



FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER



Hike to Yellowwood Cave, 12 February. Picture by **Chris Kleynhans**.

Introduction from the Editor

There's a lot of talk about mountains in this issue—even for us. Climbing them, bolting them, drawing them, measuring them, conquering them... it's all here in these pages.

John Black is back on page 3 with an update on the K2 expedition, and on page 5 Roger Natrass tells us about the resurrection of Delville Wood crag. On page 8, Jonathan Newman shares his challenges on South Africa's ultras, and on page 10 Peter Slingsby invites us to contribute to his new project in mapping the Berg. On page 12, Barrie Ridgway—one of our number lost somewhere Down Under—talks about summiting Mt Bimberi, and on page 15 we meet our new members.

Let's head in.

~ Karen Runge

UPCOMING MEETS:

MARCH

Saturday 26th - Sunday 27th

Sentinel Peak Climb
Sterkfontein Dam Camp
Carl Dreyer

Sunday 27th

Climbing: Dry Mouth Guild (DMG)
Ringwood
Gavin Raubenheimer

APRIL

Friday 1st - Monday 4th

Cambalala House Work Meet
Cathedral Peak
Clem Robins

Sunday 24th

Rescue Cliff Training
Umgeni Valley
Carl Dreyer

(Kindly refer to the latest Meet Sheet for more information on all upcoming meets and club events.)

From Under the President's Desk

Dear Members,

The Month of Love saw our ranks climb back up to 293, with Lorrian Wells, Liam King, Lloyd Anderson and Kanika Sinha joining the section. A warm KZN Section welcome to them all!

February's focus was primarily on the continued AGM preparations, with the final documents and a list of the persons nominated for committee positions sent out to members. Members would have seen a notable omission from the nomination list: Gavin Raubenheimer. After 16-odd years at the helm, and a few extra serving on the committee, Gavin stepped down from the position of Rescue Convenor at the last Rescue Subcommittee meeting. The Committee would like to thank Gavin for his service to our section, and we will miss his valuable insights. Gavin remains as Vice President. His departure has led to the appointment of two co-convenors—Colin McCoy and Paul Roth, will now be sharing convenor duties. Rescue will maintain a single vote on the committee, however.



With not much else to report on for this month, I thought I'd share a century-old snippet and some thoughts from *The Annual of the Mountain Club of Natal, No. 2, 1922*. The 1921 AGM was held at the 'Maritzburg Town Hall on the 10th May, where G.T. Plowman was elected as the President. Membership was at 217, with a net gain of 32 from the previous year.

"The Hon. Treasurer reports the Club in a sound financial position, showing a balance at the Bank of £46 1s. 6d. There are no outstanding debts."

The Club badge was decided on, and Sentinel Peak was chosen. These badges were available for sale in silver at a price of 10s. Committee members' attendance at meetings was recorded against a possible attendance number—e.g. *"Dr J.W. Bews attended 2 out of a possible 6 meetings."*

I wonder how our committee would feel about being named and possibly shamed for their attendance? Although it must be said that attendance is pretty good all round.

Well members, that's all for this time. As more of us gear up for the fast-approaching best of the Berg seasons, remember to think outside—no box required.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carl".

Carl Dreyer

President

KZN Section, MCSA

GEAR AND GRIT: Getting Ready to Conquer K2

by John Black

In December 2021, we interviewed John Black to discuss his plans to summit K2 later this year. He and his teammates (MCSA members Warren Eva, Robby Kojetin and Allan Dickinson) are hard at work with preparations. Here's an update from the man himself.



March 14th marks exactly three months before we fly to Pakistan to begin what promises to be a seriously challenging expedition: climbing K2. After thinking, planning and saving for many years, the dream is starting to feel like a reality. And that reality is both exhilarating and terrifying.

Like most things in the world right now, our expedition has not been untouched by the events unfolding in Ukraine. My South African partners and I planned to climb semi-independently, sharing logistics with other climbers from around the world. A few of those other climbers were from Ukraine. As things stand now, it's unlikely that they will be able to join us. No matter which way the war in Ukraine goes, it seems inevitable that by the time we head out to climb, the country will either still be at war or will be focused on rebuilding. My thoughts go out to the

Ukrainian and Russian mountaineers who don't want a war, but have to deal with one regardless.

Focusing on what we can control, we have been predominantly concerned with two aspects of preparation: Gear and Grit. That is, equipment and fitness. As it turns out, securing the specialist equipment we need has not been easy, either. As an indirect consequence of Covid, disruptions to global supply chains have significantly challenged the outdoor equipment industry. Most brands—and by extension manufacturers—have (understandably) prioritised the production of their most important commercial and profitable lines. This means that getting hold of high-altitude clothing, footwear and other specialised gear has been a real challenge. Fortunately, with support from some of my contacts in the industry, we should be okay—*just!*

Getting fitter and honing our training is one aspect of preparation that is within our control. Although, that does not mean to say it's without its own challenges. We all have wives, children, family and friends who we want to spend time with. We all have jobs or business that demand our time, attention and energy. None of us has yet managed to turn professional athlete (I think we may have missed that boat!), and fitting all of that in as well as finding time to train is difficult. But

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Phonix Capture: Running near Mont-aux-Sources.

you cannot go to K2 unfit, unhealthy or overweight. I've maintained a fairly consistent fitness level for many years now, kicking things into a higher gear when preparing for an expedition, a priority race or a new challenge. The degrees and types of fitness K2 requires are quite different to anything challenges like the Comrades or Ironman might demand, and we need to train accordingly.

I find that running still gets me the best bang for my buck, and by "buck" I mean time. As such, a fair amount of my fitness routine is focused on this, and I try to maintain around 60-70km of running a week. This is a mix of "easy" miles, speed and hill sessions, and from time to time I'll throw in a proper race. These miles are split around 4-5 runs a week. Running is a great base for cardiovascular training, and helps build some endurance. Of course where time allows, a good long hike in

the mountains with a heavy backpack is also important! I complement my running routine with 1-2 sessions a week in the gym with a personal trainer, focusing on core and strength training. On top of that, I try to do one session a week at the City Rock indoor climbing gym. The sessions at City Rock are an excellent form of stretching, and are great for upper-body and core strength training—as well as for climbing itself, of course. The other advantage of going to City Rock is that I can go with my wife and son: I get a good training session in for myself, whilst sharing the world of climbing with the whole family. They both thoroughly enjoy climbing indoors.



Three of our team climbing on the Sentinel.

Over the next month or two, we will continue to remain focused on training, staying healthy, getting our kit together and making sure that our logistics are all taken care of. Watch this space as the countdown continues. ▲



WHAT'S ON AT CAMBALALA?

A Note from Clem Robins

The next work meet will be held from April 1 to April 4. On top of general maintenance, we need to cut the grass, paint the pozi hut, repair the roof above the front veranda (water leak), and finish painting the ceilings.

We desperately need scaffolding and long ladders to be donated, as these have to be brought in from Durban every time, and logistically it would be a huge help to have our own there in-situ at future work meets.

To celebrate having the hut for 50 years, we will be holding a party in September 2023. There's lots to prepare, and many work meets will be needed in the runup—more on that later.

Bookings are now open for May onwards.

Thrills and Drills: *Rebolting Delville Wood*

By Roger Nattrass

In the November 2021 issue, Gerald Camp told us about Delville Wood crag and the work being done to put it back on the map. Here's a rundown on their latest efforts, from one of our most prolific rock climbers involved in the project.

“ When we started placing bolts in the early 90s, the trend of the day was to use mild steel expansion bolts, and homemade steel hangers which we hacked out of store-bought angle iron. Even then we wondered if we should be using stainless steel—but according to PhD metallurgist and climber, Stuart Middlemiss: “At least with mild steel, you can see when a bolt is rubbish.” Stainless steel, on the other hand, looks good—until the day it fails from Stress Corrosion Cracking (SCC: the growth of crack formation in a corrosive environment).



Fast-forward to 2020, and Delville Wood’s bolts look worse than rubbish. It’s interesting how micro climates from crag to crag (or even wall to wall) affect the corrosion rates. Perhaps the worst venue for this is the Ice Box at The Powerhouse in Kloof Gorge. The classic *Destination Anywhere* was re-equipped a few years ago, after some of the bolts had corroded enough to fall off the wall under their own weight!

Delville Wood is an underrated and underdeveloped crag. After a burst of activity in 1994 and 1995, barely half of the crag’s potential had been uncovered. Interest then waned, as attention switched to the Wave and Rasta caves. Climbers did occasionally visit Delville Wood over the next two decades, but tales of rusted bolts and anchors soon put paid to that. A pity, as the crag offers loads of unclimbed rock, all-day shade and spectacular vistas. And so in December 2021, myself, Johnny Gilks, Gerald Camp and James Barnes decided to resurrect this venue. Summer in KZN makes for miserable climbing conditions, so it’s a good time to get some crag housework done. Re-bolting is a big undertaking under any circumstances—but with no direct access to this crag’s heavily vegetated summit, we had to lead up each route to establish static work lines. No one took any falls, though on *Power Struggle* (24), I clipped the final chains—and one came away from the wall in a shower of rust!

THE WORK THUS FAR		
Route Name	Grade	New Bolts
Armed Resistance	23	8
*Under Fire	19	13
Fallen Majesty	23	10
*Missile Count	26/7	10
*Defcon 1	27	10
*Bazentin Ridge	21	12
Red Baron	25	10
Incest Ed	26	10
From Zero to Hero	27	9
Legend of the Lost	25	10
Cynics Symposium	23	12
*First Brigade	16	13
Siamang Blue	31	5
Big Bertha	20	8
Worm Race	14	7
Power Struggle	25	11
Arms Race	26	10

*New Route RN

Once a rappel line is established, one has to consider the new placements. This is an opportunity to correct



misplaced bolts and right any other such old wrongs. It can be quite challenging, as the first climber up often has taken the best placements. One also has to maintain the style and experience of the route—such as preserving scary lead outs. Even with the new bolts placed, the job is not done until the old ironmongery has been removed. If you're lucky, the nut has sufficient structure remaining to accept a spanner—but this is usually not the case. Vice grips may be necessary, or even an angle grinder (beware: these will cut your rope like a hot knife through butter). Once the hanger is off, the bolt should be cut flush with the wall. Glue-in bolts (like those sponsored by the club) are a high-grade stainless steel, devoid of any threads (a potential weak point) and most importantly, they are not placed under any tension. This means they are less prone to SCC. We trust these placements will last a hundred years, and the perishing glue will probably be the major determinant of their longevity.

To date we have placed 170 new bolts, a portion of which were donated by the Club. Myself and *Out with the old (bolts with hangers), in with the new (stainless steel glue-in rings).*

Johnny donated the glue (R350 per tube!), and I provided the top anchor hardware consisting of mailons and stainless steel rings/links. We also constructed a new scramble using 18 glue-in rungs, steel grab cables, and rope balustrades. We encourage members to visit the crag and join in developing new routes and restoring old classics. This crag is packed with potential for either endeavour.” ▲



STAY AT CAMBALALA COTTAGE

Cottage:

R100 per night (required as deposit)

Additional fees:

Club members: R70/night

Non-Club members: R120/night

Children over the age of 14 are considered adults. Deposit to be paid at time of reservation. Charges include gas.

Contact Clem: 084 500 4666
 clemnolarobins@gmail.com

WANTED: HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT ?



Guthriea capensis a.k.a. “Hidden flower”

WHAT IS IT?

- A plant that is pollinated by lizards! (and maybe mice?)
- Small, cryptic: 10cm high, up to 30 cm diameter, green
- Found high in the SA mountains: Drakensberg, Sneeuberg, usually 1800 – 3000masl
- Flowers between December and April
- Leaves grow in spring & summer; may be absent in winter.
- Likes rocky areas, dolerite, basalt

WHERE IS IT? Likely locations:

1. Kamberg: cliffs opposite camp?
2. Organ pipes/ Roland's cave
3. Sehlabathebe: dark loam in road cutting
4. Gateshead/ Naude's Nek
5. More Karoo sites??
6. Anywhere you see *Guthriea* plants in the 'berg...

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you see plants, please contact the research team with

- GPS co-ords
- Estimated number of plants
- Can we camp nearby?
- Leave cameras safely?
- Did you see any lizards or signs of mouse activity?

CONTACT Ruth ruthcozien@gmail.com 076 304 6769

And please share this poster with any other mountain lovers who might be able to help us!

MORE INFO

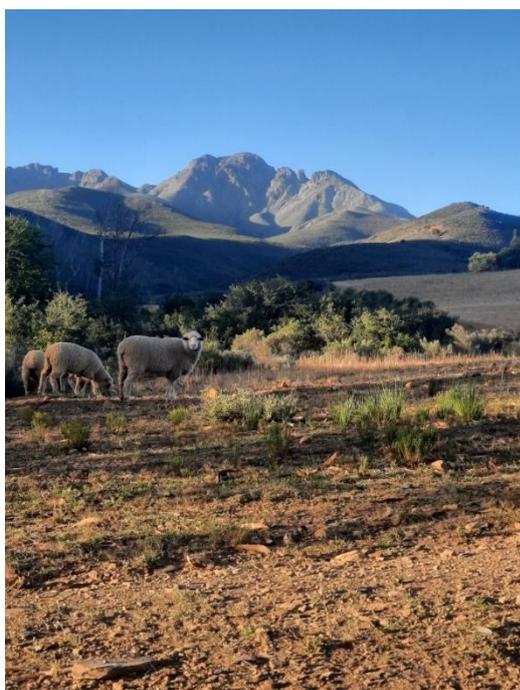
UKZN Pollination Lab website QR code → <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/nov/25/is-it-a-bird-is-it-a-bee-no-its-a-lizard-pollinating-south-africas-hidden-flower-aoe>



Climb Every Mountain:

Bagging South Africa's Ultras

By Jonathan Newman



There are many ways to measure the significance of a mountain summit—from the scientific to the subjective. For me, topographic prominence has always been the measure that made the most sense: ascertaining the height of a mountain or hill's summit relative to the lowest contour line encircling it, but containing no higher summit within it. A mountain with prominence above 1500m is called an ultra-prominence mountain. Based on satellite surveys, there are approximately 1526 of these on the planet. South Africa only has two ultras: Du Toits Peak and Seweweekspoort, both in the Western Cape. The Drakensberg has one ultra: Thabana Ntlenyana in Lesotho.

In November 2020, I embarked on a mission to climb all mountains in South Africa with at least 1000m topographic prominence: a total of 24. The logic behind the challenge is simple: it requires climbing various obscure and hard-to-reach peaks, many of which have limited information available regarding access and route. I managed to summit three in November 2020, and a further five in September 2021.

In December 2021, I set out on yet another trip to climb more of these summits. This trip included Compassberg (2502m), the highest mountain in South Africa outside of the Drakensberg; Mannetjiesberg (1995m), the highest mountain in the Kammanassie Mountains; Blesberg (2069m), the highest point in the East Swartberg; and Seweweekspoort (2325m), an ultra and the highest point in the Western Cape. Along the way, I also summited Murch Point (the highest point in the Northern Cape) and Desolation Peak (a mountain outside Graaff Reinet).



Dear Diary... Notes from on and off the trail

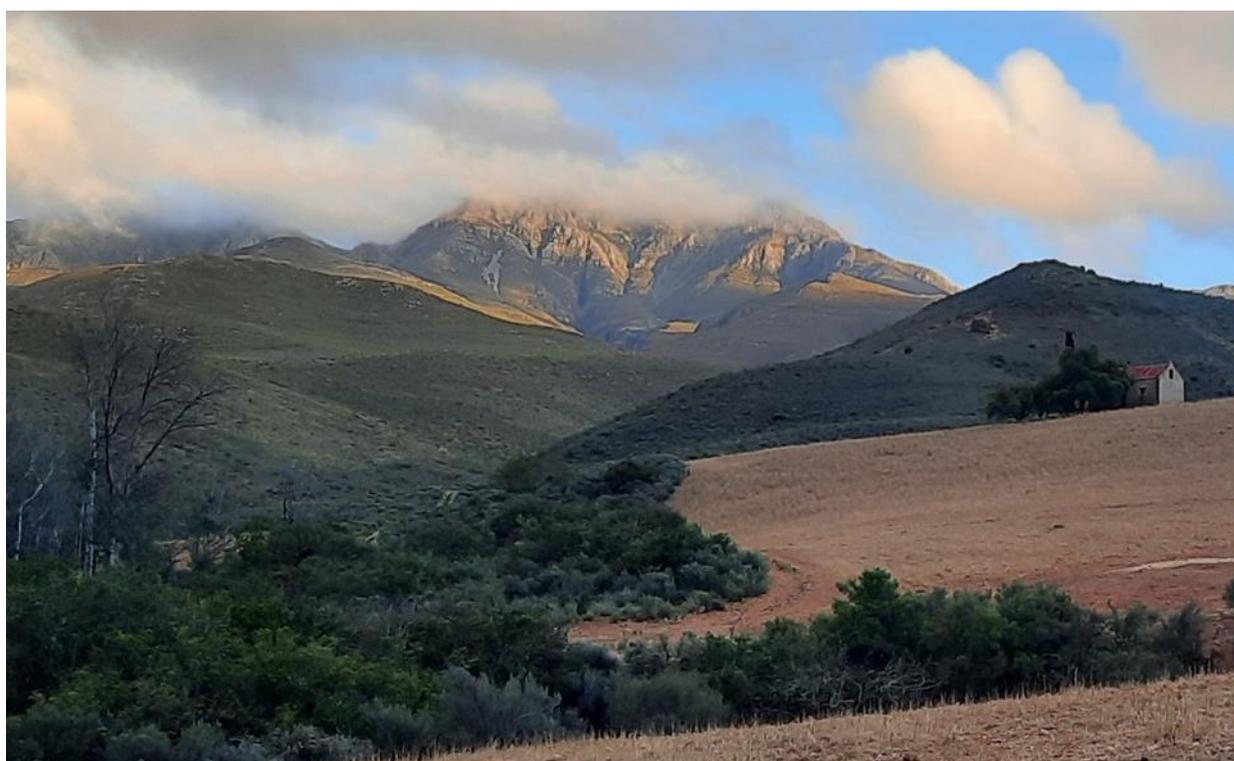
Day 1 14 Dec	Drove from Midvaal to Middleburg.
Day 2 15 Dec	Climbed Compassberg (2502m, highest point in SA outside the Drakensberg) and Murch Point (2156m, highest point in Northern Cape).
Day 3 16 Dec	Did some sight-seeing around Graaff Reinet. Technically I summited Desolation Peak, which is a mountain, but there's a road almost to the summit.
Day 4 17 Dec	Climbed Mannetjiesberg (1995m), highest point in the Kammanassie Mountains.
Day 5 18 Dec	Transit day; no notable hiking.
Day 6 19 Dec	Climbed Blesberg (2069m, highest point in the East Swartberg).
Day 7 20 Dec	Travel day. Saw a lot of ostriches; ate some, too.
Day 8 21 Dec	Seweweekspoot (2325m, highest point in the Western Cape, and one of only two ultra-prominence mountains in SA).
Day 9 22 Dec	Drove back home.

Some of the mountains along the way have been absolute gems that are rarely visited, such as Roodezandsberg outside Tulbagh. Others, as mentioned, are hard to reach. The first time I even saw the top section of Mannetjiesberg, I was less than 1km from the summit!

To date, I have summited 12 of the 24 peaks, with seven left in the Western Cape, three in Limpopo, and two in the Eastern Cape. I have no timeline in mind for finishing the project, but it has been very enjoyable to date! ▲

Along with newsletter updates, you can keep track of Jonathan's journeys on his blog:

<https://jonathantheghaznavid.wordpress.com/>





Mapping the Berg

By Peter Slingby

I spent seven years of my life, from 1978 to 1985, mapping the Drakensberg by hand. I was a Cape-based cartographer whose Berg experience was limited to a few expeditions in my student years (on two of these accompanied by my pet cat—but that’s another story!) and in those days, this undertaking had to be accomplished with no digital aids at all. No computers, no GPS, no such thing as a cell phone. Every single contour line had to be hand-drawn. Each step on every path had to be surveyed on foot—though we did cadge a short trip on an SAAF helicopter to locate some distant caves!

The then-Department of Forestry managed huge swathes of the mountains, including large catchment areas. The KwaZulu homeland governed the ‘Upper Tugela Location’ (essentially the Mnweni area), while the rest fell under the Natal Parks Board. The only detailed maps available were the official 1:50 000 topo series, and some of the older maps were still contoured in English feet. The need for a dedicated set of hiking maps was clear. We decided upon six maps, scale 1:50 000, to be printed on Tyvek waterproof paper, which was then new on the market. Hill-shading (the 3D effect that today takes but the press of a button) was added to the maps by making models. 100m contours were cut out of thin plywood with a jigsaw, moulded with Plaster of Paris, and then photographed in bright sunlight with the best angle chosen for the best effect. We completed about six weeks of field work for each sheet, and by 1985 the series was complete. I have no idea how many kilometres we walked, never mind the hours of labour!

By 1994 two editions of the maps had been printed when tragedy struck. The films used to print the maps were lost when our printer moved their premises. Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife asked us for reprints—and we could not provide. To redraw everything from scratch was impossible for me at the time, and so the authorities commissioned the present ‘Geomaps’ series.

Over the years I have been nagged and nagged to reissue my original maps. The ‘Geomaps’ have not been revised for some 20 years. In 2019, my son Jasper and I flew to KZN for a most constructive meeting with EKZNW at Midmar Dam, in the same hall where I had gathered 40 years earlier with Forestry and the NPB. We and EKZNW agreed to investigate the possibility of a new Slingsby Map series. Then Covid intervened and our project (like millions of others around the world) was forced on hold. The matter rested until December last year, when yet another email arrived, begging for a reissue of those original maps. It was the final push for me, and the new series was born.



If any MCSA members who would like to be involved, either by providing or by checking data, please contact slingsby@icon.co.za. All contributions will be acknowledged in the final product. See our other maps at: <https://slingsby-maps.myshopify.com/>

We are currently working on three double-sided maps, roughly covering the same areas as the originals. If we can print on waterproof material, we will. We have had a fantastic response from hikers and climbers to our appeal for information and suggestions, and have been flooded with data of the highest quality. Karl Beath donated his brilliant photographs as cover pictures. Map 1 is effectively complete, and Map 2 [Cathedral Peak/Monk’s Cowl/Injisuthi] should be ready by April. We aim to have the full set completed sometime before the end of 2022. ▲

July Camp Needs YOU

The July Camp Sub-Committee needs new members to help prepare and run the KZN Section's annual July Camps of the future. We are looking for new recruits to share fresh ideas and contribute to making this unique event not only more memorable, but also more appealing to the tastes and interests of all Club members.

This special camp has been running for over 100 years. For the event, a base camp is set up in the mountains, with all cooking and catering taken care of—offering attendees 10 carefree days to enjoy the mountains however they like, exploring their surroundings or simply communing in the joy of wild spaces. Be it nature walks, hikes, birdwatching or bouldering, this no-limits event offers something for everyone, and anyone is welcome. Serving on the committee means sharing in an experience that is quite unlike anything else in the Section, or the MCSA—and it's fun!

New sub-committee members will need to attend 5-8 meetings before the next July Camp, with one of these taking place on-site to finalise details with the farmer/landowner or KZN Wildlife officials concerned. In addition to helping in the preparation and planning of the camp, new members will also join the advance party, where you will be on site for three days before the event starts. The advance party is responsible for loading/transporting/unloading equipment and food, establishing base camp, and organising the food tents. You will also need to be available on the first and last weekends of the 10-day July Camp, and the following Monday for dismantling and packing up, and to help return everything to Howick for storage.

Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a vibrant new part of July Camp—we are passionate about this event, and we welcome you!

WhatsApp: 082 538 5389

Phone: 033 239 2374

Rikki Abbott Wedderburn





IT'S NOT THE BERG-IT'S BIMBERI!

A South African Hikes Australia

By Barrie Ridgway

At 1319 metres, Mt Bimberri in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is the highest point on the Brindabella Range. The western border of the ACT runs along the crest of the Brindabellas, and crosses the summit of Bimberri. This is high mountain country (well, high for Australia), but alpine nonetheless. Winter sees lots of snowfall, and the summer weather is often unpredictable. My friend Terrylea Reynolds had never been up Mt Bimberri, despite many years' experience on the Australian trails—and so we arranged a trip where we could cross that off her list.

Whilst one can walk to Mt Bimberri from the east (through Namadgi National Park and along the Australian Alps Walking Track, or AAWT), it is quicker and easier to go there from the western side via the village of Adaminaby, past Tantangara Dam and to a locked gate on the Pockets Hut Fire Trail. From there, it's about 4km to Oldfields Hut on the Goodradigbee River, at the base of Mt Bimberri.

Terrylea called for me at about 8:30am on Thursday, 4 February. We took the backroad to Adaminaby, and soon turned off the Snowy Mountains Highway and onto the dirt road. Shortly after rounding the dam, we were on Pockets Hut Fire Trail, arriving at the locked gate at lunch time. It was a beautiful, sparkling day in the high country. The broad, almost level valley was green and bespangled with wild flowers. A crystal-clear mountain stream chuckled away nearby, and we set off along Pockets Hut Fire Trail. After only about 2km, we came to the junction with the AAWT. This section is officially known as Murrays Gap Fire Trail, and we turned off onto it, climbing the long, steep hill over the ridge and down to Oldfields Hut.

Oldfields is an old cattlemen's hut from the days when farmers would bring their cattle up into the high country for the summer. It sits in a lovely position facing Mts Bimberri and Murray on the gentle, lower slopes of the Goodradigbee Valley. We arrived at 2pm, and were pleased to find no one else was there! We had the deep wilderness, the mountains, the bush, the birds and the kangaroos all to ourselves. We put up the tents—and as the afternoon wore on, sullen black clouds rolled in, settling low on the mountains. It became extremely cold. I pointed out a particular bank of cloud, noting that it was similar to those I sometimes saw in

Canberra winters and which often presage snow in the high country. (Terrylea laughed at me—however, we later heard that snow had fallen on the mountains above Thredbo ski village.) Occasional gaps in the cloud illuminated patches of forest on the mountain slopes in the most intense, clear white light, creating a magical 3D scene. Just at sunset the clouds tore open, and a magical alpenglow tinged the upper slopes of Bimberri and Murray, set against a backdrop of heavy grey-black cloud. That night the wind picked up, roaring through the trees and belting our tents. It was bitterly cold.



Snow Gums bow to the wind on the summit.

In the morning the gale was still blowing, and low clouds covered the hills. We set off for the summit of Bimberri (15km return and 708m height gain). First we crossed the Goodradigbee River, then hiked up through the tall forest (which was badly hit in the fires a few years ago), then continued alongside the grassy Dunns Flat before finally emerging on the large, grassy saddle between Bimberri and Murray, known as Murrays Gap.

From here the real work started. The trail up Bimberri comes and goes. At times the track is invisible, with only the occasional cairn, and the steep ascent was made trickier in the forest mist as we navigated fallen trees and boulders. We were

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The trail up Bimberi comes and goes. At times the track is invisible, with only the occasional cairn.”

soon drenched in perspiration, and had to be careful to protect our core (with windchill, the wind was under 0°C). Eventually the steepness eased, and we were out of the trees and on the broad summit plateau of the mountain—but now at the mercy of the gale. The mist had thickened, and wildflowers dotted the ground. Finally, a little over three hours and 7.52km from Oldfields, we were at the trig.

Whilst the mist and heavy clouds had created a beautiful, mystical landscape, we

didn't have the amazing views north up the Brindabella Range or down into the Corin Dam, nor

across to the Tidbinbilla Range. Neither of us had any wish to spend time on the summit: the wind and cold were too biting. Just before leaving the summit plateau, the clouds lifted briefly and we glimpsed a wonderful view to the south of the upper Cotter Valley, Coronet Peak, and Mts Namadgi, Burbage and Kelly. Crossing Murrays Gap and all the way down to below Dunns Flat, we ran the gauntlet of waterlogged ground, with miniature rivers flowing where our feet needed to be.

Back at camp, the weather continued as before—although at 8pm there was, for just a minute, the most beautiful alpenglow on Bimberi, stark against grey-black cloud.

During the night the gale eased, and by 8am the clouds were lifting and sun was breaking through. From the hut it was back up the hill and down the other side to Pockets Hut Track where we dumped our packs, and I took Terrylea along the very pretty Aqueduct Track. Having completed the circuit, we picked up our packs and were soon back at the car with the mountains behind us, on our way back to Canberra. ▲



A break in the clouds offers a view across the upper Cotter River Valley to Mts Burbage, Namadgi and Kelly and Coronet Peak.

Meet Our New Members



Liam Gregory King

“After four years studying in Cape Town, I returned to KwaZulu-Natal in 2020 to complete my final year online—thrilled to have the Barrier of Spears in my back garden again. I joined the Mountain Club this year with a close friend, as the two of us are keen to get involved in search and rescue. I had always heard that the Club was super exclusive—things like one has to be invited to join—so I was glad to find becoming a member is actually quite simple. This is likely my last year in Durban, so I want to make the most of what my beautiful home province has to offer.

I enjoy any outdoor activities—just connecting with nature is enough for me—though I enjoy hiking for how diverse it is, ranging from gentle saunters in the lowlands to gruelling assaults on lofty summits. Last month I went into the Northern Berg’s Busingatha Valley with three friends, and the wildness of this relatively untouched part of the escarpment is truly breath-taking. There were moments that I hated at the time (like getting my legs completely torn up in a brutal bundu bash, and

managing only 100m in an hour), but in hindsight I loved every second of it. It brings me joy knowing that there are still wild places so close to home, waiting to be explored, and ready to spit you out!

Walter Bonatti said: “I don’t deny that there can be an element of escapism in mountaineering, but this should never overshadow its real essence, which is not escape but victory over your own human frailty.” For me this means the outdoors is not where we go “to get away”—it’s home. A place where we can be ourselves, push ourselves, and learn about ourselves. When I’m in nature, I’m at my most authentic.”

“I don’t deny that there can be an element of escapism in mountaineering, but this should never overshadow its real essence, which is not escape but victory over your own human frailty.”

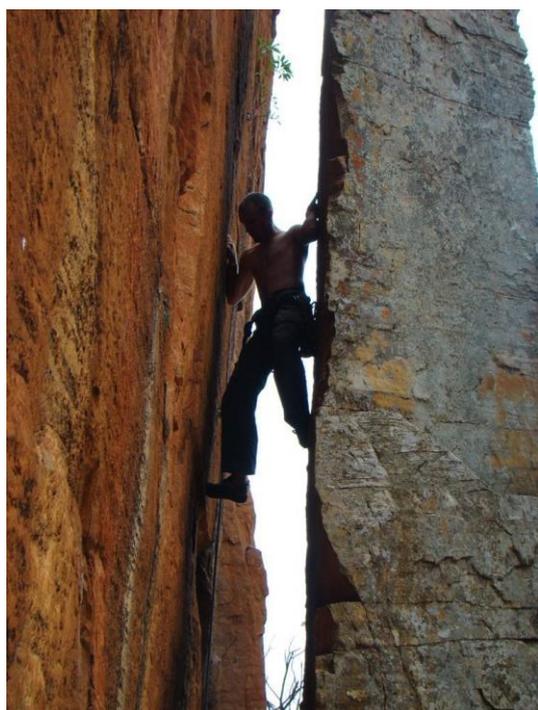
~ Walter Bonatti

Lloyd Anderson

Like Liam King, Lloyd Anderson is keen to join the Club to participate in our Mountain Search and Rescue. Referred by a friend who is a member (and a paramedic who participates in many of the Northern Berg efforts), Lloyd enjoys hiking, climbing, mountain biking, scuba diving, camping, and 4x4 and adventure bike trips.

“Nature is magnificent in all its forms,” he tells us. “Mountains, forests, rivers, deserts, oceans... if we can experience these as intimately as possible, and overcome the challenges they offer, what better can we ask for?”

He looks forward to meeting likeminded people, and learning from the wealth of experience in our Section—as we look forward to learning from what he brings. ▲



“What’s for supper, Mama?”

Review: MAMA ALLES healthy dehydrated meals



We all know the logistical battle of packing light for overnights in the bundus. Easily one of the bigger dilemma-bringers in that department is something you absolutely cannot ditch and tell yourself to ‘just do without’: Food.

How much does this weigh, does it need to be cooked, how easy is it to assemble, will it give me enough energy, does it actually taste good...?

My ex-army father used to take us into the depths of nowhere with sachets of SMASH and tins of Bully Beef, and for years I thought these miserable offerings were our only options. I am blessed to finally know better. Even so, picking between foods you enjoy and foods that are practical on the trail doesn’t have to feel like culinary Sophie’s Choice. *Mama Alles* meets every wish, here, with a fantastic range of genuinely delicious dehydrated meals. They weigh next to nothing, cook quickly and easily on gas or over a campfire, and are so filling and nourishing that I struggled to finish each serving per meal—meaning I could easily stretch my dinner out to cover lunch the next day, too. The main meal items are reasonably priced, delivery is fast and efficient, and what you get—quite honestly—is restaurant-quality food, served up hot from any campsite.

When my order got to me, I was tickled to find a personal card from the team tucked away in my package, wishing me a fun adventure and thanking me for my support. Ah, it’s the little things.

Check out their menu and their general awesomeness at: <https://mamaalles.com/>

What we love: Everything, actually. This is healthy, high-quality food that’s lightweight and reasonably-priced, and tastes about as good as anything (real) Mama ever made.

What we don’t: The smaller snack items on their menu are prohibitively expensive—but given that these are things you can just as well grab from the supermarket before you go, why bother with them anyway? The main meals are where it’s at.

How we rate them: ★★★★★

MAMA ALLES



My sincerest thanks to everybody who sent me words or images for inclusion in this issue.

The newsletter serves to chronicle our experiences in the mountains we enjoy, and each contribution enriches that record.

Please help me keep this newsletter alive by continuing to share the things you do, the things you know, and all the outdoor things we love.

Until next month, safe adventures everyone!



Karen Miller

Hey Mountain Club Members

Have a suggestion or idea for inclusion in the next issue?

Is there anything you want to correct, or maybe there's something you'd like to see changed?

Why not drop the editor a message?

(Just be nice about it!)

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