

bolfa

newsletter

May 2009

Please send your submissions to
bolfa@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au

Hi Folks,

We're baaaack!

By now you had probably forgotten about us, and frankly, we don't blame you if you did. But after an extended hiatus we no longer need to cower at the back of the CCSA meeting avoiding eye contact and mumbling sullenly about house break-ins and wedding plans.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed, some quality material once again, from some of the usual suspects and also a couple of new contributors. Please keep it coming, variety is the spice of life!

Unfortunately BOLFA has moved up in the ranks of Australian climbing literature with the sad demise of Crux Magazine. Hats off to Neil Monteith, at least he gave it a go.

We hope you enjoy this edition of BOLFA, see you on the rock,

Celia and Adam Clay



Sick of the same old climbs at the climbing gym, which are never changed and encrusted with chalk?

Need extra strength for that elusive project?

Not enough time for a trip to the crags due to work or family commitments?

Well, have you thought of building a climbing wall at home? It's a sure way to get stronger and keep climbing through the winter months. Getting some mates around for mutual encouragement can be a good social occasion and the verbal pitchforking which is likely to occur may spur you on to greater achievements.

Home climbing walls have been around for twenty years or so, and can be a really useful way of improving your climbing. The concept may have started with Wolfgang Gullich working on his campus board in the 1980s. In Sheffield in the early 1990s, committed climbers like Jerry Moffat and Ben Moon started training on home walls in their cellars. This was to combat the inevitable loss of fitness with the outdoor climbing layoff that occurs through the long and dreary British winter. They emerged stronger than ever after the winter break, to hit the crags even harder. Moffat and Moon also formed a co-operative climbing gym called the School Room. With the manufacture of plastic climbing holds of increasing sophistication, the concept has grown into the numerous climbing walls seen worldwide these days.

I've had a mini climbing wall at home for nearly twelve years and although it is small, I've found it beneficial for training. It started out as a single panel underneath a mezzanine bed in the spare room. It is now slightly bigger in its second incarnation in the shed as a two panel, roof and short headwall creation after I moved house. The left panel overhangs at 30 degrees, capped by a one metre roof and then a half metre vertical finish. The right panel is vertical. These days I can't crimp the tinies, so the panels have more medium to large than small holds and I work more for endurance than absolute strength. Most of the holds are plastic, acquired over that twelve year period. I have certainly noticed the improved comfort of use and ergonomic design of holds over that time. This must help to reduce the chance of injury. I've used a few wooden hand and footholds, glued-on pebbles plus one plastic inset hold to add to the mix. I use some free weights to warm up, stretch, then climb on board for a variety of vertical or traversing circuits. Chin ups on the holds on the top wall add to the burn. I also do timed deadhangs on slopers on the right wall.

In 2005 the extra strength and endurance I gained on the wall enabled me to get up a project climb which had thwarted me on 12 days of attempts. Without the home woodie, I don't think that I would have succeeded.



CRACK A WOODIE





I thought it would be interesting to take a look what other keen woodie constructors had done around Adelaide, so I sampled a few of them in 2006. What I found varied significantly, often dependent on the space available, and the carpentry skills of the builders.

Dave Bowen used to be a golfer, but gave up that dangerous, fringe activity for climbing about ten years ago. He has used his trade as a cabinetmaker to construct what is probably Adelaide's biggest and most sophisticated home wall in his shed. There is a pot belly stove to keep the room warm on cold winter evenings. The left wall has two main sections, overhanging at 40 degrees lower down then 35 degrees above, about six metres high by five wide. The right wall overhangs at about 8 degrees, and is about four by eight metres. This is the third version of the wall he has made. Dave also has mostly plastic holds, with the side wall featuring medium size holds and crimpers. The overhanging wall bristles with friendly buckets and equally unfriendly large slopers. He has found devising vertical routes on this has helped his contact strength enormously. He and fellow enthusiast John Marshall also created excruciating endurance fests lasting up to thirty minutes. These involve navigating the wall to clip draws at various points, then going back to retrieve them all. The session often ends in collapse onto the mattresses as though stunned by Kryptonite!

Version two of the wall was less satisfactory, as Dave had to temporarily move it to a smaller shed. There it had a 50 degree wall to a body length horizontal roof and down the wall on the other side. Dave and John thought that it was simply too hard. If you are not at a moderate or advanced degree of competence, it's best to keep the overhangs less radical e.g. 30 degrees or less. At this easier angle you're more likely to be able to lock down and crank to the next jug. If it's more overhung, dynamic moves are often the answer to solve the problem before you flame out.

Darren Williams' new house featured a four car garage, perfect for making a good sized wall. This he did soon after moving in, with two flat sections each about four by six metres, one overhanging at 42 degrees and the other at 49. He has used a majority of home made wooden holds here, quite densely spaced. Darren prefers these, as he thinks the surface texture is more kind to the fingers than plastic. I found however that unless they are well rounded off, the edges can be uncomfortable. Each is named and labelled, with monikers chosen anywhere from famous climbs to Rollergirl and Dirk Diggler from "Boogie Nights". A record book contains route plans of all the described problems, now well over sixty. On this wall the doctrine of "lunge or plunge" operates, with problems often involving distances between holds too far to reach statically. The team approach was followed here, with Darren hosting a regular Tuesday night session, then Board Lord Steve Kelly on Thursday nights at his place. Sports nutrition supplements and electrolyte/fluid replacement such as chips and beer are liberally used. They have devised their own Wood grades, with Wood 0.5 being about grade 20, Wood 1 about V2, Wood 2 about V4 and Wood 3 harder still. This system is reminiscent of John Gill's rating system of B1- B3, where as soon as a B3 problem is repeated, it is downgraded to B2.

Steve Kelly's wall in his old house at Thebarton was at the hard end of the spectrum. He has since moved, and re-erected a new one in Mitcham. I've heard that it has a lot of overhangs, but haven't seen it yet. I'll describe the old one though: it had a kickboard recessed by 1.5 metres, 50 degrees overhanging on the main wall, capped by 2 metre roof and vertical finish. The main board was covered with a grid spaced array of varied holds, mostly wooden. The wall was located in a dilapidated single car garage, and occupied it all, with the final headwall being less than a metre from the garage doors. All the holds were named. There was a CD player providing music and climbing posters for eye candy. Some of the ply boards flexed a bit under load but it seemed structurally sound enough. Again, a notebook contained descriptions of established and project problems, up to about 100. The steeply overhanging nature of the wall meant that intense bouldery moves were routine there, with a lot of the problems being "tracking" in nature. This means that the only allowed footholds are those used initially as handholds. The wall had undergone two revisions since its creation about five years ago. There had been a progression to smaller holds, as the users have become stronger.

I asked Steve if he could suggest specific benefits from his use of the wall. He described several: the ability to train for specific routes, practising the ability to remember sequences, body tension techniques, and training for contact strength. This means latching a hold and exerting a maximum of muscular effort straight away, to get you through that sketchy crux. Muscle fibres don't all work at once without practice, and you can increase the recruitment to the task by pushing yourself closer to maximal effort in training.

One warning regarding home walls, especially if pushing your limits. The risk of upper limb or finger injury is higher if you consider that you are practicing by doing the equivalent of the cruxes of roped climbs only. Steve has had trouble with chronically inflamed finger tendons and

joints due to a long term inability to stop climbing. He lamented being unable to find anyone to help him with his finger injuries. Darren quipped that he must have had these swollen digits stuffed in his ears anytime people gave him advice to slow down or rest.

My last visit in this short survey was to Gil Rossi's and Justin Taylor's shared wall. This has also now been disassembled as Gil moved back to Argentina. This was arranged on both sides of a carport - the left wall had a curved profile with 45 and 35 degree panels and a flat profile 45 degree overhang, each sector about 4 metres square. The right wall was flat and overhung about 15 degrees, being 4 by 8 metres. Gil and JT had used mostly plastic holds. Gil liked moving the holds around periodically to make variety, as opposed to Steve and Darren's method of using different combinations of fixed holds to create new problems. Again, Gil stressed the benefit of having a gang of people around to boost enthusiasm. Try an endurance game where everyone takes it in turns to do a problem, then add two moves on the end, making it progressively longer and harder. If you climb by yourself, you're more likely to just do moves which feel comfortable. Putting someone else in charge who forces you into awkward positions will make you work harder and get a better training outcome.

In summary, you can see there are several different styles of woodie. Obviously the main division is between a slightly overhanging wall with smaller holds, to one more overhanging with larger holds. Corners and roofs or curved profiles, which add to the three dimensionality of the structure, are a refinement if you have the space or interest. What level of difficulty you would want to create does depend on how strong you are to start with. If you start with too much overhang you won't be able to get on the wall or will make little progress. Version two of Dave's wall, which he thought was too hard, sounded like the style of Steve's wall.

As you get stronger though, you can start pulling longer moves between holds or substitute smaller ones or more slopers. Plastic holds have the advantage here, since they often have several profiles on different sides, so you just loosen and rotate to make a different grip. Wooden ones are a lot cheaper though and you can plane or shape them to your own preference, but they still wind up being mostly square.

Finally, if the wall isn't working for you, remember you can always unscrew the whole bloody thing and rearrange it!

By Anthony Barker



Hillan onsights Solstice



A rare and notable event occurred recently: Solstice was onsighted. It's a fine line in the Penny Lane area at The Bluff. How many times it's been led free I don't know, but it wouldn't be many. I do know that the top of Solstice was aided by George Adams and Stuart Fishwick as part of Equinox and then aided again by Jon Chester when establishing the direct line. It was freed by Carrigan in 1979, I assume on sight given his form at the time. It's one of those climbs that would be grade 18 if you're 2 metres tall and grade you-name-it if you're short. The given grade of 20 applies if you're about the height of Michael Hillan (6 foot 3).

Mike solved the tricky start and climbed the twin cracks to the Waddle of the Duck horizontal. The crux lies above - you need to get to a hold that's well out of reach for most. The crack thins and will take gear but not fingers. There's a vague hold that a really strong person may be able to use to do the move statically, but it would be tough. Mike explored this and other static impossibilities and concluded, yep, it's a dyno.

Now dynos are fine above bomber pro but that's not the case at that point on Solstice. Mike went into nest-building mode and five pieces, all described as 60-80%, was the result. The next problem was arranging the feet. The stance drops away for a straight-up jump so you need to spring up and right from an undercling. After spending a considerable amount of time going through the usual big-move emotions, Mike leapt above the void on the dodgy gear and made it.

A big line at Yosemite? No, Michael leading Solstice, The Bluff

The climbing above was straightforward and he was soon claiming the second (maybe even the first) onsight. That the seconds couldn't follow capped off the perfect day.

On the subject of Penny Lane, it's a strange place where it seems that the lower the grade of a climb, the harder it is. Take Equinox for example. The FA is described in the guidebook as "a major achievement for the time". Well, I'm here to tell you it's still a major achievement, particularly the first pitch (14). It's a leaning squeeze chimney with an undercut start. The trick is to get in facing south so you're going up with your back on the rock, not your front, but damned if I can get in the right way around. Then things get really ugly several metres up where a narrowing forces you out towards the smooth, flaring front of the chimney. That's been about my high point, but climbers of the calibre of Mike, Luke Adams and Chris Oerman are yet to solve the start.

Then there's Waddle (13). Our little group has a bit of history on this one, a 40m traverse about 12m above Penny Lane itself. On the first attempt (right-to-left), equipped with nothing bigger than a #4 BD cam, I returned to the belay "ashen-faced and very quiet" according to the feedback. Chris then had a go but returned similarly unnerved. A year later we went back armed with bigger cams, a tube, and a plan for attacking the crux. Success came, but not before our man-in-the-middle had to be rescued amid scenes of great drama (for him) and considerable amusement (for us). Then I heard Michael, Luke and Rolts were heading down for a pleasant day on The Bluff so, helpfully, I suggested a fun 13 they could warm up on. The ensuing epic is the stuff of legend. They eventually made it across with desperate aid, heel-toe hooking, offwidthing through pigeon poo, and much loss of skin. You can imagine how apologetic I was.

But I do think the girls and boys who prance around at Norton need a day at Penny Lane...

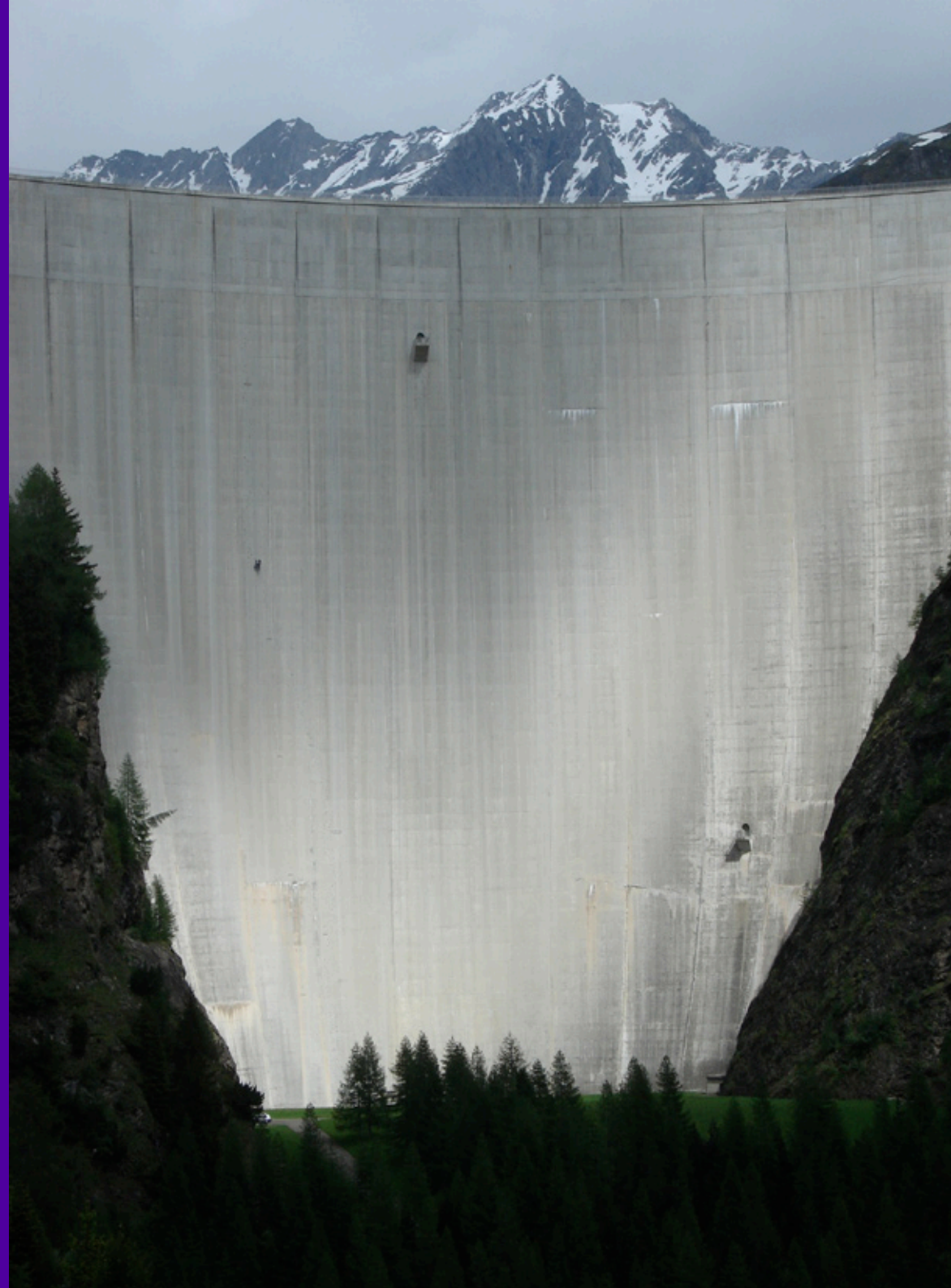
Nest building. Chris Oerman belaying

By Paul Badenoch

Dyno done, now on to glory

Climb that Dam Wall

Hidden amongst the mountains in the southern area of Switzerland named Ticino, a 165 metre high dam wall stands awaiting ascents. Luzzzone Dam can hold 108 millions cubic meters of water and is located approximately 8km from the town of Olivone in canton Ticino. This amazing wall is fitted with approximately 650 artificial holds leading up the face, pitches 5b, 5c, 6a, 6a+ and 6a+, to make it the longest multi-pitch artificial route in the world. With exposure to take your breath away the 4 pitch (approx.) climb is a great route to add to the tick list- partly because of its uniqueness. The dam wall can only be climbed in the summer months as the holds are removed during winter, and besides its way too cold to climb then anyway! To have a go at this climb you have to pay 20 Swiss Francs at the cafe to get the key that unlocks the ladder of which you use to reach the first holds. If you're spider man, amazing at smearing vertical or BYO ladder, you could probably do a dodgy and not pay, however knowing the Swiss they'll probably hunt you down (only jokin').





So here's a bit about our experience...

With excitement in our veins after seeing the wall from the top, we paid the fee and grabbed the key to unlock the ladder. On our drive down we were delayed by a typical Swiss sight- cows being herded up the road walking straight past the car. We approached the dam wall towering 165 vertical metres up with an ever-so-slight overhang at the top. We watched as another party began the 1st pitch and also watched as they abseiled back down from this pitch, apparently the exposure was too much for them. So we went on and set up the ladder to begin our ascent, and what a great climb we had! The route is fully bolted with secure belays and points at which you can abseil down if anything goes wrong or the exposure does you in. The climb is of an easy to moderate grade and it flows well. Once reaching the top of the dam wall it's a must to take in the amazing view of snow-capped mountains and beautiful scenery that is typical of Switzerland. A recommended climb that supersedes any artificial route around.

Check out this site <http://www.ti360.org/blog/index.php?entry=entry080629-134027> for some pics and a 360° view.

By Jess Swart

SNAPSHOTS



Sunset at Mitre Rock, photo Jess Swart



Sylvia Herold on Up The Baize (20),
Billiard Table, Morialta, photo Adam Clay



Sylvia Herold on
Brolga (16), Arapiles, photo Adam Clay



Ben Forshaw, falling at Backslappers,
Second Valley, photo Adam Clay



Arapiles, view of campground from
the top, photo Jess Swart




Celia Clay on Kaiser Resignation
(15), Arapiles, photo Adam Clay



Nick Neagle on Mantle (14), Arapiles, photo Adam Clay

Tcharkuldu

(Char – cool – doo!)

A large, reddish-brown boulder dominates the center of the image, resting on a flat, sandy surface. To its left and right are smaller, similarly colored rocks. The background shows a clear blue sky and a few distant trees on the right. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day.

Shoulder injuries are pretty soul destroying for a keen climber. 2008 was my year to have all my climbing objectives shattered and bounce from bad physio to bad physio (ala Steve Kelly's Rock article). After several failed trips that attempted to "get me back into it" without re-injuring myself, I finally decided to stay the hell away from climbing to heal properly – sort of. A year or so prior I'd been talking with Andy Beckworth about possible routes or boulder problems in the Gawler Ranges. Armed with a tourist map and pamphlets I blew off Froctoher and head out West at Pt Augusta. I'd highlighted any area on the map that had "rock" in it or sounded "rocky". So I cruised around the National Park for 2 days, to little avail. I checked out the Organ Pipes, but these were no comparison to the likes of other Organ Pipes us climbers know and love. Feeling pretty dejected that my search was fruitless, I decided to leave the park, but checked out one last set of rocks which I'd circled on the map near Minnipa. TCH. No wait. Char maybe. Kludoo. Oh whatever, the boulders look good. So as I wandered around the boulders I realised there was actually several hundred, with good looking lines somewhere in quality between the Andersen's in the Grampians and Castle Hill –Spittle Field. I took a few photos, drew a rough map and then kept my mouth shut until my shoulder healed.



Things came good after some friendly advice from physio and climber Sally Ely and after several months of getting strong, I managed to convince traddie baddie, Fred Dyer, that a boulder trip for Easter 09 was the business. Fred's bro, Simon, also came along. Simon had just gotten into climbing but rather than the usual Morialta introduction we did Waits and the Mid North Bridges, so Tcharkuldu also seemed relevant and out of the ordinary. It was actually supposed to be an Easter that I spent alone with my partner Joey, but once again we were off climbing. Fred also managed to accidentally convince his parents to come, but with the luxuries of a Kimberly camper, it was good to have them there.

So a blank canvas and several hundred potential problems. Where do you start? The awesome looking lines! We poked around a bit and got a feel for the rock and then dived into what we called "Flight of the Pheonix". It looked like the fist crack roof from hell but we found we could lay it back. Oh, and it's a highball. I took a massive fall from the lip and down the hill, missing both mats while the lads were still getting sorted. Somehow my head managed to miss the rocks where I tumbled while my body found all the prickles. Dusted off, I was OK. A successful first morning.

The days were still pretty hot out there, so we chilled and attempted to avoid the sandflies until things cooled off. Previous walks around the boulders had

made us thirsty for the good looking highballs. Sunset in this area proved to be most awesome and an outdoor experience par excellence! Having destroyed Simmo's hands and muscles earlier, Fred and I found some awesome problems. First "Get your Crimp On" a crimpy V2. Also, plenty of great under-clinging and lay-backing of egg shelled rock at V0 and V1. Right on sunset we tried a V1 highball up the largest boulder (which we called Atlas, owing to it looking like the Globe Atlas carries on his back). This V1 was super sweet on tiny edges with several really good moves. The problem - "I'm Rick James, Bitch" was definitely one of the classics at Tcharkuldu. Atlas seemed to have the best concentration of good problems and in a prime location! We dubbed the area 'Sunset Boulevard' and many a good problem was worked here, but in particular "The Bird is the Word" V1, "Digital Input 2" V1 and Fred's labour of love for the weekend "Deep Throat Throngbosis" V4.

With shattered hands and muscles we took the next two days pretty easy doing a bit of exploring around the area, including a sortie to the Gawler Ranges Organ Pipes to put up a short grade 15 on spooky pipes that 'peal' when you tap them with a cam. Fred led the FA followed by myself and finally Simmo, who screamed "UPPER BODY, FUCK!" while attempting to top out in front of an observation deck of tourists, hence dubbing the climb. Weather was pretty bad on the Monday, so we

headed back a bit early, but with a good 50 or so new problems in the bag.

So here are some details for you. We've written up a basic guide for the area and if you want it, email me at mike.dixon@sawater.com.au. More photos are also on Facebook. We'd love to know what you think of the area and give our grades a run down! It would also be great for some other people to set some more problems.

The Drive: 6hrs + break time. 4kms east of Minnipa which is West of Port Augusta

Access: Crown Land. No worries

Problems: 300-400 ripe for the picking

Camping: All good. 20sec walk from the boulders. BBQ, water and drop dunny inc.

Pub: 4kms away in Minnipa

Other people: None

By Mike Dixon





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