

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND BUSHWALKING CLUB – Hey Bob Volume 1, 1959

“To look with feelings of fraternal love
Upon the unassuming things that hold
A silent station in this beauteous world.”
Wordsworth.

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND BUSHWALKING CLUB

Variety in Unity...

September 1959

EDITORIAL

The University of Queensland Bushwalking Club was formed in 1950 under the Presidency of David Stewart. He was followed by John Stephenson, a geologist, now well-known for his part in the Fuchs expedition in the Antarctic. In these early days, most of the members had some association with other bushwalking clubs in Brisbane. But within a few years the position had changed, and the Club had come to take its part in the University's social activities.

Few of our members know anything of bushwalking when they enter the University. Many learn very little; a number learn a great deal; but only to a very few people does bushwalking come to have a meaning of its own, to be loved for its own sake, for its freedom, and its peace. To most it is just a part of University life, and association with University people, and, when these have gone, it becomes meaningless.

It is around this collection of students, with a common interest (through varying in kind and degree) walking and camping in the bush, that our Club has been build.

Unlike most bushwalking clubs, we have an annual influx of new members – people new to the University, looking for a recreation to provide athletic exercise, and with it aesthetic pleasure and friendship. It is then the job of the established members to help instill confidence and independence; to teach, to guide and to accept.

We are extremely fortunate to have within easy reach such a wealth and variety of bushwalking country. There are the well-known, almost unique Glass House Mountains. There are somewhat similar formations in the Fassifern Valley. And, there is the Scenic Rim, stretching almost unbroken for over a hundred miles eastward to the Coast, encompassing widely different types of country, from the sparsely vegetated rocky peaks of Mt. Barney, to the sense, sub-tropical rain forest of Lamington Plateau. And beyond the Rim lie the weird granite formations of Wyberba. In addition, trips to more distant areas of Australia become practical propositions to the undergraduate members of the Club, with their long and frequent vacations.

With the growing fear throughout the country that bushwalking is a dying pastime, it is perhaps our duty to show what can be done in the way of exploration, to find new areas, to create interest, and to bring others to know the joy of feeling at peace among things that were not made nor controlled by man.

Perhaps it is not a vain hope that this magazine may make some small progress towards this goal. It could now be claimed that this idea was in the minds of the various authors when they wrote their articles. But it is definite that they wrote with enthusiasm, and with pleasure, and that alone may bear fruit. This is the first attempt the Club has made to publish a magazine. The result has been, like all beginnings, rather crude. If there is a variety, it is a result of such in the Club. If the scope is not great, it is because the idea of the magazine and the feelings about it, are still limited to a minority of members. It is always difficult to unite people of different tastes to a common purpose, and this has been our problem. But as the feeling grows, the response will grow, and with it, the meaning of the magazine. From there it may come to have significance in promoting enthusiasm and zeal in the hearts of budding bushwalkers.

Keith Scott.

THE HISTORY OF THE BARNEY HUT.

ARTHUR ROSSER.

In 1951, when the Club was only 12 months old, and Broadbent and Stephenson were still panting after galloping round the Scenic Rim, it was suggested that a number of huts be built around the Rim, in order to make it warmer at night for anyone stupid enough to follow their example. The idea was to start with one on Mount Barney, but the Forestry Dept. demanded a definite plan before giving permission, and the club, appalled at this insistence on vulgar details, very properly forgot about the whole thing.

But the idea still lurked in the minds of the club elders, and came to the surface again in 1953, when a committee was formed to investigate the matter. Alf Rosser was appointed Convenor of the Barney Hut Expedition, and bundled off to Mt. Barney to have a look around. On returning, he admitted that the idea was practicable. Enthusiastically, a club meeting decided to start shaping stones as soon as possible, then hurried out to supper. Secretary Broadbent wrote to the Forestry Dept. with a rough plan, and suggested a site for the hut at about 3,800 ft. The Forestry replied that it was all right with them but they retained the right to remove the structure at any time.

Fidgeting restlessly as he wrote the letter, Broadbent had predicted that work would begin in August '53. Less excitable walkers made a dignified start in May, 1954. Meanwhile, the hut committee had developed a final plan. The hut was to be cemented or mud plastered stone to a height of four feet, to be topped off by a log cabin. Two windows were planned, and the slope of the roof was to be 1.25 in 15.5 from west to east. Any illusions that well disciplined club members would adhere rigidly to this plan were dashed on the first trip: far from clutching it in their hot little hands and poring over it lovingly by firelight, they forgot to take it with them at all. In fact, no-one could remember what width the damn thing was supposed to be, so they thought up a new one, thus setting up a useful precedent.

The first trip was baited with promises of a happy weekend at the Lower Portals, and not until Geoff Gadby arrived with 17 sheets of aluminum on the roof of his car, did the trip's sly leader, hill climbing humanoid "Chimp" Holdaway, leap out shouting "Surprise! Surprise! This is a hut trip!". Fresher Duncan McPhee, who had hoped to live off the land nearly dropped the raffle. Later, he was persuaded to leave his gun behind, and helped cart aluminum up over Midget Peak, in a howling westerly. Though the route chosen is the second longest up the mountain, it was at that time supposed to be the most convenient one for carrying aluminum.

Saturday night saw walkers and aluminum scattered all over the mountain, but by Sunday midday it was all at the site. For the next four years it was a confounded nuisance on the following Thursday, the last of the builders left, wet, cold and miserable, leaving the roof securely weighted down on top of the 30 inch high walls.

Two weeks later the wicked Lahey laughed rang out as he came down from East Peak and saw aluminum scattered all over the Gorge again. With Gordon Hopper, Brian Egan and some Brisbane Bushwalkers, they collected it, and cut some logs for the upper walls.

Continuing with the rush of early trips, Alf Rosser spent a week up there, cutting dead gums on the side of West Peak, for use on the upper walls. (We burnt the least of these in a recent camp fire.) Bill Deardon, who was with him for a while, helped drag the logs down to the hut. He was very surprised when a log started rolling sideways down the mountains, his hand being caught in a rope, the other end of which was

winding round the log. Bill was dragged shrieking down the slope, with every change of his hand and body being wrapped neatly round the log after the rope. Even though his hand was still some distance from the log when it stopped, Bill took an unbalanced view of the whole incident, went home, and has not been bushwalking since.

The weather on Barney frequently forced those working on the hut to put the roof on temporarily, and camp indoors. The peculiarities in the drainage of the hut were noticed, and it was on a trip at this time that Peter Gillingham, from his bed in a little stream at the northern end of the hut, announced proudly:

“I’ve got an inner spring mattress.”

Apparently, no work was done in the 1954-55 long vacation, and the first trip in the new year was in the May vacation. Ian McLoad, the new president, led a trip up from Cronan’s Creek, with aluminium and cement, and an adze donated by the Brisbane Bushwalkers. The 4 ft. high rock was, as then planned, were finished.

However, enthusiasm for building then dropped, and the president for 1956, Dave Dunstan, spoke in his annual report of the “stagnation of the Barney Hut”, while another member of that period explained –

“None of the b.....s would come and work!”

But in 1957, the new President, John Comino, leaped to his feet and cried that the hut must be finished. To get the ball moving, he grabbed 60 lbs of cement, charged $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up Logan’s Ridge and hid it under a rock. It has never been seen since.

Six days later on a moonlit Friday night grinning Dave Dunstan led us up South Ridge at a brisk pace, one of the few stops on the way being when cries of “Too high up” were rejoined by enraged bellows of “Too low down!”.

As Dave argued about the new route with the club’s hot headed secretary, Tom Brown, we dropped out cement at the hut at 1.30 am and Dave produced two thin blankets, having just sold his sleeping bag in preparation for a trip to England, and settled down beneath the grass tree. On that and the following night he was bothered by the cold, and by a couple of bush rats which he claimed ran up and down his legs.

The idea of the log cabin had gradually been dropped, as most of logs cut had rotter since the previous trip, 2 years before. We collected rocks previously classed as too heavy or too distant for use, but found that lifting them up onto the walls was very difficult. Dave’s pride and joy that weekend were two window sills which he made, with the help of Mungo Scott and others, on the northern and eastern walls. Ken, after sketching out plans for a hydro-electric scheme and a wind generator, Dave ran down South Ridge and went to England.

In his report of the trip, Dunstan urged that future trips to the hut should be private ones, apparently realizing that on any trip a few individuals did most of the work. Consequently, in the next couple years, the club had little control over the progress and design of the hut, though it did not care much anyway.

Garth Lahey thought that a block and tackle would be useful for lifting boulders onto the walls, and in the May vacation, Peter Gillingham, Ron Cox and I, with a couple of guests staggered up South Ridge with a block and tackle and more cement. The following day we built a 20 ft high tripod out of rafters. The next weekend saw Comino charging out of the scrub again, followed by a strong building party. Comino, wild-

eyed and dynamic, tore down the back wall, thus disposing of one of Dave's window sills, and, with the help of the new equipment, effortlessly placed a enormous rock square in the middle of another one, explaining that windows only let weather in, anyway.

No cementing would be done because the creek was dry and the nearest waster 200 yards down the gorge, so the back wall was built up to 6ft without cement, and was rather unstable.

On a subsequent Friday night, Gillingham and Timmins, with Pat Costello and Jennifer Hirst, toiled up Rocky Creek to reach the hut at 2 am. The rest of the weekend was spent replacing the axehandle.

A combined University and Brisbane Bushwalking trip took place in the following August. Once again we unleashed Comino, and, laughing madly, he heaved hugged boulders round on top of the balk wall, which swayed 6" either way as he did so. Meanwhile, Duncan McPhee , with Tom Brown's help, built the chimney, earnestly discussing theoretical aspects of chimney building and enthusing about architecture rising out of the surroundings. The criticism began before it was half finished, and has only recently been replaced in those hostile to the final result by a smug belief that the chimney is likely to have a violent return to its surroundings at any moment.

The progress of the hut was sufficient to warrant a discussion by the architects and engineers on the advisability of putting in a door. It was definitely established at the 1957 AGM that if a door were put in, the roof would be sucked off the first time the wind blew vertically upwards at 100 miles per hour.

By early last year, the club was, in general, much more vigorous, and some energy was left over for the hut. A day walk up South Ridge took up tools and food, and for a week in the vacation which followed. Mungo Scott and I cut timber for the rafters and beams, which Lahey contentedly belched as he potted on with his cementing. With the help of Murray Rich, we dragged the logs to the hut from the side of West Peak, and Tom Brown shaped them with the adze. Only 2 of the logs cut 3½ years before were used.

Taking advantage of the new road up to the bottom of South Ridge, we coaxed the unpredictable Peanut Truck as far as possible with a load of battens. An assorted group of walkers then took them up South Ridge, Garth Lahey pretending his was a wooden horse, and Lucy Harrison dragging hers disconsolately behind her with a piece of string.

Five sheets of aluminum were then tied to the roof of Peter Reimann's car, and brought down to Barney, it being necessary to climb in and out through the windows as the doors were tied shut. We took them up at night, and on reaching the hut at 2 am, Pete swore he was never going to carry anything more up Barney, except food. The roof was put on that weekend, which ended the successful series of trips for 1958.

1959 saw Peter Reimann (with a pack load of cement) with Lahey and Scott, wandering around the bottom of the S.E. Ridge for 4 hours, in mist and rain. Eventually, they went up South Ridge in disgust, having repeatedly run into cliffs on the other ridge.

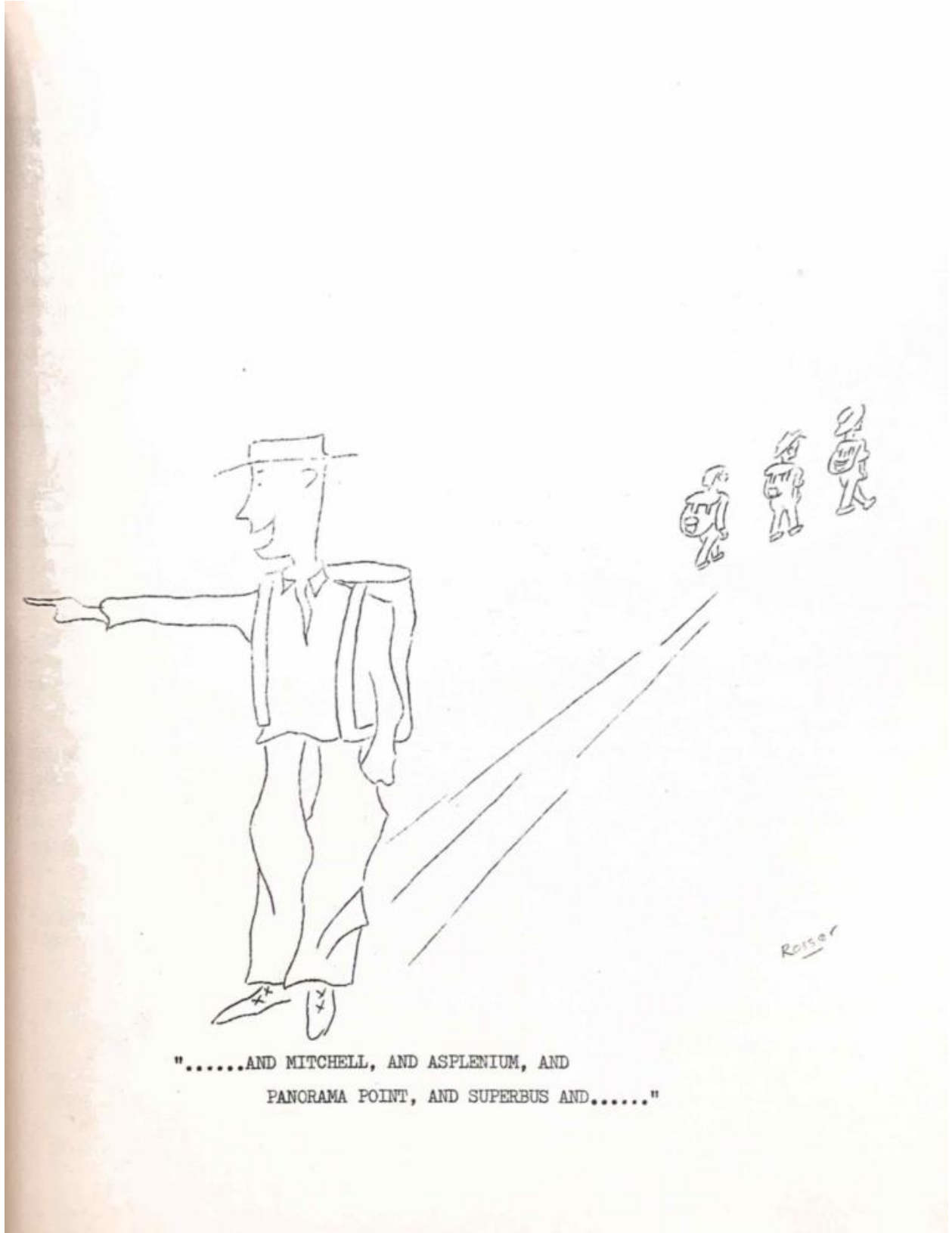
Later this year a brand new hut committee was formed, taking advantage of the fact that the club always bleats "yes" to any questions asked by the President. At the beginning of August, after some of us walked from Rathdowney to Barney, 300 lbs of timber for the bunks, was taking up South Ridge by a very peculiar mixture of people, including 5 girls.

Only one of the 4 bunks, was completed then, but since then the others have been built. The major remaining jobs are to replace the chimney, which catches alight when a big fire is built inside, and to put a sheet of fiberglass in the roof to let some light in.

So after 6 years, the hut is nearing completion –

“But what about him,” you are asking, nodding in the direction of the misery bowed figure of ageing builder, Mungo Scott, lines of worry etching his lean face – “Why doesn’t he rejoice”.

Never mind Mungo; he has a secret fear. It is his belief that one weekend he will climb Mt. Barney to find that some tidy little boy scout has used the hut, then burned, bashed and buried it. And he could be right – it is just the sort of thing that would happen.



EASTER THROUGHWALK – 1959.

(Warrazambil Ck – Christmas Ck.)

Peter Reimann

Thursday. Twelve people turned up at the station all prepared to spend the next four days on this horrible, but memorable trip.

The ride in the Interstate goods train was an event itself. The guard flatly refused to let us share his spacious abode, so there was no option but to pile into a tiny compartment in which was an unfortunate old lady intently buried behind a newspaper. It took six hours of jerky progress, and many card games to each Wiangaree, during which time Lucy and Judy distinguished themselves near the border by having a ride in the engine. We were picked up by the local cream carrier and taken out to the sawmill on Warrazambil Creek in his truck.

From here we wandered off into the fog and light drizzle, climbing a few miles and a thousand feet up a muddy bush track until general fatigue and 3.30 am proclaimed that we retire for the night.

Friday. After a miserable two and a half hours of sleep in the middle of the road with rain and mosquitos thrown in for good measure, we cooked breakfast using the muddy water running down the “drain” on the road. John Carter chucked his umbrella away at this stage.

It wasn't long before we had climbed to the top of the Local Pinnacle, and from here until lunchtime things were really worthwhile. Seventeen waterfalls poured off the surrounding Paddy's and Bar Mountains, the views were good and a spectacular razorback was followed.

After lunch we hit the rainforest and the fun began. An hour of bashing brought us to the Tweed Range proper, where the vegetation immediately became twice as thick. We turned north.

By now we were over 3000' and therefore well and truly in the clouds, which didn't lift until the next Sunday.

It's bad enough trying not to get lost in ordinary rainforest, but in this wild inhospitable profusion, with confusing ridges running off all over the place and mist blotting out everything, navigation becomes quite a feat.

It rained, and we all very quickly became soaked. With machete out to deal with frequent belts of horrible mess, it took three hours to cover one and a half miles.

It was getting late and we didn't have a clue where we were, so we stopped in the middle of nowhere and camped for the night. A fire was impossible, so we went straight to bed, had a few biscuits, and became somewhat warm and human again.

Saturday. It rained and dripped all night and we got more and more wet and uncomfortable.

Donning wet clothing again and having a few more biscuits for breakfast we pushed on. The fog was as unrelenting as ever. The soaked vegetation made us even colder and wetter. To complete our state of misery we were startled to come across very recent tracks at right angles to our own, and then received

the rude shock that they were ours of but ten minutes ago! Little food and sleep, plus cold, wet and fog and now lost – what a hell of a trip! We gave the compass a few hearty clouts to make sure it wasn't deceiving us and then had a debate on where we were. All the clues added up to the fact that we were just short of the Pinnacle.

It was futile going to the Pinnacle to admire the view, however, so we decided to cut around the back of it, navigating north with the compass. At this juncture, however, the compass, which had been becoming more and more waterlogged as the day went on, gave up the ghost completely (cheap three and eleven penny variety). Luckily, Noela Hoerlein produces another, so we successfully completed the short cut and ate lunch.

From here we had to go west and then somehow find an insignificant offshoot to north in all this wild rainforest and mist. At the critical moment the other compass became waterlogged and also gave up the ghost. Now we were sunk. We wandered around for a while looking for blazes and fortuitously found the right place.

We picked up a track and followed it north for a mile or two until it split up to a whole network of paths going everywhere and nowhere in particular. The Tweed Range disappeared and the area became quite flat – ideal conditions for becoming lost, especially without a compass. It was still misty so we had no choice but to camp. We had only covered three and a half miles all day .. Rain was pouring down in bucketful's now, so we chewed a few more biscuits and other cold things for tea and had a very wet night. Carol and Anne slept in the one sleeping bag.

Sunday. In the morning we were surprised to see that the sky was blue, and little shafts of sunlight penetrating through the trees. The compass had dried out overnight so we had a reasonable chance of finding ourselves again. After a few more biscuits for breakfast we set off with greatly increased morale.

We penetrated some thick masses of lawyer vines and eventually stumbled upon a good track. We made startling progress, Queensland's border flashed by, and we arrived at Point Lookout in the mid afternoon – and even saw some view (!).

We steamed off down the stretcher track into the setting sun, five of the party diverging off the track to look for the Stinson plane wreck, and at 7 pm decided to stop.

With our first fire since Friday morning, we dried out clothes, picked off dozen of leeches and had a gargantuan feast or rare delicacies and retired to bed.

Monday. The weather obliged by being beautiful. A lookout along the track gave a perfect view of Waterfall Creek Falls, Barney and Lamington National Park.

At last we emerged from the damp rainforest in which we'd been since last Friday into the warm sunlight, blue sky and the wide open grassy spaces. The feeling of freedom was almost overpowering. We ran down a long grassy slope and met the base campers (conveniently at lunch time).

To sum up, it was a miserable, unhealthy, unpleasant trip at the time, but in retrospect it has grown into one of the most enjoyable of the year.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(A Winge)

RON COX

Sir:

For a long time members of this club have had to suffer the overbearingly superior attitude of the devotees of an outstandingly obnoxious practice and it is high time someone protested. I refer to the behaviour of those people who refuse to make any record in summit log books, such as those on Barney and Crookneck.

At first sight this seems a commendable enough practice. Are not these people showing that the grandeur of the mountain has humbled them to the point where they realise how petty and insignificant their efforts are, that any trace of their presence left behind would defile the mountain? Are they not merely realizing that what is important is the purifying, soul stimulating experience of meeting Nature on her own ground, not the acclaim of their fellow men?

But are these their sentiments? Do they hush up this symbolic act of not signing the book? Do they with true modesty and humility brush over the subject should it be mentioned? Why, a whole cult has developed where it has been fashionable – the done thing – not to sign the book. With a smugly superior, “holier than thou” attitude, they look down on we earthy uncouth peasants who stoop to assert our pride in our achievements.

Of course, it’s a free country, they’re entitled to do what they like. But it’s very difficult to endure them. In effect they are saying – “There’s Smith down there, telling the world about it, scrawling his name over the countryside, we’re not like him, we realise how unimportant we are, we’re humble, what wonderfully modest people we are. This is outright puritanical hypocrisy.

Is there anything more childish than their behaviour when on being enlightened to the error of their ways they go through the summit books at the first opportunity, feverishly scrawling out their names.

When we climb Crookneck-Barney-Federation Peak, why shouldn’t we record our names of posterity? What is so wrong about this self pride? To climb a mountain is always no mean effort – it can be an outstanding achievement, we’re entitled to feel pleased with ourselves. Is it a sin to impress a little of our feelings on the inanimate impersonality of a summit record book?

Who has not read with fascination the story of the years in one of these books? What a loss to future generations their removal would be. And yet people have openly contemplated the criminal act of destroying them because they offended their eccentric sense of virtue.

Maybe normal people could be accused of going up a mountain just to write our names in the book on top, but one could almost accuse these superhuman exotics of climbing the mountain just not to write their names on top. I cry shame.

TRIPS THAT FAILED

KEITH SCOTT

This is intended to be a report on unsuccessful trips during the period 1957-1959. It is written with the hope that others may learn from our mistakes.

To begin, it must be pointed out that trips rarely fail from all aspects considered. A trip that to some people is a failure, can often please others.

Perhaps the most important single factor contributing to the failure of trips is indecision. This is rampant among members of this Club. Many an unsuspecting, well-intended leader, who has begun a trip hoping to form some last minute plan which will please all the people on the trip, has found his trip divided into small groups, running, wandering, or lagging all over the countryside.

This occurred at Tallebudgera Creek in February 1958. This trip was to be a throughwalk but the leader gave the people their own choice of where to go. From that moment the confusion began. It rose to a peak on Saturday afternoon, by which time the trip had split into three parties, and ended in abandonment, with Sunday spent on the beach.

It happened at Montville in 1957. This trip was planned as a three day throughwalk from Bon Accord Falls to Mapleton. We got about half a mile past the falls when the Weak began winging and whining, and the leader, in a quandary, gave in. The next two days were spent in degradation and squalor in the rat-infested, disused hut.

An interesting example of this sort of failure was the Burnett Creek trip in January, 1959. Again we had the Winging Weak with us; but the leader had the strength to ignore them, and go ahead with the planned trip. The first two days were planned as a throughwalk, with a daywalk up to Mount Ballow on the last day. Although the plan could be enforced on the throughwalk, the confusion began on the last day and only about one third of the people climbed Ballow; the remainder lay in sloth till the climbers returned.

Perhaps the people that determine the success or failure of a trip are the greater group, the Undecided, who lie between the fast-talking Weak, and the less voluble Determined. It is apparently the aim of the Weak to convince everyone else that the leader is stupid, and should be ignored. Frequently, they win, as they did at Burnett Creek. They tried again at Glass House Mountains this year; but before their words of conservative wisdom had sunk in, the leader managed by some fast-talking to get everyone (except one fresherette whom they had kidnapped) up Ngun Ngun. (His unexpected reward was being thanked by one of the people he had bullied into climbing the mountain).

It should be apparent to those concerned that the greatest thing they can do for the Club is to keep their unenterprising ideas to themselves, and not try to kill budding enthusiasm.

At the risk of being out of place, I should like to draw a comparison between the Undecided group in our Club, and the great majority of ordinary people living in democratic countries. In each case, their attitude amounts almost to complacency. The Vice-President of India wrote in "The Race in Crisis", "Why are we not stirred by the idea of one world which will compel us to liberate the poor and the exploited strata of our Society? We have the insights. Why do we not have the zeal?".

So this quality as it occurs in the Club members, may be characteristic, not just of bushwalkers, but of the human race.

The next most important factor governing the outcome of a trip is the weather, because omnipotent as it is, its effect can be dominated by the personality of people concerned. We all have fond memories of some foul weather trip, but even during the trip, though spirits be low, some element of enjoyment can be introduced by the indomitably happy disposition of some person.

This position was held in our Club for some years by Curl Timmins, and taken over by Don Galloway.

On the trip through the Cradle Mountain – Lake St. Clair Reserve in 1958, the weather was disgusting. The three Queenslanders concerned were completely wet, frozen, and thoroughly miserable. The trip was saved from failure by a bloke names George whose greatest effort was to don his pack one morning, open the door of the warm hut to look out into the icicle soup that envelopes Tasmania, and show with child-like happiness – “Taxi!”.

Finally, I would like to deal with failures due to the inadequacy of the trip leader. The glaring example of this was Knapp’s Peak in 1958. The leader had planned to do his worst. With infinite care he had arranged every detail that would cause annoyance to the poor unsuspecting fools that followed him all around and over the wretched mountain. He hasn’t led a trip since. Another performance by Mr. Lahey was to lure by outright deceit, some poor barefooted boys to the top of a mountain and down again through a tangle of lantana burrs, and back across miles of gravel. One often sees him sitting with a please expression on his evil face, recalling visions of a job well done.

Lost World in 1958 was one of those all nights, round in circles, all over the mountains, through the rain forest, in the middle of winter, in the pouring rain, camp-without-waste trips – LOST.

There doesn’t seem to be much that can be done about leaders that get lost, until you discover by experience who they are, and henceforth avoid having them as leaders.

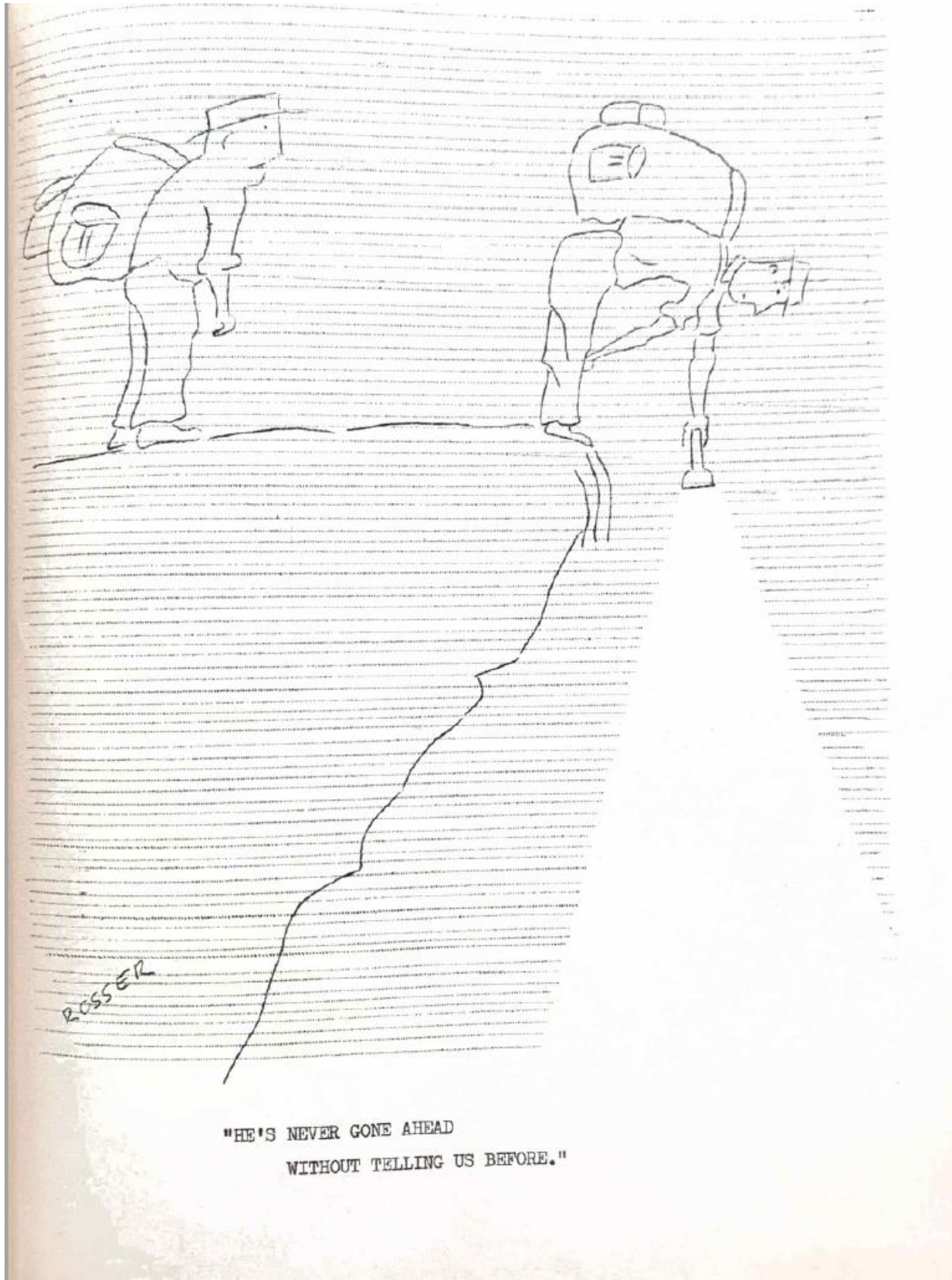
To conclude, I would suggest that for more successful trips, it should be arranged to have a good leader, and good weather (or a Galloway), and, most important of all, to decide upon a definite plan (preferably a throughwalk), to advertise it clearly, in detail, and to keep to the plan as closely as possible, remembering always that “to whasisname is not a thingamabob.”.

“He who stays in the valley will never get over the hill”

Chinese proverb

“He who rises late must trot all day”

Benjamin Franklin



A TOUR OF THE NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT

AUGUST – 1958

JOHN CARTER

The birth of a report;

“You’re the librarian, you can write it!” said Murray Rich, handing over the Pencraft Exercise Book recently bought for the purpose.

At 3.30 am, (we know this time definitely, because we’ve heard about it so many times since then), Peter Reimann scrambled out of bed, somewhat reluctantly after his three hours sleep, starting a collection of participating bodies which stretched from Clayfield to Mount Barney. With five bodies packed somewhat tightly into John Carter’s Rover, we left Mount Barney base of... at 8 am or thereabouts.

At Woodenbong the temptation to stop and eat took over and after much indecision, we ordered tea (in a teapot), bought a slab of cake and a dozen bananas... the smallest buyable amount. Tenterfield proved large enough to supply our needs in the way of food, and we pressed on to Bluff Rock for lunch. This event was remarkable in that everyone, apparently fearing nothing less than starvation, had brought stacks of food and lots of it interesting.

One member of the party, recently descended from Mt. Barney, arrived wearing three quarters of a pair of shoes, so replacements were deemed necessary. A party of two set out to achieve this, but succeeded in finding only a stunning but impractical pair of leopard-skin casuals! Two shops and one town later, the buying party had grown to four and after many trying-on, were satisfied with a pair of boots. Glen Innes was amused.

At Guyra we found Murray’s motor bike by the side of the road, but no sign of Murray. We set out on a full-scale search, and after peering in cafes and other likely places (?) we arrived at the other end of town still less Murray. However, something was approaching us from the other direction...

“It wore a long grey smooth shiny waterproofed duffle coat.

Round black smooth shiny finish metal hat

Warm blue woollen thing tied like a neckerchief

Sure looked strange to us.”

(Apologies to “The Purple People Eater!”)

Here dissension entered the camp. There were those who wanted to eat, those who wanted to sleep, and, wait for it, those who wanted to go take the PICTURES! Some time later it was decided by populus vote, to act in the former, so out onto the road to Ebor we went, followed by our lightless motorcyclist. At this stage the Byerlee-Carter Training School was formed. For details, ring the mining department! Camp was made at first creek big enough to wash in. A stew of phenomenal size was cooked, which proved too much for our combined appetites, and soon we had had it completely.

Wednesday:

It took a long time to get up, mainly due to an excess of frost outside and warmth inside. Had breakfast to the accompaniment of clicking cameras and rabbits on the hill frolicking (?) on the grass. Murray got exhausted coughing his velocipede into life, and thereafter preceded us to Ebor looking like a lopsided

beetle. With some dynamic gymnastics through the side window of the car we gave him a banana. We raided Ebor's General Store but left the Pub alone.

Ebor Falls descended several hundred feet into two drops, and one could have spent a day delighting in the scenery. However, our stomachs demanded that we press on to Point Lookout, the promised lunch spot. The latter part of the climb was by human muscle partly due to a feared onslaught of an attack of overheating in John's Rover.

The view from the top could only be described as fantastic, and presented a profile of very rugged (hellish rough) ranges leading down to the coast. It was all the more spectacular because Point Lookout was so far above everything else. The level of Peter's strawberry jam made an alarming descent during lunch.

To compensate for our ignorance as to what lay in the field of view we paid a social call on the Park Ranger. This crusty old gent gave us a picturesque account of the local history, praised the sire engineer up to glory, swore at the vandals, and finally recommended we visit the Antimony mine, especially because of the curative properties of nearby Platypus Creek, encouraged by Hugh's condition at the time. Back at the top, Peter had difficulty in retrieving his overalls from a certain cold shivering person, and we had difficulty in believing that it was only the crows that accounted for the disappearance of some of our food which we had unwittingly left scattered over the landscape. We ate in Scott-Rosser style, and consequently ate nothing at all. Murray had great difficulty in dragging John, Noela, Hugh and Pat from Top Forty on 2UE at 1 am when we finally turned in.

Thursday:

After the previous day's yarn with the Ranger, we decided to go down the Snowy Mountain range to the Bellingen River and the Antimony mine, on a two day throughwalk. The scheduled start was 8 am, but owing to the 2UE type entertainments the previous night, we duly started off heavily at 9 am. Two hundred yards from Point Lookout is a sign to Wright's lookout and Weeping Rock. This is just a rough track and peters out just beneath the bluffs. From here the way lies further down the ridge through rocky open country for half an hour. There are numerous springs on the way. We picked our way down a break in some cliffs, and soon struck the timber road to the Bellingen River. This is a four-wheel-drive track with a few steep pinches, and it proceeds towards Wrights Lookout. This is an elevated plateau of about 60 acres flanked by 100 ft. cliffs. A track leads from the road up an obvious route, and this area gives a very good view of the park. The road proceeds further down some 2-3 miles and takes a left turn to the mine. Along this stretch, some members of the party felt decidedly empty, so the remedy ... lunch... was taken of in the middle of the road. The mine has been in disuse since the war, but is worth a visit. However, Antimony has disastrous effects on the system. The mine area contained a large cement slab and judging by the sundry bods flaked out on it, it would have looked like some disaster had got is! On account of the water, or the lack of rain water tanks, the two day throughwalk was reduced to one day, and we proceeded at last back the way we had come. Frequent rests were necessary, but the rejuvenating effects on some members were amazing. Murray and Hugh Byerlee entertained us with the soft melody of a sea-shanty on several occasions. This, interspersed with Top Forty opposition evoked from the rest of us kept us in good spirits. We were forced to walk some distance in the dark, and were grateful to have a road to walk on, even if it was steep, rocky, full of gullies crossed by muddy soakages, and in absolute darkness! We were most surprised to find our down time of $4\frac{3}{4}$ hours with $\frac{3}{4}$ hour at Wrights Lookout. We camped the night at the entrance to the park, after Peter and John had once again climbed the mile or so of hill, to get the vehicle and its essential contents.

All slept well, after some interesting remarks and opinions on short throughwalks!

Friday:

Even Murray slept in after the previous day's exercise. Breakfast was highlighted by large quantities of three kinds of freely-flowing porridge. Some members of the party (boiled egg eaters) even brushed their hair, due to the impending visit to the metropolis of Wollomombi. We were led to it by its smell and hastily knocked up the baker for that reason.

The Wollomombi falls were very spectacular. The gorge is some 1500 feet and curves in an S shape for about four miles with systems of side gorges leading into it, but from the appearance of the surrounding country, one would never expect to find a gorge for miles. One could spend weeks rock-climbing in this area. A particularly good climb would be a steep ridge between the two falls at the head of the gorge.

After a typical cadge type lunch eaten overlooking the falls, we dispersed in all directions according to our various ambitions as to how to spend the next day and a half. An hour later, we re-combined and had a big round table conference, and finally departed on a throughwalk down the gorge. Emitting superlatives as we went at various aspects of the gorge, the wattle trees and the sunset, we were finally content to make camp in a sheltered spot on a creek just above a waterfall. The tea was remarkably well organized, with lashings of pea soup, stew, rice and apricots and the stew looked exciting that its overflowing contents had to be photographed by our expert on the subject. Frequent implorings by the early rising Rich finally convinced us to start sleeping long before midnight.

Saturday:

For once in a lifetime, Murray's planned early start worked – ½ hour. We got away at 8 am, mainly because we were on a daywalk without packs. This was not Murray's intention, but was a decision reached by an overwhelming majority. We proceeded along the precipitous edge of the gorge along a lot of rabbit fences, with occasional spectacular crossings of the fence by Murray. Barbed wire on top made such crossings dangerous and the report book saved a good dig in the ribs by a barb on one occasion, with a portion of Murray's shirt adhering to the fence!

Geologically, the area was extremely interesting, and Murray was well furnished with specimens, geologically, and the gorge seemed infinite in extent. Every ridge brought new tributary gorge. Of particular interest was a large pinnacle near four sawtooth on a ridge. There were plenty of long deep pools in the creek in the gorge. The area as a whole, was very similar to the Mt. Barney area and the pinnacle was very like Leaning Peak. The whole gorge would be Heaven for the nutty knot of rock climbers, and the club could easily spend a week in the area, without getting in one another's way. We walked several miles down the gorge and finally returned to our campsite. The Pat led us back to the car by a devious route, over a few fences etc. The weather was a trifle inclement that day, and raincoats were worn by those who had them and refused to share them! The top of the gorge was the best we had seen it after the rain, with a spectacular rainbow dipping to the bottom of the gorge. Due to the inclemency of the weather, and the persistency of thirst, we boiled coffee on a metho stove in the corner of the rest shed. At this juncture, a competition appeared to be afoot to see who could use up a film first and cameras pooped out from behind every rug sack. At about 2.30, lunch was deemed complete and we loaded the car again, with Pat Costello as pillion cyclist and set off for Ebor.

A cold westerly change hit us around Ebor, as we found while fixing a windscreen wiper blade outside the car. How cold the motor cyclists were was made obvious later. The road from Ebor to Dorrigo was easily the most spectacular and beautiful we had seen anywhere, and the weather conditions were perfect. The high wind was driving the clouds into exploded patterns, that races across the late afternoon sun. The light was glorious gold and the rounded ridges in yellow and green were showing off their beauty. The road cuttings were a blood red. A number of long billabongs, large parklike trees, and occasional views to the south over the ranges we had left, completed the picture... then we hit Dorrigo!

A very dejected pair awaited our arrival. Pat's mouth moved up and down without any sound beyond a dull clattering. Pat and Murray appeared real cool! There was a café and it was open, and we were cold, so in we went. Meals were soon dished out, and only the extreme generosity of the surrounding multitudes saved a dire situation. "One chip and half a tomato, everyone, for Pat." A large supply of chips was deemed necessary to fill up the odd corners, and armed with these, we set out for the nights entertainment. A policeman eyed us suspiciously.

"The Delicate Delinquent" and "The Animal World" was the program at the local Metro. The audience and the whole of Dorrigo's teeming populus was a scream of peculiarity. As soon as the end of the picture hove in sight, they were up and out like a mob of cattle into lucerne! At interval we all entertained them with the common Brisbane theatre-going practice of eating a can of crushed pineapple with one spoon between six! After the show we went to supper at the opposition café where the proprietor was not used to serving so many theatre-goers. When we left the town the place was deserted except for one dog in the street. We drove off to north Dorrigo, and set up camp on a side road. This consisted in unrolling sleeping bags and crawling in. Snores quickly descended over the landscape.

Sunday:

The night was a trifle cold with a bit of frost here and there, and after the early night in 11.30 the previous night, we all awoke refreshed. There was some difficulty in arousing some members of the party, but a spoonful of frost soon fixed this! Packing up was the usual task of cramming most things into the boot and tossing the rest in to fill the interstices between passengers. A gent in an Austin found the situation rather unique judging by his driving past with his mouth open! Murray planned to stop at the first convenient spot for breakfast... the road wound through Tyringhar past the Nymboidia River, a beautiful spot ... at Grafton Murray decided it was time to stop for breakfast at 11 am! A walk around the town was boring and we finally settled for lunch in the Park. A passer-by made a fine (loud) comment ... "My gosh, what a mob of creeps!". One member of the party hence shaved for the first time in the trop, to be able to act as a spokesman to any others who might feel of similar opinion ... e.g. parents, police etc.

At MacLean, we joined a string of cars in the queue at the ferry. Four ice creams were called for, but a "Hey Bob" from further up the queue, made the total six. Not too long after, we stopped behind another string of cars at the next ferry. We just timed things right, and missed the ferry by one car. In the interval much to the entertainment of the carloads of plutocratic tourists, we boiled the billy by the road, letting us sop tea on the ferry crossing. The trip from there to Murwillumbah was noisy as usual, because five people singing different tunes can be a little overpowering! We made Murwillumbah after being passed by an unshaven beetle on an unlit A.J.S.

Dinner was partaken at the Ritz Café by all six, all hungry, more so than the proprietors expected. It's hard to eat with six people at one wall table! After a finally ample meal, at 8.30 pm, we left at length for home,

with the mild distraction of the South Coast still in our path. Here we bid farewell to Murray, still minus a tail light. After a petrol refill, we hit Surfers Paradise, where we looked around, and found at last, a juke box with our favourite classics! Noela built a sand castle, and we ate dough nuts while gazing in awe at the comparison with the night life of Dorrigo! A few luscious dolls completed the picture. Some considerable time later we left for home. Everyone went to sleep, almost, and we finally started to dump passengers. Most spectacular was at Ashgrove where we unloaded a huge pile of plastic bags, packs, shoes, odd green articles , and Pat onto the footpath. Finally by 4 am, we were all home.

CONCLUSION:

To say we had all enjoyed the trip, would be a vast understatement. We would rather say in true tradition, that ...

“WE HAD A BEAUT TIME”

I WAS A BUSHWALKER

Extracts from the diary of a Centenary year explorer.

P. Douglas Smith

On August 8th, 1959, in the company of a group of bushwalkers, I climbed Mt. Barney. This triumphant centenary year achievement may be discussed under the following 5 headings: (1) Organisation, (2) Transport, (3) Ascent of Mountains, (4) Activities subsequent to ascent of mountain, (5) Conclusions.

ORGANISATION: There was no organization

TRANSPORT: Actually this was virtually lacking, consequent upon the absence of organisation (see above) which is apparently a characteristic feature of the UQBWC. In theory, we were to be conveyed in comfort from the kidney lawn direct to the foot of Mt. Barney, after which we would stroll up the mountain and sleep on top that night. At least this was the story fed to me by an ex-friend of mine named Rosser, and it was a combination of this fallacious picture of a quiet weekend of peace and relaxation, supplemented by frequent references to fresherettes of untold beauty, which finally after two years of persistent brain washing persuaded me to throw caution to the wind and embark upon this hazardous mission.

Our estimated time of departure was 6.30 pm on Friday. At 6.34 pm due to a break in security, the news leaked out that our means of transport had been pranged up, and that the only alternative means of transport included a train departing from South Brisbane in 10 or 15 minutes time. Hasty re-organisation ensued and all bushwalkers (and potential bushwalkers) had accumulated at the specified platform by 6.30. One hour later, whilst ten bushwalkers were arguing all at once with the ticket seller about the price of the tickets, the train quietly set off unannounced from a different platform. Thanks to the cooperation of the Station Master and the relative slowness of our train and the relative speed of the bushwalkers, it was caught. It was very long. There were 24M wagons and 17 NW wagons and 7 K wagons and some others which I do not know. And on the end was the guards van and on the end of the guards van was a small compartment containing two seats, designed to hold four people. In these there were an unidentified number of people, the additional influx of ten heavily burdened bushwalkers produced a situation which would by comparison make the average tinned sardine feel lonely. It also had a disastrous effect on my hat, which all concerned seemed to find it necessary to sit or stand upon, either singly or collectively in the most unmilitary manner.

After several hours of living hell, the train paused momentarily in an uninhabited area of bush known as Rathdowney. We sorted out our legs and arms and things and got out and waited hopefully for the appearance of the fast cars which had been arranged to convey us over the last part of the trip. Due to a slight defect in organisation these still have not arrived at the time of writing. This necessitated a stimulating little 20 mile hike to the mountain, at a ruthlessly brutal pace set by a couple of obviously demented bushwalkers out in front. As the hours dragged on the eerie stillness of the night would be broken by a funny little gasping sound as yet another bushwalker fell by the roadside, and crawled off into the bushes to die of exhaustion. Still we pressed on. By 4 am the birds were stirring in their nests, as the survivors charged by, faster than ever, with only two more miles to go. (At this stage this personal report comes to an abrupt end, on account of there was yet another casualty.)

ASCENT OF MOUNTAIN: Little need to be written about the pleasure derived from climbing mountains, for those of you who have experienced this thing will understand, and those of you who have not are probably not interested. I might mention that the pleasure derived from this particular climb was modified by 4 factors: (1) Height of the mountain (too high), (2) Steepness of mountain (45 degrees), (3) Virtual absence of friction between loose gravel on mountain and smooth soles of my shoes, and (4) Size of stack of timber at foot of mountain which had to be transported to top of mountain, for building purposes. (It has just occurred to me that if a bushwalker weighing 140 lbs., carrying a pack weighing 30 lbs., drags 50 lbs of timber up a frictionless mountain 6,000 ft high, he will do 1,320,000 foot-pounds of work, and this is more than that done by an Egyptian Slave building a pyramid, who lifts a stone weighing 1 million pounds to a height of one foot, or a pillar weighing 40 tons through ten feet).

ACTIVITIES ON TOP OF MOUNT BARNEY: The principal activities I observed were:

- (1) Nothing (e.g. sleeping).
- (2) Eating.
- (3) Trying to build a hut.
- (4) Trying to destroy my hat.

I personally concentration mainly on (2) – eating, and on trying to prevent (4) – i.e. trying to destroy my hat. I also laid one foundation stone in the hut which was subsequently moved by some one called Mungo and finally put back where I had put it in the first place because it turned out to be right after all. I also climbed North Peak. When I returned I found that my hat had mysteriously been spirited away and was now reclining on the end of the branch of a dead tree which was hanging far out over the precipitous margin of the camping area. Much time and energy was expended retrieving this.

At night I lay awake for hours gazing at the clear sky, because the stars were very bright and I am very interested in stars, and because the camp fire had gone out and it was very cold, and because pain from one of the ankles which I broke during the climb prevented me from sleeping somehow.

CONCLUSION: I am just a simple man and like to lead a peaceful life. At night I smoke my pipe and read the papers and on weekends read a book. I do not believe in strenuous exercise, for it imposes a heavy physiological burden on the heart, and this is a bad thing. And anyhow, in this modern age of transport, inly uncivilized men still walk. In short I was not made to be a bushwalker, and fear I never will be one.

CONN'S PLAINS.

Keith Scott.

The night was cold and clear; the moon was bright.
Six grey people set out to climb Conn's Plains -
A treeless dome of silver grass.

The plain was once a tribal ground but these
Dark people could not bear the bitter winds
That swept the plains; and so they lived beneath
The ground, fixed and upright -
Only the hair of their heads did show.
But black is not the colour of the grass, and the hair
Of the dead is silver; and so they were transformed.

But always when the moon was full, they were
Again, and did emerge.

And so they went, that they may know the truth.
Upwards they went. They did not speak,
Except for one who sang aloud, for he was dying.
Yet he was happy.

Onwards they rushed; they reached a cliff
And up they went.
Tossing their handholds over their shoulders,
And kicking away their footholds beneath,
They hurried on.
Soon the forest stopped, and a great white arc,
Rose into the sky. They went up into this,
And they were lighted, their separate characters
Showing forth.

One, their leader, was broad and grey;
He knew, but did not say;
He just went on.
And with him, beside him, the dependable soldier;
He always went beside.
And then a girl, pale brown, and good.
She smiled but did not speak.
And another girl, round and quite forlorn,
And a man who wore a hat
Was there – somewhere.
And there among them all, old and bent,
Was one who sang, and tried to run,
But could not.

Soon they were on top,
And gathered round the orange light
The light that brought the dead to life;
For all around within its reach
The clumps of grass transformed to heads,
And waved again their jet black hair.
But though the fire had warmth and life,
It gave no strength to draw them out;
The moon alone could give them that.

And as they stood around the light,
The air before, the woods behind
The girls went out.
They dared to tread to darker grounds,
The ground the western woods did hide.
The old man, he lay down.
And one returned to talk of fairy oaks;
The other came behind, no more forlorn.

Again they gathered round the light.
They waited.
But soon it changed to black and red.
Blood red.

The air was still, the moon was high;
And something came. They stood transfixed.
And then the round one moved and broke,
And off they ran, the round one rolled,
The old one roared, the forest howled,
And down they ran, and ran, and ran;
There came a cliff, they did not know -

HINCHINBROOK ISLAND

John Comino

Yes! It was foolish not to head to the Weather Bureau or the people who knew the capabilities of North Queensland weather in the wet season, but we went, for there was no other time available to us to explore the grandeur of Hinchinbrook's mountains, rising from almost sea level to over 3,600 feet.

It was early January 1953, during the long vacation, when we boarded the 9.00 pm Ingham bound train, to visit Queensland's most beautiful island, 1,000 miles north of Brisbane. The other passengers were astounded to see five roughly attired bushwalkers plus huge packs, enter the small compartment and proceed to settle in for the long journey ahead. Indeed, when the sixth member of the party burst into the carriage as the train was departing, they were shocked as he donned the boots slung around his neck and proceeded to fill his pack with supplies of rice, sultanas, bread, salami sausage, etc., hastily gathered in a frantic late departure.

We were excited about the trip, for we had heard that Mt. Bowen, the largest of the Island's peaks, had not been climbed for twenty years, and the Thumb, a conspicuous offshoot of this great mass, had several times defied assaults made on its virgin crest. The first sleepless night of our trip left us debilitated for the next day, so the following night we drew straws for the seats, luggage racks, and floor of our compartment, leaving the resourceful odd man out to provide himself with a mezzanine hammock slung diagonally across the compartment between the luggage racks. In this he was rocked gently as he slept for some hours until an irate ticket collector removed him, whilst ignoring the cocooned bodies in the racks, who looked like baggage anyway.

In mid-afternoon, we disembarked across crystal clear water and stood for a while in the warm white sand, overawed by the serenity of the scene that lay around us. The remarkable stillness of this tropic isle was broken only by the buzz of insects and the put-put of the departing "Warrawilla" as we gave silent appreciation to the thoughtfulness of those whose endeavours created this a National Park.

Eventually we overcame our awe and set up camp on the edge of a jungle by a small cool stream which later we explored. We found a cool rock pool and soon determined the stinging capacity of the beautifully coloured tree ants which abounded nearby.

Our best plan of assault lay in two attempts on Bowen; one party climbing via the eastern gully of Warrawilla Creek, and thence to the summit by the North Ridge; and the other attempting the summit by the impressive South-East ridge via the Thumb, a somewhat separated southernmost peak of the Bowen mass.

We witnessed a fine dawn and the east face of Bowen lit by the morning sun and capped by a delicate silvery feather of cloud presented a memorable sight. The day grew frightfully hot and humid and the steep dry South-East ridge made its assailants, as they drew further away from the water, increasingly envious of the creek party who reached their camp on North Ridge that night. The next day after a cloudy dawn, the creek party reached Bowen's summit, where, above the clouds, they drank in the magnificent panorama. To the North and the South the intensely blue ocean was set with islands, whilst to the east and 3,600 feet below them the island's colourful beaches led into the ocean, stretching as far as the eye could see, till it merged with the distant sky. The west was a mountain-walled mass, the Cardwell Range, with its dense jungles dissected by deep valleys.

Meanwhile, the ridge party, batched in perspiration, camped on a 40 degree slope at the foot of the second buttress which had thwarted earlier attempts at scaling the Thumb. Too dehydrated to have tea the previous night, they descended 300 feet down an open chimney at the side of the great eastern wall of the Thumb, in the hope of finding a rock pool replenished by the dripping water they could hear but not see. Their endeavours were rewarded, fortunately, and after an exhausting climb back, they searched for a lead on the western side of the ridge, after contemplating a very difficult climb immediately before them. The lead proved to be false, but a second attempt a few hundred yards back overcame the buttress and lead again to the crest of the ridge over a series of very exposed, but short pitches.

It was rewarding to be again in a position where we could continue our upward climb, and, skirting to the west of the final wall, we found water in the saddle between the Thumb and Bowen. From here there proved to be an easy climb, without packs, to the top of the Thumb, and a cairn was built and capped with a three inch diameter quartz crystal found lower down the ridge and brought up for just such an occasion. A magnificent view from the South stretched below us, down to Zoe Bay, flanked with its lush green low lying jungle, dissected by clear streams, and bordered by drowned mountain ranges.

To the North appeared a very difficult path to the summit across vast sloping slabs. These however, were circumvented by following up an easy but steep line of foliage to bring us to the crest of the summit ridge. This ridge, however, proved difficult, being clothed by dense matted banksia. After several hours of energetic scrub-bashing we made the summit just in time to witness a magnificent sunset, the pink glow filling the distant haze to the North and South, and the dark peaks of Bartle Frere and Bellenden Kerr some 80 miles north, poking their heads into a fast fading sky!

The following day we awoke to find ourselves bathed in heavy cloud, except when sea breezes opened an occasional feathery tunnel of view down to the 1,000 feet Nina Park on the coast below us to the North. It was wonderful to experience the contrast of this sunlight bathed peak with our present surroundings, and we determined to climb it when we returned. Evidence of a party from Tully the previous December was found on top of Bowen, and their ascent was from the North via Missionary Bay.

During the descent we contacted the creek party, who waited for us after having climbed a peak at the head of their creek. On the way down, two of our party went to investigate a grotesque assemblage of rock pinnacles on the North-East ridge. We had called these, from their shape, the Fingers – after all, there was a Thumb, and the Fingers were dying for equivalent recognition.

By this time, the weather had broken, and the remainder of the descend was made in heavy rain. During a brief lull in the weather during the next two days, a rapid and enjoyable ascent of Nina Peak was made, coconuts on the way providing a welcome change of diet from dried vegetables.

However, the “Wet” had set in in full force, and rainfall varied from heavy to very heavy, averaging, we found later, some eight inches per day for the remainder of our stay on the island.

This rainfall altered conditions somewhat, and considerable difficulty was encountered with stream crossings, Zoe Creek churning down at probably 30 knots. We had made a rendezvous with the boat at Mulligan’s Bay if weather permitted, and had intended to climb Mt. Diamantina and Stralock, but so much time was lost in getting to Mulligan’s that we had to forfeit those pleasures, and move further round the island to an alternative point near calm water.

Giant cascades, some 3,000 feet, down Stralock and Diamantina made an impressive sight, and, when the swirling mists parted occasionally on Bowen, we could see a giant waterfall which was carried away by wind after falling probably 1,000 feet free.

The walk around the island was made difficult because our departure on the track coincided with spring tides and heavy South-East winds which hurled mountains of surf up the beach and even into the fringing rainforest, undermining trees which were tossed at us up the beach. Consequently, we had to take to the dense jungle, which made progress very slow, but gave us an excellent appreciation of heavy jungle conditions.

After returning to the mainland, we had intended to spend five days in following at the Herbert River to its tributary Stony Creek, on which are the Wallaman Falls, but we found, on our arrival, that we were flood bound and could not reach Ingham. Mr. Waring kindly accommodated us, but our available time was spent before we were no longer flood bound.

All agreed whole-heartedly, however, that the trip, despite the weather we encountered, was well worth the endeavour, and we hoped that many people would take full advantage of the scenic grandeur of this Queen of National Parks – Hinchinbrook Island.

LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK

BLACK CANYON – February 1959

Keith Scott

The trip began with two of us travelling to O'Reilly's by bus. After leaving Canungra, the bus had only one other passenger, (and the driver's girlfriend) a strange little girl who sat with her feet upon the seat, occasionally jumping up and down and squeaking. When we got to O'Reilly's we discovered that it was Noela. We'd known her for years, so we invited her on our trip. Then we met eleven other people from our Club, so we invited them, and off we ran to Echo Point, where we lay down and went to sleep.

We were awoken at 4.30 am to see the sunrise – a hot hazy sun. But the weather was fine, and the view was clear, and we were happy.

We left our packs at the Worendo turnoff and went down the Lightning Falls track to the point where the track into Black Canyon begins. We had to wait here for some of our party who were wandering around the top of the hill. They must have lost Bob, because we could hear them calling him.

When they came, we went down into Black Canyon. The track goes straight down the side, and is very steep. We had some fun rolling rocks on each other, and then got into shooting Creek and followed it into the Albert River. Then we rock-hopped up to Thunder Falls, which, in their surroundings are very impressive.

To get out of the Canyon, three people climbed straight up the side of the Falls. Although they did not say, we knew they just did this to get back first and get the best beds at Rattatat. The rest of us got back to the Worendo turnoff at 6.00 pm, by which time it was raining steadily, and the forest was dark and cold. At the thought of the five miles to Rattatat in the dark, one bloke collapsed. So we put his groundsheet over him, and off we went. Our torches gave funny effects in the mist as we ran along the track, and some of the others were frightened.

When we got to the hut, they were all warm and snug in bed, except for Graham Hardy, who was lying out in the rain. He gets upset easily, so we did not say anything, but we did think he was a little queer.

The roof was leaking at one end of the hut, and the other end was taken up by the people who got there first. However, three of us managed to keep dry by hanging our tent under the roof so that it collected all the water. This water, of course, once collected, had to run somewhere, and it was just unfortunate that it did so onto Hoela Hoerlein. Noela was not very happy about this, but she cheered up when she found that by arranging her groundsheet, she could run the water onto Peter Reimann and Rod Bucknell. The three of them spent the rest of the night perched on patches of dry land, happy in each other's misery.

On Sunday it was still raining, and the mist was thick, so we all ran back to O'Reilly's. Arthur Rosser and myself came out sometime after the others, to find to our great joy most of them streaming with blood from innumerable leech bites.

It was wonderful! Then we went home.

THE ASCENT OF VIDLER'S CHIMNEY

John Stephenson (23-10-1954)

Examinations were at last over and a feeling of reckless ease was in the air. The four of us had plans – we were to attempt an ascent of Vidler's Chimney on Mount Lindesay.

Mt. Lindesay is a 4,000 feet peak in the Macpherson Range, on the border of Queensland and New South Wales, about 65 miles south of Brisbane. It is a spectacular peak, rising nearly 3000 ft. from the surrounding country, and being capped by a double cliff line 600 ft high.

The mountain was first climbed about 1880 by two of the early local settlers. They initiated the route by which the mountain was always been climbed since – the eastern buttress. This route is a steep one, but well provided with trees which permit a relatively easy though dangerous ascent. Up to 1953 no other route had been made – for 70 years Lindesay had withstood any attempts to find an alternative route.

On December 26th 1928, Lyell Vidler, a young climber from Brisbane, a student at the Technical College, visited the mountain along he had been up several times before and was fascinated by the chimney on the unclimbed Northern face. The chimney is a vertical gash in the lower band of cliff and is the only breach on that side. It is about 300 to 350 feet high, very steep, and 5 to 10 yards wide; it is really little more than a steep gully. Vidler was eager to attempt it and in trying alone, as he did, he completely disregarded all canons of safety in mountaineering.

He was killed.

No one knows how he fell or exactly when. He neglected to advise local farmers of his intentions and was not immediately missed. Five days passed before his shattered body was discovered at the foot of the crevice. In a patch of tall rainforest, within a few yards of the base of the chimney now named in his honour, Lyell Vidler is buried.

Most people who have climbed Lindesay since Vidler's death have seen his grave, for one passes it on the way to the base of the usual route. The grim reminder of the grave has possibly, deterred many from attempting the chimney. Very few attempts had, in fact, been made up to the time when we decided to try, and none of these had been successful.

It is interesting to imagine how far Vidler climbed before he fell. It is most probably that he had not gone far. The chimney is treacherous from start to finish and any stable climber would realise the very great objective danger.

Our party consisted of four young climbers.

John Comino was a young Applied Science student. He was our strongest climber, having a number of fine climbs to his credit, and we looked to him for any severe pitches we might meet. George Ettershank was a Pure Science student and had not been climbing for very long... Any lack of experience was offset by his keen enthusiasm. Ron Moss had graduated a year before as a Mechanical Engineer. Like Ettershank, he had not been climbing for very long, but showed a natural ability for the sport. I was a Science graduate, doing honours in Geology. I had been climbing for several years and had had the good fortune to have been on a number of climbs with Comino, usually acting as his second.

At 6 am. On the morning of the 19th December 1953, we left Brisbane in George's Renault. It was only a week to the day from the 25th anniversary of Vidler's death.

An 80 mile drive brought us to the base of our mountain. We ate a snack – and we were off.

Out of condition as we were, the long grassy slopes which lead up from the road to the base of the cliffs seemed interminable. It was hot and some hours passed before we drew level with the northwestern corner of the big cliffs. This is a most spectacular buttress, and, facetiously, we worked out a most impossible route as we rested and contemplated it. There is not a single ledge to break the abruptness on this side.

We followed the base of the cliff around towards Vidler's and at one point, noted the cliff seemed lower than elsewhere, and looked reasonably climbable – we kept the locality in mind. We were intent on Vidler's Chimney, but in the case of an early defeat, there was this alternative.

Suddenly, we were at the grade, and rising behind it was the chimney. It was almost 11 am. And we continued about 50 yards to quench our thirst at a spring. Refreshed, we returned and paused at the grave once more. We took off our hats and stood, bareheaded, silently, for several minutes. This would help stabilise our judgements on the climb.

We started, it had been a dry spring season that year – almost a drought, but as we clambered up through the rainforest, there were several big flame trees in full bloom.

We scrambled up into the chimney and very presently met the first step in it – a crumbly wall about 50 feet high. This defied all our attempts and so we decided to traverse out of the chimney to the right. We roped up. Swing holds provided an easy lead and a straightforward pitch up the rib edge next the chimney took the leader 90 feet up to a good belay on a tree overhanging the chimney. We climbed as a dingle team, joining our two ropes. When Comino joined me at the belay, he took over the lead.

He traversed along a ledge and after an awkward stretch above the wall of the chimney on uncertain holds he entered the chimney again, directly above the first step which we had thus bypassed. From here on, as he continued upwards, cascades of dirt from his efforts on the earthy rock began to come down. After about 70 feet, a loose traverse took him out of the chimney again, but on the opposite wall, to a comfortable belay on a large tree.

The next pitch was straight up, on the left edge of the chimney. The long roots of trees higher up allowed the negotiation of steep, smooth rock. Comino then gained a point provided with numerous trees – almost a terrace, and immediately alongside the chimney. With some difficulty, for the route deteriorated badly with each climber, we joined him one after another. It was about 1 pm.

At this point we were only about 80 feet from the top of the chimney, which is a small saddle between a pinnacle set away from the main face and the face itself. Here the crevice is entrenched, with square walls up to 15 feet high. We examined the face above us, but though some possibilities were presented, we all agreed that our best chances of getting up still lay in the chimney. The chimney was broad – about 15 feet, and it maintained a steady angle of about 50 degrees. Its loose earth supported only vines and small shrubs, but it looked as if it should go for at least 50 feet where there seemed to be something of a stance. Above this, it steepened and was blocked by two big 15 foot chockstones, the upper one of which marked

the top of the chimney. These chockstones overhang the chimney and this final section looked doubtful, but we thought we could see light through underneath the chockstones and this might indicate a way up.

We had some food and discussed the situation. Finally, at about 2 pm, I climbed 20 feet up the face and from a good belay, lowered Comino the 15 feet into the chimney.

He soon found the situation uncomfortable. The severe unbroken slope he stood on disappeared steeply back down the 200 feet odd drop to the bottom, and was not reassuring. The whole way is devoid of any obstruction and an unchecked slide would mean a quick fall down the whole way. The floor of the chimney was dirt and Comino kicked footholds for his feet. While he stood in one such fabricated foothold, and kicked another, the first quietly crumbled.

Even while digging holds with his hands, the slight vibration loosened his feet. He was on the left side of the chimney, but the wall next to him was almost smooth and offered no assistance. Slowly and unsteadily, he made his way up. After 40 minutes he had gained only 30 feet and was still 20 feet below the stance at the foot of the chockstones, he decided to descent, but immediately found this harder and more risky than ascent.

We waited anxiously while he struggled on. Strong as Johno was, he was tiring from his exertions, and as he climbed higher, the consequences of a slip steadily mounted. It took him another 50 minutes to reach the stance.

The stance was a fallacy, with no belay. Comino was able to hollow a platform big enough to sit in, crouching under the first chockstone. A small tree nearby which we had intended to use as a belay was loose. Comino was tired and did not feel prepared to continue, the attack or attempt a very hazardous retreat, until he had enjoyed a long rest.

We debated. I still felt there was a change in the chimney for the ascent – I was certain Comino had attached it rather too cautiously. Also, on the opposite wall of the chimney, about 15 feet below him, there appeared to be a lead out of the chimney. This would work out on to the edge of the pinnacle which hems in the chimney on this side. We had already climbed a portion of this edge at the bottom of the chimney, and we might be able to force a route to the top of the pinnacle in this way.

George, in his turn, lowered me into the chimney just as I had lowered Comino. Comino unroped and held the rope only in his hand, for had I fallen, roped to him, he would have been dragged down – two men falling would have been almost impossible for the belay man to hold. In my turn, I floundered in the chimney. My confidence left me soon after I started on this sickening stretch – everything moved. I decided to cross the chimney and try the opposite side to that which Comino had ascended. I finally managed to cross and at once the tension was relieved. Holds on the wall for my hands allowed me to gain height more easily and I presently reached the point of the lead out of the chimney.

I followed this. In 20 feet, as a ledge, it went out to the buttress edge of the pinnacle. From here to the top of the pinnacle climbing looked severe, with extreme exposure, and I concluded this possibility was worse than even the chimney.

I went back to the chimney and climbed up to Comino. I was still fresh and hoped to find some way up, or at the worst, some belay point from which it would be possible for Comino and myself to descend. I started

off, but the increased angle of the chimney called for greater caution. The rock was crumbly but compact enough to fashion holds.

As I passed up behind the first big chockstone, in the gloom ahead I saw a strong looking root – here was a sound belay! I literally scabbled up to it and finally reached it with one hand. Anxiously I tested it. It was dead and crumbled like a shell between my fingers!

Ahead, the semi-cave I was in narrowed into darkness. The question arose whether to attempt to return before the situation got completely out of control, or to continue on the off chance that there was a way out of the cave.

In actual fact, I was able to make a quick decision – I was almost sure I could not descend without strong changes of a fall. The whole situation was developing something of a flavour.

The steep floor of the cave was dank and musty, and everything seemed dead – everyone of the numerous rootlets on the walls was dead. Almost feverishly, I scraped and scabbled up foot by foot, half expecting to come off at any moment. Heaven knows what George, who was belaying me nearly 70 feet below, was thinking. I had disappeared from sight and the rope must have been going out in spasmodic jerks. Even Comino could not see what I was up to.

Suddenly, I was able to see around a corner – I could see light. So there was a way out! It was a small – only a foot in diameter and I had misgivings as I clawed up to it – would I be able to enlarge it and crawl through? At last I reached the hole. It was floored with earth and I began to burrow.

Through the hole I could see grass and trees in sunlight which were on the opposite side of the saddle at the head of the chimney. Comino complained bitterly as the efforts of my excavations rained down past him. I vividly remember this language when a block of rock a foot square I was getting out of the way got out of control and went bounding down close to him without much warning.

Finally it was enough. Rather done, I squirmed through the little tunnel and stood on easy ground to breathe good air again. In turn, the others came up the rope and squeezed through the hole. A short scramble brought us to the narrow crest of gap above the chimney.

The chimney had been won! It looked spectacular as we peered back down it.

It was almost 4 pm. Above us the pinnacle rose 40 feet. It had never been visited by anyone and George took over the lead to attempt it. It was tricky, almost perpendicular pitch, but he managed it and we quickly joined him on the summit. The outward face is sheer and quite unbroken for over 300 feet. We made a small cairn to record the visit and then returned to the gap by roping down off the pinnacle.

Time was getting on; we still had to get down. To do this, we had to ascend to the terrace between the two cliff bands that cap Lindesay. Once on the terrace, we could traverse eastwards and come onto the usual route which we could use for the descent.

We were 80 feet below the terrace. Georg accomplished two successive determined leads and then we joined him on the terrace. Here, in an overhang of the final cliff band of Lindesay there is a delectable cave. Not very deep, but provided with a flat verdant floor and with pure running water – a remarkable thing to find within only 200 feet of the summit. The water was delicious.

With the light beginning to fade, we made our way along the standard route. We hurried down the cliffs and on through the rain forest, finally scrambling down the grassy slopes to the road. It was quite dark by the time we reached the car.

Then, the long drive home, with the big mountain steadily falling back and silhouetting against the stars.

Vidler's chimney had at last been climbed.