

OUTDOORS

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The Otago Tramping Club, Inc.

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Contributions Invited.

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THIS ISSUE.

Late!! Of course not—it's still March, and in any case the last issue will stand a lot of reading yet—especially a story on the back page and that little reminder about Saturday bus trips still holds good, too. But seriously—we suppose that as, for three months, you have been reading Vol. I. No. 2 regularly each week it must be a bit bent and battered by now so here we are with a nice fresh issue hot from the press.

The Editor has just returned from his holiday (yes, thank you, he had a good time)—so this issue should be even better than the last, if that is possible, of course.

The material here to greet our return would have been enough to fill at least two issues (one report of a Sunday trip, if printed as submitted, would have filled a whole page) so the blue pencil has been busy, particularly on one or two reports of trips, in addition to the one mentioned, which extended almost to the "diary" class. If your essay has been cut down do not be discouraged, just remember that lack of space alone prevented publishing it in full, but if you are unable to find even the smallest mention of your trip we take no responsibility, for the fault is yours for omitting to write the report, and so you must get busy now for the next issue.

PERSONAL.

We are glad to extend a welcome to Messrs Williamson, W. Stevenson, J. J. Dickson, who have joined the Club since our last issue.

Miss Summerfield has taken up a position in Christchurch and carries to her new sphere the best wishes of all members.

Mr R. Gilkison has left on a visit to England. Prior to his departure he was entertained by the Club at a social gathering, where he was presented with a travelling rug as a mark of the esteem in which his fellow members hold him. A Special General Meeting held on the same evening elected him a life member of the Club.

FIELD CLUB.

One of the chief features of the current issue is the inclusion herein of an article on "Ribbonwoods," which has been contributed by the Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club. This will be the first of a series of articles which the Field Club will supply descriptive of the varied branches of their activities, so that Tramping Club members can look forward to receiving herein valuable information set out in a manner easily followed by a layman. We take this opportunity of

acknowledging with thanks this assistance from our sister Club.

EASTER TRIP.

The Styx district is new country for most of the Club, and it provides many interesting walks, both long and short. Among the trips available are:—Styx River and Falls.—Blackball.—The Loganburn.—Upper Taieri Flat.—McPhee's Rocks, on the Rock and Pillar Range.—Parts of the Old Dunstan Road.—A fairly long trip in the direction of Lake Onslow, etc., etc.

The party will leave Dunedin on Good Friday and return on Easter Monday, and if enough members make the trip will travel right through by bus both ways. Complete details of the arrangements will be given to those who hand in their names.

The cost will be approximately £2 5/-.

Names of those going, together with a deposit of £1, must reach the Secretary not later than 5th April.

PHOTOS.

Miss Park cannot keep the Club album up to date unless members send her negatives or snaps of their trips. Please keep this in mind.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT—AND PACKS.

Once again we have to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of numerous publications from kindred Clubs. From a perusal of these papers it is evident that a weighty question just now is the apparently universal desire to reduce packs. In the O.T.C. there seems to be plenty of room for a similar campaign, and when, on a one-day trip which last autumn extended a little beyond sunset, one of our members was able to produce the best part of a packet of candles—"left over from Easter" he explained—to light the way across the top of Mount Cargill it certainly lent colour to the opinion that a consideration of the contents of our ruc-sacks would be well worth while. In the papers to which

we have referred one writer says that tins and jars are heavy to carry and should be avoided and suggests carrying cocoa, sugar, and dried milk mixed, whilst another paper ("Alpine Sport," Auckland) publishes the following:—

"Truly rationing to reduce the weight of one's ruc-sack can reach the level of fine arts. Straining the kerosene, for example, not only increases the efficiency of the primus but also reduces the load. And we have all heard of the trampler who was prejudiced against chops as a meat food owing to the waste of effort in carrying the inedible bones, and who will not carry a mirror owing to its entailing the weight of reflections. Another member likewise objects to lading himself with the holes in macaroni, as they take up too much room in the pack. A nice point, too, is involved in setting off the weight of a razor against the increased weight of whiskers, and should the former be left behind—on extended trips the balance would appear to be against the razor."

After thus reading the words of persons who have evidently made a careful study of the subject one wonders just what they would comment on the suggestion of an enterprising company which circularised the information that we should all carry one of their aluminium camp ovens weighing ONLY 4½ pounds. Personally we incline more to the ideas of the man who doesn't carry a mirror, and may even go to the trouble of emptying our ruc-sacks one of these days just to see what is in them.

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CHRISTMAS TRIPS.

The following are reports of various trips undertaken by members last Christmas. Information in respect of the remaining activities which include further expeditions in Western Otago and some Westland trips have not come to hand in time for this issue, but will no doubt be available later.

AT NIGER HUT.

An episode of the Xmas trip of a party of the O.T.C. as seen by on-lookers (not of the party) might prove interesting to your readers as well as the party themselves (to see ourselves as others see us as it were).

The Aspiring Party as we will call them (judging by the size of their packs they would be the Perspiring Party after an hour or two on the track) arrived in the vicinity of the Niger Hut, Matukituki Valley, to be welcomed by the cat belonging to the Hut and others who shall be nameless. Percy was riding pillion on Bill's motor bike and the rest of the party per car. One of the ladies, we believe, had started off a-pillion behind Bill, but the cows' husbands, of Cattle Flat Station proved hostile and seemed to have an idea there was a war on, and it was deemed advisable for her to resign her seat in favour of Percy.

On arrival Bill looked the old bike over and found three cracks in the frame, but opined she might take him home with a bit of nursing. If not he thought the engine would be worth salvaging anyhow. As it looked very like rain a hurried emptying of everything in the car and assembling and stowing of all necessities in the packs began. To a casual observer it looked as if Woolworth's, the Self Help, and Arthur Barnett had combined and opened a branch on the banks of the stream near the Niger Hut, clothes and goods of every description and variety being strewn about the landscape in the greatest confusion imaginable.

Bill joining the party must have been an afterthought, as most of their heavy gear had already been sent in and packed up the West Branch, but all Bill's goods were on the spot and it looked as if there was enough for at least two pack camels to carry. Bill's eatables, etc., were all in packets instead of tins, and to see him trying to get a large pottle of thick honey into a small tin with a large spoon—well, as a movie it would have been a scream. About this time Percy discovered that he was a boot short and he began to think he would have to have a leg amputated before going any further or else stay where he was, but fortunately this drastic remedy was not necessary as after an intensive search the boot was found. Bill had a brand new pair of boots, but unfortunately he had not had time to have them clinkered. However, Bill is nothing if not practical, and he had included in his miscellaneous collection of gear a three-footed last, and this went into his pack, pending the time he could get a spare half-hour to complete the job. At a rough guess this last would weigh about 10lb, which would certainly keep

him from racing ahead of the rest of the party, and it is surmised that he brought up the rear once they got going. In other words, he was the last. As it rained steadily for at least three days after the party left the vicinity, it is to be presumed that he got plenty of time to do a lasting job on the boots.—O.L.H.

FRANZ JOSEF.

Imagine driving through virgin forest—giant tree ferns, flaming rata, rimu, beech, etc.—with the green moss clinging to the trunks and the ferns clustering beneath them in great profusion. We also passed the sparkling waters of three very pretty lakes, wooded to the water's edge, while in the distance towered the majestic snow-crowned mountains, and at last we were permitted our first peep of the Franz Josef Glacier. At 6 a.m. the next morning we were on our way to Lake Mapourika, where we had been told wonderful reflections of the Glacier and mountains could be viewed in the calm waters of the lake. A slight ripple on the lake prevented us from getting perfect reflections, but the view of the Glacier and surrounding mountains in the early morning light, made the trip well worth while.

Weather conditions being excellent, immediately after breakfast we arranged to hire a guide to take us to Defiance Hut; donned suitable boots, and, equipped with haversack, alpenstock, and snow glasses, were soon tramping through the $3\frac{1}{2}$ mile bush track which took us to the foot of the glacier.

Franz Josef is a very clean glacier, and we had very little uninteresting moraine to negotiate. Soon we were on the very rough ice, which continued for about a mile. Going in single file, the guide in front cutting steps into which we dug our feet with the utmost care, we climbed high pinnacles of ice, walked across narrow ledges or razor backs, with a deep crevass on either side, stepped over crevasses, and in all enjoyed enough thrills to last us for quite a while. As we travelled further up the glacier, the ice became less broken, but the climb was a fairly stiff one to people who were not in training.

When one considers that the glacier is 700ft above sea level at its terminal face and in a distance of $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles it rises to a height of over 6,000 feet, an idea of the climb can be imagined. Looking back, the Glacier Hotel seemed a very tiny speck far below; as also did Lake Mapourika; and as the day was a clear one, we were permitted a glimpse of the Tasman Sea in the distance, and, from the hut door, a magnificent view of

the glistening white slopes of the Upper Franz Josef could be seen, with the Almer Glacier on our left.

After dinner, heavy boots were discarded, and, reclining in the bunks, we listened with great merriment to the tales (true and otherwise) related by one of the guides.

The next day, when packing for the return journey, one of our party tactfully asked the guide which way we would be going back. His reply was: "On the ice." We didn't say much, but some of us had the sinking feeling that it would be much harder going down than coming up, as we would be looking down into the crevasses. This was not the case, however. The second day on the ice we felt much more confident, and we came down in half the time it took us to go up.—E.Y.

MATUKITUKI VALLEY.

Going from Dunedin to Glen Dhu occupied our first day, and we were still here next morning when the last member of the party came along to join up on what, in the early days, may have been called a motor bike. He dismounted and decided to give her an overhaul, so that we knew that there was plenty of time for another swim.

After packing up and assisting Bill to find his engine or some other gadget which he had mislaid, we eventually set off for Niger Hut, where all our gear—not to mention Bill's—was soon scattered about the landscape. Rain commenced to fall, so we wasted no time in getting a start, and by the time the Gates of Doom were reached a heavy downpour, which continued until we arrived at Cascade Hut, had set in. Here Mr Sim very kindly arranged accommodation for us, as we were in a very wet and hungry condition. Two days we spent at Cascade watching the rain, and then lack of supplies forced us to brave the elements and continue on to our depot at Pearl Flat.

Rarely in the next few days did we see the sun, so that the time was spent baking scones with the aid of a primus and a biscuit tin, among other things such as flour, etc., of course. The scones rose quickly, but went down much more so at our next meal.

As a respite from the competitions between the petrol and kerosene primus stoves (the petrol was always an easy winner) we managed to get one day fit enough to attempt to reach the Arawata Saddle, but the weather had us beaten, and back we had to go to the base. Eventually after many adventures in swollen streams we returned to Dunedin with pleasant recollections of our holiday in spite of the weather.—E.M.H.

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AGAIN AT NIGER.

On our travels in the hinterland of Otago recently we ran across a runholder to whom the words Tramping Club and Alpine Club produced much the same effect as a stooping person does to a billy goat or a red rag to a bull. We had proceeded some distance through his property, when we espied him afar off, and even from there sensed that all was not well—in fact, he looked peeved.

Diplomatically stopping the car we asked his permission to carry on. Slightly mollified (but not much) he demanded to know our destination and our intentions. We indicated that we thought of going up as far as a certain hut and camping in the vicinity, and from there doing perhaps a bit of shooting, tramping, and climbing. We were at once informed that the hut was his property, it was locked, and that no tenants were required, thank you. What were we going to shoot? This wasn't the shooting season—everything was out of season. We ventured the opinion that there might be deer about. Deer—there were no deer within miles of where we were going. And as for trampers and tramping—well, a blue haze hid that pleasant valley for quite a time while he told us what he thought of trampers generally and one party in particular who had gone through some days before and left his gates open, with the result that a lot of his young lady cows had got into the same paddock as a bunch of old gentlemen cows. He was very upset over this, and we gathered from his remarks that the latter were bad characters, the gentlemen cows, I mean, and also the trampers. About this time a casual remark revealed the fact that he and the writer had campaigned together during the war, and after that things progressed much more favourably. After a considerable time spent in swapping—er, lies we received a hearty invitation to camp in the forbidden hut as long as we liked and much information as to where we would find plenty of deer close handy. We left him then after listening to further remarks re gate crashers, cattle-mixers, etc., the blue haze again spreading along the peaceful valley and drifting up until even the highest snow-clad peaks were obscured. The axiom that all Tramping Club members should get from this story is SHUT THE GATE and leave it at that. Forget about that Gee Up Neddy song.—O.L.H.

CONTRAST.

A man ranged cowslips on a stall, and wondered how many he should give for a penny. And another man passing caught the gleam and odour of them, and had a vision of a blue valley touched with gold, and April scattering desultory rains.

T. W. H. Crosland.

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RIBBONWOODS OR LACEBARKS.

It is perhaps unfortunate that so few of our plants have common names, but this state of affairs is to be expected in a young country. Common names cannot be made; they have to grow, and without doubt ours will grow along with the history and literature of our country. Even now we have quite a number, and among these two of the most descriptive are "ribbonwood" and "lacebark."

Everyone who has camped during the summer months in the South Island beech forest is familiar with the white, cherry-like blossoms of what is perhaps our most beautiful native tree, the mountain ribbonwood. For long it was known as *Gaya Lyallii*, but the botanists have now decided that all the *Gayas* are in South America and have named our tree *Hoheria Glabrata*. Growing readily from seed or cuttings and forming a graceful spreading tree, it is commonly grown in gardens. Specimens may be seen in the Woodhaugh Gardens close to the George Street bridge or in the native border of the Upper Gardens. The juvenile leaves, very different in shape to the adult ones, may often be seen near the base of well-grown trees. In south Westland this ribbonwood grows commonly alongside the water courses, and marks out the stream beds by its golden leaves or bare branches in the winter and by its light green foliage contrasting with the darker green of the other trees in summer.

There are other handsome *Hoherias*, two from the North Island which are grown in some Dunedin gardens and one, the narrow-leaved lacebark (*Hoheria angustifolia*), which is common in light bush near Dunedin. There is a good specimen of this lacebark on the lawn in front of the hothouses at the Botanical Gardens and others near the cherry walk. Rather a slender tree with toothed leaves one to two inches long and a quarter of an inch broad, it is conspicuous in January with its dense covering of small white flowers when most other bush flowers are past. The juvenile plants have small leaves and straggling interlacing branches.

Two other ribbonwoods belong not to *Hoheria* but to *Plagianthus*. One is the tree, *Plagianthus betulinus*, so named because of the resemblance in shape of leaf to the European silver birch (*Betula*). On account of its abundance in lowland forest this tree is sometimes termed the lowland ribbonwood. It is common near Dunedin, and good specimens may be seen along the path by the Leith leading from the Lower Gardens to Dundas Street. The flowers are small, whitish or greenish, but are borne in large clusters which are readily seen in October and November. Near Dunedin the trees are deciduous and for that reason are conspicuous in winter. The juvenile plants are straggling with interlacing branches and small leaves, and, as they grow rapidly, they are sometimes used as hedge plants.

The other *Plagianthus* is quite a different type of plant. Its name, *Plagianthus divaricatus*, describes this twiggy, divaricating shrub with its interlacing branches and small leaves. Growing as it always does in a salty

SOCIAL COMMITTEE NOTES.

The whole matter of Tramping Club socials is at present receiving intensive attention from the Social Committee for this winter we hope to provide functions which will alternately amuse and instruct you.

A number of ideas are being considered, but don't let this stop you from sending in any suggestions you may have, for we need all the assistance we can get just now. For instance, do you know of a comfortable room, preferably one with a fireplace, where we could feel at home, do as we like, and pay a rental which will permit a very low admission charge—if so, let us have this information now.

This year we want to run our own shows in order to create that homely, friendly atmosphere so necessary to make a successful gathering. Just as important will be the resultant decrease in cost so that the charge should rarely exceed 1/-.

A programme of lecturettes, photo displays, cards, games, and dancing will be arranged, and each evening a light supper will be served.

The first social will be held soon after Easter. In due course you will get a notice regarding it. Thereafter the evenings will be held regularly each fortnight, so separate notices will not be required. Remember club nights and bring along your friends to join in the fun, thus encouraging them to take part in our outdoor activities as well.

soil with its roots often covered with brackish water at high tides it is well fitted by its interlacing form to resist strong shore winds, and by its small leathery leaves to check transpiration of the available fresh water. Often the outer branches may be bare of leaves, but if these are pulled aside the inner branches will be found to be very leafy. It is on these branches, too, that in October the flowers are usually found, very small and whitish, but typical ribbonwood flowers on a small scale. This plant is found in salt-water marshes such as occur at the head of Hopper's Inlet and may be called the shore ribbonwood.

All these ribbonwoods belong to the mallow family, of which probably the best-known representatives are marsh-mallow and hollyhock of the Northern Hemisphere. The fruits of the *Hoherias* are very characteristic, breaking apart when ripe into five winged carpels, each containing a seed. The fruits of the *Plagianthus* species on the other hand are like peppercorns in size and shape.

The bark of all ribbonwoods can be pulled off in long strips. Such is its strength and toughness that the Maoris commonly used it for cord. In fact, it is stated that the Maori name, *houhere* or *hoihere*, means "to bind a captive," suggesting that it was probably commonly used in war-time. The Maoris also used the bark to make a medicinal drink.—E.C.

Trampers' Motto:

Brevity is the soul of kit.

PAST TRIPS.**MYSTERY TRIP, 9/12/34.**

A muster of 12 left Donaldson's some going by Ross Creek track and others followed the leader on the Mystery Trip proper, which led them towards Nicholl's Creek and up through the bush to the head of the creek. We proceeded to the old trail and down Speargrass flat to the "boil up" at Rollinson's. After lunch ten of the party set off again to finish the trip, everyone being very anxious to know where they were going. After following the Swampy track for a short distance we went down the paddocks to the left until we came to the bush line, where we struck the track which had been pointed out by Mr J. W. Rollinson, jun. This we followed up hill and down dale for some considerable distance until we came out in an open space to admire the scenery. Here the track petered out for a short distance, but eventually we picked it up again and entered the bush once more to follow it down to Coal Creek, where we quenched our thirst and bathed our feet. Soon we struck the race which we followed to the Pumping Station. Five of us went up a creek for a short distance and then clambered up through the bush and brambles to the top of the ridge and back to the "boil up" previously mentioned. Here we made contact with the rest of the party who had gone round the road and raced us by about an hour, although we took what we thought to be a short cut. After tea we set off for home, some going by the trough route and others by way of Ross Creek. One poor individual arrived home at 3 a.m., having seen fit to lose himself on the way.—P.L.M.

BOULDER HILL AND MULLOCKY GULLY—16/12/34.

A muster of four, later increased by one late arrival to five, set off from Wakari at 8 a.m. and passed a fine-looking Fresian bull on the Bridal track, but were disappointed at not being entertained by a clog dance. It was not kind enough to say "Come up and see me sometime," as in the exciting episode we experienced with the bull on the Mystery trip.

We had a second breakfast at Whare Flat for the benefit of Mr Hindmarsh, as he had already made us clearly understand he was coming only as far as Whare Flat, and no amount of persuasion would entice him to explore Waironga Gully or any of the d— hills opposite. He was on a fishing expedition, and intended turning up sods for bait to catch fish, and eels he noticed below Y.M. camp two years ago.

The conversation had already been for the last few hours on which route we should take. We were determined to omit Pyramid and explore some new ground, so we finally decided to climb Tombstone Ridge, through Waironga Gully and so to Salisbury. We made wonderful progress, arriving at Salisbury at 12 o'clock. Here we were thrilled at the taste of real Mountain beer (FREE). It was great. (Thompson's sell at 1/- per bottle, excellent for invalids). We now had a great kick in us and walked along the railway line to Taioia, where we had lunch under the bridge, a really delightful spot.

There was only one fly in the ointment, the thought of the party who camped at Pyramid waiting for us to arrive. However, we hope they enjoyed the day.

The next item was the most important business of getting home. The hour was still quite early, but oh, the suggestions of the route required at least a week-end to fulfil. We decided if we returned via Mullocky Gully, Mount Allen track to Peaks, and down Swampy, we would certainly all work out half-way, so the next thing was the use of the railway jigger as far as Salisbury. Here again we obtained a great kick out of the free supply of mountain beer. It is highly recommended for giving life to the circus. We then proceeded over and over the hills, and over the hills again, then over Tombstone Ridge to Whare Flat.

We were disappointed at not finding some eels hung on the fence by Y.M. camp for our tea, but we hope Mr Hindmarsh will have a fishy yarn to tell us next time we see him.

After eating solidly for two hours we returned to Kaikorai (11 p.m.) to find such a sport waiting with young Lizzie to take his sister home. A most welcome ending to a very enjoyable day for the energetic members.—I.J.

LITTLE PAPANUI BEACH—20/1/35.

Unsuccessful attempt. Held up by full packs, empty stomachs, and a universal desire for a swim at the nearest beach. Will make another attempt at a later date.—P.L.M.

MERTON—27/1/35.

This trip was characterised by hard work, and the hardest bit of all was rising early enough to be at Duke Street (or Kaikorai) at 6 a.m. Five left Kaikorai at the appointed time—well, not very much after anyway—and in due course connected up with the van of the Duke Street brigade below and beyond Hightop and then carried on to the Red Hut and lunch. More solid work now after four hours strenuous walking. Soon the "Hut" party and the remaining portion of the North End contingent came along and helped to drink up the tea so that

ITEMS FROM THE FIXTURE CARD.

Bob Fullerton has something good up his sleeve for 17th March, and then the next week don't fail to visit the Gap by moonlight. We suggest you combine with the Saturday trip and go to the Club Hut for tea before setting out for the Gap—at mid-night. Sunday will be an easy day.

On 31st March we have a good round trip and a capable leader—especially at meal times, whilst on 7th April Bob Watt will do his best to lose us or at least turn on something out of the ordinary.

Finally on 28th April Bert Armstrong will take us on one of Whare Flat's best trips—and that's saying something.

Our second Saturday bus trip is on 16th March—next Saturday—so book it in for sure and ring 13-183 to say you will be there.

at noon the whole fifteen were ready to depart—eleven to Merton and the remainder to the Peaks. Another four hours along the ridge with its glorious views of the Waikouaiti district brought us to Orbell's Bridge and tea, so that after the rest the two remaining miles to Merton were child's play. A conjuring entertainment in the train completed a good day. I—S—made sausages, eggs, ham, cabin biscuits, tomatoes, etc., disappear steadily all the way between Merton and Ravensbourne to the astonishment of the other passengers and of the guard who popped in every few minutes to see the fun. Better than marmite, salt, pepper, breadcrumbs, etc., wasn't it Ivy?—J.C.L.

ANNUAL PICNIC—17/2/35.

We always have a good day for our picnic and this year was no exception for two bus loads—or overloads—enjoyed an excellent day bathing, exploring, eating, and sleeping at Pipikaretu.

WAIPORI—3/3/35.

The day was ideal for walking, and the party of 22 saw the Gorge at its best. The return route was by way of the Kowhai Spur and the power lines, and gave us extensive views of the Taieri and the surrounding hills. Four or five remained with the bus, and spent the day gathering mushrooms, bulrushes, etc.—G.A.P.

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