

# BOLFA 2019

**Featuring  
Fright of the Gull**

The Day before  
Disaster at the  
Cosmique Arête

Easter Weekend at  
Moonarie

Q&A with  
Katie Sarah

Remembering  
Colin Reece

The Route to  
Tokyo Olympics

The woody feature  
and more....

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Cover Photo: Jason Barltrop on pitch one of Flight of the Gull, Mollusc Wall, Waitpinga, SA; photo by Shane Mitchell.

Disclaimer: Rock Climbing is dangerous. It is your responsibility as a climber or boulderer to have received adequate training and to know and accept the risks involved.

## Editors Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to BOLFA 2019 edition.

My name is Emma Kent and I am your BOLFA editor this year, taking over the reigns from Kylie Jarrett; big shoes to fill.

I was inspired to take over BOLFA not only for my love of climbing but also for my love of writing and storytelling having contributed articles to the past two BOLFA's.

I'm excited to bring you stories from our local crags, international crags, mountaineering pursuits and profile pieces from notable South Australian climbers.

Our contributors Dave Bowen, Luke Adams, Jason Barltrop, Eddie Ozols, Liz Milner and all of you who submitted your woodies made this edition far exceed my expectations for my first editors role. For this, I thank you.

As soon as Jason told me he was thinking of sending me an article of his experience on Flight of the Gull at Waitpinga (and he had some awesome photos), I was sure it would make an epic feature story and front cover shot. The front cover shot is Jason on pitch one, climbing second in a trio. I knew this photo was the one when I saw it.

I was fortunate enough to interview Mike Hillan for an article on Doug's Mountaineering Record found in this issue sometime back in July. I went up to him at VRC one night before leaving and asked if he could answer a few simple questions about mountaineering and submit a photo. The words Mike wrote really conveyed to me the depth of his passion for the mountains. I wanted to include his whole quote but ultimately could not fit it in. I will print it in its entirety at a later date. The photo Mike sent through was absolutely breath taking.

The Climbing Club of South Australia mourns the loss of Mike Hillan and Simon Bou. This issue will be dedicated to them.

# EASTER WEEKEND AT MOONARIE

## The Majestic Massif of the Flinders

*By Dave Bowen*

### Moonarie

It is always an awesome experience, the isolation, the majesty and architecture of the cliff and the harshness of the landscape.

The serenity of the desert, the camping, and the camaraderie and of course the vibe!

Then there is the climbing. Soaring multi pitch routes that see you in isolation on the large faces, only viewed by curious eagles. Testing single pitch routes that are sustained and offer fantastic climbing across the grades. The climbing is usually very sustained and of a high quality, offering full value routes, sometimes along with outlandish exposure. This Easter was an unusual perfect storm of conditions.

School holidays, Easter coinciding with Anzac Day and a fantastic new guidebook (to whet the appetite), all which gave Moonarie probably its

busiest weekend ever seen.

In addition, the loss of substantial areas of the Grampians to climbing may have contributed.

John Marshall and I arrived at Moonarie three days before Easter to find just a few like - minded climbers there already.

We had a lovely couple of days climbing without

any crowds and were enjoying the ambiance and serenity of a normal Moonarie experience. However when Thursday arrived, so did the hordes, and they kept coming!

Friday and Saturday saw more and more arrivals, until somewhere between 80 and 100 people had come to enjoy Moonarie.

They travelled from far and wide. There was a small contingency from Tasmania, including Gerry Narkowicz, who was there to review the new guidebook for Vertical Life magazine, along with enjoying the climbing. Gerry quoted, "Moonarie is a special place, offering excellent climbing in a dramatic and lonely setting."

"Moonarie is a world class crag situated 450km north of Adelaide in the Flinders Ranges, Miles From Nowhere\* to most people, but a place that every Australian climber should aim to visit at..." he adds in his review of the guide book

for Vertical Life magazine.

Nick and Heather Hancock were also there with their international visitors (Brian from California and Nick from the UK). A duo from NSW was also there, Paul and Emil, more about them later. Also a large group of Victorian climbers, including Malcolm Matheson, who straightened out



Emil on Nemesis; photo by Dave Bowen



Hypertension (24) on the Great Wall and also installed a set of anchors at the new finish. And a large group of local climbers, with regular stalwarts such as, Rob Baker (Guidebook writer and Moonarie aficionado), Justin Taylor, John Marshall, Ben Carrick, Paul Badenoch, Vicki Kavanagh, Mark Witham, Belinda Baker, Duncan Love, Shane Mitchell along with many more locals, Mishka Thrun, John Stevenson, Marty, Mitchell Slocombe.

Some of which were on their first forays into Moonarie, others starting to become more seasoned regulars.

It is always great to catch up with the many people you meet over the years at Moonarie, share stories, reacquaint friendships and build new ones. With perfect, almost unseasonably warm weather for Easter at the Moon, the age- old classics got many ascents.

Routes like Pine Crack (19), The Flying Buttress (15), Thor (15), Vortex (17), Buckets of Jism (19), GRRC (13), Nervine (12), Outside Chance (16), Downwind of Angels (19), 16 with a Bullet (16), Gargoyle (13), Tim Tam (16), The Prince (19), Hangover Layback (15), The Endless Pitch (24), among others.

Other slightly more modern routes also saw lots of traffic, Mr Ordinary (21), The Passenger (25), Swooping Pterodactyls (22), The Good Life (21), Moonarie on a Shoestring (24), to name but a few.

Moonarie always seems to dish out a dose of humility, whether that be getting shutdown by a sandbagged route, (there may be a couple of sandbags at Moonarie). Or misjudging the length of the day and having an epic or unplanned bivvy, nothing is easy or taken for granted at this special place.

Two Young Victorian climbers didn't heed John and my advice, that starting GRRC at 2pm wasn't the greatest idea.

Well as you guessed, not only did they fail to finish in daylight, they also had to endure a short

electrical storm and downpour.

Eventually getting back to bottom

camp around 11.30 pm and sheepishly crawling into their camp.

There were other benightments and epics, luckily nobody needed rescue and no one was injured (other than one climber that suffered a dislocated shoulder, which ended up needing treatment in Port Augusta to put it back in).

All valuable lessons and experiences.

The Pair of New South Welshman's, Paul "Frothy" Thompson and Emil Mandyczewsky, really threw themselves at the crag sampling the all time classics.

They were racking up an impressive tick list of some of the harder and lesser-repeated routes at Moonarie.

They worked their way around the crag gathering an impressive resume, routes like Mr Ordinary (21), The Big Picture (21), Moonarie on a Shoestring (24), Pine Crack (19), The Passenger (25), Buckets of Jism (19), Loaded Bowel (23), Swooping Pterodactyls (22), Cross Purpose (25), Space Madness (24), Nemesis (22), Honour Among Thieves (24), The Good Life (21), Ape and Away (26), Endless Love (25), Goblin Mischief (23), Durban Poison (25), Two Faced Guru (27), Downwind of Angels (19), Dry Land (22), Hypertension (24).

It was really a very impressive collection of climbs



Moonarie; photo by Dave Bowen

they sampled, they both left with great impressions of Moonarie.

However they were left wondering how often the higher graded routes get climbed here, some of these routes might only see one or two ascents a year!

The daily routine of Moonarie settles into a regular rhythm, get up early, walk up the hill before it gets too hot and enjoy the climbing, the crag and camaraderie.

The evenings are often fairly quiet affairs, catch up with some friendly people around campfires, eat dinner and exchange tales of the day and early to bed.

On these longer trips there are also rest days, these can be filled with further exploration of the Flinders Ranges, lunch at the Parachilna Hotel or just heading into Wilpena Pound or Rawnsley Bluff for re supply, showers or a meal and few beers.

The atmosphere at Moonarie isn't something you experience at all other crags, and does engender a fellowship and friendships that lasts.

I think most people that have climbed here have indelible memories of the crag. Whether that be, so challenged by the atmosphere and the climbing, that they don't return, or at the polar end and you just can't wait to return to experience more of this special crag and country. With Easter gone and the peak of visitors also headed home, the crag started to return to the more normal volume of climbers, and the normally remote and isolated aura of Moonarie returned.

We got to enjoy some days climbing, where you didn't see another person, this, for me is Moonarie at its best.

Where you relish in the quiet, the exposure and the varied and fantastic climbing. We are very privileged to enjoy Moonarie.

As current users of the cliff, we need to be so very respectful of our place at the cliff, and of the generosity of the private landowner that allows us to camp on his land.

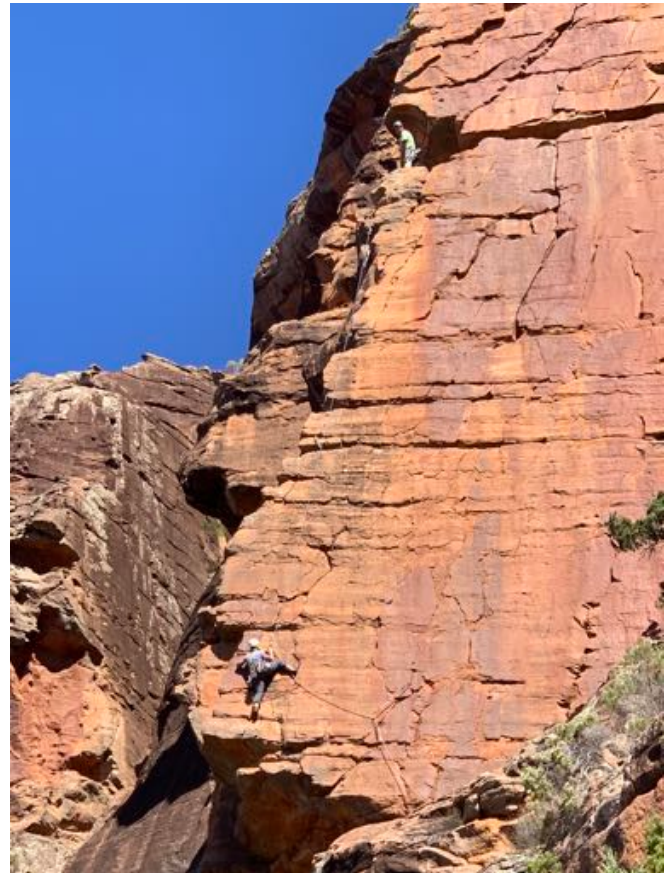
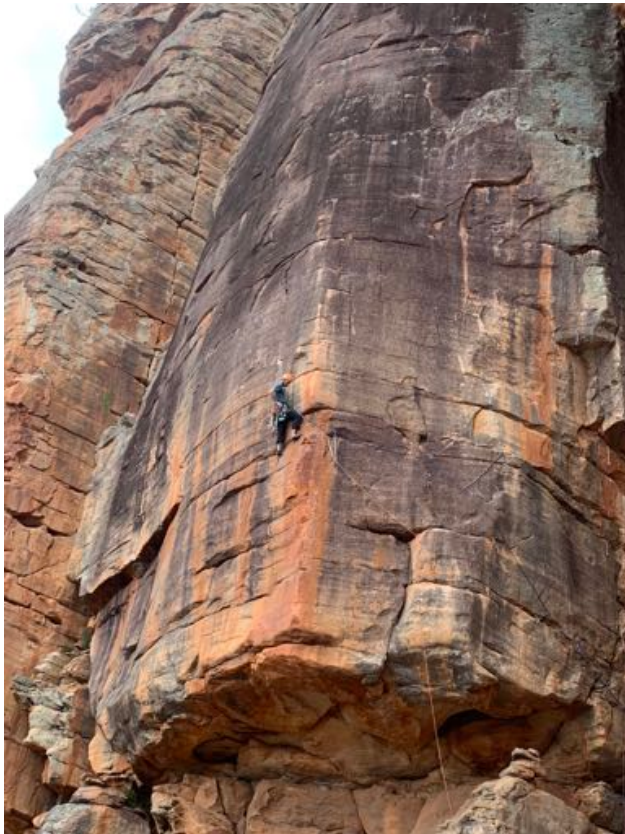


Nick & Heather Hancock on The Passenger; photo by Dave Bowen





Moonarie ... You never disappoint until next time!



Top Left: Frothy on sighting Goblin Mischief

Above: Mishka on Outside Chance

Bottom Left: Unknown party on Pine Crack

# THE COSMIQUES ARÊTE

## The Day Before Disaster

*By Luke Adams*

It had been a hot August in the European Alps. I had flown in to Geneva for a 4 week mountaineering and rock climbing trip with Greg Rolton and Paul Badenoch. We had earlier climbed in Switzerland on the Monk and the Grand Paradiso in Italy. Snow conditions in the mountains had been affected by the heat and had made climbing the stepper snow routes a bit loose and unstable. While the local climbers had more experience in the soft conditions, it didn't feel like fun to me.

Paul had decided to spend the last week of his holiday visiting friends in the South of France.

Greg & I spent a few days climbing in Italy before ending in the climber's playground of Chamonix.

As the snow routes looked out of condition, we decided to spend our time on fun easy long rock routes in the Chamonix valley.

We would take the cable cars and chairlifts up to the starts of the routes and climb on perfect granite before walking back to the cable car stations to descend to the valley for pizza and beers.

We ticked the classic Le'Index French Grade 4c (12) and Le Carkoukas 5a (15) on the Brevant rock

routes while not hard, we were required to climb efficiently to make the top in good time. Both routes required about 6 – 8 pitches of climbing.

These routes are across the Chamonix valley from Mont Blanc and afforded expansive views of the range.

Greg & I had been to the top of the Aiguille Di Midi Cable Car Lookout before and admired the long granite arête of the Cosmiques Arête. The cable car starts from practically the middle of Chamonix and rises to 3700m. The lookout at the top of the Midi is spectacular with 360 degree views of Monte Blanc Massif that are impressive.

The Cosmiques Arête (Mountaineering Grade AD 4a) has been used for decades by the local guides to prepare and acclimatise clients for later ascents



Luke Adams at the Aiguille Di Midi; photo by Greg Rolton



in the Monte Blanc Range and on a clear weather day can be very busy. Nearing the end of our trip we agreed that it would be a fun day out without being too committing.

We were up before dawn to catch the first cable car to the top of the Aiguille Di Midi but so were about 100 other climbers, paragliders and tourists. We eventually got to the snow tunnel exit at the top of the Midi about 7.30am.

The Cosmiques Arête route first requires the climber to descend a thin steep snow ridge that curls away from the Midi station and after slowly descend to the Vallee Blanche. The Vallee Blanche is a wide snowfield that is the start of the climbing route of Mont Blanc.

We put on our crampons, roped up and used our ice axes to descend firstly on steep icy snow and then onto easier terrain. Eventually we made the

snowfield and traversed under the rocky escarpment that was the Aiguille Di Midi. Our route was on the opposite side of the Midi and took about an hour to get around to.

The Cosmiques Arête route consists mostly of easy scrambling up a long granite corner system. While most of the climbing is easy, it would be a huge fall if the climber slipped.

We climbed unroped for about 150m, topping out on the first small tower on the ridge, then descended into a col and onto another small tower.

We continued on this way weaving around huge blocks of granite, traversing descending and climbing again for another hour.

Eventually we made it to the crux 4a (10) section of the climb where there was a bottleneck of other climbers. It proved to be a nice resting place while we let the guided parties go through and we could have the climb again to ourselves.

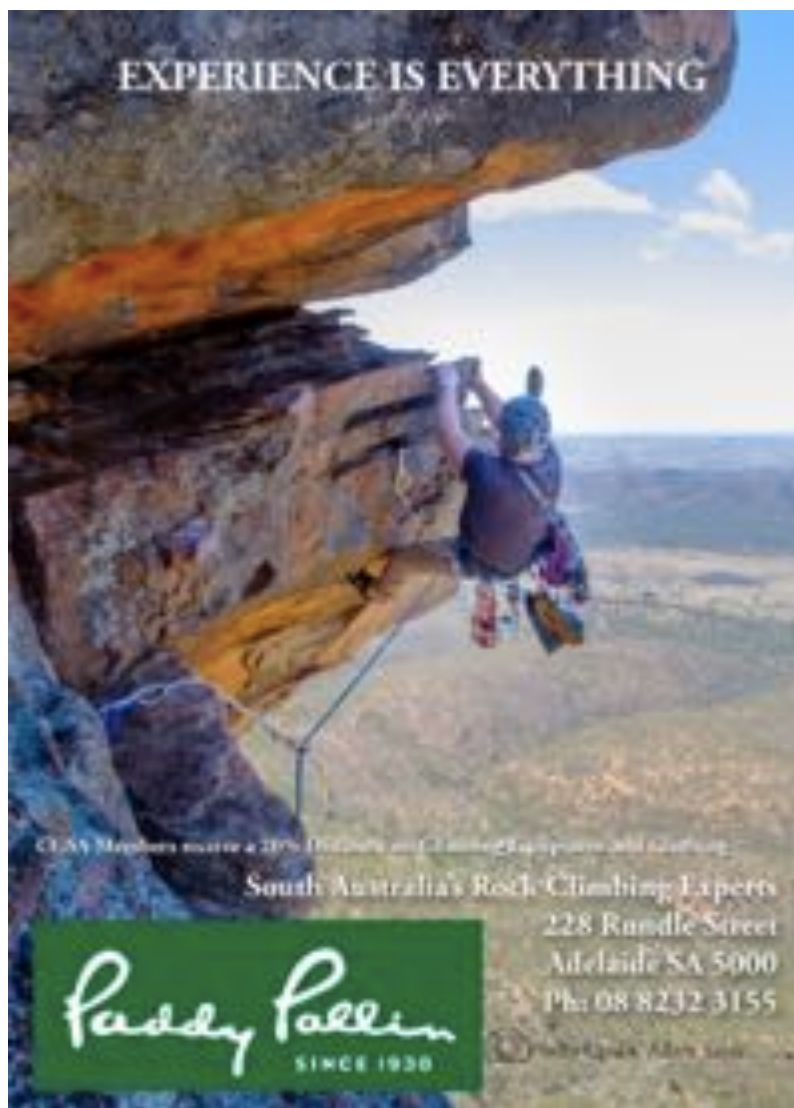
I wasn't keen to do the crux in my clunky double plastic mountaineering boots so while waiting I swapped into a pair of rock shoes.

The crux in rock shoes felt easy and we were able to move quickly' staying roped up through some steeper sections, only placing the occasional piece of protection or slinging a block for protection. After 100m more of climbing, the route eased again and we were back to scrambling.

We were slowed by a friendly British guide and his two young clients it was an opportunity to chat and enjoy the position on the steep ridge.

The top of the route came up too quickly and ended at a small flat area of rock below the Midi lookout. Lots of tourist above us seemed fascinated at the steady stream of climbers that would arrive on this summit block from a variety of routes that ended at the same spot.

The final access back to the Midi tourist lookout and our exit point of the route involved climbing a ladder lashed to the





lookout railing. Once back at the lookout it was back into our approach shoes, a couple of photos and a quick look around the tourist shop before catching a cable car back to Chamonix for a late bakery lunch.

While the Cosmiques Arête is technically very easy nothing in the mountains can be taken for granted. We found that the day after our ascent the route was closed for the season because of a large section of rock fall due to the prolonged summer heat.

I found my ability and confidence in the mountains tested by the unusual conditions.

But being there having fun climbing on classic routes with good friends in beautiful scenery, it's hard not to want to go back again.



Greg Rolton at the Aiguille Di Midi; photo; Luke Adams



The Cosmiques Arête aftermath, photo; by Luke Adams

# A Q&A WITH KATIE SARAH

## Completing the Seven-Seven

*By Emma Kent*

South Australian mountaineer Katie Sarah has climbed mountains on every continent in the world.

Katie took time out from her busy schedule to chat with BOLFA editor, Emma Kent.

### **Tell us about yourself**

I climbed my first peak in 2006 in Bolivia, a peak called Nevado Sajama, a 6,542m high peak in Bolivia.

I loved that trip; I had a ball.

I really enjoyed the altitude experience as much as you can and basically it took off from there.

Since 2006, I have climbed other peaks and by 2013 I'd completed the seven summits, the highest peaks on each continent.

As of January 2018 I had finished the seven volcanic summits also, which are the highest volcanoes on each continent.

I still climb mountains but to mix the experience up a bit there is this thing called the Explorers Grand Slam, which are the seven summits and then skiing the last degree at the poles.

I skied the last degree on the South Pole last December and then I attempted to get up to the North Pole this April.

Politics didn't work in my favour so it didn't work out, next April we are

having another go.

### **What made you decide to devote so much time to the mountains?**

I like to think I have a balance in my life and I think that is very important.

Being outdoors is a huge part of my life and there's only a certain part of my life where I can actually go to real mountains, as they are all overseas.

It (climbing mountains) is certainly the sort of thing that involves a lot of passion and focus.

In my life I have a family and a home, which obviously has to be the priority, but work and study come after



Mount Giluwe, Papua New Guinea with a local team



the outdoors and mountains.

I think that comes together in answering your question about what makes me spend so much time in the mountains and take up all these challenges.

That's a part of it; I love a challenge.

It helps me to have some sort of balance in my life, which is what I've always wanted.

I love my children very much and I certainly did dedicate my life when they were little to bringing them up.

But I realized that we don't need to immerse ourselves in one thing and so when the children were a little bit bigger and they could do things for themselves. It gave me an opportunity to get more of that balance back in my life.

It's been a mix of doing something that fulfilled my needs to take up opportunities and challenge myself but I also think I've been a better parent for it.

Because I've shown the three boys that taking up challenges is a good thing, it pushes you to varying degrees.

They're big enough now to make the choice on how they want to find balance.

#### **Where did your love for the mountains start?**

Definitely that first peak in 2006 that was my first exposure to any real mountains and altitude.

Prior to that I was always doing stuff whether that was triathlons, I ran a couple of marathons, and I was

always being active and getting outdoors.

It was only a few years before that I really started getting into hiking and then I did what was the Oxfam Trail Blazer back in the day, it was a 100km with a lot of it along the Heysen Trail.

I did that a few times and that really kicked off the hiking and being outdoors that I love.

About the same time I discovered rock climbing and it all came together from there.

When I discovered rock climbing a bit before 2006, I took that up to an extent and then it's a natural progression from rock climbing to mountaineering.

#### **What has been your favourite mountain to climb and why?**

I do get asked that question and I find it really hard to answer because every peak has been so different.

With different countries, the whole experience has been quite unique as you're in a different culture.

The place I've climbed the most is Nepal and each time I go to Nepal I'm with a different group of people and it's a new mountain and it's been a fresh experience.

I guess maybe one of my favourites would be Denali because that was different in that it was two friends and myself, we were completely unsupported.

We had no support or guides - at a few points I admit I was thinking, "oh where are the Sherpa's?"

But we just had to do it all ourselves, all of the load carrying, which included the biggest packs I've carried at high altitude.

I guess looking back at that I am proudest of that trip, as it was just with two friends and no clients. There were other people around but no one else in our group.

In a way I guess that's my favourite because I'm most proud of that one.

The way we did it, it all went perfectly, smoothly, it was a really good trip.

And it's beautiful; it's really stunning.



### What has been the most difficult mountain to climb and why?

Again each of them throws up different challenges.

I guess the obvious answer is Everest because it's the longest, hardest, highest and the most exhausting.



The Everest summit

But even Elbrus, which isn't any where near one of the higher ones was difficult. We had to turn around because of really severe weather but we ended up being able to go back up the next night and summit.

But for sheer length, Everest would have to be the answer.

### I understand you have completed the seven-seven, summing the highest seven mountains and volcanoes on each continent. Has that been a life long dream of yours to do? How did it feel when you finished?

No, everything I have done has almost sort of popped up as an opportunity or the idea has come up and I've thought *oh that sounds cool*.

So certainly the first couple of mountains the opportunities were presented and I thought wow that sounds great, I'll go along to that.

Then I was getting a bit more proactive and wanting to do more mountains of altitude.

It was easy to choose one of the seven summits as I had friends that were on seven summit missions.

So if I rang one of them up and said I want go on a trip

let's go do one of the seven summit- mountains and I was organising it they'd say, "yes I'm in."

It was a bit of a no brainer way to get good people I wanted to go away with along on trips.

So that's how the seven summits unfolded.

I love a goal, I'm very goal orientated and those lists are an easy way to put together a long - term multifaceted goal.

I came across the seven volcanic summits and thought *oh that's cool*; volcanoes are amazing they are really stunning geological formations.

So I liked that idea and but I was a little bit hesitant because one of the volcanoes is in Iran.

I thought I'll give it a go (the seven volcanic summits) it will take me to some really cool places, which it did.

I was a little bit tentative about Iran, but it ended up being one of my favourite trips, it was amazing because it was unexpectedly so much fun.

The local people welcomed me and I never felt in any way at risk or in danger so that was surprising and unexpected, it's such a cool place to visit.

The Explorers Grand Slam idea came around as my husband hasn't been to Antarctica and I had been there a couple of times so we decided to go and we thought we may as well attempt that while we are there.

It was an excuse to go back to Antarctica, which is just amazing.

As far as how it felt when I finished the seven-seven, the last volcano I did was down in Antarctica, which is stunningly beautiful and we were in a really small team.

It is the most remote I've ever been and it was such a cool little trip.

I think that whole trip and experience was just brilliant and at the time I thought *yay what a way to finish the seven-seven*.



I guess what made it a little bit more special was that I was down there in the camp, one of the other guys discovered that I was the first female to have done it (the seven-seven).

So I thought *oh wow that's unexpected*.

I was doing it for me not for that reason (to be the first woman), it hadn't even occurred to me.

**How would you describe your decisions around risk taking?**

Careful and considered.

I know most normal people wouldn't believe that and I guess my risk profile must be different to most people.

But I will be extremely careful about who I go with and that includes team members and colleagues.

I've been fortunate enough to make amazing contacts and climbing friends around the world.

I will always choose somebody that I have climbed with before and know they are great or someone like that has recommended someone else to me.

Also, choosing a peak that either I can do enough research to know it's within my capability and pushing me a bit.

I'm always happy to be pushed but it can't be so far beyond the line that it is a stupid danger.

Even better I have a few friends that I can ask flat out "am I good enough?"

And I'll either get a "yes you are" or "no you're not" and that's fine, I want an honest answer.

I don't want to be on a peak that I am not up for and they don't want me to be on a peak with them that I am not up for.

Honesty is good.

Every opportunity needs to be carefully managed and looked into.

I will also always make sure that we have all the



Denali summit

weather forecasting, all the proper structure and support that is required to make it as safe as possible.

**I'm sure you saw the picture that went viral recently of the lines to the summit of Everest, which killed 10 people. What are your thoughts on that?**

Yes of course I have thoughts; I always follow the season each year.

The commercialization has made it generally more available to people, the extent that it is available maybe needs to be checked.

I do believe that particularly in Nepal on the south side there are too many people on the mountain.

Not only are they all up at the summit in the last 200m but also throughout the icefall as well.

People queued like that in the icefall is almost equally as dangerous being queued at 8,800m.

The icefall is a place that you need to get through smartly and quickly.

You don't want to be hanging around so to have queues making more people spend time at extreme altitude and in the icefall is dangerous; there is no other way around it.

I believe that anybody who is allowed a permit to climb

Everest has to have experience. \*

You do get a lot of people that's the only peak they want to do and they are never going to do anything else.

They think I'm not going to spend my time/money/whatever getting the skills I really need.

So to insist on an appropriate level of experience, (including another 8000m peak), would knock people like that out.

They should need to have done that before they can have an Everest summit permit.

Obviously I don't have any or all of the answers but in my mind that could or should be considered and maybe it has been, but I think that would make a difference to the numbers that could go.

### **What is your next challenge?**

Unfortunately the last challenge hasn't been finished yet so back to up far north next April hopefully to get to do the last degree of the North Pole.

I'm actually going over to Europe in the next couple of months for a short fun trip to the Matterhorn.

And then I have a couple of other trips where I will be guiding and working, I will be doing a 6,000m peak in Nepal in November.

I haven't really thought of the next list or major challenge past this one yet.

I was hoping to be planning that now but I have to get the last one done first.

### **Do you have any advice for anyone looking to take up mountaineering?**

If you're doing a trekking peak, go to Nepal and go with a good operator that will give you all the right support and infrastructure.

If you want to get into technical mountaineering then I certainly strongly recommend a New Zealand alpine course that gives you some basic skills.

Then you can take those to Nepal for example and do something a bit harder and a bit more technical.

To test yourself at altitude though, a trekking peak is the way to go.

Go throw yourself at a 6000m peak in Nepal (with a reputable operator as mentioned) and you will quickly work out whether you can take altitude or not.

Most climbers will have some good rope skills and that sort of stuff but it is pretty different up there in snow and ice.

If you want to go highly technical, climb at a lower altitude like in New Zealand. But if you want higher altitude then go to a trekking peak in Nepal and then throw in technical stuff later.

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\* Applies to Climbing Equipment only.

\*Editors Note: Prior to going to print it would appear that the Nepalese government has introduced a rule requiring previous high-altitude experience and demonstrable training before a permit is issued due to this years' deadly season.



# FRIGHT OF THE GULL

*By Jason Barltrop*

I first heard about Flight of the Gull (FOTG) the year before we climbed it. Shane Mitchell had mentioned something at Waitpinga he'd wanted to get on for a while, a 118 metre, 3-pitch traverse of Mollusc Wall. Our mate Steve (name changed to protect ego) hadn't wanted to do it, so Shane had to wait for some other suckers. Enter Jack Sizer and I. Both pretty green at trad, we were up for an adventure and since Shane was happy to lead the whole thing, we set a date to climb it as a trio.

By this time, Waitpinga started to feel like a second home down south. We'd made many trips over a couple of summers to Cephalopod wall, as it often provided a cooler option to the northern crags. One particular day as Adelaide reached 40 degrees and my car struggled against overheating up Willunga Hill; we climbed at Waits' in what must have been high 20's. I'm not sure if climbing here directly created my fondness of slab, or if I gravitated towards it due to preference of style. Or if it was just the atmosphere you get from being at a sea cliff with a bunch of psyched friends in a wild setting. Either way I loved the place instantly.

Prior to leaving Adelaide for FOTG, we had done our due diligence: the tidal forecast wasn't ideal as it was rising during the day, but topping out at an acceptable high. The swell was also up slightly, but when weighing the numbers, we decided it was definitely under the risk threshold.

A fine morning, we made our way in good time under blue skies in cool air, and found the descent without much trouble. Spirits were high and the banter flowed as we picked and slid our way down the steep slope, skidding on loose dirt and vegetation, the ocean sounding louder as

we neared. Towards the bottom where the hill gave way to weathered rock, we took stock, and were suddenly forced to discuss whether to climb or not. The waves looked bigger than expected...but the day was young, we were tough, and it's only water.

Scrambling up onto the wall proper, we found the initial belay ledge at 20 metres height, and looked east. Mollusc wall, our objective, shoots straight down into the ocean. It makes a direct line eastwards to the in-cut, which jags out south roughly ten metres, then transitions 90 degrees back into Cephalopod wall, which runs east again towards Victor.

We began climbing. Shane led, I was to second, and Jack third. As I belayed I was reminded how lucky I was to tag along with such a confident and competent leader in Shane. This thing was well under his pay grade, and he set off easily, slabbing his way across the first pitch of three. Full of stoke, I then followed and tried to soak in this experience as best I could. The moves were easy, but I still found myself in that familiar position of questioning if this was a sandbag, and marvelling



Looking at Flight of the Gull on Mollusc Wall; photo by Paul Badenoch



Ready to set off; Shane looking slightly more confident.

at what climbers had accomplished in the past, without sticky rubber and fancy gear. Was I made of the same stuff as those guys, or just pretending?

Doubts quickly evaporated, because the scene is simply spectacular and it absorbs you. 20 metres directly above the ocean with waves smashing into our wall, I felt like the most badass dude who'd ever climbed. On arriving at the first belay to smiles and fist bumps, I found a comfy spot to soak in the view, while Jack set off to join us.

It wasn't long before Shane pointed out the seal hunting directly below us. And for that while until Jack reached us, we watched in awe at this animal expertly hunt for its lunch. Darting around near the raging surface with surprising speed, it rose a couple of times with very good size fish, to our cheers. By now the swell had also risen, and smashed over the submerged boulders to batter the cliff face. Foam hissed and spray flew everywhere, a strong smell of saltwater in the air. The entire area beneath us was chaos. There was

huge power being generated and released down there, and because of this realisation, I was amazed to watch this seal almost playfully go for its food. In a moment I remember vividly, I was sure it was about to be dashed to pieces when a massive wave bore down while it was trapped in front of a huge submerged bus-sized rock. Expecting carnage, instead this master of the ocean simply flipped and rolled upward with the surge to glide over the boulder to land on the other side. I contemplated if there might be a lesson there. Roll with the punches?

It was about now, the start of the second pitch, we realised the swell had become serious. The rising tide we had expected, but not these waves. Shane set off undeterred and expertly once again. However it was a little unnerving when halfway through the pitch he fiddled with what looked like small pro for a period of time, turned to look at us, shrugged his shoulders, and moved on. Jack and I peered at each other and agreed the shoulder shrugging didn't seem confidence inspiring and promised not to fall on that piece.

Having built the next anchor, Shane put me on belay for pitch 2 and I set off. The moves I could do in my sleep, but the environmental and headspace element crept in. And now the waves were seriously threatening. While I had laughed each time the water got somewhat close to Shane a few minutes ago, now it wasn't so funny, and some huge sets were closing. A couple sent spray up the cliff around me and I moved on. It became a case of timing my movement to each wave, trying to gain a secure stance as a wave was hitting. This plan worked and I still felt somewhat confident, until I saw a veritable tsunami about to crash. I managed to quickly find a position on what were probably jugs but felt like half pad crimps, and braced. I thought it was going to wash me off the wall. I hoped Shane's anchor was good. Looking down I watched the sea rise up at me and crimped hard. The sound was huge and still the wave exploded upwards. Gravity fought well for me, and the water finished within a foot of my toes, leaving all the rock wet. Normally a slow and deliberate climber, I then decided to hurry the hell up. Reaching the belay I exclaimed at the anchor! Built from 3 threaded prussik loops, Shane simply remarked he didn't have the right gear on him. One thread looked terrible, the other two, bomber.



At least it was very multi-directional. Jack followed well to join us at the belay, and although we all got some huge waves through that pitch, I felt I'd got the set of the day.

It's hard to communicate the feeling that comes across you after a long duration of auditory punishment. The constant barrage of sets smashing the wall and spraying the air, water churning, reverberating back out to sea. One after another, and another, on without pause. The serenity of the morning had morphed into a different beast as the day wore on. It got colder as the sun went behind the cliff. And although we kept calm and measured now, the joviality of earlier had given way to a more business-like attitude. The tide was now higher still, but the massive swell also meant our escape route across the Cephalopod wall base was starting to go under water. And pitch 3 is the crux.

Shane wasted no time and cruised the moves, but as I belayed him toward the end of the pitch, he



Jason hanging on through the big sets on P2

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hesitated and second-guessed for a long while. I became a bit nervous and came to the conclusion that he wasn't in a bind for the climbing itself, but more so trying to decide what the better option was for us as a team. He knew of the route Down to the Sea in Slips, which would have given us an escape upwards and onto Cephalopod Wall. But after deliberating and not being able to correctly identify the line, chose to descend the traditional finish of FOTG toward the rocky in-cut base that separates the two cliffs at Waitpinga. I was glad he chose this option as by this point I was feeling a bit shell-shocked and seeking the safety of flat ground.

The pitch 3 climbing was absorbing, excellent traverse climbing. Even seconding, route finding wasn't easy. At the end, timing our descents in between waves, we touched down one by one and scrambled up some larger boulders to the in-cut corner which is protected from even the biggest waves. Here together we took stock. Looking east across Cephalopod Wall, which unlike Mollusc has a rocky platform at its base, that familiar little exit ledge at the far end seemed a long long way away. Jack walked down the giant sloping boulder at the base of the in-cut to inspect the 100-metre walkout. Huge waves smashed into and over the rocks we needed to cross. With an



All of us taken by Garth Wimbush from the Cephalopod Wall. P1

chains above The Pool. Nearing the section of big and chossy holds, I hit a stumbling block at quite a blank section of diagonally downward climbing, and hesitated. Almost instantly and unexpectedly, Elvis Leg set in. I swore at myself for forgetting to breathe, backed off a move, rested a second, took a deep breath and realised I couldn't hang around all day as the tide was probably still on the up. I had to keep the team moving. This could be a decent fall here. One more breath...and delicately tiptoed down across holds that felt like they could be measured in atoms. Stuck it. It was then through the brittle and vegetated flakes to the good solid crack line that ran vertically to the chains where Shane was waiting. Once I was anchored at this belay, I realised

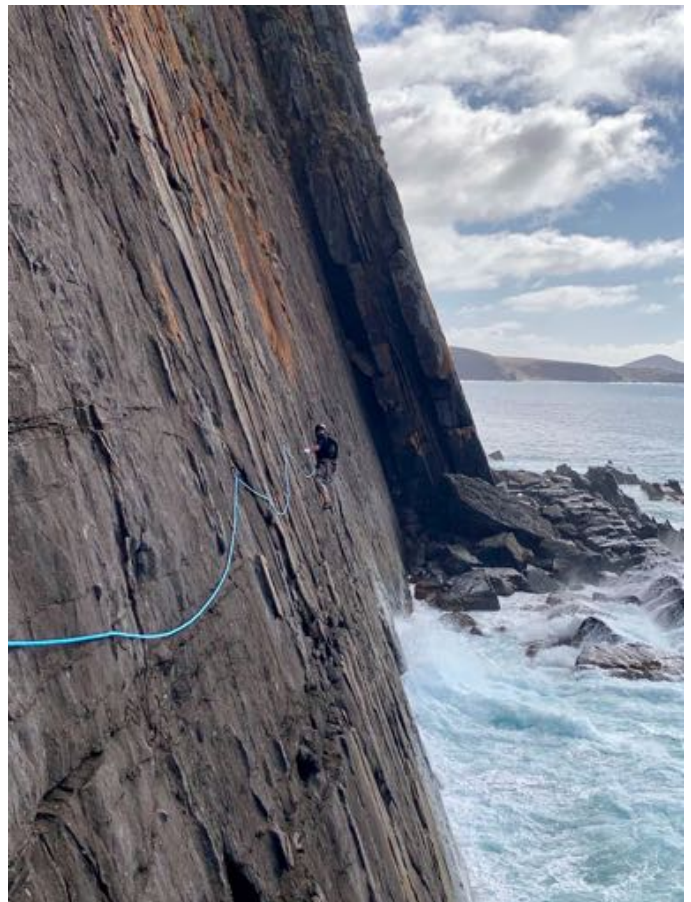
admirable amount of bravery or a worrying level of stupidity he was adamant we could time a run to beat the sets.

I began to realise what a toll the sheer volume of sound had taken on me. It's common knowledge for those who ride motorbikes long distances that simply wearing earplugs can make a huge difference to how fatigued you get. I was feeling a bit drained from the experience but determined to stay sharp. Again with the motorcycle analogy: in a race meeting, the most crashes happen in the last race of the day.

Jack said we should go for it - Shane and I both disagreed. Although I was pretty keen to get out and I've been known to do risky sh\*t in my life, trying the walk (run) out seemed incredibly dangerous.

Democracy won and we decided to climb ourselves out. Making our way up to the top of the first boulder of Stimulus Package, we set off to traverse the second wall of Waitpinga. As I belayed Shane, I watched numerous sets completely submerge the Cephalopod belay rocks. The ocean fizzed and was all white near us. Everything was loud. Now my turn to climb, I somehow convinced myself I was a badass once again, and set off. At about mid-pitch I saw that Shane had traversed across, passed a section of shitty rock then climbed directly upwards to a set of

both at the same time that we were running out of daylight and it was getting colder. I had dressed fine for a mild day of climbing, but not nearly well enough for a night stuck on a sea wall in the dark



Shane leading P2



waiting for the low tide.

I remained quiet while Jack climbed across to us, with strength and poise as always. I could tell Shane was deciding how to approach the situation, and we talked once or twice about options. By the time Jack arrived without drama, Shane knew we were at the Taleah Grace chains and had decided to continue heading up Sea Lion's second pitch to the main horizontal break on Cephalopod Wall at 30m. There

were chains there and what we thought would be an easy traverse across the break to another set of chains which then might allow access to easier climbing to our exit point at the far end of the cliff.

Shane coolly climbed the

10 metre mixed pitch, clipped the chains, and set off right across the horizontal...but was quickly stopped in his tracks by bad footers and vegetated crack. Dammit.

Now, what happened next can only be described as a complex series of tricky rope-f\*ckery that involved me following specific belay instructions that allowed Shane to perform a set of manoeuvres in which he went down, sideways, up then down again. He later said this process actually had a name, but I simply thought he'd lost his composure and his mind. Although I'm certain it didn't go exactly how he'd planned and he did kind of make it up on the fly, he'd actually rigged a fantastic pendulum swing. This would get us across to another set of chains that we could then maybe lower off and scamper the remaining distance to safety.



Jack P3

Back at the Taleah Grace chains with us, there was not much to say. Shane grinned and made manic noises as he set off running across the blank cliff section toward the other set of anchors. He gained momentum, then slowed on the rise, and fell short, causing him to run back at us and start again. Sprinting down, then across, then up, and reaching for the far chains, he nailed it. Knowing it was possible, I gathered myself to follow suit. I'd been climbing for a few years, and

had swung about on ropes a little bit. However I hadn't experienced a proper pendulum swing before, in which you have to balance and run across a cliff face in a way that doesn't feel entirely natural.

Leaving Jack on our little

belay I set off, and as the

rope stretched I ran as hard as I could and then up as the arc rose. Obviously I didn't commit enough on the first shot, as I couldn't reach Shane and my momentum sent me running back towards Jack. With a quick rev up from him, I psyched myself and set off for my second go, flying across the cliff face toward the anchors and pulled onto the wall and grabbed Shane's outstretched arm. At the chains I smiled at Shane and we both yelled encouragement at Jack, giving him beta about the little hidden side pull that allowed you to latch onto the wall just before the stance. He got to us in one great swing, and we all laughed and yelled and realised how damn cool we were in that moment.

From here, the rocks below were slightly protected, but still going under water with the sets. However we were closer and we could probably



Wave action seen from the big boulder at finish of FOTG at the in cut

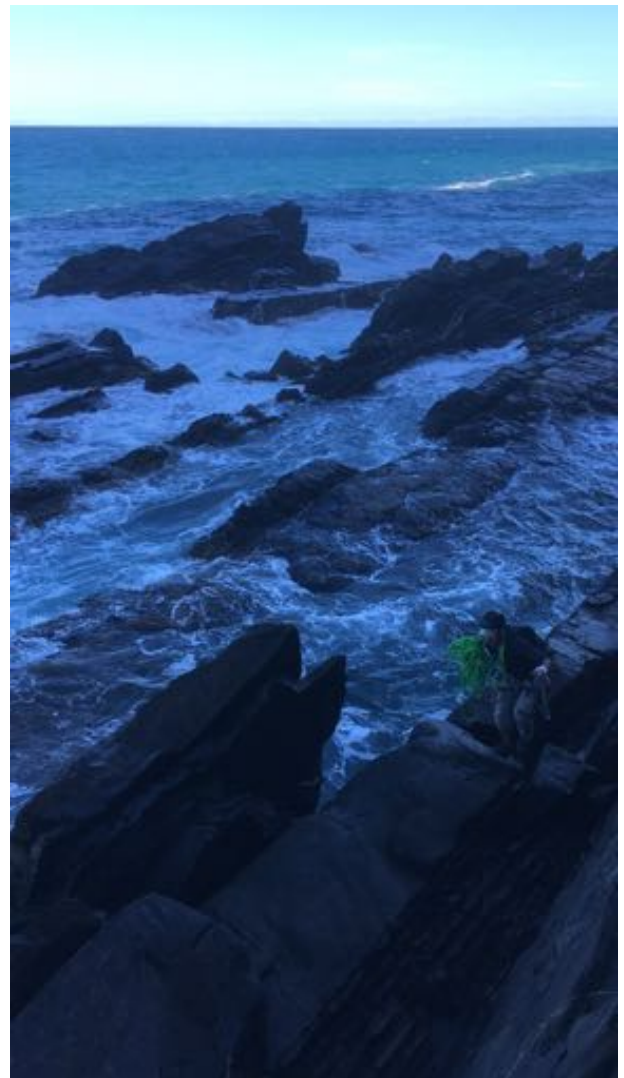
time a quick rap and run and escape at the normal Cephalopod entry/exit point. One by one, we did that, Shane going last. He pulled the rope and we sprinted across the knife blades to safe ground. Finally...up on the higher rocks we looked at each other...and burst into laughter after realising that through the entire day, we hadn't actually got a single foot wet. Even the rope had miraculously stayed dry when Shane pulled it.

The light was fading, so we didn't chat much, just quickly made our way up the gully and out, and back to Adelaide. I got home, gave my girlfriend a hug, a quick overview of the day, and drank a bottle of red wine in 20 minutes.

I've heard in climbing, people talk about "epics". I'm still green, so I definitely can't appreciate some of the incredible stuff that's been done out there. I'm also sure our day would register as a small blip on the radar of many seasoned climbers. I mean, we didn't quite run out of drinking water or daylight, and we didn't even get wet. On reflection it's basically just a big day of climbing. But when I try to remember that feeling of shell-shock caused

by hour after hour of truly huge waves crashing close into the rock below us...and that feeling of uncertainty when our escape was cut off, I believe it was pretty damn epic. A great reminder of how so much in climbing is not just physical, but also mental. And how the ability to stay measured in these circumstances is just as critical as being able to pull down hard on rock. I'm also hugely grateful to have shared that experience with a couple of extremely cool headed and genuinely great guys.

To anyone looking for an experience, Flight of the Gull should be high on the list. The climbing itself I wouldn't call incredible in and of itself, but it's the combination you get when paired with the setting that makes it so special. Just keep an eye on the swell.



The finish! Jack and I at safety and Shane scrambling out with dry feet and a dry rope! Success!



# THE ROUTE TO TOKYO

## Climbing at the 2020 Olympics

*By Emma Kent*

In 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that climbing would be an event in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. First we were excited, then a little confused. There would be only one event (and one medal per gender) that would be comprised of three disciplines, bouldering, lead and ..... speed? What is speed climbing? Whilst we were a bit confused with the addition of speed climbing, the community has needed to embrace the IOC's decision. Athletes looking to compete will have to master all three disciplines.

Here I will try and break down the Olympic selection process with a focus on Australian Olympic hopefuls.

There are three championships where athletes will have an opportunity to represent their country. The World Championship, Special Qualifying and Continental Championship. Australia sent three female and three male athletes to Japan in August to compete in the World Championship. The Special Qualifying event will be held in November in France, to qualify for this event, athletes will need a good ranking across the world championships. Australia is hoping to be represented in this event by one or two athletes.

According to Romain Thevenot, Director of Sport Climbing Australia (SCA), the Continental Championship held in Sydney in May, will be the event where Australians will most likely qualify.

Only 20 males and 20 females will have the opportunity to compete in climbing's Olympic debut and only two people from each gender can represent one country. "We are aiming for two

females and one male (to qualify)," says Romain. SCA is currently staying tight lipped on who our potential qualifiers might be but one of them is no doubt expected to be Oceana McKenzie. Oceana has received an Olympic Scholarship for Athletes from the



Australian Olympic Committee. She was one of eight athletes nominated for the scholarship, which is open to all sports, and one of four to receive it. Oceana recently placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the Meiringen Bouldering World Cup earlier this year. Another Australian on an Olympic campaign is Blue Mountains climber Tom O'Halloran.

According to the SCA, the discipline that Australians are getting the best results in is bouldering (proven by Oceana's outstanding performance in Meiringen). However most athletes in Australia specialise in either lead or boulder.

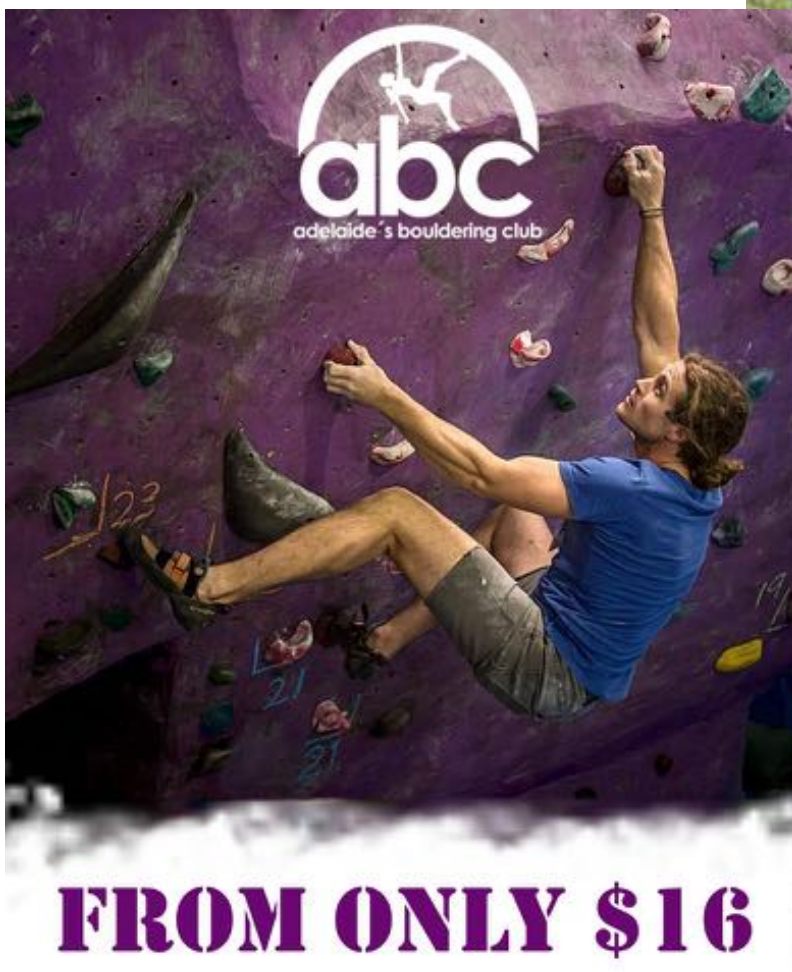
Sport Climbing Australia says the main reason we don't do as well in lead is because of the lack of facilities. Australia is home to only two lead facilities that are of "good standard" in terms of height, angle and wall type). Australia has just two speed climbing walls but neither is considered "official".

Australia will be up against some strong international competition. Other known climbing athletes looking to debut at the Olympics are Adam Ondra, Shauna Coxsey, Sean McColl and Alex Johnson.

Director of Sport Climbing Australia, Romain Thevenot has noticed an increasing interest in our sport since the Olympic announcement. "In the last five years the number of commercial facilities has doubled and we expect many more facilities in the years to come," said Romain. "We believe that Olympic time will create an even larger increase in interest and participation."



Photos: Oceana Mackenzie (VIC) and Sam Lavender (QLD) competing on the climbing circuit





## REMEMBERING COLIN REECE

*By Eddie Ozols*

I'm in the passenger seat gazing hypnotically at the passing scrub when, out of the corner of my eye, I notice Col turn his head fully towards me several times in rapid succession as if wishing to attract my attention. We're sitting on 110 km/h on a long, quiet stretch of open road heading to Moonarie on what might well be my first long trip with him. As I move my gaze, I see he's turning the VW Beetle's steering wheel with exaggerated motions just like a toddler would on one of those 3-minute toy car rides one finds in shopping malls. Some part of my consciousness registers 'that's strange' as the car is not swerving, but then my eyes open like saucers when I see air between the car body and the short length of column attached to the steering wheel. Col quickly jiggles the detached steering column back into place muttering something about the bolt having fallen out some time ago and continues driving as if nothing untoward had happened. With an apologetic chuckle he offers an 'I thought that would jolt you out of your reverie.'

Rewind a year and a bit to Easter 1975 when I'm with the Adelaide University Mountain Club (AUMC) at Mt Arapiles. With no slight degree of trepidation I'm about to be taken up Agamemnon, then graded English HVD (Hard Very Difficult) or Ewbank 7 for my first ever '-real' climb. Along the way I get a grandstand view and take photos of another party doing a fast, competent, all-nut ascent of Electra (then graded 18). As both teams summit, pleasantries are exchanged and I learn that the leader is from Adelaide but I won't know who he is for quite some time.

During my first year of climbing there were no specialist outdoor gear shops in Adelaide. So each week on a Wednesday evening climbers needing gear would have to travel out to the northern suburbs where, after working all day as a plumber, George Adams would open up his home garage. It was a veritable Aladdin's Cave of

Chouinard stoppers and hexes, chromoly pitons in myriad shapes, 46m and 50m 11mm ropes, crampons, ice axes, duvets and other delights. Being there felt somewhat akin to membership of a secret society. Indeed, in those pre-internet days, it was one of the few opportunities along with monthly CCSA meetings and, to some degree, weekend afternoons at Morialta and other local crags to catch up with gossip and meet climbers outside of the AUMC. I'm at George's one evening when a curly, fair-haired person with a discernable nervous energy about him turns up, efficiently chooses several nuts and karabiners, then pays and leaves without indulging in the small talk that most everyone else tended to do. George informs me it was Col Reece and how there's been bad blood between them for a year or so since the two put up the classic 'Flight of the Gull' traverse of Mollusc Wall at Waitpinga. The animosity was in regard to the apportionment of blame for the better part of Col's rack being accidentally consigned to Neptune's watery keep.

George opened his first retail climbing equipment store 'Thor' on Regency Road in 1976. Meanwhile, Col worked full-time for Telecom in the city and, for a while, at the Scout Shop on Saturday mornings. Here he lent his expertise in helping to add technical climbing gear to their stock-in-trade of heavy canvas tents, clunky steel karabiners and suchlike. This seemed to be a way of getting up George's nose by providing direct competition but I suspect it was more an opportunity for Col to order anything that caught his fancy in the international magazines, with a staff discount to boot. It was a small scene in those days and eventually the two did make it up to each other.

I'm at Far Crag on a Sunday afternoon in spring when an AUMC compatriot points out someone reasonably nearby on the cliff-base track, 'That's Col Reece, the State's top climber.' I make a point of not tripping over my shoelaces and continue top

roping with my group but before too long Col has sidled over introducing himself with a humble air. He asks if we're AUMC, which in those days would have been a good first guess, and says he's always on the lookout for willing accomplices. I must have signed on the dotted line because before too many weeks pass I'm belaying him up a few easy FAs at Morialta. On another occasion I arrange to meet him at Far Crag and when I arrive he's solo top-roping Barad-Dûr (22). He is using a jumar cam, attached at its base to his Whillans harness and attached at its top to the front of his chest via a sling worn in a figure 8 around his shoulders. This was the first time I'd ever seen anyone use a system like this and was it quite an eye-opener. He then proceeded to lead the second free ascent of Barad-Dûr with me belaying just as he'd belayed 'Hot' Henry on the FFA a short time before.

Australian climbers began visiting Yosemite Valley in 1973, with leading exponents like Rick White, Keith Bell and Chris Dewhirst in the vanguard. Col was not far behind, heading there in 1975. I no longer retain memory of any of his particular

ascents; maybe there was mention in BOLFAs of that time [Colin's ascents included The Prow 5.6 A2, Nutcracker 5.8, Lost Arrow 5.8 A2, Doggie Deviations 5.9 and North Buttress, Middle Cathedral Rock 5.10b - Ed.] I do however remember him recounting the story of staggering

back towards Camp 4 from the Village late one night; quite the worse for wear after celebrating completion of a significant route. Passing the outdoor gear store he saw an inviting pitched tent in the display window, he proceeded to put a brick through the window, crawl into the tent and fall asleep. Next morning responding to a call, law enforcement turned up and was surprised to find the miscreant conveniently in the tent snoozing like a baby. They hauled him to the lock-up to sleep it off and eventually he was released after payment



Col Reece at Top Camp, Moonarie, Easter 1979

of damages and fines.

The restless energy I alluded to earlier manifested in varied ways. For instance, Col was instrumental in the acquisition, carrying up and erection of the first water tank in the gully above Top Camp at Moonarie. Sometimes he got a bit carried away as



when around '74 or '75 he stacked up a line of cairns along the flatter section of the track in from Bottom Camp. Some were a meter high and crowned with 10cm dots of reflective white road paint. It was a godsend if you were benighted on a dark moonless or overcast night, coming down with no torch. However, the act was roundly condemned as overkill at a CCSA meeting and, to his credit, reduced both the number and size of the cairns on his next visit.

His zanier aspect surfaced in many ways.

We were on the main road to Melbourne but turned left at Dimboola to head towards Warracknabeal on the Borung Highway. We had the intention of blasting through northern Victoria to Canberra as the first stop of an eastern states trip. Leaving the outskirts of Dimboola we picked up speed, passing a town and a km distance sign that dispelled any illusions of it being anything but a long night of driving ahead. Fortunately, we



Col Reece and Jim Olsen (NSW) on Electra 19\*, Arapiles, Easter 1975

were well stocked with tape cassettes of his favourites: Led Zeppelin, Jethro Tull and Pink Floyd. Unexpectedly, Col hits the brakes and we come to a shuddering halt. There's nothing outside so I'm thinking blown tire or major vehicle malfunction. Col reverses the car carefully for 50m till we're in front of the road sign, headlights illuminating it. Grabbing some rolls of electrical insulation tape from the glove-box and with a 'won't be long' he steps outside, runs up to the sign and alters the 'u' of Borung to an 'i'. He chuckles as we drive off.

Arriving early for a CCSA meeting, Col and I are sorting and loading our latest colour slides into a Kodak Carousel projector cartridge. There are pictures of his latest climbing exploits but he seems most excited about showing the one that's not climbing related. It was taken on his SLR with a hand lifted from the bicycle's handlebars while on a downhill run on the new, almost completed

freeway at Willunga Hill. With the new road days from opening officially and daylight saving in place, Col had slipped through the barriers in the period between the workers knocking off and sunset. He then photographed himself screaming down at just over 100 km/h. He had a brother who was a serious club road racer and Col recounted how, on occasion, he'd accompany him on a training ride. They rode to Clare and back to Adelaide for a total of about 260km for the day. Col also demonstrated how to true a bicycle wheel using a truing stand with a marker pen, and how one could improvise just using the brake pads on an upturned bike. He also showed me how small bits of lead could be used to balance the wheel for an even better result.

Col shared a house in Wayville with Dave Blackburn, an engineering doctoral student who was building an aluminium-framed glider in their sizable grassy backyard. On my first visit Col showed me his vast collection of South Australian topographic and geological maps. If a map showed converging contour lines hinting at the possibility of a cliff, he would circle the area in pencil with the intention of checking it out. Early one Sunday I arrive at his place to go climbing. Dave answers the front door and lets me in but Col's bedroom door was shut. I walked over with the intention of opening it a fraction and calling out that the rock was waiting, it's time to rise and shine. Dave

suggests I knock, which I do a few times. After no reply I go to open the door again but Dave somewhat more insistently tells me I really shouldn't before a reply. I hear Col mumbling he won't be long. After 5 or 10 minutes Col emerges followed by one of the local female climbers. Well, well, I muse, the high priest of Adelaide climbing whom I'd been convinced eschewed earthly pleasures in the pursuit of rock was more human than I'd believed.

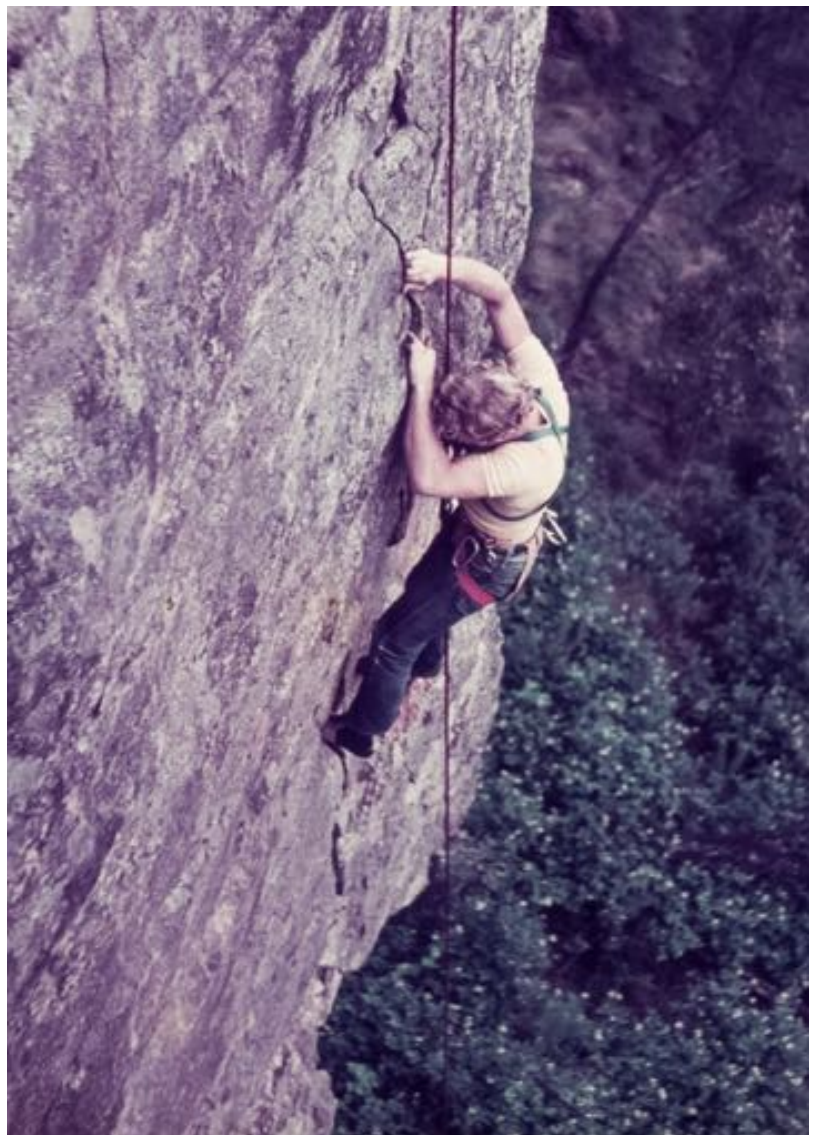
I frequently observed his open, friendly manner at work as he convinced farmers or station managers to let us onto their land for exploratory climbing trips. Or sweet-talking a waitress into letting us have some beers at the Wilpena Chalet even though we looked a bit rough and weren't intending to order the mandatory accompanying meal.

Col had clearly been the State's hardest technical rock-climber in the mid 70's. That would end with the rise of climbers like myself and, in particular, the Shepherd siblings who would climb for extended periods, i.e. not hamstrung by being weekend warriors. This distinction made a greater difference to skill and fitness levels before the existence of climbing gyms. By late 1978, even though Col had led the second ascent, Barad-Dûr was regarded by most local climbers as 21. But they had only top-roped it, often repeatedly, and had it totally wired. Col's own best effort in the Adelaide Hills or Flinders Ranges was grade 21 but many of his routes were unrepeatable. It was not recognized that some were under graded. At that time, within a fortnight, I freed the big gymnastic pitch 1 roof of Remnant at Moonarie and succeeded on the FA of Rubber Duckie at The Bluff, Victor Harbour. I tentatively gave them grades of 22 and 21/22. Soon after at the CCSA meeting I was a little concerned about how Col would handle it when I informed him of what I'd been up to. However, word had already gotten around and Col made sure to not speak or even nod to me all

evening. It might have been as if I wasn't there. Within a few weeks cordial relations were restored.

Back in the 70's at the Pines campground

at Mt Arapiles there were four long log seats set in a square around each fireplace with gaps at the corners to allow easy passage. This arrangement left one not quite as close to the fire as one would have preferred in cold weather but also meant 20 or more people could be accommodated. Once people had finished cooking their evening meals at their respective camping spots they would often wander over to another fireplace where the crowd was the biggest or the most promising of revelry. Even beginners could partake of the oral traditions of passing down stories and anecdotes of climbing feats and epics in more distant and larger theatres like Mt Buffalo, the Warrumbungle's, Mt Geryon and Frenchman's Cap in Tasmania, Ball's



PCol solo top-roping Barad Dur (22), Far Crag, Morialta, December 1975. I took this photo within a minute or two of arriving at the crag and shortly thereafter Col led the second free ascent on nuts, as cams were still some years away.



Pyramid, the NZ Alps and even further afield. Raconteurs like Chris Baxter, Roland Pauligk and Mike Law would have people in stitches and newbies in awe. Col rued the fact that the details and the mannerisms of a storyteller that had the audience splitting their sides in laughter would often only be faintly remembered a few days later.

So it comes about that on one trip to Arapiles Col discloses he has purchased a state of the art Sony miniaturized cassette recording gadget including a high quality microphone. The aim was to make covert campfire recordings in a bid to prevent all this oral history being lost. Saturday dinner over, Col sets up for his inaugural recording session. Not wanting to punch a hole through the pocket of his duvet that would have conveniently held the Sony, he clips it as best he can to an inside layer and runs wires around the armholes to the mike near his collar. We head from the shadows over to the liveliest campfire and at some point, as things start getting

animated, Col reaches for the recording switch but fumbles it badly so that suddenly the whole caboodle falls out from under his duvet. It is then swinging at his knees suspended from wires, drawing everyone's attention. A plausible excuse to offer might have meant the event was soon forgotten, but stammering and stuttering he comes across as guilty as hell. He retires to his tent to divest himself of the gear and as far as I know never tries doing that again; much is the pity.

There are bits of many other anecdotes flitting about in my memory but too elusive to be able to

commit to text. Moving into the 80's I saw increasingly less of Col. I moved to Melbourne eventually and Col soon after moved to Brisbane after which I ceased to have contact. Coming back to climbing much to my surprise after a 30-year break in late 2014, my thoughts turned to seeing if I could get in touch with climbers who had been

significant in the old days. I soon realized it was Col above all others that I hoped to reconnect with so it was very distressing to learn that he'd fallen fatally at Robin Falls in the NT in 2010, a relatively short time before my comeback. Obviously there would have been reminiscing about shared climbs and trips, evidenced by a perusal of the Moonarie guide. But, for me, there was a deeper reason. Col always seemed to be pursued by demons and climbing was an effective way to allay those anxieties. I was



Col leading Ghastly Rabbitfoot 18, Red Rock, Eyre Peninsula, March 1976

sometimes reminded of Col

when I read accounts of a great American climber of an earlier generation, Layton Kor, who was legendary for prolific, difficult new route development. In later life, perhaps partly due to the benefits of raising a family, I felt I'd developed a certain inner strength. If Col was still struggling I was prepared to reach out and perhaps offer some peace or something he could find value in, as recompense for his early mentorship, but it wasn't to be.

## CRAG CARE REPORT

*By Liz Milner*

Sitting down to write this, I cannot believe that Morialta Crag Care has now been running for five years. That's five years of great outcomes for climbers and five years of great outcomes for our local flora and fauna. Five years of the Climbing Club of South Australia working with the UniSA Rock Climbing Club, the Adelaide University Mountain Club members, Scouting Climbers, the general climbing community and members of the Friends of Black Hill and Morialta. Wow!

Crag Care has again expanded the area, which has been treated for olive and brooms this year, particularly in the areas above Billiard Table/Boulder Bridge and Muesli Wall. Great follow-up work removing re-emerging weeds in

these areas has been performed too. The difference in the feel as you walk through to the crags is obvious as is the point where you hit the olive front. Still more olives

to tackle!

We also expanded the area that is free of blackberry at the base of Far Crag and down the

eastern descent route. We have pushed the blackberry downhill from the track by over 1 metre in most places and treated the blackberry between the cliff and the track. We have even done some rope work to remove the blackberry patches in the walls themselves. We haven't quite freed up all the old climbs but we are getting very close! It's pretty exciting to be there when an old climb re-emerges! It also feels amazing to be able to walk through in summer in your shorts without being

scratched to pieces.

The department once again put some funds into the area, expanding the gorge track work. In October 2018 they sprayed



Removing blackberry from Far Crag at the March 2019 working bee



out the watsonia along the creek line all the way from Third Falls through to First Falls. One day we have a vision of crossing the creek and heading up into Thorn Buttress. Now wouldn't it be amazing to see that clean!

The plan for the next 12 months is to remove all the blackberry above the cliff line. That means that last remaining patch in our "weedy gully" on Climber Track between Boulder Bridge and Throne Room is in our sights! It has been made progressively smaller the past few years – we shall see if this is the year it goes. The last patch of remaining blackberry between the cliff and the track is also on our radar below Far Crag. There will be more broom and

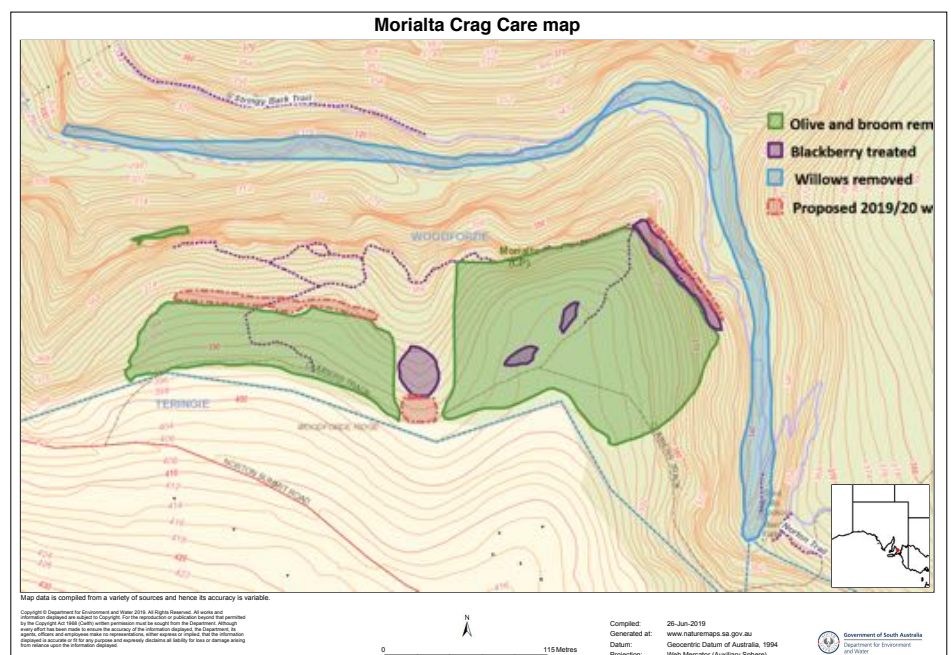


Morning Tea photo - 5th year anniversary working bee morning tea break May 2019

olive push back and follow up and we hope to get down to Billiard Table to re-visit the initial work put into killing olives when we first started.

Special thanks to any one who has come along and helped out on the ground!

There are days when you wonder if all this hard work is worth it. Then you do as I did this week and go for a walk through the areas we have worked through to establish how much we have achieved this year. You are then blown away at the amazingly awesome results on the ground. Once again thanks to all our great supporters, particularly the financial support of the Climbing Club of South Australia, the UniSA Rock Climbing Club and our hosts the Friends of Black Hill & Morialta.





# WOODIES!

## A collection of Adelaide climbers' home bouldering walls

Marina du Preez



### What made us get a woody?

Jealousy!!!... There, I said it :P -- My fiancé and I moved to Australia in 2018 with stars in our eyes and fire in our hearts, and as fate would have it, we made some awesome Aussie climbing friends... and they have a woody... and we couldn't stop dreaming of having our own little back-yard-suffer-station. We love watching our

friends climb, get stronger and crush, and we love sharing that with them.

### Where does your setting inspiration come from?

The local crags! We find ourselves a hard, inspiring route, get completely and utterly spat out by it, and then after the pathetic/angry/sad/'I don't even know why I like climbing' rant we get down to the drawing board. We simulate the hold and crux moves on the woody, and then we get obsessed with the flow of movement.. and then... We smash it!!! Let's face it, we've all said: "I wish the gym was closer, or I wish I had a gym at home... then I'll totally send that 24 I've been projecting form months... well Linda, you might be on to something

### What's the best thing about having a woody?

Three things really...

i. Community: If you build it, they will come!!!

We all know climbing people are the best people. We love challenges, supporting one another and off course, we love sharing! Need a catch? No problem!... Need some beta? Of course!!!... You look a bit hungry mate; have a bite of my peanut butter and anchovy sarmi :) It's an easy way of meeting new people, and making new friends. And laughing at the grunts that come out of people's bodies when they stick that dyno is just a bonus :D

ii. Intimacy: I mean did you even see my kitten in the photo giving me a high-five when I crushed to the top??? It's a bit of a love/hate relationship really! Some days you feel like giving it a kick, and other days you rub it softly whispering "Me precious" while holding your cheek to the cold splintery wood. But it's yours and no one has a better woody or a better paint job... than YOURS! Suck it!

iii. IT'S FREE... well sort of



Photo on previous page: Marina's woody

Marina du Preez continued...

**How has it impacted your climbing?**

Like crazy! Apart from making epic memories with my friends, I've finally learned how to climb properly with my feet! I still have a long way to go, but those awkward knee drops and open hand holds are finally starting to make some sense, and once you get the send on the rock, you have no idea how that was even that hard for your 2-month younger self

Crush hard

Dave Bowen

**What made you get a woody?**

I built my woody for ease of training

**Where does your setting inspiration come from?**

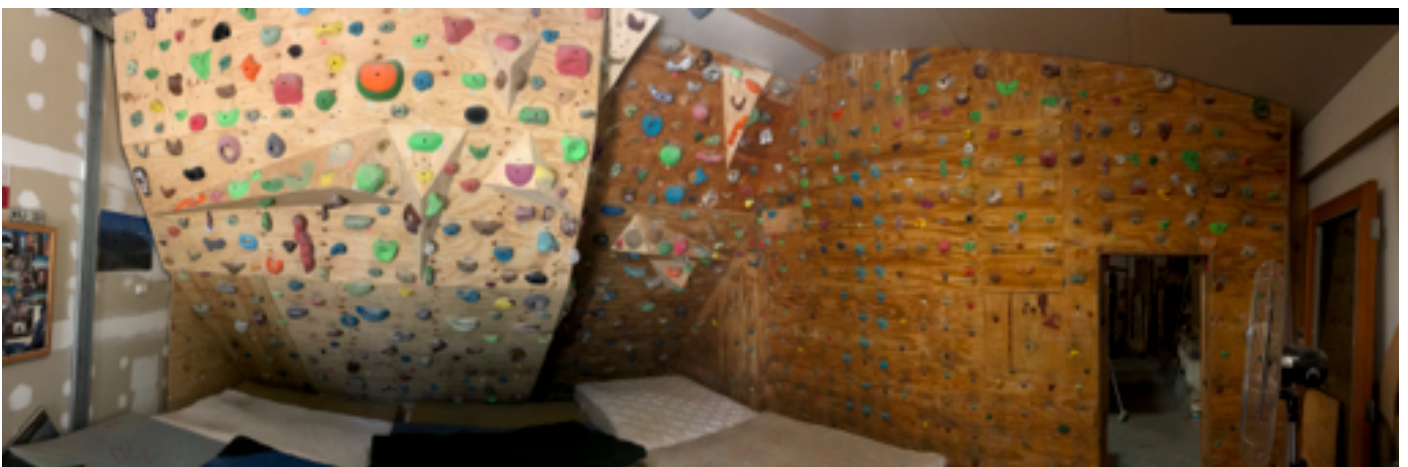
Setting problems is just for fun

**How has it impacted your climbing?**

Benefits me with keeping fit for climbing



Photo below: Dave's woody



## Raphaela Wiget

### What made you get a woody?

The last couple of years of my degree are quite intense, working about 6-7 days a week made it hard getting to the gym so having a board in the shed just took a couple of the obstacles away to climb!

### Where does your setting inspiration come from?

Well we have a moonboard set up! So there is an app where you can swipe through thousands of different problems made by people all over the world, so it's pretty easy to stay psyched on the board with new ones added all the time. We do also have jugs on the board (pink and green holds), which these I generally try to mix them up while always maintaining the ability to climb them in a continuous circuit, without the need to cut feet - this is good for some endurance.

### What's the best thing about having a woody?

Having a good night with mates on the board, some beer and pizza.

### How has it impacted your climbing?

My fingers have definitely gotten stronger since starting to moonboard; it's made me 'try hard'. And overall I'm just climbing more now!



Photo above: Raphaela's woody





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## Rod Vincent

### What made you get a woody?

Always wanted one so I could crush like Sharma!

### Where does your setting inspiration come from?

The reality TV show 'So You Think You Can Dance'.

### What's the best thing about your woody?

I don't have to drive to get there and there is a fridge with beers in it only a few metres away.

### How has it impacted your climbing?

I ain't no Sharma.



Photo above: Rod's woody



## Belinda Baker

My very small woody was built by my best mate when my son was 6 months old.

I needed too be able to train and maintain some fitness and sanity but still be within earshot of a sleeping baby.

Given my partner is fifo my woody seriously saved my sanity as it was my one way of being able to exercise at home.

The woody is the only way up to our storage area, which is full of climbing, diving and kite surfing crap!

Hands down might have given up climbing without my Mini wall! Ps now my son is 3.5 and I compete with him for time on it.

Photo to the left: Belinda's woody

Justin Taylor

### What made you get a woody?

I wanted a woody for 3 reasons

1. To hang out with guys and gals and motivate each other to achieve our goals and have fun.
2. I have a young family and it was a work, climb family balance
3. To use the latest shapes

### Where does your setting inspiration come from?

Now- a- days it comes from the IFSC world cup and indoor boulderhaus using parkour moves and so on modern fun.

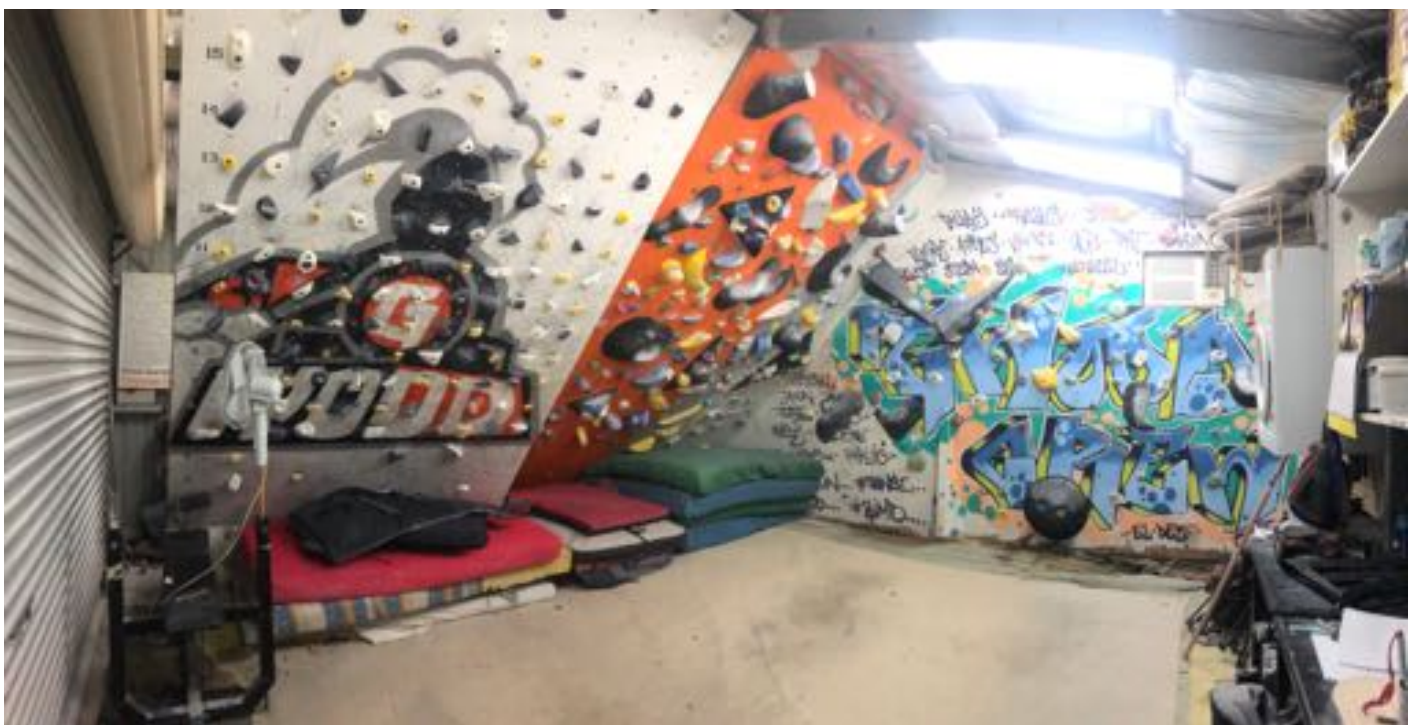
### What's the best thing about having a woody?

The banter and camaraderie it creates. I can climb at any time of day and can try complete problems that are our antistyle. It can change every year.

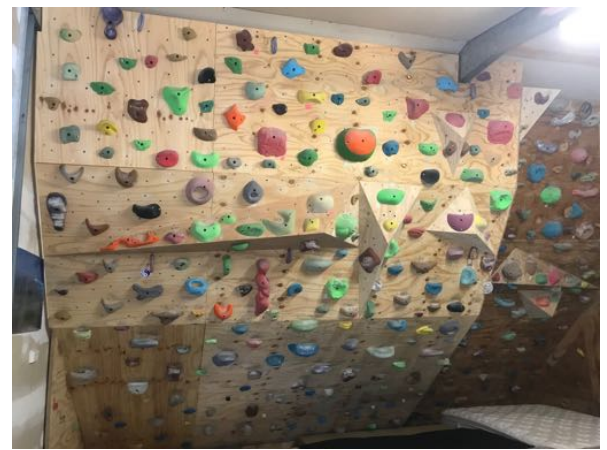
### How has it impacted your climbing?

Its impacted in many ways, firstly have a happy wife happy life and my girls play on it to ;), it has improved my climbing and created some of Adelaide's best competition climbers to date with state and National titles under their belts truly inspiring every minute of every day.

Photo below: Justin's woody



Photos below: Marina du Preez, Belinda Baker and Dave Bowen's woodies





## Mike Steveson

### What made you get a woody?

To improve my climbing fitness, it's way more convenient than going all the way to the climbing gym, and I can climb with the kids around (or when they are asleep), so I can climb more.

### Where does your setting inspiration come from?

I don't 'set' as such. I have lots of holds so I tend to leave them in place and find problems. I'm usually inspired to find new combos of moves. And it's cool working on something that starts out impossible and eventually goes down.

### What's the best thing about having a woody?

Going climbing whenever I want, irrespective of the weather and irrespective of whether I have someone to climb with that day. I also love the creativity of designing a good woody. I rebuild it every 12-18 months - I'm currently on v7.0.

### How has it impacted your climbing?

It's definitely made me stronger, and I climb more consistently so my climbing hasn't fallen into a hole during times when I've struggled to get out (like when the kids were very little).

Photo below: Mike's woody

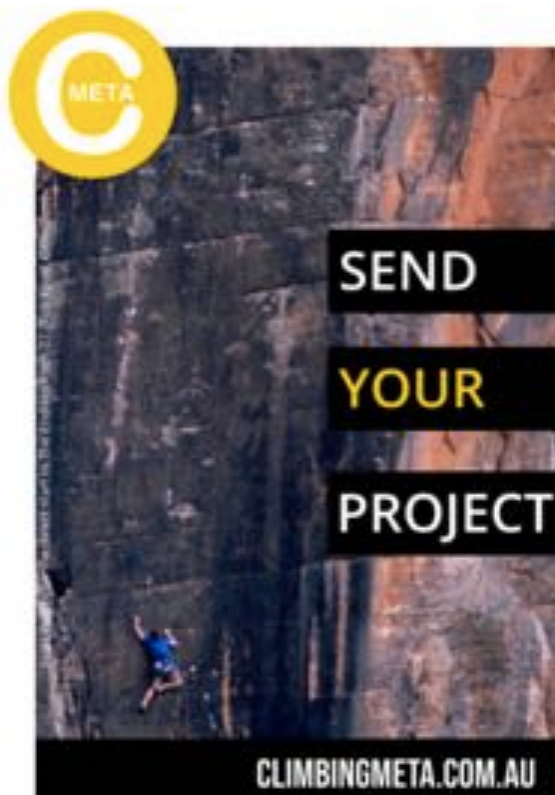


Photo below: Rod Vincent's woody

Photo bottom left: Raphaela's woody



# DOUG'S MOUNTAINEERING RECORD

## A collection of ascents by South Australian climbers

By Emma Kent

Australia isn't the ideal place for one to aspire to conquer mountains. Our largest mountain, Mount Kosciuszko is a mere 2,228 metres, it is so low in fact you can hike to the summit in around six hours at a modest grade 3. However the relatively flat land we call home hasn't stopped many South Australians from pursuing mountaineering overseas.

Doug McLean, one of the Climbing Club of South Australia's founding members has recently documented South Australian mountaineering pursuits for your benefit. Available now on the CCSA Website is *Doug McLean's Historical Mountaineering Record* for you to view. Doug has collected as many trips as possible and collated them in to one location. Information on the record includes mountain, height, location, route, grade, climbers, date and any relevant comments. The record is sorted by mountain.

I as editor of this newsletter was quite intrigued by this as a rock climber that has yet to take up the pursuit of the mountains. So I set out to find out a bit more about mountaineering from some of those climbers on the record.

It would appear from my research that two common factors resulted in pursuing mountaineering. The first being that is a natural progression from those who have already fallen in love with rock climbing and second, the sight of the mountains. For Paul Badenoch, it was the Eiger, for Mike Hillan it was Aconcagua, for Greg Rolton, it was Mount Blanc, for Doug McLean it was Hochsetter Icefall in New Zealand and for

Alicia Anson it was Everest. George Adams cites a school- teacher and his pictures of Lochnagar, Scotland as his inspiration. Each of these mountains turned a rock climbers attention to something grander. It seems as though New Zealand is the most popular place for South Aussie climbers to learn the skills needed for mountaineering. Doug McLean, Mike Hillan, Luke Adams, Alicia Anson and Paul Badenoch all quote New Zealand in their early days of mountaineering with either Mount Aspiring or Mount Cook ascents.

Standing in a place that few or no others have been before is a draw card for Mike Hillan. "These places are remote, raw, wild, dangerous and unbelievably beautiful," Mike said. "In many cases you have a whole mountain to yourself and your companions. It is such a privilege." One of Doug McLean's highlights was putting up a grade four route on Mount Darwin (NZ) with Richard Horn



Paul Badenoch on Pico Navarino, Chile (1997) "I chose this photo because it's an interesting place that few people get to go to."



(Doug notes, a respectable grade at the time). One of Paul Badenoch's most memorable climbs was a solo of the WSW ridge (the Arbengrat, grade AD) of the Ober Gabelhorn, a 4063m peak just across the valley from the Matterhorn. It ultimately resulted in caving to the hut after the warm afternoon sun turned the snow to slush.



Doug climbing Pioneer Ridge of Douglas, NZ (1970) with Richard Horn

Finally, among the reasons why our climbers loved mountaineering range from something so simple as "just because" to the mental and physical problem solving and challenges. There were a lot of shared reasons why mountaineers love the challenge and in case you needed any more, here they are (bearing in mind these were just some of the reasons):

Greg Rolton, "sense of accomplishment shared with friends."

Doug McLean, "the beauty of the mountains, overcoming difficulties and companionship."

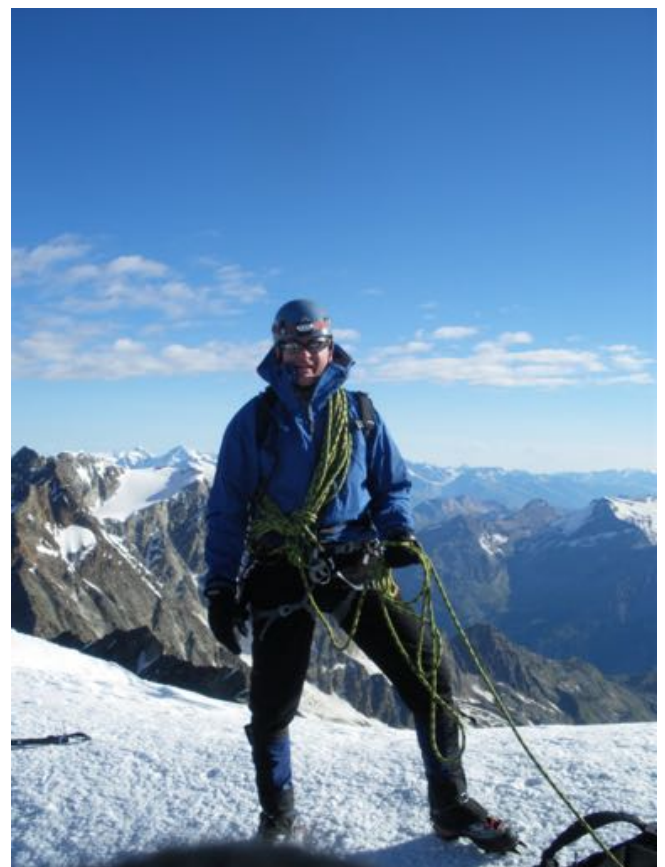
Paul Badenoch, "the effects of altitude on physiology."

Luke Adams, "it's not an instant gratification; you need to work for it."

Mike Hillan, "it is meaningless beyond many people's comprehension, but meaningful to me in a many ways that are not easily expressed."

Alicia Anson, "it is a very satisfying feeling to summit something when there are so many factors that might prevent you from succeeding."

Unfortunately for us Australian's, mountaineering expeditions are expensive and time consuming, often travelling to far away places to achieve these goals. However as evidenced by the mountaineers I spoke with and especially Doug's record, it is clear that the reward far outweighs other aspects



Greg Rolton on the summit of Mount Weissmies (2014)

of the trip. Whilst Doug has compiled a list of all ascents that were available to him, there is sure to be more out there.

If you are a South Australian climber and have a record to add, send Doug an email with the following information:

- Mountain
- Height
- Location
- Route
- Grade
- Name of climbers
- Date (at least month/year)
- Any other interesting information

Doug can be reached via email located on the CCSA website on the records page.



Luke Adams descends The Rolling Pin, Mount Aspiring region, New Zealand (2001)



Mike Hillan descends Mount Vinson after establishing a new route, Antarctica (2008/09). "We almost had the continent to ourselves."

*"Somewhere between the bottom of the climb and the summit is the answer to the mystery why we climb" – Australian rock climber, mountaineer and author, Greg Child*



# TROUBLE DOWN AT ROADSHOW

## A strange dream

*By Eddie Ozols*

The setting was the mid 21st century and climbing is incredibly popular:

Somewhere aboard LOFSAR 5, the Mt Lofty region Search and Rescue hover-platform high over the Fleurieu Peninsula.

"Virgil. You know it really eats me up that we always get landed with nerdy misfits and work experience kids. All those way honed hotties, with the animated subdermal OLED tattoos who climb grade 40 plus only want to work on the MOOSAR platform that serves the Flinders region doing those big rescues."

"Aah Scott, you know how it goes. Just put in the time doing a few tours of duty here and you'll get offered a MOOSAR posting eventually. Then you'll get to hang with the cool crowd."

"Wait a minute Virgil, there's a holo-call coming through on the dedicated emergency services frequency."

"Cut your yackin' boys"

"What's up Mr Tracy"

"Get ready to scramble Virgil, Priority One. We've received a report of a huge dangerously loose block on Roadshow at Morialta. What's a particular concern is that I got a heads up yesterday from the head of St Alexia's asking us to keep an eye out for a group of their students heading out to climb at Far Crag today."

"Wait a minute Mr Tracy isn't that the exclusive private school for inordinately self-entitled girls with the \$70,000 a term fees?"

"Spot on Scott and one of the excursion group also happens to be the Premier's daughter!"

"Why doesn't someone just contact the instructors and warn them Mr Tracy?"

"Were about to do exactly that Virgil just moments before the new-fangled 13G network went down again plunging Adelaide into communication darkness for the umpteenth time this month. The one where the state government paid squillions into the public/private partnership with all the details hidden behind 'commercial in confidence' clauses."

"Holy Dithering Dynos!"

"Scott, Virgil. I want you lads to immediately gravity-tube down to Mori. Take along the rock stabilisation pod with all that good stuff like the nucleothermic lance, titanium rods, nano silicon glue and get that sucker fixed pronto. Leave the noobs aboard to handle anything minor that may pop up elsewhere."

"Yes sir!"

"You heard the man Virgil; let's go. Hey wait, something's bothering you. You're hesitating as if things are playing on your mind."

"Years ago my dad told me a story involving a big loose block at Far Crag. I guess I didn't pay that much attention. The harder I try to remember any details the more fleeting it seems to get."

"That's right Virgil, you're dad by all accounts was quite the climber in his day but we really need to move. Maybe it'll come to you later."

....dream continuation BOLFA 2020

The logo is a horizontal rectangular banner with a black background. It features a central gradient bar transitioning from dark red at the top to bright orange at the bottom. On either side of the text, there is a black silhouette of a person climbing a rock face. The text "Climbing Club of South Australia" is centered in white, with "Climbing Club" on the top line and "of South Australia" on the bottom line.

# Climbing Club of South Australia

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