



# Runout

Summer 2011

The quarterly newsletter of the  
Canberra Climbers' Association

CCA  
Annual  
General  
Meeting  
25 May 2011

## Inside this issue:

Jesus Nut Article	4
Trekking to Everest Base Camp Everest	5
CCA Trip to Blue Lake	8
Rysavy Ridge Article	10
Update on CCA member shop discounts	14

## Vice Presidents Bit

On belay Climbers,

The Summer News Letter is out now after long deliberation. The Summer months were characterised by an unusual numbers of new climbs in Booroomba Rocks by very keen and talented local climbers like Jamie Valdivia, Oliver Story, Mike Law-Smith and others. Many members mountaineered in New Zealand.

It's quite exiting to think that Booroomba Rocks can offer to the eyes of a good climber new routes. The Club organised a successful climbing weekend at Blue Lake, Kosciusko National Park.

Club members also enjoyed a fund raising dinner organised by the Australian Himalayan Foundation (AHF). The guest speaker was Andrew Lock, Australia's most accomplished high altitude mountaineer. Andrew completed his quest to climb all 14 of the Himalaya's 8000 meter peaks.

Andrew has two big expeditions this year. He will attempt a solo, climb of the North Ridge of Mount Everest without oxygen in late May. Then with fellow climber Rick Allen attempt the still unclimbed Mazeno Ridge of Naga Parbat.

The Club is growing in numbers of members as shown in the last Club Introductory Rock Climbing day at Booroomba Rocks.

I am encouraging members to send what ever story they have, climbing, caving, canyoning, bush walking adventures for the autumn/ winter Newsletter.

On rope

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**JOIN THE CCA—There are a few ways to join the CCA or renew your membership:****The membership fee is \$20 for one year or \$50 for three years**

Fill out the online form and pay by direct bank deposit

Print out a copy of the membership form and either;

post it in with a cheque or money order made out to "Canberra Climbers Association"; or  
bring it to the next meeting or climbing day with your moneyDetails are at [www.canberraclimbing.org.au/join.aspx](http://www.canberraclimbing.org.au/join.aspx)**To pay electronically via your bank's online facility, CCA account details as follows:****Service Credit Union****BSB: 801 009****Account No: 1064291**

Note: If you pay online, remember to put your **FULL NAME and ADDRESS** in the comments or message box on your bank's online form. This will show up on the CCA bank statements and we can identify who has paid.

Members receive a membership card that entitles them to discounts at many of Canberra's outdoor shops and at Canberra Indoor Rock Climbing. Members also receive regular e-news bulletins and are entitled to participate in climbing days.

**How to send in your contributions to the Runout Newsletter**

Articles should not be more than two pages in length and can include up to three photo's. Photo's should be sent separately as articles may need to be edited for length and style.

Members may submit articles by emailing:

committee@canberraclimbing.org.au

## ABOUT THE CCA

The Canberra Climbers Association (CCA) was founded in 1998. Membership is steadily growing and is now a respected body representing climbers' interests. The CCA has a broad membership base and supports all types of climbing including: traditional, sport and aid climbing, mountaineering and bouldering.

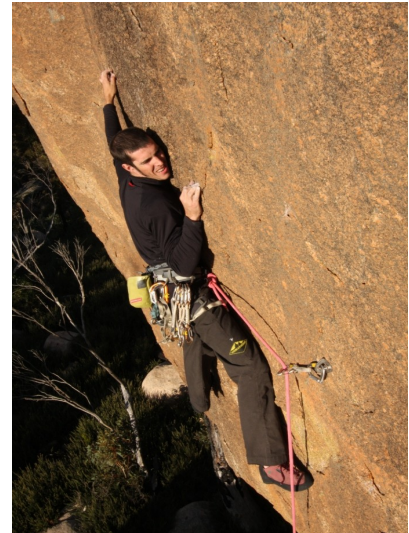
The Association aims to:

- Promote the image of climbing in the ACT
- Educate climbers and the public about climbing
- Foster local climbing areas
- Provide social activities for ACT climbers
- Maintain and ensure access to crags
- Keep climbing safe by maintaining fixed protection

The Association is involved in many consultations with Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks and Environment ACT about access to climbing areas. The CCA has worked closely with Parks ACT to repair and maintain access tracks to climbing areas since the 2003 bushfires.

Members meet regularly to discuss local issues as well as see and hear from a range of speakers about their climbing experiences in Australia and overseas. Members represent a diversity of climbing beliefs, styles and techniques, keeping the club lively. The club provides an opportunity for local climbers to network, organise private trips and find new partners..

The club's introductory climbing days at crags such as Booroomba expose new members to the traditional climbing style of the local granite.





## The Jesus Nut – Stuart McFarland

The term “Jesus Nut” remains in common use among aviation circles, to describe a critical component that “if it fails, the next person you will see is Jesus”. The saying was made famous because of the one giant, stainless steel nut, which held the main rotor of the Vietnam War era helicopter, the Bell UH-1H “Huey”.

In a climbing context the “Jesus Nut” refers to that all important first piece of protection, placed by the leader after leaving the belay.

The role of this first placement is to:

- Reduce the likelihood of a high factor fall and ground strike;
- Establish the direction of any forces applied to the belay, as a result of a leader fall;
- Prevent falling directly on the belay anchor.

Recently, I set off on my first lead climb and placed a Black Diamond No.8 Nut as my first piece after leaving the belay. As I was using a solo belay device (Rock Exotica Silent Partner) I clove hitched the lead line to the first piece, thereby ensuring constant upward tension on my belay matrix.

I slipped off the rock about one metre above this piece. The two metre fall was over in an instant, with my belay device catching me millimetres from ground strike. Only later when I went to clean the nut, did I consider that theoretically I had applied a fall factor two forces to the nut. In practical terms, the aluminium nut was no match for hard Booroomba granite. The high fall forces extruding the nut deep into a constriction of the coarse granite crack. My feeble attempts with a nut tool were as successful as using a down sleeping bag to drill an anchor bolt.

If you want to learn more about the “Jesus Nut” and the importance of the first placement as an integral part of the belay anchor, you can find more in the new 8th Edition of, *Mountaineering; Freedom of the Hills* on P159 or John Longs, *Falcon Guide “Climbing Anchors”* 2nd edition pp101-109.

Next time you pass Running Crack at the South Buttress of Booroomba Rocks, look up and behold my very own Jesus Nut that, in faithfully keeping me off the ground, sacrificed its self and remains in place as a monument to strength of a good primary placement.



## Trekking to Everest Base Camp – by Rebecca Ellison

In October 2010, I jumped on a plane to Nepal with my partner to set off on a trek to base camp Everest. This was something we had always wanted to do and can now say have achieved.

We chose to trek with World Expeditions. I can report that they lived up to their reputation for good hygiene and great staff. I was pleasantly surprised to find the staff eager to help and that English was commonly spoken.

We met the rest of our group after our arrival in Kathmandu. We were quite the eclectic bunch. One was wearing 2 week old boots, had never done anything like a long trek before, another celebrating her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, some serious trampers from NZ as well as a bunch of guys from the UK.

We spent our next day in Kathmandu and then headed off to Lukla. Camping supplies are certainly in abundance in Thamel, and cheap! I bought walking poles worth \$300 here for \$50. My advice to anyone intending on travelling in Nepal is that if you don't already own it, buy it over there.

Travelling to Lukla. That is certainly a flight I'm glad I don't do on a regular basis. The airstrip is reported to be the highest, and shortest in the world at 2800m above sea level and 450m long (finished off with a stone wall might I add). Fortunately we arrived safely, met our staff and off we set. I must say that the pace kept by the Sherpas is extremely comfortable. I wondered many a time that perhaps I had overtrained for the trek. The pace is kept at a stroll. It's a good pace to take in the beautiful surroundings you walk through.





As we meandered our way up from 2800m along the river, you pass through villages spattered with tea houses and farms. Our 15 days was mostly spent camping however, we did enjoy a couple nights in an Eco lodge in Namche Bazaar. Namche sits on the snow line in Summer and what a site to wake up with snowcapped mountains surrounding you. They say on a clear day you can get your first glimpse of Everest from a local lookout. We were not so fortunate at this point with low cloud hanging around shortly after sunrise. However, in saying that, we had lovely weather for most of our trip.



We continued meandering our way up and it was not until the day we hiked to Gorak Shep that we came across traffic. There is only one route up to Everest base camp from Lobuche which is only a couple hours walk from Gorak Shep, hence the increase in people.

From Namche to this point, you have several different routes to take. Gorak Shep has only a few teahouses however as we were camping, we sat and had a hot chocolate while awaiting the rest of the group, ate lunch and then trekked off to Base Camp.

As you climb over the glacier, the terrain is quite rugged, but as the clouds part you are hugged by Everest and her friends. A hell of a view I tell you. It was dissapointing to find that someone has stolen the sign that sat at Old Everest base camp. This did motivate us to continue to the Expedition camp which was quite a scenic walk along the glacier in search of a sign to suit a photo.

Kalla Pattar was the next adventure for us the following day. A couple hundred metres higher than base camp and much more exposed to the wind and chill, but still such a gorgeous lookout and great photo opportunity. From this point we made our descent. Brekkie the next day was served outside rather than in our dinner tent. It was a gorgeous morning and quite entertaining to eat brekkie and wish fellow trekkers walking up to Gorak Shep a good morning and happy trip.



A trip I would recommend to anyone who wishes to take it on. I loved it and so will you.





**Ollie frigging in gear on his new route attempt**

### **Blue Lake CCA climbing weekend by Jamie Valdivia**

Blue Lake is a traditional climbing area situated on the Main Range of Kosciuszko National park which has been enjoyed by climbers since the 1960's. It is approximately 28 km west of Jindabyne and 3.5 km north of Charlotte Pass. It was listed as a Ramsar site in 1996.

A great time was had by all, although a bit adventurous at times, climbing on well protected routes. Around 17 people attended across the two days, experiencing invigorating climbing on solid granite with fantastic cool weather. Good times were also shared afterward at the secret camping area, which was not so secret, as it was right next to the paved track and on looking walkers. Nevertheless, the camping area provided the opportunity to share a number of stories and many tales, while its soft grasses provided a nice place to rest tired bodies after some tough vertical work during the day.

The week end was also a great chance to road test the new (draft) climbing guide being put together by Canberra Climber, Brian Mattick. The draft proved to be well researched and allowed climbers to added flexibility to venture further and climb in areas such as Elephant Buttress, The Boulder and Grey Buttress.

The weekend also provided the opportunity for a first ascent by Mike Law-Smith who climbed a daunting old school grade 21 crack, protecting it with strategically placed wires, and hammered into the rock for added security, which he scoped carefully and methodically before the ascent. Oliver Story also provided the crowds with some exciting climbing action by attempting a terrifying, poorly protected and run-out line, on-sight, at an estimated grade of 22 plus. This attempt left Oli and his belayer Mike with sweaty palms and thumping hearts, as a couple of wires popped out of the thin, shallow crack as Oli swiftly re-inspected the route from top to bottom. Thanks to the granite gods, Metolius Master Cam are as good as they say, enabling Oli to stop before ground zero.

The weekend also provided the opportunity for somer vertical gardening, scraping out dirt and shrubbery from the cracks to protect the well guarded climbs. I'm sure we all enjoyed this from time to time, just ask Zac and Armando.....Pity they forgot to rack-up a wiper sniper.



## CCA TRIP TO BLUE LAKE



**Mike on his new route The Last Minute**



**Jamie on Mad Dogs**



**Ollie on Mindbender**





## RYSAVY RIDGE by Brian Mattick

It started with an email. "Do you want to go to Tassi and climb Rysavy Ridge?" The answer was easy – off course. But after saying yes I stated to wonder if I had signed up for a two-day slog through a leach infested swamp to some desperately steep ridge constantly surrounded by heavy black thunderheads and deluged by torrents of rain. A quick search on the net put my mind to rest.

*A mountaineering route of classic proportions* the guide said with the start a mere 45 minutes for the car. I was sold.

The team included my mate Warwick and two other Sydney climbers who I did not know. John had previously been to the base of the climb. Rick had completed the climb but his team had a few frights when they got off route, then got caught in the dark during the descent and finally returned to the car at midnight. It had been an epic!

As a result Rick didn't want to go down the gully again and tried to convince us all to take the much longer route over to the summit of Mt Rolland and then down the tourist track. I questioned this monster walk-off and Warwick started ringing Tassi mates about the descent, all of whom said don't be mad use the gully. Finally, it was agreed we would go our separate ways at the top of the climb.

I decided to take my car over on the ferry and meet the team at Launceston airport. John had booked a two bedroom self-contained cabin at the base of the climb and it gave us spectacular views of the route.

After we arrived John and Rick walked up the tourist track to Mt Rolland and left some water for their return the next day. We all agreed on an early start.







Next morning we drove the sort distance up the steep gravel track to Steve Brown's property. Steve was on the first ascent and regularly marks a track to the base of the climb. This summer there were reportedly a lot of ascents mainly by overseas climbers. After a quick chat with Steve we started the steep walk through the ferns and forest to the cliff. Maybe because we didn't really find the track or maybe because Warwick and I are getting old, certainly the other guys were often waiting for us to catch up, it was a good hour before we reached the base of the ridge.

John and Rick were obviously fit I thought they should lead off but to my surprise they insisted we start first. It was nice to see such respect for the elders. In any event it looked like there was plenty of room to pass on the climb.

We got our gear out, strapped on a harness, slipped into our climbing boots, grabbed our packs and started soloing. Judging by the looks we received I guess today's climbers don't solo easy ground. Anyhow, we thought this would give us a bit of lead before they ran us down. In fact we didn't see them for the rest of the day.

In three and half hours, right on midday, we topped out after some wonderfully enjoyable climbing. It was a beautiful day, sunny, no cloud but a cool breeze. We took a leisurely lunch and debated whether we should wait for the other guys but as we couldn't see or hear them decided to descend. I'm glad we didn't wait.





The gully required four abseils with scrambling in between and one hour later we were at the base of the climb. During the descent we could hear John and Rick on the climb so we knew they were OK. This time we found Steve's marked track and another hour later we reached the car. Sometime before three o'clock we were back at the cabin.

As we walked down to the heated pool for a swim Warwick got a text message from John. "3pm reached the top". I'm glad we didn't wait! Thirty minutes later there was other message.

"Descending the gully". We wondered what had happened, but we could also guess. Mt Rolland was further away than they thought and there was impenetrable scrub in the way that would have taken hours to struggle through.

After a quick calculation we thought they would be back at six, by seven we were starting to get concerned.

I mean how can you cook dinner when you don't know when the guests are arriving. Finally they staggered in at eight, just before dark. It had been a long but immensely satisfying day for them.



How come the geriatrics were so much faster you might ask? It wasn't because we were better climbers or a lot fitter because we weren't but more to do with our style of climbing. Our rack was half the size of John and Rick's.

We looked for the easiest line. We were prepared to solo easy ground at the start and our pitches generally had only one or two pieces of pro. Pro was only placed when there appeared to be a difficulty and long runouts were taken over easy ground.

Slings were used instead of quick draws to reduce rope drag. Whether we were climbing or descending we made a conscious effort to keep moving without rushing. All these actions saved minutes.





The route doesn't need a detailed description. If the ridge gets hard move left. But we did make one mistake and that was using double ropes. They were taken for the descent, but a single rope of 60 m is more than adequate. The route has many ledges and a bit of scrub here and there. Rope drag was an issue and usually limited the pitch length. I believe the climb is longer than indicated in the guides.

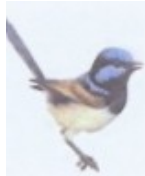
The change in elevation from the base to the top of the climb is just over 300 metres. The ridge is anything but vertical so a climb length of 350 m appears a poor guess. We climbed ten roped pitches and probably soloed two. At an average pitch length of 35-40 m, a climb length of 450 m is more realistic.



Rysavy Ridge is a great adventure. Try it if you can. You won't be disappointed.  
Brian Mattick







## LAUREL HILL FOREST LODGE

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## Upcoming Events Calendar

Date/Time	Event	Venue	Cost
Wednesday 16 March	CCA General Meeting First meeting for 2011	Henderson Conference Room, Eggleston Road ANU	Tea and Coffee Free Soft drink \$2
Sunday 27 March	Introduction to Climbing Day	Meet at Tharwa shops at 8.00 am. (Weather permitting)	Need to be a member of CCA cost \$20
Saturday 30 April	Weekend Club trip to the Blue Mountains	TBA	TBA
Wednesday 25 May	<b>AGM</b>	Henderson Conference Room, Eggleston Road ANU 7.45 pm	Tea and Coffee Free Soft drink \$2
Wednesday 20 July	CCA General Meeting	Henderson Conference Room, Eggleston Road ANU 7.45 pm	Tea and Coffee Free Soft drink \$2
Wednesday 14 September	CCA General Meeting	Henderson Conference Room, Eggleston Road ANU 7.45 pm	Tea and Coffee Free Soft drink \$2
Wednesday 16 November	CCA General Meeting	Henderson Conference Room, Eggleston Road ANU 7.45 pm	Tea and Coffee Free Soft drink \$2

**Updated information on meeting and events can also be found on the  
Canberra Climbers' Association website at [www.canberraclimbing.org.au](http://www.canberraclimbing.org.au)**

### **Wild Dog Problem in Namadgi**

Climbers should note that there has recently been several reported instances of walkers being harassed by wild dogs in the park. This includes one unconfirmed report of a physical attack. This unwanted attention is most likely to happen at dusk or during the night. Take care if walking or climbing alone or with children.

Further advice on wild dogs can be found on the Territory and Municipal Services Namadgi National Park website at: **[www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au)**