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The BOLFA newsletter



A publication of the Climbing Club of South Australia

in association with Redpointer's Anonymous

Freefall From The Zodiac - by Vaughan Thomas

Topping out the Salathe Wall on Yosemite Valley's El Capitan was the most rewarding moment of my life. Standing on the summit with my good friend Shaun, we had finally fulfilled the dream that had been obsessing us ever since picking up a 2nd hand haulbag two months previously at a charity auction in Joshua Tree. But our excitement and celebration only masked what we both knew - this would be our last big wall together.

So it was that the next day I was doing the Camp 4 circuit, desperately looking for a new partner to go up another wall with. With only a week until my visa expired, 'waiting' for the right partner just wasn't an option. That's when I met Jesse. Jesse, a hardman back in his local area (he told me), had never done a wall before, but had lots of new aid gear - an essential requirement for my eventual partner considering my skeleton thin rack.



The Zodiac (A2 5.7) (or 5.13d free)– 16 pitches: Photo courtesy of Chris McNamara & SUPERTOPO

I soon profile Jesse as the typical American shit-talker climber. He who can never climb as well as he talks shit, but is often stubborn enough to get up a wall (to keep their pride if nothing else). I did get a little worried though at Jesse's constant ramblings, as in general the amount someone talks about themselves is inversely proportional to their climbing ability. But we share some laughs, and as Jesse tripped and dropped his keys on the way back to his car that night, we joked about climbers' general lack of coordination down on the flats, how we'd never be so clumsy up on a climb.

Standing together at the base the next morning I felt nothing but excitement for being back on El Cap. Soon we were on the wall and a regular system began forming....

I would lead the pitch, fix the rope, haul the pig, while Jesse juggled up. Then he would tell me what he's dropped in the way of gear on that pitch! Something along the lines of....

"Ummm, those double length slings unclipped themselves somehow..."

then... "We're down to one purple Camalot"...

or later... "You know that rack of hooks, well..."

Every pitch became routine. Fortunately, we had plenty of gear with us, and even more fortunately, almost all of it was his!

Waking the next morning on the portaledge, we were still pretty relaxed, were on schedule, and of course were up on one of the most amazing cliffs on the planet. But, it was THAT time of the day. As I passed the bog roll to my partner (now going by the nickname 'Jesse Drop-a-Lot'), I knew the importance of what I was holding, but neglected to remind him - trusting he too understood.

10 seconds later - "Oh! Shit!" I look down, only to see our sole roll of toilet paper spiralling and unravelling on its flight down to the valley floor. It actually looked really amazing, but when it hit the ground, so did my hopes of good hygiene for the upcoming days.

Other than a spectacular save by Jesse of his airborne boot, the next day or so went fairly smoothly. On the third day Jesse Drop-a-Lot came up to the belay with a familiar look on his face. "You want the good news or the bad news?" he asks. Knowing there can't be that much good news I go for the bad. "I dropped the portaledge case." "The good news?" I asked un-optimistically. "Oh, I saw where it landed!" Great! This wasn't a huge problem, but repacking the haulbag at a hanging belay to fit on the ledge set us back nearly an hour on a day we were trying to push for the top.

By nightfall we reached a stance a mere 30m from the summit. I was confident that Jesse, also a hardcore alpinist (he told me) will have had no problem finishing up this short pitch by headtorch. But no! Jesse Drop-a-Lot doesn't climb in the dark. So there we were, 30m from the top of the biggest vertical precipice in continental America, setting up camp once again. The highest bivvy on El Cap?

Summitting early the next morning, I breathed a sigh of relief for making it through the ordeal. All that was left to do was repack the pig and descend...

10m back from the edge, Jesse Drop-a-Lot carefully took out his sleeping bag, and placed it gently on El Capitan's sloping summit. Needless to say, it started rolling. Too late to do anything, he watched anxiously (or excitedly for me) as it drew closer and closer to the void. It rolled to within a foot of the edge, then slowed down, as if to tease him, before taking the ultimate plummet towards the valley floor.

Encore!

On the recovery mission at the base that afternoon, we found only two of our dropped items. My portaledge case (the only thing of mine that was dropped) and the shredded, half-eaten remains of Jesse's sleeping bag.

The moral?: Bad partners make for better stories, but BEWARE!



Picture Perfect; Submit your photo's to: bolfa@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au



Paul Kinnane climbing at Mt Arapiles *Femroc* (18)?

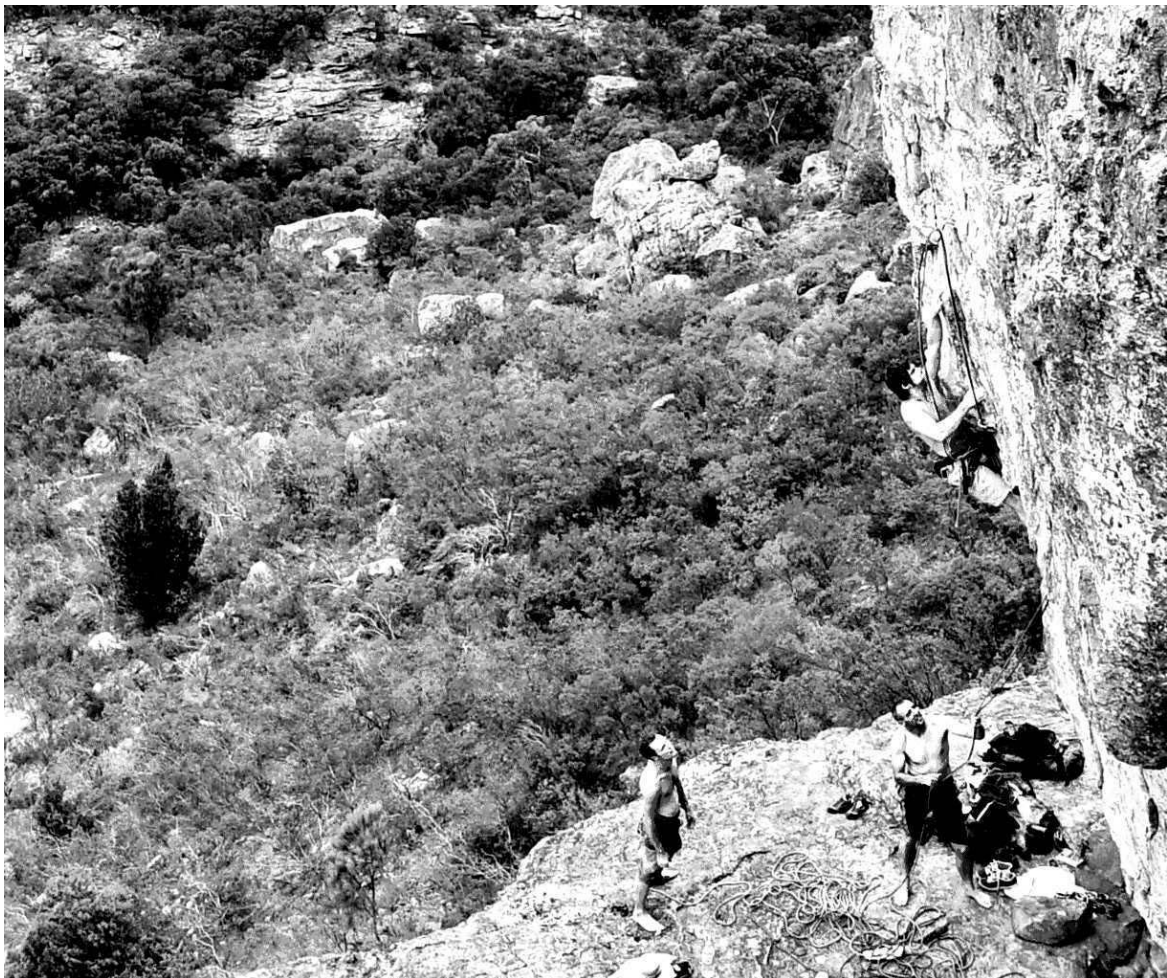


Stevie Pollard – contestant for the 'Movember Pin Up Boy Competition' – dealing with Quantum Mechanics (V8) – Castle Hill, NZ



Some of the line up from this years 'Frocktober'.

Million dollar question: What exactly is Justine Taylor doing with that hand, and why is Roberta Baker so interested?



Ben Carrick attempting *All/ez* (24) Mt Arapiles

The BOLFA newsletter

Editor: Steve Kelly

Due date for next BOLFA submissions:
Monday 31 January 2005

All photo's, letters, stories or trip reports to
bolfa@climbingclubssouthaustralia.asn.au

Club news

Recent beta on Club issues...

CCSA website

The CCSA website is up and running! Many thanks to James Falconer for his efforts in setting this site up. Users can now access the site via the following address:

www.climbingclubssouthaustralia.asn.au

Please aid in the ongoing development of this site by submitting photo's, news of new routes or any other relevant information to:
info@climbingclubssouthaustralia.asn.au

Norton summit snake alert!

A large brown snake has taken residence at the top of the Norton Summit walk-in path (level with the junction to The Hole and outer Cave). Please be careful when walking into either of these areas.

ClimbingAnchors re-bolting support

Steve Hawkshaw from **ClimbingAnchors** has recently been in touch about support for rebolting in South Australia.

ClimbingAnchors is basically a web-based retail bolting supplies company started by Steve some 6 months ago. They sell everything to do with bolting at a very good cost. There is a current deal in place whereby they donate 2% of every purchase to a rebolting fund, the CCSA fund being one of the

recipients. The purchaser chooses who they want their donation to go to. It is also possible to organise for donations to be sent directly to them, for rebolting use (on top of which they will also credit the 2%).

Further detail can be obtained via their website at: www.climbinganchors.com

Much thanks go to Steve and his team for supporting the CCSA Bolting Fund, but particularly for his donation to the cause in the form of 5 bolts and fixed hangers as an up-front donation.

Department for Environment and Heritage in South Australia communication

The *Department for Environment and Heritage (South Australia)* has issued a communication on their website (in the form of a PDF booklet) on the subject of Phytophthora – a soil and water-borne fungi which strikes indigenous bushland and ultimately leads to the death of certain plants.

CCSA members interested in learning more about the spread and potential control of this problem should view the booklet on the following site:

<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/biodiversity/pdfs/phytophthora.pdf>



Want Sandbags? We've Got 'em!

By Paul Badenoch...

Keeping a few sandbags up your sleeve is always handy when dealing with that visiting hotshot, brash youth, or generally tiresome climbing partner.

Fortunately, I've come across a number of sandbags in my travels around the Hills and offer ten examples here. Most of the climbs are pretty obscure but I guess if they weren't, the grades would have been upped years ago, hence spoiling the fun.

Bloggs Direct 17 The Right Wing, Norton

A Colin Reece route from the mid 70's. The steep bit at about 12m is the major difficulty. No easier than the 21's to the left, and harder than Continental Drift or Subduction Zone.

Comme Ci Comme Ca 19 The Bluff

Burly stuff. Not one to do if your intended victim is a lover of steep offwidth granite cracks with generous helpings of guano, but there aren't many of those people still around.

Nitrogen Narcosis looks equally nasty and Skein Dhu might be another possibility. Red Herring also has a reputation, but at least you get to tick a 22.

Debut 16 Thorn Buttress, Morialta

Full value to say the least. Tough moves, sus rock, sketchy pro. In the old guidebook, Nyrrie advised not using the holds out right, but I mean, really....

Hopes in Slopes 22 The Bluff

If someone has done something really bad to you, this is the climb to send them up. Probably more ungradeable than undergraded. As far as I know, has only been led twice in its original one-bolt format, being Kim Carrigan and Steve Kelly (or one of the latter's alter egos). See the January 2005 issue of ROCK for further details...

Nimrod 15 The Punchbowl, Onkaparinga

Could be THE sandbag of the Hills. Up a cruddy corner through spider webs to the real fun - a wide roof crack of disintegrating rock.

Maybe Mike Ashton looked at it and graded it but forgot to climb it... maybe it's some kind of joke... maybe I missed something... maybe I'm soft...

I really don't know.

No Man's Land 22 Car Crash Quarry

The mantel gives a lot of people a lot of trouble, including me. Only seen it ticked cleanly once, by the guy who introduced me to rockclimbing. He didn't employ a mantel though, just went through it using sheer power.

Raw 14 Mollusc Wall, Waitpinga

Another Colin route from the 70's. A good pitch with a very tough start at the grade.

Wimbledon Common 14 The Red Cliff, Morialta

No longer legal of course, and the last time I looked peregrines had taken up residence, so you'll have to take my word for it.

Maybe Colin was out to prove something to young Nyrie. The climb goes up a steep red wall, on good holds, to finish in a short leaning corner, on no holds. Feels grades harder than 14.

Yellow Peril 18 Cable Crag

A really obscure one across the gully from Cable Crag itself. A worthwhile climb with a damned hard start. Don't know if it's had a second ascent.

Zontal Horror 20 Raetjen's



Paul Badenoch dealing with Zontal Horror (20) Raetjens – photo by Greg Rolton

Colin again from the 70's. More recently, the second pitch defeated a strong team including Messrs Hillan and Adams, so what can I say.

The crux is fist jams in the horizontal with poor feet. This is OK if you're Aron Ralston and want to snap your radius and ulna, but otherwise the feeling is disconcerting.

You'd think a foot up in the crack might help, but we found that easier said than done. Another problem is that you're never too far off the deck so you want to keep stopping for gear. But, in all honesty, this one is probably just a good climb that's solid at the grade.

It seems that the older you get, more and more climbs feel like sandbags! Have fun everybody.



The Half Brick Award



This issues thumbs down goes to...

This issues 'Half Brick' goes to **sandbagged routes** – in any shape or form. See 'Want Sandbags?' 'Hot Fun Closing' and 'Overheard' for further details!



Words of wisdom...

"It's very difficult to keep up this outpouring of nervous energy when you think you might die on every route. It's bloody hard! You're bold at 18; you're fairly bold at 21. At 25 you're getting quite frightened and at 30 the job's knackered!"

Alan Austin, Pennine Rock TV series - UK



Club Calendar

Upcoming meetings/events

Next Club Meet: 6 December 2004

Following Club Meet: 7 February 2005

Venue: All bi-monthly meetings take place at 7.30pm in The Brecknock Hotel, King William Street, Adelaide on the 1st Monday of every 2nd month.

Voluntary slide presentations welcome at any of these meets.

The Joker

A boulderer's guide to selected Mt Arapiles routes...

Sit-start to Sunny Gully (18) (Dec Crag)

Start matched on the sloper – feet under the roof – at the base of the gully. Hard mantle by way of a heel hook leads into the original line. Ups the grade by 16.

Arachnus Sit-start (16)

One move wonder. Do it!

Sit-start to Agamemnon (21)

Brutal boulder problem leads into still desperate chimney climbing (if you've still got a groin left by that stage). Harder than Kachoong!

Sit-start to The Bard (at least 24)

Start by sitting at the base of the slab and pulling on via whatever means possible. Rolling over onto stomach considered to be off-route. Absolutely desperate and possibly harder than many climbs twice the grade.

Missing Link Sit-start (26)

Start sitting at the base of the original line and make a very hard move from two micro-crimps to a slopy sidepull. Set the feet and do a drop-the-clutch dyno to the original start hold. Probably V5/6 in its own right.

New Image Sit-start (27)

Believed to be seriously undergraded. Japan's Dai Koyamada was reportedly overheard to state "Dis is harder than Hugh (9a)!"

Aardvark Sit (28)

Undeniably one of the hardest moves on rock. How you gain the bottomless crack in the original line is anyone's guess. Suction cups perhaps?

Trojan Sit-start (29)

Out of control boulder problem start involving a 'new-age' dyno off a micro crimp to a double hand-jam in a roof. Not for the faint hearted.

Sit-start to Steps Ahead (35)

Solid 9a and believed to be harder than Fred Nicole's Bain de Sang (given the same grade). Total micro-crimping.

Daily Planet Sit Start (36)

Harder than Steps Ahead Sit-start but not quite as desperate as Fortress Sit-start. 5 grades easier if you can pull onto the wall and immediately drop into box-splits.

Fortress Sit-start (37)

One of only 3 9b routes in existence in the world today (if you believe Fred Rouhling). Desperately hard start (V14?) into sustained grade 26. Using a deckchair/cushions/beanbag considered as aid.

Yesterday Sit-start (38)

A strong contender for the second hardest route in the world (though some believe it to be the hardest). V14 on pure polish leads straight into the original line. Rumoured to have been onsighted by a visiting gecko.

Cecil Be De Mille Sit-start (39) (unconfirmed)

The hardest route in the world? This and Dreadnought Variant (slightly easier at 37) are Mt Arapiles testpieces. V16/17 just to get on the wall – then sustained 26 afterwards.

Hot Fun Closing

Latest (and some not so latest) news & views from around the world...

Local news

Of note is the return to climbing by a Mr Darren Williams, who despite having had 9 months off any physical exercise (due to a distinct inability to even walk properly) plus a back operation – started his 'comeback tour' with ascents of *Gladiator* (19) and *Terrathea* (18) (twice!)

Also on home-ground, Paul Kinnane sent *Geronimo's Cadillac* (26), after previously top roping it successfully many months before. Only 'The Stench' to go then Paul?

Michelle Newman did what she set off to do and led *Agent Orange* (15) – proving once again that she is operating far below her climbing limit! Sightings of her being glued to the back of a Greyhound bus on the way back to Adelaide have so far been unconfirmed.

Jase Morton ran up *The Natives Are Restless* (21) at the Summit, but couldn't quite provide the same treatment to *The British Beat* (also graded 21) – see 'Overheard' for details!

Rob Baker despatched an old ghost at Arapiles by sending the classic *Station to Station* (25) in fine form. Unfortunately injury was soon to come knocking on the door due to a nasty little hold on *Power, Corruption & Lies* (27) – a line which he was making good progress on.

Justin Taylor gave 'the treatment' to *The Prow* (26) in quick form – describing it as 'alright', whilst also onsighting *High Dive* (23).

Luke Geelen and Steve Kelly meanwhile climbed the brutal and rarely ascended *Allez* (24), which sits atop of Ali's chains on John's Pinnacle. The line features 4 underclings and a desperate 3rd clip (off one of them) – the scene of some excitement when Ben Carrick (see *Picture Perfect*) only just latched the draw with his hand –

much to the relief of all persons present.

Less successful was the 'teams' attempt on another of Mark Moorhead's little known routes – this time *See You Round* (given an amenable 26). Not even the crux moves were able to be completed – let alone the route. Later investigation however revealed that even grade 31 climbers had failed on this little number!

On the same trip, James Falconer (CCSA webmaster) sampled the delights of *London Calling* (27) – making good progress over 2 days – but as yet no redpoint. It's only a matter of time...

Also at Arapiles Victorian resident Nathan Hoette completed the much talked about direct finish to *Balance of Power* – upping the grade to 31. He also found time to send the obvious link up of *Balance of Power* into *London Calling* – calling it *Berlin Calling* (29).

Other notable first ascents here include Zac Vertrees's direct finish to *Final Departure* (28) on the Bluffs, and a link up of *Required* (28) into *Required* (27) – giving 'Expired' (30) by Hoette. In between all this, Hoette also managed a repeat (2nd ascent) of the Dave Jones route 'The Mule' (30) – which takes a direct line through the roof left of Anxiety Neurosis and reportedly features a crux move involving a front lever off two pinches!

Far easier but still tricky is the destined to become classic '*Bienerstisch*' (24) – a new route by the same perpetrator of *Required*. This is located in a prime area (left of Kestrel on Tiger Wall) – has two bolts, and some sinker nut placements – and is in the shade for most of the afternoon. What more could you want?

Stevie Pollard, now resident in the Blue Mountains, has been ripping it up in between bouts of real (paid) work. In one day at Shipley/Centennial Glen he climbed *Glad Ingram Direct* (27), then proceeded to onsite *Junket Pumper* (24), *Madge McDonald* (25), *Trix Roughly* (26) and *Paddington* (25). Not a bad day out really!

In the same gorge he has also sent the classic *Rubber Lover* (25), and is hard

at work on the testpiece of the wall – *Tsunami* (29).

Blue Mountains climber Ben Cossey – one of two Australians to have climbed grade 34 (if confirmed), has had a productive trip to the Grampians recently.

Cossey dispatched Hoette's route *Fire In Da Belly* (32) – thinking it was more like 31, *Breathing Gasoline* (30), *Duel Fuel* (32) – calling it 30, *Red Vinyl* (30), flashed *Tunnel to Caracas* (28), and onsighted '*Bwana*' (28) – all at Millenium Caves. Spurt Wall was the scene of more of his onsights – with '*Naughty Tickle Town*' (28) and *Fabio's Route* (29), plus a redpoint of *Chicane* (29).

At Arapiles he onsighted *The Great Escape* (28), then made the 3rd ascent of Hoette's recent addition *Break & Enter* (29) – describing it as 'rad!' Despite such impressive ascents – no onsight was to be had for his ascent of *Body Recession* (27) – which took a little bit longer.

He previously also made a repeat (2nd ascent?) of Chris Jones's grit-like scare route '*Hari-Kiri*' in NSW – featuring as it does grade 25/26 climbing with potential groundfall factor from the crux.

Monique Forrestier has – over the last year – added a fine selection of routes to her resume. Including her redpoints of 8 routes given 28, she has also sent *Tsunami* (29), *Don't Believe the Tripe* (29) and *Nature Le Esprit* (29) – the latter in France. On top of these she flashed *Vagabond* (7c/27) at Ceuse, and onsighted 7c+ in Spain (previously reported).

Icing on this particular cake however has been her recent ascent of Garth Miller's creation *Staring at the Sea* (32) on Wave Wall (Blue Mountains). This makes it her 2nd redpoint of a climb graded 32.

Overheard...

Maybe once this climb was do-able, but I doubt it...

Jase Morton – after sampling the delights of *The British Beat* (21) Mt Arapiles

Meanwhile down south, UK climber of note Nic Sellars has flashed *Serpentine*

(29), commenting that it felt more like 28 with the gear in-situ – and that he got full recovery rests in the upper headwall via some bomber hand-jams. Nic has turned his attentions to trad climbing in recent years, having spent his initial climbing career largely clipping bolts on French and British limestone.

For some perspective an article of High magazine once ran a story on him entitled 'From 17 to 33 in 5 years'. Quite a steep learning curve, which led to one of the fastest ascents ever of *La Rose et La Vampire* (31/32) – done in an afternoon – as well as flashing routes up to grade (30) such as *Nemesis* (8a+) in the Peak.

He describes *Serpentine* as one of the best routes he has ever climbed – however not quite as good as *Orange Mechanique* (29) – Patrick Edlinger's masterpiece at Cimai in France – which he onsighted (naturally).

Overseas news

New Zealand

The world dyno record has been broken by a New Zealander – Stefan Hadfield. The competition was under strict guidelines (the second of its type held in NZ). The record for men now stands at 2.70m, whilst the women have a jump of 1.90m to beat.

UK

Steve McClure has added another 8c+ (34) to Ravens Tor (Derbyshire), this time in the form of the obvious and much talked about super extension to *Mecca* – undoubtedly the most famous 8b+ (32) route in Britain.

On the grit – American boulderer extraordinaire Lisa Rands has become the first woman in history to climb a route graded E8 on gritstone. She chose the famous Johnny Dawes masterpiece *End of the Affair* (E8 6c) at Curbar – one of the more serious E8's in the Peak. The only gear is at one-third height – with the crux coming in at the last couple of moves. Such a combination has led the climb to be given the nickname of 'Death From the Top Floor' – although no-one has died yet (2 people have been knocked unconscious from groundfalls however).

Rands headpointed the route on her third day, describing the crux as feeling like an insecure V7 boulder problem.

ITA

Julien Nadiras has repeated what is claimed to have been the hardest power boulder problem in the world. *Tonnino '78* is rated V16 and is located on private land in an obscure part of Italy. The line was established in January by world class boulderer Mauro Calibani.

FRA

Yuji Hiriyama has made the hardest onsight of a route to date by sending the confirmed 'Spanish' 8c (33) *White Zombie* in the Basque region of Spain. His previous best onsight was of *Mortal Kombat* in France (originally given 8c/8c+) but later downgraded to 8b+ (32).

Elsewhere in France, Fred Rohling has once again come into the spotlight with his ascent of 'Mandalliz Drive' – which he has given 'solid 9a' (35). The grade will seemingly stick, based upon the route description (a V14 boulder problem into a 32/33) – as well as Fred's past track record.

USA

Beth Rodden has freed an old aid line at the birth place of American sport climbing – Smith Rock in Oregon. That said, the line is a splitter finger crack – the only handholds being old piton scars from aid climbing forays of the '60's. It was bolted many years before to entice free climbing attempts, but has remained in this state up until now.

Not surprising really, given that *The Great Roof* (renamed *The Optimist*) now gets a grade of 5.14b (33) by Rodden. Time will tell whether anyone else can fit their fingers into the same pin scars as she did!

As usual, please send any Local News/Trip Reports or other BOLFA material to Greg Rolton at the following address:

bolfa@climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au

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The Last Word

Scene: Climber meets girl in pub. Girl is wearing a wig having just left a friends fancy dress party. Girl and climber dance the night away, then much later in a more secluded venue, the following conversation transpires...

Girl: What if I take my wig off and you no longer like the look of me?

Climber: "That doesn't matter. We can always put it back on!"

