President  David Clelland
Vice-President  Peter Mansell
Secretary  Chris deJoux
Treasurer  Chris Hardiman
Gear Custodian  Terry Patterson
Tea Lady  Alan Clelland
Chief Guide  Mike Sheridan
Committee (at the end of the year)  Lynette Hartley, Belinda Bennett,
                               Grant Thomas, Susan Ensor, Phil Mackie,
                               Matt Johnston, Ed Mroczek, Bruce Wilson

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"Heels" has surpassed my wildest nightmares - 25 contributors, and 66 contributions; 62 pages of text and 5 of photos. Many thanks to those who did drawings - Lynette, Rosie Doole, Phil Mackie, Paul Marcroft, and Peter Mansell (below). Two very silly sketches were done by the editor. Special thanks to Lynette for a magnificent cover. I apologise if proofreading isn't up to scratch, but I've run out of time.
The colour slides were magicked into mono by Dave Waghorn, and the whole festering mass will be printed by Action Print, of Herbert St. oops! Fernish St., folks.

Incidentally, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the club. Enjoy!!
"AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR CAPTAIN...

I know you all want to get to all the good bits inside this mag and find out what everyone has said about you, so I won't keep you long.

Something really incredible has happened to the Tramping Club this year which, to an outsider, may not seem evident but to a member like myself is very obvious. Somehow the club received a shot in the arm, probably due to the enthusiasm of a few people at the beginning of the year. One person in particular deserves a biscuit for his efforts.

This initial enthusiasm soon became contagious and before long we had a whole squirming club on our hands just dying to get going. The Fresher's Trip couldn't have come soon enough. One thing led to another and the club went from strength to strength as human bonds began to weld the club into a stronger unit. People who would generally shy away from clubs due to a feeling of isolation were attracted by our dedication to good public relations and our emphasis on making every person equally welcome. Soon, many of these people, some of whom had never before been tramping, were becoming confident of both their ability to do what they thought they couldn't before and also their value to the club.

Now in September when we look back on the year, we can justifiably feel satisfied that we've achieved every purpose of a tramping club. And as we look forward to next year we can feel confident that it will be just as good so long as people remain enthusiastic and are prepared to get involved. This year's success has given us a platform from which we can launch next year's attack and the rescheduling of the elections will give us a much needed head start.

It's my sincere wish that everyone who was with us this year could be with us next year, but I know this can't be so. Maybe you can come with us during any breaks we have in common. Even if we never see you again you will not have gone away empty-handed, I hope. You will, like me, have a whole pile of happy memories to fall back on. This mag is really a catalogue of them. The value of these memories will become greater in time so don't think of how much it all cost you and how many tests you failed as a result - they're not important. Tramping is the best investment.

I could delve into this subject in great depth if I had time but I know you would rather get into the juicy bits of this magnificent mag that Bruce has so kindly compiled for us. (where's my money, eh? I'm still waiting! - ed.) Before I go, I just want to say thanks again on behalf of the club to all those who contributed to the club during the year and made it all possible.

David Clelland, President VUWTC.

JOTTINGS FROM THE ENGINEER室

Call me a liar if you like - I'm certainly no prophet. The tramping club last year got a reception like the police band at a Hart ball, and I made dire, dark and gloomy predictions about this year's activity. As vast numbers of enthusiastic club members can see I was quite wrong - the year has had the flavour of a
religious revival meeting, complete with fervent converts and a fair bit of razzmatazz.

Harking back to the Hart ball-thing, if you look around at other club members I'm sure you'll notice a hint of political awareness creeping in to campfire discussions, harking back to the club's very red-ish early days. This is a sure sign of a move from the solemn navel-gazing of the recent past to a more healthy extraversion on the part of the club. This magazine holds a mirror up to the club - it reflects its activities, albeit distorted, and a small slice of the life of the club's members. In particular I hope it has captured the sheer vitality of the last year.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to Heels, all those people who went on trips and did the mindless things that other people like to read about, and Mike Sheridan, for his enthusiasm and devotion to duty (no, no; take your money back man, I was going to say it anyway).

Bruce Wilson, supplier of tramping gear to Royalty, and future editor of Truth.

That's enough of the bullshit, folks, now into it!!
UNQUOTEABLE QUOTES DEPARTMENT
The following qualify as this year's best, or at least imply that the authors let it slip when my spies were around. Good gardening (GC/81).
1. Location, Nelson Lakes August trip:
   Sharon - "I stuck to Cam like glue over the high spots."
2. Location, Union Hall. Topic, dealing in the "Stuff":
   Richard H - "Feels good doesn't it"
3. Location, unknown!!
   Alan C - "I'm always over by eight."
4. Location, the seedy side of town:
   Belinda - "Don't look at me like that, I'm not touching it mate" - (never mind, Mike)
5. Location, Nelson Lakes:
   Frances - "She's not looking very happy cos she's got no one on top of her!"
6. Location, somewhere on campus:
   Kirsty M - "Actually I'm in trouble!"

A DICTIONARY OF SORTS - GS
It has been felt by some of us for a while now that there was a need for a glossary of words commonly used by Forestry workers and the masses.
The language used may be offensive to some persons (a personal problem).
A day off on the Queen - no nothing to do with QC's but H.2.O.
Amyl - involves heart exercise.
Ankle - what you do when there are no gunships or buffalos to ride.
Annuals - four months with the Triangle.
Army Training Manual - often read by the military to relive past glories.
Baby Sharks - often caught with lead pills.
Big jobs - every job's a big job.
BJ - no not blow job but Bunny Jacket.
Buffalo - Landcruiser.
Cold dead fish - not what you think it is but Watties tuna.
Condy - condensed milk.
Corned dog - Hellababies.
Crisis - the Forest Service moves from crisis to crisis.
Deans/yippie riders/trinties - baked beans.
Disoriented - lost.
Dog biscuits - something only the Army eats.
Donk - deer.
Drop a triangle - have a shit.
EMF - early morning fat - could involve some cooking.
Emu patrol - rubbish run, after loops.
Environmentally acceptable - the 1981 gourmet trip wasn't. Where was the grass-seed or the duckhead trying to chop down the totara?
Epic - you wouldn't wish it on your mother.
File a few Z's - to drowse.

Golden homosexual - golden fruit bikkies.

Get your shit together - how many have?

Glue - cyanide, without obligation.

Going for a shot - firing of a projectile out of a small hole.

Gravel - muesli.

Grit - sugar (see white death).

Green Shit - pinus radiata.

Green Triangle - somewhat self-explanatory.

Gunship - often a Hughes 500 with a handbag underneath.

Joint - cut of venison.

Lead pill - to suck on a lead pill, often done by animals.

Late - chocolate.

Have a domestic - doesn't only happen to lovers.

Have abrew and think about it - related to disorientation.

Hellababies - a picnic in a tin.

Horses cock - Chubb.

It's a hassle - life's basically a shit.

LMG - low mountain gear.

Lusties - goes with gap and ventilation - nothing really to do with airconditioning.

The Masses - ask the Pope for details.

Mickey's hands - tell the time.

Muck stick/cannon - often used on powder puffs.

Multiple Use - you name it the Forest Service can do it.

Nuns cunt - dried apricots.

Pass - don't know.

Patricia's - Bartlett pears.

PDR - Pretty Damned Rugged.

Physical - mildly exerting.

Perforated triangle - toilet paper.

Personal problem - something I don't give a fuck about.

Pipe cock - salami.

Possum and Paris - something like seven days without Mum.

Powder puff - skier or magpie.

Smelly - a goat.

Spag - spagetti.

Social obligation/responsibility - something the Triangle feels for 4 months of the year.

Stack a few Z's - to drowse.

Stick books - the centre-folds are normally stuck together.

Suck on a kumara - hasn't got anything to do with eating veges.

Technical problems - involves an IQ test.

Technical stalk - climbing.
The Hill - there's only one hill around - so don't be so ignorant.
Tiki Tour - a wander around the hills (see ankle).
Tucker Pucker (also TF) - tomato sauce.
Turkey strangler - it's the same as going blind with blisters on your hands.
Turd warbler - fly blow around a triangle.
Verbal - abusive.
White death - sugar, white bread, salt, coke, snow, heroin etc.
Yippee books - a bit like riding into the sunset.

EASTER - MIKE'S ALLEGEDLY MED/PIT TRIP - Fiona Clendon/Diane Imus

The trip began like any other with excited bodes, yells and screams and minor delays such as picking up forgotten overtrousers, 100 stops and food stops - we were on our way. The two groups in our van were: Kerry Lee Needham, Murray Corles, Scott Peterson, Irene Petrove, Nick Brown, Mike Sheridan, Paul Marcroft, Lynette Hartley, Terry Patterson, Diane Imus and Fiona Clendon. The trip was spent playing "Concentration" and telling jokes, and trying to steal Fiona's pizza! LH had already discovered to her dismay that her stew meat was still in the fridge! Shame! That night we all crashed randomly on the grass at the end of a road. Diane's and Terry's torches got together and announced their engagement, keeping everyone awake! At one time during the night it began to rain. The fly was up so fast none of us got wet.

Well, we stuck to the polied route as instructed, but seemed to get nowhere much, except straight up. So who blames us when we felt out of place and took a trip down a ridge off the "hill". The mist didn't help either. We soon spotted a hut but couldn't decide which it was, so says Mike, "we'll take a chance!" And off go the Famous Five for a daring drop down cliffs, scree, thru' bush lawyer, stinging nettle and over slippery rocks till we reached the Marapea River. After lunch we arrived at the hut only to find after a race for the logbook it was Otukota, miles from where we wanted to be. Lynette had taken her group back to find an easier way, so it was quite surprising to see LH and followers arrive 3 hours later.
Another group arrived just before them, who had followed us down. Boy what a farce!

Sunday morning we trudged up Puketaramea and down to Unknown Campsite, then stumbled on towards Lake Colenso. We arrived (even if some were on hands and knees!) weary and aching after scrambling up bogs, ploughing (and screaming) thru' fields of hook-grass, edging down razor-backed ridges.

That night at least five VUWTC groups of sorts converged on Colenso Hut. The evening's activities saw us sitting on rubbish bins, being smoked to death by the fire outside, Fiona rolling down the steps, and everyone getting at least one go at tripping over the guy ropes.

Sunday dawned sunny and clear, and we headed off to Remutupo Hut, while Lynette led her troops over to Potaka. We climbed over some monstrous log jams, and watched Paradise ducks fly up the river. After finding the hut almost buried in gravel, with an undermined fireplace, we clambered up a scree slope covered with unnamed cursed plants) and reached the saddle. We spotted the fit party along the tops and waved and yelled, then spent 2 hours eating and sunbathing.

After dropping down to Maropea Forks Hut we found it occupied by some piking VUWTC members, so we pitched camp and got into a great game of frisbee. Mike tried vainly to teach Murray to throw the thing, but I'm afraid to say he failed. After the fit trip arrived and got a proper fire going, we spent the evening drinking Richard's tea, eating mac cheese, drinking more tea, eating cheese cake and rice pudding (Fi's), drinking more tea, eating bread and honey (Fi's again), and drinking yet more tea. After a squashed night under the fly, Mike told Di and Fi that we had to get up and cross the river for breakfast (at 6.30 I might add). So up we jumped, got our feet wet, only to find the other's still in pit.

After racing back up to Puketaramea (1800 feet) we had accomplished a circle! During one rest stop we had a case of runaway packs, beginning with Fi's and spreading throughout the group. We then shot down the other side, splitting with the fit group who went to Otukota, at the turnoff. We continued down and had lunch at the Maropea River. Once we hit farmland we managed (finally) to get to Mokai Saddle and pitched camp at 3. Mike won the pit race, being the only entrant of course. We managed to spend 17½ hours in pit! Mind you, one or two had to shift themselves in search of water, which was only a ½ hour round trip in bare feet and shorts in a freezing gale.

The morning found us sliding out of the fly, the tent being on a slope. The louse (?) on my pillow seemed to get everybody mobile and down the opposite end of the fly, all looking extremely pathetic and yes, some terrorised! Mist does not help direction finding especially when it's windy and you don't know where you are! The poles nowhere in sight, Mike decided to "go off the edge". We bushbashed down until we came across the white poles, along with the friendly geese and sheep, and trudged on till we arrived at the carpark. An hour later the fit trip drifted in having collected bags of mushrooms on the way.

On the way back Chris had an experience going to the loo. He thought he was out of sight of the traffic, only to find he had a whole row of houses in front of him. Well, well, what an epic way to end an epic trip.
FRESHER'S TRIP - THE AUTHORISED VERSION

Catherine Allington

Wellington Railway Station at 8.30am on Saturday March 14 was a day to remember: 70-odd people, packs and bush-shirts awaiting two buses to cart them off to Totara Flats. There was a demented youth (Mike) rushing around like a mad hen trying to gather his flock and see if everyone was present and correct. It seemed they were and so we arrived, deposited in the sun halfway along the road to Walls Whare. Having been told which group was whose after sorting out gear, people and leaders, VUWTC hit the track with Group 6 in the lead. Somehow they were the last from then on. The Waiohine River provided a lunch stop/swimming hole, and the choice of walking the track or following the river. The latter was our choice, and as we had brilliant weather it was a good one. Finally arrived at Totara Flats to find the place already populated by the odd hunter and thousands of students. Frisbees were flying everywhere. Some tents were pitched, stews cooked, and the night life began. Crude jokes were told and laughed at by people who shouldn’t have understood them. All was finally quiet by 10pm or so.

Sunday was as good as Saturday, and yes, Group 6 were still last. Mt Holdsworth proved an interesting if tiring challenge. One astute leader, Phil, informed his party it was vital to establish a rhythm, having broken theirs by stopping to inform them of this fact. The summit of the track was reached, some disappointment at leaving the flag behind, so the descent began. Some people had time for a swim when they reached the bottom before the buses arrived. A mad scramble ensued for the nice bus in which to nurse blisters and sore legs, and unfortunately the Heels Hound, Bruce, was on that bus which is why this article was written. But altogether the Fresher's Trip was a tremendous success, and a lesson in tolerance for the leaders in coping with "slow birds". The trip was a good start to an enthusiastic first term.

FRESH!(the highly sought-after, imported, underground bootleg version)

-Annette Atkins

A tramping club meeting? Oh, is this where we sign up for the Fresher’s Trip? It’s this weekend; that’s what... three days away! Of course I’m going, EVERYONE goes on the Fresher’s Trip! "Everyone" was no exaggeration - 73 of us set off on Saturday for (where did we start?), the start of our tramp. From (wherever) the track more or less followed the Waiohine River, often dropping down to the water.

Our group led the way from the start. Naturally we felt pretty smug about our leading pace, until the rest of the party caught up and told us we’d missed out on some good swimming. Well, you can’t have everything.
Totara Flats was an ideal campsite - a big paddock by the river (plenty of grazing for the sheep that came along). A few nasty holes in the ground. Mike Sheridan walked into one twice, unfortunately. Soon our campsites were established and a few cans plus bottles of wine helped dinner go down. Only a campfire was missing - but a symbolic candle sufficed nicely. I mean, some of those jokes were really disgusting!!

Poor (lucky?) Rosie was the only one to crawl into the tent to sleep, eventually. The rest of our group fell asleep around the candle, when we'd DEFINITELY heard that one before. A fine arrangement, but I don't think Brian was too excited at waking up to find my feet in his face.

Our return trip on Sunday lead us further up along the river, until we reached the bottom of a hill. Then we had to go to the top of the hill! Probably the only part of the trip I didn't enjoy. It sure was a relief to walk/run/crawl/fly downhill to (wherever), where we swam and sunned ourselves before the bus ride home.

Our stomachs groaned and so did we as the bus roared past entire streets of takeaways, the driver completely oblivious to our SUETLE hints. Everyone forgot to bring their milkshakes and chips on the tramp.

I'll have to admit the trip was a success - we even had a 100% survival rate. Though, will everyone survive club membership??

**WAITING**

In the eddy below the rapids
A tree turns,
Unconcerned, biding its time,
Waiting for the big one.

Beneath the beeches the robin scratches,
Bright eyes darting, stamping the ground,
A bit strung out, hunger growing,
Waiting for the big one.

The mountains squat like crumpled towels,
Hunched against the West
In uncaring power,
Waiting for the big one.

The clouds in silent dance,
Mass in pregnant menace -
Impassive, slow-motion sureness.

The Big One.

- Bruce
Above - fancy dress contest; spot the peacocks. The winner is second from right.

Left - the editor about to throw his apple at the photographer.

Below left - Mary Allen looking coy.

Below right - Fiona Clendon looking defiant. (all Peter Mansell)
RUHAINES EASTER HUT TRIP - Simon Leicester.

The VUWTC traditional Easter migration to the Ruahines got off to a racy start with bumper to bumper traffic at Porirua and after detours at Palmerston North (an R McBrearty tour of Massey) and pub stops at Dannevirke we slumbered at the Makarorotu "road" end and at about 1 amongst a rusty iron/rotten wood junkyard.

Friday morning after prying loose from pit at a respectable time we warmed up doing a short steep climb onto Parks Peak Range for our first glimpses of the Northern Ruahines. Parks Peak Hut burger bar was an obvious lunch stop after fast travel along a 4-lane highway of a track - Ronnie lagged behind; very unusual; probably the number of cans (and rocks) in his pack.

We arrived at "3 name hut" - track signs called it Hut Ruin, hut nameplate was Akaranga and it was marked Aranga on the map - about midafternoon to find hunters (5) and their drooling dogs in the hut. After staking out a supposedly sheltered campsite we spent the rest of the afternoon cooking and listening (?) to Chris's epic commentary on life as a forest service worker plus his Xmas trips. Afterwards (very late) some people had diaries (autobiographies) to write up and Ronnie his Ram mag before hitting pit.

Getting up Sat morning was a hassle since the good weather had evaporated leaving us all the things that make tramping so stimulating - drizzle, howling wind and mud. David was especially lucky - one of the dogs was nosing around in his pack (luckily our food supply remained intact). Travel along the tops meant initially traversing a large plateau/field with scenery like an African savanna minus the hot weather and elephants. After reaching the exposed tops (Tararua style) the mist set in heavily so we wandered along the wrong ridge. Out with the compasses and some classy navigation from Richard and David saw us back on the straight and narrow - when the wind wasn't blowing us off. More compass bearings were necessary at Trig U just to find the direction the descending spur should be in and after dropping off the ridge lunch was partaken in a sheltered spot (novelty). Out came the exotics - Ronnie's kippers, Chris and his tomato/raspberry jam etc.

Ruey had dissipated enough for us to see Lake Colenso in the distance, also Ruahine Corner - the billiard table with an airstrip in one corner. On Potae the track wound through impressive canyon outcrops of sandstone (Ronnie speculated climbing them of course) and for the second time that day we briefly lost the track - must have been the lightning downhill pace we were going!

Thinking only ourselves and Bruce Wilson's private trip would be spending the night at Colenso Hut we were surprised to find Lynette's and Mike's groups there also - made it look like a VUWTC AGM. Cooking facilities were ultra-congested that night, also sleeping arrangements - a fly spread across the track and the hut awash with bodies. Sunday morning yielded a gourmet breakfast of apple and dumplings a la Richard and some decent weather, minus wind. After much delay/lake photos/comfort stops we departed up the Mangatera River at a racy pace set by David, passing areas of impressive erosion and at Remutupo Hut caught up
with Mike's party, where large shingle fans were strategically placed to shift the hutsite to midstream at the next decent downpour. (*) It was a bit late in the day to hike to Upper Maropea Hut so we sweated up the spur track to Te Atua Mahuru in brilliant sunshine and piked/sunbathed by a tarn where Chris went for a swim courtesy Ronnie, and Ronnie's food also got wet (surprise, surprise). Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and the southern Ruahines were clearly visible from the tops and we yodeled/exchanged insults with Mike's group over on Papakiakuta Saddle.

We made a reluctant departure down Papakiakuta Ridge towards Maropea Forks meeting Bruce's party tussock-hopping their way to Sparrowhawk Riv for the night. Seeing the hut 2000' below gave us instant incentive and after our usual run/slip/slide down the ridge we arrived at the hut to find Litten's private trip staying there - the Ruahines had probably never seen such a bunch of pikers from one club all at once. Flats across from the hut made a brilliant campsite and the campfire provided endless brews and festivities (as it should be) for Mike's and our party.

Monday morning was spent going over Puketaramea and down to Otukuta Hut (some of the way with Mike's group), where we considered piking in pit, going out early to a pub, or up to Miracle Campsite (the name sounded good) but after food for thought the hut was where we stayed while Chris ventured forth to find where the notorious white poles commenced (this staggered up the start of other VUW parties).

Tuesday morning consisted of a climb onto Mokai Patea where we were greeted by neon-tinsel signs "NO DEVIATION FROM WHITE POLES, NO FIRES, SHOOTING etc". Heavy mist and strong wind meant we lost track of where the poles descended from the ridge (they were distributed sparsely to begin with), so it was "Follow bearing 290°" through bush, lawyer, flax etc to farmland and ultimately the waiting van.

Party members: Chris Hardiman - leader
Dave Clelland - obnoxious plant expert
Richard Haverkamp - part time cook and navigator
Simon Leicester - part time Heels contributor
Ronnie Lock - ultra part time committee member

(*) The hut has been removed by the Forest Service.
The trip got off the ground with a flight into Bonar Flats in the Waiatoto valley just before the weather closed in. Mts Pollux and Castor provided some brilliant scenery on the way. That night and the following was spent in the hut waiting for Huey to get his act together. Our aim was to get up onto the Haast Range, which culminates to the south in Aspiring - previous parties had headed straight up behind Bonar Flats, but had ended up struggling through thick scrub. Travel up the Waiatoto then Astrologer Ck was straightforward - a small waterfall in the latter forcing us into the bush. Above the bush the Haast Range peaks (Moonraker, Spike, Stargazer, Skyscraper), Mt Aspiring, the Volta Glacier and the glacial lake at the head of the Waiatoto provided us with a spectacular panorama. With the decreasing deer population bush travel will be considerably harder. Lots of regeneration was evident on the climb up, and for the first time we saw whole alpine meadows of Mt Cook lilies and Mountain Daisies. We headed in the general direction of Corner Post and camped on what looked like the last flat area.

The automatic kea alarm went off around 5, not a pleasant way to wake up but at least the weather was perfect. The route up towards Corner Post involved some exposed climbing on slabs and tussock, the difficulty being compounded by our heavy packs. Our plan to reach Cloudmaker Lake never eventuated; a decision to turn back was made just below the top. The route is feasible, but being only our second day our fitness was somewhat lacking. The descent only required one abseil and careful travel. We got to the crest of the Haast Range on the north side of Corner Post and were again treated to fantastic views, into the Waipara and Arawata valleys. After a food break we dropped into the Waipara; a halt was called when we came across an idyllic campsite on the edge of the bush. The rest of the day was spent lying in the sun being disturbed by deer hunting helicopters.

Another fine day. Down to the Waipara, then followed an incredibly shitty piece of bushbashing up the river to avoid bluffs on the true left. Feeling utterly pissed off we finally came out onto some flats above the gorge. Good travel and good campsites were found on the true left.

After a late start next day we headed off up the true left in easy bush, and on flats, crossing from side to side where necessary. The going became more rugged as the river started rising through old terminal moraine to the glacial lake at the head of the valley. Many times we had to head into the scrub to avoid bluffs. The bush was in various stages of regeneration due to the glacier retreating, and as a result was very thick. A good campsites was established with a great view of the lake and the Bonar icefall which periodically sent tons of ice crashing hundreds of meters into the water.

The weather next day was marginal, so a unanimous decision to stay in pit was made. Our next objective was Waipara Saddle: the following day was clear and windy as we headed up. The route is relatively straightforward but many objective dangers such as rockfall were present (see route guide p. 12 .). Looking across the valley we had superb views of Mt Aspiring and the Bonar Glacier. From the top we descended
easy/steepish snow to the remnants of the Arawata Glacier, then on to the rock biv.

That night we dined on dehy and fern shoots, with disastrous consequences for some members of the party next morning. A steady plod in good weather soon had us at the top of Arawata Saddle, where we were met by a delegation of 7 keas. After some deliberation about which way to descend and a couple of false starts we made a rapid descent down a series of snow couloirs and rock ledges to Liverpool Bivvy. Gerard headed out next day, while Stu and I slothed. An attempt on Mt Barff was made a large crevasse near the top forced us to do an airy hairy traverse out onto the Matukituki side. The view of the river between our legs 2000 ft below, plus no psychological aid (ie rope) persuaded us to turn back.

With only soy grits and brown rice left we headed out to Wanaka, with thoughts of grease and cold DBs.

Other members: Stu Jackson and Gerard Honders.

A TRAMP YOU'RE HAVING WHEN YOU'RE NOT HAVING A TRAMP - Frances Graham

Or...the chooks tramp. Definitely not to be attempted by those without previous climbing, abseiling, 6 hour day, snowcraft and near exposure experience, as full appreciation would not be gained. As Kirsty M, Cath, Kirsty R, Mary, Frances and Peter (blackmailed, and subsequently adopted as honorary rooster) hit the Orongorongos we had the unique chance to put all our acquired VUWTC skills to practice. We knew it was going to be rough so when we met with a closed road at the entry to the park we weren't surprised - and within 5 minutes we had hitched a ride to the track. Experience always pays off! Pete's pack was an inspiration, even to the more experienced of us. Being all of 31 lb we weren't alarmed when he stopped for a rest halfway.

Altho' the track was hazardous and dangerous Pete managed to keep up and we weathered, intrepid, rugged and hardened trampers had learnt to grin and bare under difficulties to the extent that we clucked happily along the track. Two long, treacherous hours later we arrived at Gates' Hotel - I mean hut. It wasn't at all what we'd been used to but we forced ourselves to adapt and make the most of it. The curtains and carpet had to be seriously acclimatised to.

The fire place was completely utilised as the rain pelted down, and the gramaphone was just asking to be wound up to set the atmosphere. We soon gave up and Pete resorted to the radio in a vain attempt to get the rugby score; he too giving in to the clucking. Of course with the surroundings being such a shock our hardened tramping stomachs were soon in for a bigger one. We force fed down an entree of pizza and garlic bread, then a main course of Orongorongo fried chicken, baked potatoes, boysenberry shortcake as well as rhubarb and banana shortcake, a brew and after dinner fudge. The pain was almost too much, but we knew the experience would be valuable for the upcoming Gourmet trip. Ronnie and David arrived soon after dinner. Luckily for them there was still shortcake of both flavours left that had been too much to cope with.
Morning broke with flying shoes and certain sleeping bags being disconnected from certain people at a mere 7.30. Hardly chock tramping style, we thought. But with the President and Vice looking pretty out of it we couldn’t look too eager – so we didn’t and reluctantly went back to stacking zzz’s.

Ronnie and Dave managed to tear themselves away in search of a Gourmet site before breakfast was cooked. We dined again on rice pudding, crumpets and brew (with a heavy sediment in the bottom). What was left of the morning was spent attacking the visitor’s book and cleaning up. The river was strong and we crossed it around lunchtime in a hail storm. "A bit on the nose" was exclaimed, however being chased by hailstones brought us out in a shorter version of it. A very sore, but definitely happy ending to a very tough and hazardous weekend.

**NEW NELSON GROT (BIONIC BOWELS INC)** - Murray Corles

After a quick walk in the rain we arrive at Penella Hut, where 10.30am is a good time to hike. The hut is too beautiful to use for a quick stop only. Tea gave the chance to prove a certain theory, that the quantity of farts is directly related to the number of kidneys consumed.

After a day and a half of pit-bashing, farting and screaming at Huey we headed off to Lake Stanley via Kakapo Peak, the hard way. We travelled via a knife-edge ridge which was spooky at the best of times. When we finished this we discovered that the route we were supposed to take was along the valley below the ridge. Down a valley we went, through thigh deep mud and along a track beside Lake Stanley to the hut, where the rats were making themselves comfortable. So a night outside was in order.

Next day Huey was back as we grunted down the Stanley and up a spur towards the Lockett Range. Goats were seen in plenty here; they must have smelled us coming because they scattered in all directions. I’m certain Dutch Ovens weren’t used all that often. We decided to camp just below the bushline, having to melt snow for water. We had pancakes for dinner but the first few are best forgotten, as none of us had ever made them before.

**Smokey water in the morning - what a taste.** Nothing seemed to get rid of it. Huey came back as we walked along the top of the Lockett Range. Really chunderous travel in kneedeep slush and a driving snow-storm. After bowling down the 4-wheel drive track to the ranger’s house we were directed back to Myttone Hut which we arrived at in the dark, with only one torch. Next day it is more rain and it is out to the roadend. End of the extreme gruness.

Those who practised Dutch Ovens were: Mike Sheridan, Peter Mansell, Ian Whiteley and Murray Corles.

**Waipara Saddle** - the most obvious route from below is not really feasible. The lower third of the route follows an obvious sidestream, avoiding a waterfall on the TR; the middle third follows up snow grass slopes to the final steep line of bluffs near the top. From here a traverse to the right is made, until a steep rock-filled coulouir is reached; this is followed up very carefully until an obvious bench is seen to the left. This is traversed onto, then followed up to the saddle, just near the low point. (Chris Mroczek)
AN AUTUMN ROMP IN THE KAIMANAWAS (MAY 81) - Terry Patterson.

Time check, 7.30 am, Sunday May 10, location, Wellington Railway Station - question, what the hell am I doing here? Slowly half dead people begin to muster; the President spends most of his time collecting the frisbee off the roof of Platform 9. The bus arrives and we're away - the magical mystery tour has begun.

At Access Road 10 we meet a lonely bod - Andrew Clarke. He was lucky - only had to wait 2 hours in the rain. On arrival at the track to the Waipakuhi we realise what the bloody noise has been - two flat tyres. However the best is yet to come - the bus has no jack or wheel brace! It was quite a ride down to that main highway - not only did the sound of 2 flat tyres smashing against the floor of the bus cause some concern, the ever present burning-rubber smell was quite disturbing. Finally the driver conceded defeat and stopped at the roadside somewhere between Waikuru and Turangi, and headed off to get help. Two hours, frisbee practice, a brew and pleasantries with the motoring public later we head for Turangi and further repairs. Tea for 16 in Taupo (my God, what patience we have), where we finally pick up the by now battle-weary Peter Clarke, 3½ hours late. Our final destination was reached - Te Iringa road end - tents were pitched quickly as we crashed into pit for a well earned 40 winks (was it all a nightmare I keep asking myself?).

Monday is greeted by a cold brekky (love that muesli dontya D!), followed by a quick pack and we're first away and glad to be tramping. All 3 medium parties follow the same route to Te Iringa Hut, the Swing Bridge and lunch (thanks for the brew, Mike). After lunch our group parts company, with Martin's and Mike's heading towards Oamaru Lodge. Firelighting that night proves a very tedious business, but full marks to David for persistence.

Next morning the track is covered in many places by windfalls making my favourite pastime of keeping my feet dry somewhat hazardous. The track continues to be easy going as we pass over Kaipo Saddle - hardly noticing the climb. In the distance our goal is spotted, but to our dismay McNutt's hut is locked and it's another night under the fly. The presence of rain forces us to hit pit early though conversation runs on long after midnight.

Morn strikes and in the cold and damp all are quick to shift the pog and get moving. Hughie was to prove just how big a bastard he can be as we made our way down the flat from McNutt to Boyde. Travel was generally fast over the tussock except for the ever changing weather. First cloudy so three layers of wool and mitts, then sunny, so off with a layer, only to follow with snow - thus full wet weather gear. This continued all the way down interrupted only by numerous attacks on the body. Firstly Fiona decided
to try sitting in the mud. Next Sue tried to left hook Diane with her pack - almost succeeded in a TKO - better luck next time Sue. Then followed yours truly disappearing in a swamp up to the waist; this practice was also enjoyed by Diane who along with Sue seemed to delight in finding holes to drop into. Next big boss David unsuccessfully tried to break his ankle - even repeated the attack a bit further on.

Lunch was shared with the snow, numb fingers making frozen honey difficult to spread. Boyd Lodge was, as expected, already occupied by the other two medium trips and one of the fit parties. That night saw our party split for the one and only time. The floor of Boyd's was taken in preference to the ice cold tent by 50% of the party, only to realise just how hard a floor is to sleep on. Even more concerning is to wake up in a kitchen full of people climbing all over you - still, that's life. We, being last to depart, had the joy of cleaning up, finding several pieces of club gear left behind and billies unwashed.

After boshbashing up to Waitawhero Saddle we found the going down the Oamaru River quite pleasant, making good time. Lunch was enjoyed in the sun for the first time although the cold was still present. The combined effect of sunshine, excess energy and continuing team spirit led to 40 minutes of sheer lunacy. Fiona made the mistake of taking off her boots, which provided the ammunition for a "toes the tramping boot" competition. This madness was continued as we fitted streamlined toi-tois to our packs and tramped off to Oamaru, where we found Chris deJoux's fit party. As there wasn't enough room in the hut for all of us we pitched camp down on the flat. This time we had a superb fire and as the evening progressed we ate our way through mac cheese, ginger cake and pud plus marshmallows and two brews. An intense discussion of politics, people and power followed with no startling conclusions being reached. By the time we hit pit we were all too stuffed to carry on.

Next morning in our eagerness to beat frozen boots and socks some people fell victim to burnt gear (fire damage seems to hit my gear quite hard). Packing wasn't rushed as we savoured the warmth of the sun till cold toes finally drove us on. The family that kept passing us that day must have wondered about our appetites, as they invariably came across us when we were stopped for an eating session. Lunch was a shortish affair due to the cold, except for David and Fiona, whose appetites seemed incredibly large. The track from the swingbridge to Te Iringa Hut was quite a grunt given the rather gentle nature of our travels thus far but we tackled it in good time arriving at the hut to be met by yon family - this time they were eating! Hughie at this point decided to have one final go at us but the rain stayed away long enough for us to reach the carpark without coats - which was fortunate as David had left his at Boys! Our group was the first to arrive and we did so together, the way we had stayed over the past five days.

The journey home was just as long as the one up. Fortunately only the lights failed on the way to Taupo, where drinks were consumed rather quickly as our presence wasn't exactly welcomed by the patrons. The clientele at our Turangi stop were equally strange. As the bus departed from Platform 9 the dream became reality as Chris Hardiman and yours truly headed for the Upper Hutt train. A shower and some
food saw the time hit 6am before I collapsed into pit for several days worth of sleep.

The trip was quite brilliant due to a strong team spirit, plenty of food and David’s leadership. Special thanks to David for his patience and Peter Mansell for making May 1981 possible.

MEDIUM ONE was: David (Big boss) Clelland, Fiona (Gannet) Clendon-Clelland, Sue Marshall, Peter Clarke, “Lady Di” Imus, and Terry Patterson.

IN THE MATTER OF FITNESS

It is a feeling from within
That one gets as the tracks steep in
Moving on towards the sky
Ole fitness seems to pass me by

No matter what you try to do
Nothing is going to help you
There is but one cure for this
And that is plenty of epic trips

* * * * *  (TP/GC)
Above - working up a sweat the VUWTC-way.
Andrew Cook, Belinda Bennett and assorted backs, Ketetahi Springs. (Dave Wagorn)

Right - the French Minister of Primary Produce meets a VUWTC delegation, Waingawa road end. (Peter Mansell)

Below - instant Tararua suntan. Lynette Hartley and Mike Sheridan hiding their spots, Gourmet Trip. (Peter Mansell)
The Queen's Birthday Easy Trip did not start gloriously for your humble narrator. I was waiting at the station under a big red nine painted on white tin. This was of course the wrong place. Vans are caught just outside on Thornton Quay. Fortunately Mike and Chris saw me whilst looking for stragglers - our van left at about 7 after being push-started.

At about 11.30 we stopped at the roadend and began tramping to Waiahouhou Hut, arriving at midnight. Breakfast consisted of hot bacon and toast (and some muesli) which is generally indicative of the high standard of eating maintained on this trip. Our leisurely breakfast was disturbed, however, by the medium trip putting Catherine and pit outside. We set off for Whakapapa, reaching it at about 2, and spent a couple of hours in the local café braving complaints about our lack of purchasing. Then the pub.

We drove off to Mangatepopo Hut but as there were about 50 people in it we decided to sleep in the van at the Ketetahi roadend instead. Unfortunately there was not enough room for all of us so Andrew generously volunteered to sleep under the fly. He claims to have been warm (and I'm sure the ice that formed on his hat that night was good insulation). In the van it was warm but noisy. Chris de Joux was inadvertently struck by a flying boot and your humble narrator had to frequently turn on the light to enforce some sort of decorum (yes Concerned Mother, some of us do care!). I would now like to break from my narrative to make a plea for the provision of bunks in all vans that the club hires in future. This would not only ensure comfortable nights for the easy trips but would offer some protection from flying boots.

The next day we tramped up to Ketetahi Hut whistling as we went (and bloody good it was too). Mary, however, complained, so we fell silent. After claiming our bunks we spied the medium trip arriving, so we went off to the hot-pools, cracked a couple of tubes and stared back at the passing tourists. Some person with a red afro and a goatee beard took photos. On Monday it rained as we walked back to the van. I slipped over twice, Gena slipped three times, and Vingol attempted the splits (this he assured me doesn't count as a slip). David was observed attempting to blow up the van's flat tyre with his bare breath — your humble narrator has a photo of this.

From the Ketetahi roadend we drove off to the Tokaanu hotpools, thence to Waipuru where a select few took the two vans and set off back to pick up the fit trip at Tukino. Three or four hours later we began to wonder where they were. Chris and David arrived without the vans and said that they had got them stuck in thick mud on the Tukino road. Belinda introduced them to somebody with a 4-wheel drive, and they set off to pull the vans out. Meanwhile we settled back in the warmth and hospitality of the pub (they even invited us into the colour TV room). On the return of the vans we set off for home, one van returning to Whakapapa to disturb the fit.
trip, who had by that time retired for the night. We reached Lower Hutt at about 1.40 am.

I would like to close this biased account of the trip with an unbiased thanks to the people who organised the trips and ensured that everybody went on a tramp they could and did enjoy.

GARDENS, GARDENS OF DELIGHT - Matt Johnston

Summertime, February, we were happily rumbling down the West Coast. Highway Six, Harihari, we're going to the Gardens! Remote ice plateaus of the Southern Alps, the Gardens of Allah and Eden, hidden peaks and rough river valleys. Geoff Spearpoint, Jane Forsyth, Kelvin Berryman and I started this 10-day trip in the Wangamui River north of Harihari, then spent a horrible day in steep wet bush, and another on tussock, snow and rocky tops before starting our sidle onto the Lambert neve.

We sidled Mt Lambert, saw the mighty Lord River, and crossed a small col onto the neve in the evening. Whiteout. It cleared, so we slept out, memories of moonlight on eerie crevasses.

Next day was our climbing day, sparkling snow, and so much space! Newton Peak, mountains and valleys spread below. Blue, white and black. The ice of Eden, the shingle of Canterbury, the jungle of Westland. We scampered down the Garden of Allah, with rope and ice axe in a spooky evening light of grey. Past towering rock and splintered ice we went to camp on Adams Col. An idle day in camp, no other life on the snow and rock, only the expanse of smooth white and icy sky. No colour.

We wandered along the Garden of Eden, a shelf of sweeping curves, ice falling to the Perth. A visit to Little Unknown and Vertabrae Col, and we camp above Adverse Creek, Geoff climbing Great Unknown.

A misty descent of Adverse Creek - ice-worn rock, blue torrents, the scent of flowers. We cross the Perth and it's very low - travel not bad. River boulders, Scone Creek, grass flats, cattle track, the Whatarea, the road. Memories of the Gardens - distant peaks warm and orange, the Perth and south electric blue. Sneaking through the mountains with some friends.
ASPIRATIONS - Simon Davis & Bruce (the pen is mightier than the iceaxe) Wilson

A last minute decision - ’Let's go to Aspiring’.

Slightly hysterical planning and packing, torn from the arms of comfort on Christmas Day to swelter in a cheap hotel above the Square, wave goodbye to Brian, Phil and party en route to Arthur’s Pass, a couple of buses driving us deeper into nasty weather, to Wanaka, sombre and Boxing-Day empty. The taxi dumps us at 6.30 in a torrential downpour and lightning storm several miles short of the end of the Matukituki valley road - streams are already running over it. Plod to Cascade Hut with 70lb packs, link-up to cross ditches, collapse and wait for dinner to cook, 9.30.

Finer next day, and easy up the flats to Shovel Flat and the climb up French Ridge - an embarrassingly steep, slabby and grunty track. Progress is slow and painful; the 2 huts a pleasant, early surprise. 14 sweaty, slothful bods in the new hut, so we stay by ourselves in the old one. Up into the snow next morning in clearing cloud, footprints up to the Quarterdeck - magnificent, breath-catching view of Aspiring across the enormous Bonar Glacier; black, speckled south face, graceful south- and north-west ridges, long and jagged Coxcomb. We fluff around roping up for glacier travel, totally unnecessary, but we’re a bit overcome by the occasion. Find a site for the snowcave on the steep face of Mt French, and dig, dig, dig. Late evening; two Southlanders from Cascade Hut arrive tired and sunburnt and dig-in alongside in a snowplough flurry; a procession of Aspiring conquistadors files back to the hut and we exchange greetings. Golden sunset.

Next day perfect - orientation time. Rope up and stolidly plod across the Bonar, 45 minutes to the other side. Up easy slopes toward Pope’s Nose, 8630’. We get vertigo looking 3000’ straight down into the Kitchener River, a branch of the East Matukituki. The other two return, bad weather coming. Cloud creeping across the glacier, so we follow suit.

Weather grotty again next morning - cold wind and cloud. The cloud does its sickle act, but the wind stays. Four Christchurchers pop in to say hello and share salami and bikkies with us. One of them dies a few days later on Barnsley. The cave is comfy, pits warm, and much thick cocoa drunk.

Next morning more crud - light snow is falling and the two Southlanders (one of whom is Chris Hardiman’s cousin!!) decide to leave. Discretion is the better part of valour, so we decide to follow them before tracks get covered. It’s finer down at the hut, and a Mountain Recreation Course says a high is coming. We ponder, decide - have dinner, leave lots of gear, and race back to the cave to bivvy. Only 1½ hours instead of 3 this time.

New Year’s Eve - cold as a witches tit and definitely no celebration with no pit and only hot cocoa to keep the brass monkey at bay. Fine at 2.30, all set to go by 5, psyched up for a New Year’s Day climb, but no!! Hughie does a dirty, and it’s all wind and clag again. Time’s up - back to the hut. Three Japanese
are met marching up in the crud, and can't be persuaded that it's really not very nice up there. For something different we slide into the head of the West Matukituki from French Ridge - easy and lovely. Flowers and herbs galore, misty cliffs and waterfalls. Simon's brand-new Palmeras have to be tightly bound to keep the sole on, which stuffs his foot. Track easy, sandy fly sandwiches at Pearl Flat, to Cascade Hut for dinner with fruitcake and Irish Mist as consolation. A ride to Wanaka in bright sun and home a day early - nothing climbed, not even Mt French, but a great experience.

GREEN TRIANGLE

c/o NZFS
Environmental Forestry
Turangi
29 March 1981

Dear Mattalillo otherwise known as Matt,

It's fuckin' early in the morning, Mickey's hands are on six and six, no that's not 12 am - despite any rumour and it's bloody cold - in fact I think winter is upon or under us depending on the state of mind. Well I thought I better gather some M (Motivation), E (Energy), push the F's aside, get my shit together and write a communication before I lost touch, verbally and literally.

No doubt you've heard the complete story of EF Kaimanawa from "Rubs" Mansell aka Peter, life still goes on in the Big Green F as it has for thousands of years, the boys still start work at 7.30 am striking a blow for the Green Triangle on the way. Life has had a complete up since February when I was completely slotted with the job - must've been "Bush Sickness" - to last week which was incredible, amazing, fantastic... You may or may not have heard of an area called Motumatai (incredibly horrible area - you wouldn't want to go there) - jelly beans (bullshit) aside, the place is beautiful! Motumatai is the area of KFP that has been put aside for the protection of the wild horses - their main protection being limited access and the road in - an epic, bruising 30km in about 3½ hours. Think two gutters for tracks would be a more apt description as we drove the Buffalo (Toyota) along, only nearly got stuck once and didn't need the chains.

Motumatai, found at 39° 20' on the NZMS Ngamataki N123 map together with a private reserve known as Alexandra, comprises the main area for the horses - some 174 were
counted in 1979 by a survey party from Massey - protection = the Wild Animals Act. The origin of the horses dates back to the Maori Wars - way back...but the significance of this herd is that they are reverting to something like the prehistoric horses - very thick necks. They're in amazing condition, probably better than any town block horse, travelling in groups of 5-7, although saw 9 horses in one group. The land in the area is a series of valley/basins known as Aorangi - the hills and vallies covered by golden tussock, manuka and at the mine shaft some black and mountain beech. Where the beech grows is incredibly parklike - in fact one expects a homestead to be amongst the trees and deer to wander around the forest (instead only a few rabbits).

We camped amongst the beeches, overlooking Pinnacle Mt, an amazing backdrop to the area, and of course we had to slum it in our K2's with gas, and an open fire. Ankled down to the Rangitikei to bag some rubbish - got 5 weighing about 60lb, shit even the animals are cleaner!! Walked, waded, almost swam about ½ hour up the river - fuck I wouldn't want to do it in winter, it'd be near impossible and I'd need a snorkel and probably suffer from Hypotherm. Then walked an exhausting 800ft back up from the river to play loops, tourists and rubbernecks (delete that not applicable) by clicking photos of the horses and scenery. Nothing quite like a self-conscious EF worker playing loops - especially in front of tramps - it's not good for the image.

Wandered around the next day, counting horse (50), so saw just under a third of the herd and weren't tree'd by any rogue horses. Observed a lack of regen in many places (although there are places with wall-to-wall regen) that's why there's a lack of bush lawyer: saw a few rabbits and hares - may need another 1060 job. Then back out, just before it pissed down. Definitely an area you'd want to go - views all over Ngamatae, Ruhines and half the N. Island.

Yes, forgot, there was a distinct absence of trout in the Rangitikei - which may suggest that baby sharks have been overfished, poached, netted or otherwise removed due to an inability to supervise the area.

The Kaipo track in the north of the park has been completely recut, with a saving of about 45 min walking time (even New World can't beat that offer!), no more logs to go over, round, under or besides - in fact after nearly a month I think I can say "I survived the Kaipo". What a pox of a job, something like 500 pieces of cutting (windfalls etc). Just had to take 5 to "drop a triangle" (= have a shit). For future reference, "perforated triangles" or "dirt tracks" are shit paper. We're thinking of bringing out a "Chambers Concise Dictionary and Interpretation of Forestry Phrases" for duckheads, turkey stranglers and readers of "Outdoor", so we can converse with the masses in the hills.

The other thing we've done is (no not that - although you're not a true bushman... ask Rabs for the rest). Think of two hands and ten outstretched and you'll get the answer. Enough distractions. Got choppered into Rangitikei and poled and cairned from Rangitikei up to JT (Junction Top) and down to Ignimbrite. Also from Rangitikei nipped (cairned) our way (poles as well) across Island Range to Prominent Peak - we were about that far from Makorako - and I couldn't even get the M to go up it - shit it's fuckin hard work cairning for unappreciative loops, plus it was threatening to pox
(rain) and I don't like getting pissed on at 5000ft. Off to do some work in the Oamaru next week. Then off to cairn/pole or make other such "token gestures" from Ngapuk - Cascade, and Ngapuk - Prominent Cone/Mt Dowden although don't rely on the latter being done.

Well, Matt, hope that makes up for the lack of communication. Yea, what's the idea with growing a beard? Is it the distinguished executive look? I've just discovered a possible job as a clerk in EP at H. Office in the paper, so may see you before you receive this. If you're ever passing through the "dead centre of the N. Island" or have a weekend to kill, give us a ring via Ray. Took the old pushbike over to Ketetahi the other weekend - was going up to Mt Ngawhrowser Ngauruhoe (?) - technical problems with the ethnic names - but there was too much pox weather - so ankled around Tongariro instead. Masses of lusties around, in fact I came off the mountain blind.

Hang No. 18 when I was down in late Feb, but being a spanner nose you'd screwed off down south - how was it? Have you been overseas yet and are back clapping about (the experience) the trip. Finally if you haven't, "May the pox be with you". Keep well and take care.

G.S.

"I think that all men who traverse mountain ranges are pilgrims. The cloud of their imagination contrasts with the silhouette of reality."
- John Pascoe, Unclimbed New Zealand, 1939

ALPINE INSTRUCTION COURSE, August 7-9, 1981.
- Peter Mansell

The stroll up to the Alpine Club hut above Whakapapa in the early hours of a calm Saturday morning was a brilliant way to start our AIC. Once joined by the rest of our lot later in the morning the masses assembled into their snow gears - many getting the feel of crampons for the first time - and set off into the big white.

Our group of Simon, Jenny and myself, instructed by Matt, went through the basic and complicated forms of self-arresting, ending up throwing ourselves head-first on our backs without an ice axe down the slope, then trying to stop.

Most groups also had a go at step-cutting, walking on various types of snow and ice, how to use crampons, and becoming more familiar with ropes and karabiners while practising several types of belaying.

After finishing off the day with glissading and more bumsiding we started, the feet out and awaited George's rather large-size stew.

Sunday turned out as a bit of a white-out, and after more instruction including front-pointing up a gully we returned to the vans realising how important correct route-finding in low visibility is.

Thanks to the organisers and instructors everyone gained a lot of ability and confidence, and as a result the course has successfully encouraged us to take part in more advanced alpine and winter trips.
SNOW WHITE AND THE SIX DWARFS - Matt Johnston

Friday night saw four of us racing up to Upper Hutt, talking about the weather, cutting things fine, and missing the train. After flicking off lots of clinging little Hardimans with an iceaxe, we picked up Cathie, and that made six. Why six? Well that's how many bunks there are in Dorset Ridge Hut and it's also how many trampers you can fit in a Hillman Hunter (space-age Humber 80!)

Things were quite cozy in the car, and the bulging beauty quickly flew over the Rimutakas for a lube (grease-stop) at Featherston. Eric, who is heavily into thought-technology, had preprogrammed his car to stop at the Taratahi pub, and true-to-form we veered sharply to the right for the compulsory stop at the door.

All good things must come to an end (now who believes that!) and so we hit the road, then the gravel, then the road again, then a few gates, and finally the track to Mitre Flats.

Torchlight, moonlight, trees and stars. A good clear night for sleeping out. The others didn't think so, and they missed out on having a deer run over them in the early morning (missed out on damp pits too).

After breakfast, young Mattillillo put on a wonderful display of gallantry, fortitude and strength by piggy-backing the folks across South Mitre Stream so they could have dry feet. The conclusions from this experiment were that Chris is very light, Eric is heavy, and girls have warm cuddly thighs.

Up the track to Baldy we all plodded, crusty snow and cramping weather. We were on Cairn in three hours from the hut, just as lunch was being served at the frozen tarn. Dessert consisted of wind-blown snowflakes, so we just had to decline, and took off down the spur to Dorset Creek. Pretty good travel, a few 3-point falls, and Eric lost his watch.

An advance party of four was sent ahead to check out the creek, the track, and the hut on Dorset Ridge. The creek had Irene Swimming in it, the track had a fat hind grazing beside it, and the hut had neat views and snow all around.

We burned some leatherwood and a few socks to keep warm, then devoured stew, instant pud, jelly and fruit - mmm! A game of I-Spy reared its tired head, with such witty gems as DC (Dark Corner) and SL (Star Light). Well there are six bunks in Dorset hut, but we weren't sure if they were all going to be used for a while there. Eventually, however, an exhausted Chris crawled back into his own pit and there was peace and quiet on Walton Mountain.

"Raindrops are falling on my head." Hmm - mine too! Lots of condensation off the skylight - cool water flavoured with soot. Mud in your eye. We woke to another fine day, sun on Girdlestone and McGregor. Hard snow and cold tussock, good fun. Winter in the Tararuas. Seeing as it was Sunday, a fairly biblical sort of day, I decided to walk on the (frozen) water of Dorset tarn. Unfortunately the lord was a bastard, and waited until I had taken several steps before zapping the ice to make it break. Every step back was a cold, wet, deep one. Of course, when the others tried the ice didn't break at all, and much frivolity ensued.
When we came to Tarn Ridge Irene and I decided to go for a side-trip, ostensibly to have a look at the view, but actually to warm our toes while we waited for the masses to come and plug some steps for us over Pinnacle and Girdlestone, heh, heh, heh. We trotted along towards Blatchford's grave, until we were quite sure they had gone past, then sneaked back and followed the snowy staircase up onto Brockett. Persons could be seen on the steep face of Mitre. Other persons sat on Brockett, looking at the hills and wondering what would be the best day to go back to town.

Anyway it was icy and it snowed briefly, and we all had lots of fun bombing off Mitre. A cold lunch inside the bushline, a quick run down to Mitre Flats, and then it rained! All along the side-track, trampers kept a view, lots of raindrops came and went, tired persons too. Carpark in the dark, greasies for tea, yay! On this great trip were: Cathie Peeney, Lynette Hartley, Irene Petrove, Martin (Eric) Clapham, Chris Hardiman and Matt Johnston.

HAIL, GOOD FELLOWS! - Simon Leicester
- Tararua, 3-5 July

Aim: Meet some new scrub, get to know interesting rocks and bushes.

Method: Two cars, two trips - ours and Martin's were to go in at Mangatainoka for a weekend of sun, surf and festivities.

The locals at the Taratahi pub had lots of encouraging comments about trampers and Bruce's scratched legs, but after shaking off their admiration we sussed out the carpark at Mangatainoka. Huey was putting on a thunder and fireworks display so the fit party talked themselves into sleeping in the cars. Since there wasn't room for us to stretch out in the cars we squelched up to Herepai Hut for the night (we were going anyway - ed.) The hall had piled up nicely on the track and up towards the hut it reached snowy proportions but the best was to come the next day.

Saturday's ambition was to travel up the headwaters of Ruapehu Stream onto Haukurama Ridge and adjourn at the bivvy for lunch before a leisurely stroll down to Roaring Stag Lodge. We got down to the stream and followed Bruce up the Ruapehu rapids over the logs and rocks until he was thigh deep and teetering, before deciding to bash up a spur onto Haukurama Ridge instead - easy bush, then lots of leatherwood walls, totara thickets and flax fences for club members wanting new kicks in life.

Up on the ridge between occasional gaps in the cloud we could view the sun shining briefly on the Mangatainoka River, but with the sleet and hail being blasted at our legs by a gale force southerly we wasted no time getting to the biv. With one corner in the stream it was zilch distance to collect brew material and half a day was spent listening to Huey sounds (machine-gun hail on the roof and gurgling noises getting louder beneath the floor), wondering where the fit party was, and how long Geoff's bionic bladder would hold out.

We had the novelty of fine weather the next morning - good views of the Ruamahanga headwaters with Bannister Basin Hut glinting in the sun, and pikkies were taken to justify bringing cameras before galloping down through tussock (briefly)
and crawling through leatherwood looking for a "track" or anything resembling a trail/line of disturbed leaves etc. Fanning out in very open bush ultimately led to a Forest Service line and, surprise surprise, we emerged 15 minutes up the Ruapae from the forks. By now we had had our ration of dry weather and lunch was munch on in "Squeaking Rat" Lodge.

We opted for the loopy trail and a two hour moze back to Mangatainoka car park expecting to find 2 VUWTC cars waiting. However, divine intervention and the wet weather caused one of them to mysteriously migrate to a certain Castlepoint pub, and the other to wander down to Mt Holdsworth so occupants could check out the new Powell Hut. We road-bashed (naturally) contemplating:

- Torture and horrible death for the offending parties;
- Hitching to Ekatapuna with a kind farmer going our way (more fantasy);
- Walking 15 miles to the highway;
- Parting out megabucks for a taxi from distant Masterton.

Realistically we opted for d) (being reported overdue 2 weeks in a row didn't appeal much), and eventually both the taxi and Castlepoint car simultaneously arrived for the pick up.

Members: Geoff Boon, Simon Leicester, Bruce Wilson.

The North-West Nelson Medium-Pit to Easy Trip (The No Chooka, No Massage Party)

- mid-term break
- Paul Marcroft

This trip was characterised by the amount of grease eaten before and after, the lack of women and therefore accidents too. (Any sexist statements made are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect editorial policy - ed.) Five keen tramping chaps, under the supervision of Chris Hardiman, were separated on the very first day. Shock, horror, disgust say some, but why?

Well that's a secret, but after spending a night at various places we, with tremendous Merriment rejoined our prodigal sons at a salubrious lodge, before being intruded upon by the grossly cold and smelly medium trip. Hours later they buggered off, so what could we do but hit the pit. The next day we aimed for Mt Peel, but after winding up in mist we ended up in Trilobite Hut, with 3 hunting cowboys and another bloody medium trip. We were too cool for them all, so they drove back to town, and upstream, respectively.

At the crack of dawn the sun came... up, and we had a sunny day, Lake Cobb and Penella Hut ahead of us. So we went there, did that, ate TBs, snouted about and rejoined the medium party in that spacious post-Modernist edifice. Red sky next morning greeted us, and later on while going up to the Lockett Range the clag came and said hello too. And so to pit, to yap about dames, play chess, and eat up untold grub.
Poxy sleet reigned the next day, setting a tragic scene. With our Quest of Lockett Ranging doomed, and nearly all my black jellybeans killed or died of consumption, we were force-marched at a blistering pace back down to Trilobite to pick up the van and civilization.

Back to Nelson and grease munching. While waiting for other groups we wisely spent our time snuffling around Chez Belco and dancing on Cathedral steps for tourist buses.

The people that went made the weather seem bloody good; they were (in order of impotence)

Chris Hardiman - the bloody old bugger
Mike blister Brown
Greg Walton - quote "really pretty"
Alan "salami breath" Clelland
Paul Marcroft - jellybean connoisseur and character-builder extraordinaire.
A RUHNINES EASTER - "GOT I DID AT EASTER". Catherine Allington

We went tramping to the Ruahinees in a red Avis rental van, which made it to the road end because of (or in spite of) Robin McKeretty's and David Clelland's (in the other one) driving. We tried to boil water but it was too muddy so we went to sleep instead. In the morning we set off last (the Easy trip) after Chris Hardiman's fit lot had gone. We had to climb to Park's Peak and it wasn't easy - someone couldn't breathe because she'd strapped herself into her pack too securely, another developed a rhythm of 1-2-3 rest-2-3, and Peter Mansell learnt to count to 10 every minute. BUT against all the odds we made it, and discovered that we'd brought a supermarket with us, in the guise of one Peter L. No shortage of food. Park's Peak hut was reached and was empty, so despite rude comments in the logbook we double-bunked.

Next morning Robin and Peter M dragged themselves in, a bit damp but keen to get going, which we did. Deviation along the way, to the trig station, where Catherine nearly lost her hair. Undaunted we pressed on to Hut Ruin (Aranga), but it was full so we camped out. However we cooked our dinner inside and smoked out the whole hut, then left those within to sleep. The morning dawned clear after a grotty day before, Hughie being kind to us for our trip across the tops. Got off to a roaring start - couldn't find the track. Eventually discovered it and away we went. Hughie couldn't have been nicer - no wind (or nearly none) and blue skies, calm enough to play frisbee in at lunchtime.

We struck out for Totara Spur after lunch, but decided it would be nicer (and more exciting) to camp out on the tops along with the medium-easy and medium-fit parties, and one case of exposure. Excellent decision. It was freezing cold after a spectacular sunset, and the wind grew steadily stronger. With five girls in one tent it should have been warm, but it wasn't. The tent blew down, Debbie got out to fix it and was abruptly ordered back inside. At 5:30 am everyone was ordered up, told to pack and to eat as much scruggin as possible, then we backtracked to Totara Spur. The mist had closed in, and the wind was phenomenal. With the expert navigation and combined talents of the leaders we lost the track, but recovered it after an hour's bushbashing. A brekkie stop was ordered and readily agreed to. Then off down the spur we went, arriving safely at the river.

That afternoon was spent walking down the murky Makaroro to Centre Mak hut, where a comfortable night was spent. The morning saw an early start, held up somewhat by tardy males, but eventually the road end was reached, the vans still there, and the troops out ahead of schedule, though Robin had some trouble herding his flock of 5 ditherers across - they insisted upon linking arms every time, much to his annoyance. Diana had the misfortune to sprain her ankle while racing for a frisbee - the only other accident apart from Bridget's exposure. Everyone packed themselves into the vans and we started the long haul home, this time with Robin and Lynette at the wheels. Lynette drives as she tramps - no compromises - and would probably have gone to Wellington without stopping if the noise of rumbling stomachs hadn't drowned out the engine!

Opinions of the trip? "Bloody good!" "Loved it" "Let's do it again sometime!"
ELEGY

A silent hut - no rat footfall or fantail flutter
Disturbs the dust
Or jogs the scattered matches on the bench.
Candles lie unlit above the fireplace,
Their holders gather rust.
The hearth is heavy with an aged-ash stench,
Like a senile person cloaked in decay, never missing the bright flame of
life in her face.
And the Forest Service locker, its door sagging open,
Holds mummified potato flakes and wizened black mouse shits,
While the bunks collapse inwards, their mattresses mouldy,
Marked in the shapes of bodies long gone.
Bodies that brewed and stewed and festered in pits,
Back when heroes wore black singlets
And the world turned far more simply.
Bruce.

WITH CUDDLES AND CRUSTY IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Ably led by Richard "Cuddles" Haverkamp, our
group, one of the two easy-medium groups, established
itself very early on as one of an "easy" nature rather
than "medium" - keeping up the good, traditional club
spirit! Barely a few metres down the track on the first
day, Victor "Smooch" Strang (by the way, the nicknames of these poor,
innocent young gentlemen are not designed to raise in the reader's mind
any doubt as to why they were on this tramp; they are there to confirm it)...
came down with a bloody nose. This was not caused by poor group relations
and friction turning to violence, or Richard's answer to threats of strike action -
these all came later on (just joshin' there). No, dear readers, it was caused by an
inability to cope with the elements...a problem common to most Chem students and hockey
players! Thus, our first rest stop came practically before we'd had time to get our
packs properly adjusted... So, to all those who back nervously away from an "easy-
medium" tramp - don't!

Speaking of stops... the van tended to make several stops on its way up Graham
Rd to Flora Saddle, and on one of these "stops" (ie all out and push) I can remember
a certain Chris Hardyly - a hardy man being piggybacked by your humble narrator up
this gravel track (Gees it was steep. Must've had a gradient of at least 50 degrees - fair
dink!) Weight differences will remain buried... however, I fear there has already been
a resurrection of these facts.
We slept, or should I say: "We remained in horizontal positions", the first night under a rock bivvy. These were really unique things, common to this area, which consisted of a massive overhang of rock, under which the forestry workers had installed wooden frames for bunks — and mattresses! It was like running into a five-star pub out bush (except they didn't have any beer). So we got into our pits at about ten, and got into some mild conversation, joke-telling and singing...which by midnight had turned to rather bawdy singing and joke-telling...which by two had deteriorated to bloody chronic joke-telling! (Nigel "Squelch" Fitzpatrick could be quoted here, but him being my "Dad" I'll preserve his dignity). Consequently, by about three poor Belinda "Ballet" Bennett practically had a migraine. And I'm sure the insatiable cheeky wekas that joined us at dinner time packed their bags and fled the district after hearing John "Mouth" Hood's and Chris "Limpet" DeJoux's ear-splitting screaming competition at about 1.30 am (they were trying to outdo each other's echoes...little boys will indulge in these games).

The second day saw us wandering around snowy, tussocky, limestone country, investigating potholes and caves. (These sorts of potholes aren't there because the council fullas don't know when their smokes end). These potholes were quite intriguing, geographical formations...they were like great big inverted hills (that's for those who don't take geography)...oh sorry, what I mean is they're shaped like this ! (that's for tramping club members). At the bottom there were caves, one of which we managed to get into and investigate. Inside were young stalactite formations - some up to 15cm long...it was a really beautiful sight. Snow fights were a highlight of this day.

Vinod Dehva (given an unmentionable nickname from initials)...poor Vinod...happened to be the last to emerge from the cave, and while trying desperately to scramble up through the mud he was bombarded from all angles above by his loving friends. I can still see him—frantically and hopelessly trying to protect himself with waving arms and at the same time firing an incredible stream of abuse back at us!

The weather was terrible, especially crossing The Tableland...it was freezing, with horizontal rain driven by a biting wind...and there we were - eight sorry bobs, silent, heads down. To any passing weka on its way out to town we must have resembled a death march in Siberia (straight out of "Dr Zhivago"). After reaching Balloon Hut in the late afternoon we settled in for a day's pit-bashing on the third day...although little pit-bashing was actually done! (Apologies for letting the club down). Instead, Balloon Hut was the charming venue for a wedding ceremony. So, to pass the time (and to keep J H quiet) your humble narrator was dragged to the alter by one John Hood, and both gave our vows in a wedding that left Chuck and Di's for dead! It was officiated at by the Hon Chris DeJoux, Vinod was the organ grinder (can't actually remember any tunes coming forth...perhaps he was grinding the wrong organ!) Nigel was my "Dad", and he gave me away in a real hurry. Victor was best man, Belinda bridesmaid, while Richard took the photos.

The men looked really suave wearing the latest in neck fashion, ie one long, smelly, four-days-on-the-hoof sock. My wedding dress was quite an innovation, also (I stress it would not have been my first choice), made of the latest plastic — the
see-through variety - it fit like a 44-gallon drum. The veil was "Dad's" old white farm singlet, which, straight off Nigel's back after four days emitted all sorts of strange aromas. Belinda and I were adorned with delicate bouquets of tussock and bracken while the ring - 24 carrot - was a spectacle! (well, it resembled half a spectacle). Although there was an argument between the happy couple as to whether the divorce proceedings would go ahead this month or next, a good day was had by all.

July 1st brought brilliant weather (good on ya Hughie!), and this day was the highlight of our tramp - as far as tramping was concerned. We trudged up around Mt Peel, making a few necessary stops for young Vinod whose intestines must've unfolded during the night... cos what went in one end sure came out mighty fast the other!! Down to Lake Peel, up the side of Starvation Ridge (John and Chris played more games trying to catch a goat). From the top the view was incredible - over the Cobb Reservoir and valley... and we behaved a bit like loopies here, taking snaps of everything. Nigel, John and myself managed to get nicely grazed thighs and sore behinds while testing the durability of a plastic bag on a snow bank. Exhilarating stuff - especially when you're slightly out of control and facing uphill instead of down!

Spent the night sitting around a fire outside Chaffey's Hut - a quaint, run-down little place that had all the character and charm that most modern huts lack. This clear cold night was amazing - we sat and sang songs for six hours! Everything we could think of. The fifth day rolled along with more rotten weather, restricting our tramping plans. So we trundled back to Trilobite Hut and met up with Dave Clelland's group. I got a surprise when my group produced a bottle of Lion Brown, party hats, a cheese-cake in a frisbee, "Happy Birthday 2-Year old" cards, and a fruit and nut cake with candles on it - best birthday I've had in years. Needless to say, plenty more songs and games that night.

Heading home on the last day we stayed another night in a different rock bivvy - this one had... wait for it... a four-poster double bed and a white loo covered in green slime with something that resembled a woolworths shower curtain for a door! Talk about CLASS. Mustn't forget to mention Richard's fantastic cooking (apologies for my lack of tact in positioning this compliment in the report). Vinod makes great curry, too - we all thought it was pretty hot, but poor Vinod thought he'd left the curry powder out!

This proved to be an A1 tramp - we saw lots of beautiful country and had a great time together. Poor old Chris ("Limpet") had a rather sorry time after twisting his ankle... but he limped on... and it didn't seem to affect his vocal chords too greatly! (Sorry mate! Aaahh! Don't hit me!).
Above - On Forgotten River Col, Olivine Ice Plateau, Tasman Sea beyond. (Mike Sheridan)

Above - "Is Spidey in trouble?", Mike Sheridan prussicking, Baring Head. (Susan Ensor)

Left - Tyndall and Newton, Garden of Allah, looking to the Garden of Eden. (Matt Johnston)

Left - in the Twin Icefall, from the Olivine Ice Plateau to the Joe River. (Mike Sheridan)
EASY DAZE IN THE OLIVINES—February 1981

-Brian Dobbs, Simon Davis, Chris Hardiman, Mike Sheridan & Bruce Wilson (scribe)

Air New Zealand reluctantly let us on board—Simon, Brian and I totter up to the counter looking like refugees, under a mountain of food, packs and wicked pointed things. At Queenstown motorcamp we demonstrate our competence by spending 10 minutes arguing about whether to pitch the tent or fly or neither and where to put it, and end up pitching both. Mike, Chris and Lynette are suitably impressed.

West Otago beams as the Routeburn bus disgorges us at the Sylvan Lake track—above glint the mica-strewn slopes of Turret Head and Earnslaw, the birds sing, and the crickets crick. The anticipated stroll up the west bank of the Dart River dies at the hands of an unanticipated bluff. Desperate end-of-day energy pushes us up the track into the Beansburn and ebbs away as we collapse above the gorge at 7pm. "Another easy day, eh?", accompanied by a sneer in Bruce's direction is the habitual end to the day from now on.

The Beansburn is an attractive little river, with an old track up it which we try to follow. Above the bush the going is easy. A steep grassy climb and a bit of old snow brings us to Fohn (pronounced "fern") Saddle, a view of distant Lake Wakatipu, and in the other direction the mysterious Olivine River. The night is spent in a bivvy rock amongst a jumble of boulders at the end of the Olivine Ledge—A cozy nook on a broad glaciated shelf. Next day the bush is bashed to the Olivine River, where patches of the red mineral characteristic of the region further north dot its banks.

At Olivine Flats, desolate and gloomy in wind and light rain, our airdrop is anxiously searched for (rain! in our food!), portioned out watched by eagle eyes, and the packaging ceremonially burnt. Packs are winched to groaning backs. The track around the gorge to the upper Forgotten River is surprisingly easy—the hard part is the drag up miles of near level grass to the head of the valley. The rain doesn't mind, and falls untroubled by sore shoulders and thoughts of pit. A rock biv with a classy wall is reached and occupied. It leaks vigourously—the reputation of Moir's guidebook takes a tumble.

We sleep through the total eclipse, listen to the drips, and save food. In the afternoon the route to the Olivine Ice Plateau is receded and the real Forgotten Biv found. Mike and Chris are dragged protesting from pit and some fast talking persuades the party that the higher biv is a veritable palace.

All systems are go for an assault on the Ice Plateau next day, but low cloud and a freezing wind deter us. After an easy climb we sit just before the snow-slope waiting for the weather to change. It doesn't, so we scamper back down to the biv for more pit-work. Mike arouses some concern by imitating an avalanche and hurting his ankle. The local mouse is warily eyed.
"This is the day you want to be on the plateau!" Simon rouses us on a crystal morning, and we climb into a white-walled, blue-roofed paradise in a state of high excitement. The Darrans float serene to the west. The climb onto Forgotten River Col is tricky enough to be interesting; the col itself so flat as to be an anticlimax. Accommodation poses a problem - the snow is very hard and the hoped-for shovels absent. Water is no problem - untold puddles on a large sculpted rock by the col. We dig a large rectangular hole using iceaxes, billies and bowls, use the debris to build a wall around it, and pitch a tent and fly.

The Olivine Ice Plateau is literally a plateau of ice - a near-level glacier 2 miles long and one mile wide surrounded on three sides by mountains that rise up to 2000' above its 6000'. We spend that afternoon and the next day exploring and doing easy climbs/walks. The setting sun flames briefly on Cook and Tasman far to the north.

Exit day, early start across the shadowed snow, long climb up and around the Memorial Icefalls and across the sun- and slot-sprinkled snow-field to Solution Col, 7600'. Massing clouds to the north are anxiously assessed for their disruptive potential. They creep closer as the Twin Icefall is zig-zagged across and the ridge off Destiny reached. Crampons are removed for long swooping glissades down soft snow in a freshening breeze. The unfamiliar world of green entices us down pleasant low scrub across unusual "pancakes" of rock split by deep cracks, to the bush. Here Mike, desperate for a drink, falls headlong into a ditch and waves his feet at us, unable to move. We hip-hop across the foaming brown Joe River on handy boulders and climb to a high grassy terrace to pitch camp. After making disgusted noises about a previous party's ditch-digging and tree-chopping we use their ditch and tent pegs.

That night it rains. Next day it still rains, and the following night it breaks all records. The ditches swell from rivers to lakes and water pours through the downhill tent where Mike, Bruce and Simon huddle and curse. A 6-hour electrical storm flashes deviously. On Day 2-in-the-rain it stops in midmorning, and an attempt is made to dry pits. Mike partly succeeds, Bruce fails. He sleeps outside his sodden pit on a clear calm night on which the temperature drops to -1 just after dawn.

Off down the Joe at last, on a fine day. We try to follow the very detailed description in Moir's, with only partial success. After 2 days on half rations no-one feels terribly energetic. After 11 hours of (in retrospect) fairly straightforward bushbashing we reach the southern edge of Williamson Flat and crash. The Joe is a very picturesque valley, and the sight of an enormous river pouring over a waterfall of unguessable height is not to be missed.

We cross misty, huge Williamson Flat, dominated by Mt Ionia far above, on another fine day. The original plan was to go all the way down the Arawata to Haast, but we are now 2 days late. Heading up the Arawata the track is mostly not followed to Mid-Flat; from there the track is painfully followed from tree
to misleading tree, Mike blazing a zig-zag path as we go. Cloud is building up as we boulder-scramble and scrub-grovel to Arawata Rock, so big it has its own contour on the map. Head-high, wiry scrub+random rocks+stumbley holes+tiredness = frustration! The river reverberates through the rock - like living in a wind-tunnel.

Dicey weather next morning, but no more scrub, thank God! Easy travel in the rain, up the river, straight up a creek, angle rightwards across the grass, spot a cairn, over the stones and brest Arawata Saddle into a cold NW wind. Behind, Eros and Ionia freakishly poke blue-grey into a fluffy white sky on ink-blue cloudy canvas; ahead Aspiring is hidden in slate-grey. Far below Liverpool Biv is an inviting orange dot. Ripper! on top by 9.45; the biv for lunch.

Downhill it may be, but easy it sure ain't. We can find no correlation between guidebook descriptions, other people's comments (eg "piece of piss!") and what we can see. Everything is fearsome steep, the rain falls, and it's cold. We slide across hard snow, slither down a steep creek, spend 2½ hours roping down slabs, then run down a snow slope to the bottom - miles from the correct route. Wet and tired, we collapse at the biv at 5pm for lunch. A cosy hut that doesn't justify the title "biv" (1" closed-cell foam on the bunks), it has a magnificent view down into the Matukituki valley.

Day number Last, steep jog to the valley floor, then head-down-tail-up across the grassy flats in clearing weather. Mike and Chris are well ahead, and meet us with the taxi in the sun. Peace, comfort, Big Yellow and an easy day - who could ask for more.

"I'll never understand their language"
AND WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE AUGUST HOLIDAYS? - Terry Patterson
(and Cath Alington)

Answer - everyone who was anyone ventured into the wild beyond of Nelson Lakes National Park. Take - Saturday August 22, 1991; hell, I'm running late and I've got the tickets. Still, all 24 troops made the ferry even if a trifle bleary-eyed. Quick lunch stop in Blenheim and next was some barn on the Blenheim-St Arnaud road. We deposited Bruce's bush bunch at this desolate place leaving them to discover the mysteries of the Raglan Range.

St Arnaud arrived and a courtesy call was paid to the ranger. The lake shore sported a nice new day shelter and the warmth of the fire tempted one to try out the comfort of this hotel. But no, must remember leadership! Party food was distributed and somehow I seemed to come off worst. Tradition was followed and frisbee lessons ensued. Finally we left for Lake Head, where the Ego Trip had already taken residence. These "noble lads", known as Cam the Man, Raving Ronnie and Silent Simon, spent most of their trip taking time out instead of in - but that's another story.

Dawn struck, many hours before the Pike and Picnic crew saw it. Casualness was the order of the day as we wandered up the Travers valley. Some Picnickers were a little stuffed by John Tait, ie Francie, and Steve, whose blisters, although chronic, never dampened his spirits.

Monday we trekked up to Cupola Basin in clearing weather on a snow-covered track. Surprise, surprise: The Ego Trip were in residence, although out for some walking in the sun, no doubt. The Chief Picnicker attempted to teach the Pike and Picnic Party how to self-arrest but kneedeep powder snow made the technique seem rather pointless. Our descent was punctuated by Cath trying to reach the bottom first - but the trees got in her way. However, she did use her head.

Tuesday arrived and the Picnic Party left in brilliant sunshine for Upper Travers. Snow covered the track for much of the valley and the views were simply superb. Shortly after lunch Alan's mob made it to the hut, having slogged over the saddle in 7½ hours. Later in the afternoon the Ego Trip cruised in, hotly pursued by the Anakiwa boys.

Pike and Picnic made the supreme effort and embarked on their journey to the saddle by 8.30, in near perfect weather. Assisted by the Ego Trip we made the traverse in good time, with the fast descent via bumslding coming as some surprise to our Anakiwa friends. Forks Hut was reached by 1.15, so pike was the order of the day.

By evening the charm of this hut, along with the cold washing water, seemed to overcome our inhibitions. Conversation descended to despicable depths with the help of Paulus and Sharon, ably assisted by Geoff, and the notorious Francie contributing by laughing at every opportunity. Well I was shocked and consequently it kept Cath and me amused until well after midnight.

Thursday came and almost went again by the time the Picnic Party departed for Blue Lake. Some 3 hours later we hit the hut and yes, you guessed it, the Ego Trip lying in pit quite contentedly. Cam claimed the weather was too bad to climb. Funny, the sun shone all day without a breath of wind. We just beat the darkness back,
though three Picnickers took a longer route, not that Geoff, Paulus and Sharon would admit they were lost.

Friday saw our second early start of the trip as we began our exit from the park. The Sabine seemed ordinary in comparison with the Travers, mainly due to the lack of snow at river level and the poor track markings. This day was long and hard for the Picnic Party and we didn’t stop for lunch until 2:30 near Sabine Hut. Finally Chief Picnicler decided to camp in a stream bed somewhere near Cedric Stream. Conditions in our campsite were pretty rough and uncomfortable, and all Picnickers hit the pit pretty early. That was a long, cold, sleepless night.

Frozen boots for some next morning made things a little slower but we set off around 8 without breakfast, following the never-ending beech for an hour until we struck Howard Hut, and what a dump, more iron on the windows than anywhere else. We finally came upon Spear Grass Hut after the most boring tramping I’ve ever done. The track just went on and on and on... Still, we had made it out from Forks in 2 days and I was just a little pleased with the Picnickers. We set off on our last trek down to Mt Robert carpark, spurred on by thoughts of food from the shop and a comfortable night’s sleep.

Paddy’s Hut just wasn’t up to it, so instant decision - head for the motor camp at the foot of the hill, or so I thought, but instructions will get confused. We got picked up 2 by 2 - Cath, Francis, Paulus and Chief Picnicker met at the motor camp, but Geoff and Sharon had continued on to St Arnaud, unbeknown to me. It was then that Chief Picnicker became annoyed, than worried, for he could only account for 4 out of 7 of his party. Eventually arriving at St Arnaud’s new public shelter at around 8, who should be there but my three lost picnickers. Yes I was relieved although totally pissed off with the whole cock-up in arrangements.

Next day was Sunday, and still the weather was great. The bus arrived early, more communication hassles. Departed at 11 to meet the Ego Trip at Mt Robert, then another courtesy call to the ranger and we were on the way home. A quick stop for Bruce’s Bush Bunch, lunch again at Blenheim, and we missed the early ferry by minutes. Still, the freight ferry let us aboard (after Cam and Alan had rounded up some strays). The Railways certainly got their money’s worth out of VUWTC, as we cleaned up the food in no time.

Finally, congratulations to the Pike and Picnic for surviving 8 days under the suspect direction of yours truly. Eat Prunes & Run.

P & P were: Terry Patterson (leader of sorts), Cath Alington,
THE ASCENT OF TAMIRIKOHUKOHU AND THE DESCENT OF SOMETHING ELSE
(Previously known as "Groveling the Wilson Way") - Scott Petersen

It all began that cold June Friday night as 12 hardy individuals comprising the "medium" party and the "not quite so medium but I wouldn't go as far as easy" party headed into the dark and treacherous Ohau Gorge, our only guiding lifeline a simple torch. 1½ hours later we arrived at Ohau Shelter, also known as that funny little place with the guttering in the ceiling. That night it hosed down and the regular drip, drip on the end of a pit revealed the leaks in the roof; however Bruce said that on the table it had been very dry.

Up at 7-7.30 (depending on whether you're a trip leader or not) to plates of ...of, (I didn't want to mention this, but all the horrific atrocities committed on this trip would have come out sooner or later)...of MUESLI! While looking over Sue's map to see where we were headed someone (I won't say her name though it begins with F) commented "Hey wow Debbie! We came up a dangerous gorge last night!"

The rain stopped as the two parties set out, Sue's easy party a bit later due to compulsory instamatic group photos. So up the cold Ohau River we tramped with grim determination, under a heavy overcast sky, the easy party dodging 30 foot breakers with great skill. With relative ease we soon caught up the medium party at Ohau forks and Bruce, realising his party would be left in our dust, declared a morning tea break.

Andrew had started.

"Does anyone want some chocolate?", "Does anyone want a packet of biscuits?"; I think he had some phobia about bringing too much food.

It was inevitable that one party would pike (No, Sheridan wasn't on this trip) and it sure wasn't going to be Sue's energetic easy party. Yes, Bruce Wilson, author of many books such as "Wilson traverses the Andes", "Wilson scales Everest" and "Wilson goes across the lawn to the toolshed" decided the easy route would be a lot better (ha ha).

Away up the North Ohau we went, in teeming rain, plunging from side to side of the river through jungles of cutty grass and scaling huge boulders until we finally reached North Ohau Bivvy around lunchtime, say, twoish. "Does anyone want some cheese?", "Does anyone want some salami?", "Does anyone want a sack of flour?" "No, no, it's alright Andrew, thanks anyway". Simon was put in charge of getting the primus going for a brew in the biv, and after a few incidents of huge sheets of flame shooting out the windows and door he got started and declared it safe to come inside.

Looking up the valley our leaders went into conference and after a lot of mumbling and rhubarb, rhubarb, decided we would spend the night on the flats below the biv. Sunday morning, and for a brief moment someone spotted some blue sky! We set out together, one big party now, our goal to be home that night (ha ha). Ten minutes later we were at the base of a bush clad slope that disappeared into the clouds. So up we went, through trees, vines and law yer. Suddenly Bruce declares "We've reached the bushline"; everyone heaves a sigh of relief. Oh yes, only ½
hours of leatherwood bashing to go now. But Bruce assures us that there are some deer tracks up here. Thank God, we think. It so happens though, that they belong to the 2 foot high Tawirikohuku pygmy deer who can walk straight under leatherwood bushes. So with most of our party being over 2 feet tall we had to bash through it.

Finally we reached the top at lunchtime; most of us standing at elevation 3380 feet except Bruce, who was at 3390 feet. "Does anyone want a barley sugar?", "Does anyone want some mealmates?", "Does anyone want a freighter of rice?" "No, no, it's alright Andrew, thanks anyway". The cloud had moved right in so that you could only see about 20 feet in front of you. We dropped off the ridge into the bush until we didn't know where we were. Bruce and Sue conferred and came to the conclusion that we didn't know where we were, but I must hasten to mention that this brief lapse of knowledge did but only last a few minutes... say an hour... well okay, quite a bit of the afternoon, but the cloud was pretty thick or something was pretty thick. It was decided to drop down into the gully where we could hear running water.

After mass grovelling around steep waterfalls, down slippery banks and scaling slippery rocks we found ourselves going down Waiti Stream with a gradient of 50 in 1 and 70° slopes of bush on either side. At around 5.30 with the light failing rapidly we realised that getting home that night was not to be. The next problem was where to sleep 12 people. We found a bit of lane between two branches of the stream, and hung the flies in the trees as it began to rain. Twelve people in their pits in an area 3 metres by 2 metres isn't as cozy as it sounds, so Russian politics were discussed to pass the time. After a meal of 2 spoonfuls of cold baked beans each (where were you Andrew?) because Simon couldn't start the primus (blamed the fuel) everyone tried to get to sleep, an obvious impossibility with your pit tied in a reef knot around three other pits, a Mt Vesuvius in your back and a rock up the rectum.

Monday morning finally arrived and we set off around 8. Four hours later we reached the road and Chris' car and Simon's motorbike. "Okay, one of you get us a taxi as you go out" were the instructions; the only thing was Chris thought Simon
was going to call the taxi, and Simon thought Chris was calling the taxi. This left us remaining band of transportless refugees at the road end dying for a frisbee. After an hour and a visit from the police ("You people okay for transport?" "Yeah, we're fine thanks, someone's gone out.") we realised we'd better start walking and another hour later reached the first house with a phone.

Finally we arrived in Wellington at 5.30 - and so ended our epic, somewhat longer than expected, Ohau trip. Reunion same time, same place next year folks?
Medium: Cath Alington, Simon Leicester, Shelley Robertson, Brian Williams, Bruce Wilson
"Not quite so medium but I wouldn't go so far as easy": Mary Allan, Andrew Cook, Susan Ensor, Frances Graham, Scott Paterson, Debbie Turner, Chris Wootton.

MY FINEST HOURS

August saw the lads trekking to TNP. Tony T, Chris Mro, Rob McB and Mike S were ably guided to Tukino on Monday 24 August. It was at the Search and Rescue building at the top of the road that I, Frank A, guide extraordinaire met the four, in the dimming generated light. I roused the troops early next morning to rally round the flag and off we set for the AC hut, via a virgin route. I must say, without wishing to be boastful, that it was my supreme physique and alpine technique second to none that saw us reach Whangaehu Hut 5 long hours later, through deep deep snow. Although it was tough work we all plugged 10 steps a piece, myself excluded. I was able to manage 4616 each time - it's my favourite number. Not necessarily the troop's favourite "number" though - eh what?

Dawning from pit the following afternoon saw a brilliant sunrise over the window sill; enlightened by such fantasies we managed to struggle up Clocktower Ridge followed by a traverse of Cathedral Rocks.

Unethical plastic bunny boots were "in" on this trip except for Rob with his conventional boots, and I, being quite tough, managed without.

The following few days saw clearing and indifferent weather and the troops clambering up Te Heu Heu, Tukino and Tahurangi, all in soft snow, armpit deep in places. It was fun though and the lads thoroughly enjoyed it. After the plod to Tahurangi and back Rob happened to notice that he no longer noticed his toes. Mike thought that he could re-warm his frost-nipped extremities in boiling water, however I intervened and shaved the offending toes under my armpits - all good clean fun. Thus showing the superiority of the bare-footed guide.

It was about this time when the weekend arrived that I thought of throwing Alpine Guiding in, however it occurred to me that I could not let my clients down
in such a manner, it being such a privilege for them to be endowed with my company.

Brilliant weather over the weekend saw another two parties cram into the hut but we managed to squeeze them in at no loss to ourselves. It was during this fine spell that I decided we should be resting for the long haul back down to the car. So after a couple more trips up to the plateau via devious routes and some climbing on an ice wall on a rock buttress in the Waikato Glacier, we headed for home on the Sunday.

I left the troops at the car after supping on a cool ale and noticing that GLYNN WILLIAMS said he was giving up beer, for a while at least.

So ends my saga - another chapter supplementing my book which by the way may be found at Whangaehu Hut.

Frank A, Guide Extraordinaire.

HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED - David Clelland

Thursday 15 January, 1981. Another seemingly timeless day when you have to think for a second before you can recall where it started. After a period of stuffing around this morning I finally hit the road for St Arnaud leaving Mike and Lynette smiling from behind their milkshakes. It didn't matter that it was late because I had plenty of time and no schedule to meet. It occurred to me as I rode out of Hokitika that I was 100% FREE and could go anywhere I liked. Despite the exhilaration I kept my sights on St Arnaud hoping that Simon and Ian would turn up.

The West Coast north of Hokitika I found fairly boring, with most of the land cleared of bush and the towns depressingly drab. I rode fast the whole way driven by some restless nomadic spirit, long suppressed. There was no sign of Simon at St Arnaud and I kicked around ideas that he'd decided not to come but resolved to stick it out for a day or so anyway. I pitched the tent by the lake and after attempting to remove a twist from it decided it was a design fault on Mike's account and tried to ignore the embarrassment. I had no food for dinner and cursed myself for being conned out of the Paw Paw chunks I'd carried around the hills for 10 days.

Yet another fine day and my appetite was raging. I went down to the shop and bought $8 worth of groceries to get me through the day (saws and tomato sauce, fresh white bread, butter, peanut butter, pate, weet bix and peaches), and indulged myself....LUXURY! At 11 Simon and Ian rode past on their bikes. They didn't come back so I went looking all the way to the Mt Robert carpark, but they somehow eluded me. Bloody typical turn of events. As it turned out they had ditched their bikes near the carpark and continued up the lake to Lake Head and down the other side to the town. Eventually I found them in a remote corner of the motorcamp and after abusing them in general, told them it was good to see them.

Back to early starts and on with the boots once more. My feet announced their disgust in no uncertain terms, still sore from ten days tramping. Up the Travers River I saw some birds of prey I think were NZ Falcons. They had a chequered appearance and were very noisy and aggressive. At Hopeless Creek we stopped for a timely lunch break and a dip in the river. Then at 2.30 we headed up the creek through dry beech forest and mosied into Hopeless Hut. The rest of the day was
spent eating and discussing the route up Mt Hopeless.

5 am seemed like a good time to shed pit and start the primus, so I woke the other sleeping beauties and we were tramping by 6. The route we took was the traditional one from Hopeless Hut; traditional, no doubt, because it's the easiest. The ascent was fast and direct; the early start paid dividends by getting us to the ridge before the sun. From the ridge we climbed onto a small plateau which steepened into a narrow snow gully. This gully sniffs out under the summit ridge and the peak was surmounted by gawirling up some loose steep rock followed by an even steeper snow slope onto the summit ridge. Falling off this last snowy pitch was not on my top ten list of good ideas, so I took great care to ensure a happy ending. On top the view was excellent in all directions. Tasman Bay glittered in the sun and looked invitingly cool from our hot little perch. Caution was taken on the descent until we were in the snow gully and then it was bumsledding down to the plateau. Hopeless is 7475' + which is plenty for a morning stroll and we arrived back at the hut at 12 hot and tired. We decided to make for Angelus Hut that afternoon and after a leisurely repast by the stream we headed up the valley. The heat took its toll on our vitality and a large tarn halfway to the saddle gave us a chance to cool down.

Cooled and thawed out, we reached Sunset Saddle. From it we could see Lake Angelus and hut about a mile away and decided it was worthwhile nipping up Mt Angelus, nearby on the right. The nip turned into a niiiiiiiiiiip but we made it to the hut by 5. I drew some pretty curious looks from some of the looier occupants of the hut as I arrived; two weeks in the sun and snow had turned me as brown as a bear's bum and I must have looked like an Indian with my chux multicolored tied around my head for shade and a pair of tatty Hawaiian shorts to hide the naughty bits.

Warning! Never venture into Lake Angelus bog in summer unless you are well prepared! Disturbing 6,000,000 blowflies is like striking oil and not getting out of the way.

FIRE CORN IN THE COBB - NW Nelson, 28/6 - 4/7 1981 (Language revised after the First VUWTC Raglan Range Expedition).

This was another of those trips where the weather caved in on us and most of our plans were defeated. On the first day we went straight up to Rushline Hut, having been dropped off at the bottom of Cobb Reservoir. There were six of us: David Clelland (leader), Terry Patterson, Ronnie Lock, Rob Hunter, Jenny Dixon and Jenny Illes (me). We arrived at the hut just as darkness was falling. Bang, crash. There were odd patches of snow around and it was ultra cold.

The next morning we were going to go on to Diamond Lake to camp out there, but the weather looked totally grotty when we woke up. Snow was swirling around in big flakes and the ridges were covered in untold snow and cloud. We eventually took the plunge, porridge, and ventured out in all our clobber - only eyes showing through. . . . Total... I had my boots hanging in their traditional position on the back of my pack, due to early blisters, and was wearing my Laser running shoes. They kept my feet nice and warm, much to everyone's surprise, despite the boggy, snow-covered
After Lake Sylvester we had to traverse a steep slope covered in untold tangled scrub, trees, rock and snow. It was a bit of a battle clambering around with branches catching on everything. At the end of an hour there was still no obvious route. At our rate of progress we'd never have made it to a place to camp so we reluctantly turned around and got blown back more or less the way we'd come. We split our stuff all over Bushline Hut as if we'd never left.

The next morning fresh snow had fallen, and the tops were still covered in cloud, so we reverted to muesli and took off along the low snow-covered ridge which runs parallel to the Cobb Reservoir and crashed down to lake level via bush and a big gravel slide. From there to Trilobite was untold black-orange bog which got washed off when we crossed the Cobb River. It was thigh deep and totally freezing!!! We camped about an hour up the river (first experience of a Terry-made mac-cheese). We had a good fire over which we burnt several marshmallows, but it exploded when a rock got too hot.

The next day was perfectly calm and clear - that means muesli not porridge, and we got up quickly, and David moaning because we're in a valley, not the tops. We warmed our hands on the rocks from the fire, then zipped up to Lake Cobb for lunch leaving our packs at Cobb Hut. Chris Hardiman's group turned up again while we were lazing in the sun and talked about climbing something. We zapped back down the track to Fenella Mansion - that's a nice hut if ever there was one. One of Chris's party was sunbathing on the veranda - left there because of bad blisters. From here David, Rob, Ronnie and
I went to find 2880. We didn’t carry anything but cameras, with the usual result that most of the photos were taken on the one sunny day. We lost the track coming out of bush but eventually ended up on the top where every trumper likes to be! There wasn’t much snow. We clowning around a bit then yurttled back down to Fenella at a run.

Having two groups in there filled the hut nicely and we got a look at the comparatively gourmet appearance of the other party’s diet. We made up for it quite a bit by having 2 delicious Terry-made cheese-cakes - after yet another mac cheese dinner! Pretty soon after hitting pit someone got hungry and started mumbling and, before I knew it, sultanas were catapulting up from the dark below. There was a bit of an uproar for about 15 minutes until we quietened down for 8½ hours.

Unfortunately the beautiful weather of yesterday had turned back into grot. The brekky pog was solid, all but sugarless, and quite inedible. In dramatic contrast, Chris had cooked up the most delectable billy-full of apple and dumplings ever. Outside, the tops were still buried in cloud and gunk. We had to give away going along the ridge we’d seen from 2880 the day before and trundle dejectedly back down the Cobb Valley to Trilobite. Rain had set in and no one felt inclined to visit Lake Peel anymore so we had a drawn out lunch, dried our clothes over the stove, and played cards. Some people got a bit carried away and burnt their socks. Later, the Birthday Girl and her merry troops invaded the hut from Chaffey’s, and things were never quite the same again...

There was an incredible creamed birthday cake, an epic song competition, in which we were overwhelmingly defeated, a long song about a "hole in the ground" ably led by Victor Strang, and the dreaded "bang-bang" game (all enquiries to Jenny Dixon). The bunks were jam-packed that night, with slugs of all shapes and colours - the more sensible of us slept outside and avoided getting wet every hour on the hour. We didn’t have anything planned for the next day, so when Chris’s group turned up and suggested leaving then and there and spending the night in Nelson, we did just that. Except that we ended up in Richmond instead - that’s about the guts of it. Fin.

Of food:
"Without wishing to appear righteous I may say that I was indifferent to what we took so long as it was food and not chemicals, and gave value for weight. That this attitude involved no self-sacrifice I might add that in my opinion all tinned foods tasted the same, and that if we had to take a hundred pounds of tinned meat the proportion of ham, tongue, chicken, roast beef, bully beef, or even sardines was of no consequence. And the same might be said of cereals, of which we had a weird and wonderful assortment of every hue and texture, but which in the end all boiled down to porridge."

H W Tilman, *The Ascent of Nanda Devi*, 1937
THE MANGAAHO IN MAY - Phil Mackie.

Groan! Out to the car under my pack and dump it into the boot beside Brian's. Pick up Big B, Irene and Lynette, and it's off to the Mangahao dams. Don't have anything hanging low under your car, because you'll lose it. 'Bout 10 we are under the stars at the roadend (except Brian, who prefers wet tent to wet pit). Morning dawns beautiful and fine. Dam and lake look OK and are soon put behind us, after a quick game of frisbee. The track onto Dundas Ridge runs along the east side of the lake and up an arm into College Creek, then up the Puketerua Track from the first forks. The travel is good to begin with, but dense scrub soon sets in. We race up, following Lynette's distant yellow-clad rear.

We attain the ridge top by 10, glance contemptuously at the ridge along to Ngapuketerua, and turn to take in the beauty of the land. Two hours later, scarred and battered, we stand atop Ngapuketerua, conquered leatherwood on all sides. A pause in our headlong rush for lunch on top, where there are some nice campsites with tarns. We eat with a view of Egmont and Ruapehu, in brilliant weather. We tramp along to Ruapae and are contemplating life from that vantage point when in a spurt of enthusiasm (or laziness, I can't decide which) we decide to have a tops camp.

However, ominous cloud sends us shuffling (or in my case, hobbling) down to cozy Herepal Hut for the night, just on dark. The following morning dawns insultingly fine, and we commence the 1000' climb back to Ruapae. Lunch sees us sitting atop Walker in warm sunshine (same Big B, who mutinued and decided to amble down Harris Creek instead. Reckons that Harris Creek offers good travel from most entry points). After lunch we try to find the track that hearsay has it comes off Walker and runs down to the Mangahao. We do not succeed, and bash down instead. My ankle is starting to feel really nice at this stage. We have a brief stop after being met by Big B, then start the race against darkness to get back to the car. Harris Creek Hut is a bit of a hole, despite its lack of years. The track below the hut is mildly unrelenting and consists largely of mud and up, but is very scenic. The river would be ace in summer! We reach the dam 2 hours from the hut, just as night falls. Lynette produces stale scones which are quickly scuttled, then it's back to Levin for greasies, and home. All in all, a moderately rugged trip.

Participants: Bruce Wilson, Lynette Hartley, Brian Dobbie, Irene Petrove, and Phil Mackie (leader)
Hmmm... Bracken sounds like a nice place to go. Wonder if anyone wants to join me? Eventually I found myself a team of four which was unfortunately reduced to three by the time the trip finally left Harihari - Lynette Hartley, David Clelland and Mike Sheridan.

Scene: 4th January, 4pm. Harihari swimming pool. Mike and Lynette basking in the sunshine. David arrives on his bike in full storm gears; with great reluctance we leave the bright lights of Harihari, shuttled to the Wanganui River on David's bike. We walked about an hour or so up the true right bank and pitched camp in a seemingly innocent spot. Midnight saw the weather break, i.e. break up the tent, guys, spirits, tempers etc. Yes the tent in fact collapsed and the three were quite wet for the remainder of the night. Morning breaking saw camp broken and the troops chased up river by hordes of little black critters, without breakfast. Stopped at Shearers Flat and spent 2-3 hours drying out in the warm sun.

The river was quite high from the previous evening's little effort, making travel slow and Hades Creek only just crossable. We endeavoured to stay as close as possible to the river, climbing many boulders and extending our skills at down-climbing (jumping, hopping and sliding); not following much of a track at all except for the amazing benched track over Annoyance Bluff.

After an evening at Hunter's Hut Poker's Bluff next day proved fun and games; couldn't find a good route at all. wished we could have crossed the river, would have saved a couple of hours. Warnings of another bluff in the logbook proved ill-founded - it has since slipped into the river and was a nonevent. Huge boulders in the river above Noisy Torrent made the going slow; followed a marked, chainsawed track on the true left, the scrub trying very hard to reclaim it. The track enters the river bed a few times for a bit of boulder-bashing to alleviate any traces of boredom with the scrub bashing.

We left Smyth hut by 5.50am on Thursday hoping to make the Bracken Snowfield and dig out our snowcave that day. About tennis we decided the weather wasn't all that nice so we camped in the Evans about half a mile from the terminal of the glacier, pitching our tent quite securely for a pit day of sorts. Travel up the Evans Glacier was straightforward in the brilliant weather. Slots were easy enough to negotiate and luncheon was partaken on Full Moon Saddle. Ice axes, bowls and frisbee proved adequate in our snowcave construction.

Pottering about in brilliant weather again on Friday saw us return to the cave for lunch. It was about this time that the primus decided to blow up... Yes, burst into flames, making it quite unusable. Caused a few problems actually, not a lot of other fuel about, may have to scamper for lower altitudes I thought. Tried Katschenbach Ridge with amazing views of the Wilkinson Icefall and terminal lake. However we did not exactly know a great deal about this route and it looked beyond our meagre capabilities, so we headed back to our cave with our tails between our legs, hoping the weather would hold for an exit on the morrow via the Ramsay. We had no means of heating/cooking except Big Yellow, hence were rather dry.
"Golly, it's cold!", Peter Mansell and Lynette Hartley, Kaimanawas. (Alan Clelland)

Below - Would you buy a used pack from this man?, Chris Hardiman, Ruahines Bester. (David Clelland)

Right - Moriarty for the already brain-damaged. Nigel Fitzpatrick, Kaimanawas. (Peter Mansell)
Fortunately Huey was giving us a few breaks, Saturday was also cloudless, however the sunshine and lack of coldness made the snow rather mushy, even first thing in the morning. Wandered over Erewhon Col and down the true left side of the Ramsay Glacier avoiding many large schrunds. Skirted around the left of the second rocky knob and down a gully beyond, which avoids the icefall. Travel down the moraine was mindless, up, down, over, around and all in searing heat, still who's whinging, can't have everything.

Lunch was had at the terminal lake with a few very noisy Canada geese for company. Got washed across the Ramsay River and decided we couldn't cross the Lyall to get to Lyall Hut. Firewood was rather scarce - not a lot that was readily combustible, the Rakaia being rather barren. Found a suitable campsite with a couple of twigs to rustle up a brew with, just downstream of the bridge crossing the Lyall before it joins the Ramsay to form the Rakaia.

The Ramsay had to be recrossed to head for Louper Stream: of course on Sunday it was quite uncrossable so we had to wander back around the terminal lake and thence via Louper Stream to Whitcombe Pass. By this stage of the trip the troops were feeling 'worn out' and it was suggested that a hut would be nice to stay in for a change. Just before reaching Neave Hut yours truly managed to twist his ankle painfully and had to hobble to the hut. The 12th was deemed a pitday - couldn't walk and it was rather misty outside. The Whitcombe was notable for comparatively magnificent tracks, and apart from running into two VUWTC types (Cam and Chris) working for the FS and bludging a ride out with them 2 days later it was quite uneventful.

Beautiful place, must return sometime... with a new primus.
THE EGO TRIP OF NELSON LAKES - Cam Falkner

It was about two weeks before the August break when I put a notice on the board: "Climbing, Nelson Lakes, August, see me." Much to my surprise there were two takers, Ronnie Lock and Simon Leisnecer. On Saturday morning at 5.30 my alarm rang, it was all on. After catching the ferry and bus we walked from St Arnaud to Lake Head. The bond of a common goal was beginning to emerge; the seeds of success of a trip. Our organisation was not the best and our itinerary was vague.

The next day dawned overcast, with a light drizzle. We set off for Cupola Basin. Ronnie managed to leave his bread and torch behind, then dropped his gloves on the track. Luckily Terry's party picked them up for us. We stopped at John Tait for lunch then plodded up through the beech forest and snow to Cupola Basin. This hut sits on the bushline and is a friendly retreat from a hard day.

Monday, overcast – our first climbing day. When I think of climbers, I see toiling people in the early morning sun. People working against the problems of the climb, one with nature. Climbing mountains for a leader means decision making, evaluation of team. There are very tangible ideas of ambition, courage, fear. Self-confidence and skill must be blended, and an honest evaluation of the climb made. We are "Ego Trippers", with their self-confidence, but we still retain the frailty of self-doubt and self-deception, the conquering of which has as much to do with climbing as with gaining peaks.

We attempted Mt Hopeless by the SW ridge. It is a pinnacled, drifting jumble, rocks, snow and cornices. The "Ego Trip" climbed well until rebuffed by a difficult pitch 3 rope lengths from the summit. We returned to the hut in fading light, dejected and exhausted from 11 hours on soft snow. There was a confidence that we could work together and solve problems we could not handle alone.

As Tuesday dawned bright and clear we plugged steps up to Mt Cupola, and after 3 1/2 hours stood atop it. We had a tangible victory but not the victory of yesterday. The success an outsider can see. Lunchtime saw us back at the hut, a warm brew and quick pack. We were off again, down to John Tait and up to Upper Travers. At the latter all the VFWTC parties congregated. We were met with a warm brew and a massage and given a bed for the night. Our dinner was quite typical; an eight pint billy-full. After eating until close to indigestion we told tales of our dramatic adventures to any willing ear.

Day five, and over Travers Saddle in weather that looked as if it could turn nasty. Terry's party came along as we plugged another line of steps up and over. With a bit of bumsiding we all made it to the bottom in one piece. We raced off to Blue Lake for a crack at Franklin. Thursday dawned with high winds, swirling clouds obscuring the peaks. We spent a comfortable day lounging, eating and drinking, chatting about climbing, the weather etc with the other occupants. It cleared in the afternoon and Terry and party arrived for a visit, leaving soon after.

Friday, beautifully fine. We were up at 5.30 and left the chilly hut for the freezing outdoors an hour later. We chose an unconventional route and all went well, except maybe for the prodigious amount of powder snow. Gaining a point high
on the ridge south of Franklin I had to decide whether to press on or go back. It was 10.30 and in strong sun you want to be off the mountain by noon. We decided to press on and after some steep snow climbing reached the summit at about 12. After a quick descent we all got back to safety. It was only then that I could let myself feel elated. My thoughts had up to then been concentrated on party safety. As I walked along the shore of the lake, bright blue in the afternoon sun, dark green trees, crisp clean snow under those dominating mountains I felt success; there was value in my effort. I had aspired to gain those heights, now I had. It was the "Ego Trip."

Back at the hut we now had the less romantic challenge, that of tramping out to St Arnaud by 10.30 am on Sunday. We reached Forks Hut at dusk and settled down for a cold night. A heavy frost on Saturday morning and we were off at 8, chasing the wind to get out. More pressure, fewer stops. Quick lunch at Sabine Hut, then over into the Howard. Fatigue showing, muscles hurting, across the flats. Short rest, then up, up and over to Speargrass Hut. Nine hours on the move left us sitting in front of the fire, just warming ourselves, dinner and bed.

The next morning, again up early and off. Down to the Buller Bridge - 10.22. We arrive with 8 minutes to spare after 9 days. I'd like to thank Ronnie and Simon for putting up with me in this enjoyable trip, and I hope from this article that you can share in the experience of the "Ego Trip."

QUEENS BIRTHDAY - RUAPUEHU "CLIMBING" TRIP - Phil Mackie

Friday night. Cold - breath condensing, we quickly burrow into our pits and huddle together on the Whakapapa Tavern veranda. Next morning - promise of things to come - high cloud and cold.

Lunch is consumed outside and inside Glacier Shelter after a tiring climb. My food-bag is coated with kiwifruit yogurt - good start! We grovel in the melting heat and the crowds up onto Dome, and enjoy the prospect. A good cover of snow. The party splits, and some go searching for a place to stay while others wander around Pyramid, Cathedral Rocks, Te Heu Heu etc. We begin to excavate a platform near Dome, when we are halted by a shout from Sue, who has found a superb ice cave.
A beautiful grotto of white snow and hard glassy ice studded with rocks, the entrance jagged with icicles. It is very deep, and we don't get to investigate its full extent. A sleeping platform is levelled, the wanderers join us, and our 9-body arrangement completed. It is very cold - water freezes in the billy in 5 minutes. The sky turns first orange, then midnight blue.

We are woken by Cam departing for Ketetahi Springs for a soak - he didn't quite make it. Fantastic clouds, like black ink in water, streak the sky. We split up into parties and potter about the mountain. Bruce and I decide to poke around Cathedral Rocks. We eye the south face of Te Heu Heu but decide to wander around the easy way because of our decrepit state of health. We are rewarded with fine sombre views of the park. 2pm - back at the cave. Cloud has moved in quickly and a strong cold wind blows. We begin to fortify the rather wide entrance of the cave by fixing tents over it, using the poles and our gear as pegs.

Matt and co. arrive back in foul white-out conditions as we finish, but Brian and Mike have not come back from Tahurangi, and time is creeping on. Matt dons gear and goes outside for a look. He arrives back soon after, declaring the conditions impossible. We are all very worried.

The next morning we awake to damp pits - one tent has blown down and spindrift coats the cave. Outside the weather is foul, the snow spinning madly about. The feeling inside the cave is tense, and tempers are slightly on edge. It is hard to describe the feeling that pervades a party when an accident occurs. We all knew that if Mike and Brian had not been able to find shelter they would not have survived. I recce the snow cave back around the plateau wall, to see how the party there had fared. After tracing along the wall I find it deserted, with a candle still burning! It is decided that Matt and Irene will go down to Glacier Shelter to see if Mike and Brian were there. The rest of us sit around in the cold, unable to do anything except wait for news, and then Brian and Mike arrive. They had spent the night huddled together in the shelter using the emergency stretcher and some blankets.

We are all pleased and relieved, and morale lifts. We decide to go down the Whakapapa side, as routefinding down to Tutino is a bit trickier. From the Top O' the Bruce Matt takes off on a marathon hitch-hike around the mountain and walks all the way up to the van, which is stuck. Things aren't set to rights until late, and we have just settled into pit for the night when the van pulls up outside the tavern. Awake all the way, we arrive back at about 5.30am. I'm just in time for a bath, breakfast and clean-up, then straight to work on Tuesday. To pit after the first aid evening - only about 4-5 hours sleep in the last 72 hours - what an epic!

Participants were:
- Bruce Wilson - leader (spent most of the next week in bed!)
- Matt Johnston (acting leader)
- Irene Petrove (ridiculously healthy)
- Susan Ensoc (recovering from flu)
- Marc Patterson (coming down with flu)
- Mike Harris (went AWOL)
- Brian Derby ("")
- Phil Mackie (stuffed ankles)
- Cam Falkner (ya missed the fun ya sucker!)
THE MEDIUM KAIMANAWAS IN MAY - Catherine Alington

(not much tramping in this one, folks-ed.)

After an eventful bus ride in our luxury coach, with Alan losing his wallet and the bus getting two punctures, we picked up our two extras, Andrew and Peter Clarke. Terry and Cath's musical was born. We spent the first night in the "campground" at the road end, and set off next morning in the drizzle to climb Te Iringa Peak. David's party had left first, making as much noise as possible. Martin ("Eric" or "Moses") hustled his group off shortly afterwards, not to be outdone, while Mike "Cramps" gathered up his bunch of chooks, alias Cath, Diana, Debbie and Anthea (+ Nigel and Steve). I'm still unsure what happened about that peak; I don't remember actually arriving at the top before going down. After a painfully long walk we reached The Swingbridge in time for lunch with the other groups. David's lot took off for Cascade Hut and that was them for a couple of days. Mike's chooks and Martin's gang headed off for Omaramu Hut along beautiful manicured 4-lane highways. We reached a patch of rhino-grass and sat down for a rest because according to Mike it was "at least another hour". Diana stood up and said "There's the hut", just at the top of the hill. So much for Mike's judgment. A comfortable spent by all, since the chooks had the bunkhouse.

The next day was fine, and as Mike didn't want to get his socks wet he and Diana struck a bargain - Diana carried him across the river, and he carried her pack up the hill. Later on Mike carried her pack for 5 minutes for her share of the jelly. The walk to Boyd Lodge was supposed to be 3 hours. However under Mike's superlative leadership it took 4½, as he chose to go up the wrong side of the river. But against insurmountable odds we made it, and found the 5-star Lockwood Lodge empty. Mike chose to spend the night in the chookhouse - the only male in the room. Improper suggestions were made by the resident geriatric but properly ignored by the ladies.

Next day was our rest day. No one out of pit before 9, then brew and pikelets - the whole day passed in this glorious manner. Nick took off to shoot our venison (he missed) but heard the laughter of three chooks who decided to wash their hair!! How ridiculous. Mike chased one around the water tank three times to get a photo. A day trip was at no time considered, being considered too much like a proper tramp. Instead, since a wonderful frisbee strip had been provided we made use of it, before being invaded by the two fit parties and David's medium trip who had piked miserably the day before. Everyone played frisbee soccer until it began to snow.

That evening was chaotic. A silly bunch played "Rabbits Hovering" in the corner while the rest of us gambled away our matchsticks at pontoon. That night was very cold but who could hesitate to leap out of bed joyously when Mike came in with his torch 'gathering his chookies? Eventually things came to life but as everything had frozen overnight it took a while for people to get their act together. So Mike's chooks hit the track - Cath literally, winning a chooky fish for style. Cascade Hut was our destination, going via a new track over to Cascade Stream. Finding the track was fun - everyone going everywhere, including the fit party. Eventually we found it and bowled/boogied/grunted up and over and down. It was only a short way to the hut,
but the race was on for the bunks. We all ended up double-bunking anyway. Since we got there early we all went for a ramble up to the river - the Tauranga-Taupo - where Lynette and Mike went for a swim, for a bribe naturally. After discovering an amazing little hand-hewn hut we spent the rest of our time playing cards and making dinner. Towards midnight there was a bang like a gunshot - yes, you guessed it, Alan had fallen out of bed and no he was not pushed (I have this on good authority). He decided to remain on the floor, not wanting to try it again.

The next day was due to be rough - a 6 hour tramp to the Swingbridge, then a hill. We reached the bridge in a mere 4 hours, then after too much lunch Te Iringa was tackled again. Under Chris Hardiman’s guidance the chooks shot up the first stretch, Mike having taken off with you-know-who. The speedy-chooks collapsed halfway up and the rest of the way was conducted in a more stately manner. We got out in time to meet the bus at 5pm, which arrived at 6, then lost its headlights along the way - it had to happen. We hit Wellington at 2.30am, but I am told that everyone was only pretending to be asleep on the way home.

**AN APPROPRIATE QUOTE:**

“The positive ceases to exist when there is no negative. Activity can only be measured against inactivity; therefore to appreciate the joys of activity it is necessary to practise passivity. Hence the off-day.” Frank Smythe, *The Valley of Flowers*, 1938
THE FIRST VICTORIA UNIVERSITY TRAMPING CLUB RAGLAN RANGE EXPEDITION - August 22-30

- Peter Mansell

It was a good feeling easing back into the boots and into the tramping stride, not really knowing what to expect from the Raglan Range area. Wandering up the Silverstream sled track from the Branch River on Sunday took us through some very open beech, over a 3-wire bridge and into kea and bellbird territory. Our original plan of dropping into the adjacent Lost Stream was postponed as time ran out and muck ran in, allowing a lazy afternoon in pit, warmed by many brews, Phil's jokes, and the fire of Mid Silverstream Hut.

Swinging the packs on and stretching our legs again after a cramped double-bunked night we began leaving the Silverstream valley behind as we started up the spur next to the hut. The snow beyond the bushline was fresh, powdery and deep, with generally poor visibility added. Views of Scotts Knob to our left and what would have been amazing sights west toward the Raglan Range were totally obscured by muesi, who seemingly was here to stay.

Thigh-deep step plugging combined with sidling across slippery tussock not only wore us down but made the day a lot longer than expected, taking about 8½ hours getting into Lost Stream. After an eagerly awaited brew and dinner the fire claimed one sock after another as victims. It was a regular and hopelessly unavoidable feature of all the campfires to come - being a great laugh until your own woolies became charred.

Waking to the tinkering of a Kea's interest in our billies and bowls (sorry editor!) boulders, we were more than relieved to see the sky cloudless, the air calm and crisp. We could now see how idyllic the head of the Lost was; our camp surrounded by steep rugged snowy peaks dropping into a tussock and tree-covered glaciated floor.

Resentful of having to leave the area we cautiously made our way down the icy frozen track following the stream to the Branch River. Through the canopy of translucent greens we could see craggy bluffs and snow packed tops around towering Scotts Knob - plenty to keep climbers busy around this place.

From further up the Branch the tops at the head of Misery Stream looked very difficult, and with the tiring snow conditions in mind the hope of traversing the Raglan Range became impractical. The head of the Branch is one of several places worth revisiting, with its rough encircling tops, frozen waterfalls, picturesque tussock flats, huge screes and a well-equipped 2-man bivvy.

(continue.)

IN MEMORY OF CAMP MOTHER (a dedication)

When the trip is hard and going tough
Your blisters are sore and you're feeling rough
And the rain has soaked you to the skin
Forcing you back to where you've been
She is there, guiding you on
Inspiring all to tramp on
Ah - without a doubt there is no other
Can take the place of our camp mother

* * * * * * *

(TP/DC)
The routine of shaking the overnight snow off the fly and tent was followed by boulderhopping past the bivvy into the true-left fork, entering a large snow-filled basin. Starting to burn off last night's x pints of highly delicious apple and dumplings, we made good progress past a few bluffs on a spur toward the pass into Lees Creek. Little time was spent at the pass (after actually finding it), in very windy cold conditions, made worse by spindrift, so we donned overtrous and did some amazing bumsledges on our descent into Lees Creek. One was estimated to take us 500 vertical feet.

In the upper reaches the creek disappears underground, leaving only our footsteps and voices to break an eerie silence. The valley gives the impression of having a very cold and dry winter climate, with its bone dry twigs, frozen ground water and its main precipitation being snow.

Our campsites next to Lees Creek bivvy on the edge of huge snow-covered flats was a brilliant place for the following rest day. Sleeping in, we merged a pit breakfast with a corn-fritters lunch a la Helen (and courtesy NZFSP), and managed to fill most of the afternoon bumsledging. Often we slid with a total lack of control but ended up with laughing and frozen faces every time - there must be few better ways of spending a sunny rest day afternoon.

Even boots kept in the bivvy froze solid that night - epically cold, but they were soon thawed in the warm morning sun and once again ready to step into. After a leisurely breakfast of pop and apricots we dealt with another frozen track down Lees Creek on our way to the Wairau Valley.

Total, epically fine, bulk untold weather stayed with us for the remainder of the trip down the Wairau Valley hydro road, ending a brilliant way of spending 8 days in such a remote and beautiful area. Our "expedition" convinced me that the Raglan Range has a lot to offer any trapper, and is surely a place I'll return to.

Expedition personnel: Rob Hunter, Jenny Iles, Peter Mansell, Phil Mackie, Helen Morgan, Greg Walton, Bruce Wilson.

IT MAY BE THE KAIMANAWAS - Murray Colles

7.30 am and one of the hunters walks into the hut and says the thermometer shows 2°C and it's raining slightly. Immediately any thoughts that our party had of getting out of pit were dashed. In spite of this Jeff can't resist the temptation of having another bowl of chunder (yep you guessed it - muesli). However the thought of meeting all the other VUWTC parties at Boyd Lodge is enough to persuade the ponces to quit their pits by 8.30.

After several rounds of cards our horribly unfit 'Fit' party makes its way to Boyd Lodge from Cascade Hut along flat country in bloody cold, wet weather. A climb of 1200' to Waiautapuritia Saddle sees any resemblance to fitness disappear. Carol had problems with knees, Chris has a sprained ankle and I have a really chunterous stomach. Irene's thought of tops travelling the hard way produces looks of horror from the ponces of the party who see this as contrary to the piking ethic. On entering North Arm from the saddle it's snowing and the track disappears. Because of this, the trip
down North Arm becomes an exercise in knowing where to put your feet. Streams and vast swamps abound and all too often someone disappears down a ditch or hole. After 1½ hours of this we leave the Arm and travel along a track on the final leg to Boyd Lodge. It's still snowing and I'm feeling sicker than ever. Seeing a hut on a hill is not my idea of enjoying the last few hundred metres of a tramp. All other parties had arrived, some the previous day. All were trying to retain sanity in their own way. Dinner was the usual horrible stew, but was followed by a steam pudding, which produced some rather indifferent looks from The President. The evening produced its share of madness, what with 30 people in one hut!!

The next morning dawned clear and bright?? Yes, Mike Sheridan was heating his primus in a rather large flare-up. This he did twice. Next he got his party out of pit, finding everybody by lighter - "Shit, definitely don't want you" was muttered when he shone it in my direction. Our group had an easy trip to Oamaru Hut, arriving after 5 hours slow travel, and took a great opportunity to pit-bash in the sun. Even Irene jumped into pit - surprise, surprise! Staying there were 2 Aussie hunters, one of whom cooked up a great batch of scones. Everyone made pigs of themselves that night.

The track to the toilet was interesting? In the middle of it was an offal pit. Going to the toilet at 9.30 at night almost produced a nasty accident. Need I say more?

The hunters could hardly believe their eyes when they saw our party eating and drinking out of the same bowls; in some cases unclean bowls. Words beat them totally.

The next day, being the last, should have been easy and straightforward. Not when you're in Chris' party. After 2 hours easy tramping to the Te Iringa turnoff, instead of crossing the footbridge we headed towards bloody Cascade!! Meeting Peter Mansell's party coming the other way produced some red faces and showed what idiots we all were.

Our "Fit" (?) trip was: Chris deJoux, who was leader (?), Jeff Tutini, Irene Petrove, Carol Scott and Murray Corless, who wrote this grot. Other parties being "other" parties don't rate a mention here.
HOTTER THAN HELL - a summer tramp in Hokitika, January 81

- Terry Patterson

Time check, Sunday January 18, place; Hokitika Post Office; question: what am I doing here? - First problem, I can see packs and other gears but as yet no familiar faces. Eventually other group members appear in the form of Mike, Lynette, Chris, Danny and Rob. We pass Lake Kaniera on our way to the road end, and desert the comfort of the van somewhere up the Arahura River valley. My immediate for tramping is soon dispelled upon feeling the weight of my pack hit the shoulders. Can't think of anything excessive in my property, but then to a novice everything seems essential. Upon reaching the Cesspool we're all in need of water and a swim to cope with the warmth of the evening (fit for running I might have been but for tramping - no way). My first impression of the West Coast was how friendly the natives could be, including the black winged variety; hence the popularity of my tent which included mesh doors. Tea was courtesy the hot bread shop, followed by marshmallows toasted over an evening fire (thanks Rob).

Morning arrives (yes it's Monday), weather's brilliant yet again, and we move along the bulldozer track by the Arahura. A welcome lunch break is taken at a superb swimming hole which was surrounded by the most amazing boulders I have ever seen - some were the size of a garden shed. Refuelled and refreshed it's off towards the Trench soaking up the heat of the afternoon. Camp is struck on the banks of a stream running along the Trench and we spend several hours revelling in summer only being disturbed by our ever present winged friends.

Tuesday morning greets us by depositing some of that famous West Coast precipitation around. This naturally wasn't welcomed by me, as I found that a wet tent weighs twice as much as a dry one and extra weight was something I could well do without. This day had to be our most frustrating in terms of tramping. After carefully following the marked track through the bush we came to where the old track to Newton should have begun. After an hour of fruitless searching by all members bar me it was decided to turn back. At this stage the effects of the day's rain on party members was beginning to show, none being colder than yours truly. We headed back towards Olderog Creek but rising water prevented us travelling down, so we headed for a campsites in the bush.

We spent Wednesday at Lower Arahura Hut drying out and soaking up summer, which was enjoyed by all (especially me). That evening saw Danny's cooking ability appear, as he made a superb cake from next to nothing.

Having spent Wednesday piking, Thursday was perhaps the fullest day's tramping we had (at least while I was around). An early start saw us head up the Arahura for another track to Newton's Saddle. First problem - the footbridge was broken and the river was too gorgey to cross. Next problem was to locate the track from our new position upstream and this proved time consuming, but perseverance by the troops saw us arrive at Newton Hut for lunch. Following lunch it was off to tackle Newton Saddle and it was quite an effort (not sure how many times I said I couldn't go on). The travel up Newton Creek was slow and delayed by Danny's disappearing act. Having
decided to carry on without him we reached the saddle in stages, yours truly bringing up the rear. After taking in the views from the top it was quite an epic bomb off the side as we negotiated one or two bluffs on the way to the valley. For me travel was becoming increasingly painful as every step aggravated the raw skin on my back, cut up by the waistband. Still, we made it, thanks mostly to Mike’s sprained ankle and Lynette’s encouragement. To our surprise we found a hut in the valley, called Dunn’s.

It was persisting down in large quantities on Friday, and we spent the day relaxing in the pit. After tea Chef Danny started making Rob some lunches. You see Rob got his TBs wet and consequently had no lunches to speak of. It was while Chef was attending to this matter that the stove exploded in a wall of flames. Our first reaction was to watch in amazement, then once the heat became too much a race for the door commenced. Well, once safely outside it occurred to Mike that if the hut went up, which it looked like doing, we’d have no gear. Panic stations as bodies raced in and out of the hut chucking gear left, right and middle. This was severely impeded by the packs obstructing the door but we got most things out. Eventually the fuel ran out thus did the fire and the hut survived. Once we extinguished the hot spots the cost of this little epic was counted. Physical injuries were slight; Mike burnt his fingers, as did Rob to a lesser degree and Danny gashed his foot. Mike’s parka gone, socks for most people and Chris lost that bloody t-shirt - at last. Then yours truly, socks, putties, food, bowl etc, and the front cover of my pit. Great - if this is tramping you can stick it.

That night was a restless one spent double bunking in a charred hut.

Left to right: Snowgrass (Dianthus flavescens), Cotton plant (Celmisia coriacea) foreground, Mountain Buttercup (Ranunculus lyallii), Matagouri (Discaria toumatou).
Saturday was fine and the decision was made to abort the trip and head out before anything else went wrong. Travel was easy paced and uneventful down Dunn's Falls Ck except for my introduction to stinging nettle - believe me it's no fun to sit in it. It was over lunch in the Taipo that we decided to split; Mike and I were to head for Arthur's Pass, while the others were to continue the trip. This decision was practical given that Mike had no parks and couldn't hold anything, plus I had little food left for lunches or much gear.

Parting words were exchanged and Mike and I headed down the Taipo reaching Seven Mile Hut by mid afternoon. Tea was cooked by me of course, under Mike's direction. Sunday came around with us being slow to move away. The native cows tried to out-smart us as we wandered through their patch but only succeeded in losing the battle. The hitching commenced at 1 - I bandaged Mike's hands up excessively, hoping he'd get a lift on sympathy, and headed off to the road. Some 3½ hours later and many miles of walking Mike turned up with a lift from a couple who kindly took us all the way to the motorcamp. Food was consumed in great quantities as we made up for the week's events.

I left Mike and Hoki on Monday afternoon thanking God I was still in one piece even if my gear wasn't, and headed for the safety of Christchurch and relatives to tell the story to.

Special thanks are due to Mike for dragging me along and Lynette for her patience and encouragement, plus the troops for their presence.

We were: Lynette Hartley (leader), Mike Sheridan, Chris Hardiman, Rob Hunter, Danny, and me.

TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION, continued.

-January '81, Lynette Hartley

Having packed the disruptive element off down the Taipo four of us continued the planned trip. A very good track led us up the true right to Julia Hut. One of my favourites - really cozy memories of days spent piking there - but no!!-time for a quick foot-warming session in the hot springs then into pit for an early start next morning.

Sunday dawned gloriously fine and we were on Whitehorn Pass by lunchtime. Danny's first play on snow - comments about cold toes - continued down Cromin Stream - nice travel - to Park Morpeth Hut. Saw our first people for ages. Much excitement when they gave us some fruitcake (thank's Chris for not liking fruitcake). Bathtime in the freezing Wilberforce.

Monday was a lazy day as we zig-zagged up to Browning Pass and lay in the sun near Lake Browning. Beautiful. Rob taught Danny to self arrest in the only patch of snow. We camped outside Harman Hut that night - interesting game of chance when choosing boulders to anchor the guy-ropes.

Tuesday - cut down the Styx. Huge track. The rain and general grey-ness chased us out to Hokitika and the inevitable huge feed. All in all an eventful trip. The last three perfect days made up for the earlier problems.

The Survivors: Danny. If you see a lad wandering up Lambton Quay with a map in his
Top right - Mt Kensington and the Adams valley, looking to the Tasman Sea. (Matt Johnston)

Right - "Where's my contact lens gone?", river-crossing practice, Bushcraft. (David Clelland)

Below - Tongariro today, World Champs tomorrow, Helen Morgan, Queens Birthday. (Dave Waghorn)
hand and a foreign pack that will be him.
Rob Ultra good value on a trip, just quietly.
Chris Stirrer.
Lynette The only sane member of the party.

THE CHIEF GUIDE'S REPORT - Mike Sheridan

Yes folks we need some serious material, so here it is. 1981 has been a tremendously successful year tramping-wise. Well patronised trips run just about every weekend and eight or so involving 30-plus peoples. Pretty good, huh?

This year has seen a reliance on a key group of about six or eight people to organise and lead trips which can be quite a toll on your energies and enthusiasm. This is always the case in any successful club. However, to be ongoing we must continually encourage more people to "pull finger". Next year we won't see a few familiar faces and to be as active as this year we need more keen people who are willing to donate some time. It is quite easy to be a passenger and follow, but have a thought for the people willing to donate their time for you. Be positive, don't just talk about it.

All three instruction courses this year were a tremendous success, each of the Bushcraft, Rockcraft, and AIC having 30+ people.

Bushcraft was held just after Easter in the Terry Knee Cow in brilliant weather. The troops were given practical demonstrations of as many aspects of bush life as possible including pack floating down the gorge for the hardy, and frisbee throwing in the various inter ludes (although the daylight was a little easy in the very dry conditions). Many thanks to all instructors who helped out in keeping everyone occupied for the weekend.

Rockcraft was quite impromptu. A very pleasant day spent at Baring Head by about 20 or 30 people - no one is sure just how many! culminating in a Bar-B-Q in the evening.

The Alpine Instruction was held at the AC hut at Whakapapa and once again was fraught with over subscription and finally culled back to 30 keen bods. Basic use of ice axes, crampons and belaying was shown in good conditions on the Saturday and somewhat epic conditions on the Sun. Still a good time was had by all.

In recent years the club has seen a trend in introducing novices to the tramping world; thus we can play a very valuable part by providing basic instruction courses which although are in no way a substitute for experience do point you in the right direction.

Many thanks to all those who have helped in the task of running these courses this year, and a special word of thanks to Matt for guiding instruction at the AIC and for advice during the year.

Wonder where I can go at Christmas hummmmm, ponder, ponder......
NELSON LAKES INSANITY - August
- Murray Corles

VUWTC's most fearless group, the "7-trampers-mayhem" began this trip with all 7 members getting a lift from St Arnaud to Mt Robert roadend. Yes everybody, packs and all into one small car. With snow and mist in plenty and night getting closer, Speargrass Hut was a welcome sight. A really nice cozy little hut.

Everybody was up and about by 6.30 to be greeted by falling snow. Cold weather tends to make people sluggish, because we didn't leave until 8.30. Despite the weather the view of Robert Ridge was brilliant, coming down almost to the hut. So deep and thick was the mud on the track to Sabine some of us had to be pulled out after the misfortune of stepping in. After a brief stop at grotty Howard Hut, lunch at a stream, and stops to treat blisters, Lake Rotorni and Sabine Hut were a welcome sight. That night saw what was to be a trend throughout the trip - back-rubs, roasted marshmallows, screaming choocks and insane males.

It was rice and apples for breakfast with Fiona (the gannet) complaining as usual about not getting enough. I'll be damned if I know where she puts it all. Anyway it was off up the Sabine we went. Crossed a short bridge over a deep gorge. The valley was, at the best, pretty ordinary, with the mountains around us the only interesting things to relate to. Arrived at Forks Hut to discover that an avalanche had come right down to the river, on the other side. One can only imagine the force and amount of snow that had come down. You're not even safe down on the river.

A fine day greeted us, which forced Alan to give the day trip to Blue Lake a miss and tackle Travers Saddle while the weather was good. A cold bowl of chunder and it was off at 7.30. Puff, puff,grunt, grunt over a track which rose high above the East Sabine River and down to a bridge over a cleft canyon which was so deep you couldn't see the river below. Sighted the rare NZ Falcon here. A really magnificent and graceful flyer. With that we started our grunt up the avalanche towards the saddle. Kirsty kept singing soprano to keep her spirits up. God knows what's worse, university or her ear-splitting screaming.

The top of the saddle was deep in powder snow. After leaving crude comments about Terry P and Cath A in the snow it was down to Upper Travers Hut. Snow was too deep to rush through or bumslide over for any distance, and everybody got stuck up yoi the waist in snow that overlaid trees. Debbie was very good at this, and had to be helped out quite often. At the hut we met up with Terry's group who were enjoying themselves in pit or sliding down a nearby snowslope. The later arrival of the Boogie Boys and an Outward Bound group forced most of us to double bunk. That night proved to be a noisy affair with our group determined to be as noisy as possible, courtesy the choooks (Diane, Debbie, Kirsty and yes, you guessed it, Frances). Everybody back-rubbed everyone and conversation generally sank to low levels. The language of the girls had deteriorated as the trip went on. Somebody blamed the two males on the trip. I say tripe!

The first people rose at 5am! And what a racket; three groups to go over Travers Saddle. They were gone by 8 with our group electing to remain in pit for
the morning. But hunger and the call of nature tends to force most people to get up. Off to John Tait Hut, which took longer than expected due to snow fights at almost every clearing. We all enjoyed a well-earned (?) pit afternoon; Diane earned the nickname of Witchy here. Must be the nose.

Nobody regretted going to Cupola Basin. A nice cozy hut, with great views of Mts Cupola and Hopeless, and the Travers valley. Everybody enjoyed bumsiding and practising self-arrests on the long snow runs. After farting around it was back to John Tait. What with the track being icy, the only way down was to slide. The chooks were singing and shouting like they had never done on the trip. They sang "Ba-na-ma-na" most of the way and were determined to be heard. At the campsite by Hopeless Creek the madness continued. Murray started singing "I'm going potty, I'm going nutty" in such a way anyone would have thought he was going insane!

Another bloody cold morning. So cold in fact icicles as big as your fist hung off the branches. Fiona just had to grab one and stick it down Alan's back to encourage his soprano. A trip to Hopeless Hut was called off after all but one person decided that piking was more to their liking, so it was down to Coldwater Hut by the lake. Having been beaten there by hunters we cut across the river to Lake Head Hut.

A pit morning for us all next day, eating untold. There was plenty of bread and fillings to start with and none at the end. Inbetween times some decided to have a wash in the lake. Along the way to the jetty Peter turned back to take some pictures in the general area of the chooks - he denied taking pics of them bathing I'll bet. After more bloating it was off to St Arnaud. Alan decided to have a wash at the jetty, but his demonstration of bouncing on water as he dived in was enough to convince Fiona and Murray that the dirt on their bodies was the best fragrance to wear. Besides, Fiona decided that watching a male washing was no place for a female. On to St Arnaud, the end of the trip, where our fearful leader suffered the ultimate shame - BLISTERS!!

Starring in "7 Trampers Mayhem" were: Alan Clelland as the fearful leader
Fiona Cleland as the Gannet
Diane Ritchie as Witchie
Debbie Turner as "T" (for tart)
Murray Corles as the raving nutcase
Kirsty McDonald as the singing headache
Peter Morrison as the peeping Tom
Everybody else, get stuffed!!
CLELLAND'S SEPARATION THEOREM - Alan

The reason for writing this article is to bring home to club members, especially the inexperienced, how easy it is to get separated and lost. Sure you have read it all before in bushcraft manuals, but there is nothing quite like the actual experiences of someone who has been lost.

After bussing up to Otaki on Friday night we had a relatively pleasant 3½ hour tramp to an empty Penn Ck Hut. The following morning quick progress was made up Pakihore Ridge in warm sunny weather, but upon gaining the main range some of us (myself particularly) were found to be quite stuffed. The traverse of Tararua Peaks to Maungahuka Hut found us there for a later than expected lunch at 1.30.

Due to the pleasant conditions we decided, rather unfortunately though not unwisely, to extend lunch until 2pm, when we made a hasty retreat towards Neill Forks via ORCRETINA KNOB.

At the bushline it was decided that Peter, Lynette and I would bowl ahead to the hut while Mike and Sue followed at their own pace. As we approached the Knob itself I found that I couldn't keep up, and started dropping back. While I was somewhere in between we came upon the poorly marked intersection where one track went right to Neill Forks and one left to Hector Forks. Due to my unfit tired state I wasn't paying much attention, to where I was going and took the wrong turn towards Hector Forks. I didn't realize my mistake until I had dropped about 1000 feet and become concerned that I hadn't been caught by Mike and Sue. After waiting and calling for a while I decided that I was too stuffed to go back up and headed for Hector Forks. I intended going up the Hector River to the hut, figuring that this would only add about 1½ hours to my time. Soon after this I lost the track, which had become quite indefinite.

After searching for a while I ended up on a prominent spur to my left, and an hour later found myself at Maungahuka Forks, most definitely the wrong place. Thinking that it was not too far to Hector Forks I started to follow the Waichine Gorge down. After an hour cold, ruggedness and approaching dark made me decide to stop for the night. My uncomfortable position high on a rock and my rather slackened off state of mind meant that I ate little and got hardly any sleep. Consequently the next day I was very tired.

It took me a couple of hours to go back up the gorge, swimming in several places, to Maungahuka Forks. Tiredness and the fact that the climb out was very long and uncertain made me choose to stay put the rest of that day. After settling down I fell asleep and didn't wake up until later that afternoon. I built a small fern frond bivvy, crawled into my pit and fell asleep. Later that evening a severe thunderstorm developed. I did not have a ground sheet or similar type of shelter and so got thoroughly soaked and spent the rest of that night sleeping intermittently between bouts of shivering. It was extremely cold and I was worried about exposure but eventually the morning came, and I was still alive.

After sleeping late I was feeling better than the previous day and was considering climbing out when shortly afterwards a Search and Rescue helicopter
turned up and whisked me off to Totara Flats.

The morning after I didn't turn up the others started searching and with the help of David and Simon, who had come over from the upper Tauherinikau, they covered most of the lower Hector catchment and the Concertina Knob–Maungahuka region. Late that day Mike and Simon raced out in pretty chunderous conditions to raise the alarm. The following afternoon I had to make a detailed statement to the Masterton police, who didn't show any visible annoyance but I suspect that they weren't too impressed. We, myself especially, weren't exactly ecstatic. They did tell me how fortunate I was that there was such a skilled chopper pilot in the area who was prepared to fly in such marginal and changeable conditions. The cost of the chopper was $180, which was a large amount, but small compared with that for a ground search.

Thus ended a most regrettable experience which I am sure no one is keen to repeat.

Well I'm sorry the last article was so sobering, but after all that mindless drivel it's good to have something to think about, isn't it? Have a stimulating and injury-free summer, and I'll see you all next year. Bruce.

A nice thought to end on:

"If a man of the mountains began climbing at the age of ten, years, and lived to attain death on the hill-tops at the age of eighty, he could never achieve all his ambitions. All his life past achievements would seem to grow smaller and the future field to widen."

John Pascoe, Unclimbed New Zealand, 1938.