The EPIC

NEWSLETTER OF THE ANU MOUNTAINEERING CLUB 2013
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Welcome to the Epic. After a couple of years of quiescence, the Epic has been revived in good old-fashioned magazine form, until we are ready to once again face the melee of facebook, twitter, wordpress blogging and the rest of the 21st century. The Epic has a proud history (circa 2005?) and documents the outdoorsy adventures of ANUMC members. The Club boasts some tough, talented, and experienced trip leaders, some fine writers, and a number of photographers who have contributed to the club and to this year’s epic. Enjoy!

Anna

The Editor at Kosciusko National Park

Tigersnake canyon, Blue Mountains
Photo: Richard Salmons
The ANUMC Executive

Put a friendly face to a name with this year’s exec.

**President – Lauren Bartsch**
Since joining the ANUMC in 2008, Lauren has skied, climbed, walked, kayaked, raced mountain bikes and had the obligatory number of epics. On the weekends, she can be found off in the mountains (Bluies or Snowies), Nowra or around the local crags. During the week, she can be found at the climbing wall- where you might be asked to hold baby Lena so she can squeeze another climb in.

**Vice President – Clare Paynter**
Originally hailing from the tropics, Clare moved south to study a combined Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Arts at the ANU. Since joining the ANUMC after one year in Canberra, Clare’s outdoor interests have rapidly expanded from just long-distance running and rogaining. You’ll find Clare exploring Canberra’s multitude of nature reserves, including the wondrous snowy mountains.

**Secretary – Alana Wilkes**
Alana has been the club’s secretary for four years and a member since 2007. Alana likes kayaking and bushwalking in particular, and also dabbles in a bit of snow shoeing and skiing. She works for the Commonwealth environment department and also likes bird watching, playing social sport and travelling.

**Treasurer - Dave Powell**
I’m a keen bushwalker, but you might also catch me skiing, canyoning, kayaking, snowshoeing, or doing my bit to keep the club in the black! My favourite location for club trips is definitely the Budawangs.

**Laure Gauthiez-Putallaz**
My name is Laure, I come from the Swiss Alps. In real life, I spend my time harvesting, crushing and analysing rocks at ANU. During evenings and weekends, I double as a rock and mountain climber, not-around-the-lake runner, caver or anything else that involves getting smashed up in the outdoors. I am known for carrying ice up the Castle for the cocktail party, falling into an unknown cave in Tassie, dry-tooling by 40°C in Kambah rocks and chickening out on grade 13 at Arapiles. I’m involved in general politics, market day organisation, climbing wall matters as well as the occasional climbing skills session.

**General Officer - Anthony Mann**
Anthony is a refugee from Tasmania, where his mission was to track down the elusive two-headed thyla-bunyip. Now he’s in Canberra, he has a new quest - to lock eyes with the Loch Burley Griffin Monster, and he’s often found scouring the lake on Tuesday evenings in search of this wondrous creature.

**Social Officer - Jenny Bauer**
Jenny’s been around the club for a couple of years now getting out there bushwalking, kayaking, skiing and snow shoeing (and working up to canyoning).
The Committee

Gear store officers:
Gabriela Scheufele
Jack Chenoweth
Garrick Larkin
Sam Margerison
Jin Jin Cong

Epic Editors
Anna Kabaila
Nic Fox

Bushwalking officer
Rob Hayes

Mountaineering officer
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Canyoning Officer
Gabriela Scheufele

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Kayaking officers
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Andrew Collins

Rogaining officer
Mel Stamell

Cross Country skiing officer
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Climbing wall officers
Laure Gauthiez Putallaz
Michael Ellerman
Lee Schrader
Tim Crockford
Tom Bush

Web officers
Pierre Dominique Putallaz
Nic Fox
SNOWBIKER
Jasmine Rickards

You may recall President Lauren’s tale of woe from our 2011 attempt to mountain bike through the Pilot Wilderness area. The unexpected dump of fresh snow on the Queen’s Birthday weekend was enough for Lauren to describe “slush biking” as “the new adventure sport which is not fun while you are doing it and not fun when it’s all over” http://anumc.wordpress.com/2011/06/15/type-iii-fun/.

Call me mad, but I actually enjoyed snow biking! Pushing our bikes up a hill in a blizzard, hours from anywhere I did consider calling it off and drinking coffee in Thredbo, but the ridiculous fun of pedaling out of control in deep snow was a blast. It was like riding home from the pub in the rain veering all over the place but it didn’t hurt when I fell off. The hard slog made the warmth of Cascade hut at the end of the day even more satisfying. Since we didn’t get anywhere near climbing the Pilot, two years on it was time to try again.

Thursday 25 April 2013: We loaded up the bikes at Dead horse gap. The sun was shining, this time there no snow, but the wind was still icy cold. Equipped with warmer shoes and thicker socks we headed out along the Cascade’s fire trail. The dry bags gaffa taped to my bike gave me a wide-legged John Wayne riding style and I had to push my bike when it got steep. The long descent to Tin Mines hut was freshly graded and it was great fun to launch over the newly graded water bars and piles of brumby poo with the backpack adding an extra challenge. By early afternoon we’d already come twice the distance of the previous trip. We left our bags in the smaller hut and rode out along Tin Mines fire trail in search of the first item on our scavenger hunt: Stockwhip hut – of which there was no sign.
Friday 26 April:
The next morning the warm sun was chasing patches of frost into the shade. We got some clues from the friendly national parks worker fixing the fireplace and headed off in search of the Pilot. We left the bikes at a bend in the road and climbed up into the saddle between the Pilot and the ‘Co-Pilot’. At the summit we signed the book and, through swirling clouds, glimpsed the long descent into Cowombat Flat where we would find the next item on the list: the remnants of a wrecked plane. As we descended the fire trail became rougher and rockier. Boom! A sharp rock sliced open Derek’s back tyre. Some bush repairs with patches and a $5 note and we continued down to the grassy plains of Cowombat flat. There wasn’t much left of the wreckage, but it was a nice spot in the sun for lunch. Some campers gave our next clue: GPS coordinates for the spring at the source of the Murray. Back up the hill to the turn-off, we left the bikes and followed a faint track through bush to a grassy clearing. We could easily jump the small mountain creek that was the Murray. At the muddy spring we signed the logbook. A bit further along we found the cairn which marks the start of the straight border between NSW and Victoria all the way to the coast at Cape Howe. The ride back up the hill was hard, but back at the hut we were rewarded with a warm fire and brumbies grazing under a full moon.

Saturday 27 April:
On day 3, with more perfect weather, the only unexplored trail was the Ingeegoodbee. There were a few cold creek crossings, and then, past the turn off to the nine mile pinch we found the Ingeegoodbee Hut which was not marked on our map, still standing in spite of burnt beams and holes in the roof. We reached the river by lunchtime, had a refreshing dip, and read the entries in the visitor’s book at the much newer Christie O’Rourke’s Hut.
Sunday 28 April:
We decided to leave the Tin mine falls and Chinese mine sites for another visit and headed back on the long climb back out to Dead horse gap.
All up it was about 150km of great firetrails. A very enjoyable trip in the Pilot Wilderness area by bike, and while fond memories of the original snow biking adventure remain, this one with sunshine was even better.
The Mid-Winter Feast is an annual ANUMC social event combining an easy (though possibly cold and blustery) overnight high country bushwalk with a warm crackling fire, a snug high country hut and plenty of fine food and wine being shared amongst old and new friends. This year the 16th feast returns to Gooandra Homestead. Dating back to 1913, this restored historic four room timber house features an excellent stone fireplace which does a good job of keeping the main room warm and cosy. Nearby are the remains of an old chimney, all that remains of a small gold miners’ hut built at this site in the 1860s. The chimney is historically very significant, being the oldest standing structure in Kosciuszko National Park. Gooandra is located about three hours’ drive from Canberra, 15km north of Kiandra. Access is an easy 5km walking along a fire trail that leads past the nineteenth century gold fields of Six Mile Diggings and along beautiful sub-alpine bush untouched by the ravages of bushfire. The location is high enough (about 1380m above sea level) to be occasionally snow bound, therefore requiring snowshoes or skis to get in. Maps: Tantangara & Ravine 1:25,000.
On a cold Saturday morning in late July, I was one of nineteen mountaineering club members who set off for the 16th Midwinter Feast. The feast was to be held at the old Gooandra homestead in the Kosciuszko National Park, near the former gold-mining town of Kiandra and I’d been promised a fun weekend of good food, drink and company. Being a complete mountaineering club newbie, I was slightly nervous and barely knew anyone, however friendships began forming quickly on the foggy drive to Cooma, then on to Adaminaby and its shiny Big Trout.

As we entered the Kosciuszko National Park and caught our first glimpses of snow, Mika filled the occupants of our car in on the history of the area, pointing out the ruins from the gold-mining heyday of the ghost-town of Kiandra. Just as we were learning how the Kiandra ski club was not only the first ski club in Australia, but quite possibly the world, the area proved its longevity as we sighted a group of cross-country skiers ahead. Small world that it is, these skiers were actually part of our group, they’d set off early and were going to meet the rest of us in the car-park before the trek up to Gooandra homestead.

Soon after we pulled off the road into a small car park, where we snacked and adjusted our clothing, as the sun had come out and there was not even a hint of a breeze. Mika gave us an expert lesson on how to put on and walk in snowshoes, beginning it with a ‘what not to do’ component where he broke a strap. Then it was off along the fire trail, across the nice new bridge over the Eucumbene River, with the sun still shining brightly and the air still.
Although we were saved from wading, we still had to jump across a small creek, where I managed to clearly demonstrate my lack of coordination and snow shoe-experience, narrowly avoiding the water but regretting my decision to remove my gloves as my hands sank into the icy snow. Just after this we split up - the ‘walkers’ without snowshoes to keep heading along the more-exposed fire-trail, whilst the rest of us headed off through the bush, chasing the snow so that we could make the most of our snowshoes.

We spent the next few hours gazing at brumbies in the distance, avoiding the mess they’d left behind, as well as plodding our way up, down and around the mountains, with a bit of bush-bashing thrown in for good measure. As Mika sent us off up what we hoped was the last hill before the homestead, I don’t think I was the only one who was beginning to think we’d never arrive. As we got to the top, the hut came into view and I would have cheered except there was still a vast expanse of sloping ground blanketed with the thickest snow we’d had so far in our journey. We were by far the last group to arrive, the skiers having followed us for only a short way before strapping their skis to their packs and cutting back across to the fire-trail instead. The benefit of this was that most people already had their tents up and were beginning to work on a fire, bench seats, hot drinks and, most importantly, FOOD!
I wandered about, collecting water from the stream, chatting to people and adding my boots and socks to the steaming heap in front of the fire. It was then time for the feast to begin, and the food we ate was delicious!

We began with the following:

- Smoked salmon pinwheels (Elaine)
- Bruschetta -(Harry)
- Dips and crackers (Saulo)
- Fried bread (Michael)
- Smoked salmon (Mika)
- Sushi (Sophie)
- Rosemary damper (Jess & Nick)

Before moving on to:
- Boeuf bourguignon & baked sweet potatoes (Clare & Peter)
- Chicken sausages (Emily)
- Quinoa stew (Kate)
- Sausage & eggplant stew (Michael)
- Beef & lentil curry (Robyn & Dave)
- Pasta with tomato & veggie sauce (Rob)
- Sweet potato salad (Josh)

The feast had a sweet ending with:
- Fudge brownies with raspberry coulis (Arius)
- Baked cinnamon apples (Phillipa)
- Chocolate/ apricot balls (Phillipa)
All of this was washed down with several litres of white mulled wine (Nick and Jess), raspberry vodka (Mika), port, wine (lots of people) and chai (Peter). The next morning dawned not quite as sunny and with more wind, so we set about breakfasting, cleaning and packing up in order to get back before the forecast storm.

The fire trail was so much shorter and flatter than our initial route that we flew along before stopping to build a snowman and wait for everyone else to catch up. Emily shared her wealth of Canadian-snowman-building knowledge with us and before long we’d rolled three giant balls and created our very own snowman, complete with egg-plant nose!

The trip home was a quieter one, everyone worn out by the weekend, heading back through Namadgi instead of Cooma, where Mika lamented that he couldn’t bring the huge boulders back for his front garden. At last we pulled back up into Mika’s driveway and Sophie and I bundled ourselves back into my car for the last leg of our trip – crossing back over to North-side. As I staggered in my front door, exhausted, slightly sunburnt and laden down with all my gear, I reflected that it had indeed been a marvelous weekend of good food, excellent company and a whole lot of fun.
STREAM OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS
Papertrailtramp

Papertrailtramp is an ANUMC member who studied creative writing and recently returned from a long and adventurous stint in Canada.
Read more at http://papertrailtramp.wordpress.com/about/
Weeks skipped a beat. Couldn’t hear the tick-tock of my digital watch over the din of high water. Wait… digital. Checked the seconds display in a crashing wave, it didn’t budge. The summer’s getting a little abstract, a little hard to follow. We were tumbling down the Nahatlatch. Mary was there, and Nice of Peru with two friends, and you were there, and you were there. The water was glacial turquoise, rolling and coasting, and we dipped heavy and rose weightless. And there was one girl, the girl with the leg brace, she went head-first with her riverboard. Couldn’t see much I guess but nudged around like a lady beetle across the surface, around man-eating foam piles and sheer headwalls. And another time, or maybe it was the same time, we were all driving upstream together and my kayak slipped off Braden’s truck, banged bright red into my window and dangled there. I pinned the boat to the door with my arm but there was no stopping, only danger to my shoulder socket, so I wished my boat bonne chance and wound up my window. Then there was Kimble’s raft, which he admitted post-inflation had no thwarts or outside rope. But it was Mary who took the oars, and her paddle crew were Michie and Murphy, and they were rookies. The raft was a toy but the river was real. I knew it was real because I could see our breath on the water’s surface in the dappled evening sun. And I was worried that someone would miss the eddy before the canyon and not live. But everyone must have been okay because Mary and I started driving up the Adams in a Jeep. We could hear the short canyon, just down from the road, because we were standing there scouting it. Then we were paddling the Bridge with Jen and her Lillooet crew – they said she’s guaranteed rugged. There were boulder gardens and log jams, a blind corner drop and Mary’s empty boat recirculating in a hole. It was strangely familiar, as though I’d been there before. And there was Mary, emerging from the same pool onto the same rock I’d evolved onto when I’d swum from my kayak in the same place in real life two years ago. She climbed back on the horse, and we rode the river into the sunset. We rode far from anywhere, but we were actually driving in a little yellow car, and the car’s name was Sunny. We drove to the town of Likely to meet with Braden’s dog Kwoieek. He was pouting under his owner’s truck. Near the dog and the truck was the Quesnel River, and near the dog and the truck and the river was Braden. ‘I ran this once, when I was 16…’ he said as we injected into the swollen artery amid the submerged tree trunks, ‘…and it was way lower then.’ All of a sudden it was fast and there was no way out and we were going over the biggest freshwater waves that ever happened. It wasn’t a river exactly but an ocean falling back to earth. I saw Braden’s boat here and Mary’s boat there between the crests, and we rolled like runaway spacewater carriages. A horizon line appeared on the crested stratosphere and we crash-landed into a flukeddy cheating uncertain death. All this time the oceanic river was also a lung, expanding and contracting, and as it breathed it thrust us ashore. We trembled onto the rocks, overlooked the water and beheld a broad ledge, feeding into a boiling cauldron, feeding into a terminal hole with The End and closing credits scrolling around and around and around. We didn’t want it to End so we dragged our boats out of the canyon between the close-together trees and Devil’s Club nettles. Braden said he’d done far worse, but that it was his first time doing it in bare feet. I lurched onward, dissolving into my sauna suit, latex gasket tight around my neck, some undocumented species of mosquito-fly drinking blood from my face. Dehydration. I knew from high school biology that the human body is mostly water and is in fact a close relative of the watermelon. I wanted to become a melon filled with water but that simply wasn’t an option. We began our descent to the Quesnel just downstream of the doom part. We lined the kayaks to the water, buttscooted riverwise, put our boats on and seal-launched one by one off a fallen tree into the sweet, sweet watermelon coolness. We floated down to where Kwoieek awaited with Sam, who was also there, and the truck.
Post-traumatic euphoria crept in like the riverwater into my improperly closed drysuit fly as I floated clinging to the reeds in the gentle current. Then we were back in Likely and there was a sketchy rope-swing. It had a wafer-wood platform, jammed between the branches like a bird’s nest. Leading from platform to rope was a steep branch with flaking wooden stair-holds fixed with rusty nails. The first stair-hold snapped and fell into the moving water as Sam stepped on it, and Mary almost forgot to release the rope as she bowled back toward the tree. Braden and I let go precisely when we meant to, and with one graceful flail crashed sideways into the shocking evening cold. One by one we crawled shaking from the river, drove into the forest downstream and camped upon the sleeping Quesnel breathing slow and deep. We needed some down time so we did it all again, drove home and ran mad-high-water trips down the Thompson over and over. I do recall the sand-stung evening gusts as we hiked our kayaks and a jerrycan along the railway looming over the mighty Fraser. Then we were sailing due-Stein through the woods in the Black Pearl, skull and crossbones rattling on the hood. The Stein was still mad about the melting snowpack.

‘You’ll be fine,’ said Braden, and I knew I was in real trouble. ‘Just don’t look into the river too long.’ White-knuckle chaos, steeper than a Lytton supermarket, Steve and Bradens’ kayaks blinking in and out of sight in the stormwater tunnel of my vision. Braden told me the Stein would turn me into a drinking man. Nerves coiled like a steel spring as we rounded the last manky corner drop, I’ll take whatever’s going. ‘This one’s a light beer’, said Braden. How considerate, I thought. But I was tipsy as a top by can’s end. I checked the label. ‘Braden this ain’t no light beer.’ ‘But it’s pale, see?’ ‘So you meant light beer, as opposed to dark beer.’ ‘Yeah. Light beer,’ said Braden. ‘Sober now, in playboats surfing again at the secret spot, battle of the bigwater eddyline spiralling long into the evenings. A whirlpool slungshot Mary and I into the Rockies where old rafting comrades were rumoured to be hiding out. Andrew was there, the one who showed me how to raft, and Alex – we went through basic together. We consulted Andrew’s helmet-mounted crystal ball for a premonition of the Kicking Horse. ‘See that girl in the back?’ said Andrew. ‘She’s crying.’ We tried to blend in with the punters on the bus. They were cloned dressed like stormtroopers but when Mary and I looked down we found ourselves dressed in rebel. We rode in Andrew’s raft, along with four civilian passengers, five if you include the ashes of a relative kept in a small metal orb inside a drybag. ‘Here, take Nigel,’ said Andrew, and he handed me the sacred package while he rigged. The river was opaque with mud and minerals, cold as a warm blanket kicked aside in restless sleep, shallow as the sheet still clinging to your bones. We tossed and turned downstream. Suddenly I was in my kayak and Mary was in hers and the rafts were ahead of us and we were on our own. One of us got blasted from our boat in Shotgun and had a jolly swim, but I can’t recall who. We must have been on the way home when we pulled over by a public phone. Probably wanted beta on nearby river, the Illecillewaet, from a local rafting outfit. For some reason we had great difficulty pressing the buttons on the phone. A guide at the rafting base got impatient and answered before we could finish dialling the number. He said the river was clean of wood and jet engines for the most part so we set upon the glacial water, hands aching instantly through our thin neoprene gloves. Ran a mellow canyon and a few gentle drops down to a family picnic area, where we emerged like sasquai over the steep riverbank. Mary was blonde at that moment so she thumbed an insta-ride back to the car while I made myself useful building a z-drag mechanical advantage rope system anchored to a picnic table. The homeward highway unravelled endlessly before us like an audio cassette stripped for dental ribbon. Finally the road conformed to the Thompson and we saw the Gulp wave crashing, the foam pile undulating just right you understand. Two playboats and a cooler inched down the Thompson retaining wall suspended by a rope, and at the skyward end were Nice and I. We surfed and flailed respectively in the slow motion summer sun. The rest of the crew gravitated Gulpward like an meteorites to the desert. Motorists lined the highway, cameras trained on the wave, and eight or ten boaters chased their glory into the dusk. Lytton went from being the middle of nowhere to the centre of everything that mattered, and back to nowhere as night fell.
TIANJARA FALLS

Thomas, Lauren, Ben, Joao, Elaine & Josh

In mid June a crew of ANUMC climbers headed off to Tianjara Falls to swing around on some quality sandstone climbs. At this time of year the cliffline is shaded and cold, numb finger inducing cold, until mid morning when the sun comes around and hits the rock. After this the cliffline is in sun all day and stays warm, making it a pretty good winter crag.

Tianjara Falls is just a bit less than 2hrs from Canberra, so definitely day-tripable (as this trip did). The turn off to Tianjara is about a half hour out of Nerriga. It is one of the original crags of the region, with the first climbs occurring there in the 1970s, apparently even before the Nowra crags were discovered. A lot of the old routes have been retrobolted and hundreds of new lines have been established since. Not a great place to take beginners but good for those starting out and great if your climbing around grade 20 and above. There is good climbing starting around 15/16 and up with many of the climbs being in the low 20’s. The rock quality is generally good although as with any sandstone crag there is loose rock. As Tianjara is not climbed as often as other crags down in Nowra there is still the odd bit of hidden lose rock that has not been knocked off yet. On this trip I knocked a lump of rock off ‘Captain Australia and the Lemon Argonauts’ towards my belayer that was as big as her head, so helmets are a must at Tianjara. Also due to the low traffic, care should be taken with small holds which may just crumble to nothing in your hands.
Getting to the climbing areas involves an easy stroll along the top of the escarpment inspecting each gully you come across and trying to determine if it is the ‘descent’ gully you are after. We initially planned at starting the day at the ‘Bill James Testimonial Gully’ area but dismissed the first descent gully we came across as the wrong one. We took the second gully instead and ended up at the ‘Huskinson Homo and the Hill Top hoods’ area. We spent most of the day here enjoying the climbs on offer, with everyone in the group finding plenty of climbs at their level. Some the climbs in the high teens were found to be quite stiff for the grade. A few nice falls were had before slabby cruxes were conquered. Towards the end of the day we headed back to the ‘Bill James Testimonial Gully’ area, skirting along the base of the cliffline. We found some great lines here and I was quite disappointed we had missed it on the way in. With the sun sinking quickly we only had time for one climb each, so we all picked a climb and jumped on. The highlight of the day would have to be Josh taking is first ever lead fall off Grouple Guy, and what a whipper it was, a perfect fall. Grouple Guy almost defied Ben as well, who claimed it was absolutely sandbagged and nowhere near its given grade. Just around the arête of Grouple Guy was Thriller Direct, which was by far the best climb I did on the day. It had everything face, slab, overhang, delicate crimps and powerful jugs. By the time we had cleaned the routes and packed up, darkness had descended on us as we stumbled up out of the decent gully by torch light. It is a great feeling being tired, grubby and heading back in the dark, you know you have gotten the most out of the day.
The landscape alongside the Monaro Highway rushes past in a pale silence, all fog and frost and the dark limbs of trees. It is negative 6 degrees beyond the unblemished windows of the new Subaru, and the dawn is in no hurry to disperse the lingering signs of the imminent winter. The mood has been subdued by the warm car, the early start, and talk of the lost Canadian in the high country. Gone for over a week, there is little hope for him; a terrible loss for his family, and a reminder to the rest of us that the Australian alpine regions are not gentle.

Still, the day for us is all promise. The autumnal snows have been generous this year, and the omniscient BOM has foretold fine weather. A coffee stop at Jindabyne, and then our group of 10 was unloading the day packs and snowshoes at Charlotte Pass. Named after Charlotte Adams, the first European woman to summit Australia’s highest peak (Mount Kosciuszko, at 2,228 metres), these days it is the termination of the road that once provided vehicle access to this mountain. It is also the road closed in winter, and the opportunity to play in the snow a whole fortnight before the closure was one too good to be passed up by our trip leader.
This leader was infamous amongst the Australian National University Mountain- eering Club for his thorough preparations, his vast experience (he had led the most bushwalks and snowshoeing expeditions of anyone since the club’s founding in 1967, and had recently taken his 500th trip participant into the snow), and his photographic preference for naked people in the wilderness.

He was also entirely comfortable with talking about this, and gently asking people whether they would be enthusiastic to participate. It was so much a normal part of club culture that of the 10 of us, only the three who had never met this leader had not been photographed yet. This casual topic of conversation had been broached in the car ride, and before we strapped on snowshoes at Charlotte Pass there were already several keen walkers desirous of a private photography session in the snow.

It was actually a very convenient day for such activities, being gloriously clear and warm. The snow was a little old, and had an icy crust, but there was good cover and we didn’t have far to go. We passed the skeleton of an off-season chair lift, part of the Charlotte Pass ski resort – the oldest and highest in Australia. Brightly coloured helicopters flittered back and forth between Perisher Resort (further down the road) and Kosciuszko and Townsend, using the clear weather to continue the search for the missing Canadian.

We summited* Mt Stilwell (2059 metres), and though our ever-hungry bushwalking officer gnawed furiously at a sandwich we decided to press on before lunch. En route, the rest of the group slowly pottered through the snow whilst our leader and the first participant of the photography sessions went to a private, photogenic spot amidst the frozen rocks. Together again, the group tottered across Kangaroo Ridge, sinking somewhat when the snow belied the vegetation underneath, but otherwise moving forward quite effectively.
The landscape was a magnificent rolling carpet of shiny snow (the bright sun was reflected off the top layer of ice, making it look oddly plasticised) and dark rocks, and the view across the snow covered Main Range was splendid. Kosciuszko looked as rounded as ever, but what we could see of Townsend was dramatic, and the shawl of white gave even our highest mound a certain dignity. We were in the land of the top twenty tallest mountains in the country, with Mount Stilwell at number 21, with the others spread out in their best mottled whites before our snowshoed feet.

We gorged ourselves upon lunch in the early afternoon, admiring the view down the snowless Thredbo Valley and sipping hot Finnish blueberry soup. Another photo shoot behind some conveniently discreet rocks, before we began the meander back down to Charlotte Pass. The downhill sections led a few of us to test the force of gravity against the ability of the snowshoes’ crampons, or to go all in and slide down sections with our backs on the ground and our feet in the air. I was ever applying sunscreen across all exposed areas, and garishly pink zinc across my nose and cheekbones, in an effort to fend off the unhindered sun and reflected UV rays from my pale skin (an unfortunate but seemingly necessary partner to my hair).

We had made about 7.5 kilometres and 290 metres elevation gain in good time, considering the extended stops, so it was a comfortable day. The last of these stops was entirely appropriate, being a photography session with a Pole against the backdrop of Mount Kosciuszko; a mountain not only named by the Pole Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki after the Pole General Tadeusz Kościuszko, but pronounced incorrectly by almost all Australians †.

Once we had donned fresh socks back at the car, and finished faffing‡, we set off down the mountain. Dinner was taken at a pub in Cooma; a place of roaring wood fires, friendly staff and local artwork. The car ride on the return to Canberra was engaging, ranging from tattoos of punctuation marks to the Port Arthur massacre. We eventually bookended the day too: in fog, on the Monaro Highway, with the temperature below zero.
* Whilst “summitted” is not yet a word in the Oxford English Dictionary, I stand by its usage here: it makes sense, cannot be easily replaced with another word, and is informally used amidst hiking circles. Also, it seems a pretty cool word to me!

† Australians almost all pronounce our highest mountain as “Kozzi-osko”, whereas the Polish is closer to something like “Kosh-chewsh-ko”, though gradually more people seem to be attempting a pronunciation closer to the original. For that matter, we call the explorer who named it “Strez-lecki”, whereas in Polish it is more like “Stcher-lets-key”! Apologies to all the linguists who are hissing at my terrible phonetic spelling and blatant avoidance of IPA.

‡ Faff is most definitely a word, and has been since the Victorian era (appropriately for me, as a researcher of neo Victorian literature). It is very commonly bandied about in outdoor adventure circles, meaning to waste time dithering about.

The end!
Ingredients:

1 pkt of green apples
2 cinnamon sticks
pinch of cinnamon powder
3 tbsp brown sugar
1/2 school carton of sultanas
water (just enough to almost cover the apples)
1 pkt of scotch finger biscuits

Peel apples and chop them into quarters.
Place in billy with everything (except bickies).
Boil until apples are soft (not super mushy).
Pour out 2/3 of the water (nice to drink, if you're into that)
and pull out the cinnamon sticks.
Layer or crush the bickies on top of the apples and continue
to simmer with the lid on until the water has reduced down
to a desired consistency.

This is best for car camping (as the apples are too bulky to
carry), but it works just as well with dried apples and sub-
stituting the sticks for more cinnamon powder.

Done!

Angie
After an aborted first attempt - due to one of the worst seasons in memory - the Main Range Extravaganza took place over 3 days from the 24th to the 26th of August. Those dates had been chosen to coincide with a reasonably full moon in the hope that a few people could make a nighttime ascent and have camp set up for those arriving on Saturday morning.

Due to moving house, being in Tasmania, and my general laziness, about 7 days notice was given for the trip. The date was almost postponed again due to the mountaineers throwing up a last minute mountaineering workshop on the same weekend, but we eventually decided to merge the trips.

The forecast was looking great with consistent snow over the weekend prior and going into Monday. There was also a 30cm blizzard forecast for Thursday with it clearing up on Friday afternoon and then being clear for the weekend. The blizzard got pushed back to Friday and with 50km/h winds forecast for Friday night we decided to scrap the nighttime ascent and instead spend the night at Peter’s place in Jindabyne. The next step was to inform Peter that he would have ~18 people sleeping on his floor, which he seemed to take well.
Unfortunately the 30cm blizzard became a drenching of rain which washed away a lot of the new snow. This had been a pattern this season with almost every good snow followed by rain. Fortunately there was enough of a base this time to survive the downpour and there was still good cover down to Guthega. The rain did make for an amazing landscape of snow carved with ribbon-like erosion patterns.

We woke up at 5am on Saturday morning and were on the road at 5:45am. ANUMC Alumni, Mic, was picked up at the Thredbo turn-off and we reconvened at Guthega. Vague plans of splitting into groups based on speed descended into faffing and indecisiveness. We eventually started skiing from Guthega at 7:30am and after taking 40min to get to the hill past the first bridge, we finally split the 15-strong group into three groups. The first group was across Illawong bridge by 9am and at the campsite at 10:35am. The remainder arrived by 11:15am and all 9 tents (including the Hilleberg Party Tent) were set up by 12:20pm.

Myself, Mic, Laure, Pierre-Do, Garrick and Lea headed off for a ski, whilst the 9 mountaineers faffed about in the snow (something they call “skills sessions”). We headed up to the Twynam saddle then up to the top of Mt Twynam, where we found a small mouse-like animal shivering and trying to shelter in the trig point. It wasn’t afraid of people but we didn’t interfere with it. It was obviously struggling but we decided to leave it as we might be doing it more harm by moving it away from its territory, or it could have been an invasive species. We found it dead the next day and looking at photos, it was probably a mountain pygmy possum (a very endangered species), so maybe we should have rescued it.

At the top of Twynam, Mic turned back to meet up with two Sydney friends who were due soon. The rest of us skied westwards to ski the bowl above Blue Lake. Laure, Pierre-Do and Garrick started with the easier run down the North gully, whilst myself and Lea traversed across to the western slopes for some steeper runs. The snow wasn’t very good, but at least it was soft, although the undulations from the water erosion made things interesting on the steeper parts. We got 3 runs in before the clouds came in so we started back to camp via Blue Lake to see if there was any ice worth climbing.

Blue Lake was completely covered, but there were large cracks all around the edge so we traversed around the western edge of the lake. There was a fairly large avalanche underneath the cornice that had left a large and deep debris field all the way down to the lake. We took our skis off, strapped them to our packs and started the walk up the northern gully. The gully turned out to be very icy and we were forced to cut steps, so it took us almost an hour to make it to the top of the Twynam saddle.

Saturday night saw the Party Tent come alive, with 13 people squeezing into the tent to cook dinner and share stories, Tim Tams, and a potent concoction of condensed milk, chocolate melts and marshmallows. We finally called it a night at 9:30pm and everyone filtered back to their tents to rest for the next day’s adventures.
We awoke on Sunday morning to find the soft snow turned to mostly ice. My plan had been to ski Twynam West Spur, but the conditions weren't promising. Laure didn't bother leaving camp and Garrick gave up during the ascent up Twynam as it was particularly icy. The mountaineers set off for another day of making snow castles, or whatever it is that they do. This left myself, Pierre-Do, Lea and the Sydney crew of Mic, Tim and Chris.

It was quite windy on top of Twynam and really hard and icy. There were discussions of heading back to camp but in the end we decided to ski out to look at the Sentinel and hope that the sun would have softened the slopes of Twynam up by the time we came back. Unfortunately the Sentinel was covered in cloud, but there were good views of Twynam West Spur. There were two avalanches underneath the cornices, with one fanning out to be at least 200m wide. There were the distinctive water erosion patterns in the snow, so the avalanches had occurred before Friday's rain.

The group headed back and around the northern side of Twynam, which we hoped would have softened from the sun. It was still pretty hard, but it was an easier route down. We did find a 100m stretch of soft snow which the Sydney crew skied every last inch of during the afternoon. Laure, Pierre-Do and Garrick packed up and made an early exit, whilst Lea and I awaited the return of the mountaineers. The icy conditions prompted Lea to change her plans to stay through Monday, so she also packed up. The only ANUMC people now staying for Monday were Koen, Josh and I but our numbers were bolstered by the arrival of 3 more of Mic's Sydney crew - Jiri, Mitch and Chantelle. Jiri was keen on Twynam West Spur so he headed over there with Mic. They returned not long after, having called it off after suffering the icy climb up to Twynam.

The mountaineers returned at 2pm, packed up and left. We continued to ski near the campsite until we'd used up every last bit of soft snow available and then retreated to the Party Tent for an early dinner. There were only 9 in the tent tonight, which made for a lot less condensation (and associated rain) within the tent. After the sugar cocktail from Saturday night, we were treated to the more refined tastes of the Sydney crew with Greek sesame seed desserts and Czech liqueurs. The conversation, however, was more of the sugary-marshmallow-goo variety, as we were filled in on the latest SUCanoe gossip. We had a much earlier night, with most of us in bed by 7:30pm.

On Monday, Mic, Jiri and Tim decided for another attempt on Twynam West Spur, whilst Koen, Josh, Chris and I headed to Blue Lake for a few hours of ice climbing. We climbed the popular spot near the bottom, just to the right of the northern gully. We just set up a top rope with two T-slots and did a few climbs each.

It was Josh and Koen's first time ice climbing so we gave them a few tips and then I went up first to give a bit of a demo. Chris jumped on after swapping harnesses with Koen and he took a more difficult line closer to the point of the outcrop. His first axe swing made a hollow noise and put a 2m horizontal crack in the curtain of ice he was about to climb. Unperturbed, he continued and put another large horizontal crack in the curtain with his right foot. He made it up this first 3m face without any troubles, though. After re-positioning the rope, Chris continued up the next 4m face without too much trouble.
I then had a go at this new line and decided to give the first curtain a tap with the hammer. It fell apart easily, with the ice only being 1 inch thick and 2 inches away from the rock. I was able to get up the thicker part that Chris had used, however. I made it up the second face with a few nervous moments and topped out to put the rope back into the easier corner for the next person. My hands began to hurt during the lower off and did so for the next few minutes - it was due to me death-gripping the ice axes and cutting off the circulation in my hands.

I took Chris’s camera and started running about trying to get some good photos. I misstepped and took a 20m slide down the hill - headfirst on my back - with fortunately no injuries. Koen then had a go at the harder line and took several falls, but he persisted with it and eventually made it to the top. Chris finished up with a quick dash up the easier line and de-rigged.

We got back to camp and had lunch then started packing up. Mic, Jiri and Tim arrived not long after and had found soft snow at Twynam West Spur. They’d had a great time and got at least 3 runs in each. The whole camp was packed up and Chris carried down our rope whilst Jiri carried back the Party Tent. We left camp at 2:30pm and were in Guthega not long after 4pm.

The snow was pretty ordinary but at least the weather was good, with wind being the only complaint. It was great to get so many people up onto the main range and I’m pretty sure everyone had a great time. It’s definitely a trip that the club should try to repeat.
Where: Morton National Park
(in the Budawangs)

Bushwalk: Sturgiss not Elliott

When: Saturday 8th June -
        Monday 10th of June 2013

Trip Leader: Mika Kontiainen

Author: Helena Campens
Three fantastic days hiking in the wilderness!

Finding our way through dense rainforest, crossing rivers with or without shoes, climbing under and over fallen trees, suddenly ending up in the middle of beautiful landscape with rising rocks, walking on cliffs with head torches, following the smell of campfire, telling fairytale stories at dinner, sleeping under the stars... It was one of the best overnight hiking trips ever with the ANUMC, thanks to both Mika as a fantastic energetic trip leader and the great cheerful hiking group!

Did you know:

• That Mika is a wonderful story and poem teller?

• That he told the story of the Three Sisters in the Blue Mountains so vividly that I’ll never throw a stone anymore from a cliff?

• That I felt like Snow White with the seven dwarfs as we were walking on a cliff at night with our head torches on?

• That Daniel definitely had the brightest head torch, but that Alex saved our lives with knowing the difference between West and East?

• That the difference in landscape – from lush rainforest and damp swamps to open fields and weathered rocks – was so breathtaking, that we couldn’t resist exploring it all and to do so even climbed up the rocky face of Mt Sturgiss with ropes?

• That it was nearly dark when we arrived on the rocky plateau of Mt Sturgiss, leaving us with not enough time to get back to our camping spot in day light?

• That Vika, Bec and I, the girls in the group ;-) , always managed to be ready in time in the mornings and each time we had to wait for the guys for at least 40 minutes more?

• But that the guys were amazing in maintaining a fast walking and that I was impressed by Leith’s perseverance as he just kept going no matter how exhausted he was?

• That everybody’s perseverance was rewarded and reinforced by Constantin’s ample chocolate supplies at the end of the last day?

• That I wished that weekend had never ended?
SRI CHIMNOY CENTENARY 100km Trail Run
Training session: Regatta point - Mt Taylor (First leg of the Centenary 100)
01-09-2013

Laure Gauthiez Putallaz, Janet Street, Harold Brown, Mark Euston, Pierre-Dominique Putallaz

Editor’s note: The Centenary 100km Trail Run consisted of four legs which could be completed in a team or by one person. This article by ANUMC Vice President Clare Paynter is about a training run for the first leg of the marathon, with a map below. Since this article was written the ANUMC successfully completed the 100km run on the 21st of September which is a huge achievement!

Sri Chimnoy 100km Trail Run

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Ascent Descent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leg 1</td>
<td>23.7km 651m 450m</td>
<td>Regatta Point to Waldock St, Mount Taylor north side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg 2</td>
<td>30.1km 599m 677m</td>
<td>Waldock St, Mount Taylor to National Arboretum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg 3</td>
<td>23.5km 410m 446m</td>
<td>National Arboretum to Cnr Majura &amp; Phillip Ave, Dickson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg 4</td>
<td>23.5km 695m 723m</td>
<td>Cnr Majura &amp; Phillip Ave (Dickson) to Regatta Point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Map of the first leg
While I was still faffing around with maps at the office with Pierre-Do, Janet, Mark and Harry had ample time to enjoy the lakeside, together with a few thousand Canberreans happily frisbeeing, barbecuing or just lying in the sun.  
2:30pm, the trip leader finally makes it to the start point (with maps) and we can take off for our running adventure! Our aim is to run the first leg of the upcoming 100km Centenary trail race. The trail log available on the internet measures 23.5km, so we start at a comfortable pace across the lake, taking with us variable amounts of lollies, gels and water. We climb up to Parliament house, enjoying the water fountains on the way, and follow on Melbourne Avenue as a nice warm up to the many hills to come. The first of them, Red Hill starts with an enjoyable equestrian trail towards the South, leading way to a steep uphill section. These up and downs are unfortunately too much for Pierre-Do’s knee, forcing him to retrace his steps to the car. The rest of us continue towards the summits café, where we find the last water tap (and toilets) on the way. At that point, we are running for 1h and feeling strong!
20km and 2h30 in our run, we proceed to traversing Farrer ridge towards Mt Taylor. The sun is now quite low on the horizon and the kangaroos wear a golden aura. The trail is very good if not completely flat and allows some faster running. The four of us meet at the base of Taylor, ready for our last challenge. Mark will be the only one to run straight to the top, I prefer walking the steps and running some sections to try and relax the legs. Janet and Harry follow, for an overall time just over 3h30. Mount Taylor has fantastic views over the city, Black Mountain and the lake now seem so far away... This is however not enough to keep us warm that early in the season: we walk down in the dark towards the road and Pierre-Do who has come to give us a very precious ride!

Great adventure in the middle of the city possible only in Canberra, a nice itinerary for a walk or a run. Needless to say, ANUMC teams will come prepared for the race!
The Arapiles, Victoria

Arius Bouldering problem
ANUMC INVADES ARAPILES
Spring 2013

Wait a minute, I can’t be bothered writing an article! We went climbing at Arapiles. It was great. Here are some photos! Hope you enjoyed the EPIC. The End!

The Editor

P.S. There were no rope-cutting incidents ala Simon Yates (below)

[Image: Cyanide and Happiness © Explosm.net]

[Image: The crew]