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EDITORIAL

The 'Heels' venture this year was more successful than last, however this is not indicative of a more active, enthusiastic or spirited year for the club.

The fresher's trip and the A.I.C. had half the usual number of attenders, and the May Meet though geographically accessible at Tongariro National Park had a turn-out of three from Victoria. The Bushcraft Weekend was cancelled due to lack of interest; rockcraft appears to have been indefinitely postponed. Nelson Lakes was the proposed destination of an August trip which met with technical maladministration and never left; the Gourmet Trip suffered a similar fate. The moonlight Southern Crossing had the interest but not the weather, and a few attempts to run other miscellaneous trips could not find any takers. A busload of trampers of varying degrees of fitness enjoyed themselves in North-West Nelson at Easter, and with this the tale of trips becomes exhausted. While there are a couple of hopefuls planned before the end of the year, the most optimistic trapper must view it as a dismal track record.

The club has a new responsibility this year, namely Penn Creek Hut in the Tararua. Solid weekend vigils by Bill T. in an attempt to disprove the morbid predictions in last year's editorial have only received sporadic help from other members, though one work-party of sizeable proportions was held earlier in the year. Whether 'club spirit' has developed from the hut is highly dubious - even the predicted, much-maligned annual piss-up has not eventuated. However, this was hardly the intention of obtaining a hut. VUNTC en masse or as individuals use Tararua huts, many maintained by other clubs, and it seems reasonable for us to make an effort in this direction, providing club strength renders it feasible.

It can be accepted that any university club must have fluctuating membership and activity, but whether the 1978 chapter of accidents was inevitable is another matter. Trampers continue to tramp, and despite indolence, modesty and procrastination, can be induced to write; hence Heels, but the activity reflected in the articles is all too often the result of trips alongside rather than within the club. Obviously Christmas and longer trips are preferably private, but one of the definite lacks is of experienced people willing to lead trips, thereby passing on knowledge and experience, introducing new and interesting areas to those of more limited fitness and skill. No doubt, as one of the oldest tramping clubs in existence, we will return to our former glory, and a magazine will subsequently be easier to produce.

Thanks to those who contributed gladly, those who wrote something to keep the peace, Janet, Julian, Lucy and Rob, who helped with the more mundane jobs, Bill for the cover, and Jock who has done an unprecedented and superlative job with the advertisements.

Jenny Davies.
CLUB OFFICERS:

Chairperson: Geoff Gilman
Vice-Chairperson: David Heath
Secretary: Annlouise Mitcalfe
Treasurer: Dave Waghorn
Chief Guide: Bill Taylor
Gear Custodian: Eddie Mroczek
Committee: Jock Howie
Dean Golding
Jenny Davies
Eddie Mroczek
Stewart Jackson
Matt Johnson
Jim Metson
Liz Brunton

Tea Ladies:
Peter's Beetle chugged to a halt and we prised our gear and city-worn bodies out into the steaming remains of a mellow May afternoon. Colonel Atkinson, Peter Radcliffe and I were already well away from civilization, twenty-five miles up the Tapuaerua Valley from Ruatoria (north of Gisborne), swinging packs onto protesting shoulders, we set off up the grassy ridge above Pakihiroa station, heading for the hut below Mt. Hikurangi.

A joyful cry broke the evening silence - "Shrooms!!" Showing more enthusiasm than we had for the uphill slog, we filled our hats and bags with a generous haul of finest mushrooms. While we were engrossed, darkness and rain began to fall, good reason to stop short of our destination in a small shack. Logs from nearby provided some good wood, and a fire made the establishment quite pleasant indeed. After a brew and feed we set to on the sometimes arduous task of spending twelve hours in pit (Oh, the hardships of winter tramping!)

Fortified by a feed of bacon and 'shrooms from Peter's famed carboniferous billy, we departed the next morning for Hikurangi. A pleasant hour's walk in sunshine up the tree-strewn grassy ridge took us to the Gisborne Canoe and Tramping Club Hut, which looked enticingly comfortable. Though tempted, sanity prevailed and we sweated up the steep slip behind the hut onto Hikurangi's upper slopes.

By this time we had climbed into a layer of clammy cloud, so, donning warm gear and dumping packs, we set off up a ridge that seemed to head in the right direction. Near the top, we had some enjoyable clambering over and around a few jaggedy nergs, and soon reached a point that seemed very summit-like, but lacked a trig. Pausing briefly to admire the top-grade skin on a possum inhabiting a cleft, we traversed in the mist down to a saddle, then followed a well worn route along to the top, which boasts an impressive wooden trig. With thick mist obscuring the expansive views from this, the highest non-volcanic North Island peak, we had no cause to linger, and returned to our packs by the standard track, sliding around rock and scree before climbing a shingly gully (ugh!) to the saddle below the summit.

Having returned to our packs, Colonel made mutinous (but timely) mutterings about his slim chances of getting back to the big smoke when due there, if we continued our planned route. We amended our overambitious plans to the satisfaction of all, and made our leisurely way down to the GCTC hut. While Pete and Colonel soaked up sun and scenery from a perch up on the slip behind the hut, I nobly raced down and lit a fire, only to be driven outside by smoke. We were able to cook later when the wind changed. The day died in hues of red, with the ramparts of Honokawa and Wharekia picked out in red and gold, and we three marvelling at a truly Wagnerian sunset.

In the morning Peter and I fed and fled, wishing Colonel a pleasant few days' sojourn in the hut. We set off up onto Hikurangi again, followed the track above the bushline, through well frosted surroundings to the track that travels along the ridge above the Maungamuku stream. We soon realised the problems with this track: wild cattle churn it up, and they create confusing side-tracks. A more serious problem became apparent later. We found ourselves face to face with a particularly large black beast that showed no signs of moving aside for us, and when it made hostile advances we
made a very rapid and painful detour through some bush lawyer. This same hulk confronted us on rounding a corner a little later. Again we fled at great speed, and I silently swore to bring a shootin’ iron on my next trip to the Ruakumaras.

Lunching on a leatherwooded knob we surveyed the expanse of tangled ridges with an awe heightened by our discovery that we lacked a compass. The track petered out soon after the knob, so we steamed off down a ridge into the head of the Maungamuka to where we thought the track at the Maungatuturu was, and headed up a tree-choked stream. As darkness fell, we camped in big timber at a stream forks. The feeling of being a little lost and the sky filled with trees made our minds buzz with strange feelings that evening as we sat by the fire smoking, talking of dead friends and life.

We departed hurriedly in the morning and headed up a heavily bushed ridge. At the top, tree-climbing allowed us to see that we were above the saddle in question, and some grotty tutu bashing and sidling took us to the N.Z.F.S. track over the saddle. Following the track down through some amazing rimu-tawa forest we reached the picturesque Maungatutara streambed.

After some four hours travel along a good marked track with impressively timbered terraces, we spied the N.Z.F.S. Maungatutara hut on a high forested terrace on the true left. Used largely by long-staying possumers, the hut is very clean and well supplied with clothes, food, boots, utensils, and firewood — a hut-bashers dream. Hardly visited by trampers, the hut is one of only three in the whole range indicating how little frequented is the whole area.

We had a very comfortable stay at this hut and departed at 7 a.m. in the first light of a perfect day. Travelling quickly back up the Maungatutara Stream and over the saddle, we soon reached the beautiful Oronui Forks. The grotty NZFS hut here and the mess made in clearing a site for it were in sharp contrast to the Maungatutara hut. We boulderhopped for some hours down the river below Oronui Forks, thankful for the low level of the river, till the bush gave way to farmland. In the late afternoon we clambered out of the riverbed onto the road at Gate Station, just across the river from where we began.

Some very hospitable farmhands in a truck saved us from the 25-mile roadwalk to Ruatoria. The miles passed quickly as we talked, smoked and laughed with them, soaking up the sunshine and smiles gratefully at the end of a hard day. They plied us with much-needed refreshment at the pub, and with our stomachs and senses well-filled, Peter and I headed south and north respectively, each vowing a return.

Points of advice —
1. The Ruakumara Range is still a very wild area, little frequented by trampers. For a new and primitive experience, go there! The forest is amazing.
2. Navigation can be very difficult — see Gisbourne Lands and Survey office for aerial photos and advice, local knowledge, etc.
3. There is much game in the area — take a shootin’ iron.
4. Stick to ridges (not high ones), the larger creeks and rivers. There are few tracks.

John McCallum
WANDERINGS.

One of the better days - waking up to sunshine and a leisurely breakfast in Mount Arthur hills, then a stroll to inspect the predecessor of the current salubrious accommodation. The sight is enough to chill the bones of the modern trumper - half a dozen sheets of corrugated iron, 3' high and 6' square, now used solely by dogs.

Then up onto the crest of Flora Ridge and gradually we climbed towards Mount Arthur before dropping down into Horseshoe Basin, an area of alpine marble where potholes abound. The northern bluffs below the summit of Mount Arthur look impressive. We had great views from the top the day before - away South Nelson Lakes loom, to the east; Kaikouras, and the vast wilderness of Northwest Nelson to the west.

Then we climb towards the ridge leading to Gordon's Pyramid, Next pick our way down through the gentians to the long saddles. There's only one tricky bit - a step in the ridge, involving pushing down through thickly clustered waist-high speargrass. As we climb to the Pyramid we see in the basin to our left, a tiny tent by a small stream. A brief lunch on the top, a chat with a couple coming the other way and we head down the ridge towards Salisbury Lodge and the Tablelands - more into beech.

We discover bluffs, not serious, and it is possible to get off the track so we do so, blundering through dense undergrowth. Then a nice easy wander to the edge of the bush and abruptly Salisbury clearing is before us - red-brown-gold in the sun. At Salisbury Lodge we meet others we know, and another lunch follows. On again, the wind stronger now and a light high overcast to the west and south.

We head off through the stunted silver beech of Starvation Ridge and into the open again - more good views, though cloud on Mt Arthur and Gordon's Pyramid is really whipping around. We move on through more stunted beech, more open tussock, and gentians, though not the same type. There is no sense of urgency, rather we enjoy the walk, and Balloon Hut is easy to find in its corner of beech and long-leaved leatherwood.

The hut was a little crowded that night - ten of us, half-dozen others, a dog and eight bunks. However we had balloons, and a quiet birthday celebration, and a leaf through the book to find our names from two Easters ago. A final look at the weather and we decide to decide in the morning what to do the next day. Down Deep Creek, maybe........

- Dave Waghorn.

ANOTHER ACTIVE YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A TRAMPER

After my slothful Stewart Island summer, I rejoined Victoria University Tramping Club full of energy and ready for action. My initial achievement involved considering the Freshers' Trip. Didn't go, or anything, but I thought about it.

The next event was the AGM. There were few occurrences here though I did hear an informative discussion on the necessary qualities for a gear custodian.
Easter followed. I saw the long weekend looming with few highlights on the social calendar so I thought perhaps I could make it to North-west Nelson. The trip lists were full, but with bribery, corruption and use of the family name, I joined up under the guise of leader. (That it was a disguise will be confirmed by any members of the party - "Tony who?...")

Shortly afterwards I heard a rumour of a work party, but decided it wasn't my kind of thing.

The wine and cheese had more appeal, and despite the appalling weather I felt obliged to put in an appearance.

Rockcraft came next. In true character with noble spirit, I offered to pass on my accumulated knowledge, experience and wisdom, and instruct. However, family duties intervened and I was compelled to convey myself to Christchurch to stay with my big brother. Unfortunately, the programme organised for me included degeneracy and hard drinking with Ken J.W. Taylor. Disgusted, I only stayed a week before returning to yet another display of unselfishness and community-mindedness.

This was none other than the Alpine Instruction Course, and for four days I was to display my culinary skills, as a chef. This project was undertaken with astonishing success. Never before had alpine enthusiasts had their palates tempted with fresh fruit salad, Mother's own apple crumble, imaginative coleslaw, the oft-talked about cheesecake, and of course the unsurpassable cheese sauce.

After this monumental effort, the Gourmet Trip felt they could not venture forth without me. Nearer the time, they felt they couldn't venture at all, and like the apple, another dream crumbled.

August arrived, and with rugged mid-winter enthusiasm the G.P.A.C. planned another Epic. Unfortunately before the rigours and hardships undergone, the challenges faced and conquered, and the spectacular exploits of this torrid week can be described, the magazine must face the printing process.

Tony Gilman (?)

SUMMIT DELUSIONS

Dreaming I watch sunmisted cloud billow
Dreaming, small figures crawl up the spangled ice below
And dreaming (of grandeur) - my snowdazzled eyes
fixed on those approaching specks - windswept,
I sweep close my clouded cloak and, crowned with cold sunlight,
Dreaming, I watch...
"Til voices wake me, sharp sounds, laughter - above...
--Dreaming again, I'm trudging behind, eyes only for the trampled snow!

Janet
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TARARUAS IN MAY

One day in the May holidays, I managed to persuade Matt Johnston to do a trip into Penn Creek to deliver an axe handle, some turps, sandpaper, etc. The only problem was that he was doing a middle-crossing-cum-Southern-Main-Range, with Chris and Michael. The solution was - we'd drop off the Southern Main Range via Pakihore Ridge.

Anyway, we managed to make Powell in the late hours of a cool May night, in time to have a few brews of Milo and admire the lights of the Wairarapa before falling asleep.

By 8.30 the next morning, wrapped up in Swandris, we were steadily plodding up Mount Holdsworth, and catching glimpses of the Main Range. Having conquered the summit for the umpteenth time we chundered off down to mid-Waiohine.

There I re-located an old tyre, tucker, and car pump stash of mine. So we had no hassles getting a fire going by using the car pump, for a quick and enjoyable caffeine booster.

Thinking we were going to have a long grunt onto Aokaparangi, we cut short our morning tea stop at one-and-a-half hours and started the grind.

The pog we had had for brekkie was losing its effect. We slowly wound down, finding that the energy potential we had felt four hours ago was gone. All that remained was the thought of the great gift to New Zealand by W.D. & H.O. Wills, and so we stopped for a fructose or nicotine booster. (depending on inclination), which eventuated into lunch.

Five o'clock saw us on top of Aokaparangi watching mist disappear, re-appear, and finally settle. So we faced the reality of not making Mangahuka that day, and made for Aokaparangi bivvy, which was located without hassles. With the addition of a tent, (pitched in the middle of the biv's general draining system), it was made quite habitable. Perhaps the most memorable event of the evening was the somersault of the rice pudding; the bulk of it landed in a freshly cleaned billy three feet away.

The next day was overcast and as we re-approached Aokaparangi it began to drizzle, so we ripped out our parkas and wandered on, a flourescent insult to the environment leading the way.

Ten minutes later we were putting on extra jerseys, overtrous and mitts, and seriously thinking of our well-being with wind increasing and the drizzle turning to hail. We put a bit more haste into our plod but didn't make the 'Big M' until two hours later where some of us got into pit and the rest of us hung round wondering if it was worthwhile doing so. After a consultation with the National Programme's weather office we decided to drop down to Neill Forks (so long work party). Another party arrived just then looking wet and miserable, and accompanied us to Neill Forks. The hut was its usual inviting self, and it was nice to sit in front of a blazing fire after the crud on the tops.

Next day our foursome finally split up, and Chris and Michael went to Kaitoke leaving Matt and myself to face a humble breakfast of porridge, eggs, bacon, pork chops and pancakes.

So after a few healthy burps Matt and I pointed ourselves in the direction of Hector Forks and after three-quarters of an hour set about the frustrating business of the gorge sidle track. The predicted change in the weather eventuated, and we were given
a rare treat of torrential rain, stinging nettle, and unlimited supplies of cutty grass and supplejack. Subsequently, old Totara Flats hut was the most welcome and friendly brothel I've ever stopped at (1). So we had badly needed refreshments and headed for Holdsworth Lodge to give the alarm about a lost member of another party on Cone Ridge.

Friday night saw Matt, myself, the axe handle, turps and sandpaper etc, whooping it up at the Masterton Cop Shop (2), gulping endless cuppas, chocka with milk and sugar; and lamenting the absence of policewomen.

Footnotes.
1) Totara Flats is the only brothel I've ever stopped in *
2) Matt Johnston has a lot of patience with some cops - Bill Taylor has very little.

*typist debates this point.

- Bill Taylor.

THE BROWSE.

The ancient art of browsing, still popular through many sectors of the animal kingdom, has recently been re-introduced to the human race through the dedicated efforts of a small band of V.U.W.T.C. members.

The basics of the browse are in fact very simple. The objective is for the participant to achieve a constant feeling of semi-bloating (i.e. extreme rotundness in the region of the stomach), from the time he awakens in the morning until falling asleep at night. This is achieved by continual consumption of food throughout the day at such a pace that the feeling of semi-bloating is maintained. The stomach level should be maintained so that it is possible for the participant to regurgitate food at will and recue it.

The browse is often performed after long Christmas trips as a means of restoring the bodily reserves (as it is the means of eating the largest quantity of food over a given period). However a pitfall which must be avoided (this has always caught potential participants of the browse in the past), is that of food stockpile. At every opportunity, when travelling homeward, it is necessary to stockpile food for inter-stop nourishment. To the uninitiated the natural impulse is to rapidly consume all the food before one's eyes. The experienced browser will resist this temptation and just gradually munch his way through the stockpile at a pace which he is able to maintain all day.

At this point I would like to point out a natural advantage which many potential browsers are born with; the slow jaw movement. This serves as a natural regulator of food consumption rate, and those not blessed with this ability must at first make a conscious effort to slow their jaw movements to a pace comparable with food consumption rates. (Studies have shown that it is possible to program the brain to a slow form of jaw movement so that it is no longer a conscious effort, in as little time as half a day.)
Given the basic techniques of the browse, it is now necessary to outline some criteria for selection of browse fodder. We have found that emphasis should be placed with a high volume/mass ratio. Thus bread will head any hierarchical rating of browse faddors.

With the above information it should be possible for any beginner to quickly acquire a high level of competence in the technique of the browse. As an indication of the potential of browsing as a means of high food intake, the following list of a typical browse was made. (This one in fact, occurred over a time period of some twelve hours during a journey from Queenstown to Christchurch)

2 biscuits
1 apple turnover
1 cream bun
1 banana milkshake
1 cooked breakfast: bacon, eggs, tomatoes, etc., plus brew
wine gums
2 peaches
apricots and plums
cooked lunch: fish fillet, tomatoes, chips, salad, plus brew
some beers
chippies
2 meat sandwiches
1 bread roll
1 sausage roll
1 meat pastie
Panta
1 ice-cream
1 pot yoghurt
1/3 loaf of bread
some more beers

Naturally such a high browse level won't be attained by the beginner but it provides a standard which all browsers should strive to achieve.

N.B: No mention has been made of the liquid browse in this article. However the authors have found that it can be quite successfully pursued, either in combination with the solid browse or quite separately. We have found that a successful food browse session is often most enjoyed when rounded off with a liquid bloat session, but naturally this is a matter of personal taste, and intake capabilities (i.e. disastrous results may befall those of weaker constitutions.)

Stewart Jackson.
EASTER TRIP

We nearly piked! Yes, my fourth ever (!) Tararua trip just about didn't make it when Good Friday dawned (could you call it a dawn?) with the best rain we've had for weeks.

However, I just managed to get one particularly unwilling member pushed into Pete's car before he ran home, and our two-car convoy set off for the Wairarapa and Kiriwhakapapa.

There, a determined camper was just making his way to the bog, complete with a large rubbish bag over his body and a small one on his head - we didn't look quite so novel.

Tramping through wet bush, I soon decided, sounds much worse than it actually is. For the first time ever I felt some of the utter peacefulness of the bush, as I sat on damp moss on the ridge and listened to water dripping from silent, moss-grown trees; beyond was nothing but muffling mist.

Lunch in the rain wasn't our idea of fun, so we made our way slowly down to Cow Creek. The cage there was an - interesting? - new experience for me, as was sleeping next to the tent wall on a wet night (say no more). BUT (it can't all be bad) the next day dawned fairly clear and our enthusiasm led us to set off at least as early as 10.30am. We tramped up...and up...and up...our progress recorded regularly in the Imperial British measurement of height; 13 ft per millisecond - by Russell, of course. Out of the bush, onto Table Ridge for lunch.

This decadent repast was enlivened with Russell announcing that he was throbbing with recumbent desire (1), and some mutterings from Jim about the inexperienced waitress...altogether depricated (defaecated?) is all I have to say on the matter.

Seeing all the peaks from up there made it all make some sense to one of my intellect...and it was good to be out in the sun. Two little tarns between Girdlestone and Adkin were a tempting spot at 6 pm; we finally decided we'd do the climb to North King the next morning. A clear, cold evening, a great tea, and a beautiful gold moon rising made for a good night.

The question remaining in my mind is; Did Russell piss in the tarn or was it just the rocks?

A resolution to one day do a moonlight Southern Crossing came out of a midnight water-collecting expedition that I made - and one day I will!

Easter Sunday was eggless but fine and windy, so we slogged up to North King where a lucky accident happily prevented Russell from having to carry his sugar any further. Big discussion on South King as to whether we'd go down Pinnacle Ridge or over the Broken Axe Pinnacles and out via Holdsworth - maybe if we'd known the outcome of our decision we would've gone the latter way - but who among us had second sight, sixth sense or whatever?

Two or three deer carcasses were on South King; I spent my weekend in forewarned anxiety about being mistaken for one, but someone pointed out that I'm well known for a certain un-deerlike characteristic that would probably save me.

Pinnacle Ridge track was not very obvious and in the end Russell, Pete and I split up from Jim and Jenny and bushbashed down off the ridge to Atiwhakatipu stream, which wasn't all that much fun for one unfit one of the three - but great to get onto the track down there and finally out to Donnelley's Plats by dark. Wondering what had become of Jim and Jenny we trudged to Holdsworth (and I swear that track was three times longer than it is by day), and, throbbing with recumbent desire burst into warmth, light, music and teenyboppers (Wow!).
One stew of superior quality later, we were just discussing a brew (yes for Lu, Stu), when who should walk in but? They'd come down the stream in pitch dark with one torch so they were glad to be out. We all ended up under a schedule (2) with our heads out far enough to see a clear sky and to surprise the local residents with strange conversations.

Party: Jim M., Pete Dench, Russell as in Millington, Jenny, and Lu who wrote this.

Footnotes.
1) See Holdsworth Lodge hut book - Easter 1978
2) schedule: small shed (reference - Millington)
CLUES

Across

1  Parts of our lives
3  He who sits and waits
7  The wizard
9  Anaemic Poms are unable to
11  In the field demo.
15  Southern Alp Guide Book
16  Early morning wakening (i.e. Tony G's billy lids on A.I.C.)
17  AC--
19  -- you were
20  Ice hammers
22  Edgar Allan ---
23  2nd person plural
24  By vociferous expectoration T.C. -------- himself to our hearts
   (pre-Greymouth image)
28  Man's country (e.g. suitable for R.Meylan)
30  Has two knobs and bangs at night
31 Not to be eaten if yellow
34 Heels editor nickname
35 circulatory loss to extremities
39 This geriatric holds the ---- to our hearts
41 No longer a Christian association
43 obnoxious bastards
45 same as 43 across, chief guide
47 same as 41 across
48 They dry out the basin boys (ph: 846 499)
49 Popular cry of VUWTC in the hills
50 New at the game and a bit gumby

Down
1 Bill Foster should have been, along with the Islanders
2 To pine, etc.
3 Rubbing complaints
4 When to be in pit
5 French for 'and'
6 Elitist (i.e. unknown to W. Keys) climbing term used only by
  D. Taylor and E. Hilary
8 Tobacco-filled cylinder protruding from small hole in Everest
  mummy
10 Jim's other half backwards
12 Muldoon regards people who do this as rampant communists
13 Caravan park on southwest Ruapehu
14 Friends of the Pope, excluding Joe Potiki (abbrev.)
18 Distributors of fine Welsh krabs
21 Blonde and noisy
25 Person who confessed to stealing Bill F's hand-embroidered mitts
26 -- what you do do well
27 nasal drip
29 pre and post trip watering stop
32 divides up 1 across
35 sexy glacier
36 what 35 down is made of
37 upper part of a glacier
38 Anybody seen Bill?
40 If you haven't got it, it's the result of discretion, luck or
  celibacy
42 I can get by without Imperialists on Easter Sunday,
  I can get by without Aussie climbing wankers,
  I can get by without hydro dams in the Tararuas,
  But I can't get by without my ---
44 pulling or tugging device
46 If you're suffering from 40 down, this could well be a possible
  contributing factor

The management would like to emphasise that the answers to 39 across
and 40 down are in such proximity to each other by sheer coincidence.
I hitched down to Christchurch on a Newmans bus (on account of the rain) to find myself about a week early. So Rod and I pissed about for a few days, went on a little trip into the Cragleburns, drank sum piss, smoked some durries, and indulged in various other vices on the pretext of preparing for the trip. So when Ron arrived from Wellington I spent a day rushing around sewing and tying bits of rope and stuff together, etc.

When we finally got to Cook (courtesy of Ron's mini), we drove up and down the Ball Road a few times until we were able to stuff Ron's gear selectors on the second drive along the road or we might still be driving up and down trying to break the poor car.

The first night we bivied out in a natural shelter called Unwin. The next day we bowled up to Malte Brun Hut, had a durrie dinner, another durrie, and pawed through some stick books. A few days later we went up to some rock behind the hut in the drizzle to do some rock climbing. Ken decided to play kamikaze pilots and maliciously tried to jump on my head from an overhang about 15 feet up. Luckily I'd moved and Ken came down in a heap at our feet, spraying every imaginable joint on one side of his body.

This was rather unfortunate because the next day was all right for a climb and Ken didn't feel up to coming with us, so Rod, Ron, and I went. We climbed Malte via the west ridge and returned down Fyfe's couloir in a mere fourteen hours. Hence dinner of TVP and bed without a pit seemed quite pleasant.

Ron and Rod went up to Tasman Saddle a day or two later and had a couple of abortive attempts at Elie de Beaumont. Ken and I shot off back down to the Hermitage to catch the bus back to Christchurch.

I would like to make it clear that it is no reflection on the character of either of us that when we got back to the Hermitage, Ken went and had a shower while I went to the bar for a medicinal whisky or two.

Party: Ken Sullivan (NZAC), Ron Muir, Rod Gilman (GFAC), Geoff Gilman (GFAC).

- Geoff Gilman.

FRESHERS' TRIP

VUWTc started off the year badly with vastly depleted numbers on the Freshers' Trip - a mere 20 starters when previous efforts have attained half a century at the minimum. Seven last-minute pikers were partially responsible and they are fortunate not to have their names published forthwith for purposes of ridicule. However the three fearless deerstalkers from The Terrace obligingly agreed to use the transport provided and make a financial contribution.

The bus trip up was fairly uneventful; most notable was the record departure time - less than half an hour late, but some slow drinkers in the Featherston Pub attempted to counteract the effect.
The usual annual camp was established at Donnelly's Flat, and was followed on Saturday morning by the traditional route up the Atiwhakitu (see 'Heels' '76, '74, '72) at a leisurely pace, with a two hour lunch stop where Bill exhibited the family abilities at bludging food (so ably demonstrated to me two years previously by a greasy elder brother when I was still comparatively naive).

Saturday night was a tame affair compared with bygone years—a lack of rowdy yahoosers or obnoxious characters was prevalent until we had the misfortune to be visited by P. J. Tree who, with an audience of eager and awed faces fresh from Scots College, launched forth into a boring monologue on queen and country, a speech so soporific that Olly retired to bed shortly after. There followed some feeble attempts at former favourite songs such as Old King Cole or the unabridged Good Ship Venus, and half-hearted suggestions that Bill should assume his namesake's role in a performance of 'Schumann' before we all closed down for the night (he didn't consume nearly enough brandy and hot grapefruit refresh for an attempt).

Sunday we wandered out down the Waingawa, no interesting incidents to relate. At 4p.m. we piled on the bus, and with a brief stop to buy out the Featherston dairy, we made our way home.

Jenny Davies

SEVEN FINE DAYS IN THE PERTH

Wednesday, 25th Jan. 1978: We (Tony Teeling, Stewart Jackson, and I) are enjoying a lazy day at Scone Creek Hut in the mid-Perth after carrying 50-70 lbs up here from our road-end camp yesterday. It was a stinking hot day, as today is, and we really made hard work of it, taking 10½ hrs to get up here. It's bloody good to be back in the Perth. The river is currently (ha, ha—typist) somewhat lower than when we were here last year. Scared a deer on the way up.

Thursday: Spent 1½ hrs crossing Scone Creek up at the Bettison Forks, and bushbashed up on the blazed route to Prospector's Basin. Bushline for lunch. Worked our way up a rocky face for a further 3500 ft until we were about 6000 ft and 1600 ft above the basin. Descended to basin where bluffs were smallest and found a bivvy rock on true left just above the 1st gorge.

Friday: Stewart hunted up and down river—no luck. Tony and I climbed beautiful slabs for nearly 2000 ft to hit the west ridge of Edison at about 6500 ft. Ridge, however is loose and rotten above this height and we were forced to return back at about 7200 ft still some way from the top.

Saturday: Ascending saddle of three shingle slides downstream from the bivvy and up a steep gully brought us back to the ridge in 1½ hrs. Down ridge to a scrub and bushbash. Crossed Scone Creek on a rope.

Monday: Wandered out from a mosquito and sandfly infested Nolan's Hut in 3½ hrs to the car. Hit the piss at Whataroa.

Tony (call me Fernando) Connell
SNOWFALL

I will take me to the hills in Winter
And the snowfall quiets
the flurrying tussock of my mind
- beneath the reach of quickening wind -
to soft and frozen silence.
Now wake me if you can
- in the night's singing quiet
amongst the mountains!
Defy the glittering stars and the snowfall
- sing your own song, light small fires of comfort
and unlock the mountains' grip!
You'll find the air stilled, the tussock silent
The cold snow stretching endless...

and

I'll take me
to the hills

Janet.
Great Gripple!

A frozen Jim Metson (left) is welcomed with open arms by the Antarctic populace.
Me and my best friend having a characteristic long chat (Tapi, Kaikouras)

Clematis.

Upper Karangarua.
One day in the autumn of 1973 a guy called Mike Firth dropped into the Alpine Guides office at Mount Cook. He wanted to make a full length adventure movie based around skiing and could we help? Nick and I said sure. A few weeks later one of the other guides, Gavin, took Mike and the three central characters glacier skiing.

Mike had met Jeff Campbell, an American, and Blair Trenholme, a Canadian, when those three had been skiing in France. Annette was a New Zealand ski instructor friend of Mike's and a dead ringer for Glenda Jackson. The three were powerful all-terrain skiers. That first day was exciting for the four visitors to Mount Cook. They watched a slab avalanche chase Gavin down the steep Murchison Glacier head wall.

The filming started in June on the Tasman Glacier among some crevasses and seracs. For a few days we ducked and dived on skis around and into interesting ice walled valleys, arches and caves. Once Jeff and Blair skied a very steep gully in a crevasse wall, while the rest of us watched and filmed from the top of the serac. My job was to provide a bit of local knowledge, check out the slots, be ready to haul anyone out of one and help carry (and occasionally man one of) the 16mm Bolex cameras and tripods. However most of the group were experienced mountain skiers and quickly tuned into the local snow and glacier conditions so that they could soon look after themselves.

Unfortunately, mountain weather patterns don't give that many perfect days. So there was a lot of waiting around. Some of the earlier ideas for the film got dropped when a folk singing woman in the crew got tired of the life and departed. A while later, Annette got fed up and left too. So that left Jeff and Blair as the stars.

The fine day routine was established where the crew would fly into the head of the Tasman and ski to the filming locations on the Tasman, Murchison or Mannerings Glaciers. Depending on conditions and the places, I or another guide might go with them. We would get picked up at the bottom of the two to four mile runs and flown back up once or twice that day. At the end of the day it'd be back to the village and probably the Tavern Bar. Nights were for stirs and looking at the rushes. From the first it seemed obvious that the movie was going to be brilliant.

Sometime during that first winter, hang gliding found its place in the story. Jeff, an experienced flyer, had brought two kites out with him. And Blair was soon in the sky too, although he'd never flown before. After some skiing, flying and filming round Round Hill and Mt Hutt, they started jumping off the Minarets and Elie de Beaumont. These were the first hang glider flights ever off any of the 10,000ft peaks in New Zealand. Mike would follow on the helicopter, and Geoff Cox, the sound and camera man, would film from the ground somewhere. A small camera was occasionally used on the kites themselves.

Because the colour of their sails didn't show those kites up to their best advantage in the mountains, none of this first year's mountain hang gliding was ever shown in "Off the Edge". However it was used in a shorter movie specifically about hang gliding that Mike also made, called "Curved Air".

On several days when it was no good for flying, the walking, horse riding and camp scenes were shot. This was done mainly around the village and Ball Hut areas and in a valley of the Ben Ohau Range. Filming was also done at the hot pools at Welcome
Flat in the Copland Valley. On one beautiful September day we went out to some ice caves in the Hochstetter icestream of the Tasman Glacier. It was there amongst the gleaming translucent blue-green walls and dripping icicles that Mike did some of his most talented filming. The thaw had just started so entry into this best cave system was a once and we hadn’t brought enough film for retakes. So Mike made difficult pans with no rehearsing and made every camera angle count as we all explored the winding cavern. Mike, Jeff and Blair were incredible people to be with, especially in the mountains.

By the end of 1973 Winter the boys still hadn’t got into Pioneer for the hut scenes and some local runs. So back they came in 1974 complete with two suitably coloured gliders. They flew the Minarets and Elie several more times. Blair came unstuck during one take-off from Elie and sorted himself out only just before dropping over an icecliff. The group got their trip to Pioneer, skied the very steep slope below the hut, and skied out along the Fritz Range during a classic West Coast sunset. They also flew through Cinerama Col under Mt. Cook and off Glacier Dome down the Hochstetter Icefall. The Hochstetter flights were probably the most spectacular flying they had ever done. In the movie, the camera on the wing of Jeff’s kite shows his mind-blown face as he dives between huge seracs and floats above the chaotic mass of ice blocks and crevasses.

The shooting was finished by the end of 1974. What remained was a long and difficult job of rough editing and selecting music and sound. In 1976 Mike and Anne, his film assistant wife, took the movie to the States for film editing. Eventually they started showing it around the ski fields there. Two years later it is still showing widely and successfully, and has won world acclaim.

—Wharry Keys.

AUTUMN TRAVERSE

One Saturday afternoon, around the middle of March (i.e. the fifteenth) I decided to take a rest from the drudgery of cleaning the toilet and changing records and so I sat down.

While I was sitting contemplating the view from the 209 lounge window, and trying to focus on the B.P. clock, the green hills of Mount Victoria loomed into sight and seemed almost to beckon me to them. I was reminded of Sir Edmund Hilary’s mortal words "because it was there" and made up my mind right then to attempt an ascent that very afternoon. With those lush hills imprinted on my brain, I stood up and did a few knee-bends. As this left me quite breathless, I sat down again and started preparing a few lists. Ten minutes and two brews later, I was completely organised and pinned my whereabouts note beside the telephone. It read:

If not back by Monday night,
Ring Peter Melling.
Do Not Ring Police.

I left it unsigned and hoisting my pack—canary-yellow, ‘H’ frame, heavy-duty canvas, Mountain Mule—onto my back, I set off in brilliant sunshine up the gentle incline that is The Terrace. At Church Street steps I decided that it was time for a scrog
stop and tucked into some dried fruit and nuts, deciding against another brew as it was only two minutes from the last. At this particular point in time I remembered that I had forgotten that bane of all female trampers, toilet paper; but as there were several public toilets en route, I agreed with myself that it wasn't really necessary on this trip.

Rehoisting my pack (canary yellow, 'H'-frame, heavy duty canvas Mountain Mule) onto my back, I psyched myself up for the precipitous descent and took a step forward and then another. Approximately 178 steps later I found myself near the bottom and meandered down the remaining slope, admiring the profusion of fennel along the sides, which contrasted noticeably with the greyness of the concrete right-of-way. This prompted me to look upwards and take note of the dramatic weather change that had occurred since I first set out; an ominous cloud had come over the sun. I did a quick mental check on the gear I had packed to ensure against just such a change, being two-toned chocolate-brown and oyster Norsewear balaclava, dark green line 7 industrial safety-model parka, royal blue oxford-weave 'backed' nylon overtrousers, seashell-pink Kairanga woollen mills long-johns, woollen flecked dachstein pre-shrunk mitts, ebony black oiled japara overmitts.

As it didn't appear that these would be necessary immediately, the cloud having since moved, I set off once again in blazing sunshine. Deciding against leap-frogging the parking meters on Boulcott Street, as the tramp was more of a pleasant ramble than a fit trip, I headed on into the concrete and heavily-peopled jungle that used to be the Te Aro flats. Here I encountered all Manners of interesting fellow wanderers who neatly side-stepped my pack and I as we chundered along towards the next munchies stop, ie Pidgeon Park. After a King's feast of peanut-butter sandwiches and a take-away brew from the nearby hamburger joint, I set off once more, the Victoria foothills now in my sights. Courtenay Place flat presented no obstacle and before I knew where I was, I found myself (once again) at Flannagans. Although a grog stop of a few ales would have gone down well, I decided to pit my last remaining strength against the slope and banks of Marjorie. However, halfway up I was accosted by a fellow VUWTC stalwart flower and daisy who, in true tramping tradition, diverted my attentions true right to the Clyde Quay. Consoling myself with the thought that greater people than I had suffered a similar fate, I piked.

- Robanon.
KABOOM! Grumble.

Yet another mass of ice and snow falls from the Douglas Neve to the glacier a thousand feet lower. We got used to the noise after a while and only noticed the big ones. Tried to catch a photograph but it's all over before you can react.

Probably one of the more spectacular campsites in the Southern Alps is at Harper’s Rock in the Douglas Valley of Westland National Park. The rock bivouac is perched on a moraine five hundred feet above the Douglas Glacier which is a horrendous mass of surface moraine and black ice. Over the other side of the valley loom a series of tremendous cliffs and steeply sloping rock slabs. And perched above these is the neve of the Douglas Glacier with the bulk of Mount. Sefton at its east end.

Behind the rock spreads the table-flat valley of Fitzgerald Stream and Douglas Pass that leads into the Landsborough River.

We had come up the Karangarua from the West Coast and over Mounts Howitt and Gladiator to this place and our airdrop. Here we were eating up large and resting well in the most incredibly fine weather, watching the play of light on the bonded rock and snow. It was a pleasant interlude between the the annoyance of the last days and the unexpected struggles and pains of the days to come. We never tired of looking at the scenery from the reds and pinks of early morning through the harsh glare of noon that gave way to the softer light of afternoon before the brilliant colours at sunset, and always the crash and rumble of the glacier falling off the edge.

The trip didn’t start at all well and things (boots) went wrong again, fairly early on, but then came a few days where all went right. We picked up the drop and feasted and rested amid some sensational scenery till it was time to go.

Freshly reweighted packs entertained themselves on our backs as we left the bivvy rock, crossed the stream and sidled round the base of the west ridge of Thompson. A slight pause, a little discussion and we pick and slither our way down the moraine wall to the rocky gut beside the glacier on its true left. Then, clamber up on to the rubble-covered surface of the glacier and begin to pick our way across and downstream. After an hour of this we find our way blocked by nastily glistening black ice slots and ridges that make the place look as if a giant axe had been hacking at the ice.

So we take another half hour to back out of the mess and then start on our second alternative. Half an hour more and we are at the foot of Fitzgerald Stream where it burrows under the glacier and take a rest before following the left flank of the glacier as it grinds its way down to the lake at the tongue. Footprints
encourage us. None seem to be heading back the way we had come so we push on, round and over enormous blocks of angular rock. By noon we are at the tongue of the glacier and we rest before the next part. Still we feel good.

We look around and lose our good feeling. Ahead of us the south wall of the Douglas Valley drops sheer to the lake. The lake is at 3100ft and from where we are it seems as if all of the nearly 4000ft from the top of Glacier is vertical. Impassible. And to our right and north - well, that's impossible.

So that is it, nothing to do but to retrace our steps, slowly, and two-and-a-half hours later we are back at Fitzgerald Stream and a late lunch. Then we go up the glacier for a while and head across. At the middle we drop our packs while one of us scouts a route, building cairns as he goes. Half an hour and we have a way across and another fifteen minutes sees us in the trench on the northern side of the glacier. We clamber up the moraine wall, sidling as we do, and well spaced out. The moraine is relatively stable as the glacier is almost stagnant - shown by the large layer of ablation moraine on its surface. The sidle is a slow exhausting business but things don't look any better in the trench several hundred feet below so we stick to the sidle. As the sunlight turns gold we come to the end of the glacier and drop down to the side of it at a point where it draws away from the glacier wall and leaves a muddy flat just before the lake. Miraculously, footprints not our own are found and our spirit lifts and extra energy comes from nowhere (not much, but some). There is a little more scrabbling round the valley wall before we can wander exhaustedly round the lake beach to the moraine dam as the sun vanishes and gloom sets in.

Two of us draw ahead, eager to get to the hut, the other two lag behind in exhaustion. Night came fast and exhaustion triumphed. Two slept under the stars while the other two found themselves an overhanging rock that provided a superb bivvy.

Next day we recovered.

Party - Dave Waghorn, Martin Clapham, Dave McQueen, Jeff Hicks.

- Dave Waghorn.
climb into a blue, blue sky
fall into a deep, deep pool
cold closes round you
...freeze...
burst out!
sparkle of clear drops
in bright light
round a wet, seal-like head
water runs off
skin tingles
sun warms...

Lu

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY.

Thursday, 19th Jan. 1978: At last we're in the bush - just Monument Hut in the Hopkins River, which runs into Lake Ohau. Long journeys. Spirits are very high and optimism abounds concerning the weather. We haven't started tramping yet - ferry, train, bus, and finally Landrover brought us here.

Friday: It's been a terrible day. That is, beautiful weather and splendid place but I am unfit and could scarcely cope with my pack. We're now in Erceg Hut and hope to attack the dreaded and much-discussed Charity Col tomorrow.

Saturday: Well we made it! Snow in perfect condition, soft but not slushy, crampons for the last stretch. What a grunt and on the top we were light-headed with tiredness, relief and the bliss of a cold lemon-drink. Discussion, as we're all worried about whether our air-drop will be at Harper's Rock - we sent it off rather late - so feel we must press on and find out. To the Landsborough tonight? We decided No, and careered down for a brief swim in the stream below, then on to a campsite which we lined with ferns. The atmosphere tense at dinner, as some want to hurry and some don't. Ouch, my sunburn!

Sunday: A late start caused upsets and meant that we tramped through the midday heat of yet another scorching day. Marilyn feeling lousy with flu', so we stopped in this beautiful camp-spot near a glacial tarn, all tumbled grass-covered boulders, beeches and snug bivvy-spots. Lazed, swam, washed, read all afternoon.

Monday: We rose at the appointed hour and set off briskly, past streams with delightful names like Repulse Creek, Echo Stream, Romping Water....by midday we were on beautiful flowering terraces above Rubicon Torrent, skulking in the scant shade of rocks amidst streams, tarns and a riot of Celmisias and Edelweiss. After lunch, a unanimous pike - it was too lovely a place to leave.

Tuesday: Why didn't someone tell me that glaciers are really crystal mountains?! - the McKerrow, after passing through an amazing Gate of Hell, pink-lit snow above, narrowing rock walls, and a roaring torrent beside us. Then the glacier - clear ice! and off that onto the slopes of Douglas Pass, and a thousand feet up to
the most stunning view of the trip. A terrific panorama of mountains, not rock and scree but vast snow-slopes - mainly Sefton and the Douglas Neve - and at our feet a big barren brown plateau, with our rock bivvy just out of sight. Down, down, down...and now we're here. With a box of food flown in for us as a favour when we radio-ed our fears about our real one. But - no more fuel....

Wednesday: Bill and Bryan away by brilliant moonlight to the conquest of Mt. Burns; the rest of us lazed all day, eating well. Then suddenly - at dinner - our real air-drop arrived with a helicopter!! What excitement!! Now we can do as long a trip as we'd originally planned; and everyone has changed completely, spirits are high again, you'd think we'd all come back to life.

Thursday, 26th: Ate all day. And talked, especially - and very entertainingly - Bryan. Kept us all amused.

Friday: Overcast thank goodness, and we climbed Mt. Thompson with day packs and swollen stomachs.

Saturday: Cleaned up and left the bivvy, and down the bloody glacier all day - what a bastard. We headed down to its foot at first hoping for a quick way across, and were forced to retreat, cross higher up, then edge down beside it. Moraine and scree very sharp, murder to boots and as Marilyn found out, to knees, hands and noses (she made a gory three-point landing!)

Sunday: A long grunt today, up - not the Wick, as we'd thought, but a long, conveniently sloping rock shelf. (We camped at the bottom of it yesterday.) Over some ice which had me petrified with fear, teetering about on my crampons, very glad of help and reassurance. The tops misted but Welcome Pass eventually found, and a snow-cave dug in time for food and collapse at 9pm.

Monday: Rest-day...snow-cave improved...visitors...Sefton tomorrow. Nerves....

Tuesday: Sefton was....- amazing!! Indescribable. Up before dawn and the snow crusted and glittering with stars, with a bright half-moon and huge singing sky of stars above. As we went up the sky lightened ('til we could see the earth's shadow on the cloudcover below) to deep hazy pinks and greens. Roped up over one large crevasse. Top steep and a bit icy - not too bad - and what a view! Many photos. Julian ate caviar. (Yes it's true!) Down again to snooze in the snow-cave, then packed up and off down and down and down....to Scott Creek, then disagreement - on, to hot pools? or camp here, high up? Pools won - just - and an interminable journey down the waterfall followed. Then along the Copland Flats to people and pools. Very weary - the pools perfect.

Wednesday: Up the Copland through lovely long grass in hellish heat to Scott Creek hut. Marilyn very weary with a bad cough. Rested and dined then went on in the evening and camped at the bottom of Copland Pass.

Thursday, 2nd Feb: Out!! The Pass was a drag - lotsa people - upupupup then downdowndowndown. Weather still perfect despite the forecast and after a carefree lunch we pushed out down the Hooker, heading for the pub, pouring sweat and developing new aches and pains with every step.

So.... that was it. Five very sunburnt people began telling their friends the amazing tale of TWO WEEKS Of Sunshine In The Mountains!!...Well, gee, far out, man....The best long trip I've been on yet, and huge thanks are owed to Bryan and Bill for making such a trip possible for us less capable beings.

We were: Bill Foster, Bryan Sissons, Marilyn Bramley, Julian O'Brien, and Janet Atkinson.

- Janet.
IMPRESSIONS OF THE MAY MEET.

May Meet - what is it? Well, I was informed that it's billed as the inter-university-tramping-clubs' Event of the Year. This year the Meet was held at Tongariro National Park, hosted by Auckland University. About eighty people attended, Vic providing the dubious number of three.

Travelling up to National Park was notable for rumours of heavy snowfall; arrival at destination was memorable for the lack of snow.

For two-and-a-half days a variety of things of varying interest happened; including trips up 'the mountain', to Tama Lakes and Turoa Skifield, and the usual Trippers' excursions.

The Chief Ranger of Tongariro National Park arrived and gave a talk about the future of the Park and the present conflict between environmentalists and those wanting to exploit the Park for financial gain. He went on to detail the mistakes of the past, such as unchecked, unconditional ski-resort development; and what the future holds. Because of the problems with erosion, track maintenance, litter disposal and overcrowding of the present facilities, he thought that in the future a quota system might be necessary, to control numbers.

Perhaps the most controversial speaker of the Meet, on the same interesting topic, was Peter Mulgrew. This spokesman for Alex Harvey Industries, also known as the Turoa skifield salesman, openly admitted to a profit motive, overlooking the cost to the natural environment. Like a used car salesman, he told of flushing DC9 vacuum toilets, a creche for the kids, a car park (which has since collapsed), and other superior facilities.

He tended to ignore the problems of erosion caused by bulldozer access to Stage One, the effects of building on the vegetation, problems of silt in the streams and of rock slides; and the suggestions of the Environmental Impact Report. If we are to believe Peter Mulgrew, paid to promote the company's view, Turoa will become the North Island "playground" for skiers; but clearly with too much haste and not enough knowledge, for short-term rather than long-term benefit.

On going up to have a look around Turoa at the invitation of Massey (who own a hut just below the field) we could see that bulldozing to widen the road was causing further erosion problems, adding to already serious surface erosion.

To conclude about May Meet - it was well-organised, with "cordon bleu" cooking, including the delights of steam puddings followed by beverages. It is to be hoped that Vic can do better in future, with better attendance, and do a good job next year when it is our turn to act as hosts.

George Symmes
Those nice Taylor boys at an after-match social

Waghorn windowcleaning

Sefton side.

Karangarooteed boots.
Between the Edges — on the Tasman below Mt Darwin.

GFAC mascot.

Recent surrealist work by W Taylor.
ppos at the pools, Ketetahi.

"Say, ranger, which way now?"
- Harry's tourists at Hochstetter Icefall.

Penn Creek.
Chariots of the Goods, Antarctica.

Forgotten Foster.
BLOODY PLANTS

I first came across that botanical abomination known variously as spaniard, speargrass or Aciphylla, at a tender age, in a tender part of the anatomy when my highschool class was on a visit to the Cobb Valley. We climbed up to the top of Mt Peel from Trilobite Hut and I sat down. Only to stand up very quickly. Round One to the plants, and almost every other round since.

Animals eat speargrass while it is still young and tender, but if allowed to grow the plants become hard and unforgiving. I've seen a leaf point go through leather. Besides being hazardous, the mature grasses can be spectacular with their massive flower-heads - they don't look much like their relations, the carrots and parsnips.

Another spikey plant is Matagouri which looks like a monstrous dead Hawthorn and grows well in the lower flats of the Travers Valley, among other places - sheer hell to have to travel through - go round if you can. It's very good at shredding packs, parkas, overtrousers, bush-shirts and skin, and is also known as Wild Irishman.

The stinging plants, the nettles, are fortunately local in occurrence. I won't say any more for fear of becoming obscene.

Then there's leatherwood in all its twisted glory. Stories abound, many originating from the Tararuas, where, in many places, it provides the final obstacle between the bush and the tops. Wellington trampers can rave in long and horrifying detail about their struggles with these in all weathers the Tararuas can show. So can I, but I won't. Its redeeming features - it burns well even when green, and the flowers are pretty.

Bush Lawyer I have never really been able to laugh at since I wrapped a length around my neck in Able Tasman. It holds you back, trips you up, shreds your favourite skin; but the fruit when well ripened is often quite edible.

Another creeper is supplejack. Ever tried to clamber through a thicket of the stuff on a slippery bank? No? Well you don't know how lucky you are - there were nearly two Deadbeat Daves, both singing soprano.

The grasses aren't innocent either - cutty grass, carpet grass, ferns, and gorse, of course.

But for all the uncomfortable plants in Godzone, there are many more innocent, joyful, and nice to be near. Don't let the Forest Service change them to pines.

Dave Waghrum
You looked out the window
Just for a moment
You saw some old hills...
Sunshadow on dry brittle brown
dark scrub below
ridge clear against winter-blue sky -
Drift away...
Sun warm, you're sweating up a spur
boots solid, real, on mud and roots
breath comes hard
you never felt so stuffed before.
Look up - no, don't look ahead
it's a steep one...
voices; they're sitting
dappled, tired, clustered beneath
some tall beech -
you join them
no-one speaks
for a moment only...
...drift away...
You're back
(there was no reality)
in a sunless room; lino and glass -
they're kind, but you need to be there
in the cool, dappled shade.

Lucy

THE NIGHT ALF'S IMPERIAL ARMY WAS OUT-LUNATICKED
(Just one of the many adventures of Medium Slow Group II)

Like waves upon a receptive shore, the seven silly shitheads
got washed up into the receptive bosom of Flora, who welcomed them
with open portals.

Night fell with a resounding thud and the departure of three
NZFS woodmen, burdened down with the group's cutlery, a weka and
a transistor blaring the Trot's results.

Came six o'clock and the brew above the fire reeked evilly of
curry, and worse! the chimney, struck by a projectile (a piece
of wood), thrown by an indiscriminate "Drake" under the subversive
employ of Alf's Imperial Army (who had put out a contract on our
dinner) dropped shit into the fire.

Dinner was eaten; the result: open at both ends. After 84
Proof refresh, Phil the Viking raided next door (the hut of Alf's
Imperial Idiots) and decided to rape the men.
A musical interlude was provided with the singing of Christmas carols to the AIA (also known as Dad’s Army).
War was declared on Dad’s Army at 8pm NZST. Jock the possum climbed onto the roof, did twenty pushups, a blood-curdling haka and dropped a missile down their chimney, while fighting a solo rear guard action.

Terrorist tactics were employed, beginning with the preaching of the beliefs of Jehovah’s witnesses, the selling of “Watchtower” and slandering of the Queen’s sex habits, and finishing with a demonstration for abortion, a Man’s Right (and also a Dog’s Right). The Vice Squad then proceeded to raid the next hut (AIA’s hut) for filth and apathy. A quick inspection under the mattress revealed... nothing!

The roar of the rusty bedsprings heralded bedtime and hitting of the pits.
Signed: the six silly shitheads of “Medium Slow Group II”; Jock Howie, George Symmes, Dean Golding, Phil O’Donell, Bill Frecklington, Dirk Catsburg and fearless leader Geoff Gilman.

QUEEN’S BIRTHDAY, THE KAWEKAS AND VERA THE V.W.

If you happened to be driving from Napier to Taihape, not very early on the Saturday morning of Queen’s Birthday weekend, you might have seen three squirming, pit-encased bodies, fighting for supremacy of some sort as they lay squeezed under a fly. At least, one of them was under the fly – one was partway under Vera the V.W. and the other was getting a frosty nose out in the very nippy air.

A little while later the same three could be seen down the road, where they’d driven to be in the morning sun! and were getting themselves organised in a dithery sort of way, in between publicity shots and examining the crystalline structure of hoarfrost.

Climbing up from the Ngaruroro in open country very different from the familiar Tararuas, we looked about us at rolling farmland, the distant Ruahines and the Sparrowhawks, and the river itself flowing swiftly below us in a fairly narrow valley. The country we were in had unusual reddish-brown soil – mostly we were out in the open as the vegetation was mainly manuka scrub. Frozen puddles fascinated me with their curved silvery lines, and before long there was a sprinkling of snow around us as well as the hoarfrost lifting up the loose soil.

Once on the ridge, the Kawekas were visible; lovely in the bright windy day with a delicate snow covering, stretching enticingly away... The country easy, pleasant tramping country, and we were beginning to see why one of our number, who had grown up in the Hawkes Bay hills, (almost), was sometimes rather rude about our lovely home-grown Tararuas.

But even eager, young trampers like me don’t have endless energy and after a short slog I was pleased to see the lunch stop; Kiwi Saddle hut, on the other side. Enthusiastic H.C.T. members were busy fitting into their roles with the girls making bread while ‘the lads’ chopped wood and did a bit of hut maintenance.
We chose between dropping down to Kiwi Creek or taking the so-called side track. This eventually made us climb to the height of the hut on the other side of the valley - all good exercise I guess. My first experiences of bush-bashing didn't give me a taste for it; apart from the physical discomforts I didn't like the isolated feeling I got from the middle of a tall thicket of kanuka when I couldn't hear the others at all.

So I at least was happy to find myself descending very steeply into the valley - so steeply that I felt the next step might take me onto the roof of the hut, tucked neatly against the hillside as it was. I was obliged to sit and stare into space in a zombie-like manner (as I had been known to do when in a somewhat intoxicated state), while my faithful companions rallied around making the hut into a home for the evening. Apple loaf a la Atkinson made a delightful hors-d'oeuvres; tea was a simple meal of frankfurters and spaghetti. The hut was ours for the night and we made good use of the space and the mattresses, the two females being careful not to encourage the advances of the male of the party, who was finding it hard to resist such personification of beauty, wit and womanly charm.

It was up to the tops the next morning; another bout of bashing, catching glimpses of sunlit bush as we went, and for me finding that the way to go was to develop a certain defensive attitude: a few trees aren't going to get me down, I can handle worse, etc.

The tops - Rocky Point, an extraordinary outcrop of rock rising out of the bush, with a good view of surrounding ranges and even a distant Ruapehu. The nice thing about the tops in the Kawekas? It means virtually the end of long slogs; there are great flat ridges, gentle inclines and long downward slopes. The vegetation is an attractive mixture of golden tussock, dracophyllum, some kanuka, and lovely patches of open beech with very little undergrowth.

There was a time when we weren't absolutely sure where we were, but coming across a gentle basin with a stream and a little camping stop, Russell recognised it as a childhood picnic spot (from the days when weekend trips were done in a day), and we saw it as a desirable place to stop. By 6.30 pm (?) the three bodies were once again in pit underneath their fly - and once again the clever one was in the middle (need I say more?). Twelve pm, and it was time for midnight snacks, brews and euphemisms.

Breakfast not only solid (as opposed to liquid), but sustaining, is an absolute necessity for my continued welfare in the hills, and I shall stick to that statement to the last in spite of the derogatory remarks of my lazy or other-wise friends. So, one solid and sustaining breakfast later, we left our friendly spot and started off across the smooth and rolling tops. One particularly lovely basin we came across had a little polythene shelter nestled against a patch of bush - evidently a few hunters come here, and some bring horses.

Water had cut strange runnels in the soft soil which were tricky unless you always walked as if on a tightrope. Hogget was amazingly flat and seemed to go on forever; I found it hard to work out where I was going as a result (in relation to the surrounding peaks). We headed across unusual volcanic country, pumicey, fine soiled, carved by the weather.

"Out" turned out to be further than I imagined when, from the tops, we looked down to the farmland where we would eventually come out. We descended through unexciting scrub and I mused grumpily on the beating my poor delicate body, which has never revelled in
masochism, had been forced to take. The lovely bush we came into had an eerie feeling of having once been ravaged by man, but was now deserted; the evidence being great tracks criss-crossing through it - confusing and rather depressing to follow.

One boring road, and two paddocks later (as it turned out, we were lucky not to meet the farmer, who had just ear-bashed Roussel for crossing his land), we were back on the Napier-Taiaha Road, and just wondering how much traffic there would be when a forest service landrover with a friendly driver came past, and we travelled in comfort back to patient little Vera.

So our first experience of the Kawekas was good enough to make us listen with a little more patience to Roussel running down the Tararuas - to me, though, they are two very different, but equally lovely places to tramp.

The Trendy Trio - Russell Millington, Mary Atkinson, and Lucy Atkinson, who wrote this.
MR CONNELL-KOTTER AND HIS SWEATHEGS

It all started when Tony (Animal for those who know him by that name), during one of his Maths lessons, taught his class to do river crossings in the swimming pool at the Boy's Institute. From then, it was all on. A week off work to take them for a tramp in the Tararuas which, for most, would be a first and quite an experience. For me, it was no first time in the bush, but an experience for all that; fuck - words fail me.

Tony managed to enlist Loop Benton, Loop's younger brother Mark, and me, to help him herd this marauding bunch of characters. The trip was to go in at Holdsworth Lodge, on to mid-Atiwhakatu, stay there for a few nights and then return.

We managed to get them all down to the Railway Station. However on this short trip we had a taste of things to come when two of the girls had problems carrying their worldly possessions all the way from the Terrace, so double packing was the order of the day.

The train ride was excellent. Everybody was in the non-smokers, except myself, graced with charming female company in the smoker. We were to be taxied out to Holdsworth Lodge, and I thought nothing could be easier. In fact, we made it, but on arrival the goon of the trip slammed his finger in the taxi door as he got out.

Well, off we set with our sights on Holdsworth Lodge, which wasn't hard since it was in view only 100 yards away. Even so, double packing was still a necessity. That night, the wine flowed freely: (Loop and I enjoyed a bottle of Pepe Lopez, at a safe distance from the mob), and the company whiled away the evening listening to silver lady "Hutch" on the "Battleaxe's" portable record player which was part of her essential tramping gear, which also included Twenty Solid Gold Hits, volumes one to seventeen no bull-shitting, every single album without a gap, 1-17. We managed to convince her to leave this equipment with the caretaker, with some difficulty. "Battleaxe" Bronwyn was recovering from a hole in the heart - what she was doing tramping I'll never know - and spent the trip threatening to throw me in the creek which scared shit out of me - she could have, no sweat.

Also on our first evening, character (or should I say catastrophe) number three came into her own. This was Fish - a small, frail girl with very thick glasses (twice the depth of a coke bottle) - hence the nickname. Incidentally, all had nicknames and answered to nothing else. Well, Fish got pissed for the first time in her life, and started to get depressed. Romance, it seemed, had passed her by, and it was in vain that she focused her attention on the class hero, a strapping young lad called Zain (who needs a nickname when christened with that). Zain was sporting a bandaged leg from hip to ankle from a recent spill off his trusty 50 c.c. hog.

Teacher persuaded Zain to have a chat to Fish for a while, he then with typical quiet authority and professional dignity, delivered a brief but sobering morality lecture (a Connell speciality - available on request). In the end everything started to settle down and was quite quiet, mainly due to Monk, the local "Tough", who announced that if anyone were to budge from pit, even for a slash, or to mutter another word, he'd break their face. Tractor sheds have always appealed to me, so I slept there and got a good night's rest.
Breakfast was over and packing up was underway when Zain had the misfortune to have one of his infrequent epileptic fits. Hence I found myself wandering around Masterton Hospital for three hours while the others started off without us. Zain was fine but a bit tired, so he just slept and I wandered round, thirsty as hell, without a cent on me to buy a cup of coffee, and feeling ripped off after a long ride in an ambulance and the dog didn't even use his siren or flashing light once.

Zain and I caught another taxi and made good time in catching the rest up, only to find that Monk had forgotten to put his sox on that morning and had gotten blistered feet.

Zain, on arriving at mid-Atiwhakatu, made the classic statement that made it all so worthwhile: "Hey, where's the light switch?" After being informed about the situation, and a long explanation about how it would detract from the great beauty of being away from it all and getting right into the bush, he enquired why we didn't just stay at Holdsworth, for at least it had power.

Our stay at mid-Atiwhok was sweet with Tony racing off each day doing day trips he wanted to do, leaving me in charge of the group, my main duty being; trying to get them to leave the hut and to convince them that they were not hungry, for being an epic Connell trip he kept costs down as well as the protein intake. Nose was the hardest one to convince, for he even dreamt about Kentucky Fried day and night - I think that's all he lived on, and wished to continue on that diet for the rest of his life.

Finally we got back to Holdsworth, only to find that other people were arriving. We took one side of the hut and let a group of kids have the other side - a large organised party led by an older guy. The caretaker had told us to expect them so we showed them their half, and went off for an afternoon stroll. Then Nose came rushing in, and announced "Hey there's a whole fleet of cars coming" Thus arrived the Girl Guides who were the real pre-booked occupants of the hut, numbering about forty. Being a gentleman, Tony finally consented to them having our side of the hut, and we all slept outside under the tree - not without great complaints from the kids. After numerous embarrassments, with Zain unknowingly insulting the Girl Guide Leader about her over-sized mammary glands in front of her fiance, and an eleven-year-old Girl Guide threatening to kick Loop in the crutch if he cheated at long ball again, we finally made it home - and boy was it home sweet home.

Tony Gilman

![Home Sweet Home](image)
MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM (ANTARCTICA, SUMMER 1977-78)

As a place, I guess it’s the furthest one can get from the usual experience of so-called “civilised living”, a landscape of unreal magnitude where man still hasn’t really wiped his dirty feet. The climate is such that he must survive artificially, supported by tenuous supply lines, always aware of a degree of vulnerability.

We went in at the deep end, starting our travels at the head of the Taylor Glacier, the edge of the polar plateau, and what might be inadequately described as a far-out place. Cold though, when the wind blew, it certainly wasn’t easy to work or to travel—fortunately our three days were near windless and we departed in fine spirit. Tobogganing down glaciers was quite an exceptional buzz—slots wide enough and sufficient in number to lose your breakfast over. Fortunately they stood out clearly, irregular white depressions in the scalloped blue glacier ice. We were relative novices at handling sledges and toboggans, five degrees of slope meant near total loss of control on the smooth ice. I think that day I lived on pure adrenalin.

The terrain stayed breathtakingly beautiful, a glacier miles wide, alive beneath us, spreading and merging into layer cake rock formations and peaks on either side; Beehive, Finger Mountain, The Inland Psych and other exotic formations. Clear skies gave us occasional glimpses of Erubus with its plume, probably seventy miles away—big mountains are funny that way; you need to be well away from them to see how massive they really are. If there was a creature inhabiting those

was a creature inhabiting those parts it would find amusement in these grossly overdressed intruding analysts, putting about, shutter happy and exuberant, lost in the dimension.

We meet briefly with another Vic. party, share their company and their ‘rabbit el Mexico’. I can’t quite recall the details but the recipe was on the back of the box—’Ranch reared rabbit’ conjured up wierd visions of round-ups and stampedes. The next two days in the Beacon Valley we worked our way up both sides sampling and observing the leveled and weathered strata, spinning out the 24 hour daylight to squeeze the most out of the days. An exhilarating abseil from the glacier edge got us to work each morning and the converse grunt on ascenders got us home in the evening.

Home deserves a short discourse. The classic polar tents are pyramid shaped, double walled, with a ventilator pipe poking through the apex—little different in external appearance from the tents of Scott. They are poorly ventilated if the entrance is closed— a trap for the unwary with less than perfect primuses and thus fumes and monoxide are always about.

Down the glacier we trundled, just idling the toboggan and working hard to keep the sledges behind it. In ten days we had reached the glacier snout—two days work on the surrounding slopes and the glacier tongue; we awaited the chopper to shift us into the next valley. A short shift (for a helo) but late in the day when they arrived, the weather rolled clear down like a south-
erly front and a three day blizzard began. Helicopter and all we ended up stuck on a small isthmus called Marble Point. Marble Pt. is another saga - however I don't think any other area left us with the awe and exhilaration of the Taylor, with its carved valleys, peaks, and that massive glacier.

Those memories stand out in what was a marvellous Antarctic summer of memories - cold place though.

Jim Metson

Party was: Jim Johnston, Nick Logan, Joss Lang, Jim Metson.
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