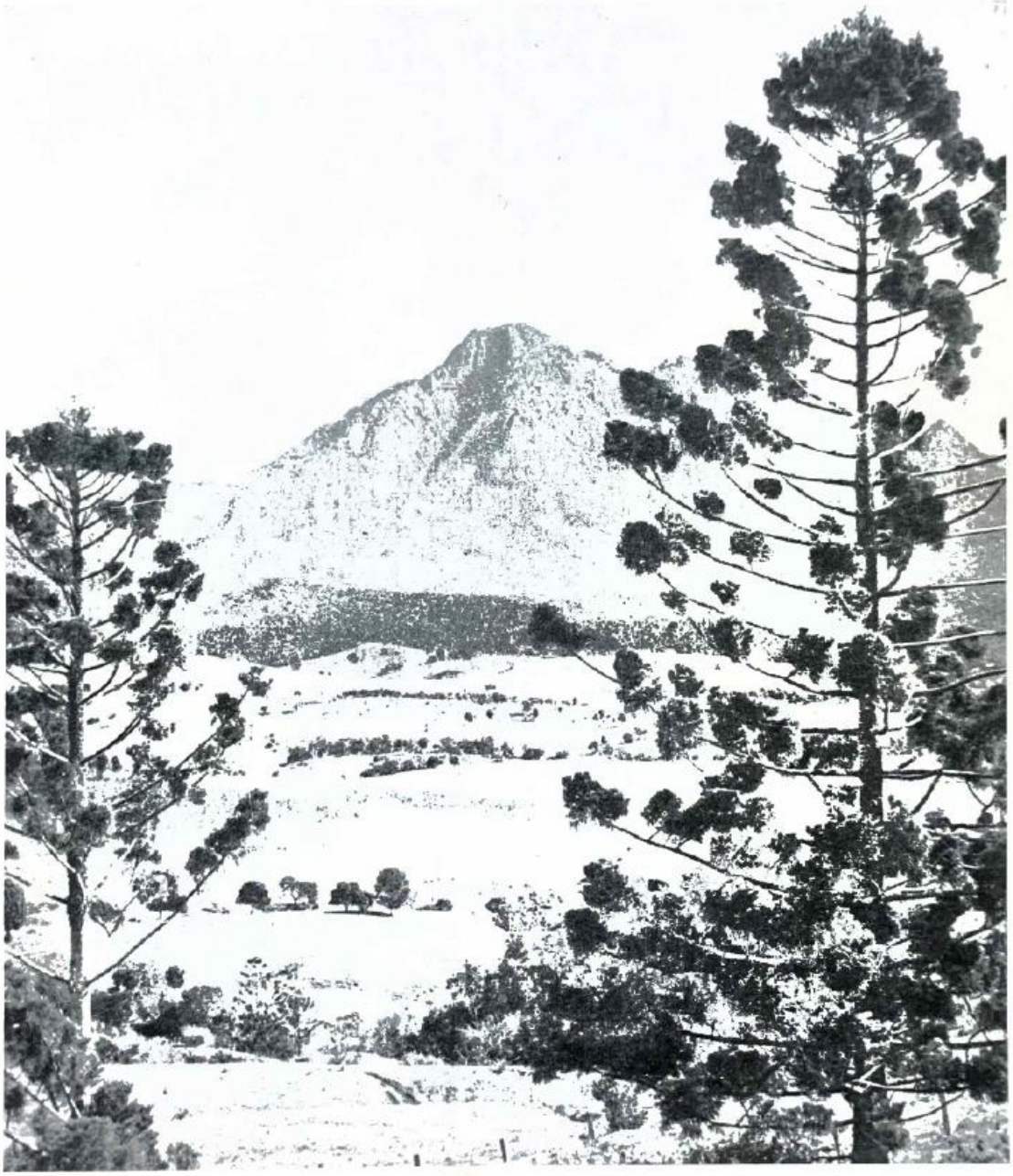
# U Q B W C 1961



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NICK TIERNEY

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Cover Photograph - Mt. Barney, South-East Queensland.

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## EDITORIAL

One of the foremost aims of a bushwalking club is to promote a genuine love for everything connected in any way with the bush. It is true that our members are enthusiastic about trips and are keen to support those organisations concerned with the preservation of forests etc. Surely, though, love of nature should manifest itself in more ways than these.

Being in the bush, the freedom from the noise, confusion, and worry of everyday life should bring to us a feeling of thankfulness. The undistributed peacefulness of the country should bring us to a sharp stop when we think of racing off madly through the scrub. Granted, Man has always been eager to show his prowess, to conquer the elements of Nature, to undergo endurance tests set by himself, as a preparation for future activities, and to break records of height, distance and time. But these should not be the sole consumers of a bushwalker's time.

For example, it seems that the art of discussion is lacking in our club. Camp fire yarns are not characteristics of trips. Instead, we turn in early to recover from the exhaustion of the day's activities and also to prepare for that of the day to come. Surely this is a gross oversight on our part. Are there many other better places to put forward our ideas and opinions and to discuss the diverse and puzzling aspects of life? Here we are, surrounded by people who, being bushwalkers, must have some common characteristics, and yet those same people will go home after a weekend in the bush together, knowing little more than each other's names.

Why is it that so few amateur artists and philosophers take advantage of the bushwalking club? The scenery provided by the South-East Queensland, where we spend a greater percentage of our bushwalking hours, has plenty of scope for landscape painting etc. There is also the atmosphere of the bush. Compared with that found at the University or at work, it is one of complete serenity. This atmosphere should be powerfully conducive to both painting and philosophy.

Perhaps these few words will stir among some of our walkers, deeper love for the bush not only as a medium for activity, but also on for deeper thinking, and the exchange of ideas, letting all who wander there be charged with the peace and beauty it holds.

Catherine Prentice

## ANTIPODEAN AGONY

Hal Nix

Scene: N.B.C. T.V. Studios, London. The noted T.V. compere, Gavin Fauntleton, interviews the young Austrian ethnologist, Hans Winterhalter, who has just completed a world tour.

Gavin Fauntleton (G.F.): Mr. Winterhalter, perhaps you can explain to our T.V. audience just what an ethnologist does.

Hans Winterhalter (H.W.): They the customs and habits of people study.

G.F.: I see. I see. Yes, yes, very interesting. Now tell us, Hans – I can call you Hans? Oh goody! Thank you! Thank you! Well, Hans, which country had the most entertaining customs from your point of view?

H.W.: I am young man. For a young man, no place is there like Tahiti. Why in Tahiti…

G.F.: (Coughing nervously). Ahem! Yes! I suppose you must have met with considerable dangers in your travels in faraway countries.

H.W.: Ja! Many danger I face – climbing in Himalayas… Wait, I not finish with Tahiti.

G.F.: (Coughing even more nervously and developing severe facial tic). Er – perhaps some other time Hans, but you must tell us what was your most frightening experience? I suppose the Himalayas were fraught with dangers

H.W.: Ja, Himalayas dangerous. (Somewhat reluctantly and quite obviously dragging his mind away from cherished memories of Tahiti)

G.F.: Well, then, Hans, could you tell us of your most frightening experience?

H.W.: Ja. It was in a place called Australia.

G.F.: Australia?

H.W.: Ja! Australia very dangerous!

G.F.: I suppose you are referring to the er – “outback” areas of the colony.

H.W.: Nein. Much danger also in infront areas.

G.F.: How extraordinary! You really must tell us.

H.W.: (Obviously reluctant at the memory) We-el, hiking I was with my pack on my back, in a city called Brisbane which is full of Australians (shudder).

G.F.: Yes, yes. Please continue.

H.W.: At home am I in Melbourne and Sydney as there, only a few Australians among the continentals are.

G.F.: I see! (Muses thoughtfully about the Tahitian story)

H.W.: Well – one late afternoon the streets of Brisbane I walk. Of a sudden appears a tall thin Australian with ropy hair. He grasp my arm – peer into my face and say “Aha! A walker of the bush!”. “Nein!” I

say, “Nein! Nein!”. “Good” he say “Come with me!”. He take my arm. Too dazed am I to object. He lead me by arm down street to truck swarming with queer people. This truck they call the peanot truck.

G.F.: (Somewhat dazed) I see!

H.W.: The tall thin, ropy haired man exchange weird cries with the peanots and they swarm over the sides of the truck and surround me.

G.F.: Surround you?

H.W.: Ja! They grab my camera. A vicious girl look at my bulging pack suspiciously and say “You have transistor radio?”. “Nein!” I say. “Good” say this girl.

G.F.: What extraordinary behaviour. What happened to the camera?

H.W.: They examine it closely and then give back to me. They then help me reverently into truck. My camera it is a Leica.

G.F.: The camera must be a status symbol with these peoples?

H.W.: Ja! I think, Ja! After very long journey in truck, arrival it is in the dark. All jump out and run into the blackness. I jump out and run also for in the truck you peanot.

G.F.: (Titters to himself, then blushes). Rally Hans, I …

H.W.: In the morning they say we climb to the world that is lost.

G.F.: The world that is lost?

H.W.: Ja! All are lost who climb such places. We got lost with much ease. As one who has to this place been, it should stay lost.

G.F.: How utterly exciting! I suppose this lost world has some peculiar significance to the indigenes.

H.W.: I do not know of what you say – significants? However, rituals are performed by these in dingy jeans.

G.F.: Rituals?

H.W.: Jawohl! All waken early but none arise. I get up and run to and fro, but the walkers of the bush scowl as it disturb their contemplations. Eventually the sun is so hot they get headaches and cannot continue contemplation. They slowly arise. Eventually after lengthy preparation to the river we move.

G.F.: The river!

H.W.: Ja! This river is hidden with large slimy boulders. All stare at hills in distance as in a trance. Suddenly a female peanot leaps from rock to rock and into the distance fastly disappears. All then commence leaping and leader chant, “Kum back Loocee”.

G.F.: How utterly extraordinary! A ritual chant no doubt?

H.W.: It is know to me not. Many times I stumble and fall into the icy water but still the distant one leaps and the leader cry “Kum bak Loocee”.

G.F.: All this sounds unusual, but hardly dangerous.

H.W.: But wait! Finally all stop and leader makes smoke fires with wet wood. All eat dry biscuits, prunes and raisins. When all eyes streaming with smoke, leader shout harshly and stamp out fire. We drink cold water and then run headlong up mountainside through dense jungle.

G.F.: Up a mountain?

H.W.: Ja! This world was lost on top of the mountain.

G.F.: What is this “world” like?

H.W.: It is lost I tell you. We found it not.

G.F.: Well what was so dangerous? (Looking anxiously at studio clock)

H.W.: (Sighing with some exasperation.) Well, eventually, we arrive on top of ridge. Night is near. Some advance peanots have lit fire in clearing but leader ignores this. He leads us into the jungle again, where we wander in a ritual circle for many hours, torn by thorns and stung by trees that sting in the night. At last we stop and light fire. Rain drizzles – my feet are swollen, my hands are swollen from the trees that sting, my face is swollen – all is swollen but my stomach is shrunken. The leeches are fat and my blood it is thin.

G.F.: (Shuddering) Leeches!

H.W.: Even so! The walkers of the bush cut vines from the jungle and drink the sap thirstily. This must have narcotic effect because one peanot who cries much, shrieks and groans in the night. All laugh widely then look at me. At last I realise my folly. These people are insane. I am insane to be with them. Sweat from me runs. Alone am I, far from my country of birth, in a world that is lost and with madmen for company.

G.F.: What on earth did you do?

H.W.: I shrink into background hoping they will not notice of me take. Also they are hungry.

G.F.: Surely they are not still cannibals?

H.W.: The chance I do not take. All night in the cold rain I sweat with fear.

G.F.: What happened in the morning?

H.W.: They go on but watch me carefully. Someone points to the Guesthouse of O’Reilly on far peak I of a sudden remember a very close relative who live in the Guesthouse of O’Reilly and who does not know of the sickness of his mother.

G.F.: And they allowed you to go?

H.W.: Ja! Boots and food is given to me and a way is shown. All this time they closely me watch. Suddenly I leap forth and run the slope down. They cries I hear but stop I not.

G.F.: You made your escape?

H.W.: Ja! At the Guesthouse of O'Reilly they say it is the impossible is, to come from the world that is lost in twenty minutes.

G.F.: Did you meet these "peanots" or walkers of the bush again

H.W.: (Shuddering) Nein! Nein! The good Lord He be praised.

G.F.: Well thank you, thank you Hans Winterhalter for your enlightening talk upon your agony in the antipodes – it would certainly be a frightening experience to spend a night alone on the lost world with such companions.

This story is entirely based on fact and therefore is not entirely fictious. Any resemblance to any persons, living or dead, is not coincidental.

## A WELSH WEEKEND

Peter Reimann

Craig Yr Curn Du, Drws Neoddodd, Glogwyn-y-Grochan…. This could only be Wales. Wales, the home of British rock-climbing and of British foul weather. Wales, where, it seems, all of England goes to climb or to walk, come what may.

The club I joined thinks nothing of going 320 miles return almost every weekend to climb in Wales, while, should there be a spare weekend, they'll run off at the slightest provocation to spend the day on the Derbyshire gritstone "edges" eighty miles away. Every easter they dash off to the snow and ice in Scotland; Whitsuntide sees them basking in the sun or climbing on the granite cliffs of Cornwall. And the summer holidays – what an opportunity for Zetmatt, Chamonix , the Dolomites, the Austrian Tirol! The Lake District was packed out with tourist and walkers feasting on the superlative scenery that inspired Wordsworth and Coleridge – mountains reminiscent of the bare New Zealand foothills, quaint old villages, valleys full of lakes and English trees. But mostly it is to Wales, so that is where I have mostly been, and this article must correspondingly be about Wales.

Friday evenings opposite the Rugby P.O. invariably sees a blue Dormobile* crammed sardine like with up to fourteen people and loaded with rucksacks on the roof-rack, all ready to streak off into the twilight along the A5 to Wales. En route one's ears are assailed with the chaotic noises of the other thirteen occupants – pre-trip exuberance – and one soon suffers the acute pains of cramp peculiar to this vehicle – "Dormobilitis" it is called.

The destination is Llanberis Pass in North Wales. Thumbing through the guidebook you are startled to see that although the pass is only about two miles in length, this guidebook is devoted entirely to the routes up the cliffs on the northern side of the valley alone. The pictures in the book appear to be a confusion of white dotted lines denoting the routes weaving all over the faces, each with a name like "Cenotaph Corner", "Little Whizzer" or "Cemetery Gates", and each with a grading like "very difficult hard" or maybe "just very severe" or "extremely severe". You count up all the routes and find that there are over a hundred, each within a few yards of the next. No wonder this club goes to Llanberis Pass weekend after weekend.

However, not every weekend is there a convenient Dormobile hired, so one must then resort to the Power of thumb. And hitch-hiking in England is so easy. One must go to great pains to dress in the accepted attire of a climber, i.e., knee-breeches, long socks, boots, motheaten anorak and a conspicuous rope, because this makes it all the easier. For instance, it is sometimes necessary to queue up to get a lift – each person placed strategically at fifty yards intervals down the road form the roundabout. If you happen to be at the end of a queue of ordinary dressed people, the discriminating motorist will sometimes stop and pick you up in preference to the others ahead. If conditions are good, you can even choose your lifts, it being best to specialize in fast post-war cars and to ignore all pre-war vehicles and trucks.

At long last you are approaching the destination. The first spots of rain appear on the windscreen, which gradually but irrevocably increases into a downpour – special Walsh variety. "A million curses on this blasted Welsh weather" you exclaim, and back thoughts revolve around your mind about pitching tents in the rain and wind in the middle of a waterlogged bog.

* A Bedford van with windows and seats

Eventually the vehicle stops, and out you climb into the weather. There follows a frantic search for your torch, which, after much rummaging around while all the contents get wet, you find has migrated to the bottom of your pack. In the meantime, everyone else has found the choicest spots to pitch their tents and you see that the only place left is a low-lying quagmire full of puddles. Finally, the tent is up – a moment of triumph – and you crawl into the sack and go to sleep (or try to, but how can you when every gust of wind that roars down the valley explores against the tent wall and threatens to pluck you away?). One desperately wonders what the weather will do tomorrow.

Tomorrow comes – raining of course. After being woken up at regular intervals by the bleating of a stray sheep who would choose to stand just outside your tent, 10 am sees you crouching miserably over the primus eating breakfast. Suddenly, in the middle of a mouthful of cornflakes you observe that something has changed. Yes! It has stopped raining! Breakfast finished, you peer out of the ventilator of the tent to see if there is any activity outside. Not a soul. So, some more sleep. At 11 am somebody yells "the weather is breaking!". Peering out into the bleak exterior you see some patches of blue sky appearing furtively between some huge clouds. This is hopeful; the rock should be just about dry by this. People emerge from tents with their ropes and slings. There follows much argument and discussion. Who is going with whom, which one is going to lead and who is to second him, what to do? Perhaps the "Overlapping Wall" on Carreg Waster, "Sabre Cut" on the Cromlech. A state of confusion arises while everybody declares their ambitions and nobody agrees. This club has no official leader for a trip. What you do is entirely up to you, whether it be walking, climbing or festering at the campsite. Indeed, it is not practicable to have one leader, and about a dozen lead on rock-climbs. By lunch-time everybody is sorted out, and reasonably happy, but what the heck, why bother about lunch when you've just had breakfast? People set off down the road in pairs looking up professionally at the cliffs towering above.

These cliffs are only 200 feet high and the open windswept tops are another 2000 feet above this, usually wreathed in cloud. If the order of the day is rock-climbing, the procedure is to do a climb and then run down the easy way a little to one side and start on another route. No climbing is done to reach a summit. And so, all the weekend, one may indulge in such rock gymnastics – and of course, Wales is not one of the world's foremost rock-climbing areas for nothing. The quality of the rock is excellent – here are all the cracks, grooves, jug handles, exposed faces, rigs, chimneys, etc. that one could wish for, and one can meet such a variety of situations in any one climb that the interest is sustained at high level throughout. And rock gymnastics it indeed can be, since many of the harder climbs require not only delicate balance, but also strength, particularly in the arms and fingers. Unfortunately, on many of the climbs the holds have been worn from constant usage and they therefore stand out in contrast to the gray coloured background rock.

You'd be half way up the second pitch enjoying the friction of dry rock, and would be just about to embark on the critical part of the climb which would need all you've got when it would all of a sudden become ominously dark. You glance anxiously at the sky. Sure enough, a gust of icy wind brings with it the first flurries of … rain. Typical Welsh weather! It lures the climber out and lies cunningly in wait until he's halfway up the cliff and then proceeds to rain on him with obvious glee. If only it were consistent. Even if it rained incessantly at least you'd know where you were, and you'd spend the day at the pictures in Bangor instead. But, here you are, perched on doubtful holds in the middle of a big, and by now, slippery cliff, getting progressively more soaked, fingers freezing numb. There is no escape, no shelter of a welcome tent, no pictures in Bangor. You are irrevocably committed to continuing on.

But it is not always like this. On one recent weekend the weather was perfect. It was warm enough to roll up one's shirt sleeves on occasion, and the rock was dry. It was even possible to be rash and sleep out in the open! However, under these circumstances another factor looms to the forefront. When I heard about people queuing up at the bottom of climbs in England I did not think it possible. But good weather brings people out in hordes to climb on the cliffs. Three of us, doing one particular climb, found ourselves waiting for three others to move on up, whilst, in the meantime, no less than six more people arrived on various blocks of scree in preparation for the long wait. Some ate their lunch, others lay in the sun, a few lit up pipes. Then, blow me down, but two other people appeared heading up the slope. They took one look of disgust and disappeared to look for something else. And this is not only restricted to the easier climbs. It is astonishing to see how many people aspiring Joe Browns there are. This all delights the tourists who stop their cars on the roadway below and gaze upwards, some with binoculars, at the various climbers arrayed all over the cliff faces.

And, of course, one may go walking and enjoy the sweeping vies over old glaciated valleys, treeless hillsides clothed with grass and heather plunging down to the valley floor with its patchwork of stone-walled sheep paddocks and dotted with orange, white and red tents. One sometimes runs into a lone sheep or a picturesque tarn in a "cwm" or hanging valley. On one occasion, I went up to Snowdon via Crib Goch, said to be the finest ridge walk in England. It consisted of a very sharp rocky ridge with steep drops on either side, and provided one ignored the procession of other walkers who evidently also thought it was the best ridge walk in England, it was a pleasant way up the mountain. On reaching the top one steps into a hotel filled with tourists who come up on the train, and other walkers eating sandwiches and drinking tea. Yes, a real, live, genuine, hotel on top of a mountain – never thought I'd live to see the day. Tryfan has a similarly fine ridge leading up from the Ogwen valley further north. This is called "scrambling" rather than "fell-walking" or "rock-climbing" – certainly not "bushwalking" – one never runs into vegetation troubles here. On top, instead of a hotel, are two prominent boulders called Adam and Eve who practically yell out at one to be climbed for the purpose of jumping from one to the other. Also on the top is a mess of decaying orange peels, scraps of paper, tins, etc. I am told there are even mice who manage to live on all this. One therefore sits on top looking at the beautiful view of fog and conjecturing upon how on earth mice could have got up there in the first place anyway.

Towards the end of the day one's stomach demands consideration so there is nothing for it but to plunge down the scree slopes, cross over the road and start brewing up a feast. A real feast this can be, because being economical with weight is unheard of. One's pack is never carried more than a few yards.

After this, due to the habitual inclemency of the weather, and the treeless nature of the surroundings, one must forsake that wonderful invention called a fire, around which to sit and pleasantly while away the evening, and instead migrate to the nearest pub, e.g., at Pen-y-Gwyrd. And I must add by the way of clarification that British pubs are nothing like their Australian counterparts – they are a social gathering place where anybody may spend an evening in pleasant surroundings. One enters a warm room full of tobacco smoke and people, mainly climbers, seated around large tables over a pint of cider or ale. On the walls are pictures of climbing and climbers. The topic of conversation? Climbing of course. In the corner might be a group of local famers talking in their native Welsh tongue.

Sunday evening would be time to pack up for the long trip home. Milk bars seem to be a rarity in this country, so instead of something like the famous Rose Café in Beaudesert, there is either Hung Hing's in Shrewsbury for a Chinese feast or the pub opposite for a quick pint and a pie if time is short.

And so that, in brief, is a typical Welsh weekend. “Why the hell did I ever go” you think as you shed dripping wet clothes and thaw out gradually in bath. “What a perfect miserable way of spending a weekend.” But b the next meeting one learns that there is another trip to Wales. One desperate weighs up the pros and cons: a week spent sitting inactive at a desk; what if it happens to be the very weekend when it decides to be fine? And so, “the wheel is come full circle”. You are off again, eagerly anticipating a fine weekend.

## WHY GO SOUTH?

Doug Glague

Advertisement – BEWARE!

CARNARVONS. Ever heard of them? If not, say nothing for either you are an ignoramus or you have never had the misfortune of meeting the author (if the term is permissible) of this article.

However, for the benefit of the uninformed, the Carnarvons are situated about 150 miles north of Roma. They may be reached by the so-called Carnarvon "Highway" which continues on to Rolleston, but if the weather is favourable a branch road, leaving the "highway" at "Wyesby" station, can be used. This road takes you the last twenty-six miles to the gorge mouth and represents a saving of forty0odd miles. Like all other things in the area the National Park is on a BIG scale; it is about 500 square miles in area.

On approaching the area, Black Alley Peak is visible to the north, and stretching for at least 50 miles to the south are BIG sandstone cliffs. The northern portion of this line of cliffs is composed of the Questas which are upthrust from the plain like battlements guarding the outer extremity of the park. To the south of the Questas lie the glaring white Moolayember cliffs which provide a beautiful contrast with the blue green foliage that caps them, the blue sky above and the greens and browns of the foothills and plains below.

On arrival at the gorge mouth is seen a hut (permission is needed to enter) erected by C.W.A. and occupied by rats. A garage and abundant water are available in the large camping area there. The main hazard of spending a night there are the molesting possums which not only take food from your hands but also clamber over, and fight on, your sleeping bag whilst you are trying to go to sleep.

In preference to giving a long description of my trip there, I shall endeavour to give a few comments on some of the more notable features in the Carnarvon Ranges.

Once in the entrance of the gorge, a large plain confronts you. It is while crossing this, the Kooramindangie Plain that one encounters the never-able-to-be-forgotten experience of spear-grass harvesting. Shorts and no socks are advocated for maximum comfort here.

The next, really notable, sight is Violet Gorge. This is on the extreme left branch of Koolaroo Creek and contains tree-ferns, mosses and all the other greenery so characteristics of such beautiful places.

On no account should Word's Gulley and Falls be missed. These falls are very narrow and RACE hundreds of feet down a narrow groove in the sandstone. It is necessary to walk out into the creek until you are at least waist deep, to view these falls properly. The gorge in which the falls are situated, is itself elevated and has a very small fall at the entrance. The tree ferns inhabiting this gorge are the most delicate but also the most gigantic that I have ever seen.

The Art Gallery is worth a visit because it contains some aboriginal "spray" paintings and carvings. Actually paintings are to be found throughout the area as this was sacred ground to the original inhabitants. However this group of paintings is quite extensive and easily found.

Cathedral Cave is a heavenly place to sleep in (particularly if it is raining) and don't fail to drop around the corner into Boowinda Gorge or you won't be able to say you have 'seen' the Carnarvons. This gorge is really fantastic as the cliffs tower hundreds of feet above you on either side. In some places the floor of the gorge would not be much wider than 15 feet while in other places it is impossible to see the sky.

Evidently the rainmakers had been hard at work for at this stage rain cut our capers short.

Goothalandra (The Devil's Signpost) is an upthrust from the Questas and from some angles looks very like Crookneck of the Glasshouse Mountains. It is reasonably easy to climb from the northern side.

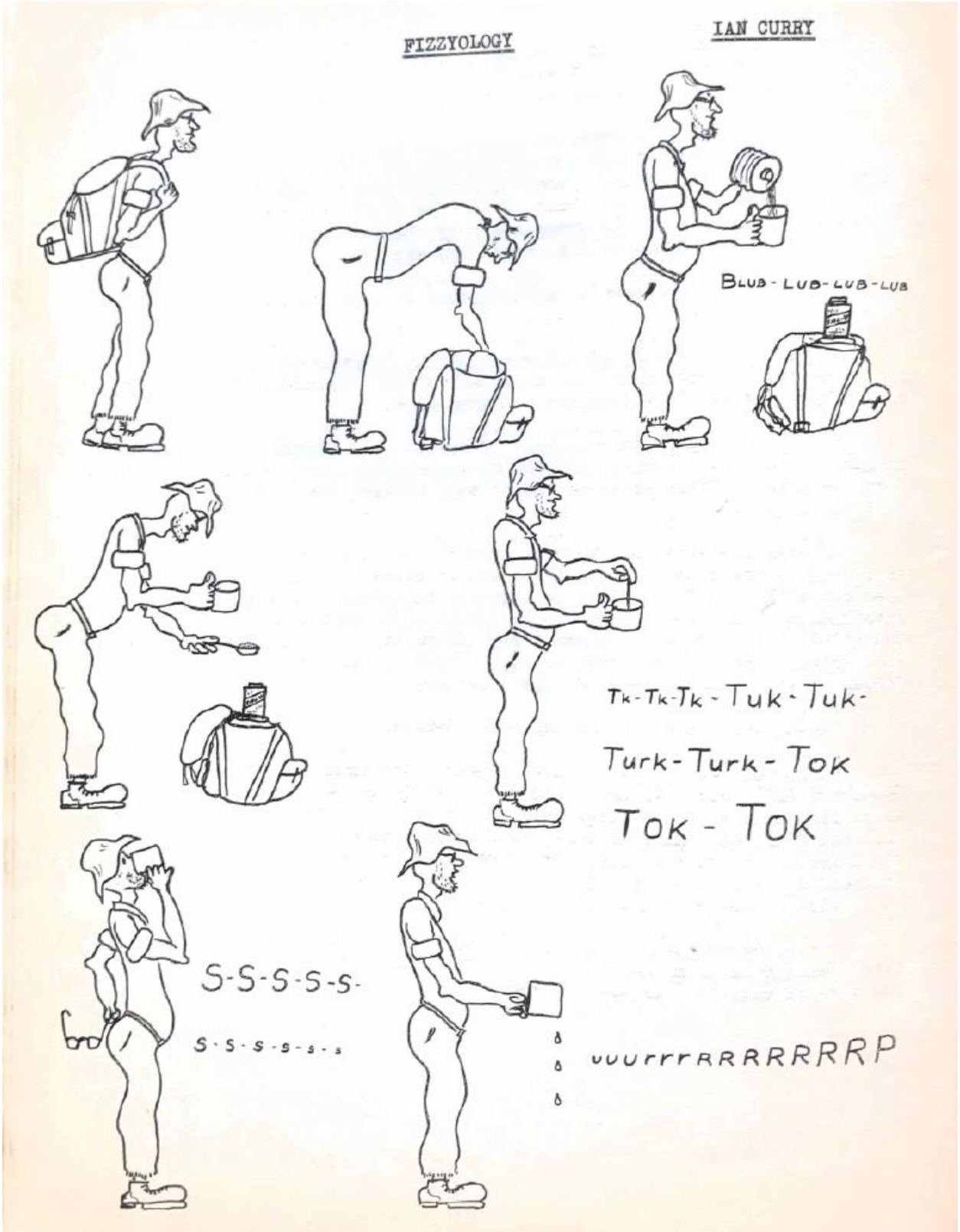
Wild life abounds in the area. There are the possums, bandicoots and kangaroos about the campsite and the white cockatoos that scream as they fly down the gorge. There are also the stately brolgas that stroll over the plains.

Briefly the area is a MASS of magnificent cliffs that change colour according to the time of day. These are so clean that they appear to have been cut with a knife and are so gigantic that they rear some 500-600 feet into the sky. And there are also the gorges; the most fantastically beautiful, little gorges you could ever dream of, little gorges filled with cool water, mosses, tree ferns and delicately tinted rocks, gorges so fantastic that I could never do them justice.

These, yes THESE are the Carnarvon Ranges.

There will be a trip to these ranges after exams. (perhaps late December) this year. If no transport is available it may be necessary to hitch from Injune to the gorge mouth (90 miles) with possibly no lift for the last 26 miles. However what could be more enjoyable than walking with the flies, dust and heat? Of, if it rains, what could be more memorable than wading through dirty, black mud? Therefore two alternatives are available; (a) walk at night, or (b) guzzle fizzy.

But no matter what the call of the illustrious wilds is back and once more I must pick up my pack and mush. The walking is as hard or as easy as you like to make it. So see you there.



## THE EPITAPH OF A HUT

Duncan McPhee

It was once said: “Let he that is without sin cast the first stone”. We have all just been heavily stoned, for, as we are glumly aware, one man has torn down the traditions, in material form, of the University of Queensland Bushwalking Club. One man has decreed himself so above his fellows that his own aspirations, as far as building a shelter in the wilds is concerned, must replace the confused thinking and actions of so many “insensitive undergraduates”.

The old Mt. Barney hut has been demolished and a new one is being constructed to prove how ugly the old was, and how beautiful is the new. Eddie, the builder of the new, says that the rectangular shape and the aluminium roof of the original hut were disunified! Dreadful! And only perpetrated by “people with an underdeveloped regards for this lovely place”. If this is true then the only harmonious shapes are those of the original mountain, and to live in these places man must hide in nature. This is just not the nature of man. The Japanese were the greatest architects of all time when it came to placing a building in harmony with nature. They knew well the innate sense of the interdependence of man and nature and the forms of each – yet the essential contrast wrought by the mind and hand of man”.

Built in the saddle of the Mount Barney massif, the original hut had a fine expression and character – almost a personality. The rough stone walls bound the structure of the mountain while the highly reflective lightweights corrugated aluminium roof a fine material in itself, was a direct and honest contrast to the rough heaviness of the stone, and the lacy green-grey of the surrounding scrub.

This building was also beloved by nature: by the weather, by the vegetation, but the sun and wind and the people who build it.

Nature savagely attacks and destroys ugly or unworthy things: that gerish new roof paint quickly faces, while the earth’s own colours of yellow ochre, white, earth red etc. remain unchanged; how fast those ugly tins flung about the picnic area rust away the harsh glitter of polished brass changes to a gentle green patina on weathering. Building construction goes the same way – where it is poor, and unworthy of man – nature quickly destroys it. Nature however can love a good building with well used materials. The beautiful green copper roofs of Stockholm and Copenhagen are world famous. This is caused solely by the weathering of a noble material.

Weathering had confirmed out choice of stone as a noble wall material. When the boulders were dug from the mountain and lifted onto the walls they were covered wit mud and earth and the structure looked bleak.

Years of storms and wind and sunshine, washed, cleaned, dried and bleached these stones to warm, welcoming colours, while the crystals of the rock reflected the light. The whole atmosphere had changed, weathering of the stones had turned them into a delight.

All genuine materials have a basically pure characteristic. Strangely enough it takes practice and experience to see brick, glass, concrete or any material, as a unit embodying many different physical and aesthetic characteristics. These individual characteristics make up the nature of the material. If therefore, a material is used properly it must be used in the nature of the material. It must be used so that, as far as possible (For economy), all its characteristics are used.

As an example, consider the aluminium roof of the Mount Barney hut. The necessary physical properties were: a sheeting easily erected; impervious to water; a good heat reflector, to keep day heat out and fire heat inside; it had to be light enough to carry up the mountain by hand yet strong enough to span between the supports and withstand strong winds; for economy there had to be the minimum wastage at laps. There was no doubt that the corrugated aluminium satisfied all these physical conditions. There was, however, another condition that the aluminium demanded. It was corrugated for strength, and for jointing and lapping the sheets a rectangular layout was the only possible satisfactory condition. If the corrugations were flattened to effect a lap joining for any other shape, then there would be loss of strength and loss of a simple watertight joint. As the hut was torn down because it was considered aesthetically inferior, it seems incredible that a roof is to be built on the new hut with all the corrugations "pounded flat" and "covered with briars". Surely to the most insensitive, the smooth finish of frank truthful corrugated aluminium is preferable to the tortured untidiness of pounded aluminium covered by dead bushes. Even the inherent strength of the material is gone and keeping the roof watertight becomes a problem.

Surely it is better to be honest and simple and express the roof, than to be evasive and subservient and conceal the true nature of the material.

When sailing, man asserts himself in nature – he presents a bold feature in nature, but by integrating himself into natural elements he realises, the poetry of man and nature. So too can a building be a bold feature well integrated in nature. Are sails part of the ocean? Are aluminum roofs part of a mountain?

The shape of a ship is vital for its easy passage through the water, but the shape of this building was decided by the inflexible shape of the roofing material, the rectangular bunks and the rectangular box for food and equipment. The rectangle was the simplest and most efficient shape. The hut was also a concession to nature in that man needs shelter in the wild.

If conceived and built by one person, this hut would still have been good. It was far more wonderful than this, for it was built by many people with violently differing opinions over a number of years. Plans were torn up or forgotten, no one spirit would be tolerated – the structure evolved, it was not predesigned. Because nature had laid down the discipline of remoteness, any complicated ideas were eliminated, only fine and essential material was used and the construction was kept to utter simplicity – "the expressive power of unadorned form". The structure became a strong element in the landscape, a ship upon the sea.

Many people derived enjoyment from building the hut so that it would stand solidly against the elements. To others, a sense of achievement could be gained by working with friends to build this hut in memory of good fellowship in the club, but in particular, to Steve who initiated an exciting career at Mt. Barney. Jon Stevenson was a founder of the University Bushwalking Club and earned his Doctorate of Science through the geological study of this mountain. He then went on to climb in the Swiss Alps, cross Antarctica with Dr. Fuchs and then almost scale K12 in the high Karakoram Range. The hut site was selected by Steve and permission granted, as a special concession, to build in a National Park. His friends started the hut as a tribute to hum and to his enthusiasm in opening up Mt, Barney to Bushwalkers. Its use as a shelter was of slightly lesser importance initially.

The original hut was neither perfect nor easily built. Many pulled down what others had built and every individual fought for his own expression while arguments raged. When near completion, the chimney worked well only if the wind did not blow down the valley. The fire built in the wrong position cause it to

smoke or the frame to catch fire. All problems could easily have been solved by time and understanding. The principle of the aluminium chimney was good, but the construction was poor, so that nature was destroying the untidy fixing. Once again the aluminium was associating itself with the air by soaring as a chimney into the sky and throwing the smoke to the winds.

Will this new hut have a chimney which will draw the smoke away from the inside? Will the roof leak water? Will it be resistant to bushfire with its dead bracken on the roof? Is the out of shape hexagon a better plan shape than the rectangle? Will the roof be stable in the high wind?

If the answer was “yes” to any of these questions there may be some grounds for an improved design but to forget all these questions in a search for beauty is not good sense.

Barry Smith is a New Zealand with considerable mountaineering experience on snow and ice. He is in Queensland to study Vet. Science at Queensland University and writes here on a recent expedition to the far South.

## ANTARCTIC SUMMER

Barry Smith

At 10 pm, we had our first glimpse of Antarctica. We gazed I awe at Mt. Sabine through the windows of our Superconstellation aircraft. Yes, there it was, knifing upwards out of a sea of ice to 14,000 feet and silhouetted against the orange sun low in the west. At midnight, we landed at McMurdo Sound – the doors opened and the icy blast entered the plane.

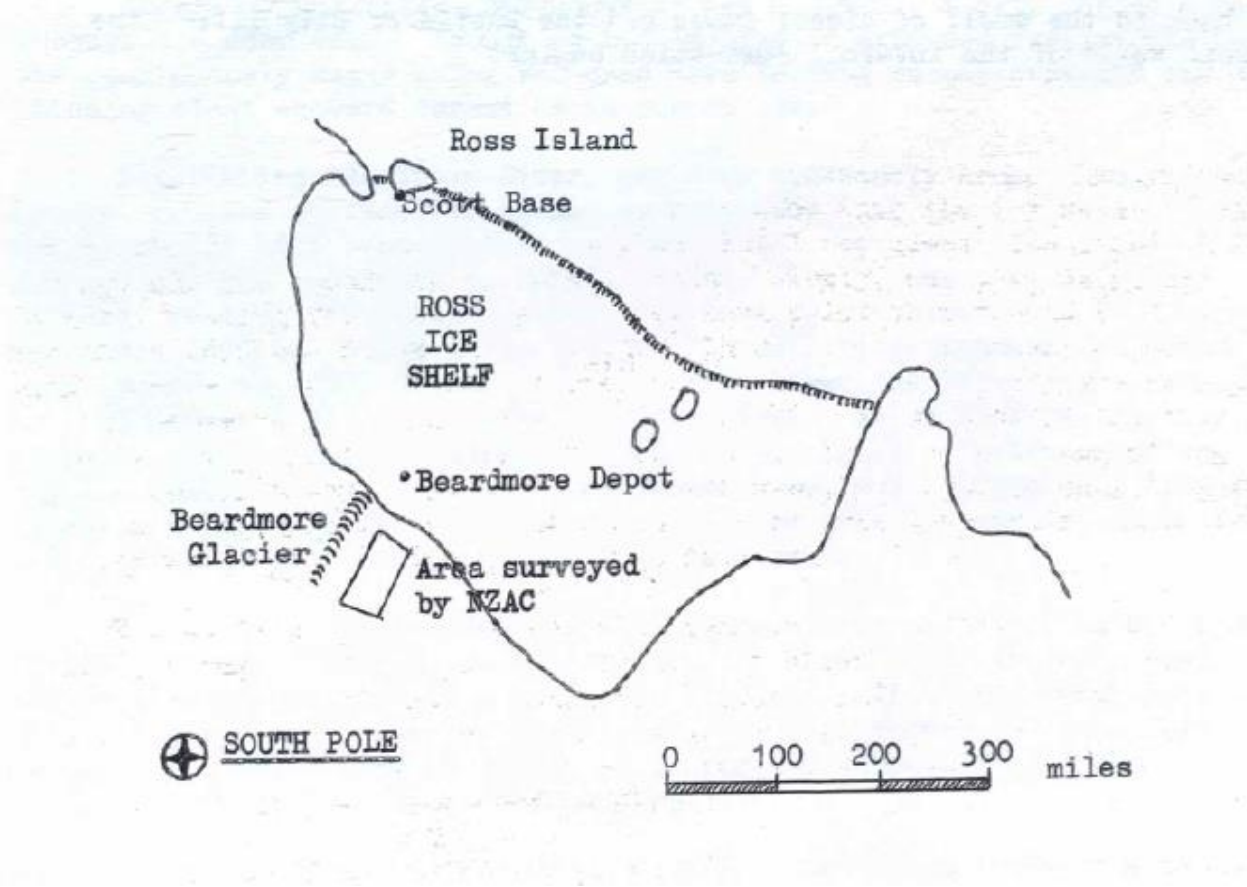
This was the start of the 1959-60 New Zealand Alpine Club expedition to the Beardmore Glacier. The selection committee had sorted eight members out of the applicants; Bob Cawley – leader, Dr. Robin Oliver – geologist, Hugh Tyndal-Biscoe as biologist, Murray Balt – surveyor, and Peter Bain, Neville Copper, Brian McGlinchy and myself as assistants. Ten days after our arrival at McMurdo Sound, we were flown 400 miles south to the Beardmore Depot which lies on the Ross Ice Shelf near the foot of the mighty Beardmore Glacier of Scott and Shackelton fame. We were the first party to approach this great river of ice since Scott's ill-fated party in 1912. There is a current scarcity of sled dogs in the Antarctic and we man hauled our food and equipment as Scott had dome some 50 years ago. Our equipment was much superior, but even so, the designs of essential items such as our sledges and the polar tents were identical to those used by the early explorers. Our purpose was to approach the area to the east of the Beardmore Glacier and carry out topographical work, geological, biological and soil surveys, and collect Met. information.

From Beardmore Depot, we began man hauling our sledges across the Ross Ice Shelf towards the mountains. There were two men to each 700 lb sledge. Scott and his men won all my admiration during the seven days we spent on the Ice Shelf; chain after chain, one foot after the other, we struggled and strained; every bump in the snow required an almost superhuman effort to get the sled across. We would start in the morning at a dead slow pace, and get slower all day. The mountains lured us on, but hey never seemed any close at the day's end. Finally, we reached the edge of the Ice Shelf and established out depot. A 24 hour storm gave us the opportunity to take a much needed rest.

Form this depot, we travelled deep into the mountains via unexplored glaciers. From camps in those glaciers, peaks were climbed and surveys carried out. One such peak was Mt. Kyffin, a granite tooth protruding from a mantle of snow and ice with a 5000 foot vertical face overlooking the Beardmore Glacier. While the surveyors surveyed from its lower and easily accessible summit, four of us attempted to climb the steeple-like higher summit. The climb was up fairly easy granite but the last ten feet proved a bit too risky. Had we been in New Zealand we would probably have climbed it, but at 85 degrees south, 300 miles from the pole, it was a different story. On the summit of the lower peak we found evidence in the form of erratic rocks that the Beardmore Glacier had once covered this peak. We were always overawed by the vastness of this great white continent and the size of its terrific glaciers and icefields but it was still hard to imagine these mighty peaks were once covered entirely by one huge ice sheet. The Beardmore must be one of the world's largest glaciers; it is over 100 miles long and 50 miles across at its widest point.

It was in this area that we discovered several biological specimens. Lichens were in abundance and occasionally we would find a small clump of moss. Insects (Collembola – genera Xenylla and Anurophorus) and spider mites were found. This was the furthest south that insects had been discovered.

A few more peaks in the Kyffin area were climbed and surveying done from them and then we moved further east to the large Commonwealth Glacier. One of the peaks, Mt. Patrick, was typical of the peaks surveyed in this area. We set off early in the morning and by 5 pm we reached the summit after a 6000 foot climb up a ten mile ridge. Surveying took five hours and we were back at camp by 3 am the following morning. The view from the summit of this mountain was magnificent. To the north at the mouth of the Beardmore Glacier was the sheer buttress of Mount Kyffin, to the west across the Beardmore lay massive, icy 15,000 footers and between the two of them lay the great Polar Plateau. To the south were more mountains and eastwards lay another huge glacier, long and narrow, winding a tortuous path through the mountains. The temperature of minus 2 F – 34 degrees of frost – and the strong wind made surveying difficult.




On more than one occasion, I found myself alone, a mile or more from the rest of the party. It was in these moments of solitude that I'd just sit and listen. Just silence – not the slightest sound. Stillness and silence and a vast arena of glistening snow and ice covered mountains; it almost seemed sacrilege to break that silence. I've experienced this sort of thing in the mountains in New Zealand but ever the same feeling of insignificance and solitude that I experienced down there.

Christmas day was spent in a minor blizzard in a camp at 6000 feet at the head of the Commonwealth Glacier. With a few decorations in the tent, a small amount of brandy and radio communication, we joined in the festivities at Scott Base, the New Zealand base at McMurdo Sound. Bad weather continued for a week at this camp. The arrival of a Skua gull winging its way across the Antarctic continent heralded the approach of fine weather but it was too late, our time was running out. With one last longing look at the mountains we had hoped to climb and survey we set off down the glacier. On the way back to the Ice Shelf, we managed one last climb, on one of the peaks overlooking the Beardmore Glacier. Our trip had been a fairly short one and very enjoyable despite the hardship. Looking down from this peak, we again had to admire the tremendous efforts of men like Scott and Shackelton. Its vastness itself is a silent tribute to their courage and endeavours. Eventually, we were flown back to Scott Base and after a very short stay there we travelled back to New Zealand on an American ship.

Thus ended four months of snow and ice and continual daylight. Once again back to the smell of diesel fumes and the bustle of city life – the different world of the internal combustion engine.

John Elliot is an Englishmen who has visited many Australian walking and climbing areas since he has been in this country. At the Editor's invitation, he has written us this article on Australia's highest mountain.

## KOSCIUSKO IN WINTER

John Elliot

We had left The Chalet at three in the afternoon.

All morning our route had followed the hard packed tracks of the various snow vehicles that operate between the ski-fields around Smiggings Holes, Perisher Valley, and The Chalet. Of our surroundings we had seen little, for mist covered the snow country and in the heavy silence it brings, the soft brunch of our footsteps, and sudden, sharp vicious slashing of sleet showers had been the only sounds. Sometimes we had been forced to wade through swollen streams barefoot, wincing at the cold, and the sharp-ribbed layers of ice that cut into our feet. Amongst the throngs of gaily attired skiers, our rucksacks and ice aces had seemed somewhat out of place, almost as much as they had appeared in the crowded city a few hours earlier.

But now we were only figures in a harsh, white landscape. Even the last stunted Snow Gums had dropped away over the horizon, and only blank, unbroken snowfields stretched away to Kosciusko, still four miles distant. Boundaries of mist and snow were scarcely discernible, and the angular silhouettes of the few snow poles within our eyes compass, gave the only substance to an amorphous landscape.

Ahead, my companion, Bob Jones of the M.U.M.C., slowly forced a passage through the deep snow. Though we had enjoyed an extended rest at The Chalet, the continuously heavy going was once more telling on our strength and the blinding sleet showers forced us to crouch low.

Negotiating the Snowy River, our feet constantly broke through the slushy, crusted surface, to plunge us knee-deep into the icy water beneath. Now it should have been my turn to lead, but I was almost too tired to keep moving, and Bob consented to remain ahead. Slowly, wearily, we pushed forward, resting frequently against the snow poles that seemed to disappear endlessly into the blank wall of mist. In gathering darkness, we could at last discern the rock-studded slopes of the Etheridge Ridge where we hoped to find Seamen's Hut, our refuge for the night. As we crested the final slope, a sharp, freezing breeze struck us, giving us a foretaste of the night's temperatures. The snow was firmer here, and pausing only long enough to get a torch from the pack, we stumbled down into the saddle, where the hut lay, its walls half0hidden by the high snow banks.

The solidly built stone hut was equipped with a coke stove and a supply of fuel, through kindling was almost entirely absent. While Bob prepared a meal on the primus, I used a knife to whittle a sufficient number of slivers from a log to eventually get the stove going. We damped the fire down, put several billies of snow on top to melt, and, as a precaution against the fumes retired to the other room to sleep.

I awoke at five the following morning, and having shaken the stove into active life, opened the shutter to see what the weather was about. A glitter of stars against the black velvet sky reflected dully on the frozen snow slopes scattered with dark boulders. Beyond the glass one sensed the heavy silence of intense cold.

But when we left the hut after breakfast the first grey mist streamers were already sweeping across the saddle and the sunrise glow was fast disappearing beneath angry cloud masses. Bob chipped a few steps to allow us to scramble over the snow bank around the hut, and then we were crossing the saddle with less than a mile to the summit. Our steps crunched lightly on the hard frozen snow, harmonizing with the rhythmic chink of the axe ferrules on the icy surface. As we sidled cautiously across the sooth northern slopes of the Etheridge Ridge it was hard to realise that a road lay somewhere beneath our feet. Occasionally we were forced to cut steps across the stepper sections, for our boots alone could make no impression on the icy surface.

Once a brief opening in the mist revealed several small corries about Mt. Mueller, their curving walls sheathed in pale blue ice.

In the poor visibility we lost the scattered snow poles several times before eventually reaching a point from which we could risk striking directly upward to the summit. Over these last few hundred fee the frozen snow gave way to grey, wind-fretted ice that cracked unpleasantly beneath our feet. The lower half of the trip station was also encased in the same wind sculptured mass, but a few blows with the ice axe revealed a brass plate that proved that this was indeed Mt. Kosciusko. With visibility still nil we paused long enough to eat a few squares of frozen chocolate before commencing out descent.

Coming down the first slope we were caught by a sudden sleet storm that buffeted us violently for a few minutes before passing on almost as quickly as it had come, and leaving in its wake the deep silence to which we had become accustomed.

We descended cautiously over the frozen surface, occasionally encountering the infrequent sections of snow poling, and coming at length to a fairly level place with one single, rough hewn stake that we knew we had not passed previously. Study of the map seemed to show us as being on the wrong side of the Rawson Saddle on the Etheridge Ridge probably on the Lake Cootopatamba track. We changed course to a compass bearing we hoped would bring us back to the Kosciusko road line. We continued on this course for some time, traversing featureless, undulating snow field that gave us no clue to our position.

Crossing a smaller, boulder studded ridge we began to descend a shallow couloir on the farther side. A few feet from the top I lost my footing finding myself almost immediately plunging downward at a rapidly accelerating pace. I endeavoured to brake my slide with the ice axe but holding this the wrong way found it almost at once ripped from my hands. On either hand rocks flashed by in an ever increasing blur, and a sudden change in the snow level shot me forward into a head-first slide. Then miraculously my speed began to slacken and I found myself tumbled out on a small snow basin.

In the mist I could neither see, nor communicate with my companion and I was forced to wait until at length he rejoined me before being able to assure him of my safety.

We continued forward on the same bearing meeting no recognizable feature, and becoming steadily more apprehensive as the time passed. When at length a localized lifting of the mist gave us a rough idea of our surroundings, we hastened to compare this rather limited picture against the map layout. Closest comparison seemed to be an area of the Snowy River basin south of the Etheridge Ridge. On that assumption we made a further alteration to our compass course.

We had been walking for almost an hour on this new bearing when further breaks in the mist showed snow poles a little to the right of our course. For some time now we had both been feeling the effects of

our extended trip, but this brief vision enthused new life into our tired bodies, and we pushed on determinedly, soon to discover that these were the poles we had followed up the Snowy River yesterday.

A last blizzard struck us just as we cam on the saddle, forcing us to crouch double to reach the hut, which we regained just five and a half hours after leaving it.

Fortunately the stove had remained alight so that we were able to enjoy our belated second breakfast in some degree of comfort. Then, with our gear packed and the hut chores attended to, we set off to retrace our route of yesterday.

But what a contrast in the two journeys. Today we walked on a crisp, unyielding surface, and the rivers were effectively bridged by firm frozen snow. Even the mist lifted a little giving tantalizing glimpses of the snow covered hills around us.

Towards evening we came on to the Charlotte Pass. Below us the skiers made a brightly coloured pattern on the slopes about The Chalet. Ahead the winding tracks of the Sno-Cats stretched away into the distance to merge softly with the white horizon.

Tomorrow we would return to the city. For us Kosciusko was almost over.

## DAIRY STORY

Arthur Rosser

Once upon a vacation Monday, George and I strolled along the Barney View road, with our heads down and our packs up. I was saying that I would willingly accept a ride on a tiger's back were one civil enough to offer me a lift, and George was picturing my discomfort should the animal have fleas, when an old Ford truck rattled past us and stopped. We ran to catch up.

"Just where the hell do you think you're going?" growled the old man inside. We told him.

"Get in", he said, "Mind the jelly". We got in.

"Jelly?" asked George. "Gelignite", said the man.

I wondered if gelignite came in tins or bottles and hoped I wouldn't find out the spectacular way.

The man's name was Jones, and he said he could take us to the Yellowpinch, which was a good thing because we were on our way to join Horace, Fred and Herbie, who were frolicking on Mount Barney. "What", I asked, for the matter was disturbing me, "is the jelly for?". "Bunyips".

"Bunyips?" I asked doubtfully. "Ung" grunted Jones. "Bunyips bad this season?" asked George, fascinated.

Jones obligingly told us about this Bunyip trouble. The bunyip, he confided, had arrived uninvited at his farm a few days previously, using a herd of cows for cover. Jones was driving the herd to the dairy at dusk when a voice from the middle said bitterly: "Changed yer mind, I s'pose. Gawdstruth!"

Jones looked all around. He saw nothing unusual, but he was alarmed. He had never met a bunyip socially, and he didn't want to, because he'd heard stories; but he knew the signs. Talking, for instance: a well known bunyip trick to lure innocent dairy farmer into the night, where packs of ae_datetime waited, drooling impatiently, ready to set upon him.

Having caught their dairy farmer, the activities begin: Hide and Shriek, Toes in Threes, Drop the Farmer, Nip the Hand, Bled Drover, Snakes and Farmers, and Australian Ghouls.

So Jones, who was nobody's fool, ignored this sinister remark, and kept on driving the cows. "Fair go" complained the voice. "Whats the flamin race in aid of? This looks like a good place to camp!"

Jones's worst hears were confirmed. The thing had singled him out, and was determined to get him. However, to his relief, he reached the dairy unmolested, and thankfully drove in the cows ("uts", said the voice in disgust – "Wots wrong with the great outdoors?") and lit the lantern. Bunyips, for personal reasons, are reluctant to appear in public under strong lights.

The milking had to be done, and Jones completed it without further interruption, though he did catch a glimpse of a tall creature with an enormous humped back.

As Jones passed quickly by the pigsty on his way to the house, the voice spoke again: "You little beauty!" it gloated, and a moment later added: "Mm! This is GOOD! Have some?". It then belched a contented belch, like a seal clapping.

Jones reached his house at high speed, and spent an awkward night with a shotgun under his pillow. When morning came and the bunyip had not struck, Jones felt calmer and decided to spray some burr in the Creek paddock. The result of this decision was that he actually saw the bunyip.

It lay in the middle of the herd, a revolting sight: hideously sluglike appearance with no limbs at all, and coloured slime green. Mad, darting eyes were set in a rough, semi human face. Near its head a small tag was visible, bearing the sinister inscription: “Paddy Made”.

Jones stood terrified, spraying his left foot, mentally picturing the Paddy, evil God of all bunyips, lurking in its lair surrounded by lantana, lawyer vine and gympie; lying on a heap of unburnt, unabashed, unburied tins, sustaining itself with the remains of captured dairy farmers, and spending its time in the asexual production of more and more bunyips.

One of the cows, which had been chewing thoughtfully and contemplating the thing in the paddock for some time, strolled over to have a bit of a sniff, just in case the object was edible.

“Gerrout!” snarled the monster, “Getter hell! We don’t move till I get a descent sleep. This is a lousy damn campsite. If you’re making porridge, ill clean out your billy when you’re finished.”.

Jones retired in search of his shotgun, but when he returned the creature had gone. There followed days of chaos on the farm. Fence posts were ripped out; huge bonfires appeared at night, with the creature attending them, canting – “The bigger the fool, the bigger the fire!”.

Cows which had never wandered before were found high on the slopes of Barney, and sounds of hammering came from the forge at night. The cows kept getting bits of metal imbedded in their hooves, and the pigs lost weight, no matter how much they were fed.

Jones became irritated. He began to set booby traps for the thing, and finally ran out of gelignite after blowing up three cows, a horse, and the mailman’s car. Telling us this in the truck, Jones became excited, and George and I felt slightly overwhelmed and we were glad to arrive at Yellowpinch.

“Just there”, muttered Jones, “is where I first saw it.” He pointed across the creek.

He stopped the truck to let George and me escape, and as we thanked him, the muffled “Hey-bob” of Horace, who always sounds as if he is wearing a sleeping bag on the wrong end, came floating down the valley from the farm ahead.

We climbed back in, wondering if the chaps weren’t taking rather a long time to find South Ridge.

“What’s the main trouble?” we asked Horace and Fred, as we got out again at the dairy, where they were crouched over a fire making milk pudding. They explained. It was Herb. He was missing again. Not lost, of course, but definitely overdue. He had vanished near the crossing the night they arrived. He had wanted to walk up the creek before camping but they ignored him. A herd of cows passed, and no more was seen of Herb.

George and I saw the situation in a flash, and led them out of Jones’s hearing. “That old maniac”, said George, nodding at Joes who was lovingly unwrapping a parcel I had been sitting on, “while a generous man when it came to giving lifts, is not quite all there as far as …”. There was a terrific explosion in a nearby gully.

“Got the beggar”, whooped Jones, and he galloped off around the hills. We followed.

“Hell”, I groaned, as I picked up a familiarly smelly sandshoe near the smoking put left by the blast, “hardly a trace. Poor old Herb!”. “What lousy luck!” muttered Jones. “I might have got a few bob for that scalp!”.

We gave a descent burial to Herb’s remains – one left sandshoe, an exposed roll of Kodachrome, a packet of dried vegetable, and a fizzy tin – we left the fizzy; it was the way Herb would have wanted it.

It was nearly dark when we reached the saddle above the Barney Hut.

“George”, I said, as the four of us sat looking at West Peak, “ can understand Herb mistaking cows for bushwalkers, and Jones thinking Her was a bunyip, but I don’t understand about those bits of metal in the cow’s hooves”.

“Elementary”, replied George. “Herb was leading them up Barney, and Barney has rock slabs on every ridge. Cows would slip on slabs, so Herb, a chap who was not bright but who was a good bushwalker, fitted them with tricounis.”.

Reaching the hut ahead of the others – they were all peering at a small embarrassed insect – I was astonished to find it contained a bloke massaging his left foot.

“Herb!” I exclaimed, “Haunting already?”.

“Careful!” he said. “Watch your step. The place is mined. Threw me pack on a bush and BOOM! Not safe. Treacherous tourists, I suspect. Or more likely”, he added, frowning, “Boy Scouts.”.

“Oh!” I said. I cleared my throat. “Where, uh, where are your, uh, friends, Herb?”.

“Horace and Fred? Dunno. Must have lost them at the time of the explosion.”

“No, not them; the others. You know.” I could sense his embarrassment and went quickly: “You can tell me! Moo!” I hinted moving forward.

“Moo?” asked Herb, stopping his massaging. I nodded conspiratorially.

“You were trying to bring them up Barney, but they slipped on the slabs. Jersies are lousy on rock, aren’t they?” I said, knowingly.

“Jersies? Cows?” he asked incredulously.

“Sort of”, I explained quickly, so as not to give him the wrong impression. “Bushcows. Cowwalkers. You weren’t a bunyip at all. you could never suck blood” – I grabbed his arm as he began to edge toward the door – “but you could put tricounis on their hooves to stop them slipping on the slabs!”.

I could see he didn’t get it. I gave an illustrative imitation of a cow slipping on rock with my free limbs.

“Poor cowsies”, I added, to show my sympathy. Herb wrenched free and leapt for the door. The others were crossing the creek.

“Hullo, Herb”, said George, nervously, and he added “Moo!” as one cow greeting another, just in case. I could have told him it was a mistake. Herb gave a strangled cry and dashed off into the rainforest.

In the end we never explained to him, as he remembered nothing up to the time of the explosion. When he eventually cam out for food, we let Horace and Fred take care of him. He didn't trust George and me then, and he still doesn't. I am afraid the old friendship has gone forever.

## A TRIBUTE TO QUEENSLAND

Keith Scott

When I stand on Mt. Barney and look out across its peak and gorges I have a feeling of peace, a feeling that I have touched something eternal, something constant. This is an experience which imparts a very deep satisfaction. I think that for many people this feeling of satisfaction and of peace, comes from their beliefs in, or perhaps knowledge of God. But for me it comes from the mountains.

And yet this constancy exists in the presence of an infinite variety, each facet of which is equally beautiful. It is this variety which makes each repeated trip to the same mountain a new and rewarding experience. Here in Queensland there is no lack of variety and this can be well demonstrated by visiting Barney regularly throughout the year, to climb its southern ridges in winter on a moonlight night with the westerlies screaming over the peaks is an almost fearful experience. While to lie on its peaks in the sun on a quiet spring day is perhaps the ultimate in peacefulness. From every direction it shows a different colour – form dark, cool greens on the south-western side, to dry yellow greens on the north0w-est, grey greens on the south-east, and harsh greys and browns on the north-east. In winter it is a dry mountain. But during a summer thunderstorm it is as though it were the origin of all waters. The white of the tops of the peaks becomes a mass of rushing white water with the rocks poking through. Every gully, every hollow becomes a torrent of water. Numerous waterfalls tumble off the cliffs of the West Peak and the thunder rolls up the gorges with a deafening roar.

Last year I visited Barney on a warm spring day. The mountain was quiet and peaceful and we spent a happy but somewhat ordinary day. But on the way down we were caught in a hailstorm, and this was a delightful experience. The grass-tress collect heaps of hailstones and the patches of green moss on the rocks become covered with shiny white ice.

When you climb Barney on a hot summer day you know you are in Queensland. Due to this there is a very strong tendency among bushwalkers in Queensland to travel to the cooler states for the summer vacation – to get away from the heat. But I find Barney in summer to be a most rewarding experience. I suggest that you try it.

There is another feeling among Queensland bushwalkers which is far more disturbing. This is that there are no real mountains in this state, that one must travel to Tasmania or New Zealand for real mountaineering experience. Perhaps this is so. Perhaps one's reputation as a rugged mountaineer is not complete without this experience. But is it worthwhile travelling these great distances just for this feeling of glory, of triumph and conquering the snow-capped peaks! Are not we forgetting the true beauty of the mountains? They are not things to be conquered. All that the mountaineer conquers are his own physical and, perhaps, mental weaknesses. He conquers his own desire to stop in the face of hardship. This is of course a worthwhile experience. But the mountain is never conquered, not is a mountain any less a mountain because it does not impose sufficient hardships to stop all but the "true" mountaineers. In fact, I am of the opinion, that because Queensland lacks these mountains which impose climbing difficulties, it is a better place for bushwalking. Here we have less chance of being perverted by the athletes and gymnasts. We cannot, or at least may not, continue climb our mountains for the feeling of triumph and glory. Although our athletic nature may stimulate us into taking up bushwalking, we should eventually realise the pettiness of this aspect and come to enjoy the mountains for what they really are – places of

peace and of beauty. Let us be thankful that in Queensland we have such beautiful mountains. Let us explore them for the sake of their beauty. Let us keep Queensland free of mountaineering.

On the north-western end of the Lost World Plateau, there is a flat grassy bank on the edge of the cliff. There is a small, probably permanent creek coming out of the rainforest at this point and dropping over the cliff. From this place you can look down into the Albert River Valley with its changing shades of green and yellow. And you can look across the razorback to Barney in the distance. Go there, and just sit and look out for a while. See then if you are glad that you live in Queensland.

## A WALK ALONG THE SCENIC RIM

Bert Anderson

One had often heard of the "Scenic Rim" in lectures and talks, and had read of it in Arthur Groom's "One Mountain after Another". So if was that, on trips to various vantage points in the south-east corner of Queensland, one would gaze at this string of mountain peaks: they form the Dividing Range from Mt. Mistake to the border at Wilson's Peak, and the border from Wilson's Peak to Lamington Plateau. One would speculate on the views which could be had from them and on Arthur Groom's concept of a series of continuous reserves from Binna Burra to Mt. Mistake.

So speculations gave way to action and a trip was planned. Five people did the trip. They were James Cuthbertson, Jack Farr, Graham Tweedale, Ian Wylie and the writer.

This walk was done in the period 26th December, 1948 – 9th of January, 1949. The actual planned time for the trip was 10 days, thus allowing 4 days for eventualities. The route was divided into three sections and two food depots established at the ends of the first two. One depot was based at the property of Mr. MacKay of the Head and the second at Mr. Tom Bretts at Palen Creek. Food cases were packed with our food requirements for the next section of the trip plus a real feast for the night we unpacked them. What a morale booster was the thought of that meal on the last day of each section!

Generally our food consisted of dehydrates prepared by one of the party and planned to give a balance of normal food constituents. We also included adequate sweets, salts, etc. to avoid the possibility of cravings developing.

Our equipment was, to say the least, individual. Only one member had the orthodox rucksack, the remainder varied from a self-designed pack to something resembling a Christmas tree.

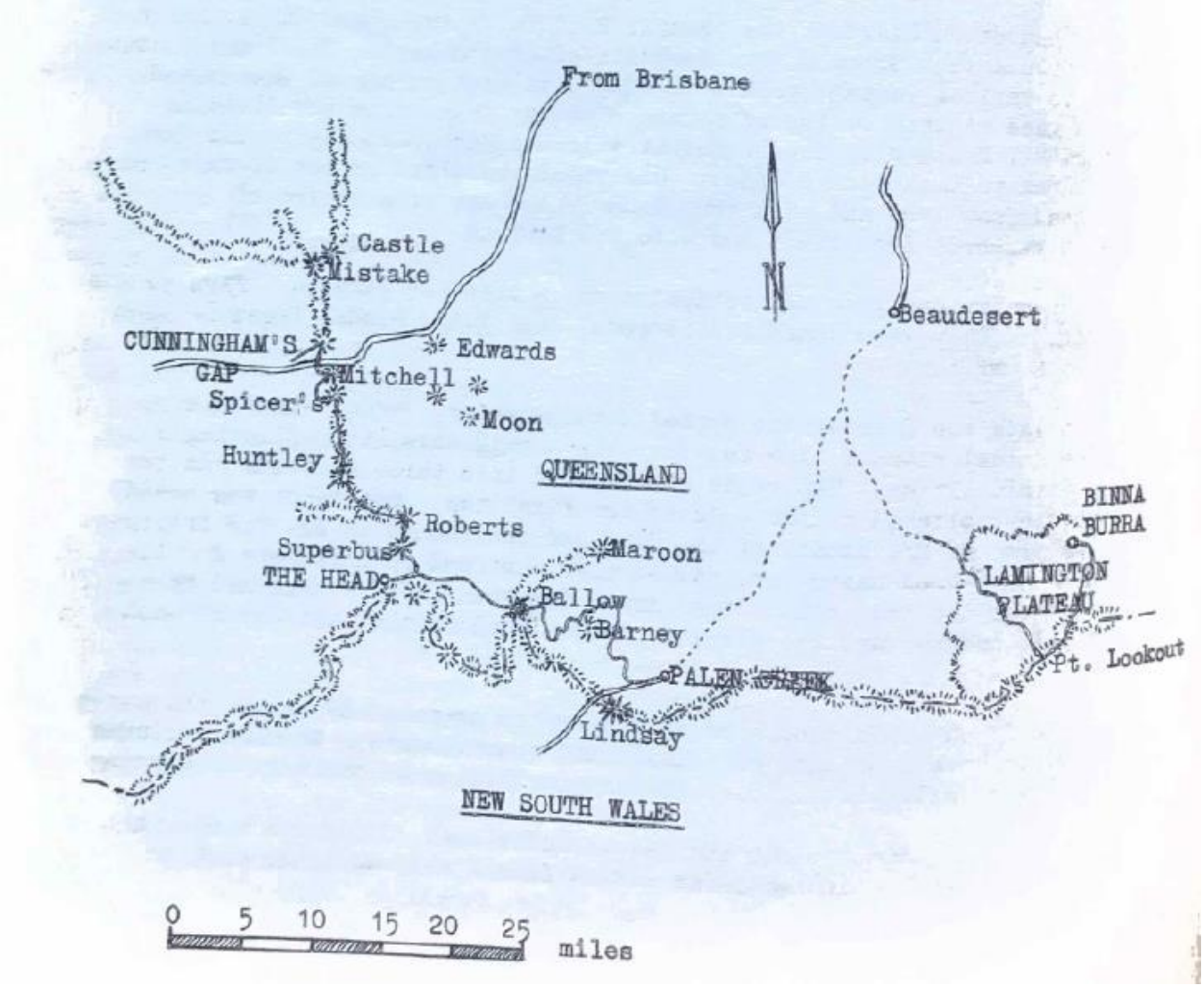
Each person carried between 35 – 40 lbs and this weight did not vary throughout the trip by more than 5 lbs. because of the food. One item which contributed more than its share to this weight was the Jungle Hammock. Each member of the party had one of these which could be bought at disposals at that time for about 25$. Despite their weight they were a useful addition to the gear and gave flexibility to the choice of campsite in the rugged terrain which was encountered.

The route (see map) was broadly as follows:

First section – Start from Cunningham's Gap and walk along the Dividing Range to The Head.

Second section – Over Wilson's Peak, Mt. Ballow, Mt. Barney, and Palen Creek.

Third section – Along the McPherson Range to Richmond Gap, into Running Creek to the falls, then over Lamington Plateau to Binna Burra.




The distance for the whole trip was approximately 86 miles. We left Brisbane on Sunday, 26th December and camped that night at Cunningham's Gap. Our sleep was disturbed by rain, a possum, and a Forestry worker who insisted that the best way to Wilson's Peak was via Boonah.

The first day of our trip was an easy one. It was spent on Mt. Cordeaux in the morning and on Mt. Mitchell in the afternoon. The weather had cleared and the views were excellent. An easy day for the first day was designed to allow us to become used to our packs. Camp was made in Spicer's Gap that night and we were able to swim in the creek despite the drought that had gripped the south-eastern area of the state during the latter part of 1948.

On Tuesday 28th, we set out into the relative untracked regions of the "Rim". The day started with a long climb up the grassy slopes to the west of Spicer's Peak. The sun was hot and we sweated out our softness on the climb. The packs became larger and heavier with each succeeding step. We lunched on top of Spicer's Peak with only one cup of tea each and the pattern for the first section was set, for water became our pressing problem. The few storms had done little to offset the effects of the drought and surface water was not plentiful. As our food was dehydrated, water was a real need, particularly for the evening meal.

Fortunately for us the vesicular basalt which characterized the country of the first section is a good aquifer and we were able to obtain water from cliff faces etc. with difficulty and considerable waste of time – but we did obtain water – that is, with the exception of Wednesday night, when the need for water competed with weariness and weariness won.

We camped that night on a burnt out slope, with an inclination of about 45 degrees, with little to eat and still less to drink. This was our worst night of the trip – thank heavens for the hammocks!

Scenically this section of the trip was a gem. The panoramas of the east dominated by Flinders, Edwards, Greville, Moon etc. with the Barney group to the south and the D'Aguilar's to the north were unending in variety. As we climbed each peak in succession and as the day changed from morning to afternoon these features changed in relative position and lighting to give a constantly varying composition.

The vegetation throughout was as pleasant mixture of scrub and open forest with terraced cliff faces on the mountain slopes bedecked with orchids and ferns.

For me, unfortunately, our preoccupation with the water problem somewhat overshadowed my delight in the views. In spite of this, however, I can remember where the views, the forest glens, and the fern shrouded scrub gardens were enjoyed to the exclusion of all else.

For the reader's interest the mountains, in order encountered, on this section were: Spicer's Peak, a small double peak named by the boys "Big and little B---ds" (the reasoning behind this being that, at the Lamington end of the trip the Big and Little Buggrams, hence, it was fitting that these should be so named for this end – I do not think the suggestion was accepted by the Lands Department), Huntley, Asplenium, Steamer's Ridge (the Junction of the Steamers with the main range), Mt. Roberts and Mt. Superbus.

When we reached the Head, in pouring rain and mist, our footwear was starting to deteriorate – all but one member of the party were in this difficulty. Two of the party had started the trip in gym. boots. These proved to be completely inadequate. Mr. MacKay was able to sell us two pairs of work boots of suitable size but this left one member still in battered gym. boots. We therefore changed the route of the next section slightly from that originally planned, to take in some farm houses on the way to see if we could purchase another pair of the right size.

For this reason the first part of the second section lost much of its interest by bypassing Wilson's Peak until we reached the base of Mt. Ballow (still, unfortunately, without the boots). There we camped on Saturday night, 1st January, 1949. It was quite our best camp to date.

To me, Mt. Ballow is an interesting mountain. Its Antarctic Beeches give, as always, a sense of timelessness. In one place there is what appears to be a stand of young Beech trees. We also saw a Lyre Bird here. I shall never forget the view in the late afternoon of that day, looking back over where we had been, the mountains we had crossed, every ridge and peak sharply outlined with shadow and their crests touched with the sun's gold. This scene with the memories it now held for us and brightened as it was with nature's fire was unforgettable. These are the moments, the highlights of the bushwalker's pleasure.

For the next two days we were in the back country behind Barney. Due to mistaking one ridge for another one we descended from the north peak of Ballow into Barney Creek too far up the gorge. This put us back more than a day. We did not regret it however as it is a truly beautiful area. The camp in the scrub that

night was yet another highlight for we found we were surrounded by millions of glow-worms. They made a fascinating sight in the darkness.

For two days we rock-hopped down Barney Creek and gorge – a trip of never-ending interest. But, for the bloke whose boots had given out it must have been torture since he was virtually barefooted. He nevertheless endured these two days without a murmur of complaint and could even laugh – albeit somewhat hysterically – when we found a tin of syrup at Drynan's hut.

The morning of the last day of this section we were without adequate food for breakfast. Our food depot was still some few miles off so we purchased some watermelons at the first farm house we came to. They were not a satisfactory substitute by any means. Thus it was that with the weight of our packs on our backs and the weight of the watermelons within in front we trudged the last of the second section intent only on reaching our food depot.

The footwear position had to be corrected so we made a further change in plan and cut out the section between Palen Creek and Running Creek. We went instead into Beaudesert. After the shopping was completed we caught the local bus to Christmas Creek and camped near the National Fitness Camp on the evening of the 6th January.

We started the last section of the trip with a grueling climb straight up the face to Lamington Plateau. As most of the remaining section of the trip would be familiar to readers since it traversed the Lamington Plateau to Pt. Lookout and then along the brushed and graded tracks to Binna burra there is little point in describing our experience here. We ourselves saw very little as it rained all of the last day and we were in scrub for much of the time the other days.

We arrived at Binna Burra at 2 pm on Sunday 9th January and our trip was completed.

We had not done the trip exactly as planned, but we had completed it, and I am sure that to every member of the party it had been a worthwhile experience. I think that with a fore-knowledge of the route to help, this through walk could become on of the finest bushwalking trips possible. It has endless variety, splendid views, and can be rugged enough to test the stamina of the hardiest and ablest walker.

I should like to do it again and I think that, all things considered, I could ask no better than to do it with the same companions.

## MY FIRST THROUGHWALK – EASTER 1961

Berenice Madsen

It was late Thursday night when we found ourselves abandoned by the roadside at Cunningham's Gap. In front of us was Mt. Mitchell, rising like a dark shadow into the blackness above. On the far side of it were Spicer's Peak, Huntley, Asplenium. At this stage they were mere names to me, but I wondered that meaning they would hold for me in four days' time when we were due to meet the other at the basecamp on Emu Creek.

We set off along the track and started the gradual climb to the saddle. With each step I could feel my pack growing heavier and the straps sinking deeper into my shoulders. As I plodded on I thought, "Oh, my aching legs! Will they get me to the top? Why did I ever come bushwalking?". I thought of my friends back in Brisbane enjoying the comforts of civilization. "You're crazy!" they said when I told them how I intended to spend the weekend. I had not thought so then, but now I was beginning to wonder if they weren't right after all.

However, after a while, I was amazed to discover that my legs weren't quite as weary as they had been, my pack not quite so painful. Perhaps throughwalking wasn't going to be such a bad proposition after all. with this encouraging thought I pushed on, now rising up into the mist. Looking down, we could see the lights below gradually receding. At last Doug came back with the news that we were almost there. Around the last bend, up the steps, and we were in the saddle. How delightful it was to put own my pack and craw into the depths of my sleeping bag.

Next morning I woke to see the light creeping into the valleys far below. As I lay there I thought of all those sensible people who had spent the night at home tucked safely in bed. Never would they know the feeling of contentment experienced while lying in a warm sleeping bag under a clear sky and watching the sun rise over the mountains.

After breakfast we continued on the summit. Ahead of us lay numerous mountains and now that I could see where we were going I was filled with awe and wondered if I had lost my sanity when I became a bushwalker. Returning to our camp to collect our packs we then set off down the mountainside, stopping on the way to say "good-morning" to a black snake.

We rested by a creek and feasted on fizzy and raising while Doug and Bill provided amusement by tadpoling. We then continued on almost level ground for a while, crossing several dry watercourses, wondering whether there would be water in the next one. At last we found some, so we stopped for lunch and relaxed while Dough entertained us with the help of a book of Australian verse.

The climb up Spicer's Peak now confronted us. We eventually reached the saddle after much scrambling up the grassy slopes and occasional rock-climbing where I was most grateful to be temporarily relieved of my pack. When we reached the peak the sun was getting low and I was not at all happy at the prospect of walking through rain forest in the dark.

We scrambled down until suddenly we found ourselves at the top of a cliff face. It was dark by the time a way down was found and we made slow progress as we dodged nettles and Gympie bushes (not always successfully), stopping to say "hello" to a pair of Devil birds sleeping peacefully. We were hopefully watching for a sign of eucalypts ahead of us when we encountered a tangle of lantana. We decided that

this was a sure sign that we were almost out of the rain forest, but it seemed an eternity before we found ourselves in open forest. After stumbling over rocks and feeling quite dejected for the last hour or more, I was elated at having a bit of moonlight to show me where I was going. I leant one lesson that night – never wear a watch when bushwalking. Mine is doomed to spend the rest of its days on Spicer's Peak.

On Saturday we began the day by climbing Double Top. We rested at the top while we looked back to see where our jaunt of the previous night had taken us. We now had little water left so decided to have a water-party down to Hell-Hole Creek when we reached a suitable point. About midday we left our packs in the care of Dawn and Aegus, the bushwalking dog, at the top of the ridge and made our way down to the creek. We came across an old timber road but decided not to follow it as it was covered by an excellent crop of nettles. We followed the almost dry creek bed downstream and luckily caught the creek just before it fell over a cliff. After a good lunch and a much-needed wash we made our way back with full water-bottles. Our three hour water-party almost ended in mutiny when it was thought that one of the water-bottles had been left behind at the creek. Fortunately it was found just as Barry was going back for it.

An easy walk took us to the grass-tree forest just before Huntley where we stopped for the night. We grazed in administration at the glorious sunset which gave a rosy glow to the top of each grass-tree. As darkness fell, lightning flickered all around us and a few drops of rain chased us to the shelter of our tents. It did not last long and we gathered around the fire again to pass the time eating toast, laughing, and wondering if the Eater Bunny would find us up there in the morning.

Next morning we watched the rain coming closer as we started our climb up Huntley, by the time we reached the cliffs the scenery was concealed by an uninterrupted whiteness. After being hauled over the cliffs and enjoying a short scramble we reached the top. The view, so I am told, is wonderful – providing the weather cooperates. I must go back and see for myself one day. After lunchtime in the clouds we headed for a ridge leading to Asplenium but soon discovered that the goblins had shifted it while we weren't looking. However we soon found it and set off again while Aegus, forgetting that he is supposed to be a one-man dog, tried climbing into various packs as their owners scrambled over the rocks.

We spent the night perched on the top of the cliffs near the end of the ridge. Next morning a very worried Bill informed us that Aegus was missing. Immediately a search was made and at last Bill found him at the bottom of the cliffs. As he climbed down the rest of us waited anxiously. The rope was let down and up came Bill with the pup, unharmed but very meek.

On the way up Asplenium and along to Panorama Point we amused ourselves by singing nursery rhymes with expert assistance from Noela. After sliding off Panorama Point we soon found ourselves on a timber track which took us down to Emu Creek. After disposing of our remining food and revelling in the abundance of water we sauntered along the road to the mill where we deposited out packs. Jubilant and light-footed we sped on to the base-camp.

As I looked back over the last four days I was convinced that bushwalkers are a unique and somewhat crazy race but in spite of rain, nettles, and numerous aches and pains, my prevailing desire was to be one of them.

## THE UQBWC WINTER EXPEDITION TO TASMANIA

Ron Cox

One dull, rainy August morning, a tiny boat chugged northward up the gray, windswept waters of Lake St. Clair. Aboard were four brave bushwalkers. One was big, strong Peter Reimann, handsome idol of the bushwalking club's young ladies. A quiet and modest soul, he made a great contrast to the unashamedly egotistic earbasher Basil Yule, short, squat, rugged as a small ox. The other two were Ron Cox and Pat Conaghan, a veteran climbing combination. The tall, lean and undernourished looking Cox and the short and slightly tubby Conaghan made another strangely contrasting pair. Queenslanders all, they were bound for the high mountains of the southern Reserve, a region of Tasmania seldom visited in winter, even by Tasmanians.

Their friends had labeled them "mad", and gleefully laid claim to their material possessions, their clothes, books, cars, even their women. Their boatsman, Park Ranger Wally Connel, at least had enough faith to leave the payment of their fares to the return voyage when he left them at the norther shore of the lake. On to their backs went their gigantic 85 lb. packs, and into the wilderness they walked. On tracks degenerated to sloppy morasses of mud and floating ice, they stumbled and splashed, sweated and strained, all through that cloudy afternoon. Heads down, they walked past a large sign indicating a turn off track to Pine Valley without seeing it. For hours that night, they blundered through the pitch black forest on the wrong track, searching vainly for Pine Valley Hut. Finally, completely lost, they pitched their tents in a small clearing as the rain poured down. It was a fine start to their great expedition.

Next morning they woke to a deathly silence and found that an overnight snowfall had transformed the forest to a white fairyland. Everywhere the ground, rocks and trees were covered. It was amazingly quiet, the fine white powder soaked up all sound like s sponge. Ow and then a tree branch would silently shower its load of snow to the ground. It was a storybook scene to the Queenslanders; they'd never seen snow like this before.

Later they deduced they were on the wrong track, and by late afternoon had reached Pine Valley Hut. It was cloudy all day, and there were no views of the mountains. After a night in the hut, they moved up to the Labyrinth Plateau, a high maze of frozen lakes and rounded hills where only the twisted snowgums and low, gnarled scrubs grew through the deep snowdrifts. They camped that night on a lovely, snow-capped hill, and next day climbed even higher, above the last scrub and trees, to the DuCane Plateau, a pure white Alpine world of snow and rock and ice. The weather remained overcast and misty, but those were exciting days, filled with new experience. Their progress was checked abruptly by a fierce mountain blizzard that swept across the range, lashing snow into their faces and forcing them to take shelter on a little terrace below the Plateau's southern rim. It was a though struggle to pitch their tents in the howling wind. All hands were needed to hold the flapping nylon down while the guy-ropes were attached to ice-axes and aluminium tent pegs sunk deep in the snow. Once they were inside and the cheerful primuses were roaring, the blizzard could howl and scream its worst. They laid up all afternoon while the storm spent its force.

The trials of living in a small mountain tent were many – the simplest operation becomes complex in the confined space, particularly when the primuses are burning. They often wondered if they could escape in time through the single sleeve entrances of the highly inflammable tents if one of the stoves were knocked over. But the greatest problem was condensation. The steam from their cooking condenses on the cold,

waterproof walls and then ran down to form deep pools on the sewn-in floor. They learnt, very early in the trip, to reduce condensation by keeping lids on boiling billies and opening the tent vents wide (otherwise they'd have floated outside on their lilos).

That night the wind abated and the snowing stopped. For the first time their thermometer dropped well below freezing. This was a happy sign, in the mountains a cold night means a fine day.

At first light, a thick mist hung over the silent, frozen landscape. Stamping their feet and blowing on their cold hands, their breath puffing into clouds in the frosty air, they surveyed the scene. The tents, the only definite objects visible in the fog, were half covered by the new snow. A wet towel, left out overnight, was frozen, literally stiff as aboard. Looking overhead, they could detect a faint suspicion of blue colouring the grey and hoped wildly that this was a long awaited fine day.

Just a little later, light from an unseen sun began to filter through, slowly turning the mist to a thin luminous haze. Now, the golden sunlight fell on a million sparkling crystals in the snow. They looked about them at the gently undulating hills of the plateau and not a tree was in sight, the dazzling snow cover was broken only by low buffs of ice plastered rock. But snow scenery is not black and white as one might imagine. In fact the greatest impression was of strong colours: the deep indigo of the sky, the lovely ice-blue of the shadows in the snow, the rich brown of the Dolerite rock, the gaudy hues of their tents – all stood out vividly by contrast with the white.

They were camped at 4,200 feet on the southern scrap of the Plateau, and a boiling mass of grey cloud towered over Pine Valley to the south, blocking the view in that direction. Once a window appeared in the cloud and framed in the window stood a great pyramid of snow, blazing golden in the low sun. it was Mt. Gould, buried under the new falls. For twenty seconds they stared incredulously, then a curtain was drawn across the window and the vision was lost. But the best was yet to come. At last the topmost crags of Mt. Geryon appeared above the grey mist, their snowy crests lit from behind by the slanting rays of the sun. the four campers shouted and laughed and almost danced in ecstasy as they watched the mists withdraw, foot by foot, down the flanks of the most beautiful mountain they'd ever seen. When it finally stood revealed, a soaring vertical mass of brown rock, plastered with blue snow and silver ice, it was hard for them to believe they were still in Australia. Actually these mountains are small compared with the high mountains of the world, but size is no criterion of beauty, and the scenes were all they could possibly have hoped for.

There was no question of packing up and leaving this idyllic area – they simply stared, almost paralysed, for hour after hour while the last mists dissolved and the morning's frosts thawed away. But, about noon, they decided to go for a walk and gathered together ice-axes, ropes and spare socks. They had no definite plans but it was very tempting to go and look at the North Peak of Geryon, a mile from the camp. An hour's delightful walk on firm, crisp snow, in the hot sunshine, took them close to the mountain, where they paused to ponder.

It was 2 pm already. They'd never climbed snow before. Their only knowledge of art came from text-books. However, the lower slopes looked reasonable and they at last had to look at the first bit. So they crossed the col which joins the Plateau to North Peak. A short traverse brought them out high on the precipitous Western Face which now tumbled far below them. They started up the face, climbing on high angle snow, kicking deep steps and using their axes as an aid to balance. For safety's sake, they belayed as in rock climbing, except that their belay anchors were axeshafts driven deep in the snow. As they

climbed, they learned. The sheer physical pleasure of moving up slowly and rhythmically in easy balance, driving the boots one after the other into the surface with deft kicks, was all new and exhilarating. The yawning drop down the Western Face to the screes a thousand feet beneath their heels was an ever present reminder of the danger of the situation, setting their nerves to that fine pitch of excitement that makes the difference between mere sport and high adventure. The grandeur of the aspect completed the beauty of the climb. There was the magnificent, white snow and brown rock of the peak itself, the view out across the Plateau, and beyond the big Ossa and Pelion mountain groups absolutely buried in snow. The sky was blue, the sun blazed down on the landscape; this day alone was worth the long journey from Queensland.

An occasional step of rock separated the stretches of snow, but these they climbed easily, scraping the ice from the holds with their axes. The sun dropped towards the horizon, but this was only slightly disquieting. Finally in the red rays of the setting sun, the four brave mountaineers stood on the summit of the North Peak of Geryon. It was the first winter climb of this peak, and proud they were of their beginners' efforts.

Multicoloured hues blazed in the sky and in the snow – reds and pinks, yellows and golds, purples and blues. Distant peaks stood out stark and black, silhouetted against the dying light. As that last light was extinguished, Jack Frost turned on his "Fastfreeze". Hurriedly pulling on every piece of spare clothing, the climbers started their scamper off the peak. Extreme care was needed, for their rubber soles were poor footwear on the rapidly icing surface. However, the torchlight descent was uneventful, and an hour later they were traversing off the mountain's flanks to the safety of the flat Plateau. As they tramped home to High Camp, the thermometer showed 22 degrees. Despite their ice plastered appearance, the bit in the air, and the numbing tightness of their freezing boots, they glowed warmly inside with the satisfaction of pioneering a superb climb. Soon the primuses were warming the tents as they melted bucketsful of snow for hot food and drinks. Needless to say, they slept soundly that night.

Late the next day, which was again flawlessly sunny, Bas and Pete took one tent and backpacked further eastward along the DuCane Range, camping on Big Gun Pass. The day after, they achieved another 'first' for the expedition by completing the first winter circuit of the DuCanes from the Labyrinth of Falling Mountain. From the High Camp on the DuCane Plateau to Falling Mountain they were never below 4,300 feet. They showed that the best thing to do in winter is to go high, for at that altitude the snow was always firm and hard, and provided superb walking, in contrast to the soft conditions below 4,000 feet.

Meanwhile, Conoghan and Cox, bewitched by Geryon, had stayed behind to make a crazy, hastily organized attempt to traverse the mountain's four peaks from north to south.* No one had ever climbed from end to end over the mountain's crest before, even in summer. Their all-time record late start at 5 pm was in the best traditions of Queensland mountaineering. They took sleeping bags and, after climbing North Peak again, this time in the dark, they bivouacked at 5,000 feet in a hole dug from its summit snows. Sadly, the weather turned really foul next day, and after another criminally late start, due to the cold, it was 1 pm before they had negotiated the 150 odd yards along North Peak to its southern end. Here they could just make out the real difficulties of the climb through the mist and falling snow. Slashed out of the mountain were two deep gashes, nearly 300 feet deep, one between North Peak and the smaller but wicked spire of the Foresight, and the other between the Foresight and South Peak.

* See sketch of Geryon peaks on page 44. *[Note that this was the original text, see page 46 now]*

The sides of the gashes, which they had to ascend or descend, were terrifyingly steep, in places actually overhanging, and sheathed in a grey armour of ice. The thick mist and freezing conditions, added to the immense technical difficulties of this winter climb, were more than enough to scare the usually optimistic duo into a hasty retreat. Descending the mountain, they narrowly averted disaster when Cox, climbing down a steep couloir of snow and ice too quickly and too carelessly, slipped, and fell 150 feet. Conaghan held him on an ice-axe belay. Had the belay gone, they would have fallen over a thousand feet down the Wester Face. Later the night caught them still on the mountain, and so it was rather late when they reached the comforts of High Camp.**

Next day was maddingly warm and sunny. They dawdled till noon, reluctant to leave, then walked out to Narcissus Hut on Lake St. Clair, arriving four hours after dark, to rendezvous with Reimann and Yule who had descended from Falling Mountain. Poor Conaghan left by boat next morning for civilization and work. The others walked that afternoon – and night – to DuCane Hut, in rainy weather. They carried very light packs now, they'd discovered that Tasmania wasn't the Antarctic land they'd expected it to be so they left half their gear at Narcissus Hut. There is really no reason why pack, with food for say a fortnight, should weigh more than 60 lbs.

Their objective was Mt. Ossa, 5,300 feet, the highest mountain in Tasmania. It was rumoured that it was unclimbed in winter. (Later they found that Andrew Hamilton, a Scotsman resident in Tasmania, had climbed it the previous August). At noon next day, they were at 4,500 feet in the climbing gully at grips with the real climb. A four mile walk, the traverse around low Mr. Doris, and a long snow face lay below them. Another Tasmanian blizzard was trying hard to discourage them, whipping sheets of snow off the top of Ossa and down the gully with such stinging force that it was agony to look up. They paused to reconsider, and Bas and Pete lit up their pipes, with difficulty. If they could light a pipe in the blizzard, they could climb in it, so they roped up. Four pitches on 300 feet of had snow took them to the gulley's head where they had a precarious swim up through a steep, hanging mass of powder snow. Then a short climb, on tiny steps chipped in the inch thick verglas coating on a rock slab, brought them out on gentler ground. The remaining 400 feet was an easy slope.

When they broke through a small cornice to gain Ossa's summit plateau, they met 'whiteout' conditions. The plateau was a big dome of featureless snow which merged imperceptibly with the mist so that absolutely nothing could be seen. Looking down, they could see their boots but not the snow they stood on, they might have been walking on air. Like men in the dark, they groped along, reassured only by the rope between them, and miraculously blundered onto the tumble of half buried boulders that marked the summit of Ossa. It was 2 pm, the temperature 28 degrees, and it was no place for Queenslanders to linger.

Descending below the mist to the lowlands, they found the entire countryside was white from the fresh fall. The sun came out on the snow next morning and DuCane Hut and the surrounding trees looked like an Old World Christmas scene. It was a flawless day, but they wasted it in a shocking fashion sleeping in the bunks of the Hut. The next day was flawless too, but that was they day they had to walk out from the hills.

It felt like a summer day as they tramped southward over DuCane Gap. When they checked their thermometer they realised how they'd acclimatized. It was 40 degrees, the temperature of the average Brisbane refrigerator.

** Full account in "Skyline", 1961.

## ANTICS IN ETRIERS

Gordon Grigg

The sun was just rising as Pat Conaghan and I threw down our loads below the broke columns at the foot of Crookneck's East Face. Above us, as we sorted our equipment, leaned the face with its formidable lines of overhangs and its great crack running from top to bottom providing the route.

The face had been completely climbed only once before, in September 1959, when Ron Cox was successful on his eight attempt. Ron's pitons were still in place, so for us the task was much easier. The climb is done in three pitches, the second being the longest and almost entirely artificial. We intended to bivouac at the second stance.

A gusty westerly was whistling in the rocks as Pat led off at 7 o'clock. The broken columns were soon below him and he was at the first overhang which necessitated the use of etriers (rope stirrups). Once over the overhang, a delicate traverse took him to below the main crack; from there he went about ten feet up on etriers to the first stance. After the sack was hauled, Pat called for me to follow. The rock was already warm to the touch, and very smooth. Shortly I joined him at the stance (a foot square chockstone under an overhang) where I would stay for another eight hours.

When ropes had been rearranged, Pat commenced the second pitch, climbing free for about twenty feet to the first wooden wedge. From here on, the climb to Stance Two would be all artificial climbing, on pitons and wedges. Leaning out on the anchor ropes I was able to watch Pat climb. He was, by this, well in his stride, and climbing very confidently. Sharp commands such as, "Slack red, tension white", came floating down, interrupted by hammer blows and snatches of song.

Once, while he was driving in a new piton, the one he was supported on slowly began to come out. The occasional leisurely hammer strokes suddenly became frantic and Pat had only just managed to clip one rope onto the newly driven peg when his lower support came out. Standing on my chockstone, I wondered if he had become at all unnerved by this, but he was soon continuing after some choice remarks about Cox's pegs.

Another incident soon followed. A wooden wedge came out under his weight. He fell six feet by a running belay on the next wedge lower down held him easily; the thin nylon ropes were so elastic that I hardly felt him fall.

By now, Pat was very tired, and very thirsty. The gymnastics of the climb were proving very strenuous. As I shifted my cramped feet into a better position, I realised how later it was getting. Already Pat had been on this pitch for five hours, and the shadow of Crookneck was rapidly lengthening towards Tibrogargan. My arms and shoulders were very tired from giving tension on the ropes and I was cold.

Time passed, and soon Pat was able to call down that he was ready to attempt the last and biggest overhang, which requires considerable care. No doubt encouraged by his raging thirst, he was soon on the wedge above it, and then there was a few feet of free climbing to the second stance. It was 5.15 pm.

At first I shuddered at the thought of climbing this, the most arduous and difficult pitch, in the dark, but a desire to leave this horrible chockstone, and the confident shouts floating down from up above on the ledge, allayed my fears, and soon I was able to declare my stay at Stance One over.

By holding the torch in my teeth I was able to see fairly well, and, my mind being fully occupied with the technical intricacies of the climb, time passed swiftly. During haulage the sack had become caught on an overhang, and this necessitated my freeing it on the way up. While tied on up above, so Pat could have both hands (and his teeth) free, I shone the torch straight down. The ground was out of sight below, and the wall fell away below me to merge with the inky blackness. The only reality was the firm rock in front of and above me.

Piton after piton was passed, while Pat called instructions about the reliability of the pitons and meanderings of the route. My arms were aching when I reached the last overhang. A moment's hesitation followed by a muscle stretching effort, and I was on the wedge above the overhang. I was very tired, and my mouth felt dry. I climbed up above the wedge, but while endeavouring (for the second time) to retrieve the etriers from it, I had a short fall back down below them, and resorted to the top rope to climb into the stance. It was 9 pm.

Our ledge was far from spacious (three feet by two feet six inches), but after the verticality of the wall it seemed so. Any movement up here needed careful deliberation as we had to be most particular not to let anything fall. After eating, we crawled into out sleeping bags, arranged slings in comfortable (?) positions, and tried to sleep. In his book "Starlight and Storm", Gaston Rebuffat soliloquises in very grand style about the pleasures of a "bivvy" but I am now certain that this was written in retrospect. The night wore on, each waking the other with his movements. The stars winked, and from far below the roar of the wind in the trees came up to us.

Due to general lethargy it was long past daylight before we thought about moving and consequently it was 11 a before we were ready for the climb. On this, the third pitch, the wall loses some of its steepness, and most of it can be climbed free. Soon Pat was well above me, and my only knowledge of his progress were his boots scraping on the rock, the rope gradually being payed out, and his progress report. Then he was able to report that he was at the top of the chimney, and finally a triumphant yell announced his arrival at the top of the wall. I hurriedly made preparations to start, and, as I began, my whole body welcomed activity. This pitch is sheer delight to climb, especially the top chimney, and it seemed only a short time after that I climbed out of it and joined Pat.

Exultantly we collected the gear, and raced off for the summit to make an entry in the log book and eat some food which Ken Warner had left there for us. Then we scrambled down the track and off down the foothills.

As we left the mountain stood majestically silhouetted against the pink western sky, and gradually received as we drove away.

We had both enjoyed our brief sojourn in the "World of the Vertical".

## BOSWELL'S HOLIDAY CAMP

Grahame Hardy

On each of the past two years, the New Zealand Alpine Club has given a short course on snow and ice climbing exclusively for Australians, so as they wouldn't get "dedded" so often. Basil and I had decided t go. We were supposed to meet at the Mount Cook bus depot in Christchurch at 7.30 am. Basil and I arrived at 8, and without any money to pay our fees, thus establishing from the start what manner of men we were. After a little bickering with the bus driver, we were taken to Tekapo, where we met out instructor, Boswell, one of the guides from the Hermitage. We soon discovered Boz had a favourite word (yes, that word) and he forthwith applied it to us. From thereafter, it was always: "Come on, youse ( ) Australians.". by the means of a truck and a sheep farmer's tractor, we reached a deer stalker's hut on the Godley River next day. From here we had to WALK, unfortunately carrying the very considerable quantity of food and equipment we would need for the next eight days. The river, typical of East Coast rivers, had a flat bed of gravel, usually more than half a mile wide. Meandering hither and thither across this was a very cold and fast flowing stream. Crossing a small branch of this proved to be a harrowing experience.

Basil and I went across together, propping ourselves up with out ice-axes, and holding on to each other like grim death. Basil was carrying all the bread, and I had all the chocolate, but our concern wasn't due to this. We just liked each other. Shortly after, we reached the Alpine Club's Hut. It was a square tinny thing, wired to the ground, as no-one trusts anyone in New Zealand. It had eight bunks, for ten people. I, of course, was on the floor. The only disadvantage of this was that everyone held their plates over me while eating breakfast, to avoid slopping on their sleeping bags, and I ended up covered with porridge each morning.

The general scheme of our days at the hut didn't vary much. We had a couple of glaciers fairly handy, the Mawd and the Godley, with a smallish icefall, crevasses to practice not falling into, and bits of snow stuck on the sides of the neighbouring mountains, to practice falling down. Boz moved us from one place to another to teach us various things.

We went to bed soon after dark. All except Basil. He had brought his own small hurricane lamp. Each night he hung this above his bunk and spent a happy hour writing vile and unspeakable anecdotes, courtesy of Boz, in his diary.

Breakfast was a miserable meal. The cooks, a different two each day, got up at 3 am, and started to burn the porridge. When it was burnt, we were served it in bed. As no one bothers about washing plates at that hour of the morning, the second course, warm bacon, was served in the ruins of someone else's porridge and milk. Thus fortified, we used to leave the hut before dawn, faced a couple of miles of shifting scree and moraine, before we got on to the glacier. Then if we could find a suitable hollow in the ice, we usually started the day cutting steps up and down the side of it.

Cramponning was administered as a punishment for needling Boz. "Right, youse ( ) Australians, put yer crampons on.". He would then pick out a horrifying ice slope, and tell us to go up/down it. He himself stood on a flat spot, and encourages us with his favourite word.

He had given us some theoretical instruction on ice-axe belaying, and one day he decided to show us how effective it was. He took us up a respectably steep snow slope, stuck his axe in the snow, and put a turn of his rope around it, leaving about 50 feet of slack. One by one we tied on the other end, and dived down

the slope, losing our breakfast (no real loss), when the rope pulled taut. Except once when the axe flipped out, and the bloke on the other end was, in theory, dedded.

Occasionally we used to mess around in the icefall, which is the cracked area of ice on the slopes at the head of the glacier. The cracks often went down several hundred feet, with snow bridges over them at odd places. We moved over this sort of region roped in pairs, belaying each other when needed. Once, when we were at this game I was roped to Boz. He had taken us to the top of the icefall. Then he told us to spread out and find our own way down. I lead off with Boz in tow. This sort of conversation ensued for a while. “Why didn’t you cross over that?” “It might fall.” “No it won’t.” “It might.” “Don’t you trust me?” “NO!” “Stupid ( ) Australians.” “Cut steps like buckets, idiot.” Etc. eventually, we were through it, and as a reward for not dragging him down a crevasse, he pulled out two packets of life-savers. “What kind do you want?” “Both.” He slapped me across the face, and said: “You get one.” It wasn’t exactly a Sunday School.

## GERYON TRAVERSE

Pat Conaghan

Could it really be the same mountain? Five months ago it had been plastered in lovely winter snow; but now it is January, the middle of a drought, and the mountain is enveloped in a thick pall of smoke, - a bushfire smoke that suffocates the Whole Southern Reserve.

Ron Cox and I had been drawn back to Mount Geryon whose soaring walls of Chocolate brown dolerite form a high narrow spur jutting South from the DuCane Range in central Tasmania. Geryon of course was the three-headed monster in the day of Hercules, but this modern day descent was just a little wiser, for in addition to its three main towering summits, almost 5000 feet high, a fourth but smaller peak terminated its deeply serrated profile on the South.

The idea of a traverse of all four peaks was very appealing, especially as it had never been done, and it appeared that a traverse of the peaks from North to South would involve only one major obstacle, this being the ascent of the Northern Face of South Peak. The other three peaks were normally all climbed from the North, but South Peak was the exception and had previously only been surmounted via its Southern Face.

We had climbed North Peak the previous winter so were familiar at least with part of the route. From here a300 foot descent would land us in the narrow notch under the slender spire comprising the Foresight. After climbing this monolith, another descent would bring us to the crux of the traverse and if a northern ascent of South Peak was possible, only the smaller Southern Spur would remain, and our traverse would be complete.

A little information was gleaned about approaching Geryon from the south, but we eventually misused this by staggering up the steep forested Western slopes of the spur under the crippling weight of heavy packs, and established ourselves accidentally but most providentially on a God-sent supply of permanent running water at the base of a big sandstone band, 1000 feet under the Southern Spur.

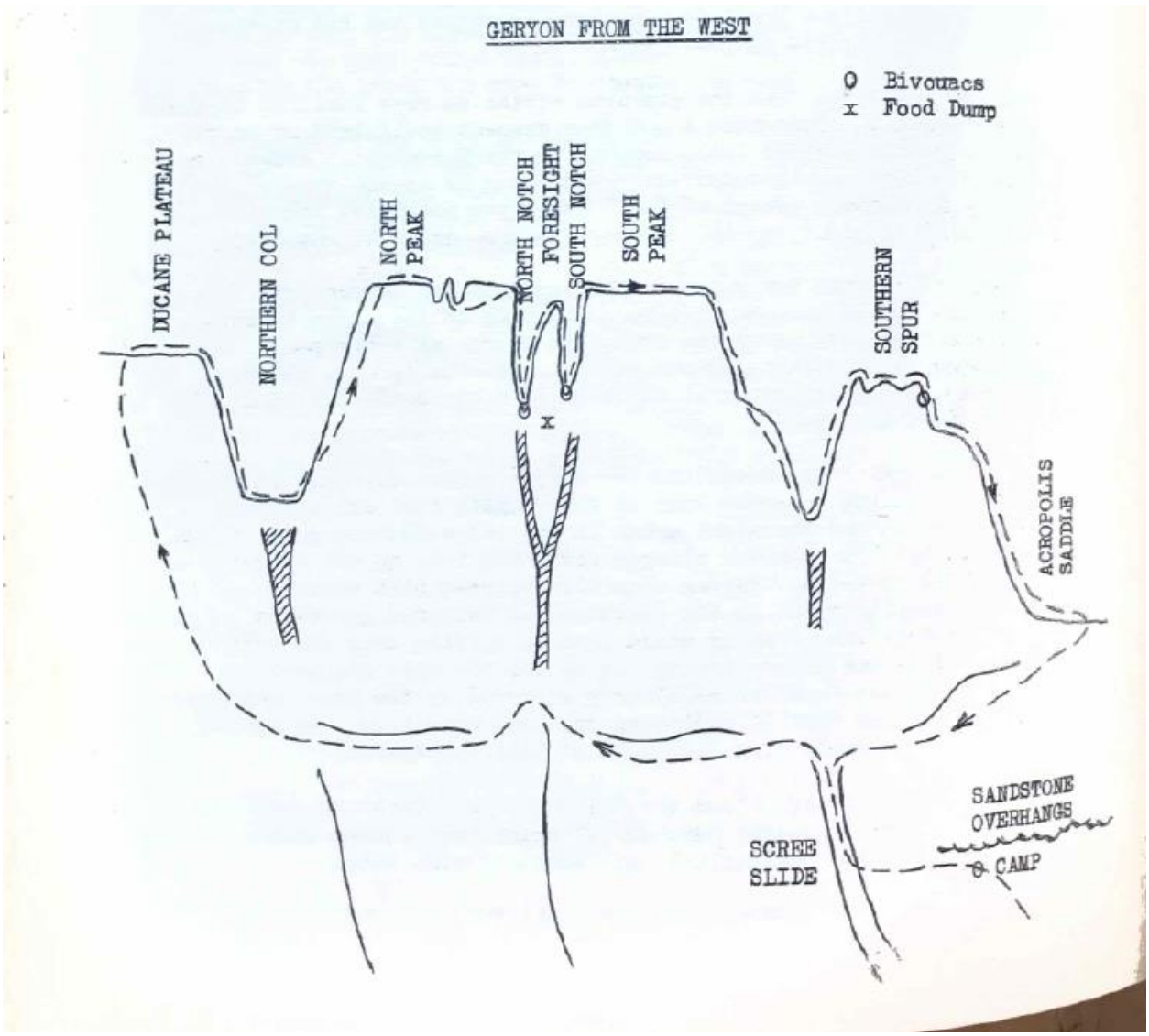
We spent the next day inspecting the mountain from our Western position and succeed in placing a meagre dump of water, with food and climbing equipment, high up on the Foresight arete in the large Western gully which descends from below this peak and plunges down 1000 feet to the screes and forest of Pine Valley below. Having come ill-equipped with suitable containers for carrying water on the traverse, we resigned ourselves to the fact that one-half gallon of water would have to suffice over the entire parched route. This was disconcerting, as so far the days had been “scorchers” and we had become so peculiarly addicted to the sweet sustenance of lemon and lime drink that it dominated our very existence. We measured each day, and all its activities, in units of this refreshment.

With a nocturnal descent from the Foresight food depot, it was post-midnight when we finally crawled into our sleeping bags hoping somehow to be off next morning somewhat earlier than our usual 11 am start.

“Auspicious” hardly seemed to be the right word to describe our late start next day at the same old leisurely time. By early afternoon we had sidled the spur on the West and climbed to the chaotic boulder-strewn plateau abutting Geryon’s North Peak via the razor edge saddle which connected the two.

North Peak presented no difficulties and we wondered just what the weather was about as we sipped a little water on the northern summit of the peak, after having scrambled up from the saddle below. Low swirling mist was raking the ridge as we roped over to the peak's south summit, being forced off the skyline crest by a small but difficult problem which we considered unworthy of effort and time.

Cheered on by a friendly burst of warm afternoon sun we accomplished a series of diagonal rappels which took us down to the knife-edge North Peak – Foresight Gap, 300 feet below. We arrived in this notch shortly before dark and after briefly inspecting our bivvy-site, spent tedious hours of darkness hauling necessary items over to it from our food cache on the Foresight arete. More time was employed in the building our rocky perches into something more comfortable and after greedily devouring our rations of liquid and food we put out the candle in a new-born day and faced the problem of trying to sleep.




"Why carry all this junk over the Foresight?" Indeed, we shouldn't be needing that 15 odd pounds of ironware, and why risk losing our japara bag of previous water by taking it up this pinnacle? So we spent until mid-afternoon (with the aid of another late start) ferrying all unwanted gear around the side of the pinnacle leaving it close to the notch on the other side, and returning for our attack on the Foresight.

Despite its formidable profile, the climb was not too difficult and with two pitches behind us we were soon relaxing on the confined area of the summit. The view from this vantage point is of extensive verticality. The eastern drop is savagely abrupt, consisting of a 1000 foot fall to the contouring scree line of the Geryon Acropolis cirque. On the west the great gully sweeps down in arcuate grace, belching out its rubble on to the talus slide below. To the north and south loom spectacular walls of rock. The South Face of North Peak hides in its own gloomy shadow, but the virgin North Face of South Peak, though probably not rising more than 250 feet above the South Notch, is radiantly proud in the warm touch of sunshine. Rarely have we seen such a beautiful wall, elusive as its scale seem to be, for it rose uniformly in slanting sweeps of smooth brown slabs and we wondered just how long it would take us to find the key to its top – a day? – maybe two! It was difficult to appreciate the scale of its features but we were firmly convinced that the top half of the face would only yield after at least some use of pitons.

To the north and west the sky was black with storm. Long streaks of lightning crackled over the northern DuCanes and Cox (by profession a physicist), had a hard time curbing my anxiousness that the ironware we still carried would attract its attention.

A suitable anchor for the abseil down the south side of the pinnacle was not forthcoming except for a great block of rock of half-summit dimensions. Reluctantly we cut 30 feet of nylon from the red end of Ron's old Viking rope, for our slings were not many and far too short for this. After hanging this nylon sling around the block, we attached a small hemp sling and ran the doubled rappelling rope through this. It is dangerous to abseil directly off a nylon sling as slight slipping motions of the two halves of the rappelling rope relative to each other could melt through the sling.

Cox came down as the mist rolled in from the west, and later, having recovered our cache from the gully below, we collected a little water with our plastic tent-cover from a lightly fleeting shower. But any thoughts of a party that night were quite promptly ruined by my colliding with the water-bucket, as a panic-stricken dive averted loss of our plastic catchment in a high sudden wind. We had lost more water than we had gained and gleeful thoughts of extra nourishment died stubbornly in our minds. Evicting our dolerite bedmates into the western gully at our feet, we crawled under our plastic sheet and were mockingly lulled into slumber by the drumming of rain on our frail filmy cover. We each kept sliding down the sloping ledge only to be reawaken by our weights on the anchor ropes as our waist-bands out painfully into our ribs.

At daybreak all was a murky white soup, and a howling east wind raced through the gap over our heads. By 9 am, however, as Cox led off on the rope, the sun was shining bravely although the air was still crisp and cold.

Reasonably easy climbing soon saw Coz established on a roomy overhung alcove at the head of a large diagonal wound in the lower part of the face. Up I went with the pack, cursing its relentless downward pull as it was now heavily loaded with the ironware which we would probably need on the wall higher up.

Ropes organized, cox had soon disappeared around the eastern edge of our alcove, the last I would see of him for several more hours. Thirty odd feet of moderately delicate free climbing and his rate of progress was checked. Above him, towering away into the blue sky above was a blank holdless wall of beautiful, solid rock. It would have to be Artificial. A vertical crack ran straight up the wall and Cox was soon merrily singing away as he slowly pegged his way up the next 30 odd feet of the crack. Nearing the top of the

slabs, he was able to escape from his etriers, and climb the last section free, hailing himself on to a two foot wide ledge which cut horizontally across the top of the wall.

Several hours alter as I joined Cox on the second stance our hearty morning songs had died, for our throats were like deserts and our immediate action was an impatient, almost frantic, search through the pack for the liquid supply. We had spent six hours on the last exhilarating pitch, but our world of absorbent rock seemed now to soak up every beam of heat from the sun, as if in revenge of our violation of its ageless solitude.

Another 30 odd feet of wall above the ledge proved fairly easy and leading through on this pitch I quickly arrived on a broad slope of scattered blocks with the summit cairn just a walk beyond. Cox clambered his way up the final pitch under the weight of the heavy pack and walked through to the cairn where I soon joined him for refreshments in the alter afternoon sun. it was now about 5 pm.

The northern panorama was remarkably clear, but towards the southwest, long silvery shafts of sunlight danced tenaciously on the surface of a great low menacing cloud bank as it spilled in over High Dome and the mountains to the south.

Would it be possible to complete the traverse in the few remaining hours of light? Our hopes were now high, for our dehydrated bodies made the most of the excuse for a quick and final dash down off South Peak, over the Southern Spur and so home to our mossy ledge, where we pictured our little stream of water, gurgling merrily on its way of self-dedicated wastage.

Photos taken, we raced down the climbing gully on the south side of the mountain, prudently checking our pace once or twice to lower the pack over steepish sections, and soon found ourselves emerging on the large peculiar slabs slanting valley-wards at the base of the peak. A further descent over scrubby bluffs brought us to the much deeper incision of a South Peak – Southern Spur Gap. We wasted no time here for the light was dying fast.

Above us rose the northern buttress of the cheekily fourth Geryon head, the last obstacle in our path. We roped up a diagonal line to the left for four pitches, over easy scrubby rock, emerging just under the top of the ridge in a small scrubby basin. It was not almost dark. Hurriedly I inspected a steep plunging gully on the southern face just beyond. I could not see down it very far but it looked promising and we climbed down a little; but soon it was too steep to continue with the pack. Cox clambered down further on a tour of inspection while I waited with the pack. Soon he was back declaring it would not go without rope.

Now it was very dark. There were no stars in the sky for a thick layer of cloud blanketed valley and mountain alike. Activity had ceased and suddenly we felt very tired. The decision to rest awhile was easily made, so retreating up the gully a little by torchlight we were delighted to find a delectable ledge, gained by a short traverse on the face to the right.

We sank down on the ledge and were as still as the dead weight of the pack. One cup of water each and our supply was exhausted. But our parched throats were not to be satisfied with this meagre drop and so our thirst raged on.

“Do you think we’ll make the high camp by midnight?”

“Dunno! Maybe. Just think of all that water flowing to waste down there.”

But our minds were too numb to think. We were still going on tonight. Oh yes! – but later. For now just let's rest a little…

"Here, have a peanut and some chocolate. That's the end of the food."

Just a little more leisure – then we would see about abseiling down into the black void below. Then there's a scrub bash, a scree slide, and more scrub.

"Hope we find that cairn on the scree slide to show us where the camp is – end up in Cephissus Creek if we don't!"

"Damn it! Let's go to bed. I'm too tired to spend half the night looking for a drink."

Fatalistically we got out the sleeping bags and promptly hit the sack. Cox didn't share my glorious comfort. Strange – it was a heavenly ledge – claims his end had bumps on it. Luckily the ledge was overhung, for next morning we awoke in a white shrouded world. The weather had broken at last.

Thank Got it came today and not yesterday.

A long slippery wet rappel off our last sling, a rapid descent down the scree to out camp, and by mid-afternoon the great orgy was in full swing.

"Lemon and Lime? – but there isn't any sugar!"

"Oh just use the strawberry conserve!"

At half past three we bade farewell to out friendly sylvan bank and by 8 pm had arrived somewhat soaked and a good deal more tired at Narcissus hut. It had been almost dark as we crossed over the plains track at the entrance to Pine Valley.

"Farewell Grand Mountain! We know you are still there!"

Geryon was hiding again – this time in miserable low cloud.

## EDIBLE PLANTS IN THE RAIN FOREST

Prof. D. Herbert

The familiar vegetables and fruits of our everyday life haven been produced by selection and improvement of wild plants from diverse parts of the earth. Some of them have been in cultivation for thousands of years and in some cases are no longer known in their wild state; others have been produced comparatively recently by plant breeders who have created such hybrids as the boysenberry, the plumcot, and the citrange, as well as a great range of more familiar crosses including hybrid sweet corn, the modern varieties of sugar cane and improved pawpaws. The wild colewort of northern Europe is a poor-looking plant, but from it have arisen such vegetables as the cabbage and the cauliflower. Such improvements call for patient selection over long periods of time or for the special skills of modern science.

The Australian native plats were never improved by the aboriginals and when European settlement came to this continent there was no local agriculture using indigenous plants, such as had existed in North and South America. The blacks were hunters and their vegetables foods were only those that were growing wild. They included yam, waterlily roots, occasional fungi, some berries and that most unappetizing growth, the nardoo. It was little wonder that the settlers relied entirely on the food plants imported from other countries, mainly Europe, America and Southern Asia. It was not that the local plants were incapable of improvement. The fact was that this had never been attempted, and now because others had already been developed in more than sufficient variety, there was no incentive to start on the long tedious process of seeing what they could be induced to become. They are in fact comparable with the wild plants of other continents; that is to say they have amongst their numbers some good food plants that could be further improved, some inferior ones with possibilities, and the majority with none at all.

We have, nevertheless, in our rain forests enough emergency vegetable food to make starvation unlikely even over a protracted period. Charles Burgess, the eccentric hermit of the MacPherson Range, lived for years in a cave eating only wild herbs, fruits, nuts and the like. I doubt if he really enjoyed this diet or that he did not have an occasional change to potatoes, bananas, and pumpkin when he came down to the settlements, but at least he lived mainly off the land. He found Queensland nuts in those ranges; round the rain forest margin there were yams, and there were lilly-pilly berries on the trees along the streams. In autumn there were finger limes to be shaken from the small trees, and at various times the wild raspberries, cape gooseberries, occasional tree tomatoes and passion fruit provided variety even if there was not much nutriment in them. Tender fern fronds and delicately flavoured terminal shoots of palms were always available in quantity. He might have collected freshwater crawfish, or caught eels in the creeks, and perhaps taken an occasional snake or goanna, but he restricted himself to a vegetable diet. Finally, however, he returned to comparative civilization, and in his last years went back to ordinary European food.

There is, then, little doubt that the rain forest can provide at least a subsistence diet, even if it is not particularly tempting. One important point is that it must be preset in sufficient quantity for a meal, and be easily recognizable. To those without special botanical knowledge, that rules out some of the useful things such as yams, those excellent substitutes for potatoes. It means too, that seasonal crops such as finger limes cannot be relied on. Other berries should be avoided unless they are very familiar, as in case of the raspberries and cape gooseberries. There are too many barriers that are poisonous in some degree, especially those that have some resemblance to tomatoes.

We fall back therefore, on two types of plants, the ferns and the palms. These are generally present I quantity in the rain forest, and are not poisonous in the slightest degree. When the young fern fronds come up they are tender and easily snapped off. These can be eaten raw or cooked. Small ferns are not worth bothering about, but a few of the “fiddlesticks” in the growing points of tree ferns give quantity in a short time. They are hairy and the hairs should be singed off before use. Use only those that snap off, not those that are passing over to the fibrous stage.

The tender tips of palms often have a pleasant delicate flavour, and are reasonably nutritious. The terminal leaves are pulled off to their bases and the growing tup which is the edible part is revealed as a cylinder of tender white tissue. As this destroys the palm such a source of food is out of the question in national parks, but it happens that one of the noxious plants of the train forest, the lawyer vine or rattan, is a climbing palm and can often be found in great quantity. It is recognised by its long barbed whips. The method of collecting its pencil-sized edible tips is to hold the stem near the end and jerk back the terminal leaves. The flavour varies, being sometimes slightly bitter, but many of them are pleasantly sweet. Much depends on whether they are growing in an open place or in the shade. They can be eaten either raw or cooked.

Some plants looks attractive but are startlingly unfit for food. The green scrub lily, or cunjevoi, has a tender stem that would seem worth trying, but it causes a most intense irritation of the mouth, and can put the unfortunate eater out of action for a couple of days after only one bite. Inkweed berries are black and succulent but are very acrid, and it is well to avoid the wild passion fruits unless they happen to be the domestic species run wild.

It is often said that a good guide to emergency foods is to watch the birds and eat what they eat. They, however, eat an extraordinary collection of berries, some of which are actually poisonous to man. Pay no attention to them. Eat nothing you are not sure of, and to be safe, do not take quantities of anything but young fern fronds and the growing points of ferns, with perhaps by way of variation, such easily recognised fruits as raspberries, finder limes and cape gooseberries.

## HEIL DIE ALPEN!!!!

Murray Rich

One pm – Sydney on Boxing Day 1960.

Three pm – flying high over Cook and Tasman, above New Zealand's fabulous, glittering, Southern Alps. Peering out of windows from horizon to horizon, trying to take in all of the splendid sight allowed by a fortuitous break in the weather.

Three days later, five Queensland climbers found themselves on these Alps, in bursting anticipation of climbing these peaks of rock and snow and ice. We had connections through Jim Hutton, whose brother had arranged an air-drop for us at Erewhon Col, 7000 feet up in the Rakaia peaks, north of the Mt. Cook region. Previously, David Elphick, a very fine climber from Christchurch, had invited us to join and snow-cave with his party at Erewhon Col, and this would give us an excellent opportunity of gaining some experience in Alpine craft. Dave was at the same time organizing an eighty-day, eight-man Trans-Alpine expedition, which waws to be somewhat of a record.

We were a mixed bag of climbers. Peter Reimann and Basil Yule had recently been on a winter trip to the DuCane Ranges of Tasmania, and were enthusing greatly for some climbing. Graham Hardy, Mike Knowles and myself, all rock-climbing devotees, made up the party. In the previous fortnight, Basil and Graham had been on an Alpine training trip with a guide of note, Philip Boswell. Some mountaineering was learnt, but mainly a huge store of jokes of doubtful colour which were relayed on to us.

We had left Christchurch on the morning after Boxing Day, on a seventy-mile taxi drive to Glenfalloch homestead, on a high country sheep run. After forty miles of bad road, one broken sump and then miles walking, we arrived at Glen Rock, where we enjoyed the farmers' hospitality and their beer. We could see the lofty snow peaks in the distance, and as the icy wind blew through our hair, and the sun glowed in the west, we wondered at Nature's greatness.

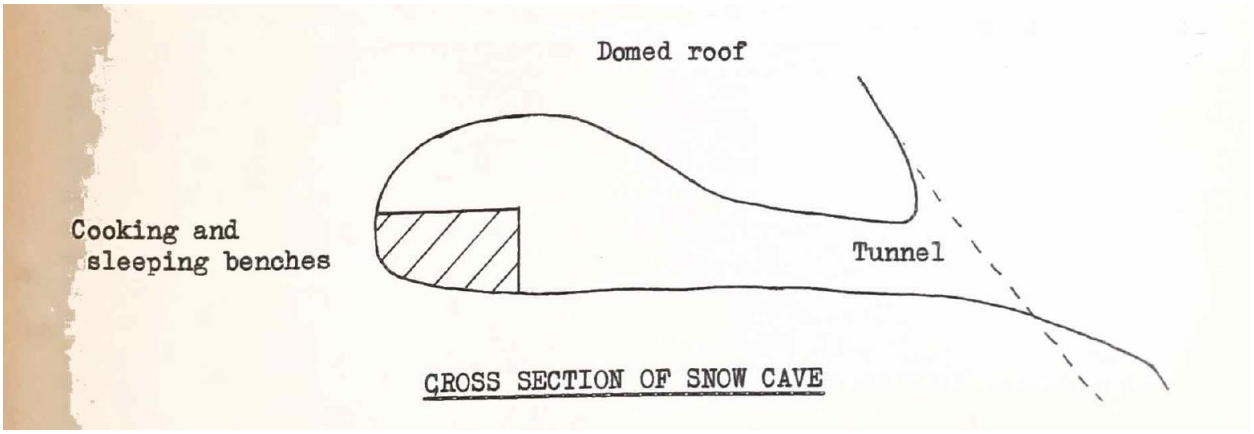
The first day saw a 6.30 am start, and a 10.30 am breakfast. This was not repeated. The end of the second day saw us on the terminal moraine of the Ramsay Glacier. Here, Pete broke his ice-axe which he craftily mended with Jubilee clips. The third day a memorable trip up the Ramsay Glacier, with magnificent views unfolding on the way. We chopped the ice and cut steps, tried out our capons and crossed crevasses, and tested our rope technique. Avalanches of snow and rock disgorged themselves off the 5,000 feet Whitcombe face, unclimbed, and just above us. An icefall with big seracs blocked our path, but this was successfully by-passed. From the top of Louper Peak came mirror flashes, which turned out to the Dave Elphick and his party. Another party were silhouetted against the skyline of the razorback Whitcombe ridge. Towards the top, on the extensive neve below Erewhon Col, we were met by Don Hutton and his party, who escorted us to the snow-cave site, and said "Dig".

That evening, as we pitched our tents, we gazed towards the Golden Road on Mt. Evans, Red Lion Col, and Half Moon Saddle. Katzenback Peak lay on the far side of a huge neve.

Dave happened to be making an attempt on Mt. Evans, first climbed in the 1930's and offered to guide us on this climb. Pete, Mike, and Basil were the only ones lucky enough to do this climb. After rising at 3 am, they made their way down the Evans Glacier, and then up very steep snow slopes onto Red Lion Col. Another eight hundred feet led them to the Southern cornice. This had taken them ten hours of climbing.

The time was 3 pm and a Norwester appeared ominously on the horizon. Dave decided to turn back; but the summit was almost within their grasp. They returned at 11 pm, “from the end of the world”.

Snow-caving is a cold way of living. The temperature remains steady at 32 degrees F during the day, and goes down to 10 degrees F below freezing at night.




It is cold, hard, work digging it, but in a blizzard in the Southern Alps, it offers sure protection, whereas tents may be torn to shreds. Mike’s transistor radio was very welcome, especially to the New Zealanders who had been amongst the mountains for thirty days. However, the weather forecasts were invariably in error.

Some Geological Survey food supplies were carried down to the Lyell River. We were waiting on the weather for an attempt on Louper Peak, but this did not eventuate. The greywache rock is very loose and liable to come off in great slabs. One afternoon we did a rock-climb on a small peak near the Amazon’s Breasts, and one morning we made a traverse down part of the razor-sharp Katzenback Ridge, with cornices, on parts of which one must be very wary. We even saw a chamois, which Graham photographed with great ardour. Naturally I was changing my film at the time.

We were holed up, expecting a blizzard, but suddenly the weather cleared, and we quickly prepared for a stolen climb on Erewhon Peak (8000 feet). Also we could make a reconnaissance on Mt. Whitcombe. Erewhon was climbed successfully, Dave’s party and ours climbing together, and the climb proved most enjoyable. Our attempt on Mt. Whitcombe next day, was foregone because of bad weather.

Instead, we hot-footed it down the Evans Glacier, and then to Hari-Hari on the West Coast Wanganui River. New Zealand rivers are icy-cold and swift running, and are generally difficult to cross, except for the shallower streams.

We had spent eleven days on the Col; eleven days to remember. Our “culmination” was celebrated in the usual, in Hari-Hari Hotel.

New Zealand offers every opportunity for Alpine climbing, from the easy stuff for the beginners, to the ten-thousander for the seasoned mountaineers. There are huts in most regions. It is best to obtain some knowledge of Alpine-lore and Alpine-craft from experienced climbers, and in this way we gained much from our climbing with David Elphick. Weather conditions are extremely variable, and one climbing day in three is a good average.

New Zealand is an excellent place for climbing, a sport which offers a challenge in hardiness and skill which the more discerning will gladly accept.

## CROSSING THE GRAHAM SADDLE

Basil Yule

Peter Reimann and I were tired. We had just completed a grueling hike out down the Wanganui River after two weeks at Erewhon Col.* The scenery we had witnessed among peaks of 8000 feet and higher had certainly been memorable: I remember best the day that we completed the long approach up the Ramsay Glacier. We had been on the glacier so long that we had become inured to the glacial scenery and the majesty of the Eiger-like dimensions of the Whitcombe East Face beside it. Then as we reached the top of a steep couloir, an entirely new scenic aspect was disclosed to us. Three or four rising slopes of snow stretched out a mile wide before us, culminating at the skyline two miles away in the Erewhon Col. To the right of the col, the skin smooth slopes lifted to the aptly named Amazon's Breasts, arched mounds of snow rising to rocky eminences of summits. This was the most inspiring sight of snow I saw while I was in New Zealand. But, beautiful as this area had been, we were told of the tremendous superiority of the scale of things amongst the 10,000 footers further south in the Southern Alps. 10,000 feet is a magic figure in New Zealand – there are 27 monsters over this height. We became spellbound by their reputation and excitedly prepared a trip to see them.

Unfortunately, my holidays were nearly at an end, and we had only three days to do our trip, a crossing over the Main Divide through the Graham Saddle to the Hermitage. We left Franz Josef, a small village on the west coast, at 6.30 in the morning. Making good time on the road, we were soon on the Franz Josef Glacier. It was out of this world breathing in the fresh air of this great ice block. We donned our crampons to walk up the hard ice. High up on the glacier, we ran into an ice-fall and ignoring the instructions of the chief guide at Franz Josef, decided to try to force a route straight through the fall, just for fun…

It took six hours to go 400 yards.

For hours we clambered around seracs and climbed up and down steep ice slopes over the formidable teeth of the gaping crevasses. Pete provided himself the complete virtuoso, balancing on crampon points and ice-axe where I had to cut large steps to stand in safety. Finally, we could see the clear, flat ice only 20 yards away but couldn't find a route. Pete contemplating crossing a snow bridge across a crevasse which barred the way and he carefully climbed down and prodded it with his axe. Suddenly, it collapsed before our eyes, setting up hideous echoes as it plummeted down. Some of these crevasses are so large that it is said that one could drop a Morris Minor down one and not hear it hit the bottom! (Moral: Don't use a Morris Minor on a glacier). At length, we found a route which involved climbing up a vertical ice chimney using crampons on one wall and ice axe on the other; an ice ridge led out onto flat ice.

Here we had dinner, finishing up with iced coffee. Nescafe, milk powder and sugar are rapidly churned up in iced water to make a delicious thirst quencher. We revelled in the warm afternoon sunlight as we made our way easily over the next couple of miles of ice and walked up a hill to the Almer Hut. We had climbed nearly 6000 feet and walked six miles from Franz Josef.

These huts are complete with bunks, sleeping bags or blankets and mattresses, and cooking equipment. The Almer Hut is used mainly in winter, by skiers who are flown into the area. From it the view is quite extensive. We could see the Defiance Hut perched on top of a sheer face, 1000 feet above the glacier.

* See account by Murray Rich on page 50. *[Note that this was the original text, see page 52 now]*

Years ago this hut could be reached from the ice but the glacier is drying up (As the earth recovers from the Ice Age) leaving it a most inaccessible haven. One day the glacier might disappear altogether but it is still about 2000 feet thick. We could also look down on the icefall that we'd come through and it was the most vicious mass of sharp edged seracs imaginable. A plane crashed onto these seracs several years ago. The occupants were not seriously injured and spent a night in the wreck balanced on the edge of a serac, kept awake by the devilish sounds of crushing and grinding as the glacier flowed downhill. You can still see the plane there, a couple of hundred yards further down now.

In the hut were "Boz" – guide Philip Boswell – and two clients. They got away in traditional NZ style at 1.30 am next morning. Pete got the same idea, but I refused to consider such an outlandish and inhuman scheme, I felt as if I'd just put my head to the pillow. Pete's persistence prevailed at 6.30 when we finally got away. We travelled across a huge expanse of snow, the Franz Josef neve. This is the source of the glacier, the snow deep down is compressed into ice and the whole mass slowly moves downhill and becomes a glacier. This snowfield is 11,000 acres in extent and we could never tire of admiring the loveliness of its gently rolling surface.

Planes were buzzing around all morning making sightseeing flights for the tourists; Pete and I were the chief attraction! Later we saw a plane fitted with skis land on the snow and take off with Boz and his clients. Boz had written in the snow for assistance because one of the clients were sick – probably from the killingly early start, I felt like saying to Pete "I told you so".

Pete and I went on around McKay's Rocks, thousand foot fangs of sheer rock, and finally reached the Graham Saddle. Here we had lunch, at nearly 9000 feet. All around us were the 10,000 foot peaks. We hardly dared speak in their presence. They were amazed at our tepidity – they seemed to as "Who let these Queenslanders into out threshold?". They appeared crestfallen, however, that we had caught them wit their back yards dirty: the tabled masses of moraine and the soiled ice of six glaciers which emptied into the Tasman Glacier made a chaotic scene. Way down on the Tasman, we could see the red roof of the Ball Hut beaming welcomingly at us from 10 miles away.

After lunch, we went down a steep couloir below Graham Saddle under the rock of the Minarets. Near the bottom of the long slope, we had the choice of jumping a crevasse or climbing down a hundred feet of difficult rock. If the jump was successful, it would just be a stroll down easy slopes afterwards. Pete leapt across, wearing the full crevasse escape regalia of slings and ropes, and belayed by me. Fortunately the overhanging lip on the other side was firm and held, it was as strong and as hard as steel. While we were shuttling our packs across on the rope, Pete gave an impatient and vigorous tug which pulled me off balance. One of my cramponed boots came out of the snow and I fell on one knee on the edge of the crevasse. Momentarily, both our faces were whiter than the snow.

When we had reached the Tasman Glacier it was dark and still a long way form the Ball Hut. It was a fine night so we decided to sleep out under the starts. The walk over the glacier to the hut would be on ice turned iron hard at night and would have been very jarring for the feet on long pointed crampons.

We slept comfortably 11 pm next day thus missing out, to out chagrin, on seeing the morning sun on Cook and company. On the long walk down the Tasman Glacier and later on the Ball Hut road, I suffered agony with my feet. My wet socks had contracted tightly around them, and when we reached the Hermitage, the tops of my feet had blistered worse than the soles. But it was still with much reluctance that I bade my adieus to these grand mountains, sad that my acquaintance with them had to end so abruptly.

## COMING – WEATHER OR NOT

Ken Warner

The Brisbane Meteorological Bureau has been blamed for many monstrosities in the past, but for persistence, monotony and sheer dogged cussedness their efforts in the past eighteen months remain unexcelled. Trip after trip they have turned out that fine sunny winter weather that our Tourist Bureau seems to find so fascinating. The result of this surfeit of sunniness is that we are beginning to forget all those happy memories of the "wet trip".

Things were so different when I joined the club in 1958 that it seemed the club hierarchy had deliberately conspired with the Weather Bureau to produce at least one inch of rain per day for the duration of each bushwalk. The fact that most of this rain fell during crucial moments of a walk – crossing logs, going up steep rock slabs, at the junction of two indistinct ridges, pitching camp or travelling in the back of an open truck – may, of course, have been coincidence, but at the time I had my doubts about this.

My introduction to general damp was at Lost World in 1958. I wondered, as about twenty people crouched under the soggy tarpaulin in the back of the "Peanut" truck, just how far they would go before they realised atrip was impossible in such weather. I spent the first night sleeping in an upside-down table, four feet in length, in a dilapidated, leaking hut; my introduction to a four-poster bed! The second night was slightly worse, for in addition to the constant rain, and the fact that the party had tents to accommodate only half our numbers, it was generally agreed that we were lost. This, the leader indignantly denied – it was just that we were either walking the wrong way or the cliffs were on the wrong side of the mountain.

Mt. Lindesay has always had its own personal jinx on me. My first attempt was in July 1959, when natural instincts prompted me to run a mile to avoid any rock. Summoning all the courage for which we Britishers are so well known, I put my name down for this trip. One look at the mountain with its halo of clouds led me to hide in a cave on My. Earnest while the rest of the party set off. From six o'clock onwards people returned to report steep cliffs, wet rock and crumbling slopes. When the last of the stragglers arrived at midnight telling tales of the ghost which stopped their ascent, threw sticks at them, caught their rope, and finally followed them down the mountain, I resolved never to attempt Lindesay in the wet. It was raining again later in the year when I was down that way to get the better of the thing. This time thoughts on British courage had slipped my mind and I abandoned the attempt and returned to Brisbane. I was just plain scared. When I finally reached the summit this year I wondered what all the fuss was about. Lindesay, however, was not the be conquered so easily, as the car developed a serious internal complaint, and the tree of us spent an utterly miserable, cold, foodless, sleeping-bagless night near the mountain.

My one wet trip in 1960 was to the Mt. Walsh Ranges near Biggenden, in the May vacation. This was a private trip, and evidently the Weather Bureau had not heard about it, for it rained for the last three days. On the second last day, Judy Bryan conducted a scientific experiment t determine whether it was better to roll one's sleeves up and get cold, or to wear them full length and get wet. With one sleeve rolled up, Judy trudged along in pouring rain. At lunch, as we sat under a dripping rock, we were amused to see Judy's one bare, blue, skinny, quivering arm covered with goose pimples. At the end of each pimple was one small blonde hair, and at the end of each hair a small droplet of water hung posed, as dew on a spider's web. It was on this trip I spent my most uncomfortable night, as on the last night when we were lost and confronted with great cliffs which fell away below us on three sides, we put up our inadequate

sheet of plastic in the pouring rain over a patch of prickly bushes, growing in rocky ground on the steep slope.

No account of wet trips could be attempted without mention of the now famous Tweed Ranges Easter throughwalk of 1959. Peter Reimann, in that year's magazine, describes it as a "miserable, unhealthy, unpleasant trip", and deals very thoroughly with the walk. However, he does not mention the long agonizing night hours as we huddled together in our sopping bags. He doesn't recall the feet protruding beyond the end of the short tent, and the fact that their owner didn't realise it, as he was soaked to the waist. Not mentioned either are the freezing mornings as we crawled naked from our bags to don yesterday's soaked clothing. He brushes over the fact that with no fires for three days and carrying mainly dehydrated food, we lived on the starvation diet of Ryvita biscuits and jam, occasionally supplemented in the evening by some mushy tinned Baby Food. A hardy chap is our Pete.

These are the joys of a wet trip. Howe pleasant to recall them now in the comfort of a warm home.

What's that Mr. President? You want me to lead a throughwalk this weekend? Not me chum, it looks like rain.

## FOOD FOR BUSHWALKERS

Fay Hutton

If other bushwalkers are at all like me, the first time they went bushwalking they either too much food or too little food, or the wrong type of food or such uninteresting food that it was quite hard to get rid of the last bit in the billy can, even to Peter. I used to take too much food but since that time, the amount has decreased – I have found out that the greater evil between going hungry and a heavy pack is a heavy pack. One exception was the Moreton Island trip for which I somehow miscalculated and took three times too much – I ate very quickly that trip.

Since my first trip, I have accumulated a few ideas about food and cooking for bushwalks which I thought may be interesting, if not useful, to other people.

When I think of Noela, I think of creamy rice. Her creamy rice seems to be about the best I have come across. Anyway, it is better than the tinned stuff which I tried once. This is really terrible and tastes like sour milk. The taste cannot even be disguised with stewed apricots. Noela's creamy rice needs patience to make, although not as much to wait for it. About three-quarters of a billy can of water is boiled and a half a pound of rice is added. Nearly all the water is boiled away, the rice being soft by this time. It needs to be stirred frequently otherwise the bottom gets burnt and no-one will clean out the billy. Then sugar is added until it tastes sweet enough and a whole tin of Nestle's reduced cream is added if this is available. Otherwise, some thick powdered milk is added. Serve while hot in attractive dessert dishes. Banana custard (Forster Clarke's) goes very well with it.

There are many kinds of soups in packets – vegetable, mushroom etc., and fresh vegetables cut up and boiled first, then added to the soup, make it much more interesting. Carrots, potatoes, and beans (lentils) are easiest to carry.

Royco instant potatoes taste just like ordinary potatoes. Powdered milk and butter only need to be added and if the outer packet is taken off, the inside packet does not take much room. Also it is very light. Better than powdered milk is skimmed milk powder. This may be bought in packets, it is cheap (1/11 a pound), and it mixes much better than ordinary powdered milk. It tastes more like fresh milk too.

One bushwalk that I go on, I am going to take some deep frozen smoked cod. This would have to be unfrozen and put in a plastic bag and possibly in some material. I think it would keep for one day only. Then this would be boiled in some water and white sauce made by boiling water, adding powdered milk, thickening with four and adding butter and pepper and salt. I am sure that this would be nice for breakfast.

During the "cow bails" bushwalk, Peter made a coffee egg flip, the idea originating with Gordon Grigg apparently. This is made in a plastic shaker (6/-). Powdered milk, sugar, a raw egg and coffee essence or instant coffee are needed. I must confess I didn't like it much, but a few people seemed to.

Vita Brits are a very good buy – you get so many for your money, and although they tend to be a bit tasteless, they fill you up and are good if you don't feel like cooking. I think strawberry jam is nicest on them. Also honey, or vegemite and cheese.

Of course I must mention the best known recipe, i.e. Ken's, Ken's – I don't know what to call it. Anyhow, he boils a big billy full of water and adds mushed up tomatoes, onions, Kraft cheese, bacon and spaghetti. If I remember, the spaghetti is added first and the cheese last. While this is cooking, he puts an egg in to

boil and he stirs this, or makes someone else stir it until it is all one big mess. Then he dishes out the egg and adds it, adds tomato sauce and eats all he wants. Then he gives to the poor, the crumbs from the rich man's table. A variety of things, depending on one's mood and supplies, may be made from spaghetti or macaroni etc. Once I made an Italian meal out of a packet. It was lovely. There was even a sauce to go on top of it.

Someone always has fried eggs and bacon, and sausages for breakfast and often even porridge appears, usually half cooked because porridge always talks to long to cook. It is much nicer raw anyhow in fact the next bushwalk I go on, I am going to have raw rolled oats and powdered milk for breakfast. Blue Lake flaked oats is the best, it has least weevils in the packet.

Evan insists that Tom Piper tinned food is best, for meat and vegetables etc. I feel that Baby and Junior Heinz Food are quite good, at least the apples and a few of the puddings are. Also the tins are small and very easy to pack.

Lucy and I made a dried fruit tart once which was very successful. Some pastry was put in a tart dish and a packet of dried fruit spread on top. Then condensed milk out of a tube (even though it looks like toothpaste it is very convenient) was poured all over and the tart wrapped in Alfoil or else another dish the same size can be put over the top. The tart is cooked.

Gold Crest and Mellah instant dessert seem the best. Rice can be added to any dessert without disastrous results. Heinz-Ade is a very pleasant drink especially if someone else makes it. Other drinks easy to make are coffee, (Nescafe or essence), tea, cocoa, Quik, etc. Fizzy of course is indispensable for disguising all types of funny tasting water.

Ken makes scones and puftaloons but I haven't a clue how, so if anyone is interested and ignorant, ask him. Oat cakes would be an interesting experiment. Rolled oats, sugar, an egg, milk, self-raising flour and butter are all mixed into a thick mixture and cooked in Alfoil or a suitable container.

Other things that people bring to eat any time are sultans, raw peanuts, dried fruits, e.g. apples, apricots, figs, dates, etc., chocolate, fruit tingles, barley sugar and other glucose sweets (instant energy).

If I have left any article of diet of any importance, then it is too bad.

The author would be grateful to correspondents who point out errors or make suggestions for improving the text.

## A TIME TO REMEMBER

Jim Wyndham

Lartius was a character, I relate to you, originating in Sarday in the days when Rome was an ever expanding nation. However during these times Hannibal, with his army of men and elephants crossing the Alps, was providing a constant thorn in the flesh to any military general Rome may have processed that time.

Young, insignificant Julius Lartius as he then was in the year 7 B.C. was born in early 20 B.C. on a small farm about seven kilometers from the mining town of Sarday. The Tiber ran through the property and during the wet season the turbulent river occasionally broke its banks causing local flooding – much the same as it does today. On clear days one could see from the top of a nearby mountain the Seven Hills of Rome. These were truly magnificent spectacles, especially the one which stood up like a ninepin with mottled spots of tussock grass clinging to its formidable steep approaches. The Tiber Valley stretched lazily away towards Rome with small crofts dotted in an orderly fashion on either side of the river.

During his boyhood days Julius (for he was quite a size), kept a close watch on the ants and their nests. His dad was rather troubled at times when Julius would ask him questions concerning the ant's habits and origin. You see father Lartius wanted Julius to be a great centurion, one of whom Rome and its peoples would be proud. But alas, big Juli was not impressed by the hordes of soldiers who marched to and fro across the countryside. What would Julius be when he grew up – a massive two and a quarter metre gladiator?

As Julius grew up he went to school like any normal child would do in these times. Yes, you're quite right, his school was not the same as we know a school to be, it was totally different in fact. In the first place very few thinking powers were required of a student so long as his dad belonged to the nobility, with a dozen or so poor unfortunate slaves bidding his will. In the second place – I think I have written enough about his schooling but must add that Julius came through with flying laurels – he could read the "Iliad" backwards and knew Homer's works of art as if they never existed.

Two weeks after his eighteenth birthday, he and a friend of his, Guliner Flavius went on a tour of Palestine and Egypt. As they travelled through Palestine they noted the progress the great Roman government had made. The Romans had built huge granaries and improved the irrigation techniques by demolishing existing water wheels and placing bigger and a little more efficient ones in their places. They were particularly impressed by the Sphinx (plural) and pyramids and the might statues of Ramasies, together with the legends which had grown around such marvels. At times Guliner who was a vivacious speaker used to bargain for hours on end with travellers selling trinkets and beautiful silks, obtaining much articles as low as 45% of their original value. Julius would also join in such bargaining but he found greater pleasure in walking for miles absorbing with keen interest the birds and the bees and cotton bushes along the river side. His foremost thoughts were concerned with ants. Each time he came across such creatures he would examine them closely, nothing their colours, shape of head and reactions to his handling them. One day he came across an ant which he had never seen before (I forget its technical name), however its characteristics were similar to the modern day Bull ant, lively and ferocious when disturbed.

No trouble to Julius for he took up a thin blade of grass and tickled its abdomen, the ant showing little or no trace of fierceness after this treatment. He was becoming a keen anthropologist (one who studies like and its lower forms) as well as a land lubber, and, as a result of his keenness in walking and at watching,

he developed a code to inspire fellow anthropologists and land lubbers, especially the latter. This was his code: “Like all ants, give each other a friendly twitch; carry your own weight in food, travel far (on your legs of course), jump about, go crazy, say something in no silent words when someone stands on your nest”, and so on. This idea attracted Guliner and eventually a host of his fellow enthusiasts. They had found something unusual, something inspiring, exhilarating, and unexplainable.

We do not have to study ants, thank God, to enjoy bushwalking which is an active past-time (phew!) absorbing what we see and placing it in some sequence, within our own minds.

## A WEEKEND ON MT. BARNEY

Ron Cox

If you'd been on the Drynan's Hut road early one July morning, you might have seen three bushwalkers weighing their rucsacs on a pair of scales which hung from a tree branch. You would have been surprised to see that, in reversal of the usual practice of throwing out excess weight at the start of a trip, they were solemnly topping up with rocks until each pack weighed 70 lbs. Bas, Pete and I were training for a winter trip to Tasmania and intended to carry these loads up Mt. Barney (4450 feet) via Leaning Peak and then down over Isolated Peak and Eagle's Ridge. With us were Judy and Lucy – in the role of passengers as we were carrying their gear as part of our ballast.

We left our parked cars and walked to the Portals where Barney Creek flows out onto the plains through a narrow cutting with vertical walls. Here the creek completes its long and tortuous journey through the deep gorge it has cut from the side of Mt. Barney. People sometimes swim through the pool between the cliffs, but it was a little cold for swimming that winter day, so we struggled up into the flanking hills, went round the Portals ad scrambled back into the creek on the other side. Barney Creek is a fascinating place. You progress upstream by hopping from boulder to boulder, jumping over water which is sometimes shallow, sometimes disconcertingly deep. The creek rushes along from pool to pool in fast rapids and small waterfalls. After rain it can become a raging torrent in a matter of hours. Steep slopes and cliffs hem you in on both sides and the Portals seal the whole gorge off from the outside world so that you feel locked away in the heart of the mountains. Yet it's only a short distance to the paddocks you've just left.

We rockhopped up the gorge, peering up through the bush at the side, trying to guess the foot of our climbing ridge on Leaning Peak. There are no tracks on Barney except for the path worn up South Ridge, on the other side of the mountain by generations of Hut builders. There are at least a dozen recognised routes to the top with nothing to mark the way. So year after year, party after party gets lost on Barney, especially when the notorious mists descend. Yet bushwalkers never think to mark the routes. If they did, it would destroy much of the mountain's charm. This lack of tracks was a slight problem to us, but eventually we decided it was time to strike uphill from the creek.

Cliffs skirt the stream all the way here and it took us half an hour to get up the first hundred feet. Now the long slog up to Leaning Peak, 3000 feet above us started. Hour after hour we crawled up the steep slope, groaning under our loads. Poor Pete had been out most of the night before at a wild party and was feeling the effects. Since I'm only about half as strong as him at my best, that made us equal. Bas struggled along successfully enough with his pack towering high above his head. Lucy and Judy would race on gaily ahead and every now and then we would catch up with them lazing on a rock in the sun, reading a novel they'd brought with them, enjoying the experience of having such big strong walkers to carry their packs for them.

To lend glamour to the proceedings, I'd brought along my ice-axe which had just arrived in the mail. I wanted to get used to carrying it before going to Tasmania. It takes practice to carry an ice-axe without dropping it or spiking yourself every time you stumble. Actually, once you've used one a lot it becomes an extension of your arm and you feel almost naked without it, not only on snow mountains but in normal bushwalking. An ice-axe is much like a gardener's grubber, but lighter and shinier. Normally, you carry it like a waking stick: the head is the handle and the shaft is the stick. This gives you a tripod stability that makes movement with a big pack over rough ground much easier. You can poke it in the ground and sit

on it like a shooting stock when you are tired, you can use it as a camera support, you can scratch your back with it, (even defend yourself against the Barney monster with it?). Half way up the ridge I decided it was Pete's turn to carry the axe. I might mention that in those days, Pete was not the dashing mountaineer you read about elsewhere in this magazine, in fact he was still a genuine, purebred Queensland bushwalker. I told him he must try the axe. He blushed fiercely … Aww, no, Ron, you carry it a bit further… No, Pete you've got to learn … Looking around sheepishly at the surrounding gumtrees, he reluctantly took the embarrassing object. Since then, he has never looked back.

As we toiled upwards, the tangled foothills gradually formed into a definite ridge, and what a ridge! This is my nomination for the finest ridge on Barney. The loose shifting soil and the messy scrub of the lower mountain improved to beautiful firm rock. On most of it we walked easily p delightful slabs. Occasionally we roped up on the cliffs, but the girls scrambled up easily enough without packs. High up, the ridge steepens to a narrow stairway of rock with long slabs falling away on either side. Here is the best view of rock walls in South East Queensland. The enormous North Face of Leaning Peak, the cliffs on the ridge which runs out to Isolated Peak, and the steep slabs of Isolated itself, form a tremendous arc of rock sweeping around before your eyes. Leaning Peak's North Face is nearly 2000 feet high, and absolutely bare except for a few straggling trees on one or two ledges. There are no holds or cracks and there will never be a climbing route on it, unless someone is prepared to spend a year of weekends drilling it for rawlplugs.

It was getting late when we reached a flat spot on the ridge. The sun hung low on the horizon and the smoke haze over the jungle-clad mountains to the west was turning golden. Now we were right under the final summit block of our peak but a steep wall barred the way. It was easy to give in to the protests of our aching backs, forget our resolutions to reach the Hut and stop right here. "Cook, women" we grunted. And they did. That's the real purpose of women. Man must toil and Woman must feed him. It was a luxury.

And the stars and the moon came out and shone down on Barney. A solitary campfire burned high up in the midst of that vast slumbering mass of peaks and ridges. It was only a day from the city, but here there was the perfect solitude of the hills.

Next morning we sat and watched the sun rise, slowly filling the valleys with scarlet light. Breakfast was a very light meal as we'd used nearly all our water the night before. Perhaps we could have carried more water instead of those rocks… it took five hours to get up the last 500 feet of Leaning Peak and down the other side onto the main mass of Barney proper. First the cliffs above our campsite took a long time with he packs, although we didn't have to resort to sack-hauling. From the top of Leaning Peak you look up to the highest points of Barney – east, west and North Peaks – and you are, as always, impressed with the grand scale of the chaotic masses of slab and scrub. From here, the mountain has no beauty of form – as compared with views from say the east it's very ugly – but it's a wild and rugged place.

You have to rappel to get down the other side of the peak. It's called Leaning because it leans against the rest of Barney, so part of the descent is overhanging. We hung the double rope from a tree and sent the girls down first to find water and prepare lunch (and to test the strength of the tree, and to see if the rope reached the bottom). Then we rappelled wearing the packs, which were not as awkward as we expected. The girls had found a gurgling little stream and cooked us a superb lunch. So superb that we had to lie down for hours to recover, abandoning hopes of going to the actual summit of Barney which was still 500 feet above us and half a mile away over North Peak. But it was very pleasant lazing in the warm sunshine

and we'd climbed to the central regions of the Barney massif, renewing old friendships with the mountain, the home of University bushwalking. About 3 pm we started the descent.

It took the rest of the afternoon, climbing down more of a face than a ridge, to reach the saddle between Barney and its satellite, Isolated Peak. From here, our route was to be 500 feet up to Isolated and then a long, involved descent of 3000 feet over the bumps of Eagle's Ridge to Barney Creek. The sun was just setting and this would obviously take all night. So we took a quick gamble, scrapped our original plan, and dropped of the saddle on the Barney Creek side, hoping to force a route straight down to the creek. We'd never heard of anyone going down there, there could easily be very dense scrub, but it should be free of cliffs. It was a race against the dark now as we had to use the last light to the full. Our hearts sank as we got deeper and deeper into a tangle of scrub. Then we stumbled out into a dry watercourse and, miraculously, it widened out further down into a smooth pathway of bare slab. Thankfully we slumped down and rested our backs.

The moon appeared and the slabs were a bright ribbon winding through the dark trees. As we descended, fairly racing along, the ribbon widened and became a highway. Now it was 60 feet wide, 80 feet, a hundred. The trees on either side drew far back in the gloom, leaving a broad, bare surface of rock. Except for slight undulations and the gentle downhill slope the slabs were smooth and flat. The creek itself was only a trickle in a groove in the centre but after rain it must rush down inches deep everywhere, wearing the rock away to its present smoothness. There was a strange, perhaps eerie loveliness about that moonlit road. (Lucy complained that the sound of my ice-axe tap, tap, tapping on the rock was giving her the creeps!) The slabs went on downhill, unbroken all the way, for what seemed like miles. It's remarkable that we'd never ever heard of their existence, possibly no one's ever seen them before. Perhaps they're quite mundane in daylight, but that moonlight descent was the most wonderful way I've ever been down Barney.

At the end, there was a waterfall; in the gloom the bottom looked frighteningly far down. It took two hours' searching with torches back and forth along cliff tops before we found a route. At last we stumbled down onto the banks of Barney creek. We lit a fire and boiled up a brew but there could be no real celebration, it was midnight and still a long way home. Pete and Bas opened their packs and bumped their rocks; they'd dutifully stuck to them all this way – I'd quietly abandoned mine a long time ago. After that, we rockhopped downstream, struggled up the hills around the Portals and reached the flat fields outside. Our packs were still near 60 lbs. but we were almost too tired to care now. I, for one, was in a strangely bearable state where the agony had gone on for so long that I'd become numbed and indifferent to it. Perhaps this is what dying is like.

Then we hit the road and there was an hour's more walking, swaying along almost asleep. This was the worst part, expecting the cars to materialize over every hill on the road. When we finally reached them, well into the small hours of the morning, we still couldn't relax. There remained the long drive home.

The sun was well up and making beautiful scenes out of the early morning mist on the river when we reached Brisbane. We'd left Bas in Beaudesert catching some sleep in his car before his day's teaching at a nearby school. Pete, a man of iron caliber, went almost immediately to work. However, I'm afraid I must confess that, that day, I "took a sickie".