ceased and the remainder of the trip was in fine weather! Lunch was back at the foot of the Mystery Track – how we appreciated that name now. Fought our way down the Coomera in about four hours, another two to Binna Burra arriving there at 8 o’clock and demanding a meal from the kind personnel. Guests quite impressed by our appearance – felt proud to be one of the brave youth of today.

Left Binna Burra at 9 o’clock with only two torches both with flat batteries and nobody with the sense to beg, borrow or buy more – you see we were a mob of idiots, true Uni. Bushwalkers. Everything went well for the first few miles except that our packs bit deeper and deeper into our shoulders and our feet were by now beginning to object. Also the leeches after four days had succeeded in greatly diminishing our haemoglobin supply.

Rest at 2 miles, rest at 4 miles and here we changed torches. Rest at 5 miles and then nearing the 6 mile mark we had our little piece of drama. Dawn was leading (to set the pace, very magnanimous of us sturdy males), I was second and John stumbling along third walked off the edge of the track over a twelve foot drop onto an extremely steep slope above one of those cliff drops which are so well known to that area. All we heard was a yell and the noise of breaking timber, and when we finally focused the torch on the darkness we found John about feet down the slope in the middle of a shrubbery and looking very put out, but apparently unhurt. Just as he had almost scrambled back Dawn suggested that perhaps his specs may be useful. Then followed one of those haystack searches for a bout 15 minutes but absolutely to no avail. We again set out this time with John second but really no better off than before because of his recent sight loss. For the next few miles we rested every mile to cure our jaded nerves. At 7 miles the second battery gave out but with juggling we managed a fair light. However this new scheme only lasted to the 11 mile mark and from then on we were stumbling over the worst portion of the track with only the aid of a very weak beam. At this stage the miles seemed to have multiplied by ten and the rucksacks increased in weight several folds. Finally just as prima lux was settling on the countryside we arrived at our destination, 14 miles in 7 hours; no records but what a haul!

However my job was not yet finished, for I had to drive back to the Metropolis. While John slept in the back Dawn kept up an incessant chatter in an attempt to keep me awake. She was in the main successful but on more than one occasion the car found its way onto the wrong portion of the road without any help from me. No accidents either of a fatal or minor nature occurred, and after a very slow drive home we arrived just in time to join the battle for positions in the peak hour South Side traffic. Two hours later bathed and fed I collapsed into bed to sleep for five hours on one of the hottest days that summer.

Therefore gentle readers be ye warned that the author is a very wayward and stupid fellow, who chooses impossible weather for trips and is dominated by passions which do not agree with normal routine!

## TUTOKO

Basil Yule

We could have been a carload of tourists as we sped along the narrow winding road.

Te Anau faded behind but the long calm lake still kept us company for many miles until the road left its shore and entered the lonely realm of the beech forest.

Onward, across the alpine divide, lay Milford Sound and its attendant guardian, Mitre Peak – (the destination of many visitors who come this way.) Queen of the Fiordland mountains, however, is Mt. Tutoko (9,042 ft.). Little known and inaccessible to the ordinary visitor content to travel by car, and rarely revealed by the eternal mists, Tutoko has the reputation of being a “hard nut-to-crack” because of this remoteness and especially because of the long spells of adverse weather with which it repels its would-be assailants.

Pet Conaghan and I had been invited by Bruce Naylor and Derek Winter, both of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club, to “do” Tutoko with them, in the New Year of 1962. We left the Cook area with its huge untidy glaciers and rubble-strewn mountains for the cool green tree-shaded valleys, and the Tutoko bewitched mountains.

Fiordland was covered by cloud which tantalizingly hid the ‘tops’ as we sped along the valley floor, walled in on both sides by precipitous mossy faces that rose into misty obscurity.

As we made our way along the ungraded track by Tutoko River next day, the mountains were still in hiding. The track was barely distinguishable from the slimy, rotting vegetation covering the floor of the beech forest.

We were beset by the weight of our heavy packs and smothering swarms of vicious sandflies. We eagerly anticipated the time when we would be above the tree-line in the purifying cold of the big mountain, free from their annoying presence.

That night we camped at a rock-grotto called “Dave’s Cave” and cooked our meal by the side of the creek on an open wood fire – a novelty for us who had become used to using spirit stoves. Our sleep was rudely disturbed by gambolling ‘possums trying to steal our food store’. They looked strongly out of place in the beech trees.

From Dave’s Cave on Leader Creek we climbed 5,000 feet in seven hours to Turner’s Bivvy, a large glacial erratic on the slopes of Mt. Madeline, now made into a rough shelter by climbers. The route up to the bivvy had been roughly marked by splashes of red paint on occasional rocks. Again we were denied sight of the mountains, by the cloud-cover, but it was fascinating work moving up through the different zones of vegetation.

From the beech forest in the valley floor we moved up through zones of wirey scrub, then slippery snow grass, and finally emerged on the ice polished rock slabs, just under the summer snow line of the Madeline snow basin.

Despite the mischievous efforts of some cheeky keas, we had soon settled into our new home, but the weather, however, continued to deteriorate.

We hadn't even seen the mountain yet. Derek called it in "mountain of the mist" and Pat said it was like Big Ben – rarely seen. Nevertheless, in spite of the cloud and light rain, we set the alarm for 1 am next morning, still feeling optimistic about our chances of starting the climb next day.

When the alarm went off next morning it was still raining however so we stayed snug in our bags. for breakfast, Derek and Bruce joined Pat and me in the kitchen where we spent the whole day sleeping, eating, reading and smoking and watching the rain ceaselessly pound the world outside.

The next day was worse with the rain and the wind setting up drumming crescendos all day. A river rushed over our tinned food supply on the floor of our shelter but we were snug and warm in our down clothing on slightly raised shelf of the floor.

Next morning, everything was still and unreal compared with the noise of the previous day. Outside was a perfectly still wall of mist, so thick it looked capable of stifling our very breathing. As the sun rose this lifted to reveal with scintillating distinctness the huge bulk of Tutoko. The sky seemed so blue and clear that nothing could blemish it. The hanging Age glacier, whose tremendous avalanches had set up thundering echoes in the mists, was now sparkling with gleeful malice.

The effect of this abrupt revelation was different on each of us. I wondered how on earth we were going to get over the S.E. ridge with its sharply uprearing pinnacles and steep rock steps. Pat was transported by joy, skipping from rock to rock trying to find the best vantage spot from which to photograph the scene, as he raucously shouted out his praises. Derek bustled about arranging the gear, eager to start. Bruce quietly lit his pipe and gazed at the mountain with a decidedly determined glint in his eye. We were going to knock the rust from our ice-axes at last.

We had planned to make a high bivouac at 7,500 feet in Turners pass at the start of the two mile long S.E. Ridge of Tutoko and immediately under the North West ridge of MT. Madeline. We set off up the rock slabs in brilliant sunshine, carrying suitable provisions for the bivouac and spent sometime in crossing the heavily crevassed lower glacier of the Madeline snow basin, above our rock-refuge and then climbed up to the pass itself. Here we found a suitable bivouac spot on a rocky ledge and having deposited our gear here, set off in the mid-afternoon to reconnoitre the start of the S.E. Ridge and to prepare the snow slopes with steps for the climb the next morning.

Our reconnaissance did not take us far, in fact only over the first bump in the ridge. From here we could see that the ridge ran along roughly level for about a mile before rising in three steep rock steps with intermediate snow aretes to the summit ice-field with the summit beyond to the West.

Next morning we were away in freezing cold at 4.10 am. We were lucky with the snow, a good frost had cemented it giving our steps rock-like stability and so we made fast progress to the ridge top where easy scrambling in the half grey light of pre-dawn consumed our energies for quite some time. Warm from our exertion we paused and admired the way the approaching dawn lit up the surrounding peaks with a beautiful pink glow. We were relieved to witness the dawn of a perfect climbing day.

Onwards we sped over numerous bumps and depressions along the wide shattered ridge, at last gaining the saddle between the last pinnacle on the lower part of the ridge and the first of the three major rock steps.

The first buttress proved clean and firm and caused little difficulty. One small traverse half way up was of severe standard but delightful to climb on its neat tiny holds.

A snow arete and flaking wind-formed rock-terrace led up to the base of the second step which we found easier climbing than the lower step. On top of this buttress we rested and celebrated our success with a drink of lemon and lime, chilled by judicious handfuls of snow. We thought it all right sitting in the sun sipping lemon and lime, receiving the third rock step optimistically, and contentedly munching chocolate. Here Bruce decided the sun was far enough up to give him concern with snow burning of his face so he smeared red lipstick over his lips and nose. Pat did the same. They looked a strange pair with red glowing faces.

The route leading up to the third step narrowed to a slim terrace. On the right the terrific drop stretched dizzily down to the Donne Glacier draining down into the Hellyford valley beyond.

Pat coolly calculated that the skyline on the left of the third step looked the likeliest route. I was not interested in routes at the time. I felt sure we would get up anywhere on this beautiful rock. When we caught up with the New Zealand rope who were ahead at this stage, we found they had started climbing the wall to the right of an ice-filled vertical gully which gave away to an icy wall beneath. Pat decided we might as well give it a go here as well so started up to the left of Bruce. Bruce however was having difficulty and eventually decided to come down and try somewhere else but by this time Pat was more or less committed and decided to go on.

The wall was very steep and from the rocky projections icicles hung giving a forbidding appearance. The New Zealand rope worked over to the left hand skyline and here found easy going. After much vain searching Pat found an anchor of sorts and shouted that he would haul up the pack and axes I was carrying, but I ignored his testimony as to the wall's difficulty and climbed up enthusiastically. I was soon in trouble. I climbed up under an overhand and started traversing to my left on very steep rock.

I put my hand to a 'jug-hold' to test it. The darn thing moved so I really gave it a good yank to test it conclusively. The result was conclusive alright, I pulled it right out of its socket and it fell across the rope and onto my shoulder. I called for slack rope with Pat answering.

"Don't fall you ---- the anchor we're on wouldn't hold pussy!"

I warily slipped the rope behind the loose block, called for tension and then shoved it off me. I was afraid it would spring back and knock me on the way down but it missed, and then thundered down into the snow below with huge accelerating bounds gaining more savagery with each bounce.

That was the most malicious rock I have ever met!

From here there was a finger traverse to the left, then a short vertical pitch up to the "stance". My forearm muscles and nerves were very taut by the time I reached Pat. I relaxed with relief looking forward to belaying him up the wet rock ahead but he considered the change of anchor too difficult in the confined space and asked me to lead through.

The next pitch was wet and slimy on smooth ice-worn holds but the angle had eased off and after some awkward moments and abortive attempts and retreats, I finally reached the top of the wall and brought up Pat whose legs had by now gone to sleep on the two cramped footholds he called the "stance".

We were now on top of the ridge. In front of us stretched a long undulating snow arete which led eventually onto the summit ice-cap. On our left the Age glacier tumbled down the South face in a fantasy of ice-forms with the valley jungle far below.

We were horrified to find the steps of the first rope (now 20 minutes ahead) swing down along the knife edge and then up at the horrifyingly steep angle. One side of the arete was wind battered and firm, the other side was soft and fluffy and formed of fresh powder snow from the recent blizzard. Our right crampon could not penetrate more than half an inch while our left kept balling up with the powder-snow causing much consternation and forcing us in prudence to move on at a time on the steep section.

More crests, then a bump, a large crevasse which we had to jump and then we were on the wind-cruised surface of the ice cap itself. This swept round in a broad curve of corniced ridge to the actual summit which we reached at 1.30 pm. Bruce and Derek had already been there for half an hour, relaxing in the sun and starting in on lunch.

The incredibly impressive West face fell sheer away in large bold sweeps to the emerald green of the trees, 9,000 feet below in the Tutoko river valley.

Only the silver pyramid of Mt. Aspiring and the great black hulk of Mt. Earnshaw away to the N.E. now stood above us. A sea of mountains and deep valleys stretched away on three sides while the Tasman sea shimmered blue in the sun to the N.W.

We had taken 9 hours and 20 minutes to climb up from the high bivouac at Turners Pass and took 7 hours 40 minutes for the return. The descent was uneventful except for the last stretch in the starlight.

A darkness fell about 9.30 pm we were treated to a fine silhouette of the western mountains and the rim of the ocean's horizon. It reminded me of a child's drawing. We were very weary when we finally curled up in our sleeping bags at 10.30 pm.

It had been a long day but a grand climb.

THE BARNEY WORSHIPPERS

Anon.

This is a story about a strange race of people living in the Southern Queensland. They are occasionally seen in other parts of Australia and even in other parts of the world I am told, but all seem to have their origin in Queensland. I call them Barney Worshippers but they have a strange unpronounceable name for themselves “UQBWC” I think.

I don't know what it means. They have many puzzling habits and after many years of study I still do not understand them. However I shall set down the observed facts and you can see what you think.

These Barney Worshippers or “UQBWC” people can be identified by their clothing and habits. Their clothing is rather uniform and can be generally described as faded, dirty and tattered. There is however a certain amount of individual variation. All wear trousers, but some are long and some short. I have even on occasion seen them with one long leg and one short, a little indecision there perhaps. The shirts are usually even more tattered than the trousers; one oft observed example bearing the insignia “Rosser's Fan Club” painted on the back. You might have seen it. The most popular style of hat is an old army felt. However to be eligible it must be soaked in water and tramped on until it is completely shapeless and full of holes.

Footwear is a very interesting subject, since I have found out the significance of it. There are two main types; boots and sandals. The boots are used for kicking rocks down a slope in an attempt to hit the people further down while the sandals give a certain amount of agility, allowing the wearer to jump out of the way of these rocks. They seem to find great enjoyment in this sport. I have seen other strange types of footwear including thongs and bare feet, but haven't decided their use yet.

On their backs these strange people carry a bag full of goodies called a rucksack or pack. The female of the species can be distinguished in general by her smaller stature and lighter pack. The goodies in the bag are partly for eating and partly for sacrifice to their god Barney. It all seems to be part of a complicated religious process. The contents of the goodies are devoutly and carefully prepared and eaten. The shells are then burned and tenderized by pounding them with heavy boots, and then buried as a sacrifice to Barney. The Barney Worshippers never fail in this sacred duty.

These people spend many days at a time wandering through treacherous jungle and up and down mountains looking for their god. If you disguise yourself as one of them they will invite you to go too. They undergo terrible trials some of the best known being “The Test of the Gympie”, “The Test of the Raspberries”, and “The great Hunger”. However it all seems to be worth it for they never complain and are usually rewarded their stoicism. One of the group will suddenly point and shout, “There's Barney”. Whereupon they all turn and pay silent homage. They must have great faith in their god because I have never yet seen anything where they point except the ordinary trees, mountains, clouds, etc. thus I have come to accept that only those with great faith are privileged to see this god.

However, I have established that Barney lives in Southern Queensland. The Barney Worshippers do look for him in other areas; they even bury his sacrifice as usual, but I have never seen one rise up and shout “There's Barney” except in the area round South-Eastern Queensland. I always feel terribly sorry for those who go to look for him in the wilds of Tasmania or Hinchinbrook Island because although they talk about him and bury his sacrifices, I know they will not find him.

Older members of the group rise to the position of Committee member, which is equivalent to a high priest. These are somewhat revered by the younger ones, as they have the power to lead the pilgrimages looking for Barney. One of their main functions is to make sure everybody is lost at least once on each trip. Some are very skillful at this; becoming lost three or four times on a two day weekend. I have never found out the reason for getting lost because someone always decides he knows where they are and spoils all the fun. The high priests also have the privilege of undergoing many of the trials first, especially “The Test of the Raspberries”. There are other priests who are not Committee members but who nevertheless lead pilgrimages. Perhaps they are being trained for the Committee.

There is a strange and interesting ritual about which I must tell you. It is useful only because of their strange habit of always walking one behind the other. It takes place only on a very steep slope where there is a very large loose rock. It is usually the privilege of the leader to suddenly dislodge this rock so that it goes thundering down towards his friends. Meanwhile he shouts “ROCK” as loudly as he can and those below are expected to jump out of the way. You can see how exciting it would be. The object is obviously to kill someone, probably the old decrepit members. However they are surprisingly efficient at getting out of the way and I have never seen anyone killed so I don’t know for certain the reason for the attempt. It could be sacrificial.

The weekend pilgrimages must be rich emotional experiences for the Barney Worshipers. They always set out in high spirits laughing, talking, singing, and consuming vast quantities of food obtained at a halfway house. On the return journey they are quieter somehow, and more at peace with the world. I envy them their serenity.



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