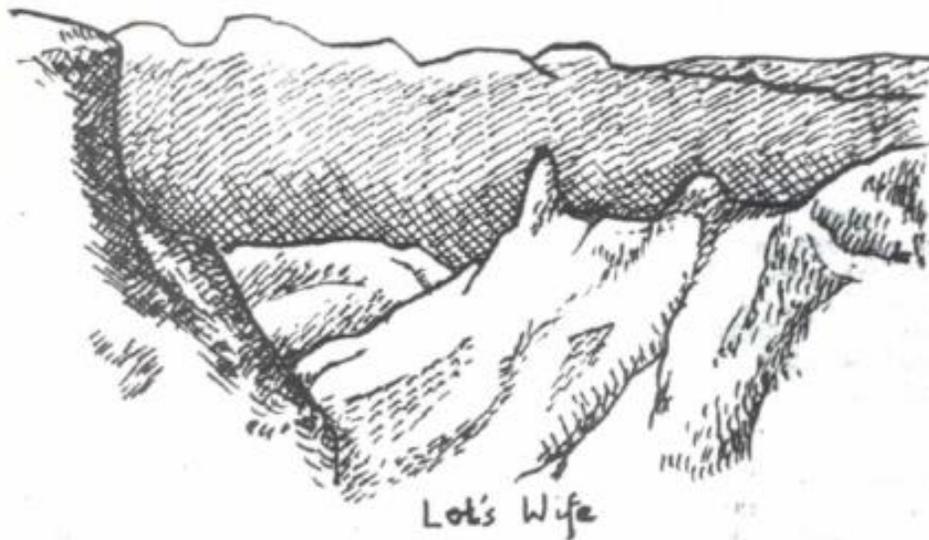


HEYBOB

VOLUME 21



UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

BUSHWALKING CLUB

1979

EDITORIAL

Perhaps one of the major functions of the Heybob editorial should be to summarize and consider the club's activities over the previous year

The usual long holiday trips were made to places as varied as New Zealand, Tasmania, Hinchinbrook and the snowy Mountains. South-east Queensland was extensively covered by weekend and day trips, and several "new" areas were investigated in this region, as well as in Northern N.S.W. One feature of the club during this period has been the increase in the number of day trips and private trips arranged.

Unfortunately, the lack of new members mentioned by the two previous editors has continued to cause concern. The club is still fairly strong as regards experience and expertise, but the younger crop of active members would be of at least three or four years standing in the club. The possible reasons for this decline in membership are puzzling – it is certainly not due to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of older members. However, this membership problem is not unique to U.Q.B.W.C.; other University clubs are complaining of the apathy of the student body. The reasons for this prevailing apathy elude me.

On the Australian conservation scene several major victories have been won recently, including the decision not to flood the Franklin and the declaration of Marine Parks on the Barrier Reef. The conservation movement is strong, and it needs to be, to resist the tendency to develop for development's sake, and the use of an "energy crisis" as an excuse for desecration. American conservationist Bob Marshall understood this situation when he said:

What makes wilderness areas most susceptible to annihilation is that arguments in favour of roads are direct and concrete, while those against them are subtle and difficult to express.

Nigel Beeke

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SOUTH-WEST TASMANIA

By Helen Philips

It was in a pub one night, I believe, that the idea was conceived – an extended trip around South-west Tassie was a very exciting prospect. A few months later and after a minimum of organisation, we found ourselves in Sandy Bay supermarket (Hobart), to the amusement of customers and attendants, buying sufficient salami, dehy, cheese, rice, pog, chocky, biccies, IPs and cheesecakes to feed four males and two females for thirty-two days. Much sorting and packaging on the roadside, and we were ready to put food dumps into Junction Creek, two hours from the end of the Scott's Peak Dam road. Our hired vehicle was returned to Hobart and the walk began with much grunting and groaning up Mt. Eliza from Condominium Creek. The first snow fight on Mt. Eliza and a swim in any icy tarn were an invigorating start to the circuit. Neil refrained at a safe distance claiming only dirty people wash. Mt. Anne gave us superb, sunny views with much piccy taking and chocky eating before setting up our Christmas Eve camp on a shelf leading to Mt. Lot. A very handsome snowman with hat and pipe was constructed between snow fights. Christmas Eve was celebrated with Chrissy cake (icing half 4 an inch thick!) and the odd drop of Mercury Hard. ..

Christmas Day gave us beautiful views of Lake Judd far below and Lot's Wife, as we negotiated, with some interest, the route around Mt. Lot. To finish the day, we treated ourselves to a rather disjointed scrub bash down to the chilly waters of Judd's Charm where we bathed (gasp) in the fading sunshine. no sooner were tents erected on the sodden ground than Hughie burst forth. For two days, the lake ten yards from the tent passed in and out of the mist while we caught up on our reading and invented some very cryptic crosswords. One good game to pay was tormenting Pete by leading him to believe that his daily chocky ration had been eaten, but he was too big, brave and wonderful to mind. Only when he was on the verge of tears and strangulation of said chocky eater, was the sticky brown substance produced to calm the poor beggar. Despite foul weather, we decided to continue due to diminishing food reserves and a certain brilliant Andre Jamet tent that was filling up with water. Morale was flying high as we stuffed away wet bags and tents and splashed off into the mist. Hughie amused himself with driving rain and wind over the more exposed sections, but eased off in time from us to descend Mt. Sarah Jane. It was a pretty day's walk even in the mist, but the view would be tremendous in sunshine. Finding ourselves on the sodden plains surrounding the Anne River outlet from Lake Judd, we crawled into a small, but nevertheless "above bog" campsite and proceeded to peel off sodden clothes. I will note here that the drier members of the party sported ancient greasies while an infamous Goretex leaked like a "sigheve" and another contraption (\$60 worth), generously lent to me by an unnamed comrade of Hughies (both conspired to make me bathe regularly for a day at a time) had a sponge like quality. During subsequent rainy days, it was to be found deeply buried within my pack so as not to get wet (took on excess weight when wet, I found. It did however, come in handy for eating lunch on keeping flies off and keeping cool on sunny days. Wet mornings thereafter brought the dread of another freezing day, when one's chocky ration expires in the first hour to leave one shivering for the rest of the day. The owner of this abortion of a garment (noted for his navel divots by the way), pleads ignorance of its degenerated condition.

Not tempted by a bog-strop back to the Scott's Peak Dam road, we took a route up Snell's Ridge to go "Ah, pretty....." at the tarns before reluctantly descending to Edgar Dam Picnic area for the night. The native touri found us interesting specimens and were amused by a barbaric display of clawing and thrutching that followed the discovery of a kilogram of fudge and coconut ice in Neil's pack – "emergency supplies". A small amount lasted till the following day when we reached our first food dump at the end of the Scott's Peak Dam road, and proceeded into Junction Creek – the vast majority of "Prehistoric Turd".

That this place is the home of the vast majority of Tasmanian march flies and mosquitoes, can only be accounted for by the fact that there is a vast prehistoric dinosaur turd buried three inches below the ground. An IP with layers of green and chocolate was a memorable sight and a rare treat.

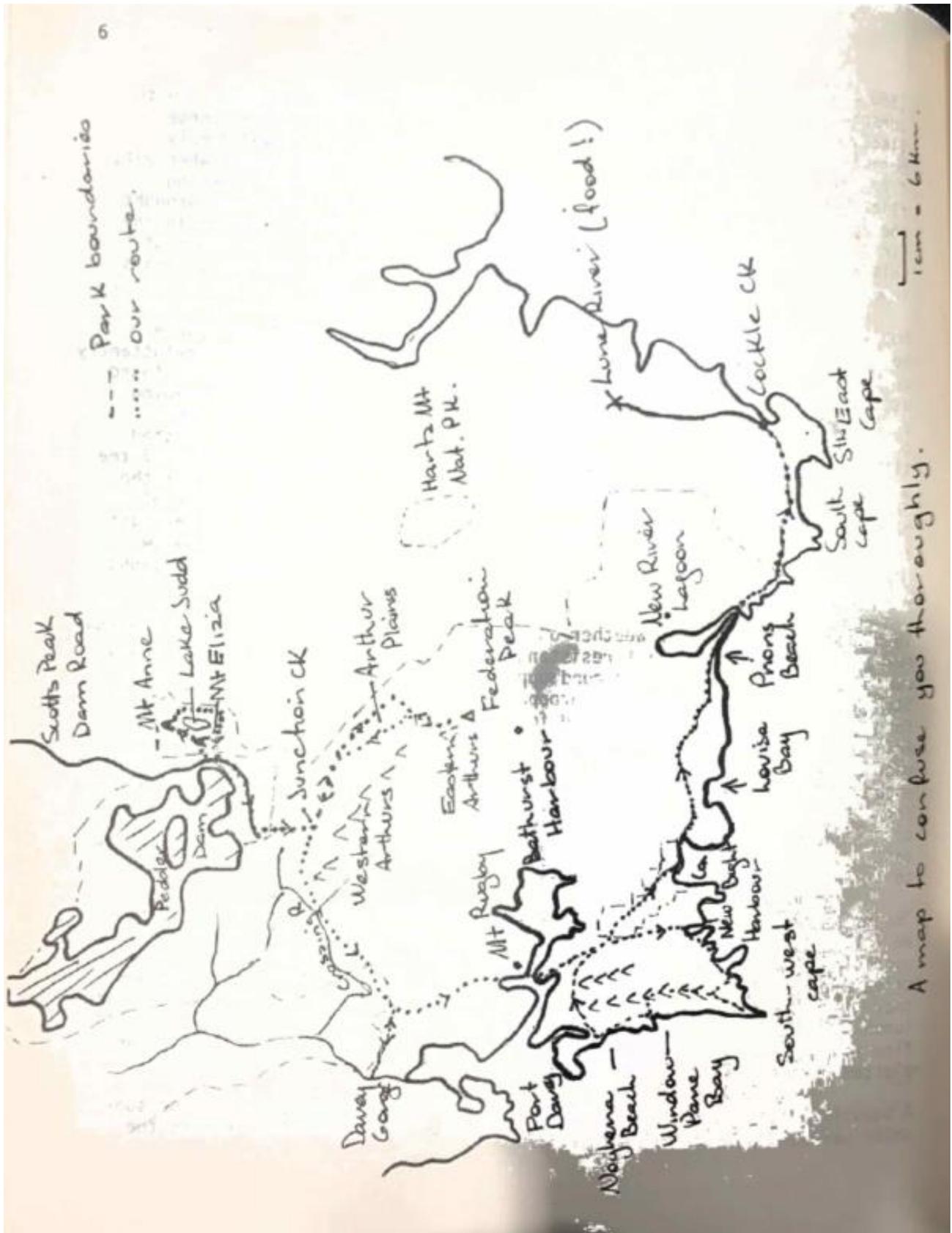
The morning brought fine weather on the Arthur Plains and a hair wash for the more extravagant, less dirt resistant of the grots. A typical button grass campsite (a foot above the ground supported by stiff grass) was found near Strike Creek. Excess gear was dropped at the base of Luckman's Lead the following morning and we prepared for the steep ascent into the Eastern Arthurs. After having "grunted" only a few hundred feet, Hughie's forlorn mood became more of a tantrum. Black clouds, clag and high winds hurtling about our destination above, convinced us to retrace our steps for two days, and eat copious dampers in the shelter of a low camp. We next tackled the climb in sunshine to have lunch in Stuart's Saddle, a quick trip up The Dial and paid our respects to Stuart's grave before a fine walk around the Needles to Goon Moor for a brilliant sunset.

A beautiful rest day was spent at Hanging Lake and Geeves Bluff in the sunshine before descending to the Arthur Plains. Our return trip across the plains was not so comfortable weather wise. Needless to say we were soaked all day (to varying degrees) and had to give lunch a miss to keep moving so as not to freeze. Arriving at a very sodden Seven Mile Creek at dinner time, we tackled such difficult tasks as unbuttoning wet clothes and putting up tents with completely unco-ordinated appendages.

The morning saw us drying clothes on the sunny bank, hair washing en masse and lying in the sun, before returning to Junction Creek to collect our final and heaviest food dump – 16 day's worth. With grunting and cursing, packs found their way onto unwilling backs. After several trial attempts we discovered that it was still possible to walk and turtled off down the Port Davey track leaving passing walkers chuckling in our wake. Lunch found us at Crossing River, a superb beach of white stones and warm water to lilo, swim, bathe etc. in. Needless to say, this spot became dinner and breakfast too. Another day along the plains brought us closer to Davey Gorge to camp amid very sharp button grass above Spring River gorge. In the morning, spirits rose high, as we dumped most of our weight (extra food) and floated light in pack and head away from the track in the general direction of Davey Gorge (Gus saw it in the Wilderness Calendar so it was bound to be good).

While there is an easy and a hard way to Davey Gorge and we managed to find them both in our travels – the odd bit of scunge if you have got a nose for it. Hughie, being the good fellow that he is, made sure not to disappoint us and shrouded the gorge in heavy mist so as to look just like the calendar photo – good value. Avid liloist among us were somewhat dampened in enthusiasm, not to mention everywhere else, so the lilo, after coming all this way, never actually found its way into Davey Gorge.

Returning to our dump, we continued along the Port Davey track to the narrows of Bathurst Harbour for more fun collecting mussels and a boat shuffle. Learning to row is fun with people who understand how hard it is not to splash (Freddy got all wet but I could tell he didn't mind). Previous intentions to climb Mt. Rugby were frustrated by a shroud of drizzling rain and camp was set up on a very pretty beach south of the narrows where Helen prepared a feast of fresh mussels for dinner – ah nice. We woke to see Rugby across the narrows in clear blue skies. A quick trip up Mt. Beatie had to suffice yielding good views of the Harbour and Celery Top Islands.



Melaleuca was not a pretty sight with airstrip and associated scars so we left it as far behind as possible before the munchies hauled us to a lunch halt. By this time munchies had become quite insistent, with the male members of the party (inefficient metabolism) – starting with Pete’s food dreams. He would wake often in the early hours of the morning licking his lips and saying “Hmm, that was nice”, then giving us an amount of the feast of his dreams. Then there was the rock that had the audacity to look just like a port chop (now deep under the water of Davey Gorge), and hallucination of chocky bars lying on the track ahead. Every night we gathered around the bubbling pot of Vesta dehy and discussed “What we would eat when we got out”. A damper was a rare treat and billies were licked and scraped many times over. Bag time had the pleasant consolation that pog was only ten hours away followed by yet another day’s chocky ration (no I wasn’t obsessed with chocky). The next six days, to my mind were the highlight of the trip. The circuit of the South-West Corner took us from one beach paradise to another, camping on the grassy banks of winding rivers where they entered the pounding surf. We camped at New Harbour, then Ketcham Bay before climbing Mt. Karuma in gale force winds to get our first glimpse of South-West Cape itself – a spectacular razorback jutting out into the sea. A fierce sea swept it on the western side in contrast to the charmed waters to the east. A campsite was found in a protected saddle on the cape. In heavy mist we re climbed Mt. Karuma to follow the South-West Cape range north, getting scant glimpses of the West Coast through the clag.

We descended to Windowpane Bay through thick coastal scunge. By this I mean somersaulting through bauera and wrestling with horizontal scrub not to mention the odd person who jumps off cliffs. It was a bedraggled crew that soaked smelly feet in the cool creek of yet another idyllic campsite that evening. A minor navigational misunderstanding found us at Noyhena Beach the following lunch time (instead of on route to Melaleuca) where we hung drooling over a pool of very agile whiting trapped in a large rock pool by the low tide. So near and yet so far from our deprived stomachs. Returning through Melaleuca we took somewhat more interest in the walker’s hut there, ferreting around spuds (Yum), some vegemite, and some pepper – all much to the amusement of bird-watching inhabitants of the hut.

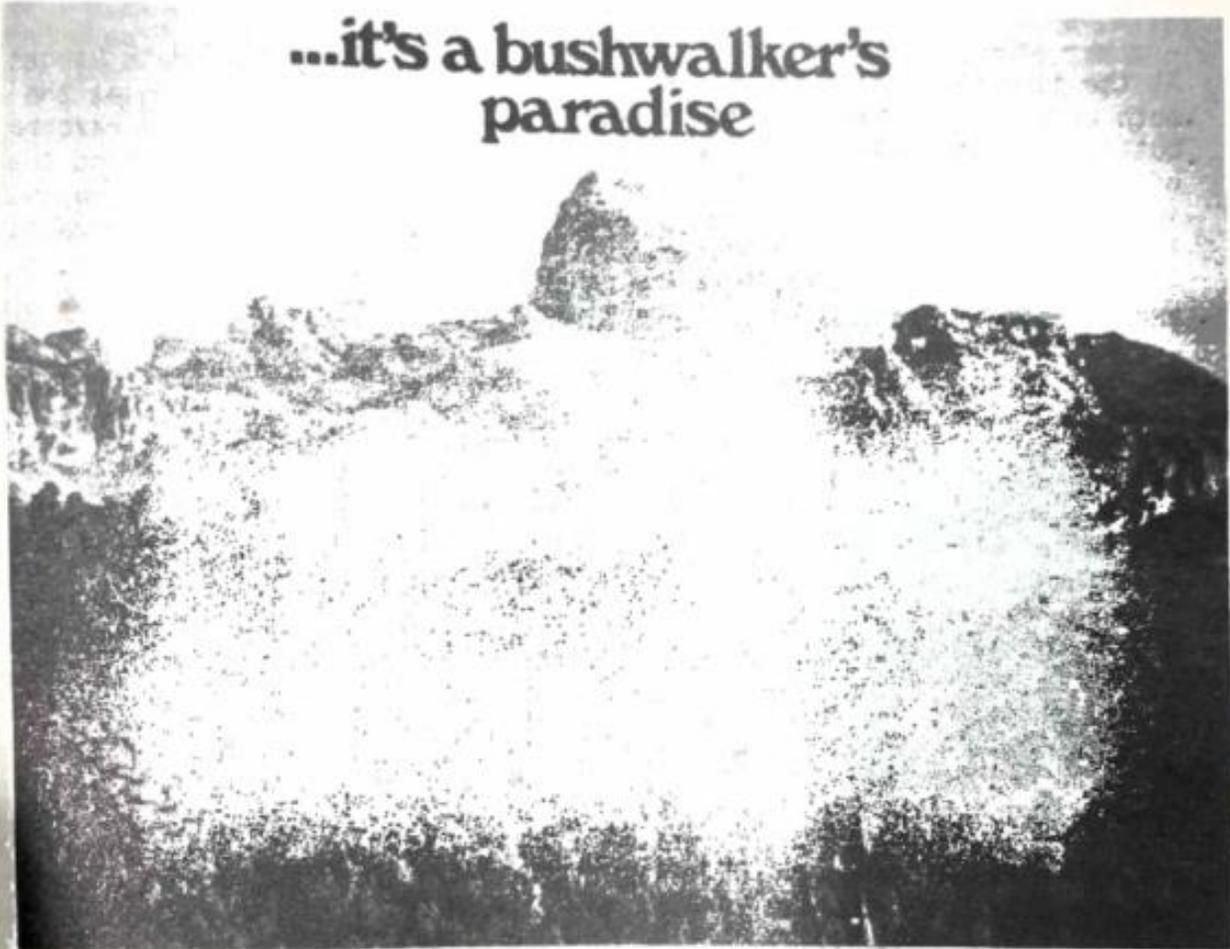
A wet camp at Cox Bright marked the beginning of the end – the final walk out along the South Coast track – the home of the remaining population of Tasmanian march flies not residing at Prehistoric Turd. Nevertheless the charmed beaches were a gratifying end to the trip. We managed to justifying food left by other kindhearted (over fed) souls in Lousy Bat Hut. The walk out was reminiscent of a past Tassie trip with great views of Precipitous Bluff from Prions Beach. From the top of South Cape Range we saw back along the South Coast to the South-West Cape far in the distance.

Morale sailed high on the final night with much washing of body and clothes in order to “Get a hitch out of Cockle Creek” – our first taste of civilization, and hopefully, good food, for quite a while. No cars at Cockle Creek and four dry ryvitas each as our sole remaining food supply, gave us little choice but to start walking the 20 km. to Lune River. For the story of the subsequent gorging of food, I refer you to an article in Mini-Heybob Vol. 15 No. 1.

The hunger was soon satisfied and six very fortunate people now have fine memories of their adventure in South-West Tasmania as it was then.

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BOOLOUMBA CREEK

By Ralph Carlisle

At the junction of Booloumba and Bundaroo Creeks in the Conondale Ranges, both creeks drop about 30m over a series of falls before joining at the bottom of a deep gorge. Between the creeks is a short, isolated razorback of rock known as the “Breadknife”. While most of the slopes around the junction are covered in thick scrub, the southern slope is very open eucalypt forest with grass cover between the trees, making it excellent for camping. A couple of very pleasant daywalks can be done from the junction, upstream and downstream along Booloumba Creek with many swimming holes along the way.

The best maps of the area are Forestry maps, but these are not contoured. The 1:50,000 Kenilworth Sheet 9444 – IV can be purchased readily; the corresponding 1:25,000 map is more difficult to obtain – the Forestry sales counter did not have a copy for sale but photocopied the relevant section for me. In this article, map references are given for the 1:50,000 map using the minutes of longitude and latitude given at the margins of the map. To fix positions between the minute lines, the use of seconds is avoided, instead, the position is estimated to the nearest tenth of a minute. (Note that minutes of latitude descend, rather than ascend, the map). A permit from the Kenilworth Forest Station is required to enter and camp in this forestry area 0 it can be obtained by calling personally at the station or by writing in advance. As Forestry appear to discourage camping in the area, it may be a good idea to stress that you are from a bushwalking club and have a responsible attitude to the bush.

Access to the area is from the Mary Valley Highway, a few miles south of Kenilworth. There are two roads – both dirt and very steep in places – possibly not negotiable by conventional vehicles after rain. One road leaves the highway at 41.3'E, 37.8'S; this is a well-marked road, turning off about 0.5 km before the road through Jimna. The second road is slightly shorter and less steep; it leaves the highway at 40.8'E, 39.3'S and passes through a farm (ignore the “Private Property” Sign). These two forestry roads join at 38.1'E, 41.6'S. Park the cars at the sharp left-hand bend at 37.4'E, 41.0'S (If you cross the concrete causeway at 37.2'E, 41.2'S, you've gone too far). Walk down the 4WD track (going off to the right of the road) to the obvious campsite on the last level ground before dropping to the creek proper.

Walk 1

This walk goes to Booloumba Creek, crosses the ridge back to Bundaroo Creek, and returns to the campsite.

From the campsite, continue down the track till you are overlooking the junction and the Breadknife. A pleasant stroll upstream along Booloumba Creek for about 3 km follows, passing water falls, rock pools, fern gardens and palm groves. Initially, progress is by rock-hopping, but when the rocks give out further upstream, it is best to wade through the water (occasionally waist deep) as the undergrowth is too thick on the banks. Continue upstream to a 10 m waterfall (at least 1 km upstream from any other falls), with grassy slopes on the northern side. From here, the scrub-covered ridge on the south side must be crossed to Bundaroo Creek. This requires careful navigation, and the 1:25,000 map is of help here. From the top of the falls, proceed roughly S.E. along an ascending minor ridge through moderate scrub (beware leeches!). you may find a faint track, and this may be followed until it starts to traverse around to the right across the slope. Keep ascending (more southerly direction now) till you reach the highest point of the ridge, where there is a tree with a yellow ribbon round its trunk. (I think this is Point FI on the 1:25,000 map). Head slightly N. of E., down the slope till you reach Bundaroo Creek (a compass is very handy here).

If you strike thick scrub towards the bottom of the ridge, edge round it to your left. Cross Bundaroo Creek and pass through 10-20 m of scrub before breaking out into open forest. You may then head up the hill about 100 m to the road, which you follow to your left about 1 km to the cars, or you may follow Bundaroo Creek downstream to the falls at the campsite, passing through moderate scrub on the way.

Walk 2

This walk goes down Booloumba Creek to the second of two downstream sets of falls, retracing its steps for the return journey. Although the falls at the junction can be descended to the bottom of the gorge, it is not possible to pass through the gorge immediately downstream of the junction, so access to the gorge is slightly further downstream.

From the campsite, traverse round the ridge in the downstream direction, maintaining your height till you reach the 2nd or 3rd gully. Descend via either gully down a very steep, grassy slope to the bottom of the gorge. Rockhop downstream about 0.5 km to the first downstream set of falls (30 m). These require some care in descending. Another 0.5 km brings you to the second downstream falls with a magnificent swimming hole at the bottom. To return retrace your steps up the creek, past your point of descent to where further progress would require swimming. Ascend by the steep, loose-earth gully on your left (this is the first gully as passed from the top – O.K. for ascent but not descent, to my mind). Continue over the ridge to the campsite.

Both these walks were done without difficulty in dry weather when the creeks were relatively low. In wetter conditions, problems may arise, especially with the set of falls on Walk 2.

THE NIGHTCAP RANGE

By Nigel Beeke

Maps: Nimbin and Rosebank 1:50000

This article is by no means intended as a definitive guide to the Nightcap Range area, it is merely intended to interest bushwalkers in an infrequently visited area near Brisbane. The range lies just to the north-east of Nimbin in Northern New South Wales, about 180 km. by road from Brisbane. Many places of interest can be visited, or at least approached by car. Included in this category are Minyon Falls, Cooper's Creek Gorge and Peach Mountain at the eastern end of the range; Tuntable Falls in the central section and Doughboy Mountain in the north. All of these features are clearly marked on the Rosebank map. In addition are the interesting western areas visited during a weekend through-walk early in '79 – Mt. Matheson, Mt. Neville, Blue Knob (Mt. Burrell) and the Sphinx. While you are in the area (especially if you are a rock-climber) Nimbin Rocks (201344N) are worth a visit, Mt. Warning can also be visited on the way there or back.

The section MT. Matheson to Blue Knob was done by our party in an easy weekend trip. After a detour to investigate MT. Matheson, we followed the Goonimber Forest Road until it deteriorated shortly after the summit of Mt. Neville. The crest of the range was then followed, over the Sphinx and Blue Knob and hence to one end of our car shuffle at (190441N). most of the walk was through rainforest, complete with lawyer vines, and with a few lantana patches on Blue Knob.

Our walk started at the T.V. masts at (293428R). The Forest Road leaves the bitumen road shortly before the masts. It is signposted, but is not marked on the map. However, before following this road we climbed Mt. Matheson (803m), a walk through open, scunge-free rainforest, but with no views. Returning to the road, we found it to be in good condition (i.e. up to tourist standard) as far as Mt. Neville (880m). it deteriorates rapidly after the crest – enterprising drivers might go about a kilometre further at the most. Some reasonable views were obtained from this road.

However, the interesting part of the trip began after the road ended. Firstly, some old forester's huts were found in the vicinity of (235453N). a rocky pinnacle at (223453N), shortly before the Sphinx, was climbed, giving good views over the Nimbin region, the Tweed Valley, Mt. Warning, Lamington and the Sphinx. The last-named feature now presented itself as a problem to be climbed. Towering cliffs on the three sides facing us were obviously out of the question. There was no track to indicate a previous course of action.

We eventually contoured below the cliffs on the norther side, along and up a perpendicular grass slope, and hence to the crest of the ridge joining The Sphinx to Blue Knob. This route requires care due to the steepness of the grass slope, our star climber tried the first three metres of a 300 metre slide into oblivion.

The razor-back of the Sphinx provides good views, and also provided us with out campsite – albeit it is a narrow one. Thus the next morning we were in a position to scunge-bash our way through to the top of Mt. Burrell or Blue Knob (923m). this trig gives great 360 degrees views – including Mts. Barney and Lindesay in the distance, as well as the areas mentioned previously. A note on the scunge 0 with care the lantana patches can be avoided. From the trig the obvious western ridge was followed back to the car – this route being scunge-free open forest.

By leaving one car at the foot of the western ridge of Mt. Burrell, and driving the other as far as Mt. Neville, the weekend walk described above could be performed as a day trip. One aspect our party did not

investigate was the water situation. Presumably water would be found not too far down the southern side of the range.

Thus it can be seen that the area centring on the Nightcap Range has much to offer the bushwalker and rockclimber. A weekend could be very profitably spent exploring the region.



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THE FLINDERS IN SUMMER

By Lewis Vaughan

For many people the Flinders Ranges present a problem when viewed from the Queensland border. Seemingly the best time to visit the area would be in spring, however university holidays aren't long enough and the travelling distance rules out any possibility of a visit. During winter there is a high likelihood of flooding, and a four wheel drive is often necessary for access to interesting areas. The question is thus posed, can the area be visited in summer? The answer is yes!

In fact there are many arguments favouring summer as the best season, a prime point is that one misses the droves of tourists which frequent the more popular places in other seasons. Factor against summer are heat, flies and lack of water, all of which are really just a state of mind!

Really the lack of adequate water is the most crucial problem. In many cases it rules out long walks, but even these can be done with just a little foresight. The heat is not a great problem, quite bearable compared with banana humidity. Flies provide an important protein supplement, being engulfed (via nose or mouth) without even trying, these should therefore be seen as an asset.

Some very pretty areas can be visited on day or two day walks, by following gorges and creek beds.

The Arkaroola area south of Lake Callabonna and nearly at the northern tip of the range is an ideal area for this style of walking. Most often the creeks are dry, so one is faced with dry rock hopping or a pebbly scramble. River red gums line the route and one is constantly escorted by the bleats of wild goats and the screeching of myriad flocks of Corellas. For such dry areas one is impressed by such a wealth of fauna.

Spring is an ideal time for wild flowers. Just east of the Range, close to Lake Frome, an entire plain can be tinged red with Sturt's Desert Pea. Summer naturally presents a rather dull and drab appearance, but this highlights creek and gorge scenery and wildlife.

Arkaroola is a semi-station which has been utilized by the property owners to catch the tourist trade – they are very proficient at so doing. One is not really allowed to camp in the area unless at the stated camping place. However, the owners would probably be amenable to a walking party – if not it is simple to escape detection.

The Flinders' Ranges National park is the largest in South Australia. It is 130 kilometers north of Hawker and due east of Lake Torrens. There are two main areas in the park. Firstly, the southern section is Wilpena Pound, for which the park is well known. The pound is about fifteen kilometers long by seven kilometers wide. It was cropped and settled in the late nineteenth century, the property owners left before the first World War. A basin with a slightly higher rainfall (approximately 14 inches) than the surrounding district (10"), it is rimmed by mountains of 2000 to 4000 feet. St. Mary's occasionally registers snow falls in winter. A day trip across the pound and up the peak is a worthwhile effort. The pound's entrance is beleaguered by a camping ground and a perennial stream. Water can be found in the pound (although a little brackish) even during the height of summer. Graded tracks run to different areas, and don't be put off by the Ranger's warnings. For anybody with only a slightly level head it would be very difficult to become lost!

Orraporrina is the northern section of the park. It consists of about 70,000 acres of a sheep station bought out about seven years ago. The effects of sheep can still be seen (bare and bald), these effects are kept in good maintenance by the local feral goats. Once again the best walking is found by following creeks. A number of these flow during most years and are a haven for water fowl, they are also ideal for cooling off

in. Brachina Creek is one of the most pretty and constant of the creeks. Always beware of the elusive water holes big enough for swimming in, they can lead one for miles up a trickle of water. The Orraporrina area is in many ways more pleasant than Wilpena, there are fewer people, no graded tracks to mention of and is just good for lazying about in.

The southern section of the Ranges is dominated by the Mambray Creek Park, hugging Spencer Gulf, halfway between Port Pirie and Port Augusta. Alligator Gorge is in the limelight so one is obliged to see it. Mt. Remarkable is on the eastern side of the Park and is a separate entity unto itself. A quiet little town called Melrose nestles at its base, a fine walk can be made climbing to its top. Once again don't be put off by the numerous menacing signs; supposedly the ascent takes seven hours but this can be done in a leisurely two and a half.

There's lots more which hasn't been mentioned, and all told it's a tremendous area no matter what season, so go and see it if you're down that way in South Oz.

A WINTER TALE OF SAMENESS

By Reg Pollitt

The morning is cold, the sky bleak and heavy the knowledge is always there at the back of the brain, pushed farther back as I huddle under the thick blankets to escape the cold. The thought that I must soon become a part of bleakness chills me. A motorbike frostily passes down the street outside. A reason, any reason is used; I tell myself that if he is up then so should I be about. Hastily I throw back the warmth of my fortress and make a dash, pyjamas are quickly discarded and the coldness possesses me. The transition to heavy clothes is almost frenzied. The struggle is over and I stand numbed waiting for body warmth to rebuild again.

Water, cold and piercing; the face flings to retain its small reserves of heat, that ruddy glow momentarily appears, and vanishes. The leaden complexion takes its place, and I move as though I were in a funeral. The mirror reveals all, and I feel cold and metallic. These despised ablution, hurried through, half completed. The cold takes control over the face and hands.

Suffering hands, useless hands, thin and boney, are forced through the daily drudgery of preparation. I try desperately to generate some heat, rubbing them, holding them over the flame all to no avail. Oh! How I hate the bleakness, the bitterness of it all, the frosty sameness. Breakfast is tried, but the attempt confounds me; effort, I tell myself I must eat. Hurry, watch the clock, quick, a quarter of an hour to go, quick finish now. Sparingly rinse the dishes, roughly make the bed, the teeth, clean the teeth. Five minutes to go, come on, come on hands. Is all the lunch packed? I ask myself for I have been caught before. Money, handkerchief, quick grab the great coat.

Slamming the door I gloomily face the day. I move out into the claustrophobic stillness of overcast sky. Clambering along in the bulkiness of the thick jumper and the encasing coat. I feel a though I were an automaton. Surely the bus has gone? No, there are figure bleak and forlorn breathing forth vapour, grouped like penguins waiting for the bus I hurried for. Oh! How I hate the sameness of it all.

With the noise and filthy smell of exhaust the confined chariot arrives. The shadows of people fumbling with money. I mutter a curse. The same idiotic remark. Surely he, they, someone should know what I want without telling them, but the monologue goes on every morning; for ever it seems. Ever!

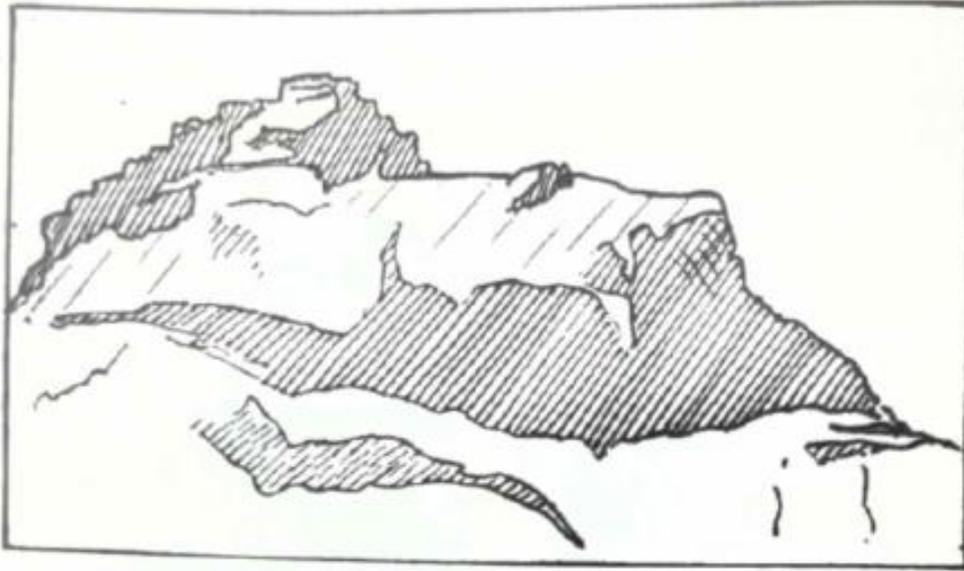
The same accursed faces, the closed in oppressiveness, the acrid and stifling smell of smoke. Don't open a window! They will think you are mad. No one else does. A fraction, not too much. There, that is better. The wind rushes against my face as I hungrily inhale the biting air. A stop, another and another, the same faces, why, why can't they dissolve, get new ones? The show is old, worn thin with age and usage, the production is poor, the players tiresome but on and on it goes unceasingly each morning.

Progress is slow and fast, the air gives it a certain speed, a quality, an illusion. The roads are wet and greasy, the traffic cold and filthy. Trucks belching forth out supply of air for the day. Conversation is moronic but all are compelled to listen, the details painful to the ear. The pensioner is rejected – "Quarter to nine, lady!". As she slinks back I wonder at the difference of five minutes. A mumble is heard, "Oh! Poor dear, isn't it terrible" fall from the painted, ugly faces of the smug. The conversation is recommenced, the petty details and platitudinous phrases clash against the oppressive air. That stentorian voice is heard again. Oh! Blast the women and her operations.

The doors open spewing forth passengers, the dirty dust settles at the entrance and exit. The lungs take in their share, a cough, horrible nasal noises, children of the virulent air. At last escape, release as I fall on to the dusty wind blown pavement. Ah! "Fresh air". Trailing a long coat a pennant to the wind, I make unsteady steps against the particle laden air, desperately conjuring images of the bush, my only redemption from the nine to five syndrome.

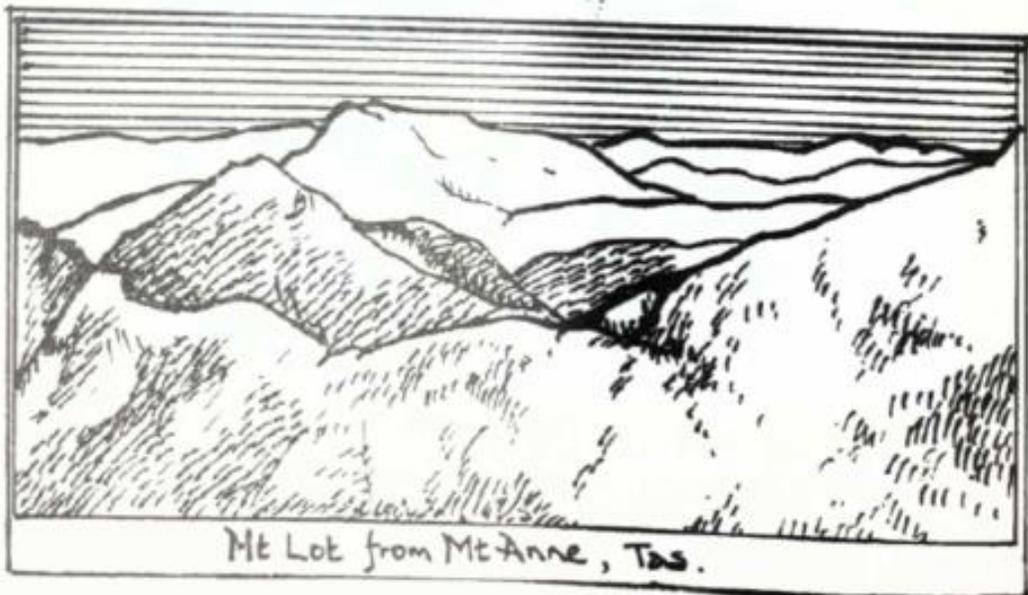


Mangrove channels, Hinchinbrook Is.



Mt Anne, Tas.

6
m.



Mt Lot from Mt Anne, Tas.

THE OLIVINE ICE PLATEAU

By Helen Phillips

The idea of a climbing trip to the Olivine Ice Plateau was Norm Kelk's who obviously is prone to fantasies of surveying in inaccessible areas. The three of us who joined him – Dave Bayliss, Grahame Wurth and myself must be a mite crazy or just gullible. Nevertheless, we got off to a good start with Dave, Norm and Grahame arriving at Christchurch Airport for their flight to Queenstown with a total of 136kg. of luggage on a free allowance of 48kg. That there was a problem became evident when it wouldn't fit on the scales. "Don't put it all on, or it will all fall off" said the girl at the airport desk. Then at the prospect of an excess baggage penalty "No, it'll take too long".

Much heaving and milling at Queenstown airport and our party of four plus mounds of luggage representing nineteen days food plus climbing gear and woollies, crammed into a helicopter for a breath taking mountain grazing flight. The Ice Plateau is a remote area between Mt. Aspiring and Milford Sound. Access on foot is difficult. We landed high on the north branch of the Barrier River, 2000 ft. above the authorized landing zone in brilliant weather. At this point we established three principles concerning Hughie which hold in every case in New Zealand.

1. If it looks remotely like rain, it will rain.
2. The corollary: If it doesn't look remotely like rain it will rain.
3. No matter how long it has been raining, it will continue to rain.

After a reconnoitre of the route for the following day, we set about the task of learning to erect a brand new Force 10 tent to which Norm had added snow valences. A good tent they thought (chuckle – little did they know). I will add here that there are no huts in this vicinity but what it lacks here, it makes up for in keas.

Day 2

Food was carefully divided according to appetite, with Dave on 1 kg. per day, Norm and Grahame on 0.65 kg. and me on 0.5 kg. per day which was all very nice till Dave crawled into the straps of his 110 lb. pack, and we began to totter up the 2700 ft. onto the snow. Half an hour later we were forced to stop. Disaster number one had struck with the rubber sole coming off Dave's climbing boots. With cord and Swiss army knife the soles were temporarily fastened on and we continued up mobile scree onto snow slopes which soon lost their upper limit in thick mist. Many hours and barley sugars later, we collapsed in the mist at the first, and, as it happened, the only campable area in miles. The mist later parted to give us views of the Northern Olivines and revealed that we had camped 100 ft. below the summit of Pic d'Argent (6800 ft.) Oh joy – a revelation in the night – the floor of the force 10 leaks on snow!

Day 3

Morning mist cleared and we set off to climb Ark (7600 ft.) in soft snow. It turned out a beautiful day with fine views of the plateau and surrounding mountains from the summit. We were able to pick out our planned route of entry onto the Plateau. With normal New Zealand weather inconsistency it rained that night, and with some tension we lay in bag, floor leaking under the bivisac and condensation dripping from above. Hughie was merciful however, and with Drambuie to sustain us, and repatching of the tent daily, we stayed reasonably dry.

Day 4

Fine again. We set off to climb Gyrea (6700'). An easy but beautiful climb with a fine summit snowridge and either an easy climb up summit rocks or exposed grade 20 rock climb if you follow Grahame. The afternoon was spent extracting screws from Norm's and my boots to do more permanent repair on Dave's. Quite a barbaric procedure and, unfortunately not very effective. We marvelled at the weather which managed to change every five minutes and did the daily repatching of the tent.

Day 5

We shifted camp onto the plateau itself, going via Little Ark with slightly lighter but still excessively heavy packs, which made one particular steep 500 ft. snow plod up Little Ark into a major epic. Then it was downhill all the way onto the Plateau. The Plateau and surrounding mountains were an overwhelming sight in brilliant weather. A glistening field of untrodden snow stretched before us, surrounded by mountains, glacier and ice falls. We walked south along the western edge of the plateau with a continuous rain of ice avalanches from the mountains beside us. Really spectacular at close range. We set up camp in a beautiful sheltered site in Forgotten River Col where small rock pools saved us melting water. Keas were soon to find us and demand that a guard be posted constantly when any gear was left out of the tents. When we retreated to bag, they amused themselves with gnawing through tent guys or jumping on the tents.

Day 6

With an early start to cross the plateau we climbed the northern end of the Memorial Ice Fall to the saddle between Passchendaele and Destiny. We approached the summit of Passchendaele (7400 ft.) from the south east for a beautiful view. Back down to the saddle and across the neve of the Memorial Ice Fall to below Destiny (7900 ft) which was climbed via steep but easy snow and rock. The summit of Destiny would have to be the best lunch spot of the trip. The summit itself was a beautiful snow arete and gave brilliant view of Aspiring, Cook, Tutoko, Earnslaw, Barrier and Snowdrift ranges. Coming down proved quite exciting, if not a little dangerous, with the top ten inches of snow coming down with us hiding slots and the umpteen tons of snow above threatening to treat us to a premature burial. We learnt quickly about avalanche prone wet snow conditions in the Olivines. Often just throwing a small rock onto a slope would set it off.

Day 7

We set out to climb Climax from Climax Col but found this rock route quite difficult. I'm sure it is possible but we elected to spend the morning investigating our proposed escape route from the Plateau while the weather held. This was fortunate, as we discovered that our intended route along the ridge linking Climax and Gates was impassable due to present ice conditions with a large schrund cutting the ridge. It is as well we knew this before the weather closed in, as it did that afternoon. Our intended "out" route via Possibility col along the Barrier Range to Mt. Ian and then along the Snowdrift Range to Arawata saddle and West Matukituki Valley was now amended slightly in that we would have to drop to the Forgotten River 4,000 ft. below and climb again to get the Possibility Col.

One memorable incident was that of Grahame's hat which blew off his head to land on the other side of a crevasse and 4 ft. from a "edge" of some description, with Grahame in hot pursuit. We later shuddered as we looked down from the south-west ridge of Climax to see his footprints dotting out onto a breaking cornice, part of which later thundered to the valley floor. Norm, who was attached to the other end of the rope, claimed that he was "sort of on belay".

Day 8

An enforced rest day with heavy mist and light rain was received without complaint, as we realized we were exhausted after seven days climbing. Time to catch up on reading, crosswords, chocky rations and listen to Norm rave about his billy. He wishes me to include a note on its superb design with round base, ease of packing, clip-on lid “far surpassing those possessed by normal billies” unquote. It’s now due for an intensive panel beating job after riding temporarily in Dave’s pack. Dave and I made unwelcome visitors in the others’ tent to take refuge from the “despicable hole” (Force 10 tent) – term later used for all things wet, cold and miserable.

Day 9

We left the plateau in a white out for Forgotten River descending over hard snow and rock onto scree then tussock. Looking back to the col was a beautiful sight with a waterfall tumbling over the ice onto the rock below. The scree brought with it disaster number two with Norm cutting his hand and wrist badly in a fall. Nurse and vet to the fore, we bound him up and made camp prematurely when reaching the valley floor. We were grateful for having toted a well stocked first-aid kit all this way. This incident along with the deteriorating weather forced us to abandon plans to re-enter the mountains. Instead we would follow the valleys out via Forgotten, Olivine, Pyke and Hollyford Rivers.

Day 10

Due to the helicopter ride in, we had not appreciated just how inaccessible the Olivines were. Two or three days out to civilization we thought but we were in for a rude shock. We followed the Forgotten River in rain down to its junction with the Olivine River via the Forgotten River gorge which provided interest for Norm one-handed despite some form of a track. We stopped on the Olivine flats after finding a hunter’s log hut hidden in the trees.

It was all of 8 ft. by 5 ft. with one hessian bunk, a small bench, no door, but it was DRY and made for a cosy night out of the “despicable hole”.

DAY 11

We set off with intention to reach the Pyke River – in theory 5 or 6 hours away. It may have been when the route was blazed earlier in the century but now all that remains are the blazes. We later found that our twelve hour epic over, through, under, but mostly around windfalls on a wind goose chase marked by a few blazes was a standard experience for this stretch, encompassing the Olivine Gorge (though I’m sure no two parties take the same route). It is encouraging, in a strange way, to stop for lunch in the shallowest puddle you can find, shivering and sodden in torrential rain, jumping up and down to keep warm as you gnaw salami and cheese, while Dave screws the soles back onto his boots, and know that you have the capacity to endure all this without cracking up. That is if you call our hysterical condition sane. Totally exhausted, but at least on flat ground, we made camp on something akin to a swamp as darkness fell.

Day 12

Having found the Olivine River, we ploughed off through horrible boot-sucking swamp to eventually meet the track down the true left bank of the Pyke for lunch and further boot repairs. By this time, it took some convincing to stop Dave ripping the soles off his boots and walking on the leather. The bog bash had not treated them well. We crossed the Olivine in true river crossing style at its junction with the Pyke and followed the bank down to the head of Lake Albaster. It was of course as stated in Hughie’s rule number

three, still raining as it had been since we left the Olivines and would do till well after we emerged to civilization. I had heard that the Pyke was boggy but this was incredible. There was much swearing and cursing as we extracted each leg one after another. It's not surprising that we took eight hours over a theoretically three hour section (in route guide). Last on the agenda for the night was a chest deep river crossing over a tributary of the Pyke to gain the left bank of the Lake. This took much shuttling and shivering of persons to carry each pack over at shoulder height. Norm encountered one long-dead duckling floating past and plucked it out for an alleged "Duck Souffle".

Day 13

We were grateful to have the crossing behind us when the morning brought a strong southerly up the Lake. The route guide says "follow the track down the true left bank of Lake Alabaster walking in the lake where necessary" – in our case grappling with large breakers. I must admit that I expect New Zealand tramping to have its difficulties, but surfing with a pack on is a new one. Lake Alabaster is not very long but it took a days thrutching with windfalls to bring us at long last to a HUT! At the southern end, with lines to dry out your inevitably sodden belongings on the pretty pebbled beach.

Day 14

Hughie endowed us with a fine morning but we soon found that Alabaster Hut is not the place for a holiday unless you carry the odd gallon of insect repellent to stop the sand flies carrying you off.

From here it was an easy walk along "pram track" to the road in the heavy rain and an 8 km road walk back to the reputable Gunn's camping ground. As Dave and I stood in the pouring rain groaning at the prospect of erecting our tent and a wet night, a friendly cocky took heart at the dismal sight and invited us into his warm dry cabin. To share the night with his family. Warm stove, hot shower and soft bunks – ah nice.

Despite the epic walk out, our Olivines Trip was amazingly successful. Most people we've spoken to who have been there don't believe the place has ever had seven fine days in a row and certainly don't want to hear about it.

If you are considering a trip to the Olivines, take the remoteness and inaccessibility into account. The helicopter ride in certainly made our trip a lot more feasible. be confident with navigation as you cannot depend on tracks in the snow or other people to be there. The isolation presents a need for careful preparation of food, gear and fitness as well as safe climbing.

Above all you are more than justified in getting really excited in advance because it is a most mystical and beautiful plateau of ice with many glaciers. I look forward to returning to visit the Northern Olivines via the Arawata River and its tributaries.

THE “HARD”

By Bob Hoey

You are at a club meeting. You spot a rugged looking individual you suspect may be a – gasp – HARD! How can you be sure? Look for the following indications: faint but telltale scars on the hands, arms, and legs attesting to many a difficult battle with the dreaded lantana, raspberry, lawyer and various other nasties; not to mention with food stealing goannas, possums, giant rats ...

It should be noted that the cunning Hard often attempts to disguise these scars with a profuse hairy covering (and some of the men are just as bad). They also discourage close scrutiny by the emission of a pungent odour reminiscent of rotting socks (even rotting toes).

(The Club used to possess a dried Hard in a glass case, until it was confiscated by the Vice Squad).

The next step is to try to talk the suspected Hard into coming on a walk. They should reply by arguing that it sounds too strenuous, it's too far from the pub, they're feeling a bit crook etc. etc.

Your suspicions are well founded if they do come for a weekend and arrive with the most battered pack you have ever seen. The rest of their gear looks as though it has been towed to O'Reilly's (and back). When you look like actually commencing the walk they say they're not feeling up to it and will spend the weekend at the cars. What will inevitably happen from here on is:

1. You are so exasperated at your prospective Hard's slackness you try one final effort to get them to come. You offer them a challenge. You point out a really interesting looking area on the map which no-one has ever been heard to visit and you tell them you're going there. They reply that:
 - a. The creek is filled with scunge.
 - b. The slopes are covered in lantana and loose rock.
 - c. There isn't a descent campsites for miles.
 - d. They could produce a better trickle than the waterfall.
2. Out of stubborn pride you follow the route you have pointed out, thinking they are sprouting just so much bovine excreta to justify their lethargy. During the course of the walk you discover:
 - a. The creek is filled with scunge.
 - b. The slopes are covered in lantana and loose rock.
 - c. There isn't a descent campsite for miles.
 - d. You can produce a better trickle than the waterfall.
 - e. You are thoroughly crapped off.

Upon your return to the cars, sadder but wiser, the Hard looks at you with such sorrow that your heart melts, and enlightenment dawns upon you – they've got no new walks left to go on!

You become their friend and buy them a weeks supply of fizzy (your entire month's rent gone!).

And when some obnoxious stropky idiot complains about “that lazy bastard over there that always comes to meetings but never goes on walks”, you suggest that what they should do is invite “the lazy bastard” to a promising but unheard of area and offer them a challenging walk.

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NOVEL HINCHINBROOK CAMPSITES

By Nigel Beeke

Last year's annual U.W.B.W.C. pilgrimage to that magical isle in the north was unique in several ways. Firstly, everyone who went to the island climbed Mt. Bowen. Secondly, several "campsites" were used which had previously been neglected by club members. There were two mountain parties, the idea being to avoid having eleven people trying to camp at Thumb Saddle. (Of course, this eventuality did eventuate anyway!). The party consisting of Robert, Dan, Wendy, Tony, Robin and myself was particularly adept at finding choice campsites.

Site 1:

"It is possible to reach the saddle in one day" – says Barry Baker's route guide when speaking of Warrawilla Creek. After last year's epic I will agree – it is possible to reach the saddle in one day – but we didn't make it! The onset of darkness found us somewhere in the upper reaches of the creek, position indeterminate. By torchlight an area with a slope of slightly less than 30 degrees was selected as the "campsite". Of course, the idea of trying to put up a tent was farcical. However, Hughie for once was kind, and no rain added to our misery. An uncomfortable night was spent by all, with people attempting to sleep on boulders, between boulders, around trees, wedged between packs, trees and boulders, etc.

Robin's observation that her life was ruled by Murphy's Law promised well for the future! To add insult to injury, the next morning it was found that the saddle was a mere 15 minute climb away – so near, yet so far on the previous evening.

Site 2:

By the time a water party had returned from the western side of the North-Bowen saddle it was obviously too late for us to reach Thumb Saddle before nightfall. In fact, late afternoon found us faced with the task of sleeping on the summit of Bowen. With a bit of clag about it appeared to be wise to set up tentage, but those who know the top of Bowen will realize that tent-sites are more than slightly limited. However, with a bit of imagination and a few rocks Robert's tent was erected on a bare slab – his complaints the next morning about the hard ground were probably justified! With some re-arrangement of the vegetation my Ultimate was assembled, although it did have an indoor garden and a rockery. At this stage I established the policy of selecting the best sleeping spot for myself – after all, it is my tent! Thus Robin was left to contend with a "moderately" large hip hole.

Site 3:

The Thumb Saddle is not, of course, a new campsite on Bowen. However, it probably was a novel idea to try fitting eleven people into a campsite which is a squeeze for six. This situation arose when we reached the saddle too late to consider descending Zoe-Thumb Creek – a direct consequence of failing to reach the North-Bowen saddle on the first day.

Consequently, the Pinnacle Ridge party of Bob, Liz, Ross, Heather and Springe caught up to us, reaching the saddle later in the afternoon. Our party established the right of prior claim and erected the Ultimate on the only recognizable tent site – which provided accommodation for five, although it once again had an indoor garden and rockery. Various other structures were then erected on unlikely looking sites.

To make things interesting, for the first and only time on the trip Hughie opened the floodgates on us. Those in the Ultimate remained 95% dry, almost everyone else was a little on the damp side – particularly Springe, whose disaster of a hutchie kept him 95% wet.

For the rest of the trip our campsites were fairly standard. However, despite the unusual campsites of the first few days “a splendid time was had by all”, and the usual vows to return were made as the boat nosed out from the Ramsay boardwalk.

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OR DOWN

TEN GLASSHOUSES IN ONE DAY

By Reg Pollitt

A likely story! Saturday night saw nine of us stumbling like a geriatric commando group in the vague shadows beneath the formidable East face of Tibrogargan, the object of our assault. With torches flashing and minds asking what a way to spend Saturday night, we stealthy made our way up to cave five, having employed a belaying system to ensure that F.M.R. was not to be called out the next day.

Although the rope was not really essential, it was certainly an added assurance in the nebulous light, for the next day exposed a rather precipitous section. Ah! Ignorance is bliss. Our spacious cave was a welcome sight, with extensive views over the secret blackness pierced by the lancing beams of light as vehicles jostled far below, their howls and thunderous roars clearly heard late into the night from our cave.

Sunrise as seen from the cavernous mouth, with the unusual rock formation to the left, and the seemingly black branches of trees in the foreground against the effulgent light of a new day was truly beautiful. There was a sense of power as the distant orb etched out the covering shroud of cloud, its intensity growing all the time until it could almost be seen to pulsate with life.

Breakfast was consumed with the knowledge that we were only twenty minutes from the top, consequently it was a lazy affair, pleasant in the unusual surroundings. Again a belaying rope was rigged up to enable us to traverse the section to our right, where once a tree stood permitting easy access to this interesting up route. From here there are a few sections which require care, however in general the route is to be highly recommended as it is far more interesting than the eroded tourist track which scars the western side of the mountain.

Speaking of tourists we were on the top for only a few minutes when hoards of great white sahibs overwhelmed us by the sight of Bowie knives hanging from their belts. These were presumably used to fight off the tigers which abound on the western side of the mountain guarding the dangerous trail much in the same manner as Cerberus the three headed dog guarded the gates of Hades.

Our descent was hastened by abseiling twice, initially twenty five meters down to the cave again, although our fifty meter rope was a bit short! The second abseil was from the lop of the cave, approximately forty six meters in length thus bypassing the time consuming section which was negotiated the night before.

The day was quite hot by this time, our enthusiasm waning with the thought of nine to go, oh hum! Off to Beerwah. Thirty minutes up, twenty down. Well, perhaps not. For those who have not climbed Beerwah before, it affords excellent views of the surrounding Glasshouses, itself being the highest with an elevation of five hundred and sixty-six meters. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the mountain is the geological formation known as the organ pipes, which is one massive overhang frowning down on the pilgrim ants who wander up for the magnificent view. For people who are put off by the short ascent over the initial slab which is confronted at the end of the obvious track, an easier way may be found by skirting to the left and then rejoining the upward trail.

Lunch was in order by the time we reached the cars, eight to go in four hours, well! Crookneck? Hmm, well yes, definitely a must, so we all trundled over to the deformed creature only to find it being molested by B.B.W. people.

Crookneck is certainly the most dangerous if not the most difficult to climb. However, this should not deter interested people, for the difficulty lies in the instability of the semi-columnulated trachyte rocks

which in place have been dislodged, making both ascent and descent time consuming, it is essential not to place total reliance in seemingly immovable rocks, no matter how large. There exists ample evidence on the way up to substantiate this claim, and undoubtedly with successive parties the situation will become even more palpable.

However the climb to the top is certainly worthwhile, for it provides yet another view of the patch-work quilt which blankets much of the area. It is interesting to note the varied lines of soil ranging from deep reds through pink to yellows, bones, and the odd grey of the pineapple patches below to the east with farmhouses and sheds interspersed, giving the area on a Sunday a quiet peacefulness.

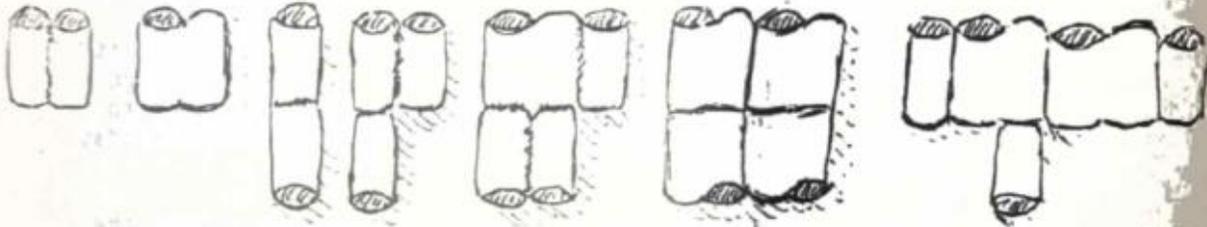
Our descent was cautious and although we had placed a safety rope across the most difficult section, it was not really necessary although certainly reassuring. With seven to go we thought of repairing to the nearest watering hole. Well, since Ngungun was on the way and three out of ten is rather a poor effort, we decided to drag ourselves up the fire ravaged side of Ngungun. It was stark contrast to the luxurious growth seen earlier in the year when F.M.R. had a training day at the same location, none the less the view from the top is again very good with Crookneck in line with Beerwah, the blue haze in the distance a beautiful back drop for the grey eminence of Beerwah.

Fortunately we met the second part of our party who had driven up earlier in the morning on top. Apparently they had climbed Tibrogargan and Beerwah in the morning so there was very little ground for one upmanship on our behalf. Anyway by this time the remaining six hills were diminishing in our estimation, particularly when you consider that you can drive to the top of two, consequently the order of the day was a quick trip back to Caboolture, and a game of darts with one of those boards which exhibit a magnetic force field making it almost impossible to hit a double score. Well, any excuse is better than none, and that goes for climbing ten Glasshouses in one day too.

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THE “TURDBERGER”

By Russell O’Malley

Well you might ask what is a “Turdburger”. It is an affectionate term for a particular brand of the recently vogue internal frame backpacks, sold under the somewhat inaccurate mark of Berghaus. The range of packs available in Australia is poor, the quality dubious and the price always exorbitant. Five years of somewhat abusive use of my “Mountain Mule Expedition” had finally taken its toll. Because of my itinerant living habits the old “Mule” was stationed at my parent’s address from time to time. During one rather prolonged period there, my mother mistook the dejected, dirty, dilapidated appearance as meaning that it was time to send my most treasured friend to the place where all good packs eventually go - the local rubbish tip. Just because the throat was ripped, the pockets had holes in them, every piece of webbing was held together by rusty wire, the side laces gone and the bag held on by copper wire doesn’t necessarily mean that it was not beyond repair. Such are the risks of having mothers. Little did she realize that the mighty “Mule” duralium frame is almost indestructible and readily refitted with new accessories. After a vociferous and rather abusive exchange, I went for a belated though interesting search at the tip. Unfortunately, though a sacred object, the “Mule” was incapable of resurrection and is now quietly resting below tons of decomposing rubbish and City Council ashes. One last pleasing thought was that its solid nature will form the reinforcement and foundations for the football fields of the future.

After some weeks of grieving over my previous loss, I began to wonder how I would utilize the opportunity which this mishap had afforded me. Would I trade the faithful, serviceable, though somewhat less than sleek classic H-frame New Zealand-made pack for something else. With the skeptical eye of experience, all the camping stores on Australia’s east coast were closely investigated. Finally on the rock solid logic of “variety is the spice of life”, \$100 was outlaid for a large green and blue Berghaus pack. Selling points were: no cumbersome external frame, closely fitting, anatomically designed duralium internal frame, overall weight less than a pound and fitting for cross-country skies, crampons and other climbing accessories.

It looked so good with its gleaming green colour and soft suede base; a sleep pack ready to be put to the test of usual bushwalking and travelling abuse. The testing ground was South America and the duration extended. The trial was set, and my interest great, for this new unknown quantity had a high standard with which to be compared.

The disappointment was almost instant and my \$100 investment looked rather unsteady from the outset. On a short bus trip, with luggage hidden in the compartment below, we encountered a rainstorm which duly sent spray over all the gear. On arrival I found 10 wet boxes of film and other soggy objects in the side pockets. So much for the amazing new waterproof nylon. Still I kept an open mind and wasn’t ready to take too many points off the new pack just yet. It requires a little understanding on both sides to fully assess something’s worth.

The next point took a little time (very little) to discover that no matter how an internal frame rucksack is packed it has a terrible tendency to get very tired and want to fall over. To gain maximum unassisted standing time, I discovered the best method was to lift and then bounce the pack a few times, after which you must slowly remove your hands so as not to disturb its delicate position. Without wind and in a flat place the maximum recorded time was 6 mins.48.4 secs. Through some hideous stroke of bad luck, there were in fact two green monstrosities on the trip, and much time was spent watching the gradual then

rapid collapse as the first and then the other hit the dust, while the two H-frames stood like sentinels in the face of such devastating phenomena as breezes.

As all bushwalkers are basically (though sometimes well hidden) humans, we all like to sit down from time to time, and as such, a necessary requirement of a pack is that it can be sat on; unfortunately the “Turdberger” does not lend itself to this either, as it begins to bow horribly in the middle for the lack of substantial frame. The rather long and permanently attached hip belt proved to be useful for getting caught in car doors, dragged in the mud, stood on in crowds and winding around your fingers but very little else. The super Berg-buckle proved not to be of a special formula indestructible material but just common old house plastic and lasted an amazing four weeks. This left me with two great green wings and a long blue tail attached to the body of the pack but now without apparent use. By now my friendship with the “Turdberger” was wearing very thin and though not yet expressed publicly a few deft kicks were issued in private in an attempt to get some sense out of it.

Rather worried about what would be revealed next, I decided to give it a final try in real bushwalking territory on a twelve day walk. Though I can understand that it is much more pleasant to take a trip when the sun is shining brightly, it does come to pass, that on Earth, we occasionally have rain and therefore one needs something in which to keep his things dry. As the storm clouds thickened and the early morning snow turned to the afternoon’s heavy rain we blundered on for another four hours to the little hut. Thinking I was smart by taking any likely items out of the side pockets, I curiously loosened the cord on the Berghaus throat. Thorough disgust was all I could manage, as wet clothes, bag and everything else was emptied onto the floor, and then the excess water poured from its plutonic depths. Swearing about the cheap nylon cover and the sponge-like suede base, I suddenly realized I hadn’t looked in the top pocket compartment.

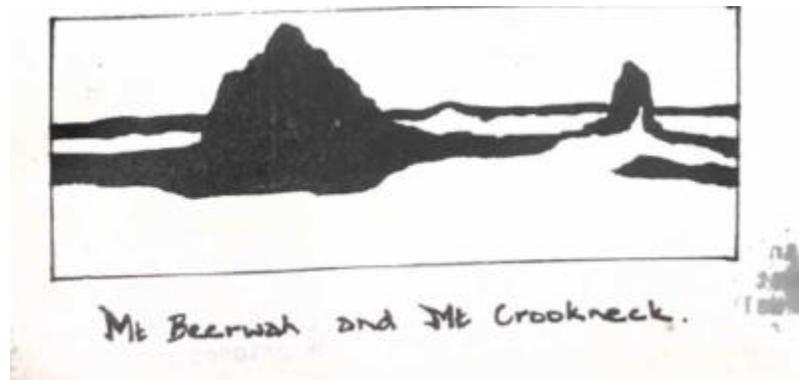
Surely that would be waterproof, after all it was made from blue and not green material. Alas after removing soggy maps and paper, blue proved not to be such a water repellent colour when put to the test. The company could have saved its money on the expensive green throat.

Other general complaints were that because of its longer thinner design, everything you need is always at the bottom of the pack and unless you are 6 ft. tall you almost need to climb inside to find whatever it is you are looking for. The straps for the top flap are permanently fixed and often in the way, the point of attachment to the body is far too high for anything less than a full pack.

If you think that I have any good words about this fast-aging useless piece of equipment you are wrong. Unfortunately or perhaps fortunately, I am a long way from the place of purchase and the factory for “Turdbergers”. I think I am stuck with “Turdie” at least to the end of the year though I don’t know about his health. Already the covering over this aluminium bones has worn through in a couple of places, the back straps are straining at the seams and there are small holes in the body though this is unlikely to increase the inflow of water.

As can be seen by the above first-hand report, the “Turdberger” suffers from several basic design faults. The plastic fittings need to be replaced by the expensive wonder metal duralium; the internal frame is without advantage in design, comfort or longevity, the external long H of New Zealand packs having obvious advantages. The sexy suede bottom needs to become conservative leather, the stingray flaps and tail could be trimmed down or made removable, and as for waterproofing one or two things should be incorporated in the manufacture, either drainage holes in the bottom or more practically, and I am sure not much more expensively, waterproof durable nylon.

Well I know some of us were born to cast our fortunes to the winds and I guess I'm bound to travel down a road that never ends, but unfortunately for the moment I must share this read with "Turdie", until finally the Berghaus blues cause me discreetly to drop him over a very big cliff into the sea and drown, as he almost surely would, and lie on the sea bottom where all bad packs finally die.



THE HEYSAN TRAIL

By Lewis Vaughan

In South Australia at the present time a new walking track is being established. It has been under the guidance (or mis-guidance) of the National Fitness Council. The southern section was completed at the beginning of this year; it extends from Mt. Magnificent about sixty-four kilometers south of Adelaide to a point close to Stirling, approximately twenty-five kilometers due east of the city.

At the time of its opening I was living near the area, consequently the opportunity presented itself to view the walk from first hand. This section follows the Mt. Lofty Ranges northwards through a number of National Parks, pine forests and dairying country. Since one is expected to be overawed by the magnificent gums lining the beaten path the Council latched onto the name of Heysan (well known for his paintings of gums). One objective of the Council is to extend the track from its southern section northwards to connect with the Flinders Ranges. A walking track provided for the entire length of the Flinders may be marvellous news; however, the manner in which it is run and its construction brings this into question.

From Mt. Magnificent two of us trudged up to the stony outcrop of a low slung ridge. We were on the edge of a National Park with a Jersey bull pricking its nose on barb wire on the other side. This sets the pattern for the rest of the walk in and out of tiny remnants of scrub, the majority of the time being spent trundling across paddocks or through pine forest. Obviously the walk is quite exquisite during spring time and early summer merely because of the pleasant surroundings. But it is a far cry from “bushwalking” as most people comprehend that word. However, the track was not designed for that but more as a “Life Be In It” promotion.

Well! Off along the ridge we went and immediately lost the bright red markers that line the track – which was a number of feet wide. Beware! On this track there is absolutely no chance of becoming lost. Summer wasn't the right season for walking, although water wasn't a great problem since one is so close to civilization. Why wasn't it? A.A. has a habit of declaring fire bans and on those days (practically every day of summer) you are banned from walking on the track.

During the next few days we found out more unpleasant “rules”

1. If you stray off the track you may be prosecuted for trespassing by irate farmers.
2. Absolutely no camping (Sleep in a pub!). Yes, that is what they advise.
3. One isn't allowed to climb the barb wire fences (possible damage), but must step with the aid of brightly painted (red and white) stiles.
4. Don't walk too fast – you may miss the patches of bush on passing.
5. Don't fall off the three foot wide plank bridges placed across patches of mud.

So much for sarcasm. If you are in the area, take a look at it in spring, it can be enjoyed for the sake of a pleasant walk through a quaint rural area. However, it would be most unfortunate if the spirit of the trail should continue sliding up to the Flinders in its present form.

If the trail isn't criticized it may well end up missing Wilpena and Orraparrina and going for a hundred mile foot race to thee west on Lake Torrens.



Needles, Gibraltar Ra.

SNOW AND ICE CLIMBING

By Helen Phillips

Although snow and ice climbing is a long way from walking through the Queensland bush, there has always been the odd UQBWCer prone to dabble in it to various degrees. Despite obvious inhibitions due to expense and distance of travel (and perhaps I should include fatality rate), the joy of being high in the snow, in fields of peaks and clouds will continue to lure walkers into this magic world.

After tramping in the valleys and low passes of New Zealand's South Island, it was a natural progression for me to want to explore some of those high places which, as yet, lay beyond my scope. Moving on snow and ice has to be learnt from someone who practices the correct techniques. This is obvious from the number of accidents that occur through inexperienced people venturing beyond their limits. This learning process can be done in a number of ways.

- A. Do a basic Climbing Course with Alpine Guides at Mt. Cook or Geoff Wyatt at Mt. Aspiring. These cost \$175 - \$200 and last 6 – 8 days respectively. They are expensive but you can feel sure you are being taught tried and true techniques by people who use them constantly. You won't emerge in six days a competent mountaineer, but you gain a ground on which to start building experience with safety. More importantly, you become aware of how much there is to learn. It is important to follow up the course with some enjoyable, fairly easy climbs that are within your confidence limits. There are many such climbs. For example, in the Mt. Cook area: Chudleigh, Hochsetter Dome, Turner, Aylmer, Walter.

They are not to be taken lightly, and should only be attempted when weather and snow conditions are favourable. Gaining an understanding of weather and snow conditions is an important part of the course as well as discussion of possible climbs to start off with. Perhaps I should list briefly the main topics covered on the Basic course at Mt. Cook.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Rope work | – Knots, harness types and relative merits. |
| Rock climbing | – Few basic movements and belay techniques, prussiking. |

Weather, avalanches, first aid, navigation, tall stories.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Walking in snow | – Kicking steps, use of ice axe. |
| Self arrest | – From sitting, falling, upside down and back to front positions without skewering yourself. |
| Snow belays | – (1) Double Anchor with snow stake and ice axe, (2) shaft/leg belay, (3) snowstake deadmen, (4) method of use – “dynamic” principle. |
| Snow shelters | – Build snow cave, trench mound and igloo |
| River crossing | – Brrr. |
| Ice craft | – Crampons, glacier travel, step cutting. |
| Crevasse rescue | – From hauling out – to prussiking – to pulley systems. |

Experience walking with the club in Queensland and rope work on F.M.R. training days is quite adequate qualification for the course. It helps to be fit and “steady-on-your-feet” as well.

- B. Hire a Guide at Mt. Cook to teach you these basic techniques. This is probably the next best to doing the course depending on how long you have the guide. They cost \$50/day with a maximum of four people per guide.

Alpine Guides also run a basic expedition for which people from (a) or (b) are eligible but this is an expensive six day trip (\$175) which you could probably do unguided with care. A problem with guides and courses is the chance of losing your money if (when) the weather goes bad.

- C. If you are lucky enough to have a friend with experience to teach you, this is very cheap and enjoyable way to learn. Be sure that you have confidence in their competence.

- D. Books on snow and ice craft may be helpful but they cannot substitute for practical teaching.

After the basic instruction, it is just a matter of building confidence and practicing the techniques until they become automatic in times of need. It is important that you relate to you partner(s) with absolute trust and it is preferable that your capabilities are similar.

Much of climbing is common sense, e.g., for glacier travel, it makes sense that the person travelling first is most likely to fall in the crevasses, so the second must be strong enough to hold him.

On the first trip, one learns a lot about gear and it is best to borrow or hire until you find out what to buy, should you decide to continue.

The guides will give you an awareness of survival in the mountains and general techniques of mountaineering. They will also tell you that “a climber is one who gets to the top of a mountain but a mountaineer gets back down again”.

“What a privilege to know
the profound stillness
and peace of the land,
to see
star spangled skies
and to listen to
the pulse of the Universe...”

Jill Tremain

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