



Climbing  
Club  
South  
Australia

# **bolfa**

newsletter

June 2010

Please send your submissions to  
[bolfa@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au](mailto:bolfa@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au)

Hi, here's the next instalment of BOLFA; once again there is plenty to read, thanks to contributors for your efforts. Thanks also to Celia for her work in producing yet another great newsletter in between study and baby duties.

On behalf of the committee I (Adam) would like to take this opportunity to invite as many people as possible to the upcoming CCSA AGM with club business such as election of committee for which members will be eligible to nominate and vote.

In addition there will be a discussion on the balance between access and new routing as well as responsibilities for fixed gear and safety. If you are an active climber, and particularly have a preference for sport climbing in the Adelaide Hills your opinion and input is welcome, regardless of membership status. Decisions made on this subject will be by secret ballot and will be open to meeting attendees. If you have any questions regarding this agenda item please do not hesitate to email me at [president@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au](mailto:president@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au)

**We look forward to seeing you all at the Robin Hood Hotel on Monday 2 August from 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start.**

Cheers,  
Adam





# Like Bali,... but not

So aside from the fact that your airfare and one night's accommodation in Darwin will cover your entire trip to Thailand and that there's no reasonable limestone or lady boys in sight, the Top End is almost exactly like being there. The climbing is hot and sweaty.. and that's even before you tie-in.

As a previous connoisseur of Blue Mountains sandstone (and the other joys that the greater Sydney region have to offer) moving to Darwin three years ago was an experience lacking in relief. The seasons, when not being extreme, were punctuated by nothing but the subtleties of changing flora, fauna and the tortuous creeping humidity. The landscape, when also not being extreme, was interrupted by little more than termite mounds. This may sound like the start of a sob story, "climber stranded in not so Top End" but, surprisingly, there are some exceptional places to get out and about. I'll let you in on a couple of gems..

Darwin, renowned for its stubbies (of the liquid amber variety) and a particularly masculine population, has a decidedly softer side. Porcellanite and Phyllite. The lovely pale pink and orange escarpment, punctuating the end of the Darwin plateau, has weathered the passing millennia of wet seasons and storm surge to outcrop in a triumph of textured soapy chalk. There are 3 places that are worth a look in, two of them will need the tide to be in your favour, but all have an agreeable sandy landing and even afford a bit of shade if the tide and the sun are in agreeance. Take your imagination and, if embarking on the high ball areas of East point, your nerve, and you'll be rewarded with a variety of problems that will have you pitting your contact strength against the might of mica.







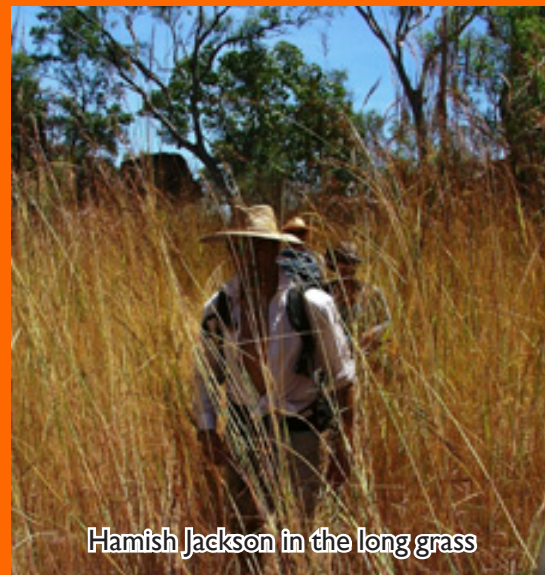
Mark Shultz; tall man and a taller boulder problem

Outside of Darwin town the road is straight and the rock, where you can find it is good, really good. Bulletproof siliceous sandstone with a definite brittle edge – indicative of age and exposure – cover up boys and girls it's hot. The North Apostles are the closest crag to Darwin and bear the hallmarks of SA's very own Colin Reece wielding a power drill, bolts and glue. Routes are on a collection of pinnacles up to about 15m and are a mix of fun sport routes, trad lines and a funny little 'golf tee' featuring a single bolt on top so you can top rope the hell out of the shady side at almost any time of the day.

Highlights are the amazingly high grass following the wet season, a tree containing a native bee hive that was kind enough (with some encouragement from a mattock) to disgorge some of its precious bounty (liquid gold!!) and the lack of people. The approach to this crag confirms that you can go further in a hire car (Budget drives you further).



Delicate fingers avoiding the crack for Rory Johnston, Shumita Joseph looks on in distain



Hamish Jackson in the long grass

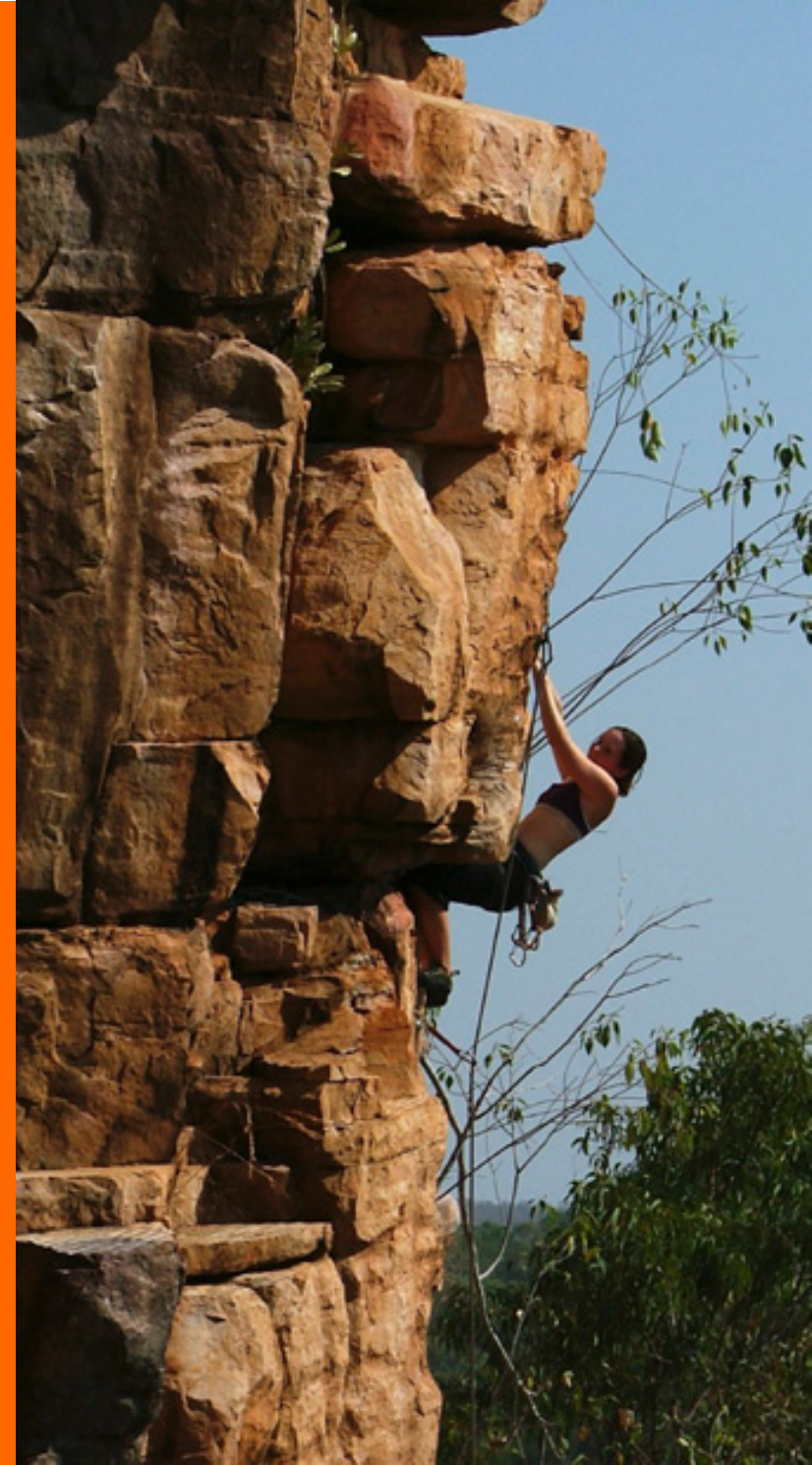


Pin Major pinnacle, Guten Arven face. Ze Germans are everywhere  
Ze Germans are everywhere



Further south from here the climbing gets better and better. The sandstone is carved by ancient gorges that are incised into a deceptively flat landscape. Everywhere to climb in the Top End has invariably been discovered by Colin (heavily qualified statement as there are many signs of climbing in the caves and overhangs for the eagle eyed few). His manic intensity is fascinating, his crazy eye probes maps over the wet, and when the weather breaks he covers much of the promising country side on foot, motorbike and various barely registered cars. He is solely responsible for so much of the developed climbing in the Top End that it's easy to forgive some of his idiosyncrasies – like taking you off belay without warning at the top of a climb.

Hayes Creek bears the hallmarks of the drill in two distinct areas, the shady side and the sunny side. Spider Gully, as the shady side is better known, features a narrow gorge with a small spring, a soak hole and, of course, spiders; there to eat the thousands of butterflies that coat the walls to escape the heat of the day. Fortunately the number of people is significantly less. This is the Territory's premier sport crag, bitumen road all the way, pub, green grassy camp ground, a pool, mangoes in the build up and cliffs that evade the sun for all but the pinnacle of the day. The rock is somewhat similar to the broken walls around Billiard Table but up to about 30 m and slightly overhanging. You'd be a total sad sack not to enjoy it here at least a little bit, grades roughly 17 to 24 with a fun 12 that rises up a ramp – keep an eye out for the resident brown tree snakes – and around 25 routes to choose from.



Hamish Jackson and Claire Hewer, Tasmanian climbers going to great lengths to stay warm, Hayes Creek, NT



But the jewel in the crown by a long shot is Umbrawarra Gorge. This place is one of the unsung heroes of the Top End, not really frequented by tourists, not big enough to be an attraction in its own right and a bit of a walk to the big cliffs that make this place pure magic. There are of course a number of rules that need to be wilfully ignored to facilitate this experience, but isn't that part of the essence and attraction to climbing?

The best way to experience Umbra is to don your pack and walk in, any way you attack it there is about an hour of cruisy walking to be had before you come to a handful of small areas suitable for camping.. flat, clean white sand, quiet and next to crystal clear water, spring fed throughout the year. Depending on where you choose to make your base there are a number of polished, flat, room sized boulders to serve as kitchen come chill out area, and most importantly, no bugs. You shouldn't underestimate what a revelation this is!

The stunning clear water, multiple swimming pools and sandy beaches are also Umbra's down fall. You can chill in the cool waters all day postulating over the possibilities of this line and that line, ooh or that line all day and not climb a single metre, yet still feel fulfilled and invigorated.



How about some climbing today Jon?



Hamish and Shumita, too many lines to choose from (they went right, I went the line from the water, through the black overlap and the splitter above.. mmm dream sequence starts now...)





Hamish Jackson ascending another beautiful line (at 1/3 height)

But when you do rack up, there is nothing like launching into the unknown up new lines, on stunning rock, in a magical location. New routes abound with 2km of useful gorge and up to 50m high for the last 800m or so. This is the sort of place you want to remain as it has done for millennia without the intrusion of guidebooks, officialdom and people. You may not be the first, but the odds are stacked in your favour, and if not, it feels like it anyway.



Jon Green spies some of the local artwork

I don't know if I have donned my rose coloured glasses to reflect on this place but the pictures can probably speak for themselves. I love it there. The cliffs down the lower half of the gorge are reverent. The silence and solitude enshrouds and nurtures you. This has been a place of respite from the world at large for generations, as the petroglyphs on the walls will attest. There are few places that really strike a chord with you like this, and most of them will be rapidly spoilt by the thronging masses searching for the next 'fresh' experience, but this one, thankfully, will maintain its charm. It is protected by obscurity, by a somewhat underwhelming experience at the top of the gorge and by the star studded attractions of nearby Kakadu and Katherine/Nitmiluk.

There is more to say, but like many things in the Territory there are rumours and innuendo. Unfinished and covertly bolted routes, lost in the acres of Kakadu escarpment. Recently unearthed gorges, beckoning to would be pioneers. Majestic pinnacles on the Arnhem Plateau.

If you never never go, you'll never never know.

By Tim Smith



# Just Another Overseas Climbing Trip



## Learning No. 1

**Never book your airfare and time off from work before checking what months are wettest at the chosen crag and country you are travelling to.**

2010 was supposed to be a no overseas climbing trip year. Mike & I had planned a 2 week walking trip in June to the Larapinta Trail in Central Australia as a consolation. By about mid March we were kicking around the fact we were keen for another adventure and I suggested Squamish as an interesting cliff. So at the last minute we booked tickets and proposed to meet in Vancouver around the 1st of June.

One of the benefits of travelling to North America is the two pieces of luggage of up to 23kg each. This means we could travel in luxury and bring the larger tents, extra clothes and of course the full size wok.

Mike & I met in Vancouver picked up our little hire car and drove through and out of the city towards Squamish. The darkened skies and the constant drizzle were getting us worried.



Squamish is only about 80km from Vancouver and stands directly next to the highway to Whistler ski fields. Unfortunately it was not to be. After a hearty cooked breakfast we checked the forecast and decided we could not wait a week for the weather to clear. Skaha Bluffs is near Penticton in British Columbia, about 6 hours' drive east from Squamish and became our new plan. The local outdoor shop salesman in Squamish sold us a Skaha Guide and promised us that it would be a lot drier on the other side of the range. We arrived in Penticton late on day 1 of our trip and were both feeling the effects of a long drive and jetlag, but being motivated to at least see some climbing, we walked out to the crag for a look. Skaha Bluffs are a series of cliffs above the town, predominately smooth granite of up to 50m high. The nature of the rock requires bolting to make most of the routes and it is one of Canada's premier moderate sport climbing areas. A light rain started before we had gone too far and so we walked solemnly back to the car trying to convince each other that it would be clear by the morning.

It rained intermittently through the night but by next morning the sky was clear enough for us to venture out. We started on a small introductory area known as Red Tail Area. Getting a feel for the climbing on Lichen in my Panties 5.8, What's Left 5.10a and Basic Black 5.10a. The weather held and we finished Day 1 with 8 leads each.

Most of the classic two and three star routes at Skaha were vertical granite faces with sharp good edges and well thought out bolt protection with the occasional piece of trad gear to keep you honest. We would each lead a selected route. The first person would lead, lower off and clean the gear. The second person would then lead and do the same.

The weather held and Days 2 and 3 were spent working other areas at the crag. Some of the Classics at Skaha that we did were:

- |                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| What's Left 5.10a *          | Tradition 5.10b *      |
| Grassy Glades 5.10a **       | Homer's Wake 5.10a *   |
| White Knuckle Express 5.8 ** | Womb to Tomb 5.10d *   |
| Brilliant Pebbles 5.10c ***  | Generation Gap 5.9 *** |
| Stubborn Streak 5.10b ***    | 'S Cool Wall 5.10b *** |
| Rejuvenation 5.9 *           |                        |



We continued to assess the weather in Squamish to see if it was improving but the forecast was for more rain. On the 4th morning in Skaha, we woke to solid rain and the decision to move on to another area was made. I had bought a Smith Rocks guidebook from Australia for just this eventuality. Smith Rocks is in Central Oregon and boasts over 1300 routes. It is the high mountain desert environment and we felt confident the rain would not follow us there. So we packed our stuff and drove south on Highway 99 into the States, through Washington State (getting a speeding fine along the way – welcome to the US of A) and into Oregon.



**Learning No. 2**  
**Doing 70 miles per hour in a 60 miles per hour zone costs about US\$100 when you get caught**

It was a long drive of approximately 800km but when we arrived and viewed the gorge that makes up the Smith Rocks State Park we both knew it was a good move.

Smith Rocks State Park has an interesting climbing history. Oregon Trad climbers used it as a local training ground until the early 1980's when Alan Watts, a local hardman, introduced sport climbing. It quickly became America's sport climbing capital heralding in routes like Chain Reaction 5.12c, Rude Boys 5.13b and To Bolt or To Be 5.14a.

Our first full day at Smith was a Saturday and the first dry weekend in North Western United States for a couple of months, so the crags were full of climbers from Portland, Seattle and even Vancouver. An early start beat the queues and we ticked 16 routes between the two of us.

The first few climbs were eye opening as the first bolts are 5 – 6 metres off the ground and after some quite cruxy moves. We subsequently found that a lot of climbers in the know carried adjustable stick clips for the high first bolts. The rock was weird mix of volcanic mud with small stones in it and large hueco like holes. A lot of the routes had very sharp edges that wore the tips of your fingers raw. Some of the Classics that we did in Smith Rocks include:

Wherever I May Roam 5.9 \*\*\*\* five pitch sport

Light on the Path 5.10a \*\*\*

Five Gallon Buckets 5.8 \*\*\*

Nine Gallon Buckets 5.10c \*\*\*

No Golf Shoes 5.10c \*\*

Caffeine Free 5.10b \*\*

Irreverence 5.10a \*\*\*

Barbeque The Pope 5.10b \*\*\*

Sunset Slab 5.9 \*\*\*\*

Jim Treviso Memorial Route 5.10b \*\*\*\*

Captain Xenolith 5.10b \*\*

Earth Boys 5.10b \*\*\*

Tuff it Out 5.10a \*\*

Drill 'Em and Fill 'Em 5.10a \*\*

Gumby 5.10b \*\*\*

Magic Light 5.11a \*\*\*\* (Mike only & probably the best pitch of the trip)

Phoenix 5.10a \*\*\*







We climbed at Smith for six days. The days would start with a leisurely breakfast, a 2 minute drive from the campground to the carpark and a 5 minute approach walk which would be followed by climbing for 6 – 7 hours. After climbing we would either hit the local supermarket for food and beer supplies or the local restaurant called the Depot. By the end of the trip we had climbed 9 days in the last 10 and were starting to feel worn out.

The Statistics say it all:

Mike Hillan led 60 routes with about 1,380 metres of climbing.

Luke Adams led 50 routes with about 1,140 metres of climbing.

We had to be back in Vancouver by midday Saturday so on Friday morning we packed up a gear and drove 10 hours back. Mike went on to Las Vegas and met his wife for another couple of weeks of touring and I came home to a very frosty winter in Adelaide.

Despite the initial disappointment with the poor weather at Squamish things worked out rather well. Climbing at Skaha was excellent but three days of climbing that was similar was probably enough and the travel day was a welcome rest day and let us see some more of the country. Smith is a climber's crag and provides greater interaction with other climbers. Camping is better and there is a wilderness character that is lacking at Squamish which is almost urban by comparison. You gotta put on your bucket list.

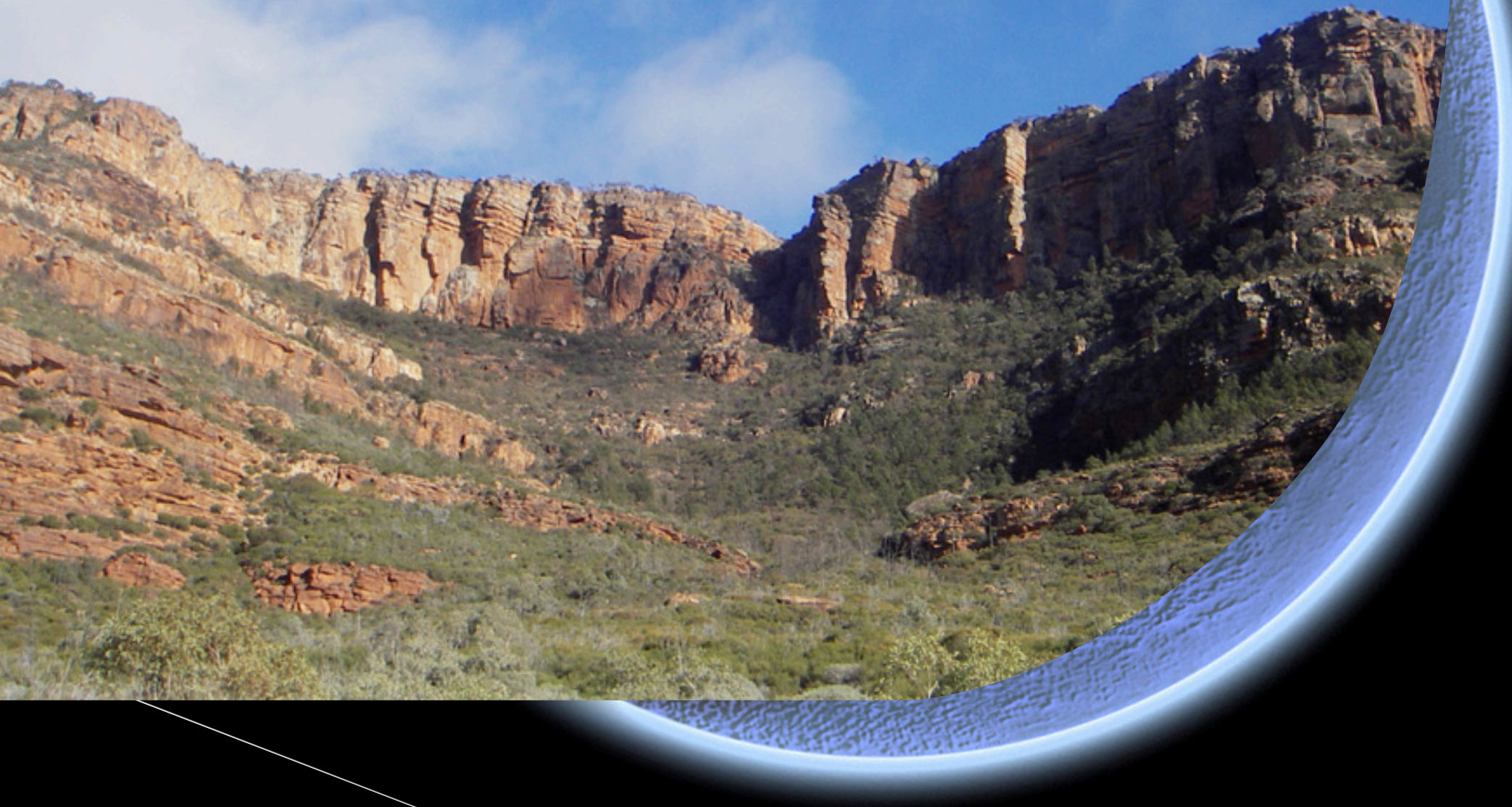
### **Learning No. 3**

**It is probably impossible to have a bad climbing holiday.**

By Luke Adams



# walking on the **MOON**





# walking on the MOON

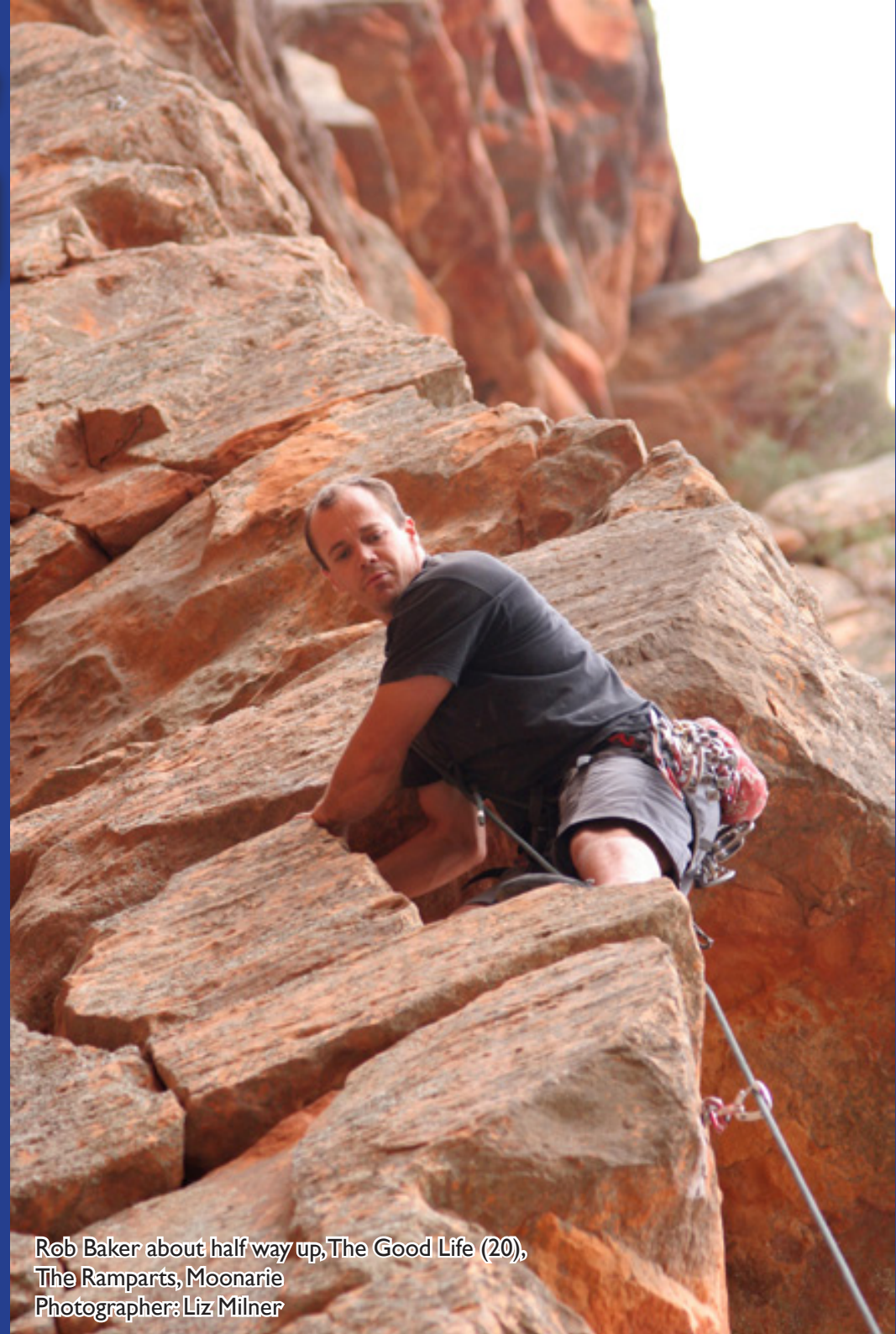
These photos were taken at Moonarie on Easter Saturday, 03/04/2010 and are all of Rob Baker making his first ascent of the new route he had just finished bolting, seconded by Jackie Bernardi. New route is on "The Ramparts" and has been called "The Good Life" 35m (20). It follows the arête between "Jumbos Last Stand" and "Miles from Nowhere". Grade (8) for the first 8m up to the first bolt, then fully bolted to the top. Finishing just right of the large overhang at a set of double chains.

Garth (my husband) reckons it rates a couple of stars (2) but we didn't canvas anyone else. Being a new climb, there is still a bit of loose rock about. (Rob graded & named it).

Cheers  
Liz Milner



Rob Baker at the first bolt.,The Good Life (20),  
The Ramparts, Moonarie  
Photographer: Liz Milner



Rob Baker about half way up,The Good Life (20),  
The Ramparts, Moonarie  
Photographer: Liz Milner





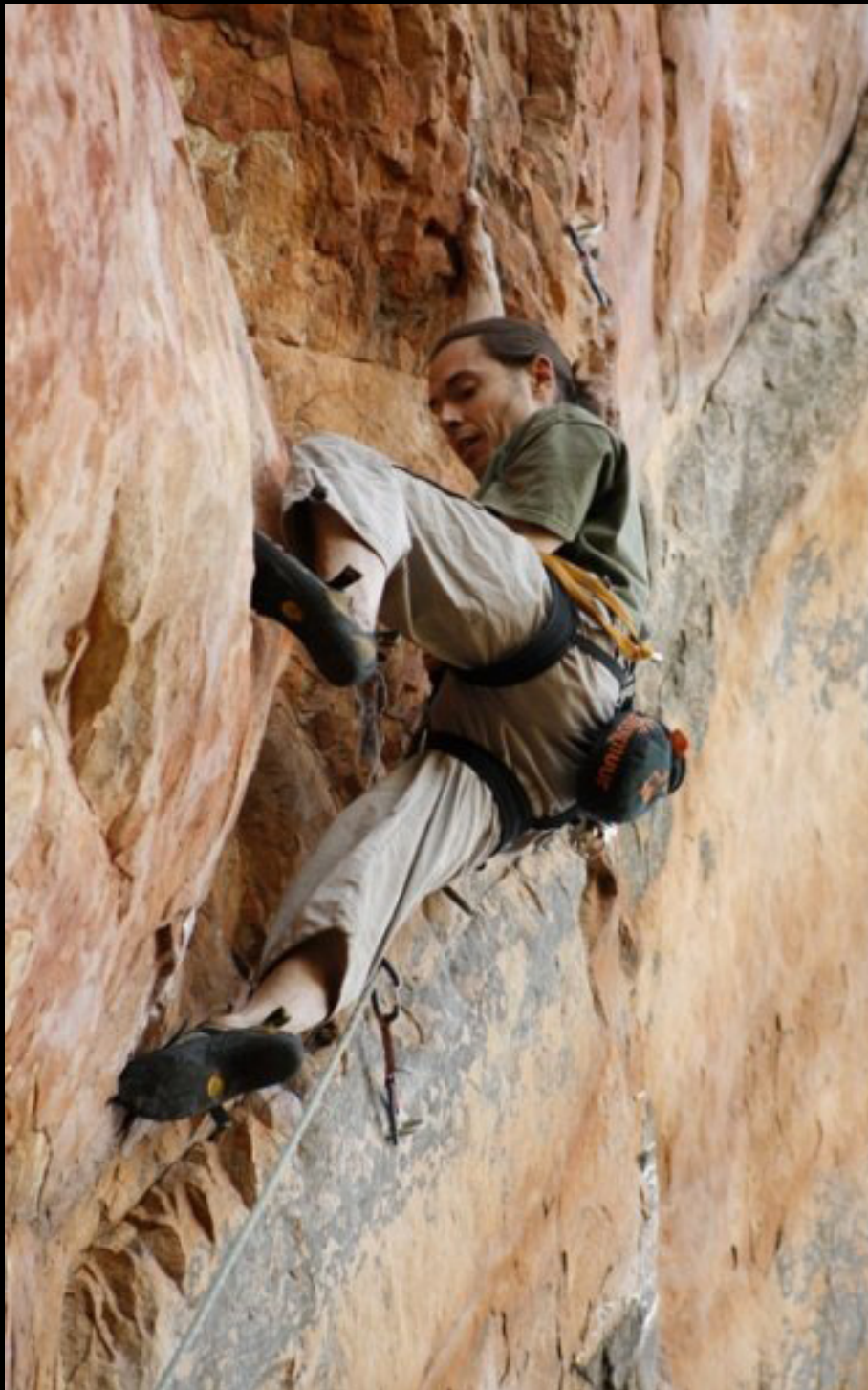
Rob Baker near the top, The Good Life (20),  
The Ramparts, Moonarie  
Photographer: Liz Milner



View of entire climb, The Good Life (20),  
The Ramparts, Moonarie. Rob Baker near the top.  
You can also see Mike Hillan leading Toblerone (on left)  
Photographer: Liz Milner



# SNAPSHOTS



Mike Garrett on Gotham City, Grampians  
Photographer: Phil Davis.



Mike Barnes belaying at Arapiles.



Freddie Dyer impersonating Sideshow  
Bob at the campsite, Arapiles.



Celia Clay leading Hell For Leather,  
Arapiles.



Mike Garrett climbing in the Peak District in the UK.



# Chance Meetings

**Where else would you expect to meet climbers, but at a cliff?**

I had been living in England in the early eighties, and was on a weekend visit up to my usual climbing partner Mike Broadbent, who was also over in “the old country”, but living in North Wales. We had been climbing on one of the North Wales seacliffs, and were put off by being vomited at by nesting fulmar gulls, so decided to head for an inland crag. We picked Craig Y Forwyn, a lovely limestone crag, and were chatting while checking out the routes along the path. Having passed a bunch of climbers, we heard from behind us a gravelly voice uttering the challenge “Australian Poofthahs”! We turned around slowly expecting trouble, to be confronted by a bearded but strangely familiar face. An astonished Mike recognised him first and exclaimed “Chris!!”, to which I added a fraction of a second later “Baxter!!” There were smiles all round as the tension broke. Chris had been on a business trip to London, and had looked up some old mates for a weekend climb. Mike had got to know him while climbing at Araps in the few years before emigrating, but I hadn’t really met him then. I had more contact with him later, as the South Australian correspondent for Rock magazine for some years in the nineties. His recent passing is a sad loss to the climbing and outdoor community, since he had done so much to support our sports and pastimes, through the two magazines he founded.

by Tony Barker

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# ENTER THE DRAGON

**DMM-Wales latest take on the twin-axle SLCD or (cam/friend) is now available from the Scout Outdoor Centre.**



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This is a fine addition to our already solid backing of DMM-Wales equipment. The most popular Item being the 'Aero' range of quickdraws and karabiners. This is mainly due to quality of finish in screw gates and smooth motion gate mechanisms, all of which are snag-free.

The next arrival of La Sportiva climbing shoes is in September and will include the latest 'Miura Velcro' and lower prices across the board on Mens Katana, Girl-tana, and Miura lace – Miura lace being arguably the worlds best 'advanced-all rounder' climbing shoe. So please swing by the Scout Outdoor Centre to check out the latest in climbing technology.



# Scout Outdoor Centre

## What happens on a climbing trip,..... stays on a climbing trip.

Luke Adams provided BOLFA with the following story behind the black eye in the picture:

Mike's Black Eye goes something like this.

Mike: What was the name of that 5.11a I just led?

Luke: Magic Light.

Mike: Oh OK

5mins later

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5mins later

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Luke: Magic Light.

Mike: Oh OK

5mins later

Luke: Ask me again I dare you

The rest is history or at least that's how I remember it. Hehehe

Mike's response: ... mmmm... that's not quite how I recollect the incident. It went like this...

Mike: Check out the size of that ute over there. I bet you could stick a big tree trunk in that back tray.

Luke: Oh yeah, that's a big ute alright. It must be the small dick syndrome.

Mike: What do you mean?

Luke: You know. A man with a small penis makes up for it in a Freudian type of way by compensating with a big ute. Bigger the ute the smaller the dick.

Mike: Really?

.. pause ..

Mike: Are you sure?

Luke: Absolutely. That's why I had the Porsche.

Mike: Really? I'm so sorry.

Luke: Yeah, a real bummer but what can you do?

Mike: Have you tried the enlargements?

Luke: Yeah, but they didn't seem to take. Hey look! There's the owner now. I'll go over and ask him.

Mike: But he is with three other guys. How can you tell he is the owner? Maybe he needs a big ute 'cause he and his mates are just big Americans.

Luke: Trust me. It's like gaydar. I can tell.

Luke: Goes over to the guys, has a word or two, hold his little finger up and points to me. The guy goes red, clenches his fists and Luke steps aside to let him and his mates storm over to me. As they get closer I can see that they are not just big, they are fucking huge. Think Hulk Hogan huge. They surround me.

Big Guy: "This guy (pointing to Luke) says that you reckon I have a small dick".

Mike: That's not true, what I said was "I bet you could take a big stump in your back tray".

And then it started ....

Luke's response to Mike's version:

Who writes your material it is great. Gold

We will let you work out what story is most likely to be true... there's probably a good hint in the devilish smile on one of the protagonists.







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