heels

1982

Victoria University of Wellington Tramping Club
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COVER GIRL
Mike Sheridan on Full Moon Saddle approaching the Bracken Snowfield. Red Line on the left, Mt. Evans on the right. Taken by David Clelland.
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EDITORIAL

I'm very grateful to the response given this year from my nagging for articles. 'Heels', as a result, is a bit thicker, with a great deal of interesting variation. If we keep this up, we'll be putting out bi-weekly supplements.

But seriously, a yearbook like this is very important, as a publication, for at least three reasons.

The first, for the sake of history; as we have secured our 1982 tramping year, in print, forever.

Secondly, for information regarding trip-places, times, routes, huts, terrain etc.

And thirdly, for memories sake.

I hope 'Heels 1982' will satisfy at least one of these objectives for you.

This year’s gossip? Well, we’ve talked about it, discussed it, analysed it and decided it’s really none of our business.

Some things have been stolen, used and abused in this magazine. Don’t blame me. I didn’t know any better.

If you find any mistakes in 'Heels', please understand they are there for a purpose! I’ve tried to print something for everyone, and some people only look for mistakes.

Bulk thanks to:
'Action Print', (29 Farish Street), for their helpful and approachable service.
'Bromide Bureau', (83-87 Cuba Street).
Mike S. for all his help.
Debbie, Jenny and Sue Ensor for their art work and help.
Terry and Mike for putting up with 'Heels' strewn all over the flat.
And Helen Shanahan for the typing.

Frances Graham
LOCATION MAP

Someplace in Yankeland
-Jenny and Matt

Kawekas
Tongariro-Queen's Birthday
-A.I.C.

Mount Egmont

Ruhines

Abel Tasman

Total Bulk Taranuas

Northwest Nelson

Orongorongo

Baring Head

Barlow

Nelson Lakes

Garden of Eden

Lewis Pass-North and South

Olivine

Hagian Range

Mount Cook (ascent of)

Fiordland
APRIL
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JULY

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AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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The events listed above are for the month of January.
The shop with the lot for the great outdoors - from sleeping bags, and clothing, to packs, stoves, and tents.

See on display our large range of light hiking tents. From the simple traditional A Frame tents to more complex Alpine Geodesic (dome) tents. Gortex Bivy Bags - a sleeping bag cover that breathes (no condensation problems). is waterproof, warmer, drier than any sleeping bag cover before it.

don't forget to ask for a club discount

LEVEL 4, WILLIAMS CENTRE PLIMMER STEPS PHONE 728-459
CHIEF GUIDE'S REPORT

by Mike Sheridan

Well folks, here it is again, my serious bit. How tedious you all say. Well you get that on the big jobs; and every job's a big job.

This year we have seen activity kept up by a host of keen blokes and blokesses, which is always good. Many thanks to all who have helped me out during the year — leaders for doing bulk leading, mostly in the right directions. And instructors without whom none of the instruction courses could have gone ahead.

Bushcraft was once again in the Terrykneecow and made a valuable contribution for those fresh to the hills.

Rockcraft again went to Baring Head for 30-40 people. A day's pottering about on the rocks culminating in a soccer game followed by a bar-b-q.

The Alpine instruction went to Rangipo hut at Ruapehu, and much fun was had by all in perfect conditions. Thanks from everyone for the great food Richard.

So there it is. Another year has gone. A couple of trips slightly late out and the usual run of geographical embarrassments. But one can usually chalk those up to the learning process. After all, we're all students of something—or-other.

Just a Thought.

Did you pack a lunch dear?

Yes Mum — cold rabbit pie, cabbage tree soup, a dead cat and a litre of Worcestershire sauce.

Are you bundled up warmly?

There's frost in my ears!
Yes Dad — a bearskin, pile jockstrap, four pits, and a second hand 747.

When will you be back dear, you know we get worried?

By lunchtime, Country Calendar, next Thursday, my birthday.

Well have a good time and watch out for mad stoats.

And beware of bald strangers doing gorge-trips in moats.

The world's a strange place dear.

You're not quite equipped,

Until you've been tramping with a Varsity trip.

Bruce.
Greetings to all V.U.W.T.C'er's. Glad you're still here to read these ravings of the year.

Whatever measures you use to gauge the success of a tramping year, (and there are many), one cannot help but remark that this year not only have we tramped more, but we've been a lot more social with numerous get-togethers happening as the year has progressed. For me this year's highlight was the first club meeting held in March where I counted in excess of 120 people. This initial interest remained throughout, building an active membership in the range of 45-60 out of the total membership of 160.

As with any club, the responsibility for its smooth running rests with the dedicated few who give their time and energy in the varied activities they perform. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the club officers and committee members for their efforts this year. It takes a lot of time, and many hours are spent arranging trips, socials and slide evenings etc. But it's time well spent when you reflect on our achievements this year. There are a few people in particular who have earned their chocky fish. Firstly, Murray Corles, who took over the Gear Custodian position, late in the year. He has done an excellent job recovering much of the missing gear and improving the operation one hundred percent. Secondly, our Chief Guide of the last two years and prior to that President of 1980 - Mike Sheridan. Mike has made an enormous contribution to the revival and success of V.U.W.T.C. in the '80's. Few people can match his tireless efforts made for the club, and on behalf of all members I thank Mike for giving us more than we could ever have expected.

Well, as Francie's deadline has passed, I must stop dribbling and leave you to Heels '82. To those members who will inevitably leave the club this year, many thanks for being a part of the tramping club. For the stayers, all the best for summer tramping, be safe, and we'll see you back in 1983 for yet another dose of the ol VUWTC magic.

Happy tramping

Terry X. Patterson
Having now done the N.W. Nelson trip, and plenty of time to digest my experiences (Francie will confirm that!) I suppose the climax of our trip was the day we spent track- ing along snow capped ridges from Kiwi Saddle hut to John Reid hut. (John Reid being a pioneering helicopter pilot in that region.)

The day (Wednesday, 30.6.82) started off beautifully. The sun was shining, the clear blue sky, the frost on the ground and the satisfaction of looking back on Mt. Luna and the Luna Ridge and proudly proclaiming that we've been there! As we had a rather long day the day before, i.e. from Stone hut to Kiwi Saddle hut. After breakfast and cleaning the place and also sorting out where the toilet was ("second turn on your right", I remember Hugh said. But it turned out that I was the only one who actually knew where it was), we started our climb up Patriarch Ridge.

We got onto the snow and were half way across Patriarch Saddle when the weather decided to turn sour on us. A large mass of cloud was hovering over Mt. Patriarch and it was moving towards us quite rapidly. We were half way to the first peak (there are quite a few of them, steep and rocky too!) when the snow cloud reached us. Mind you, even though we had the rare honour of seeing a nearly round/circular rainbow, our spirit began to sink. The prospect of being stuck in a snow storm didn't sound very promising at all! Especially not for a bunch of novice trampers. It was only the second tramp I'd been on, and the first time for Kathy I think. The steep and shale peaks didn't help much either.

Anyway, we got over our first few obstacles just fine, but the time factor began to creep in. It was almost 2.00 pm in the afternoon and we were only half way there. It was thus quite a relief when we saw tracks on the snow (it was Murray's group) but what we did not know was that we were still four hours away from John Reid.

The sky was darkening and we were pushed to the point of desperation, when we hear Hugh shout "Shit Hot!!" We finally sighted the hut and the trip was much easier from then on.

I suppose I've painted a rather gloomy picture of the trip. I'd have to say it was just one of the bad days, but it was one of the last. Other days were absolutely fantastic. The beautiful scenery, the snow, the frost, the greenery, and just being with mother nature. I'd learnt, I think, to identify the difference between a red and silver beech, the celery plant, the pepper plants, coprosma, etc. And also know what a South Island robin looks like, as well as Paradise Ducks. To top it off there was fantastic company. Starting out as total strangers (at least for me) there was a feeling of camaraderie at the end of the trip.

My advice to fellow novices? Don't miss it. Not only do you come out more confident but also with a better idea of when you will turn to jelly when faced with height. I rest my case!

Hugh Dawson
Kim Hanking
Kathy Jones

Paul Simmonds
David Killock
Sim Wong
NEW YEAR'S KAWEKA TOUR

by Peter Mansell

Warm humid mist hung over our party of four on the first morning's grunt, a long and nasty one up Makahu spur to Kaweka J. After peering through clag for a place to go, we spotted our first waratah and set off northward along a flat and easy section of the main Kaweka range. A feature of the main range, (though in the gully heads), was the extremely bad erosion. This is the reason for the triangle's experimental contorta protection planting.

Lunch was had at Ballard hut, the first water so far, and was followed by a quick saunter across to Venison Tops hut (or Kelvinator Lodge, Prestcold Palace a history of no stove or hut).

Fiona's moselle time-trials didn't seem to make her more delirious than usual, as we made good time along the bushy ridge for Mangaturutu hut. It's situated on the bushedge of a high tussock plateau, and further on towards Te Puke. The mist cleared, allowing views west to the slips and scars of the main Karweka range.

Plans of staying at Te Puke hut soon changed after one look at all the pits, and a few stick books. So down, down, down to Harkness hut we went.

Heading on down Harkness stream we criss-crossed our way through the upper tussock area, and sidled along in some nice beech to Ngawapuruah hut - an ultimate frisbee clearing on a high river terrace. Once all together again we quickly strung ourselves out on the other side of the Ngaruroro river, on our second sweat up to Otutu bush. As I recall the gradient did in fact ease off, several hours later. But at the first rocky outcrop our only view was of a grey wash of rain looming up from Boyds. So we pressed on through messy windblown mountain beech, across daisy fields, past a few menhirs, and eventually dipping back down to the Ngaruroro river.

With jelly legs at Rocks Ahead hut, we gorged on our New Year's eve pancakes. Ronnie being a professional flipper from way back. We finished the wine off and being a little fatigued we did the sensible thing and crawled into pit quite early.

The last leg of our non-stop Karweka tour was up and over the Karweka range, staying at Back Ridge biv, amongst more daisies. Here we gulped down lunch and untold Refresh, then carried on for the memorial.

Since lunch we had: sun, mist, thunder, heavy rain and sun again. Once past Karweka J. we descended Makahu spur in the familiar thick humid mist, but was Huey content? Never! The next torrent was really one to write home (or to 'Heels') about. We even had to take shelter in Domineo biv. As the biv. was not the answer to Fenella in the Cobb, we couldn't stay forever. So we splashed on down to the waiting car, sitting on the first of our three flat tyres.

All in all, of the area we saw, there are easy tops, plenty of good huts, interesting bush ridges and rocky outcrops. A good place to spend more time exploring around or just lazing in the summer sun.

Tourists:
Fiona Clende
Ronnie Lock
Ian Carlyle
Pete Mansell
Looking into the head of the Barlow from the Adams Range.

BARLOW

by Bruce Wilson

South Westland beckons - the trumpeter of very little brain responds, and like Winnie-the-Pooh goes bumpy-bump down to Harihari to seek some honey. Mike Sheridan is rescued from terminal botulism by Simon Davis, Brian Dobbie, Bruce McKinlay and Bruce Wilson ("The Immaculate Orifice").

Civilisation (in the form of green grass) is left, and Little Man River, just south of Harihari, is tripped up. It's steep and full of big goffs (and a wee gorge), and progress proves to be slow. With no prospect of today's destination being reached, camp is embraced early in a good spot, while Brian and the Orifice do a recce.

The usual strenuous activity leads eventually to Escape Col, on the Adams Range near Mt. Adams. Southwards Mt. Elie de Beaumont dominates, but snow and Tasman are cloudy. The southerly airstream that persists for the next ten days is here cold, and the usual alarming collection of clouds scuds about, amounting, as always, to nothing. Steep snow to the Escape Glacier, crampons and an easy stroll, and an ace camp on rock ledges beside the North Barlow, looking across to the Great Unknown they, isn't this where we were supposed to be at the end of the first day?

Roll on the worst day of the trip - stunningly hot, mindless grovelling in and out of big gullies as we sidle the Barlow, fruitless climb all the way to the Siege Glacier moraine and back down, and a blessedly cold swim. The final grovel is up to a beautiful terrace beyond the Siege, with a tarn big enough to swim in and a view to make the mouth water - eight and a half hours to come one and a half crow miles. Fantastic clouds grow out of the valley at dusk; huge demons, beasts, and ghostly fingers.
Grey day but easier travel - the nor-wester brings rain as the Barlow is reached; a terrifically violent, gorged and dirty grey river. An enormous rock is our lunchroom, and by mid-afternoon the clouds have run away pursued by our friendly southerly. After dinner the last twenty minutes to another great campsite above the bush is bashed (hey listen Orifice, we were supposed to be here two days ago!!)

An hour up the moraine of the upper Barlow, all systems go then Mike slips and carves his thigh up. A team of eminent surgeons, headed by Bruce McK., is speedily convened and the patient patched, but visions of several days on the Garden of Eden have flown. Two minimal tent sites are carved out of the rubble and Mike rests up while the four of us carry on for a quick trip to the Garden. The Farrar Glacier - cascading white marble poured from a jug. Turn right, scree slopes and steep stream. One of those notches in the Devil's Backbone is Vertebrae Col. (neat names, huh?) - we choose a rock gully that provides some exciting climbing. The névé is in perfect nick for travelling on, but times is tight. Hurry across and climb Little Unoon (pile of rocks) for a great view, then find the real col and come down a steep snow slope to the scree (you can see this snow from below).

Next day is another hour-day, back to camp in the grass and sunbathing with more or less clothes on (and more or less sunburn). Mike's leg is a little uncomfortable, but he can get around okay. Stream and steep grass slow our second assault on the Adams Range, as does a knife-edge of crumbling conglomerate above gory drops. Pretty easy tho'. Mt. Kensington is dominant along the range. The main Poerua valley is reached down an easy stream and swiftly boulder-hopped down. It is very attractive - lots of rata (not in flower), thick scrubby bush, clear blue water and patterned rocks. We negotiate two "sort-of" gorges, meet the Wilberg River, and stroll up it to camp by a large stream. The only decent spot is in a wee dry overflow amongst rampant olearia regeneration - please don't rain! Some spots send pulses racing and pits flying into tents, but nothing happens.

Yet another hour-day (pretty cruisey, eh?), up to Exit Creek, flats in the sun but the usual cloud massing from the south. Brian, Simon and Orifice race up the Wilberg - very steep and bouldery, but easy.

The fleshpots of Westland beckon us up Exit Creek, entice us up a waterfall, and see us on top of the Wilberg Range for lunch in the hot sun, looking down on the coast. Stunning views enhanced by low clouds. Unfortunately we descend into the cloud going north along the range and take a wrong turn - talk about humid Trev!! We camp by a large tarn near the end of the range - cool until the cloud goes, then downright frigid when the sun sets. More of Bruce's all-thumb joints appear, to enhance the scenery.

The track down to the road is found without difficulty, following poles from the trig on Mt. Wilberg. It disgorges us into the sun on farmland and we collapse by the road to wait for the bus. Above us glints the trig, and all around is our pot of honey. Christopher Robin drags us back up the coast, bumpety-bump, and puts out the light.
F.E. HOLDSWORTH by David Hanna

As being the first club trip I've been on, one question was foremost on my mind: were all these rumours about the club true? After the exciting bus ride I arrived at the Lodge really looking forward to the lovely hike up to Powell hut in pitch dark (extreme exaggeration). After the delightful stroll on the Friday night (more crap!) we arose to the beautiful sight of the sun rising over cloud-covered Wairarapa - almost making the previous night's hike worthwhile. But in typical Tararua tradition the clear morning didn't last. By the time we had reached Holdsworth the mist had already set in. Due to the weather deteriorating we decided to change the proposed route around Girdlestone to via Dorset Creek. Arriving at the Dorset Ridge hut at 2 o'clock, the remainder of the afternoon was spent reading 1964 Readers' Digests.

Sunday's weather showed no improvement until after dropping off Cairn to Baldy, the cloud lifted enabling us for the first time a view of the area. The party was making good time along Pinnacle Ridge until suddenly disaster struck. We had just dropped off the ridge track at Donnelly Flat when - Peter lost the track. Had it not been for Martin's keen eye spotting a ten-foot wide shingled track (road) we might still be lost. After the long, demanding climb out from Donnelly Flat we were pleased to see Holdsworth Lodge.

All in all a very enjoyable tramp and as far as those rumours about the club - they're ALL bloody true!

Peter Mansell
Dave Hanna
Mike Brown
Martin Clapham

Matt Squire
Murray Corles
Anthony Holland
7.30 am Saturday morning, thirty five people had assembled and were ready to load up the bus and head for the hills. We were dropped off in the Kaitoke Basin, at the bottom of the Puffer Track. There we broke into groups of five or six, with a common destination of Smith Creek Flats in the Tauherinikau Valley.

A couple of groups headed straight for Smith Creek and set up camp, then headed into the wild green yonder to conquer mountains and streams. Other groups took longer routes, deviating from the track. At times wandering in somewhat circular directions and meeting each other while in various degrees of confusion and lostness. The leaders had handed over the reins of pathfinder to other members of the group, thus it was not a worthwhile proposition to follow another group, as we were all taking different routes. Some followed Marchant Ridge, and then dropped off into a valley to meet the Tauherinikau River. Other groups headed east at Dobsons hut, then descended into a valley to follow Marchant Stream. All groups left their marked tracks, bushbashed, traversed streams, practised map-reading, orienteering, fly pitching and fire lighting.

All arrived safe and sound by 5.00 pm when the mammoth task of cooking tea began. By 8.00 pm, all had satisfied their gluttonous desires and gathered around the fire. Jokes (fair and foul) and singing occupied the evening, with musical accompaniment of recorders. The feature of singing was the round of "Doosey do", with actions led by Hugh Dawson. An excellent game of "Tooth" commenced, where everybody assumed a pseudonym of three syllables or more. Memorable titles included: "Electric wiper of other peoples bottoms", "I don't cheat on my income tax (sometimes)", "Spanner nose", "Stinky bum" to name a few. They shall remain anonymous, however most of the names quite suited the people concerned ... We then gorged ourselves on toasted marshmallow, numerous brews, then hit the hay.

River crossing took up the next morning, where we learnt successful ways to drown oneself. I mean, cross a river, using mutual support or a pole. The river wasn't very large but the temperature must have been approaching 0°C. Good fun eh!

After lunch there were talks given by Martin on primus lighting, and first-aid by Richard. Then a quick game of frisbee before departing at 2.15 pm. For most of the time walking out, Mike and Bruce debated the theory that if you run downhill you're less likely to fall over than if you walk down. Mike's reasoning being that your feet have less contact with the ground to slip on, so you're less likely to fall over! Figure that one out for yourselves, and blame Mike Sheridan for any injuries incurred while testing this theory.

Besides all his weird and wonderful theories, Mike did an excellent job in organising the weekend. Thanks also to the other leaders for passing on their pearls of wisdom; making for a very worthwhile weekend.
DI BRINGS US DOOSEY DO

6.30 pm, Friday night, and the beginning of yet another thrilling V.U.W.T.C. tramp. The unepic bus trip turned epic at Waikanae when the clutch-cable broke. It only happens to the best of us ... we continued to our destination (broken cable and all) which was at best one and a half hours before the carpark. We set up camp on the flats just over the bridge from Parawai Lodge, making do with one set of poles, two tents, no trees and one fence. (That took a lot of intelligence, eh Mike?).

Saturday morning saw us set off at 8.30. We followed the old tramline to the point where Saddle Creek leaves Waitatapia Creek, along Saddle Creek, then up and over the hill. Lunch number one was had here by all. At Arapito Creek we left the track and followed the stream down to the Otaki River. Some people, who shall remain nameless, had to keep with their group, or a certain leader would keep having to sprint to catch them.

At the Otaki River we had our lunch number two. Way-d-go VUWTC. Further up the river there was a swimming spot for the harder female species who lasted twenty minutes in the sub-Antarctic temperatures. (Morag, from Terry's group, Tracy, Liz and Yours Truly.) Snow foams serve as good lilo, but boots and cheap Taiwanese ones rot.

Fifteen minutes further upstream we set up camp. Time: approx. 3.30 pm. Guess what we had for tea - stew à la Fiona's bacon flavoured T.V.P.... mmm yuk. There was just enough leftover for Ronnie, our evening visitor. We happily spent the rest of the night climbing trees and singing. Our ensemble included such music gems as "doosey do" and "the National Anthem".

Sunday dawned bright on those who slept outside. We tramped out via the track rather than follow Arapito Creek. The best part of the tramp for some was the decision to pack-float down the Otaki to the carpark. Cam and Kirsty obligingly carried extra cameras and jerseys for those who didn't have a surplus supply of waterproof bags.

We would have walked to meet the bus, but due to increased pack weight we were unable to walk fullstop. Consequently we accepted rides when they were offered.

by Diana Ritchie

Tracy Buckland Mike Sheridan Liz Iles
Catherine Travers Fiona Mathieson Diana Ritchie
Paul Simmons Kirsty Law Denise Tocher
Take four good mates: myself, big brother Dave, Peter and Simon, also cousin Dan. Plus a large tape deck, bulk food, a couple of shooting sticks, some good yarns, and head for Gates' Hut/No. 78/Shalimar, in the Orongorongo Valley. And you’ve got good times.

Yep, that’s what we had when everyone else was in North-West Nelson. Pancakes in front of the Mansell piece, Marianne Faithful lending a hand, bowling down the river bed for a hoop beside the water, frisbees at day, silly-boys at night, the customary burnt toastie-pies, brews and stick books. Then reclining on one of the hut’s superb bunks. Not before waking up the valley with the horn though.

We bowled over the new and very much yet to be completed five mile track, going astray once before resorting to the old track. It’ll take a while to get used to not using the old track. We then indulged in one of our favourite pastimes: wandering slowly up the Orongo river bed, with not a care in the world. Simon and I could only stay one night and it was with much sadness that the four of us parted at the Whakanui Track. At the sight of Peter and David striding side by side up the valley towards Mathew’s Stream, with their guns slung over their shoulders, I could tell they were in their element.

They continued this pioneer lifestyle for the rest of the week, returning fruitless to the many comforts of the well decked out Gates Hut each day and a good long sit by the fire. Neither really cared that all they got was a goat bowled over by David on the third day. Gates’ Hut is still there, even if the deer aren’t.

EGMONT

by Nigel Fitzpatrick

Friday we arrived at Dawson Falls and went up to Hookers Shelter. The track up had frost and ice on it, even below the bush line. Finding the shelter uninhabitable we turned back.

Konini Lodge was unlocked, so in we crept, feeling very guilty as we hadn’t paid. About 8 pm, in burst car loads of Methodists on a camp. Kids scream, radios blare, and we move to a smaller room. The noise continues unabated. Peter moves to the colder but quieter public shelter down the road. Ice forms on the window.

Next day we’re off before 8 am. The steps up to Fanthams Peak, a cold breeze picks up. The mountain is now clouded over, and brown cloud stretches for miles. We decide to head for Lake Dive hut. The track sidles through tussock and was usually little more than poles jutting through the hard snow. One gully was so steep that we had to front point six to eight feet to get round it. Then down thousands of icy steps. By this time the sun was shining, and the mountain was clear, but it was 11 o’clock – too late to turn back and climb it.

Walking down the steps was a depressing experience. The weather was fine and I felt that with better organisation (e.g. if I had got the key to Syme Hut) we could have climbed Egmont. That afternoon we slept.
Next day we were up by six, and left by seven-thirty. The night had been cloudless, and the conditions looked perfect, except for the snow being a bit too icy. We started climbing Fantham’s Peak before nine. The snow was hard with occasional patches of rock and ice. The slope was steep. The going was slow and tiring – we were all being very careful that each step was firm, quite conscious of the danger of a fall – a successful self-arrest was not certain, at times I felt that it was unlikely.

We reached Fantham Peak just before twelve, and had lunch. The view was superb. Egmont looked very close and steep. During lunch we were joined by two climbers – who looked very much at home in the conditions. They were locals but friendly and we started talking. I asked them what kind of people were most at risk on Egmont. They replied people like us; semi-experienced, from Wellington, keen, and new to Egmont’s icy conditions. We decided we would only climb Fantham Peak!

We went down after lunch and I found myself becoming more confident. We got to the car-park at about three and drove home.

Looking back we all agreed the experience had been a good one, none of us had worn crampons for so long a period before (seven hours). We had experienced conditions new to us. The views had been superb. Now, I remember sitting on Fantham’s Peak looking across at the three Tongariro peaks jutting above the clouds on the horizon. It was from the side of Ruapehu that I had seen Egmont jutting above a sea of cloud; red in the sunset, and had resolved to climb it. Now I’ve been half way up it.

Nigel Fitzpatrick
Peter Morrison
Chris Hardiman

Roughin’ it on Gourmet?
OLIVINE ICE PLATEAU by Jenny Illy

On this trip we started with fifteen days food on our backs and took twelve days to get out. The "Olivine Ice Plateau Trip" has a nice ring to it, but we only managed to grovel to the edge of the actual Ice Plateau in mist and murk, peer in white space, then sloth back to our nice dry rock bivvy. It was however our goal. The original plans were healthily ultra-ambitious and the whole character of the 'epic' was, as always, different from the original fourth floor library dreams. Rob Hunter, Lynette Hartley and I wobbled separately down to Queenstown camp-ground for the rendezvous by various devious means and spent the evening re-plastic bagging four people food to three people food in the cookhouse.

On February 3rd we caught a bus loaded to the gunnels with bodies and packs. Driven by a total comedian, we headed for the Lake Sylvan track - i.e. access to the Dart River. The 'tramp' was going really well until the bus holed its fuel tank and we were stranded on a bridge for two hours or so waiting for another bus to dump us further along.

Once on our way, the tram lines we were following disappeared and it turned into an African jungle type bramble basin. We came out just before the bluff and as the river was too deep to walk through, we backed up a bit and climbed straight up. Two hours or so later, we were back on the 'beach'. The walk from there, up the Dart and Beansburn to the rock bivvy near the head of the Beansburn was straightforward, but took longer than expected. We met up with four people from the Peninsula T.C. (Christchurch). Rob couldn't stand us any more and decided to escape back out with two of them. While Lynette and I continued on with Norm Gourdie and Sari Lewis for the rest of the tramp. The bivvy rock is a bit down stream of Fohn Saddle. It's a huge rock split in two, has a narrow passage inside linking dark caves, and was good and dry.

We discovered that the next morning our attempt to find Fohn Saddle, a couple of thousand feet above was zonked by zilch visibility with lots of snow flying around - result: return to bivvy and try again tomorrow. The morning was perfect, if not for bulk amounts of ice-coated tall grass. We clambered up and over Fohn Saddle on a "high", spotted Tutoko, and gobbled down lunch on a sunny Olivine ledge. The descent to the Olivine River below wasn't quite such fun and can be conjured up by the words used in Moir's Guide: "Mossy Boulders". We descended at quite a steep angle, and got bluffed by trying to walk by the river too soon. Another hunt for old blazes and deer tracks ensued, along with losing legs between big mossy boulders and clambering among root and rock until the flats at the junction of Olivine and Forgotten Rivers = camp 4 - yeh!

Flat ground, tent up on true right of the Forgotten under beech trees. Mac cheese, salami and veg for tea. From here onwards we had a good spell of four days before the grovel to end all grovels. The Forgotten River originates
up high at Forgotten Col., where we were heading. And
squeezes through a narrow gorge, just before joining up with
the Olivine River, floating bottomlessly through a seven
foot gap at the bottom. We splugged over the 'paved' gorge
track having dumped half our load under a log to be picked
up again after a social visit to the Plateau. We had started
tramping with fifteen days food for an originally planned
fourteen day tramp—"result, gluttony". Anyway we were soon
wandering happily up Forgotten River Flats by the river, in
the sun, idly watching peaks on the Ice Plateau appear one
by one, as we rounded the corner to face the Col. head on—
'Yahoo!!'

Um, yeah, well anyway, it was kinda warm so we
splashed a bit of water hither and thither and climbed
straight up the stream boulders to the highest rock bivy,
next to the cliff base. We spent the next two nights there
with a close up view of the big wide crevassed glacier
filling up the Col and spilling big waterfalls off the
vertical face beneath it. We awoke the next morning to
what we thought was the sound of rain but was actually the
waterfall falling over the bivy roof. However all the tops
were engulfed in a dense floating white stuff. Bother!!!
We ventured out at about 1.20 pm and plugged up across a
small snow face towards big slots which sliced out from the
glacier, and then detoured right onto a big rock outcrop.
Norm disappeared up it, decided there was a way, and we
all followed—up a shute, along a narrow ledge and then
scrambled over the top, to be let down perfectly on the
snow again above the slots. It took about twenty minutes
to race up to the high point on the edge of the Olivine Ice
Plateau—climax of the trip. "Been there, done that!" We
stared into whiteness straining to see some outline of a
vast ice plateau stretching out before us, then zap back
down with dripping cameras to the rocky outcrop where Lynette
was waiting with frozen toes. We were all in the bivy again
by 5 pm. Flash! Lightening... Thunder!! Yamoo! Zap, right
at our front door sending Lynette and I to the roof and back!
Thunder rolled like a thousand stags roaring simultaneously!!

For tea we had a gourmet gloop to celebrate having
reached the "white height" of the trip. That night was clear
and heavenly starry with a full moon lighting up the steep
wet grass slopes so I could sneak out of the biv in the
middle of the night and try to photograph it. Woke to a
clouded sky and it rained off and on while we demolished
more mac cheese, salami. We scampered back down the river
over the gorge track and back to 'base camp', where we retrieved
our bagged food safely from under the log. Salami
invaded our dinner again. Norm was getting highly wary of
the stuff as it kept reappearing in breaky, lunch and dinner!
All good stuff. That night was ultra windy, i.e. I kept one
arm holding down a corner of the tent and the other in
pit keeping warm. The clouds were letting loose with
H<sub>2</sub>O.
In the morning the rain stopped earlier than we realised - being under a sky of dripping leaves. The weather was actually A1 so we vamoosed up to Four Brothers Pass instead of trying out some more "mossy boulders" down the Olivine, an escape to the Pyke River and out the 'loopy' Hollyford track via Diorite River, instead of Olivine Gorge.

The pass was wonderful - amazing green shiny asbestos, X amount of orangy rocks strewn around. There was no snow, lots of warm sun and keas swooped all around. We finally followed Norm hairily traversing left across big loose boulders and then cannoned off down a scree shoot to the grassy Diorite Flats. Somewhere there's a blazed trail going down on the true left of the river away from the gorge. Wherever it may be, we didn't find it the next day.

After four hours of crashing downhill, over, under and through bush, vines and fallen trees, trying to follow deer trails, we still weren't down so we stopped for a subdued lunch. Once on the flat ground at the bottom we located the river thinking of following it through the boggy flats of tangle rubbish, but it dissipated away and we were left with a nightmarish, never-ending (well, almost never) wallow through deep bog, getting tangled in vines and attacked by cutty grass, bush lawyer and bastard grass. This was one of our "easy walking out" days! Nine hours later we staggered into a hut and sunk onto mattressed bunks feeling battered and thankful for the mosquito netting in the hut.

Next day Lynette and I raced to Lake Alabaster hut by midday, jumped in the lake and lay in the sun 'til 7 pm!! Bliss.

At the road-end, around noon the following day, an elderly lady asked who was looking after us!

Lynette Hartley
Jenny Iles

More About Skiing

"Your pitiful floundering," He said with a sneer
"Remind me of tramping I did long ago.
In my youth I was foolish.
I thought that the bush
Was far nicer than cold, sterile snow."

"I'm amazed," I gasped.
"Why did you give it away?
Why spurn the green rivers and trees?"

"Because," he said brightly,
"Now I'm agile and sprightly,
And I can match all this fashion to my skis!"

Bruce.
SKIING THE TARARUAS

by Anthea Simmonds

Pete Mansell's medium party proceeded (at mildly discrepant velocities) up the Waiopuho Track, on the first day of our journey through the mud. (Most of the morning had been spent camping on various street corners awaiting the punctual bus.) About four hours later Waiopuho hut emerged from the rain and mist, its primary attraction being the imaginative painting by a certain seat.

Joined by Richard's party, who, as fate would have it, found our party amazingly difficult to part with. We spent the night in our sardine factory endeavouring not to show those calcium articles known as "teeff".

Sleep was difficult at first with Nigel excitedly throwing shoes at the unfortunate rat that dared to inspect the origin of the lingering scents of mashed potato, fish, instant pud...

The next day to Te Mataiwi was another wander through the mud. The weather being such that it wasn't an easy matter to determine whether one was in fact on the top of a ridge or whether one was not.

We arrived at Te Mataiwi hut to find it rather over populated with V.U.W.T.C. types, all having altered their intentions to greater or lesser extents. The afternoon, which later changed into evening (it was so claggy this change might have passed unnoticed had I not mentioned that it occurred) was passed with the usual occupations - philosophical discussions, singing, cards, table traverses, and of course Doosey Do which provided on-lookers with more entertainment than the participants.

Except for the speedy ascent of Pakemataiwi by a few and Mike R's leatherwood races, Tuesday was a total pike by all. Hero of the bunkroom was Hank Dantry - the hired killer of "You're Lookin' for Trouble" - courtesy of Te Mataiwi hut. Meanwhile in the other room murderers reigned winking with differing degrees of success. The evening brought the inevitable singing, yet another exhibition of 'Doosey Do' and a rather-too-close encounter for my liking with a billy of hot water (sitting on the floor beside a coal range may be a trifle warmer than you think). And wasn't it Richard who on Bushcraft said he's never come across burns on a tramp?

Wednesday heralded more skiing - a definite lack of friction on Gable End Ridge contributed to this. However this meant no one was especially slow on arriving at Ohau Shelter where lunch was partaken of, before sidling out beside Ohau Gorge to meet the bus.

Pete Mansell  Sandra McLellan  Tracy Buckland
Sue Marshall  Morag Meyers  Tonia Schaefer
Anthea Simmonds  Francie Graham  Alex Henderson
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF TRAMPING - Simon Leicester

(1) Time (t) to reach hut is directly proportional to desire to get there and in inverse proportion to pace.

(2) \((f \cdot l \cdot n)^2 = \text{Blister area where } f = \text{frequency of river crossing.}\)
\(l = \text{length of trip.}\)
\(n = \text{necessity of boots.}\)

(3) Intensity of desire to reach shelter = 1

Deterioration of weather

(4) Warmth of pit is inversely proportional to Height of Sun and in direct relation to willingness to pike.

(5) \[ A = \sum_{i=1}^{B} C \text{ where } A = \text{success of Freshers (trip).}\]
\(B = \text{amount of bribery.}\)
\(C = \text{amount of coercion.}\)

for each Fresher \(i\).

(6) In any region managed by a Green Triangle
\[ A = \frac{1}{2}b \times h \]

Where \(A = \text{theoretical area of hut to do Time Warp in.}\)
\(b = \text{booze consumed.}\)
\(h = \text{hallucinations induced.}\)

(7) Experimental Maxim for trampers and students

The long slog = The hard pass.

FURTHER READING

Clelland and Wilson "Aspects of Height Management".

Clelland and Mansell "Green Triangle Equations and Philosophies".

Faulkner "A Climbers relation to peas".

Johnson and I les "Canadian Salmon Botulism - An Advanced Study".

V.U.W.T.C. publication "Metastability of Relationships with Application to Lunchtime Conversation".

Aristotle, Leicester et al "Universal Relevance of Fundamental Principles".
By 3.00 am early on Saturday morning our group (Cam, Don, Andrew, Lloyd, Jane and myself) had finally got to our roadend dying to get some sleep in the van before the sun rose. We couldn't drag ourselves up till 9.30 am, and didn't leave till around 11.00 am for Ketetahi and Mangatepopo. However hitting Ketetahi for lunch we were enticed to stay despite the crowds, but due to the extremely deteriorating weather. As the day wore on the wind grew gale force and the sky reddened dramatically before agitating into increasing turmoil. But these signs were not heeded by our leader who chose to sleep on the verandah. Ah well, each to his own, we thought as we bunked down in the warmth of the over-populated wind beaten hut.

Cam, we were afraid, had been encased in a block of ice on the porch, as he didn't appear for breakfast next morning. Full storm gear had to be attached before stepping out the door, so none of us checked him until the call of nature grew too strong. Totally cocooned in his pit, he finally emerged exclaiming "It's gonna be a fine day!" Our worst fears were realised. He was definitely suffering from exposure. Inside around the fire, we let him loose on the seemingly long-time established residents. Thinking we were set for the day shock waves were sent around the hut when Cam decided we'd be off. Surely not!

At 10.30 am the six of us stood in all our glory, wool and p.v.c., to the supposed amazement of the hut's population. With Cam's maddness desperately trying to rub off on us, we crawled up the wind stricken slopes behind Ketetahi at a 25° angle to the snow. Battling no longer once we descended into Central Crater we had a beat trek down past the Emerald Lakes, through Red Crater and finally out of the snow and across the bare, barren rock stretches towards Oturere Hut.

Finding Alan, Ronnie, Bruce, Phil and Brian in an embarrassing situation ... we soon had those lazy pit bashers playing frisbee outside the hut and other mindless activities to keep warm. Totally sussing Bruce out with liar-dice, Jane and I learnt exceptionally quickly the techniques of that game. After tea, excellent doosey do's
and time-warps, the eleven of us played a one hundred percent participation and concentration game till well into the night. Excellent entertainment was experienced by all, making for a well worthwhile detoured day.

This time we got Murphy's Law sorted out by still being around on a Monday - (as it's always fine on Monday). Proud of ourselves we enjoyed an absolutely beautiful day wandering out through the scattered scrub and scree, beside an awesome Ngauruhoe, to Waiohohonu, only two hours away. From there we chose to visit the local Ohinepango cool water springs and the Old Waiohohonu hut. This hut has a cosy setting in the bush, with Ngauruhoe as its backdrop and an old signpost to the side, making obvious the period it was built, by the wrong height figures given. The hut has double walls filled with pumice for insulation and proudly hangs plaques from different tramping clubs, including V.U.C.T.C. (early 1900's) holding inscribed into them various names. A very worthwhile tiki-tour, put a definite atmosphere on the area and made us aware of how much harder it must have been in earlier days. In appreciation of those times past-by we found a sunny clearing beside the river and soaked in the U.V. rays for an hour or so.

Out to Access Road no. 14 we wandered in the sunshine through the desert-like country happy at the weekend contrasts.

Cam Falkner Lloyd Richards
Jane Binnie Francie Graham
Don Stevens Andrew Cook

FITNESS A DISADVANTAGE

by Bruce Wilson

It's not quite correct to say that our Queen's Birthday trip almost didn't get off the ground, (we spent a lot of time off the ground but we weren't going anywhere!) A horrible Wellington Friday beckoned a jumble of trampers|climbers|hot pool enthusiasts northwards. While northwarding along, near Paekakariki our wheel makes coming-off noises. (Right chaps, I've had enough, I'm off!) From the safety of the local petrol station Mike finally roused Avis, and he and Brian catch a $50 taxi to Wellington Airport. We ring the police in Palmerston North and Waikouru, for them to pass on messages. Then stood outside in the cold when the long-suffering garage proprietor finally managed to close up for the night (leaving his 600 kg, man eating dog in sole charge). Nine o'clock, and along comes Mike, fills his car and disappears. It seems Brian has disappeared too.

Ten o'clock and along comes a police car. Our worst fears are realised. Brian has had an accident, but the call of duty is strong and he has returned to Wellington Airport to further deplete Avis supply of cars.

Eleven o'clock, along comes Brian, and we all leap in. (I wonder if Phil is missing his pack? He, he, I'll bet he's pissed off!) Phil and pack are reunited at Waiopu at 2.30 am. We abandon all pretense of doing a fit trip and accompany the climbing trip to a 3-3.30'ish pit stop at Iwakau shelter.

Saturday: "I feel like a cup of coffee!". "Well, stir yourself then!" A Memorable day (I think). The fit trip surprises itself by strolling at high-speed
to Tama Lakes for lunch. Upon opening packs the five are startled to see several dozen curious people materialise from the scrub. They seemed to resemble members of the Hutt Valley and Heretaunga Tramping Clubs.

Waikohonu hut is full of road end trips, and pressure is strong to push on to Oturere. A similarly full Oturere is reached on dark, after a pleasant walk, and the day ends with accompaniment from the soundtrack of World War II.

Sunday: "We'll freeze our balls off!" - Bruce cried as he was dragged protesting from the loo where he was hiding. Ronnie hustles the troops up the track for a pathetic assault on Ngauruhoe. Zero visibility and freezing wind turn them back at Emerald Lakes. Bruce has the grace to say: "I told you so" only a few times. On the returning journey we are abused by Terry's and Nigel's easy parties, who plodded steadfastly off into the murk. Bouldering on the rocks above the hut makes the day seem more physical than it really was.

Cam's medium-and-quite-lively party encourage party games and foolishness which succeeds in exhausting us more than any other of the day's activities.

Monday. Perfect. Hurried breakfast while the sunrise paints Ngauruhoe pink, then away up the valley again - after a "Timewarp" or two. Young Kemo, a lone trapper at Oturere, and without crampons, accompanies us as we head on up Red Crater with our autopilots locked onto the top of Ngauruhoe. Phil's blisters get the better of him, and he returns to join a crampon-less Alan. Autopiloting up the hill is easy as the snow is just right for crampons. We could almost sunbathe on the top, except that it's freezing cold. After a quick "Timewarp" to an unresponsive crater we slither down in softening snow and trudge back to our packs for lunch by 1.30 feeling a bit stuffed now.

The trip was mostly downhill (Phew!). Ronnie's blisters are so bad he can't walk, but we had to be trotting on, and two hours from Emerald Lakes we hit the carpark, and do a last feeble "Timewarp".
Monday, June 21, about nine at night I found myself in my bedroom sipping cool ale and soaking up the laid back sound of 10CC, which takes me back to my younger days. I'm suffering a bit from post tramp blues à la Jumbo Pike trip. My head still hurts a bit too. Work is a hassle and life is a bore coz everyone's got exams. So the scene is set to take time out with a Van Hartog and reminisce about old times. Soon my mind wanders to far away places, and long gone events. Days have turned into years. Hell, I wonder what's happening at Okarito, I bet Erula is deserted. I wonder if there's anyone in Mt. Arthur hut, wouldn't mind sunbathing in the Orongorongo Valley right now. Dates, people, places come and go like the pages of some vast photo album. Pretty soon I find myself grinning a fond smile. Ah yes, like pages of a well read book my mind has opened at one of the best parts. I think that most fairly experienced trampers have one or two trips which stand out from the seemingly endless list. Whether it be for the company, the scenery, the weather or the events, these trips form our fondest and happiest, yet in some ways, saddest memories.

It is often these memories to which we return at times like this when our morale is sagging. And so I find myself thinking about a trip I did at the end of the 1981 varsity year. This particular trip was destined to be a success from the start. It had all the ingredients. Exams were over and although the weather was poor our spirits were high. We had our own wheels, a good road-end hut in which to repose bulk food, ales and music. But the major ingredient, apart from the great place (central eastern Ruahine's, that is) was the company. Basically a bunch of old mates getting together for a good old school-days style tramp. Not too much organisation, a bit of boyish madness and a whole lot of enthusiasm.

Well, by now you must be wondering what we actually did! After the Penn Creek piss-up, we bade farewell to the rest of the club and headed for Otaki where we picked up Simon Leicester and Tony Gates. From there to Levin, where Andrew Clarke completed the six, the other three being: Peter, myself and Terry. We reached the empty
Triplex hut in the dark, after the usual route finding etc. We immediately attacked the ales with great vigor, helping to keep the tone of the club down.

Consequently the climb to Buttercup Hollow the next day was not in record time. Copious amounts of rather alcoholic sweat was the order of the day. It was quite cool up in the mist, so haste was made over Armstrong saddle and down the spur to Top Maropea hut; passing some epic slips and rather prominent pinnacles looking quite eerie in the mist. Top Maropea is a rather cosy little four bunk, with lots of atmosphere, which I was pleased to return to. After demolishing a tree (well, it was about to fall on the hut, wasn’t it) we ate well and played cards before a well-earned sleep overtook us.

The next day saw no improvement in the weather, yet we raced back onto the tops and headed south towards Te Atuaoparapara, better known as Tutenkhamen. Here we had some excellent bouldering in the many very steep snow gullies. After a couple of hours of tops some good scree provided a fast descent to the bushline where after some discussion the correct route was decided upon. Down. Look, there's the hut, just there, see? Piece of cake, ten minutes, we said. One and a half hours, lots of leatherwood, a lot less skin and a grotty gully later we arrived at Waikamaka hut for a late lunch. Luckily we donned our L.C.G's (a jug for the person who guesses that one!). We shocked even ourselves with the new realms of coarse language which we explored. A certain photo will testify to that:

I can recommend Waikamaka hut, quite a good spot, it has an interesting toilet which will be remembered fondly by Simon for the "emergence" of his nick-name which I cannot really repeat here. In fact, I cannot really repeat any of our numerous nick-names here! Once recovered and cleaned up, we headed for Rangi saddle and its world-famous Spaniard and Speargrass plantations. Once safely negotiated, we found the track sliding down the true left of the creek into Rangi Creek, which like many Ruahine streams afforded us good travel, to the Kawhatau River and Waterfall hut. Waterfall, one of my favourite huts, is in good condition, six man, in a great location - central to many places, but also a worthwhile destination on its own.
Wednesday dawned bright and sunny at last and it was with zest and great yearning for the tops and views that we made our way up Tussock Creek. Soon a likely looking side creek was selected and we began the long strenuous ascent to Broken Ridge. The creek soon turned into a waterfall and eventually an epic slip. We soon found ourselves in a rather treacherous situation with a fairly interesting piece of potential kinetics stretching away below us. Many a brick was passed. It was an unreal situation to be actually yearning for the vast acres of leatherwood beside the slip. Once upon Broken Ridge, the views were fantastic. We made our way south-east over 5550, which is a bit rugged. We observed masses of deer trails to the north before stopping at a tarn for a classic top's lunch. Lots of sun, no wind, and great views.

It soon misted in, and with the mist came an oppressive humid heat rarely experienced on the tops. We made our way down a narrow ridge towards Smiths Stream before dropping left into the open bush making excellent travel. After chasing some donks and negotiating a massive cliff-slip-type thing, we made it into Smiths Stream above the hut (which is marked incorrectly on the map). The bright sunshine, beautiful beech forest and steep snow patched tops made it comparable to some of the most picturesque South Island streams. Smiths Creek hut in fine weather was a great place to be. It served as a fitting climax to another great day's tramp, to spend the evening sunbathing outside.

Fine weather the next day saw us following another picturesque stream bed north towards Middle Stream, before climbing to a low saddle and sidling through Totora forest to the top of farmland. After admiring the magnificent view for a while we descended to Middle Stream for a lazy lunch. Another hour or so saw us back at Triplex. A trip down to the car for fresh supplies of beer, food and music.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT RUAPEHU

Only the cool air
as we left,
Making our way to
the Sun.
The Moon
- guided by its' light,
and its' shadow -
We rose
from silent plane
to silent sky, as
Red and Yellow
Souls,
Gliding on
a crystal
Path to heaven.

by Rob Hunter [June '82]
The Upper YTTY medium trip rated about a cool 0.9 on the celsius scale. That is to say: the terrain was cool, the people were cool, and as we left on Saturday morning it was also 'cool'. However we luxuriated in the sun on the shingle flats at YTTY hut, sauntered on up to YTTY-Otaki forks, sached up to the first forks, and boogled on up past Island Forks up to the West YTTY. This gives me an all-time grade of 0.102. For boring place names - but I can do even worse.

We did six and a half hours the first day (and saw a lot of wet rocks). The YTTY becomes very pleasant above the W/O Forks, in fact, the whole YTTY-Waitatapia is very pleasant and relatively easy country though people keep telling me otherwise.

We found a postage-stamp size bit of ground beside the stream (West YTTY) to camp on and licked it into shape. Everyone played dead after dinner and the game ended about 7 am - and Mike lost coz he got up first - didn't he!

Around 8 am we headed up a spur. Now you may say "a spur" is a bit general but the AA signpost was missing. At the top we regained our orientation by getting our leader to point while spinning him round we obediently followed his direction. We travelled from this position at the head of the Waitatapia watershed down its last ridge and shortly dropped into the Waetatapia by (you guessed it) another spur. By this time we'd had spurs down to a 't'.

There were a whole heap of more wet rocks in the Waitatapia - very much like YTTY, only slipperier. It took ten hours to travel to get from base of Mich stream (where we think we started) to the Otaki Forks.

P.S. I would like to add a line here: that is I'm glad I didn't have to go home and tell my mother I'd been on the Easy YTYY trip. From what I've heard it abounded in sordid squalor and a-cultural activities than can only be whispered about in dark corners. Those decent members of the club can well do without these 'influences'. I recommend the issuing of licences for easy trips from now on so that these 'influences' can be registered and so that the pest-destruction people know where to lay their baits.

Mike Robertson
Donna Scarf
Steve Kohler
Julian Beard

Ian Slux
Jim McKenzie
Mike Dally
HUCK FINN – EAT YOUR HEART OUT!

Cheer Leaders:
Diana Ritchie
Frances Graham

Chief fija thorou:
Mike Robertson

Crew:
Ronnie Locke
Dave Clelland
Pete Mansell
John Hood

They were young, but strong, as they sailed out of Oriental Bay, in a ten foot sloop named S.S. Trumper. They were a foursome, planning to sail round the fountain ahead of the six other rafts. As she set sail from the bay, her sails didn’t flap in the breeze – as she had none. She was, however, a beautiful polystyrene raft seating four. Fifteen minutes later they returned. This is their story.

It tells not of their epic voyage, the storms they weathered and the dangers they encountered. Because there weren’t any. But it is a story of outstanding courage and high adventure.

What would the world do without the bravery of such men? Would Columbus have discovered America? Would Tasman ever have found New Zealand? These and other questions will be neatly avoided as the Victoria University Round the Fountain Raft Race departed the sands of the bay. Ronnie, Peter, John and Dave, with the red-blooded urge to excel, to do the impossible, (and win twenty cans), paddled into the distance.

Others attempted that which we warned couldn’t be done. And couldn’t do it. But our brave crew of the S.S. Trumper conquered the seas of the first leg, as we proudly witnessed their circle of the fountain, that infamous piece of concrete in the harbour.

They headed back towards the bay, with high winds carrying such garbage as rotten tomatoes and apples their way. Such storms didn’t deter our crew as they spotted land and cruised onto the beach, at least fifteen rafts in front.

V.U.W.T.C. conquers the sea! by Francie Graham
Friday night, about 7.00 pm, location: Avalon. 
The weatherman forecasts 75 knot winds, thunder storms, 
and hail; maybe even snow. Sounds good. Afterall, this 
is meant to be an epic trip. Eventual route decided upon 
after much labouring, and was to head for the new Jumbo hut.

After conquering the Rimutakas with little damage 
apart from Eric's insatiable desire to overtake himself, 
Holdsworth Lodge was reached by 10.00 pm, where the over-
whelming desire to pike was eventually countered by the lure 
of several hours of moon lighting in the Atiwhakatu. Mid 
Ati hut came into view around 12.20 am and pit wasn't too 
far away, despite Richard's insistence on sleeping with 
the wood not quite in the door.

Dawn broke, and after we stuck it back together, 
the direct route to new Jumbo was ascended, rather than 
the security of the distant track. The climb was pretty 
basic with open bush, making it less epic than we imagined. 
On reaching the bushline, Jumbo was sighted just in time 
to beat the hail storm that was to last for the next 
twenty four hours. This latest addition to the THC's 
Tararua hotel circuit is a most pleasant way to spend a 
foul and poxy Saturday, although the leaky windows and 
smoky fireplace do give cause for concern (alas but mere 
teething troubles, you might say).

Sunday broke again, and we decided a direct 
descent via the track was quite challenging, especially 
as it was covered with melting snow and hail. Apart from 
the swollen side streams and water logged track the return 
journey was a little more than wet although Eric and I still 
disagree as to whether my route finding went astray towards 
the end of our merry wee jaunt.

Still, V.U.W.T.C's official Jumbo christening 
party completed its mission with flying (albeit soggy) 
colours and carried off yet another first for us all to 
cherish. 

Eric and Erotica were: 

Martin (Eric) Clapham 
Mike Sheridan 
Richard Haverkamp 
and 
Terry (Pen) Patterson
There you are at 5.30 pm on the median strip of State Highway 1 waiting to be picked up, wondering if they'll remember you.

Ahaah! A Runciman bus; but as you stride out to meet it, gazing at its headlights in anticipation of its slowing down to stop, your head swivels slowly round. Yes, right around, so now you're gazing at its tall lights, disappearing off down the motorway at 80k. Apart from feeling and looking a fool, you're awash in puddle spray, and are devising what to do with the trip organiser once you've strung him up on a meat hook.

As it turns out, that bus was only a Tongue and Meat one, your bus arrives some twenty minutes later.

Leaving the handles and B52's behind, you proceed into the black void of the Wairarapa, or the desolate expanses of Otaki. About sixteen hours later the bus grinds to a halt at the roadend, (about half way along the road, if heading for Otaki forks), after the mandatory last load of junk food at the dairy and greasy shop. Everyone grins and jeers as you pull away ahead of the Tongue and Meat bus. So with a banana superthickshake, a double helping of soggy chips, hold-the-dog-fritters, and a few jellybeans sitting in your stomach, you totter off the bus and set about either tracking down your group, or your leader, hearing the usual:

"Damn, my torch was on all that time."

"But I thought a windbreaker would be okay."

"You didn't think."

"Anyone got a spare right boot? 7½?"

"I thought you brought the macaroni."

"Don't worry, I brought two pairs of jeans, have one of mine."

And then you close your eyes, slowly shake your head in despair and sigh, as you see the aspiring community spirited, if-in-doubt-toss-it-in type male, who brings the group carrot supply, just in case we're snowed in for three weeks.

So, after an eternity, the hints you give of looking at your watch constantly, finally get through. You all set off for the hut. While you're admiring (or almost retching) at the legs in front, examining the stitching on the Alp Sports gaiters label, and dodging those slug-type things that the boids up ahead have blasted out of their nostrils, your torch begins to wander a little on the uphill bits and you notice that under that long woolley singlet or bushshirt of the person in front there are no undergarments. So you kindly ask Bruce to take up the rear.
After about fifteen minutes, the cackle turns into puffing and wheezing, your 'Reward' lets your armpits down something horrible, you wish Vic club and the Romney never existed, you're thinking of plausible excuses to pike at the hut all weekend, someone's got blisters, everyone asks "how far is it now?" about four times a minute, you haven't the foggiest where you are, landmarks on the track always seem to take a long long time to pass, someone up front has crook guts and you're spitting out the lumpy bits, your torch is on the blink, you've stubbed your big toe which went septic last weekend, and the person in front has a rattley billy which is really making your blood boil, almost as much as the latest T.V. advertisement catch-phrase which keeps playing over in your mind.

The off-bushshirt stop follows shortly, accompanied just round the corner by the on-off-on-off parka stops. You note that even the fit guys stop for this often and carefully put their parka well down in their pack each time. If the person in front stops for more than five seconds, and the others behind you are bumping into the back of you, it's high time to stoop and swing your pack off. There's always someone who wants to study a map - decide who, after you've dug it out. At this stage the other groups loom up, as they approach they seem to cough more or hold their breaths to suppress the panting noises - they usually assess the situation presented as a full rest-stop. After a few more seconds, those still standing realise they don't really fit in too well, especially if they've still got their pack on, and have to answer enquiries such as:

Mike Robertson abseiling during Rockcraft at Baring Head. Royd Bussell.

David Hanna abseiling at The Rockcraft. Royd Bussell.
"How much party gear did you say you had?"

"Yes, a brew would be nice, to have ready made at the hut" and if you're standing while your leader's sitting then you'll likely be nominated for brew duties in the morning.

From then on, all sidestreams, changes in vegetation, any slight hint of a fork in the track, unusual bark or leaves are deemed as official reststops. Of course, there's always something digging into someone's back which requires a thorough investigation with a committee of six.

So as your destination nears on such forgettable tracks as the Penn Ck, sidle track or the grunt up to Powell, you smell smoke.

"Oh no, who else is mad enough...?"

After kicking the doorstep to get the mud off your boots, in you plod, in your nine pound Falkners, one by one, trying not to wake the already woken. After knocking your head on a hanging tilly and spitting out someone's underpants, you put your torch down but it invariably sits so as to shine directly into the eyes of someone on the bunk. You gingerly step over to the mantle-piece or windowsill, stepping in someone's guts who's in pit on the floor and who is now rubbing his eyes looking up into your woolley singlet, and you finally get across and blindly feel around for any sort of a candle and matches. You find the tacky cold remains of a mac-cheese they couldn't hold on to.

After your hot jelly and chocolate bikkie, sock wringing session, casting your vote (if at Penn Ck. hut) everybody decides it would be nice to actually locate all their own gear before they hit pit. Even though you've just arrived, your gear is spread to all four corners of the hut which now takes on the atmosphere of a Salvation Army centenary used clothing and camping equipment gala day.

When the stampede whimpers to an end, and the cacophony dies to a quiet political debate or the beginnings of a snore, you wriggle into pit, and fold your body so as to adapt to the appropriated floorboard ration. As you close your eyes you breathe in deeply for the first time... through your nose. Your cozy little corner turned out to be the elected dump-PILE for everyone's steaming wet socks, and the dung from the paddocks never did actually wipe off, you'll always have a table or bunk leg in your neck, the next guy's knees will be in your back, your bushshirt pillow never forms the comfortable shape, there's something poking into you from below that's big enough to pester but too small to warrant investigating, someone is constantly fishing last minute things out of their pack, everyone's concentrating and picturing the chewing and swallowing process of someone who's eating some chocolate, the guy with the crock guts is on the other side of you, everyone has those rustley, noisy sleeping bags, everyone turns over out of phase, and someone has to crack the joke about

"And now we can all get some sleep"

but it's not so funny as everyone gives their token chortle or flying Falkner, thinking it's the last episode as..

....the Tongue and Meats turn up.
1. Down to earth skiing.
2. Beatles song.
10. Things which fall out of trees.
12. Not now, ...
15. 2x Spanish yes.
16. To sit upon.
17. Gentleman... Indian.
19. To hide the grey hairs.
20. Grading ?
21. From the heart.
23. Annual publication.
25. Trendy.
26. Rhymes with sheep.
27. Man.
29. Unique female organ.
32. Charlie's Chook.
34. Now
35. Egyptian deity.
38. Ridge - Northern Tararua.
41. Tararua peak.
44. Mountain Range.
45. ..., far and wide.

1. Crevasse.
2. Breakfast delight ?
3. Particular type.
4. Record.
5. Ailments.
6. After 5 down.
7. Alienated.
8. A grunt.
9. Related to 2 & 5 down.
13. Gobble up.
16. No such word.
22. Trapped.
28. Ladies name.
30. Divides two watersheds.
31. Bear country.
33. Je comprende.
37. Prominent triangular peak.
40. Tree type.
42. Thanks.
43. Who took Latin for example ?

Courtesy - David Clelland
& Simon Leicester.
By February 19, 1982, Man's knowledge of the world was expanding rapidly; he had reached the Poles, made journeys across deserts and mountain ranges hitherto thought impassable. There seemed no limits to the courage of intrepid and resourceful men and women, prepared to test the barriers of physical endurance, to accept the ultimate challenge of unknown dangers in the unceasing continuance of V.U.W.T.C. Tararua trips.

Four of this new breed were Peter Mansell, Kirsty Richards, Scott Peterson and Simon Leicester, who in 1982 against all the best advice of friends and colleagues decided to embark on a truly awesome quest - the Holdsworth McGregor, Holdsworth peregrination. Reaching Powell hut on Friday night one of the female members of the trip (who wishes to remain anonymous) removed her brand new boots and single pair of socks to reveal gaping red congealed crevasses in each heel. But after surgery with her band-aid heavy duty kit she was once more journey fit.
Setting off as soon as it was light ... well, say nine twentyish, we were going for the summit and half an hour later Mt. Holdsworth lay beneath us. Striking 'out' northeast we followed the tops in fine weather stopping for consumables (lunch) just past Angle Knob. The sky was threatening rain as we reached McGregor Biv where one party member happened to comment "Shit, it's only one man." Soon, packed in like a 92g Watties (salt added), we hit pit and woke to a clear, fine but freezing morning. The destination was mid Atiwhakatū but if there was any time left they would go on to look for the source of the Otaki and the so-called "silly" route to Kaitoke. Like a real Japanese tourist Peter's camera was out taking in the rare scenes of clear Tararua ranges every hundred metres, on the path down to Atiwhakatū stream via the Angle Knob hut site with Simon disappearing now and then in the now overgrown track.

On reaching mid Atiwhakatū hut in bulk epic weather, Kirsty tried to put us off our dinner by revealing her now decaying feet, a real St. Johns case by now. Following the Atiwhakatū out, in again fine weather (three days continuous! is that a record?), we headed back to the western hills, while on the way indulging in such pastimes as pointing out petrol stations we had never visited. And yet another V.U.W.T.C. trip was notched in the handle of time as without persons of courage and determination such as these four, eastern Tararua trips would be nothing but an empty myth.

Kirsty Richards packing at McGregor Biv.

Take back sand-flies to thou on high
He who loves all things
And if this deed cannot be done
Then remove their bleedin' wings.

Stolen by David C.
We arrived at the Waihohonu road-end at about 2.30 am. The sun was not shining. Aaah, I thought, another few hours and I'll be warm, asleep in a hut. I got out of the van and sunk into the mud; goodbye dry socks. With my morale shattered, I got back into the van.

Nobody wanted to move, so we took the packs out of the van and settled down to sleep in it. There were just the seventeen of us. The only way to sleep was to sit resting your head on your knees. Despite discomfort, several people managed to snore.

Next day we awoke and looked out with bleary eyes at the grey clag and brown mud. Still noone wanted to leave, but by seven we were moving and arrived at Waihohonu hut after eight. There we met some trampers who assured us they were tramping in the Ruahine's, unconvined, we ate our breakfast and set off again at full speed for Oturere hut. I was put at the back to waylay and slow down the "Ruahine" trampers who might try to pass us. Most of the easy party sped ahead with Terry's medium two group. The Ruahine trampers never materialised.

At Oturere hut there was half a days sleep followed for the easy party by a delightful mince stew and a solid spoonful of spagetti. Spagetti should not be put in till the water has boiled.

Sunday, we awoke yet again, and we were ready to leave by nine. But we decided to wait for the medium party, and for the day to warm up. About ten, we meandered off, I again at the back, so as to have nice steps plugged for me (I had wanted an escalator, but was cruelly rebuffed by my comrades). The weather was not kind; there were no brilliant views and even Blue Lake had turned a claggy shade of grey. We passed Cam's medium group on their diversion to Oturere hut. Ketetahi was full as always. There was one group constantly lighting primi.

"Stand back for the flare - 1, 2, 3, 4" and a four foot flame would shoot up blackening the cupboards above.

After lunch myself and the other males went for the hot pools. Getting out was an experience. Have you ever stood starkers in a minor gale trying to put on four layers of tangled clothing?

Monday morning we were awake at 5.30 am. The other people in the hut had decided, after two days, to leave Ketetahi:

"Yep, it's fine - we'll go today, heh, heh - wouldn't have seen nothin' yesterday."

Monday was gloriously fine (understatement) and we left for Ketetahi roadend after lunch. I was at the back to make sure no-one got lost.

"Well" says Mike, "How was leading your first trip?"

"Pretty easy - you just follow everyone else."

Many thanks: Hugh, Laura, Sue H., Kirsty, Sandra, John, Sue M.
TUT TUT...  
RUAHINES FIT  
by Malcolm Drummond

Arriving at Kawhatau Base at 1.00 am after a Thursday night start we were met by drizzle. On getting out of our pits we discovered that the base was locked, so half of us slept in the porch and the other half in the vans.

The next day saw us off up the hill onto the Hikurangi Range aiming for McKinnon Hut. But it started snowing and the wind got up, so we headed down a ridge and onto the track to Crow Hut. We got about half way down when some of us saw a silver hut sitting in a clearing. When we got down to it, it wasn't there! (Must have mobile huts up here). With the weather worsening, we ran down to Crow Hut, got out our pits and spent the rest of the day there.

The next day was just as bad so we slept (Terry for eighteen hours that day!), read and cooked bread without yeast, or baking powder, using F.S. flour that had little red lumps in it (possum bait?). It was here that Terry cooked the worst custard I've tasted in my life. It looked like little yellow bits of puke floating around in a sea of brown water and tasted the same - bloody awful.

On Sunday morning it had stopped raining and wasn't so windy so we took off up the ridge to the Mokai Patea Range where we hit snow. Then we dropped off the other side to Wakelings Hut for lunch. After crossing the river (some barefoot! eh Mike S?) we walked up the low spur to the top where we left the track and went south along the main ridge, then off a spur into the river below Top Maropea Hut. Here we found a newly marked track with fluorescent pink paint on nearly every tree. This took us up to the hut which we got to just before dark.

That night was clear and so wanting to use the tripod I'd carried all the way I got up at 1.00 am, tripped over Mike S. and Lynette who were lying on the floor!, and climbed onto the water tank and got a photo, only to find later that it didn't turn out.

Monday morning was fine so we made a relatively early start and headed off up to T.C. Atuopara Maara. Many photos later we got to the top with an impressive view of Mt. Ruapehu, the Kaimanawas and Hawkes Bay.

Getting down the other side was a bit of a problem with icy scree slopes the order of the day. Terry even showed us that he could skate.

Finally we got to the bush line and one long epic bushbash through leatherwood later we reached Walkamaka Hut. Terry (who thought he was smarter than the rest of us) decided to go down a creek instead, but slid down a waterfall and had to be rescued from a bluff by Mike S.

From there we made our way up the Walkamaka River and over Rangi's Saddle, then down to waterfall Hut where we had a late (3.00 pm) lunch. After lunch we were off again, this time to cross the Hikurangi Range and get to Pourangi Hut by dark - hopefully. The going was good to start with but Pinnacle Creek got steeper until near its head we were climbing up a decaying rock slope with virtually no handholds.
After a lot of scrambling and sliding and a change to clean pants (for me anyway) we got to the top where it levelled off. The mist then closed in on us and we missed the track down the ridge to the Pourangaki Hut. So we instead took another ridge which bluffed and then ran into a steep gully. After more sliding and sliding and another change of pants, we made it down to the creek and the headwaters of Pourangaki. We followed this throwing our packs over and jumping down ten foot waterfalls until dark where we set up a fly in an epic campsite at the junction of two creeks. Next morning Mike S. woke us early and we were off at 7.00 am so we could get to the road-end by 3.00 pm. Around the first bend in the river was a picturesque flat campsite with overhanging manuka trees and wide grassy flats. We kicked ourselves a few times then went on down the river still climbing around or jumping over the odd waterfall until we came to an impassable one, which caused us to take to the bush and sidle around it, then some bluffs. This took us an amazing two hours to get two hundred yards downstream through bush lawyer and supplejack, before we could get back to the river.

Here we saw Pourangaki Hut in the distance and so inspired by this sight we started off down the river again - only to be told by Mike S. that we had to go faster to get to the road end by 3.00 pm. We by-passed Pourangaki Hut and got to Kelly Knight Hut for a ten minute lunch then hurried out along the gorge track and finally got to the car park by 2.45 pm - no worries Mike.

Here we met up with most of the other groups, and after waiting for the others we got into the vans and made our way back to civilization.

Members of F.E. trip were:

| Mike Sheridan |
| Terry Patterson |
| Bruce McKinley |
| Lynette Hartley |
| Mike Robertson |
| Malcolm Drummond |
POTHOLING MT. OWEN

by Matt Squire

The good thing about North West Nelson is that the maps are so detailed and accurate - at least for everyone except where our brave party ventured.

Travelling down on the ferry - I think it was rolling, not us and then on to the Wanganui Road-end in a big Newmans bus, the roadend arriving at 3 am along with three skinheads and an excrutiatingly heavy frost.

Next morning was terribly cold, but what a day! Brilliant sun and no wind. This of course was our epic day, with three hours along the road up the Rolling River to Courthouse Flat, where after careful contemplation of the hill ahead of us we decided to stay put for the rest of the day.

Monday morning, another brillant day, and a nasty grunt up to 4,500 feet. It wasn't too bad though, because when you think about it, fifty pound packs are quite light. Those of us crazy enough (i.e. everyone except Donna) climbed a thing called Billy's Knob (5,400 ft). Amazing views and many photos preceded our drop back down to Donna and the packs and on to Gravity Pass hut. The track was quite fun as it made its way below some pretty impressive bluffs. The hut itself was on a kerosine cooker and stove.

Tuesday morning dawned on us with yet another fine day. It was, however, still extremely cold, but that was luxury. We followed the glacial moraine called the "Railway Embankment" in knee high snow and spirits. After a couple of hours we hit the top of Sentinel Hill (5,300') and gazed in awe at the wonderful view: thick, fresh snow for miles around in an area called Sanctuary Basin, or as we prefer to call it: Pothole Doomsday Basin. Being a rather gullible lot we believed what the guide book said about climbing Mt. Owen, but unfortunately for us the guy who wrote it was a grandmaster of the understatement. (Majoried it in at Lincoln.) We were not content with this, we had to be stupid as well, because we were convinced we could see an easy route. Quote from the guide book: "An easy stroll ... with your hands in your pockets." Well, it wasn't.

We didn't manage it with our hands in our pockets, but Mike did manage something with his legs in a pothole. That was enough to decide not to bother further with Mt. Owen. Incidentally, Mt. Owen is the highest peak in the Nelson Forest Park, standing at a mighty 6,300 ft. So now we have nothing to boast about. The rest of the day was spent making our way through knee high snow to a saddle into the very top of Nuggety Creek. Finding ourselves unfortunately bluffed above the creek we had to detour for a while till we could pick a route down into the creek, in a huge impressive basin. Another hour, and a bit of bush bashing found us at Branch Creek Hut in the Fyfe River. Tapioca pudding that night capped off a rather full day.

Wednesday morning saw yet another brillant day, starting at 8 am with a walk up to the head of Fyfe River to Turks Head River. Bush bashing is fun, especially uphill through snow, but it was worth it for the view. Several basins and gullies later we found ourselves atop an unnamed peak at 4,800 ft. in deep snow. Here we had lunch amid 360° of snow capped mountains, Mt. Patriarch being most impressive. We could also see the Southern Alps as far down as Cook.
The ridge we were to follow down to Kiwi Log Cabin could also be seen. It looked easy. The map made it look even easier — it wasn’t! We followed along the ridge for two hours until we were suddenly bluffed. Up until this point the trip had gone really well so I suppose it’s fair enough that it was cut short by an impassable 100 ft. bluff. So at 3:30 pm we were turned back to where we’d had lunch and down the Creek (which was dry) towards Dogface Flat in Nuggety Creek. 6 pm and it was pitch dark and the Flat was nowhere to be seen. We pushed on a bit with torches. We were soon well and truly bluffed and well and truly stuffed. A campsite was made in a little flat spot in the bush. The dried up creek made dehy food impractical so the hoards had to go hungry. We all slept well that night — sort of!

Breakfast was had next morning after we bush bashed down the creek into the Nuggety. So we eventually made Dogface Flat without too much trouble and thence via a track up through bluffs to make our way back to Courthouse Flat (great side track — climbed about 1,500 ft — fun, fun). It was one of those well marked tracks that you can’t see on the ground.

Friday morning was another brilliant clear day, but we didn’t care and stayed in tent until about 10 am. After a leisurely mac-cheese we slowly packed and began yet another epic day which saw two hours of road walking. Friday night found two other Vic parties camping in the same place telling relative bullshit stories about how epic their trips were.

Our final day was filled with a one hour walk to the road end, a bus trip to Nelson for a health food stop and on to a Picton pub. The 6.40 pm crossing was great fun, but this time I think it was us who were rolling because apparently the sea was quite calm.

Overall it was a great trip — it was the weather that made it. There were a few nasty bits but that was LUXURY — I’m a starter for next year.

We were
Mike Robertson (our glorious leader)
Donna Scarff (without tussock)
Malcolm Drummond
Dave Adams
Ross Wakelin
and myself, Matt Squire.

Appearances

You feel into the darkening valley —
"Did we come up there?"
It looks so smooth and innocent
Dragging veils across its face.
And hiding shyly in the gloom
"Hard to believe, eh?" with false gusto;
"Piece of cake" I lie with ease.
"But it was such a horrible grovel",
[Well yes, you’re right,
But I’m never going to admit it.]
The year was 1982 and the time was Easter. Well, when I say Easter I mean more around and including Easter; Easter itself was in there. Any way after spending a shortish to longish drive à la Avis, performing mindless, pre-school, negative I.Q. games with Richard "Andretti" Haverkamp steering, we were off the main drag. The Levin fish 'n chips didn't agree with us all, but we'd have to blame Alan's driving, as one party member rapidly left the van, everyone climbing over each other to let him through. Mark took this opportunity to pull up some "toilet paper" from the side of the road as he thought he'd rely on 'Bush Bidets' rather than Purex softouch. We reached our destination; a gate beside a road! It was pissing down as we hit pit in various forms of shelter (Nigel said the gearstick was very comfortable).

Morning! And Huey's bullshit chunder still spewed forth from above as Cath woke to find herself doing an Aramoana stint around the tent. After a quick breakfast we were on our way, though an Arctic high velocity trade-wind tried to change this. Totally soaked and refrigerated we reached Kelly Knight hut, our supposed lunch stop, but after everyone commented on how comfortable the bunks looked and how cozy the fire was and how nice the paint-work looked we decided to stay. With Mark constantly walking into beams and Scott into hanging lamps, the morning of Saturday was upon us.

The wind has ceased, so it was an ideal opportunity to head onto the tops and on with our planned trip. (Well, perhaps not ideal, you know. I mean it was still raining and it was completely overcast, but the team spirit was great. Well, not great perhaps. I mean it was okay. The track was great though, but it was uphill and it headed into the cold. Sorry it wasn't ideal was it? But the track was new and well cut. Well, actually it wasn't all that well cut taking into account the avoiding huge thistles, stinging nettles and losing the track at the top. Bloody Hell! Whose stupid idea was it to take off that day?)

Hitting snow at the snowline we also hit wind, sleet and cold, so after four hours of plugging with negative visibility we thought we were at the turn off ridge. Well, when I say "we" I really mean Sue and Cath. They conferred with map and compass and I'd have to say the ridge we headed off down did turn right and I mean, it was only two hours away from the proper ridge. The fact that it headed back in the direction we had just come is a mistake that any woman one could have made. I wouldn't want to put their tracking ability down, oh no, never for a minute, I mean they've been on a first aid course.

The decision was made to bash on down the spur to the snowline as Huey was being a real bastard and one of the team was feeling a bit knackered, but I think anyone would have rather contested a round of Jewish international pig-tickling than continue on, that day.

Finding a spot in the leatherwood, Johnston demolition earthworks ltd. went into operation and a clearing was formed that 'looked' flat.

Into pit to retrieve our feet and hands except of course our gallant leader who hacked (was forced really) the conditions and cooked the mac-cheese and for this was awarded the stainless steel yashmak for bravery. Lying in
pit with a Himalaya mountain chain in my back and a Grand Canyon under my rectal area, Mark commented that the pack he was lying on wasn't too bad.

Sunday arrived and the weather had cleared up some, but we decided to head back, as we were too far behind the planned trip with only two days left. So with Bruce replugging our steps at great pace and only disappearing below the surface once, we returned to Kelly Knight only having had to face a snowball in the face.

![Mark Johnston](image)

**Sue Ennor partaking in the Easter spirit atop Mangaweka, Ruahine.**

Monday was upon us and lo and behold, blue (a forgotten colour) sky was there! Cath, having had to tackle the worrying pressures and hardships of sub-zero conditions, and Nigel, having had to face the extremes of physical endurance, decided to rest, well deservedly, but a day .... okay, so they were a couple of lazy pikers! So we bid them adieu and were off for the tops. We had a view for some minutes before the inevitable clag moved in as well as the human clag, i.e. Richard and Paul's 'daytime romp through the trees' parties. Conquering Wooden Peg we headed off for a triple peak triumph, taking in Iron Peg and the mighty Mangaweka with a certain person, unmentioned in this script, doing the eight second hundred metres to race first to the trig. God that stuffed me out...oops. Back we went and down to Purity hut where we set up the tent. After a dinner of Govin's and prunes and custard, Sue excited the scene to be 'one with nature'. With the great view before her she was all set until a certain two roudy lads stood nearby spouting off songs and general silly behaviour which was bound to tighten up anyone's sphincta muscles (she said she lost the mood). Morning arrived with clear views of snow-laden Ruapehu. Off down the ridge and onto the farm land following the notice that said only cross the fences by style. Mark and I crossed the first one by the Asiatic Nureyev style and others by the adapted swan lake style crossing style. And so endeth the Ruahine's 1982 Frigidaire expedition.

We were: Cath Alington
Mark Johnston
Nigel Fitzpatrick
Scott Petersen
Bruce Law
Sue Ennor.
A beautiful Friday night in late August saw a Picton bound ferry leave Wellington's shores with five trampers on board. Later that same night we piled out of the Newmans bus in Nelson and within fifteen minutes, were ensconced in pits under trees beside Nelson Cathedral.

After a generous and cheap breakfast at Cobb & Co. next morning, we found ourselves Lewis Pass bound in the sheepskin comfort of another Newmans bus. We found David Clelland hunched over a fire by the road bridge over Jackson Creek where the bus deposited us. His stiffed knee, he'd decided, would make further tramping somewhat hazardous, so we were down to five. We portioned out his party food, winched packs to packs, wished David well, took a deep collective breath, and planted boot. We were not to see another person for a whole week. The Lewis Pass country was ours. At 3 pm, after only 45 minutes, we pitched our two flies on a small piece of it, about a mile up Jackson Creek below where Bruce had found a blazed track leading tops-ward. Out came my poker dice, and Simon and Jenny, new to the intricacies of the time-honoured game of liar dice, soon established themselves as truly superb liars. Jenny managed to find something hilarious in every hand she threw. An extremely cunning way of confusing and baffling the rest of us honest liars.

The rain bucketed down most of the night but Sunday dawned tantalizingly clear and the cold morning spurred us on up the good blazed track which led on to the tops (two hours). Superb views over the Victoria Range, impressive Mt. Haast and down the Maruia Valley.
Bruce and I cut some steps down a hard snow slope to a large snow basin. I put on crampons (but they weren't really necessary and weren't used for the rest of the trip) and led off up to the top of the ridge from where Lake Christobell, surely the hub and scenic gem of this area, was spread out below us. Lunch in the snow on the bushline with a glimpse of the sparkling lake below us. The 1,800 ft. bush-bash down to the lake was straightforward and quick. This was followed by what seemed like a long walk around the crystal clear lake and on to a good track to the flats at its head. Much gear-drying, fire-lighting, brew-consuming and frisbee throwing ensued at this sun-drenched paradise and it was universally agreed this would be the ideal place for next year's VUWTBC Freshers Trip.

Half an hour up the Blue Grey River took us to Christobell hut, where we spent a comfortable night. Monday saw fresh snow smattering the bush down to 1,000 ft above us and an 8.30 am start. The track took us up beside, and sometimes above, the lovely Blue Grey River. It continued through quiet mossy forest until our pace was slowed to a crawl when bush gave way to deep, jumbled avalanche debris covering the river. Sinking knee-deep at every step in this was enervating, but the horrible soft snow plugging side up to Robinson Saddle was worse – Peter's lead always seemed to land him in waist-deep holes, and it was here that Simon became known as "Giant-step Leicester". It took us two hours to cover the 800 feet from the Blue Grey to the Saddle and we arrived in a total white out. Dedicated compass and map work, trudging across tops with almost no visibility followed. And we knew we were on the right spur down to the Robinson when I bum-slid over the top of a marker! A late lunch (2.30) on the bushline and then a quick hour down the steep track (on the main spur ending in forks in the river (not as shown on the map).

We arrived at Top Robinson hut, in the middle of a big clearing, surrounded by steep bush-clad valley sides. Peter's startling fire and brew-making ability came to the fore with the brew taking a mind-boggling twelve minutes from match to mug. This was the first of countless brews to be consumed at this hut.

The rain started overnight and Tuesday did not look promising. A look at Jenny's heels, covered with blisters of medical journal proportions, confirmed this as a rest day (for some). Bruce and I nobly headed out at 8 am into the bleakness of the day for a recce of our planned route. Horrible weather thwarted our sussing out the intricate last part of our possible route to a pass below Mt. Barron. We arrived back at the warm hut at 12.30 suffering from the first signs of brew withdrawal symptoms.
Liar dice by the fire and numerous brews all afternoon were followed by a powerful bean stew (one with consequences for days after). I told a couple of shaggy ghost stories and tottered early to pits suffering from an overdose of brews. Four inches of snow plastered the hut, clearing and bush. The day was soon clear, cold and sunny. The hut was photographed from every conceivable angle, and we left at 8.00, after I'd spent almost an hour mending my busted pack strap. We bash ed through snow-covered bush, the last forty-five minutes being one of nature's true grovels, with one and a half feet of fresh snow covering the trees on the bushline. We burst out into another world. The mountains at the head of the Robinson were absolutely saturated with snow down to the valley bottoms. Mt. Boscowen and Mt. Barron rose supreme above the others. We could have been in mountains twice the size, as the heavy snow accentuated bluffs and ridges. Taking short, sharp turns at plugging we reached the last tricky piece in the jigsaw of our route. We ploughed down a thigh deep powder slope with avalanches coming down on all sides, with Bruce plugging fast steps up to the relative safety under a rocky ridge. We were all given a fright when a great mass of snow slid silently round the side of our rock ridge and stopped only ten feet from us. It was onto this avalanche path that five minutes later I plugged heart-pounding steps onto the safety of an unbroken 60-70° slope. Twenty minutes up this we were on top of the pass below Mt. Barron that we named Waiheke Pass (so far as we know, no-one else has travelled this route between the Waiheke and the Robinson.)

Before us was the large snow basin of the upper Waiheke and some dedicated thigh-deep wading down this, took us out of avalanche danger and time for a late lunch. Within five minutes, the hot sun and blue sky had been replaced by a freak heavy snowfall and we abandoned lunch, swapping it for storm gear and a hurried and undignified departure. It just as quickly cleared and a grovel down through scrub took us to the moss-covered Waiheke Valley, a scene totally different from that of the Robinson. We found a group of rocks less epic than all other groups and pitched our fly over that. That night was spent relaxing in snug pits, eating a stomach-expanding fish kedgeree and cheesecake dinner and reflecting on a truly amazing day. Sleep came easy.
A freezing morning kept us cocooned in pits until after 9.00. It was another glorious winter day. We soon reached the wide bench track above the Waiheke River that leads to Anori Pass (an old pack track used by the Maoris last century) and reached this low (3,300 ft) Main Divide pass soon after 11 am. An unforgettable lunch stop began an hour later when we hit the Doubtful River. The sun shone from a cloudless sky down on the large snowy mountains at the head of the Doubtful River, birds sang, the frisbee flew and we drank in the beauty of a Lewis Pass winter. Half-way down the Doubtful River, Jenny gave away her boots and wore my sandshoes. Doubtful hut was reached at 4.00 and was a disappointingly small and dirty three bunk hovel. We pitched the flys on the flats below it and sat by our hot fire that evening with the temperature plummeting to -2°C behind our backs and a full moon overhead. This trip was notable for its high musical content. Every few minutes a spontaneous burst of singing and whistling would shatter the peaceful stillness of the night.

Friday morning saw us trudging steadily up through open bush on the true right of Devilskin Stream, following a faint trail and we reached the deep snow of the low-slung Devilskin Saddle (4,050 ft) at high noon. A cold wind sent us scurrying down the other side to the head of Blind Stream without stopping. Jenny twice disappeared into the deep holes left by our boot prints in the snow and had to be dug out, my sandshoes proving a mixed blessing. The first ever VUWT sashand crossing of Devilskin Saddle in winter was celebrated in Devilskin biv, a comfortable and cozy bivvy situated beside Blind Stream about 300 ft. below the Saddle.

We lost the marked trail to the Nina half-way across a steep bush-covered scree slope, but still reached Nina hut an hour and forty minutes after leaving our frozen feet at the biv. Small, concrete floor, five midget-sized sacking bunks - Nina hut didn't look like a suitable venue to celebrate our last night. However, we soon made it our home: Peter, black bristles peering out from pit, remarked on how greasy trampers became without a wash for seven days (from that moment on, becoming known as "Greasy Pete"); Big Bruce hunched druid-like over a complex of billies and plates, cooking our chow mein by candlelight; Simon and I reading books in attitudes of concentrated repose; and Jenny taking the whole scene in with swift strokes of her pen.

On Saturday, after Bruce had consumed titanic portions of everybody's mac cheese brekky, we bolted down the lovely Nina Valley and hit civilisation in the form of the NZDA Lodge beside the Lewis Pass road at 10.30. Bruce's frisbee was thrown, the Newman's bus successfully flagged down, and epic rain and floods kept us entertained until we were disgorge at Tahuna Beach in storm-ravaged Nelson at 5.00. Shoppers! What bliss. Decked out in our best singlets, fibre boots etc., we hit a soggy Nelson and stretched our stomachs to the limit at a mighty little Mexican restaurant. A grand way to end a trip I thought as we staggered to our cabin that night.

Good food, great company, tremendous country, what more could I ask for? Except perhaps to go back and spend another week experiencing a Lewis Pass winter sometime - I'm sure I could not get too much of it.

The party:
Brian Dobbie (the one to blame)
Big Bruce Wilson
Jenny Iles (sometimes known as missiles)
Simon (Giant-step) Leicester
and
Peter (Grease is the word) Mansell

"Once you get the fire going it takes bugger
S.M.U.T.T. by Matt Johnson

As a founding member of the Society for the Meaningful Use of Tramping Terms (S.M.U.T.T.), I would like to report on recent discussions held between myself and my colleagues in the S.M.U.T.T. committee, about the serious misuse of some valued tramping terms by members of our tramping club. These discussions were prompted mainly by certain plebs using the word 'Epic' to describe such wooferish activities as: crossing cold rivers with water level below the knee, courting members of the opposite sex, and returning from a weekend trip a day late. Many of these activities are simply 'foolish'. (Only when you have become an experienced trapper can you consider your follies to be the outcome of unavoidable circumstance, and call them 'classics' or 'epics'.)

The S.M.U.T.T. committee considers that the following examples provide contextual definitions of the terms 'physical', 'technical', 'classic', and 'epic'. This should clear up any doubts about the correct usage of these important terms.

PHYSICAL: Sweating up the Puffer track on a hot morning with a pack full of booze, for the Gourmet trip.

Running down to the railway station after a 5-6 lecture, with a full weekend pack, and ten minutes to catch a train.

Grunting up 5,000 ft. of Adams Lambert ridge with a 55 lb. pack, in the rain, through vertical-to-overhanging bush, half-tracked waist-high spaniard grass, prickly scrub, pot-holed tussock, rock and snow.

TECHNICAL: Abseiling head-first down Easterfield on a single rope, with handcuffs on your ankles and a supermarket bag on your head.

Front-pointing up the Terrace at 6 am. in mid-winter, in a hail-storm, with one broken crampon and short fingernails.

Getting bombed by a slab avalanche and digging each other out without any equipment (Ketetahi 1981 - elements of physical, classic and epic also).

Playing 'Cuba Mall', tipping bucket fountains with human buckets, double browns and a Totora tree.

Trying to de-cork a bottle of cheap sherry, with the blunt end of a rusty mercator, when you're half pissed and with the other arm around an equally-pissed wide-eyed fresher.

CLASSIC: Camping on the Tauherenikau riverbed on a fine night, then having a record rainfall that turns your campsite into an island.

Having one Avis van stuck in scoria on the Tukino 'road', then getting the other one stuck whilst trying to rescue it.

Leaving your boots at home on a Queen's Birthday trip to snow-covered Tongariro National Park.

Leaving your parkas behind (when you're Chief Guide) on a Gourmet trip to Totora Flats, and having a couple of inches of snow on the flats.

Buying a used car and watching it burst into flames the next day in a San Francisco street (with three of us inside!!).
EPIC: A three hour chemistry exam with a hangover and flat calculator batteries. No, not epic.

Two consecutive days in the hills with Murray Masochistic, but not epic.

Your first Fresher's trip, with wet muddy jeans, wet pit, smudged mascara, animalistic companions, constipation, incipient alcoholism and enormous blisters. Great but not epic.

Groveling down a steep, scrubby bank in the twilight hours of the first day of your Easter trip. Tedious, but not epic.

Spending a week in a freak snowstorm, camped 6,500 ft., cut off from most of your food and gear, with swollen feet and miles from anywhere. Epic.

GARDEN OF EDEN EPIC

by Simon Leicester

Monday 25th December 1981

Destination: HariHari, deadline sometime that night so long as the bike doesn't breakdown, hit a drunken train etc. Mid-afternoon, and I cruised into downtown HariHari. After meeting up with the rest of the team we adjourned to HariHari Metropolitan swimming pool. A good night at D.B. HariHari followed with some Yank singers drawing a full turnout of West Coasters. (So it seemed anyway.)

Tuesday 29th

S.L. Shuttle service ferried troops to the last house before we headed up the Wanganui Valley with creaking packs and groaning bodies. The track skirts the true right bank all the way to Hunters hut and at Annoyance Bluff we were surprised to meet six T.T.C's also heading for the hut. That night we double bunked with mosquitos plus their mob.

Wednesday 30th

We departed Hunters in drizzle and mist leaving the Wanganui and heading up the ridge paralleling the true left of Lambert river. The ridge track turnoff was an unexpected find amongst dense supplejack and dripping bush, since the route isn't used a hell of a lot. And there's virtually nothing solid to put markers on anyway.

After a 1,500 ft. climb the weather crapped out and since the planned camp was another 1,500 ft. mostly of tussock, we piked for the afternoon.

Thursday 31st

Another pike day ensued giving us time to get dressed for the New Year's ball in our nylon castle.
Friday 1st

All tired after a rip roaring rage from the previous night.

The weather is looking brighter and after reaching the tussock windows in the mist gave us glimpses of the Adams to the west and Jones flat in the Wanganui to the north. Lunch was spent amongst neat shale crags and tarns at the top. After traversing across some amazing flat tussock basins extending to the s.w. we climbed a barrier range to the south, boulder hopping up one of the numerous streams.

At the top we got in some glissading down a steep snow couloir leading to the east branch Aciphylla creek. We made camp beneath the couloir, giving us superb views of Mt. Kensington to the west in the mist free sunset.

Matt, Sue, Penny and myself went for a recce up to the eastern col., impressed with the ruggedness of the area, Hende Cliffs and False Blue Lookout in the foreground flanking the Lord valley, with many of the Divide peaks poking above mist in the distance.

Idyllic campsite in the head of Aciphylla Stream, Gardens.

S Leicester.

Saturday 2nd

We departed idyllic campsite heading over the col. and dropping steeply down a stream-cum-waterfall for 300 ft. Gave our ankles some exercise sidling across loose scree and steep tussock as we skirted around Mt. Lambert towards the Icefall. Six keas shadowed us, circling around like vultures, but coming in for a landing once we had lunch. They got a bit curious in Penny's pack and Chris got a bit over-enthusiastic with the rocks. Keas, like Norwegian Blues, stun easily, as one did for about ten minutes before flying off to join his mates. Thereafter keeping their distance.

Lambert Icefall was revealed as the mist subsided and periodically ice bounced down off the rock slabs. The contours stuck close in that area. A large boulder landmark (visible in our air photos) led us across a rock ledge to a small notch in the eastern ridge
of Mt. Lambert. Visibility was now lousy, so Matt and Sue did a wee recce to find the right notch. We roped up on the other side of the notch, and we were now on the slot covered Névé.

Compass navigation in misty twilight led us over avalanche debris (resembling a ploughed field) slots and across Lambert névé, to a rock ledge below 7,350. It was roughly 12 by 5 ft. wide, hence housing our 8 by 6 ft. tent with one side suspended in space and guy lines attached to rocks holding it down. The wind was starting to get gusty and Chris had to spend half the night supporting one of the poles.

Sunday 3rd

We had a forced rest-day as wind outside was unpleasant to the health. There were violent fits of activity outside to packs and snow, during brief lulls in the wind. Weather improving.

Monday 4th

Lull in the weather about lunchtime and things looked promising. So we roped up and set off for Adams Col, but after three-quarters of an hour just below Satan's saddle the weather crapped with high winds, sleet and snow. No time to be hanging around, so we climbed the nearest slope scraped out a flat site with snow walls on the windward sides and hauled out the six man tent quicksmart.

It snowed heavily that night and there was a danger of being buried as snow drifted over the tent, so all night we had someone in storm gear belayed outside to clear the snow off the tent.

Tuesday 5th

By dawn the snow drifts had won and we had reached crisis point. Penny managed to haul out a spare three man tent (with built in floor) just prior to the main tent collapsing. We all dived in, Sue minus socks and parka. There was virtually no food or gear between us, except what we were wearing and one pit. Luckily we had salvaged some snow foam, so we tore it into strips and spread it round giving us insulation from the snow.

Ventilation was a total hassle as the tent was only draped over our heads and bodies. Opening the entrance for any length of time meant getting doused in spindrift.

Wednesday 6th - Friday 8th

Basically a blurry haze of cramped conditions, howling wind and never-ending snowfall. Each was suffering the effects of cold, exhaustion and dehydration (since our only primus to melt snow was buried) wondering how long the storm would rage. At nights we had to stay awake to stop from freezing and we soon became dazed, forgetting each others names, arguing about space in the "balloon tent" and having to constantly shift the site of the tent, as it kept slipping off the platform.
Finally on Friday the storm broke - we were virtually despairing: "God, I'm so tired, how long can this go on", being the motto engraved in our minds. Chris managed to get out and start digging around to find our packs and the other tent (hoping to recover food and primus) and was helped in brief bursts by others - not feeling quite so healthy.

We were by now rather weak and very dehydrated - urine going out not being replaced by water coming in, and it wasn't till now we realised how much water and salts we'd lost. We spent the day desperately kneading snow in plastic bags to create as much water as possible. By much trial and error we dug out some packs and food from under three feet of fresh snow. We now realised we could survive if the weather held, by sitting it out until rescued by a chopper. We were just too weak to get off the Névé by ourselves and Friday 8th was the day we had told the HariHari ranger we'd emerge from the Perth, trip over.

Saturday 9th

Another fine day with little wind. We remained in the balloon tent (watching avalanches thunder off Mt. Lambert) until the sun reached our slope, then rose. The sun melted untold snow off the steep rocks above and we caught it trickling off the nearest slab, with Christ almost sinking through into the schrund below. Blocks of snow and ice fell all day to either side of our tent and Chris stamped out a large S.O.S. in the snow. More excavating revealed three more packs, as three planes buzzed over to the north, raising our hopes for an early departure. But no such luck. Food was found in the buried tent so the first decent meal since the rock ledge camp was had. A lot of time was spent massaging our now swollen and numb feet and hands.

Gardens, West of Main Divide.
Lambert slope in foreground.
Mt Stothard in centre.
S Leicester.

Sunday 10th

Also fine. More digging for gear - out came primus, ropes, clothing and utensils that we'd given up as lost. Interest- ing how much our stomachs had shrunk, even to hot food.
Monday 11th

Fourth day overdue. We realised the chopper wasn't coming, but didn't know why as it was still fine. We decided to rope up and leave the way we'd come. Getting off the Névé and out of the snow was the main idea before the bad weather returned to finish us off. Made it to Boulder landmark after slow progress, hence now in lee of Mt. Lambert and with rocks as our shelter.

Giving Matt and Sue all our remaining high energy food, they kept on going with only bare essentials to send in help from HariHari. Penny, Chris, Cath and myself set up a boulder bivvy and rationed out the little remaining food to last until Friday night. We worked out ways to make the meals seem bigger and spent time reading and drying out gear.

Tuesday 12th

First decent wash since ....? Feet all sore. Unknown to us Sue and Matt reached Hunters hut today.

Wednesday 13th

Another pit day as weather is freezing and claggy. Matt and Sue arrived in HariHari at midday and S.A.R. team were alerted.

We heard a chopper buzzing around below us in the mist, great morale boost. Start of this trip seems a lifetime ago.

Thursday 14th

Two figures emerge out of the mist at 7.00 am. Both were S.A.E. climbers, one a doctor - having been dropped further down the previous day. Rapid exit via Huges 500 soon followed, tree-hopping at 140 mph down the Wanganui to civilisation.

Sue Ensor
Matt Johnston
Penny Hazard
Simon Leicester
Chris Hardiman
Cath Feeney

Superficial Frostbite

- involves only the skin or tissue immediately beneath it. White waxy appearance of the injured part at the outset. After re-warming, the frostbitten area will become numb, mottled blue or purple, then swell, sting and burn for sometime. In more severe cases blisters occur 24 - 36 hours beneath the outer layer of skin. These slowly dry up and become hard and black in about two weeks. General swelling of the injured area (edema) will subside quickest if patient stays in bed and rests.
Throbbing, aching and burning of the injured part may persist for several weeks depending on the severity of exposure. After the swelling finally disappears, the skin will peel and remain red, tender and extremely sensitive to even mild cold. It may perspire abnormally for a long time.

All of us suffered the above in differing degrees. It takes a long time to heal (months or years) and is bloody painful. One fairly reliable symptom of incipient frostbite in fingers or toes is the sudden and complete cessation of cold or discomfort of the injured part, often followed by a pleasant feeling of warmth.

Some basic prevention methods:

Dress to maintain general body warmth.

Eat plenty of fats, carbohydrates and protein.

Socks and boots should fit snugly with no points of tightness.

Avoid perspiration, keep hands and feet as dry as possible.

Even with vapour barrier boots don't let socks get too wet.


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NELSON LAKES by Andrew Cook

The second night I spent in the shelter at Lake Rotoiti was no different from the first (when I "slept" there in the May holidays while on a cycling tour, I remember thinking how cold it would be up on the peaks tramping through snow and was glad that I was headed down the Wairau Valley by bicycle), except that the second time I was there I was with a group of mad keen trampers all willing to throw their lot in with the sandflies and disappear out the door for a week of "roughing it". In fact, several times during that first night I woke to see the bleak mountain peaks, then convince myself that it must be a bad dream and try to go back to sleep. My night time fear dissolved into the happy reality that we were actually tramping on the first stage of the journey which brought us safely to John Tait hut, through rain and sandflies. After dinner that night we began the tradition of reading from the "Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy" as from John Tait on we were the Hitchikers of the Galaxy - complete with towels.

The second day found us up Copola Basin practicing self-arrest and bum sliding in mountain grandeur. Back to John Tait for lunch before donning our heavy packs and grovelling up to Upper Travers over avalanches and through deep drifts of snow.
Next morning found us gulping our hot breakfasts and slowly ascending the Travess Saddle after saying goodbye to the easy party. The weather was ideal and we stood gasping at the top from the scenery, as much as from lack of breath! A terrific series of bum slides brought us down into the rugged Sabine East branch. And from there on to Forks hut for the end of day three. Peter managed to persuade most of us to accompany him to Blue Lake the next day. This involved crossing some really huge avalanches under Moss Pass before reaching the beautiful yet forbidding Blue Lake. We had lunch in Blue Lake hut briefly, then clambered back to Forks hut for afternoon tea at 5.45 pm.

Thursday was a picnic day which saw us rambling down the Sabine to Lake Rotoroa for a beautiful afternoon by Sabine hut, a rest we needed before the next day's steep climb up to Cedric. On top of Cedric we snapped off plenty of film and gaped at the impressive view over lunch in the snow. The weather was perfect and allowed us to scramble round to Angulus for the night. The view from Angulus hut was not exciting as the Lake was frozen over and we had seen enough snow by then. That night we debated the merits of Savlon along with the use of university students and the details of leg amputation in hospital! So by morning we were ready to leave the hut, despite it blowing strongly outside. We crawled on to Robert Ridge, from where we were blown down into Speargrass. We decided to tramp out that day and arrived at the carpark by mid-afternoon, to walk around the Lake and join the others at the shelter for a night of celebration over a very successful tramp.

Thank-you to the organisers of the trip, and especially to Peter for leading what to me was a real Godsend of a tramp - even the weather behaved itself!

Group members: Peter Morrison (Leader)
Mike Lowrie
Alan Gibb
Jane Binnie
Sharon Patterson
Andrew Cook

AVIS AGONY
RUAHINES by Debbie Turner

Our convoy of three vans had headed out of Wellington at 5.30 pm on a wet Thursday evening, and after the annual traffic jam hullie, compulsory ration stop and numerous Avis van reunions our van finally wound up the Mangaweka Gorge to a 1.30ish pitstop at Kawhatau Base. Where (because of our respect for Forest Service property and the accompanying ranger) we slept in the vans and other unobtrusive pit-spaces. Terry setting a fine example froze on the front seat minus his pit in his bid for an early start.

The drizzling morning found our group heading up to Colenso. As we climbed, the winds ferocity increased as the weather conditions deteriorated. We clambered up past the Knob, dressed in full storm-gear and battled on against the gale and oppressive Spaniard-grass. We reached the trig at midday where we all (except our leader) proceeded to sit beside the 4700 ft. trig and exclaim at the necessity of having to climb to it and the aptness of the inscribed "Sh*t, it's windy up here!" upon it. Paul, who had chosen a less exposed spot to rest in, charged over the mountain side to rescue his hat as it was blown straight
up and away. We battled along the tops, in xxx knot wind, sleet and rain which sent us flying in all directions and caused us to assume Sir Raeligh-type prone positions across the track. We stopped before climbing onto the most exposed ridge, while Paul did a tiki-tour. It was decided to turn back because Wakelings Hut was still hours away, we were frozen and the conditions weren't getting better. Back we went, past the trig, the tarn you could have surfed on, up a bank where the entire group went for a sixer and then we dropped over the side into waist-deep tussock and holes and down onto the bush-track. Reaching the base at three we were greeted by Richard's already resident van group. The rest of Friday and Saturday heralded pit-days.

Future Avis Pitdayers. As an experienced Avis pitdayer I would encourage you to plan ahead before being crammed into your sardine-can. To survive you must kit yourself with plenty to do. Exhilarating activities such as:

- Counting holes in the van, or bowls under the holes.
- Picking the grit out of butter, and mould off the bread.
- Taking turns to rotate the leg space. Form a roster.
- and, sitting in the front and pretend you're going home!

will keep your group members docile until the rain clears.

Mikurangi, Ruahines.
P Morrison.

Saturday, spirits were boosted with changed environments: breakfast in the house's kitchen complete with radio, compulsory orientation lessons out under a fly, and a change of view for the van, i.e. the other side of the lawn. That night around our fire, our songs and jokes were interrupted by the invitation by some hunters to go into Mangaweka for a few drinks, which we declined. We congratulated ourselves on our refusal when the already well-lubricated hunters backed their car straight for the van missing it by millimetres and a big pine by a more comfortable inches, then it was a safari around the paddock in a close inspection of our fly and then away down the road. As we wondered whether they'd make
it back Paul expressed his distaste of a dunlop aquajetunning over his guts and having it get stuck and spinning
there. That night as our leader lay alone under the fly,
he thought he'd met his aquajet.

Sunday was clear, and brought a new road-end
and Farmer Brown's brightly orange and black striped
posted track, well defined with electric fence. It was
up a mini-puffer and through bush to Purity Hut, Alan's
departing group and sagging sacking bunks. Everyone had
appreciated tramping again and the evening continued in
a good-humoured mood with snow-men, photos and endless
meals.

With a fine day ahead we set off up to Wooden
Peg with totally wonderful alpine surroundings. The clouds
receded to the south so that we could see the mountain
peaks of Ruapehu and Ngarauhoe clearly and to the north
the main range of the Ruahine's. Heading for Kelly Knight
Hut we dropped off the tops down a spur arm meeting another
Medium group coming up, and finding a highway through the
leatherwood. We got onto the bushtrack, strewn with storm-
thrashed vegetation.

As we approached the hut, an unfriendly G-gnome
told us to get lost (in no uncertain words) when he spied
our multitude descending upon his happy abode. However,
we moved in and set up hut. Next morning we energetically
basked in the morning sunshine until it was time to hit
the track down river to the vans. As we descended the
valley we met other groups also leaving the bush. Over
the paddocks and into the vans; we wound up the gorge
with Diana creating instant ventilation in our backdoor
by slamming a temperamental bent door-frame so the window
fell out. Ingenious. With a pushy Big Mac behind our
vans we fairly scooted out onto the main roads that took
us home.

Paul Marcroft
Lloyd Richards
Jim-Bob McKenzie
Frances Graham

Jane Maxwell
Nicki Gibb
Debbie Turner
ARETE BIV by Murray Corles

My first trip that I have led was the F.E. trip in May which began with sadly depleted numbers - only three starters. A route was planned from Ohau to Te Matawai via Gable End, Bannister, Cattle Ridge, Haukura Ridge, Mangahao, Tawinkohukohu (the place where Bruce W and Co. were reported overdue last year). Definitely an epic.

Anyway having only three in one party proved to be a nice manageable number as we grunted up the Gable End track after lunch at Ohau Shelter. A nice track but I swear it's longer than the map shows. Passed Butcher "Birdbath" Saddle and reached Te Matawai Mansion in fading light and deteriorating weather (never was brilliant). Burned leatherwood for cooking fuel.

Up and about by 6.30 am to a muesli breakfast, super-glue strength brew (it sure stuck to the roof of your mouth) and Mike's 800-proof Refresh (I swear whisky was never that strong). Set off at 8 am in rain and a strong northwester. Our aim - Cattle Ridge by tonight. Three keen bods were determined to do it, but by the time we reached Pukenuatawi, a change in plans looked on. What with horizontal rain and strong winds. We went along to Arete where the decision to drop down to Arete Biv was made with the idea of possibly staying the night (heh, heh). Took a while to find the biv, but found it on the northern bench - in the tarn. However the water was at least 15 cm from the bottom of the floor. We got inside and started the primus for a brew. Didn't have to walk to get brew water. Who could ask for more from a hut. It was about this time that Huey really let open the floorgates. The tarn started to rise, but we didn't take much notice of this as we thought the tarn would not rise very far and continued to review our trip plans as it was considered too dangerous to go over Bannister. Brew was ready and it was about this time that the tarn waters were also interested in our brew and trip plans. Yes, the tarn had in fact risen due to the heavy runoff from the surrounding slopes and was now entering the biv. The first reaction from everyone was to stare in amazement while splitting their

The masses at Te Matawai Hut during"May Camp."

S Leicester.
sides with laughter. We weren't laughing so hard when personal gear started floating out the door. A frantic packing session then began. Mike's cup of thick vegetable soup was knocked over. This produced a great cloud of steam as cold water met hot water. Diced carrots and peas along with a light green slime were seen to float out the door as everyone packed in record time and force-marched back to Te Matawai. The water was ankle deep inside the biv when we left.

Back to where we came from, dejected and totally pissed off as we were all feeling fit and starting to get into our tramping stride. We reached Te Matawai to discover all other V.U.T.C. parties had arrived, as well, under various circumstances and reasons. We decided to stay at Te Matawai. Various new routes were chosen but all rejected due to the bad weather or possible high river levels. So a day and a half pit bashing, cards, murder-winks etc. were chosen to pass the time. Leatherwood races for hard people were used to pass the time, some going from A to B via Z and most going the wrong way at some stage. At least it prevented boredom setting in, although Malcolm got desperate at one stage.

The walk out next day saw our party split up, leading other parties, due to a nasty accident the previous night. It was uneventful until Ohau Shelter when Mike and Malcolm decided to packfloat down the Ohau Gorge. At about 2 pm, these three silly hemmes started their trip just as the rain started to get heavy and the river rose. This trip involved pressure waves, waterfalls and debris in the river, and generally getting knocked about a bit. We were a little worried when they had not emerged by 4 o'clock for what should have been only a one hour trip. They finally appeared at 4.15 after taking almost half an hour to emerge from the gorge by trying to scale the sides of it.

Those in the F.E. pit-bashing party were:

Murray Corles (leader), Mike Robertson and Malcolm Drummond.

Girdlestone in morning mist from McGregor Biv. P Mansell
A poor head so I let it go
Best head I ever shot
The best set of points I've ever seen
Fresh sign all over the place
I never shoot stags in velvet
The shot echoed up and down the valley
I have a natural sense of direction
I thought I would sleep out
A glimpse of white as he took off
A mob of deer
A running shot at 300 yards
I stalked the stag until
I was 20 yards away

- A clean miss.
- The only head he ever shot.
- Female tramper in the Kaimanawas.
- Plenty of opposum.
- He never sees stags in velvet.
- He fired five times.
- Never leaves the river.
- Lost.
- A fantail.
- Two.
- Browsing at 20 feet.
- Didn't know it was there.
In the shimmering midday heat, we step out of the van that takes people from Collingwood to the start of the Heaphy Track. Our objective was not that overpopulated route, but to push south to the Tablelands and explore the Douglas Range.

Starting from the Bainham road-end, we strolled along the vehicle track to where it devolves into a tramping track at a feature labelled the Castles. These are a series of deep cracks and holes in the predominantly limestone rock of the area. By late afternoon, we had reached the beginning of Brown Cow ridge, and had, upon finding some water there, decided to camp. The campsite is at the southern edge of a pair of clearings called 'Beethams Clearing' and if you look around for a vague ground trail, you will discover a great little campsite, bench and all!

Next day, more interesting travel to Brown Cow above Boulder Lake (the track sides 'The Pulpit' at 4,110 feet and does not go over it, as marked on the map). Farewell Spit and the Tasman Sea were visible north and an exciting vista of Anatoki and the Dragons Teeth peaks southward. Some really interesting and different travel around the sandy shores of Boulder Lake (3,200 feet) bring us to the hut near the southern end, set in lovely beech forest with a large waterfall nearby.

The route from here crosses Arena Creek near the lake and follows up the long tussock slope between Arena and Orater creeks to Green saddle. Follow the ridge southward about 100 metres to a cairn, and from here the route sides along the eastern side of the range. Occasional cairns and bits of track are useful guides. Eventually you will come to a step gut called the Needles Eye. This is marked by cairns up to the saddle, through to Adelaide Tarn. The first view of the Tarn with Trident Peak rearing up behind it is impressive. Further down toward the Tarn you'll get the first close-up look at Anatoki and the Dragons Teeth. These are huge cliff-hung crumbling rock peaks, that present a startling aspect from any viewpoint. A night spent at Adelaide Tarn Hut is our reward for a long, thirsty, hot day.

The next morning, after a quick trip to the ridge under Mt. Douglas for photos, we strike off threading through the Needles Eye and a fairly easy side under Needle Peak around to Yuletide Peak. The heat became totally amazing – over 35° in the shade, of which there was none and we were consequently exposed to the full blast of the sun for much of the day. At one stage I took a large step up and nearly fainted. There is, however, no shortage of water (lukewarm) under Yuletide Peak on the east side, and we made this our lunch stop. From Yuletide we took the northerly spur down to Anatoki forks. This is an excellent track. The 'Old Hut', five minutes down stream from the forks is in fact the luxurious new Anatoki hut, with a huge stove, wetback and shower! Having just cooled our heat exhausted carcasses in the river we ignored the latter feature.
Next morning we headed upstream. There is a track all the way to Lake Stanley not marked on the map. However we left the track as the river turns west, and follow the Anatoki to before the first stream marked on the true right - well almost. There are plenty of old blazes around, and we were mislead into taking an easier spur next to an unmarked stream. It makes little difference anyway.

2,000 feet later, we poured our sweat-laden selves onto the top of the ridge, and after lunch, cruise up one of the Drunken Sailors and look down on the Lonely Lake (not named on the map). The travel is steep but safe, and Lonely Lake hut is achieved an hour later.

The bit of a ridge between Adelaide Tarn and Lonely Lake, we avoided in our two day detour, is for very experienced masochists only, and is much better looked at than traversed. For those foolhardy enough however, the route is explained in detail in both huts. Expect a day of at least ten hours tramping/climbing.

I cannot emphasise the beauty of the Douglas Range enough. From the mossy shade of the Anatoki River, the dramatic setting of Adelaide Tarn to the rocky splendour of Anatoki and the Dragons Teeth, whether viewed from the north or south. It is very well worth a visit.

The next day we followed the route south to Kakapo Peak. The route-finding is difficult if weather craps out, as it did for us. Some tricky compass work is involved for the route is not well cairned and has some surprises for the unwary. We sidled under Kakapo Peak on the western slopes, along a huge slip part of the way and then over to the eastern side of the ridge. Once passed the peak we found our way down to the amazing Fenella hut without difficulty and called it a day.

Next morning was fine again! We raced off down the valley to reach Trilobite hut for lunch. From here we grunted up onto the Tablelands and arrived at Balloon hut in the late afternoon. The hut was in a disgusting state and we spent hours cleaning it up.

Learning the 'ropes' at The AIC.
Cam Falkner, Terry Patterson, David Hanna, Alan Clelland.
The next morning was misty and we slept out to greet the New Year. That day we dropped down Gridison biv. This bivvy is nearly as surprising as Fenella hut. It was originally a large rock overhang, but has been modified by the forest service and has among other things, multi-level sleeping platforms including a double bed and a wrought iron chair hanging from the ceiling of the rock by a chain!! Two fireplaces and a curtained off alcove serving as a toilet - a far cry from the stained glass windows and varnished wood of the Fenella hut bog.

We consumed lunch and shuffled up to Flora hut to follow the easy track up 1,000 feet to Mt. Arthur hut. This would be a great place to stay but for its population of cavers, who had according to the hut log been there for a week over the holiday period! And it looked it. We continued another 500 feet and camped on the tops.

Next day was again fine and warm. We strolled up Mt. Arthur (5,890 feet) and spent two & half hours sunbathing next to the trig on the summit with huge panoramas all around - great. After lunch we set off towards Gordons Pyramid. The water around these parts is scarce and it pays to conserve. It also pays to watch where you put your feet - there are buck holes and depressions. We took the track off Gordons Pyramid that descends north-east following Gridiron Creek to begin with. Although not marked on the map, it is a good, easy track. We followed the Flora stream down to the Lower Junction marked on the map. The old hut marked at the forks does not exist. We stayed instead at Chaffeys hut (also known as the old asbestos cottage). This historic hut has walls covered in early newspapers, a good frypan, armchairs and real atmosphere. It has been an unduly hot, tiring trip from Mt. Arthur, and were grateful to have its shelter for the night.

The next day was overcast and we strolled out to the Cobb road, where we immediately got a ride out to the 'Rat Trap', and down an ale or two to celebrate the end of nine days of great tramping. That night, after three more rides in rapid succession we were ensconced in air conditioned luxury in the pushbutton environment of Nelson's Rutherford Hotel - thinking about tramps past and yet to come.

Phil Mackie

Brian Dobbie

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Crossword answers.
In the beginning was The Leader.
The Leader was the Will, the Light and the Planner of Trips.
And the Leader did say - "Yeah, verily-I promulgate unto you this Trip list to peruse."
And the Masses assembled, two by two (oops, different story!),
and perused all the live long day, hallelujah!
Until some among them did put their names to this list, and did become Trip members.
And the Leader said unto them "Take up thy packs and walk!"
And they did.
And the Leader did also say unto them, "Carry you all of this party gear and my food, for my will is your command"
and they did.
And they did journey unto the farthest mountain, knowing not where they were, and saw the strangest of sights,
knowing not how they came to be.
Until they reached a spot high on the farthest mountain and The Leader said, in a voice of thunder, "Stop! I need a crap". And they did. And The Leader did.
And The Leader returned from Meditation alight with fervour and did pronounce to the assembled Trip Members:
"Yeah, verily, for sooth and fie -
We will build on this hallowed spot
A fabled bog-house 'neath the sky,
And it will be the grandest of the lot.
With walls of ivory, roof of gold and graffiti of smut,
To all the world it will be known as ... Penn Creek Hut".

Bruce.

Te Hua Hua and Tukino in the background.

Terry Patterson, out from Rangipo Hut. A I C
Waking up was a shock to the system. Sleeping under the stars that night, we awoke colder than our 2.30am bunking. The frost covering our pits was clearly the reason why. But those frosty mornings invariably bring those frosty days. The first in weeks, according to the Ranger. The Dart River proved to be a sub-zero floating ice-berg as we crossed in first thing that Sunday morning. So much for warm dry feet as we continued down the four wheel drive road into the land of perma-frost and sunshine.

Eight kilometres up this country road, amid farmlands, we hit the junction of the Rolling and Wangapeka Rivers, where the Main Wangapeka Track starts for the Karamoa, (and continues on to the West Coast). Mt. Patriarch posed stately in the cloudless blue sky for the Japanese tourists among us, and the beautiful Paradise ducks honked down the river, as we went down the Wangapeka.

We lunched about four hours later beside the river and remains of mine machinery from days gone by, when gold was hunted in this area. Later in the afternoon we passed Kings Creek hut, leaving the solid block of ice in the billy, continuing along the north branch of the Wangapeka. Arriving at Stone hut (7½ hours from the Dart) we left Steve's party spluttering in our dust back at Kings hut.

Tramping up over the Wangapeka Saddle the following morning saw us climbing with growing anticipation at the snow above us. At the trig (4,525 ft) we looked across the snow capped tops and proceeded to plod along them, with the surrounding ranges stretching for miles. Nugget Knob (5,125 ft) was soon directly above us. If it hadn't been for the bit of a bluff dividing it and us. It was here I decided to test the force of gravity while negotiation this bluff, involving throwing oneself off the vertical edge. I thought this was a bit risky and painful, so there was a compulsory half hour shake.

Hurricane hut was to be but dreamed of as we diverted to the forest line below Nuggett, and pitched fly in the snow, enjoying our 'room with a view'. For entertainment we shouted into the distance and listened to our echoes bounce off the ranges many miles away. We departed the fire for pit as darkness fell. However this was not as darkness would usually have it - the end of the day. Nor was it the beginning of our sleep. It was but a mere continuance of the day. For many of us, sleeping was beyond our capabilities, as we tossed, turned and sighed all night. It was clear that Chris was happily in Noddyland, however, much to our annoyance. Or was that an avalanche continually rushing past our fly!

Sleep practice ended in relief on Tuesday morning. We climbed back up to the bluff beside Nuggett. A few keen ones climbed the Knob and raced down trying to break speed records in whatever trend gave best velocity. Finding an un-named stream (probably the infant Karamoa) off the range below Nuggett, we dropped down for a bit of character building through the grappling triffids. Hitting the Wangapeka track, we wandered along west to Helicopter Flat hut in the late afternoon.
Early morning greeted us with yet another crisp frosty morning as we headed down the Lost Valley. The frozen tarn, which initiates the Lost Valley Creek, stubbornly refused to break. As we heaved rocks at it they clumsily skated across. Unlike trampers who tend to fall in at the unstable sides, eh Chris! The valley could very well be lost, in the mist that hung over us as we dropped down through this really pretty area to Luna hut. The vast Luna Slips rose majestically into the mist further along the river where the Karamea runs into the Taipo. We left the valley and wandered up the large Karamea River shingle flats and into the bush. The track markers were obviously laid by drunken forestry summer student type workers as we bashed our way along the side of the deep, slow flowing river. Exiting the bush at a clearing on the true left of the Karamea, where Meteor Creek flows into it, we mended our wounds and crying stomachs. Thereafter, heading up Meteor Creek in an effort to reach it's source. However keenness wore off in proportion to our skin when river bashing commenced. Windfalls were the order of the day as we clambered over, under, through or around them. It's great fun balancing on slippery logs! Oh well, there's always the river to break one's fall!

Curses, battles and frustration grew exasperated and annoyed, to the point where we finally stopped around 4.00 pm (approx two-thirds of the way up). The river was narrow and steep making campsites less than scarce. We hunted down firewood (all wet) and pitched the fly in a confined flattish space, complete with cold and colder running water. And Mike, never ceasing to amaze us, yet again lit a fire from the abundance of wet wood. Darkness had fallen within an hour and our morale was boosted enormously by the fire as we cooked and laughed over it. Sleeping again proved to be a bit of a strain for some. Chris complained Mike had both females to himself; and my feet hung out of the fly into a slight tributary of the creek, as I slept curled round the pole and down the fly at right angles to the rest, i.e. space wasn't plentiful.

Thursday's dark and gloomy morning initiated with orders from Mike to David for the breakfast making as David slept at the access end of the fly - and while he was there he may as well ... Breakfast was consumed in pit as we all dived back for more kip. Mike, contrary to popular belief,

Towards the Karamea from the Lost Valley

P. Graham

didn't let this fashion continue, as we were relatively quickly geared up to hit the stream once again.
Finally reaching its source at around 3,900 ft, we kept on climbing up a spur to the snow line from where we climbed up to Mt. Luna (5,350 ft). It was beginning to clag in, (first and only time), so we made a hurried descent and followed steps Steve's party, we guessed had made. We spotted the hut from a long way back. This always seems to be the worst way to see a hut as it takes much longer, than imagined, to reach. From our high view point on the ridge we could see down on the arrow-straight valley of the Crow to the north, and the Stone Creek pakihi to the south. We sidled round under Maudies Peak (5,285 ft) looking down on Lake Luna, frozen over, then basked down the slopes to the bush line. Soon arriving at Kiwi Saddle hut we found Steve's party enjoying a pitish day, so in our envy we told them huge fibs, enlarged beyond belief on our past days - all epic stuff! Especially the one about the 'track' above Meteor Creek.

Boy, was Steve getting some threatening looks from his, until then, loyal party!

Sunshine shone on Mt. Luna and N.W. Nelson on Friday as we looked high up at the mountain we'd conquered the day before. We raced down Kiwi track to the genuine Daniel Boone style Kiwi Log Cabin. Then retracked down the Wangapeka and along the beautiful river to Rolling Junction (about nine kms from Kiwi Saddle). From the junction we plodded down the Rolling River gravel road, heading for Courthouse Flat hut, four kms away. Courthouse Flat was apparently a hive of activity in the 1870's when there was a great deal of gold in the area. Streets were laid and a courthouse was built. But the gold proved elusive and within a few years the place was deserted. The hut is a sixteen man Forest Service one and Steve's and our group crowded each other out round the fire that night, before spending our last night in the park.

Saturday saw us road-bashing twelve kms to Rolling Junction and the Dart. We bussed back at 12 noon to wet Picton and the 6.40 pm sailing back to Wellington. The ferry trip was epic in itself. 'The' ferry rage of the year I'll bet. And a tramp that suited this fine style through a truly beautiful region of North West Nelson.

Mike Sheridan
Tracy Buckland
Chris Duffy

David Malcolmson
Dean Patten
Francie Graham

(Steve's Group:

Steve Kohler
Geoff Flimmer
Boyd Russell

Jim-Bob McKenzie
Sandra McClennan
Scott Petersen)

Mike to Francie:
NELSON LAKES by Murray Corles

At Picton we pushed twenty-five people into two nine-seater vans and began a slow journey to St. Arnaud Shelter. Next day saw Dad (that's me) getting his mob of seven kiddies off at 8.30 am, via Lakehead into the Travers Valley. We lunched in the rain by the Arnest River, which the kids thought was the campsite for the night (it wasn't). We camped further up the valley at Hopeless Creek where everyone was too tired, wet and miserable to enjoy the fire that night.

The next day Dad and the kids headed for Upper Travers in another long day. We lunched in the sunshine at Summit Stream, then made our way up through the deep snow, with a noisy kea following close behind. The tramp up to the hut was a bit of a grunt for some of the kids, but with no fatalities. We bum-slid down the fast icy slope outside the hut for the rest of the afternoon. Peter Morrison and Co. joined up later, to share the hut.

We spent the next day going up the Travers Saddle under blue skies. However the steep slope was icy so a good enough slope couldn't be found to practice self-arresting on. Ice there was, slope there wasn't. The troops were a bit apprehensive, but didn't regret the climb when they'd reached the saddle. A walk to Travers Tarn revealed the tarn to be completely covered in snow, with no indication of its existence. Mist began to close in and the wind picked up, so we cancelled the trip to Rainbow Saddle and made our way back to the hut. The remainder of the day was spent sunbathing and making a snowperson with a difference. Say no more! Our noisy kea constantly stared through the window at the dinner-making proceedings.

Wednesday was cold, overcast and snowing. The troops voted to go on down to John Tait. On the way down we had the great (?) pleasure of meeting the N.L.N.P. Ranger who just happened to be staying at the same hut with three helpers, at the same time we were. Bloody marvellous turn of events. I don't think they were impressed with our presence. What with seven kiddies constantly out to break all decency rules.

Thursday was a daytrip to Cupola Basin, and more bum-sliding. Great view of the valley and then back down to John Tait and the campsite at Arnest River. Friday was off to Coldwater hut, having cancelled our Lake Angelus trip due to injuries. We met the Ranger yet again. Nice hut with an outside open fireplace and robins landing at our feet. Great views of the lake and mountains, spoiled only by Maryanne and Fenella washing their hair.

We woke to a misty Saturday morning, calm lake and calls of Paradise Ducks. Really peaceful. Everyone had the opportunity to sleep in. With the result that most didn't emerge till around 10 am. We headed back to St. Arnaud, via Lakehead after deciding the roadbash at the end of the Whisky Falls track wouldn't be much fun. The track back turned out to be long and slow for everyone, but we arrived back to find Mike R. and his mob already in residence at the shelter.

The kids were:  Maryanne Sheridan  David Balham
Murray Hughes  Fenella Foster
Dinah Wakelin  Gary Coulter
          Cheryl Witham

Dad was:  Murray Corles
Way back in 1904 W.G. Grave, the great explorer of Fiordland, did a bit of an epic from Lake Te Anau to Sutherland Sound. Some 78 years later a keen type picked up his book....

Fiordland... Ah... memories of rain, bush, more rain, thicker bush, still more rain, sandflies, torrents of water and epic steep bits.

Six excited trampers congregated in Te Anau on Monday 28th December. After a quick dip off the wharf into Lake Te Anau, the troops indulged in their last junk food for a few days. Rapid Travel Ltd. provided an excellent and extremely friendly service, transporting up Lake Te Anau to the mouth of the Worsley valley early that evening. A seemingly insect proof hut on the lake edge put a roof over our heads, but nosy sandflies can enter through many small holes. (Does it follow then that the same number would enter through a larger hole?)

Tuesday dawned, and the trip proper began. After strapping up both of Alan's twisted ankles (twisted the day before, playing silly buggers in Dunedin) we hit the track. Travel was good on an overgrown and marked deer trail as far as the walkwire across the Worsley and thence via a ground trail and the river bed to the Castle river. A quick lunch was had at the junction with Terminus creek, in the rain, sauntering up afterwards to Prospect creek. A good route past the steep cataract out of Lake Brownlee exists on the true right, 300-400 ft. above the creek.

Much film was spent on the Lake whence a route was chosen on the t.l. (true left). One spot of about 60 ft. involved pack floating to avoid a climb over a small bluff - laziness to the fore except for Terry, that is, who didn't seem to be too keen to get damp. Still, I thought, plenty of time for that! Camped at the head of the lake in light rain.
Groveling through "pleasant ribbonwood and grassy flats" - a quote from Moirs; it proved to be the catchphrase of the trip. It was actually pissing down and we were climbing up/through/over/under ... real shit ... Never believe anything you read. Up past the t.r. of Lake Sunor until a leaky bivvy rock just below the head of the valley provided an adequate lunch spot ... tea spot ... and sleeping spot, although we did have to pitch a tent inside.

The view from the bivvy rock was incredible. "Four miles beyond we saw the end of Prospect valley. A magnificent mountain rose like a gigantic wall, 3,000 ft straight out of the valley, then sloping steeply back to its dark, rocky summit, it rose another 3,000 ft."

Playing ducks in the Worsley.

Luckily there was an escape from this seemingly impassable headwall - as Grave himself found. Up towards the left lay Hunter's Pass. That would have to wait. That afternoon the whole cliff face was alive with waterfalls.

Thursday as overcast, and we overslept and were not away until 9 am, with blue patches appearing towards the sky. The going wasn't too bad up to the pass - staying on the t.l. of the stream draining the pass. On the other side we wandered down to the large tarn/small lake about 200 ft. below and had a spot of luncheon in the now claggy weather. Some four hours later a break in the clouds and seemingly we could see the route down the other side; Geeeeee .... EPIC bits! We sidled slightly left and then down. We used a rope across a few slippery slabs and tussock with rather nasty fall-outs, and again, to lower our packs down a steep slab. However the route was quite negotiable and would have been straightforward on the ascent. However, in the scrub things got steep and slow as we hung on while being ravaged by sandflies. Sandflies which could attack a moving target. Alan seemed to be quite frustrated with his snowfoam sticking out from his pack, in places resorting to taking his pack off and dragging it through the scrub.

* W.G. Graves.
We eventually reached Starvation creek about 8-ish. Starvation creek was named by Grave after his party spent four days camped there on a spoonful of cocoa each. It took us five hours down from the pass. Campsite manufacture took another couple of hours, eventually settling down for the night to see the New Year in.

After the epic of the last day, the next day an easier time was called for. So, in the SUNSHINE we wandered off down to the Dark river which took about two hours to the forks - either in the creek or following the t.r. bank. We followed the t.r. up for an hour or so then crossed over to the other side for an hour to find a campsite, just before the river swept north and steepened. A lazy afternoon in the sun being molested by keas.

While Lynette’s back was turned, Mike (which one?) took to throwing stones ... and the other Mike managed to score a direct hit ... with a sock, yes, actually knocked it off the branch with a wet sock. It screamed off and kept its distance for at least an hour.

Saturday, and the clag was back in again. Climbed the spur on the t.l. of the Dark, which provided good travel. However we bluff ourselves by going too high, so we had to backtrack slightly and drop into the river - we had missed the cataracts I’d been warned to avoid. The rest of the journey up the Dark was up the river bed scrambling up over boulders. As per Moir’s description we entered the dried up creek bed and climbed out onto a spur on the t.l., to get views of the large un-named lake. Rain and wind forced us to camp in the tussock - quite exposed, however we batoned down the hatches. Not much eventuated except rain of course.

Approaching Hunter Pass
from Prospect Ck.

Sunday - a pit day, well so everyone thought but weather cleared slightly so Mike and Mike went up to the Light/Dark saddle for a look. A route down looked feasible, so we were packed up by 3.30 pm and on the saddle by 4.05, molested by half a dozen keas. Amid comments from Lynette and Derek, questioning my sanity, this was it - the supposed ‘EPIC’ bit. THE Light/Dark saddle. Only been done once before in this direction. Slid across to the Bushy Rib we had spied (probably the one described in Moirs). It appeared to continue uninterrupted to the valley floor. Bit of a push through rather dense scrub to get to it. However we got bluffed; thoughts of mutiny flashed through my mind - "get back", I cried atop a tree, "the rib is further over to the left." So it was back up and across, then with Derek leading the way down the rib. Nothing we couldn't handle, all the way to the valley floor. Everyone was elated. This was it, we'd done it. In the valley floor about 7 pm.
Next day it rained again, solidly. Another epic day had meant another late start. Travel was quite good down the East Light, mostly in the river and then when it got gory, on the t.r. The deer trails were amazing - it certainly made things a lot easier. Pity the deer don't blaze their trails as well.

Headed for a saddle and lake more or less by compass ... and lunched under a fly by the lake. A fire, a brew and the drenching rain made moving off rather slow. However we pushed on around the west side of the lake and across the swollen outlet on a fallen log. Another messy hunters' camp with canvas, polythene, old cans and string spoilt our "total wilderness experience."

Sidled down into the north branch of the Light after being confused and not believing my compass, however better minds reasoned it out. The north branch seemed to have a few waterfalls to negotiate, and much discussion was entered into, until an equilibrium of opinion was worked out.

A small gorge upstream of a major fork was sidled high on the t.l., then around a waterfall on the same side close to the river. There was quite a lot of water in the river. I think it was closely related to the amount of rain falling. Above this waterfall, the river flattened off and travel was really good, through beautiful beech flats. Pushed the troops on past these flats however to where the river steepened again and campsites weren't quite so abundant. However, after engineering work, a reasonable site eventuated.

Tuesday was a welcomed pit day - bulk hail, rain and thunder. Wednesday began to have thoughts of swamped campsites, but we managed. Thursday dawned fine; maybe we could still get out on time. Away by 7.30 and around another waterfall on the t.l. close to the river. An hour later we got to a confluence in the head of the valley. Followed the t.l. branch however things got confusing when the stream disappeared underground. So we followed the dried up creek bed towards Staircase creek saddle. Gradually as we climbed, the stream got bigger. Brilliant day, frosty
morning and we were in the shade all morning - all added up to: Bloody Cold.

Climbing up through waterfalls, sunshine, with full storm gears on. The sides of the gut were quite steep but creek itself is quite negotiable. Had to stop near the top when we finally got into the sunshine, to restore circulation to numbed toes. Epic. Had lunch here, about ten minutes below the saddle. We finally left two hours later after thawing out. Sidled left from the saddle down to the moraine and around the lake. We sidled high on the t.r. above the scrub and then down to mid flat. However the sidle down through Staircase rapids was not so easy - quite slow. At some stage blundered onto two markers but no ground trail at all. Eventually headed for the river again via a dried up creek and crossed the river following the markers. The markers meandered a bit, and troops were bickering a bit, so we pushed across the river and hit the track to Sutherland Falls. Eventually hit civilisation at Clinton hut at 8.30 pm stopping for a bite to eat (scraps). Much to the amusement of faces peering through the windows of the hut.

A bed for the night would be quite nice we thought so it was off to Dumpling, arriving at dusk at 9.30, and talked our way into the hut (you have to book you know...) for $4 each. Hotel accommodation. We were still eating and cooking at 11.30 pm when all the loops were in pit.

Next morning we timed our departure to the last possible minute and we were off - racing. We gained a bit of time so lunch was stretched. Had one hour twenty minutes to get the last five miles done. An average of four miles an hour with five minutes to spare. All was going fine ... the last mile however was rather long. We had to break into a trot, followed by a sprint for the last quarter mile. Believe it or not Terry managed to twist his ankle somewhere about here so we had to drag him by the ears more or less (well no, not really) and eventually just leaped onto the boat as it was pulling out.


Mike Sheridan  Lynnette Hartley  Terry Patterson
Alan Clelland    Mike Robertson  Ian Whiteley
(Derek)

SENTRY BOX

By Phil Mackie

After sleeping out under a fly because we missed the Sentry Box roadend and its associated hut, we got some directions from the farmer and proceded back down the road about half a mile until, in the middle of a big horse-shoe bend we find a small side road which peters out after a few yards, and an innocuous unmarked style on the right marks the beginning of the Sentry Box track. We log in at the hut and depart.

The track is quite open and easy, and we hit the top of the ridge quickly. We proceed northwards to Aronga Hut where we have a break. The hut is well located in a hollow and a short walk is rewarded with good views of the tops around Tupari (5,006 ft.). Easy travel to a large open spur (easily distinguished on the map), which leads down via a quick, easy bushbash to the Kawatea River near Rocksilde Biv. (though we didn't see it).

The Kawatea River is quite something. It is the most heavily eroded and "filled in" river I have yet seen. But despite this, it is very scenic. Travel is a cinch,
over gravel coated river bed and flats. There is a neat gorgy bit before Kawatea forks, getting your balls dampened. The hut is on the forks, comfortable and liberally equipped with stick-books. The bog is conversely quite revolting - not recommended!

The next day, we go up the other branch running parallel to Ruahine corner, which is of a strikingly different mossy nature. A long poxy bushbash later sees us emerging onto the 'flats' at Ruahine corner. Flat they are not! It takes a short while to traverse the short distance to the huts (one brand new NZFS six bunker and an old but good four bunk hut), and scuttle a large lunch. We then found the track along to Potae and made our way up onto the range with the aim of getting down Totara Spur. No way! The clap was in, and as many in the club have found out, Totara spur is not easy to find. Instead we cruised south, until we found the rock pinnacle marking the route to Kylie Biv, which we duly crammed into for a cozy night. It is situated about ten to fifteen minutes down the first eastern spur, south of Totara spur.

The next day, we took off down the same spur, as we didn't fancy our chances of finding Totara spur. Navigation was tricky and we found ourselves at the top of a huge slip in to the river. The passage down was gripping, to say the least. We motored up-river to Upper Makarora Hut then grunted up to Parks Peak hut where we had lunch in comfort - neat hut; a fully lined four bunk number. The clap was still down so we couldn't comment on any views that may have been through the sparse bush.

We were intending to return down the Sentry Box track, but in a spurt of enthusiasm, we hoopered off down the first eastern spur past the hut, which starts as a well marked track. It does not continue that way, and an unwelcome grovel was our reward. We arrive back at the car by 3.30 and race off back to the big greasies and smoke, after a great three days.

Those participating: Phil Mackie (storyteller)
Martin Clapham
Ross Leggett
Paul Stephens
Moonlighting

By Mike Sheridan.

Mike Sheridan
and Marc Patterson
atop The Big 'C'.

M Sheridan.

As I sit here in my freshly painted room, I glance across at my moonlit poster of Cerro Torre in Patagonia. Amazing, like, one day...

Mind you as you all know, I have never been one to be up and about at that time of the 'day'. Well, okay there have been one or two moments of weakness.

Like our attempt at a moonlight Southern last year... midweek no less. A rather tiring experience all up which turned into a moonlight ascent of Hector from Otaki Forks. The weather packed in atop Hector and we headed back for home at midnight. Next time though given a bit of decent weather and we should knock the bugger off.

Then, early this year, Marc Patterson and I found ourselves trudging across The Grand Plateau, under the silvery moon, heading for the Big C. Perfect conditions - Good freeze and a breathless clear night. Lurbriggens route was to be our course, weering onto The East Face to side step a couple of sticky bits. Until our calves demanded respites, so it was the rocks of the ridgeline which provided the 'new' experience of dancing on rocks with crampons on.

Onwards and up, over The Summit Rocks. This must be more or less it, we think, the top I Alas, on looking across to Mt Tasman (the sun was now up.) it was still higher than we. So it was up and beyond eventually reaching the top of An 8thd about 9.30am, some seven hours after leaving Plateau Hut. The view from 'The Top' was certainly grand, seemingly the whole of the West Coast and the bits inbetween. The route down was plugging through The Linda getting the rope out and roping up to avoid any indiscretions towards the house sized crevasses. (It's the ones you can't see you have to worry about.)

Mt Cook from Mt Dixon.

East Ridge.

East face

Linda Glacier.

M Sheridan.
Then there's the story of the pike trip into Jumbo. - No, I'm boring you, I can tell.
Or the time on the wall behind The Reserve Bank one night after a meeting... Rave, rave...

My favourite though would have to be watching the sunrise through the trees of the Marchant Ridge, very early one morning this year while enroute to Hector, Neil, Winchcombe, Cone, The Terrykneecow Valley and back out to Kaitoke all in one hour day...

And then there's the one everyone knows we haven't done. - But did think about while spending the weekend lying in pit at Mitre Plate Hut. Yes, I refer to our attempted 238° crossing of The Tararuas from Mitre Flats to Otaki Forks... Hmm, maybe next year.

Ramble ramble rave rave, I suppose you get like that though when you get older.

Doocey Do-ing : The Gourmet Trip.

How to abuse your body in the Tararuas

Sunday, April 18th

Programme your body to "go" and forget about your mind, visiting such attractions as Marchant Ridge, Alpha hut, Dress Circle, Hector, Neil Winchcombe Ridge, Cone, Tauherenikau Valley and Smith's Creek all in a day. Pray for kind weather, as we were lucky to enjoy, and don't expect to 'come right', 'peak', or 'appreciate the trip' on the Neil Winchcombe Ridge, especially the seasick bit up/down/up/down/up onto Neil. Arrange to have your airdrop of new legs about Cone, or Cone hut, and don't expect to meet the climb out of Smith's Creek with much enthusiasm.
It's the tramp you have, when you're having about three tramps, and if you've got a spare sixteen hours, this could be the trip for you.

Body-abusers: Peter Mansell, Mike Sheridan
ABEL TASMAN

by Kirsty McDonald, with extracts from 'Scott's Antarctic Expedition No. 2' by S. Petersen.

No, indeed folks, this was not a tramp to be scoffed at. This was the ultimate in tramping: the scenery, the climate, the track, the bridges (rails included at no extra charge) and the murder (of the sandfly variety). And so it was that on the 28th of December 1981 at 7.30 am we did depart this fair island for bluer waters. Arriving in Picton at 11.00 am, we travelled to Nelson on a Newmans Coach of the 'Luxury' type. Then to Motueka and finally by mini van we arrived at Kaiteriteri to meet the M.V. 'Matangi' which shipped us at 7.30 pm to Totaranui. We arrived there two and a half hours later, after much chundering courtesy of our illustrious leader.

Off at 7.30 am the next day. We notice the sign says one and three-quarter hours to Awaroa, and the map says two to two and a half hours, so off we set at an easy pace. After an hour Awaroa appeared to our amazement. Obviously loopy times. In total bulk heat and sunlight, we boogied on to Tonga Quarry, with epic scenery along the way (i.e. deep blue lagoons and golden beaches). We arrived in time for lunch after which we hit the beach, which was "frightening and confusing". By the end of the day everyone was totally burnt to a frazzle, as if that great orb of the heavens which we know as the sun, was really just a great Shacklock GE2 in the sky. Dinner was in order, but not before Nigel went hunting, the knife between his teeth. For that fiend of the filthy food filchering, the weka, had been prowling under bushes and behind trees waiting to do his dastardly deeds since our arrival. After (before and during) dinner we enjoyed musical entertainment with an ever-so-slightly out of tune ukelele and two gazoos.
So we woke at 9.00 am the next day to spitting rain and Kamikaze sandflies after a night of ducking and diving as the buzzing got louder near our ears. At revoiring the scene at 11.00 am, we headed for Bark Bay hut where we had lunch, then continued on in torrential rain to Torrent Bay. Knocking an hour off the loopy time, we arrived at 2.40 pm to a hut bulging with humans, and some C.U.T.C. 'trampers' as well.

After a night on the floor (smut smut), Thursday dawned bright and beautiful. Because the weather was so great and Marahau Bay only a day's tramp away, and with two days left and mattresses to sleep on (due to the mass exodus of people except us), plus with New Year's eve to celebrate, we decided to spend the day at Torrent Bay hut. So we headed for the golden sand where, as we cremated ourselves under the sun, we enjoyed pleasant loopy activities such as swimming, eating, frisbeeing and sun-bathing. That night we gazooed, burnt live mosquitos, ate, drank and were merry as the New Year did arriveth.

The next day we left at 9.30 am, arriving at Marahau (which was filled with happy little holiday makers) at 12.00. And being the beach bunnies we were, we geared up to hit the sand in total sun type heat. We tented on the beach that night, and were up bright and early the next morning to meet the van at 6.30 am. It zoomed us back to Motueka where we connected with 'el busso' to Nelson, then on to Picton and home.

The beach bums were:

Nigel Fitzpatrick (our illustrious leader).
Scott Peterson - mentally insane from an early age.
Steve Kohler - a very 'deep' person.
Kirsty McDonald - has a crab problem.
and
Debbie Turner

P Mansell.
RAGLAN RANGE TOO

by Terry X Patterson

Following in the footsteps of our illustrious pioneers, a scaled down version of last year's Raglan Range trip headed off up the Branch River in traditional August weather. After crossing the Branch courtesy of one wire cage, complete with "extras" (ask Mike and Phil about that) we completed the grot (F.F.) road-bash with a lunch stop at Reagan hut. Deciding we didn't fancy lunching in a freezer, we strolled on up to Mid Silverstream hut, having conquered a 900ft. grunt and a three wire bridge, which added to the variety of streams cross on the way up the sidle track.

Next morning dawned perfect and with numerous ZZZ's stacked away we set off up the spur behind the hut, heading for the tops below Scotts Knob. The journey up was long and tiring with yours truly feeling the result of flu and low fitness. On the way along the ridge, which was traversed in brilliant clear skies and calm sunny weather, plus snow capped peaks, we caught continuous views of Scotts Knob and the rest of the peaks in the Raglan Range (eat your heart out, Raglan One). After lunching below Scotts Knob we step plugged our way along the ridge until a suitable route down into Lost Stream was found. Bum sliding was the order of the day as we rapidly reached the bushline by mid afternoon with the sun still drenching the valley, which was spectacularly covered in snow. On arriving in the Lost Stream, we were pleasantly surprised to find a bivvy near the head of the valley nestled in the trees. This valley, like many others in the Raglan Range, was characterised by its steep rugged peaks and snow covering everything bar the sheer rock faces and bush covered slopes. Even the valley floor had a thick carpet of snow making the views simply superb.

As we entered our third fine day in a row, a new route was embarked upon which went somewhere up the first stream on the true right, heading in the general direction of some "dubious pass". The wander up had its moments, as we sidled up to a 6,300 ft. knife edge pass. I'm somewhat loath to describe it as such, because I'm still not convinced it was actually a pass and not just a mental aberration on Mike's part. Anyway we lunched at the top amidst a howling wind which raced through a tiny hole in the rocks, while the sun shone merrily above. Deciding to descend down this "thing" proved to be quite an event, with Phil first announcing it was good snow to walk down, and then two seconds later proclaiming it was a prime avalanche slope and racing off down to the bottom some 3,000 feet below. This announcement did wonders for yours truly and Mike who proceeded in a downwards direction with extreme caution, arriving some forty-five minutes later at Misery Stream. This valley was the most beautiful from my view point, added to by the amazing Top Misery hut, which was totally stocked and yet hadn't been visited for nine months. A quick second lunch was had and we set off for Bottom Misery hut, wandering down through snow covered flats and untold rock debris which the peaks above had deposited some years before.

When we awoke, shock and horror appeared on our faces, for it had been and still was raining. But we could take it, better it rained when you're in the valleys, than on the tops. Leaving at the gentlemen's 'hour of 11.00 am, we headed for Top Branch Bivvy, having a pleasant wander up the Branch, reaching our dog box at 2.00 pm. All the
way up we secured some excellent views of the vastness of this mountain range, and the rather rugged tops which dominate the skyline. Sleeping in our wee abode was no easy task with Phil finding six foot three doesn't go into six foot, plus Mike and myself being reminded that double bunking isn't all it's cracked up to be, especially with a pack frame delicately positioned between the thighs. So we arose finding a fresh snow fall which was promising for our ascent to the pass leading into Lees Stream. After bashing through waist deep, cold snow, we hit the bushline taking it in turns to step plug up to the pass, while negotiating a slightly less avo prone slope. Once out of the wide snow basin and getting merrily snow burnt we donned storm gears for the most brilliant bum sliding in history, as we raced down into Lees Stream, reaching the bivvy at 2.00 pm in brilliant weather. Bulk brews and food were consumed as we reflected on our successful completion of three passes in five days, with only a gentle stroll down to the Wairau ahead of us.

Next day was, yes you guessed, brilliant weather again, making the journey down Lees Stream to the Wairau River easy going, apart from the ice covered tracks which were extremely hazardous to all those except eskimos. After making the river by 12.00 noon we set off on the last part of our trip the epic, delightfully joyful road bash. This was not to be as painful as we envisaged, for after reaching Dipstick Flats, and pursuant to a minor muting we tried our luck at hitching, gaining the required result around 4.00 pm from some skiers leaving the new Rainbow field, (see skiers have some uses). We reached St. Arnaud in time to catch the shops and all their charms.

Thus we waited two days for the rest of our bods, who spent their time amongst Nelson Lakes in none too favourable weather. So what do we think of Raglan Range - suggest your check it out next year, it sure is an amazing place.

Mike Robertson
Phil Mackie
Terry Patterson

HOWLING AT HOWLETT

by Brian Dobbie

Greasies and space invaders at Levin, petrol at Dannevirke, then we headed towards the mountains, happy to be away from it all for a brief two days.

We spent Friday night sheltered from the gale-force westerly wind in the cavernous interior of one of the biggest, best appointed huts we'd ever sleep a night in. A quick visit the next morning to the ladies powder room pausing only to read the sign "Ashley Clinton Fire Brigade" (we thoroughly recommend this place to crash a night), we drove off up Mill Road into misty rain to Morcock Base. The N.Z.F.S. ranger there gave us useful directions. Rain and epic wind on the farmland ridge could not stop us reaching Daphne hut, beside the Tukituki River by lunch time. Even Phil in his plastic climbing boots (which he insisted on bringing because our original plan had been to attempt
the snow saturated Sawtooth Ridge) did not slow us on our steep ascent up into thigh deep snow on the tops of the Main Range.

Sitting astride a small hollow right on the ridge at 4,400 feet was Howletts hut. A superb "A" frame style hut surrounded by deep snow, littered with comfortable mattresses and ripe for a pike. It was 3.00 pm, and after eager investigations revealed several miniature bottles were disappointingly empty, photos were taken of the hut, Hawkes Bay farmland below and the impressive snow covered ridges. The ridges swept up into the wind-torn clouds covering the mysterious Sawtooth Ridge.

By now preparations for a pike began in earnest. Peter got the Little Doris stove going so well that the temperature soared to a tropical 14°, and stayed that way for the rest of the night. Alan concocted a magnificent stomach-expanding eight pinter stew. While Phil and I did our bit by warming mattresses. The remaining evening was spent reminiscing of trips past, swopping memories of childhood and school days, solving a selection of the world's problems and surviving some of Phil's jokes. Outside the wind howled and buffeted the hut unceasingly. Inside it was snug and warm.

Piking continued in earnest until 10 am next morning when we left that memorable hut in full storm gear intending to continue south along the tops to perhaps Fohangina Saddle, if conditions permitted. Talk about wind! Soft knee deep snow made progress slow, even for 'Plastic Mack'. But after an hour and a half of storm-force wind that blew my first map and compass right out of the undone top pocket of my pack, then Phil's map out of his hand, we held a conference, shouting in ears to be heard. We decided to head straight down to the stream 2,500 feet below. It was deep snow and leatherwood-infested stuff,

Last drops of liquor ; Howletts Hut ; Ruahine
Brian Dobbie , Phil Mackie , Alan Clelland.

but Peter found us a good route down beside an evil looking steep slip. Soon we were skipping down an easy stream, heading for Daphne hut. Peter fell and badly twisted his ankle down this stream, but kept a stiff upper lip and kept Plastic Mack company at the rear.

Our second lunch at Daphne, and back along the track and farmland to the wind-scoured car by five. We strapped Peter's impressive looking swollen ankle and the powerful winds outside pursued us all the way home.

Thanks to - Alan Clelland Phil Mackie
Peter Mansell