

# Can it be DONE?

Popular Weekly  
Feature

I WISH WE COULD CALL THEM AND TELL THEM WE CAN'T GET THERE UNTIL SIX O'CLOCK, BUT WE WON'T SEE A PHONE FOR MILES - WE SHOULD HAVE A PHONE IN THE CAR.

YES, WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL WE ARE ALMOST THERE.

NEAT STATION

WIRE TO TELEPHONE POLE

## CAR-PHONE

WHY NOT EQUIP MOTOR-CARS WITH A TELEPHONE THAT CAN BE USED ALONG COUNTRY ROADS WHERE A SIMPLE PLUG-IN DEVICE HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR PHONE SERVICE. CAN IT BE DONE?

If you have an idea that will make a useful invention, turn it into cash. Read on page 490 of SCOOPS' Special Prize Offer.

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I found this series 'Can It Be Done' in a SCOOPS magazine I bought at a garage sale. It occurred to me that while we can laugh at the foibles of the past, we are not so ready to admit that we can know so little of the future. Our children will do and see wondrous things so our best bet is to ensure that no lasting damage is done now that will limit their otherwise endless possibilities.



# Mountain Magic

Paul Dann stirs the pot and tastes the elixir

IT'S THE FIRST THING I see when I arise in the morning. A great looming massif; it rears up from a skyline range, gold-rimmed by a rising sun to the east.

In a few minutes sunlight trickles over the bulk, and quickly bathes its flanks in a wash of brilliance which sets the pattern for an always-changing play of colour and mood — flat and hard in the middle of the day, softening to subtle pinks and purples until the gilding from a brassy sun gives way to calm pastels of mauve before darkness creeps in.

I built my house so that from the balcony I could marvel at the wonder of this mountain. Currockbilly, at 1132 meters, the second highest point of the Budawang range east of Braidwood with its thrilling displays. At the end of the day, to sit in a battered deck chair, with a flagon of wine at one hand and an old dog at the other, to gaze at the drama of towering cumulus clouds billowing over the mountain is a gift to treasure.

Far to the east of the range is the sea. Cool moist air pouring up from the coast meets hot dry air from the west and makes memorable spectacles of cloud. On even the hottest day there's usually a cool easterly mid-afternoon, bringing with it rolling clouds which seep down the mountains flanks to fill the valley with mist. And at night lightning far out to sea turns the cumulus into a flickering and flashing electric blaze — my own aurora.

It's about a six-hour walk from my

place to the summit of Currockbilly and back, and I've taken dozens of folks there to share my love of that mountain. To some the climb is demanding, but always rewarding; for as far as one can see, to north and south, is a vast jumble of contorted ranges, ridges and valleys. To the northeast, across part of the Budawang wilderness, the stark teat of Pigeon House Mountain rears above the skyline. To the south lies another brooding massif, Mt Dromedary, now called Gulaga National Park.

With luck, the party, sprawling for a lunch break in a saddle carpeted with springy coral fern and heath, can gaze out to the west upon the thrilling spectacle of wedge-tail eagles, soaring far below on spiraling thermals.

Sometimes the eastern updrafts can reverse into downward torrents, as a mate and I, in an old Cessna, found one day. Flying over the mountain from the west was easy, but no way could that machine, even on full climbing altitude and maximum throttle, make it back from the east. So we had to humbly skirt around the seaward ramparts to find a saddle hundreds of meters below the summit to exit suitably chastened by that mountain.

From the summit can be seen, 50 kilometres or so distant, the coast with its thin slivers of beach and the vast smudge of the sea. To impress my parties with my eyesight, I used to comment on the imagined surfers. "Good waves today — wow, that guy

on the yellow board can crack 'em", until a smart walker upstaged me with, "You mean that bloke with the gold earrings in his left ear?"

These walking parties up to Mt Currockbilly tend to bring out the best in people. But for me the real reward lies in clambering up the western slope late in the afternoon and settling down for the night in a bed of heath, sheltered from the west by low tea tree and mallee, to watch the sun rise the next morning.

And it's worth it all. As daylight seeps across that maze of wild ranges and valleys, often cloud-filled, a golden glow to the east announces a rising sun; and suddenly there it is, turning the clouds to bronzed cream and the ranges, and sandstone cliffs to the northern skyline, to ever-changing mauves amid greens and browns.

And there's a magical moment for many walkers, right at the summit. After the last few hundred meters of a sweating, stiff scramble through sclerophyll heath and scrub of tea tree, drumsticks, boronia, mallee, and so forth, folk are suddenly standing on the top, a quartzite ridge a metre and a half wide. And to the east is a canopy, close enough to touch, of 20-meter high plumwood rainforest, often shrouded in a cool mist swirling up the steep, eastward rampart.

"Married to that bloody mountain", someone once accused. Maybe, but if so, it's sure been a memorable relationship.